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H.M.S. MERCURY

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OCTOBER 1973 - MARCH 1974

.....*An informal record of events in  
Kelly Squadron.*

EDITION NO.2

## FOREWORD

By Lieutenant Commander S. DRAKE-WILKES (K1)

The second edition of the Kelly Log has overcome the perils of power cuts, 3 day weeks and general shortages. Since the first edition way back in October, 1973 we have had Christmas, New Year and many successes both on and off the sportsfield.

The Kelly Cinema started in December and the Kelly Club started in Sommerville Block in February. Both need your support.

Our congratulations to JROs Myerhoff, Stalker and Stevens for forming the winning team in the first ever R.N. Biathlon. The 1<sup>st</sup> XV did well in beating Bishops Otter at Chichester. The Squadron cross country was won by Antrim but we were only able to get 4<sup>th</sup> place in the Command Championships.

We continue to train, to provide the ceremonial and to provide sports teams. Keep up the winning streak.



S. Drake-Wilkes

## I DON'T MIND A JOKE, BUT .... A PANTOMIME:

BY K.W.

The latter half of October saw the start of rehearsals for this year's pantomime, Dick Whittington. The producer Lt Derek Sayse and his wife Anne held the auditions for cast and chorus.

Ninety five percent of the people who wanted to take part had never before set foot on stage, let alone acted. We were armed only with the experience and expert guidance of Derek and Anne and, of course, our own courage.

Few people in the cast had ever sung solo before and of course this is quite necessary for a panto. After auditions the cast and chorus were selected. Rehearsals took place in separate groups three times a week. Towards the end of November the rehearsal groups were joined and rehearsals became more intense. We were, up to the end of November, still using a tape recorder for the music. This was not very satisfactory but had to suffice until a better means of musical accompaniment could be arranged. Professional groups were very expensive and since the panto runs on a shoe string, that was out of the question.

Like a gift from the gods, a charming lady by the name of Doris Westerway arrived in our midst. Doris is a marvellous senior citizen and a wonderful pianist. Never did she miss a cue and if our timing was not all it should be, Doris would speed up or slow down as the situation warranted.

The final dress rehearsals are now completed and we are ready to expose ourselves to the public.

The first performance was a matinee for the children on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> was allocated to ship's company and Kelly Squadron. That turned out to be our most trying, and possibly our most enjoyable. The audience never failed to read between, or give a different meaning to every line in the script, even where none were intended. The next evening had a completely different type of audience when three hundred senior citizens arrived. It seemed quite strange to be able to say a whole line without having to shout above the belly laughs and cast calls of the previous night. During the interval we served tea and biscuits (not too hard) to the old folks and on completion of the performance we mingled with them and some very interesting conversations ensued. Wednesday night was allocated to CPO's and PO's but only about one quarter of the theatre was filled. It is quite difficult getting any feedback from so few but it did give us good experience of yet another type of audience. Thursday, the final night was a star studded occasion as far as the audience was concerned. The Captain headed a cast of dozens of well known and well loved personalities. This again was another type of audience being formal, although friendly.

On completion of the show the Captain gave a speech of thanks to everyone concerned with making the panto a complete success. He remarked that the ages of performers ranged from 10 years (sugar kitten) to senior citizenship (the pianist).

We believe that everyone who saw the panto honestly enjoyed it. We know that everyone on and back stage spent a great deal of their spare time in perfecting it, and enjoyed every minute of it.



### A PIECE OF CAKE

BY K.W.

You've heard of Navy cake, well here's your chance to get a slice.

Every term a large iced cake is presented by the Captain of HMS Mercury to the cleanest mess in Kelly Squadron.

Each week, as we are all well aware, the messes in the Squadron have to be cleaned for rounds. To add some incentive to this irksome chore points are awarded to each mess. A sliding scale of points are awarded according to the standard of cleanliness of each mess.

At the end of the Winter term we saw Jackson and Inglefield blocks neck and neck and with bated breath we awaited Captain's final rounds. Well, hard luck Jackson, there can only be one winner and you were only beaten by a few points by Inglefield.

Inglefield block was awarded the cake last term and that brings the points back to zero ready for the Spring term. We have just started the term now with everyone on an equal footing. We must all be determined that the same block isn't going to walk away with the prize a second time.

Mess cleaning is not just a game for which the prize is a cake if we win. I expect that some people feel, we don't want a silly cake so we won't clean the mess. As I said before, the cake is only an incentive to make an extra effort in the mess. Each person's personal pride should afford all the incentive he needs to keep himself and his mess clean.

I'm sure that ninety percent of you have never had to scrub out at home, so here are a few tips that may help you for next rounds.

Before the cleaning operation starts, ensure that enough equipment is obtained. The accommodation office will supply or tell you where you can get it. Clean each mess, telly room, and bathroom at the same time, starting with the overheads, lampshades, curtain rails etc. Then work down, cleaning the windows and finally clean the deck as instructed by the accommodation office. When the messes, telly room and bathrooms have been completed, return all furniture and clean upstairs landing and passage. Return all furniture to the ground floor messes and clean lower passage overheads, broom cupboard, mats and finally deck. There should be no need for anyone now to be in the block except the lower passage cleaners.

Easy isn't it? Why doesn't it happen?

### SO YOU WANT TO BE A SUBMARINER!

BY K.W.

"Is everybody here lad?"

"Yes Yeo!"

"Right, on the bus then."

The start of another trip to HMS Dolphin at 0740. This is my second trip and both times the weather has been inclement to say the least. We battle our way through the rush hour traffic in our smooth running, "dare I try to snooze" pussers bus. As we get stuck in Cosham, Hilsea, Commercial Road and all points West, I wonder wouldn't it be more advantageous going direct to Gosport by road.

We arrive at HMS Vernon and have to stand in the teeming rain and storm force 10 wind, for a boat across to HMS Dolphin. The sadist who chose this route knows that only three people could stand in the Q.M.'s lobby before it was overcrowded. Mind you, Vernon has not spared any expense to make sure we get thoroughly soaked. There's not so much as a fat gutter to stand under.

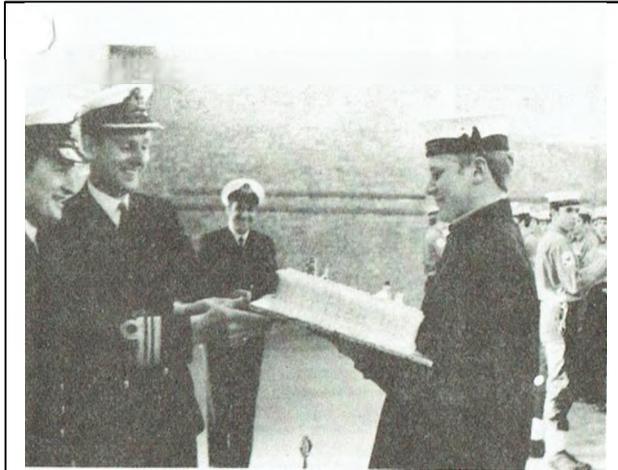
Anyway, we've got a sense of humour haven't we? We'll stand here with the water trickling down our necks thinking how glad we are that we joined the Navy.

"Ere's your boat now" grumbles the Q.M. enthusiastically. The boat has three attempts to get alongside, which cheers us up enormously. We manage to get on board and, blast! too late, six people have beaten us to it, the cabin's full. Never mind we'll stand on the upper deck and sing all the way across. It's a good job we're not stopping at Haslar, they might lock us up.

Two thumps on the starboard (right hand) side and we realised we've arrived. Thank god for that, two minutes more on the bumpy water and I may have disgraced myself.

“Hello, I’m R.S. Glummph”, his voice is carried away by the wind. This pleasant looking chap is our instructor for the forenoon and leads us off in the direction of the cinema.

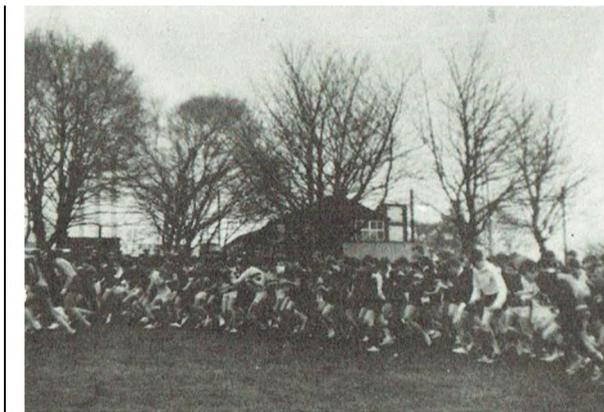
We are shown the polaris film with stirring music and smiling officers, and we all leave simply yearning to be submariners. The next thing we are programmed to see is the submarine escape tower, but of course they don’t use it on a Wednesday, “You should have come yesterday,” he tells us. Never mind, we’ll have a look at the museum instead. This is a very interesting building, the exhibits are’nt bad either. They must be really fascinating when you’re not soaking wet.



Cdr. R.C. SMITH (Support Cdr.) and Lt. Cdr. M. CASWELL present the cake to RO3 PONTEFRACT for the cleanest accommodation block of the term.

(See ‘A Piece of Cake’)

Lt. TRAYNOR (Antrim D.O. and P.T.S.O.) wearing his P.T. Hat, awards the Inter Division Trophy to RO3 CARTWRIGHT of Glamorgan Division.



CHARGE I FREE BEER ? NO.  
The start of Kelly Squadron’s Cross Country Championships.

(See ‘Sports Review’)

It's now 10.00 and time for standeasy, "there's an automat just round the corner" says the instructor. "You can't go in there" says a Chief, "rounds!" Luckily our instructor is a communicator and soon finds us another one, phew!

Ten fifteen, we're off again, this time to visit the Alliance. She is a submarine berthed alongside the jetty. Oh good! The rain's stopped but the wind is still strong.

We get below and everyone goes quiet thinking "blimey ain't it small". The instructor shows us how to use the escape equipment. I suppose this is in case the sub sinks, she is pretty old and it's damn windy up there.

We're given a guided tour of the boat through the messdeck, which says it holds sixteen, we couldn't get fourteen in. And then to the control room, Engine room and after ends. This is the most fascinating part of the trip and everyone is looking around in awe and in periscopes.

After the tour the instructor gives us a handout and a lecture on the submarine service. Two of our class are convinced and are ready to become ROSMs.

Well that takes us up to lunchtime and then it's back on the boat to Vernon. The walk back to the jetty from the dining hall was not uneventful. One of the lads lost his hat to the wind, it did a classic roll along the jetty and plopped into the harbour. Much laughter from the troops!

The trip back to Vernon was uneventful except that the boat slipped a green one just as the Yeoman was putting his foot ashore. Again much laughter from the troops, "Get on that bus and keep silent" said the Yeoman with no malice in his voice whatsoever, as he slugged along the jetty.

### THOUGH SHALT NOT FLANNEL (11<sup>th</sup> Commandment)

BY C.Y. PRINCE

This article is intended to point out the fact that in Kelly Squadron there is probably more experience on average than in any other squadron within the confines of H.M.S. Mercury.

Having said that it would be prudent to state that we are talking about things in the broadest possible sense and not trying to outdo any of the other sections. However, those are far more specialised than we are in the N.E. Squadron.

Producing statistics can be very dull, both for the statistician and the reader but I feel the following make quite interesting reading and prove the point above.

The average time served by officers and instructors is over 15 years.

Over two hundred ships past and present have been served on and these do not include short term loan drafts of less than six months.

The various types of ship read like an unexpurgated version of "Jane's Fighting Ships" from the first world war onwards.

From HMS Iron Duke completed in 1914 seeing service in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> world wars to HMS Tenacity accepted into service in the R.N. last year. Including battleships, carriers, commando ships, destroyers, GMDs, frigates, corvettes, minelayers, minesweepers, cable layers, recovery ships, MTBs, subs., survey ships, destroyer and submarine depot ships, RFAs.

Service has been seen in virtually every campaign in the last thirty years and we even have a qualified Prisoner of War interrogator on the staff.

As you see, if you are hauled over the coals for something, flannel will get you nowhere, it's all been heard before! From I fell asleep, was at the heads etc. etc. for A.P.O.D. to I was travelling all night so couldn't concentrate on Morse/flashing/typing/exams on Monday.

Conversely, this knowledge is there for you to take advantage of. All you have to do is make the effort and ASK. From filling out D.P.C.s (what's it like on one of those) to how to start an allotment. Someone here can tell you and if not can soon find someone who can. Remember to ask at the appropriate time though.

Don't ask your instructor the rig for "exped C" when he is attempting to teach you the finer points of Tape Relay. You're likely to be called a "£\$%^" and as has been proved he's probably met plenty so you will be fully qualified.

#### GUESS THE CELEBRITY?

My call to join the Senior Service came when I was twelve years old. I suppose a rebel in the making as my father, his brother and my grandfather were all Army.

However, to start a naval career I joined the Dover Sea Scouts for seamanship training which went great guns until the outbreak of war when all our facilities and boats were barred from us. To overcome our problems we applied and became "The Dover Sea Cadets" and I became an instant Petty Officer cadet, teaching "Morse".

The Royal Navy then became our godfather and all service facilities were opened to us. The bug was still with me and I applied to join the Royal Navy and was accepted.

The great day dawned and I joined up – St. Patrick's Day 1943. My first stop was an Army Camp of Nissen Huts in Preston. The next day it was all the way to HMS St. George, the boys training establishment in the Isle of Man. There a pleasant year of training was enjoyed. Discipline was no problem as a lot of it was instantly administered by my seamanship instructor with a Q.B.5s. (Quick Bunch of Fives!).

My first ship was a battleship of the K.G.V. type, HMS Anson. The tonnage was 32,000 tons – that is some battleship. The main armament was 10 14" guns, secondary armament 16 5.25 HA/LA guns, Pom Pom, Bofor and Orlikons. It also carried two Walrus aircraft, these were catapulted off at right angles to the ship. The danger was that the ship had to stop to recover them by crane, making the ship a sitting target for U-Boats. The planes were not very fast and if there was any wind when catapulted they shot off the side of the ship and were then blown sideways. I went off as ballast

once, I never volunteered again. As the plane left the catapult the wind took it and before we were making any forward progress we were clear of the stern.

I joined the Anson in Scapa Flow. The very next day it was away to sea and Gunnery Practice. Not long afterwards it was to sea on a Russian Convoy. There I saw the "Cruel Sea". One minute you could see ships about you, the next just sea towering above you, The sea in the Arctic Circle is very cold and in fact when it breaks over the ship it turns to ice. A beautiful picture but no good on the ship. It had to be chipped off, steamed off, otherwise it stopped guns' machinery from working.

Once at sea, it was watch and watch about and after three weeks one is very tired, very hungry and very dirty. You didn't undress and in fact it was so cold you didn't want to undress.

After two such trips, the Anson came down to Devonport for a refit. As boys were not allowed to stay, we went to our Port Depot, mine was Chatham.

I had not sooner arrived at Chatham than I was on my way back to Scapa and joined HMS Iron Duke, a rather older battleship. I wasn't on this very long as it was a transit ship. It actually laid on the bottom, having had a bomb through it, so it was a type of barracks even though everything on it worked.

This was one of the last ships to have a turret amidships called "Q" turret. This turret could only fire over a very limited angle either side of the ship, consequently because of its limitations the "Q" turret was done away with in later ships.

My next ship, bless it, was HMS Duke of York, a sister ship to the Anson. My action station was the gun layer of a 5.25 gun in S2 turret. This ship took me to the Far East and into the British Pacific Fleet.

As a boy seaman, to find out what we wanted to do we all did eight weeks training in seamanship, gunnery and torpedoes. Out of sixty seaman boys I passed top in each of these ship courses so I had a choice of what I wanted as a career. I chose gunnery so that later I could become a P.T.I.

In passing, torpedo men were in the main the ship's electricians. There was no such thing as a straight electrical rating. That branch wasn't created until the 1950s.

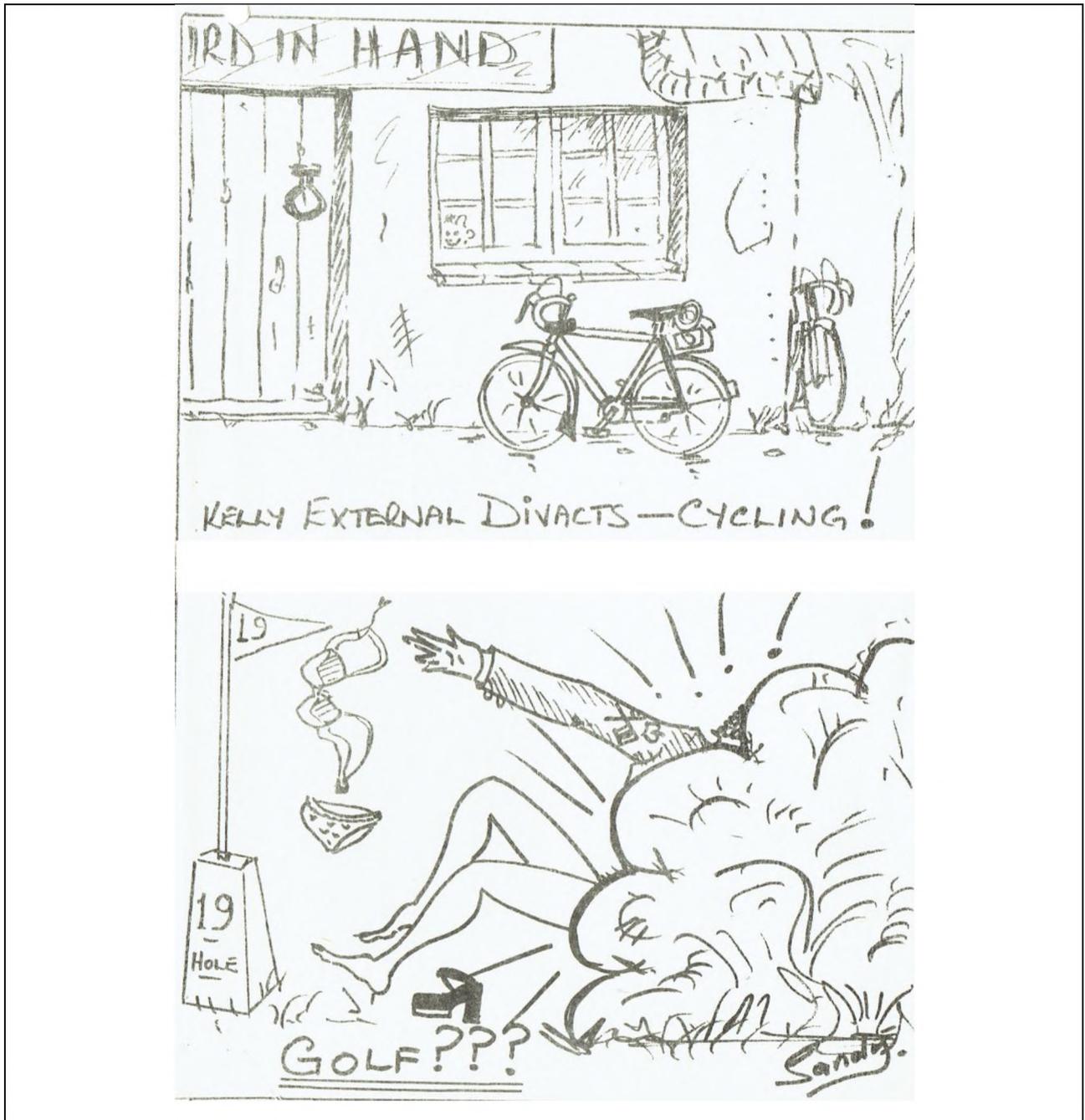
I progressed from a Boy I/C through to Acting Leading Seaman Temporary at 19. After the war, and home, I was trained as an L.R.2. for the Mark VI director on the weapons class destroyers. This never happened. I ended up on HMS Wren, a bird class frigate stationed in the Persian Gulf.

Ships after this: HMS Savage, an emergency class destroyer. (This was one of the flotilla that torpedoed the Bismarck – the name plate of the Bismarck hung in the ship). From her I spent a year on a survey ship stationed in the Outer Hebrides. This is the sort of ship to go to if you want to save your money – it's virtually continuous sea time. This one was a converted ocean minesweeper named "Rifleman" which as a survey ship was called Shackleton.

My last ship was HMS Albion in its first commission as a commando carrier and operated the entire commission off Borneo during the Borneo confrontation. Better known as the "Grey Ghost" we were the general dogsbody for everyone changing over regiments, carrying all types of helicopters and troop armour, and evacuation of civilian personnel. Our own two helicopter squadrons landed in Borneo and worked entirely from small jungle clearings for the eighteen months we were out there.

Wherever you are, whatever your trade, to enjoy a ship you must work as a team. My motto is "Work Hard and Play Hard" and the service is an enjoyable career.

NOTE: Our thanks to Lt. Traynor for his interesting and informative memoirs.



## EXPED TRAINING

BY K5

Unfortunately the fuel restrictions, with the added effect of swine vesicular disease in the Hampshire area, has somewhat curtailed the activities on the exped front. Despite the mild weather during the Spring Term conditions have not been conducive to good expeds, the rainfall in the area already almost equalling the total annual average.

However, despite the apparent gloom, Longmoor orienteering and participation in the Leading Rates Leadership School activities continue. Providing the weather remains fairly dry for the next few weeks it is hoped to recommence potholing activities in the Mendips.

The summer divisional Exodus looks like having a changed venue as the New Forest is now out of bounds to Service teams during the summer months – a new site is in the process of being negotiated at the moment. C.Y. Casmore is now an official cave leader for several named potholes in this area.

It is hoped that the next edition will have more interesting reports on Exped.

## SPORTS REVIEW

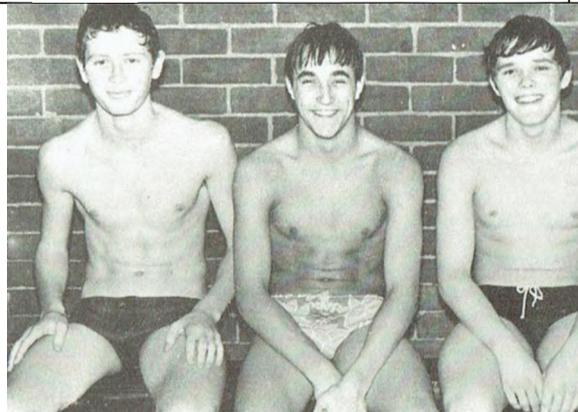
BY L/SEA O'SHEA

Kelly Squadron has in the past had a good sporting record. We have supplied good standard teams in several sports. Rugby had a very good side in the Autumn term, Soccer reached the Semi-Finals of the R.N. Youth Knockout Cup. Morris and Winn at Rugby and Pidgen, Nock and Stanage at Soccer all achieving Navy Youth standard.

The opportunities are available for all to partake and enjoy sport even if it is only Inter-Part. Sport is primarily for enjoyment. Opportunities are also available for the more dedicated to reach the top in the chosen sport, as one or two have already discovered.

Any sport or pastime can be organised from the P.T. Office, if you have a problem contact us and we will help.

Kelly Squadron Cross Country Champions  
(L to R) JRO Rowe JRO Brent RO3 Martin  
(See 'Sports Review')



Mercury's Successful Biathlon Team  
(L to R)  
JRO'S Stalker, Meyerhoff and Stevens

Presentation to the Winning Biathlon  
Team by the Captain of HMS Daedalus



## OLYMPIAD AT SULTAN

The first of what is hoped to be many inter establishment Olympiads took place at HMS Sultan on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December. These were intended for New Entries and Kelly Squadron entered teams in all events. Sports on the agenda for the day were 7-a-side Rugby, 6-a-side Soccer, 6-a-side Hockey, Swedish Longball, Volleyball, Badminton and Squash.

The overall result was a triumph for Kelly as we finished second to a very strong and somewhat older Collingwood, trailing us were Daedalus, Sultan, Dryad and Vernon.

Rugby proved to be rather hard for our side with only 7 in the team especially as some members of the team were celebrating the night before, however, we finished as runners up to Collingwood.

Soccer was a disappointment as we ended up in third position but had we scored one goal in our final match we would have been the winners.

The Hockey was unfortunate as we came up against a very strong Sultan team in our first match and therefore we did not gain any points at all, losing to the eventual winners.

In the Swedish Longball, after limited instruction, we entered the final somewhat fortunately but again lost, this time to Daedalus.

Volleyball was the next where we entered an all Anglo team and were dashed by the Malaysian Naval Team disguised as Collingwood. We completed that competition in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Badminton was also a triumph for the Collingwood Malaysians, Kelly finishing fourth.

It was left to Squash for Mercury to attempt to win at least one cup, alas, Mercury was again the runner up to, you guessed it, Collingwood.

To finish up in second place was an excellent effort and it is hoped in the very near future to challenge Collingwood for the cups.

## BIATHLON

On the weekend of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> January, the first R.N. Youth Biathlon Championships were held at HMS Sultan.

Mercury entered one team consisting of JROs Stalker, Stevens and Meyerhoff. These three trained in the limited time that was available and approached the event in high hopes.

The Biathlon is a progression to the Modern Pentathlon which is 5 sports – running, swimming, fencing, shooting and horse riding. The Biathlon is 2 sports – swimming which is a time trial over 300 metres and cross-country running, again a time trial over a course of approximately 3 miles.

On Saturday evening competitors mustered at St. Vincent Swimming Bath. First to swim in the Mercury team was Stalker in heat 3. His time was 5 min. 05 secs, and collected 556 points. Stevens was next in heat 4. His time was 6 min. 19 secs, for 444 points. Last to swim was Meyerhoff

in 4 min. 39 secs, for 844 points. So the evening finished with Mercury in a strong position with 1844 points.

The next morning saw the competitors on Sultan's cross-country course. Mercury's team were jubilant, the P.T.I. bleary eyed, however the run commenced.

The first Mercury runner was Stevens, he returned in an excellent time of 14 min. 09 secs, for 1018 points. Next away was Stalker and he returned another good time of 14 min. 19 secs, for 988 points. Last away again was Meyerhoff and while he was away the last Vernon runner had finished setting us a standard. It was similar to being an expectant father waiting for Meyerhoff but eventually he appeared and finished in a time of 15 min 44 secs, he collected 733 points to give Mercury a total of 2739 points for the running.

Mercury's total was 4583 points which gave us first place over Vernon's 4497;

Individually Meyerhoff finished 3<sup>rd</sup> with 1577 points, Stalker collected 1544 and Stevens 1462.

Our team is now building for the Tetrathlon, 4 events, to be held at Yeovilton in February.

Whatever the result, our team has already done very well and has worked hard.

There is still room for more people to have a go in this rapidly growing sport, and the benefits are there for anyone who is willing to work hard and be dedicated.

#### KELLY SQUADRON CROSS-COUNTRY

Kelly Squadron held its Spring Term cross-country on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January. The conditions were ideal for cross-country running even if the Instructors team did not think so. The mud was thick and the rain fine and only the brave survived.

After an explicit briefing of the course by P.O. P.T.I. Jones the race was started by K1, with the Instructors team benefitting from a handsome start and collecting some their team members from the P.O.'s mess on the way.

The competitors were away for a fine afternoons exercise and fresh air and the waiting Instructors were anxiously awaiting their classes, they said for the result but I believe they did not want to lose anybody to the countryside.

JRO Rowe was the first to appear slipping around the wood and on to the Broadwalk. He eventually came in as the winner and was closely followed by JRO Brent who was second and RO3 Martin was third.

For the next hour competitors were still finishing and even during the prize giving runners (walkers) were appearing out of the gloom.

The prizes were presented to the first three individuals and the winning class by Mrs. Drake-Wilkes.

Individuals

1. Rowe
2. Brent
3. Martin

Classes

1. A28
2. T9
3. A27 'X'

RUGBY

KELLY SQUADRON v 2<sup>ND</sup> XV

BY EDITORIAL STAFF

After much bragging from the Squadron, a 'needle; match was arranged for the New Entries to prove their prowess on 13<sup>th</sup> December.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> XV won the toss and chose to play into the wind. It had been quoted before the game that it would be a contest of speed and handling from the New Entries and brute strength from the ship's team. This proved to be very much the case.

Scoring was opened by the Kellys. After some good handling RO3 Martin broke away with a superb run and touched down. This try was converted by RO3 Dent.

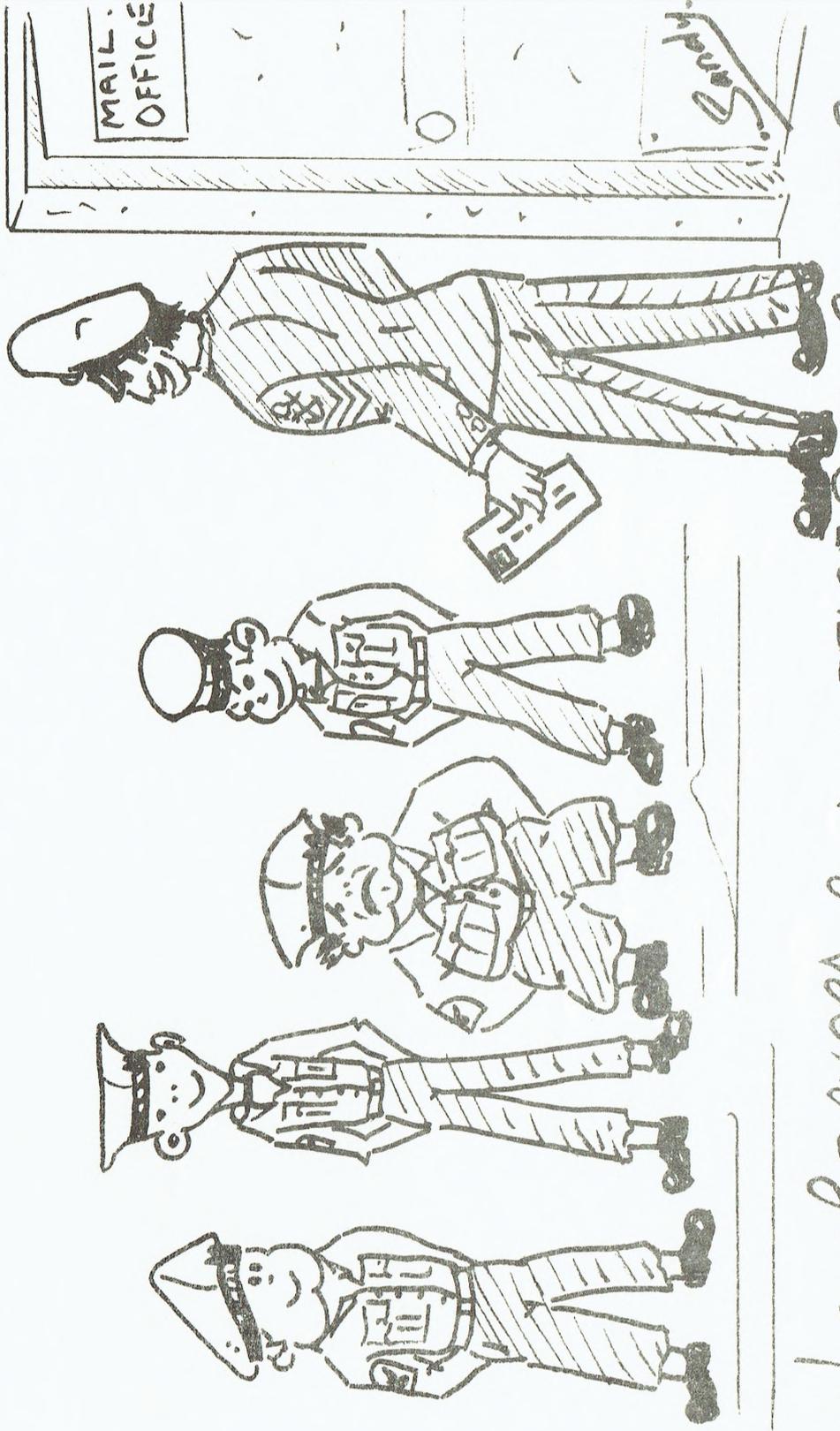
A few minutes later the scoring margin was further widened. Again this try came after some good handling by the Kelly three quarters which resulted in JRO Hacket touching down. Once more RO3 Dent converted in fine form.

The second half saw the ship's team fighting back. In all, three tries were scored. Unfortunately none were converted which left the final score at 12 -12. This was a good reflection of hard fought, but even match.

KELLY SPORT STOP PRESS

Recently track suits have been ordered for members of Kelly Squadron sports teams. These are a two tone blue colour and will give our teams a distinctive and smart appearance.

Another idea on the road is the award of Kelly Squadron colours to those who have distinguished themselves through sport. It was decided to award a tie, and it is hoped that the Squadron will come forward with a suitable design which can be used. K1 has given us permission and ideas for these schemes and we hope that the benefit is reaped by as many as possible.



OK! STEP FORWARD, RADIO OFFICER 3 BLOGGS.

## SO IT'S ROUGH BEING A NEW ENTRY – OR IS IT?

BY R.S. SMITH

All Chiefs and P.O.s have to go and do the Leadership Course at HMS Royal Arthur at Corsham. The course lasts for five weeks and it's all go from the moment you arrive until you leave.

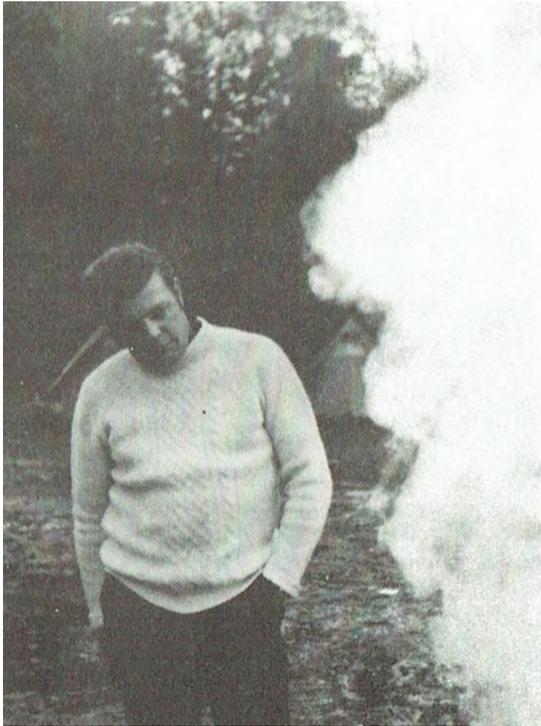
Your day starts at 0815 with divisions, ceremonial on Thursdays, and finishes at 1800 after you've played dog watch games.

During your first week you do a fitness test which consists of running on the spot for 3 minutes, your left foot must touch the deck 300 times and after each 100 you do 10 star jumps. Then you do as many press ups and sit ups as you can, (they like you to do at least 30 of each). This is followed by seeing how far you can reach up a wall from a standing jump. You do P.T. at least three times a week, which is all circuit training and the usual P.T.

On to "The Cliff and Chasm", a team of 7 of you have to get a barrel full of concrete up a practically sheer cliff, over a chasm and down the other cliff. The only gear you have is a rope, a spar and a heaving line with a block. Off you go and for about ten minutes you go through untold agonies. By the time you get to the top of the cliff you are exhausted. If the barrel touches the side of the chasm, round you go again. I was carrying the spar and it got heavier and heavier. When you've heaved and sweated everything down the last cliff, it's all thrown into a handcart and your run with it up a hill to the finish line. Can you flake out then? No, you have to stand to attention and be reported to the adjudicating officer.

Of course, you think you are reasonably fit as only two days before this you'd done a 3 mile run – in denims and boots, and there's no stopping or walking, if you do a P.T.I. places his boot in an appropriate place, and you start running again.

The 'Adventure Playground' – a huge muddy field on top of a hill with old aircraft, tillys, 3 ton wagons, huge steel balls, iron bars and all sorts of ropes, blocks and pulleys. It's great up there when it's blowing and raining and you're in charge of a team of 6 trying to get a steel ball up in a tree, or get a land rover on the back of a 3 ton wagon. Sounds easy – it isn't, I know! The obstacle course, only 5 in a team this time. Obstacle course – basic, go round that any time, O.K. with a 100lb log as well. The first obstacle is easy you only have to step over logs. The second is a water hole over which you swing on wire stretched between two poles. You have a snatch block so you can ride across though, but if anyone or the log touches the water, round you go again. Then on to the gantry, a steel erection shaped as shown in the photograph. The log has to go between the two bars at the top, when this is done the team swing across the water, grab the rope and heave the log through. Of course, anything or anyone in the water, round again. The fourth obstacle is over water, again on a wire, then through the tunnel – a pipe about 60 ft. long. The last obstacle is only a 10ft. wall, but by that time it seems to be 110 ft. high, then you run for approximately half a mile to the finish line where once again you fall in and get reported to the adjudicating officer.



A worried Exped Officer wills his fire to burn in the New Forest



Members of A26 and A27 during their Exped in Liss Forest. One of the few Expeds that managed to 'Get Away' (See 'Exped Training')



The Gantry at the PO'S Leadership School.

(See "So it's rough being a New Entry)



The Obstacle after The Gantry, if you fall off apart from getting wet, the team go round again.

Then you go for a 5 mile run, same as before, Denims and boots. After the 3 miles you did a quick circuit in the gym, after the 5 miles – No Sir – 100 sit ups!!!

Of course, during the rest of the day when you're not physically exerting yourself you go to lectures on all aspects of leadership and Naval life. For dog watch games you play either volley ball or deck hockey – with an ice hockey puck, if it hits you it hurts.

They let you go ashore at night, the social life is really good, but if you go ashore at night and “hoot with the owl”, then you must be up in the morning prepared to “soar with the eagle”.

You do a final fitness test in which they expect you to do better than the first you do. You all do more than 300 running on the spot, at least 40 press ups, 100 sit ups and you can jump higher.

What all this was building up to was “The Black Mountains”. You have to be fit to go over them, especially at this time of year. They pitch you out onto them at 4 a.m. and you go round them finding various points, but you're not allowed back at base until at least 4 p.m. the following afternoon. You have to sleep in a tent for the night and it gets cold. Anything can happen while you're up there, and invariably does. But it's a good test of leadership and team spirit.

All in all it's a very good five weeks from every angle. I'd go back tomorrow.