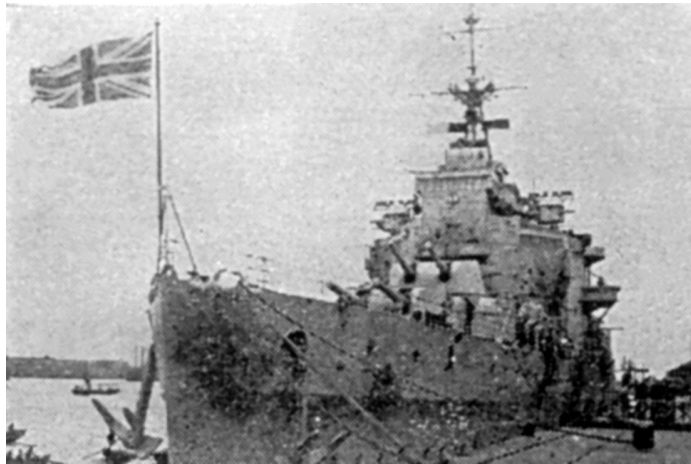


The Naval Historical Society of Australia Inc.



HMS LONDON
IN THE RIVER YANGTZE
20TH AND 21ST APRIL 1949



Gordon Dalrymple & Neil Stewart

MONOGRAPH 170

HMS LONDON in the River Yangtze 20 & 21 April 1949

Gordon Dalrymple & Neil Stewart

Monograph No. 187

HMS LONDON IN THE RIVER YANGTZE

20TH AND 21ST AUGUST

THE SHIP

HMS LONDON, a member of the County Class of cruisers, was built in Portsmouth Dockyard with engines manufactured by Fairfield Shipbuilders and Engineers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. She was ordered under the 1925 Estimates, laid down 22nd February, 1926, launched 14th September, 1927 and completed on 5th February, 1929.

She was the 10th ship of the Royal Navy to bear the name "LONDON". As built, she was a sister ship to HMS DEVONSHIRE, SUSSEX and HMAS SHROPSHIRE. The KENT class, which included HMAS AUSTRALIA and CANBERRA were similar but had torpedo bulges which increased the beam. Designed to conform with the 1921-1922 Washington Treaty, which limited the standard displacement of cruisers to 10,000 tons, the County Class was designed for commerce protection with a high speed of 32½ knots, long endurance of 10,500 miles at economical speed and good fire-power with 8 - 8" guns mounted in twin turrets.

The US PENSACOLA and NEW ORLEANS, the Japanese NATI, the French TOURVILLE, the German HIPPER and the Italian TRENTO classes were all design solutions to the same limits.

Overall dimensions of the ship were; length 633 ft (193 m), beam 66 ft (20.1 m) and a fully laden or deep draught of 21 ft (6.4 m).

The 8" gun was new to the Royal Navy; it had a high muzzle velocity of 3150 ft/sec (960 m/s) and a range of 20 miles (32 km). It was a very accurate gun and was the smallest gun in the RN to require mechanical handling of the shell and charge - the shell weighed 256 lbs (116 kg). The guns could elevate to 65° and under director control could sustain a firing rate of 4 rounds per minute.

Secondary armament as built was 4 - 4" guns in single mountings and a number of close range weapons.

The ships were excellent sea-boats and their high freeboard allowed high speeds to be maintained in heavy weather.

The sacrifice of armoured protection which was limited to 4 inches (10 cm) over the main deck and alongside the turrets, magazines and machinery spaces was a disadvantage which was accepted to get the speed, firepower and range.

HMS LONDON SERVICE HISTORY

LONDON was flagship of the First Cruiser Squadron, based on Malta, from 1930 until 1938 when she went for refit in Chatham Dockyard.

The refit amounted to a major re-build and when she emerged from Dockyard hands in March 1941 her appearance was similar to a FIJI class cruiser; gone were the three raked funnels and the rather "bitty" small bridge, replaced by two upright funnels and a larger block-like bridge extended back by hangers for the aircraft to be launched by a catapult lying athwartships.

As with the other County Class cruisers, she was given four twin, high-angle 4" anti-aircraft mountings in place of the single 4" mountings

At a distance LONDON could be distinguished from the Colony class ships by the flush upper deck versus the lower after weather deck of the Colony Class.





HMS LONDON



It seems unlikely that LONDON ever put to sea with aircraft on board; war-time experience had shown that the aviation petrol was a hazard and the recovery of an aircraft at sea could be difficult and placed the ship in a possibly dangerous situation.

During World War II, LONDON served mainly in the North and South Atlantic until 1944 when she joined the East Indies Fleet based on Trincomalee.

Shortly after the War ended, she was reduced to reserve but in 1946 was brought forward for service in the Far East partly due to the high deckheads giving good habitability in the tropics and also due to the fact that, lying off one end of the Hong Kong New Territories frontier, her 8" guns could comfortably reach the entire length.

THE SHIPS COMPANY FOR THE 1947-49 COMMISSION.

The ships company for the 1947-49 commission was drawn from the Chatham Division. The officers down to and including Lieutenants had all seen service during the war, as had all the Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers. There was, therefore superb, practical experience and leadership available for Junior Officers and Ratings. Indeed, three of the Lieutenants had had their own commands and found it difficult to revert to watch-keeping.

There was, however, a shortage of manpower in the Royal Navy and LONDON had a reduced complement - for instance, only three of the main armament turrets could be manned.

LONDON was an extremely "happy" ship.

THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION IN CHINA IN 1949.

Fighting between China and Japan had commenced in July 1937 but war was not formally declared until 9th December 1941. By that time, China was divided into three zones;

Japanese Occupation Zone comprising nearly all the coast and a good part of the hinterland,

Nationalist Government Zone of the southern and eastern inland, and

Communist controlled zone of the north.

Although they were nominally allies against the Japanese, the nationalists led by Chiang Kai Shek were bitter enemies of the Communists led by Mao Tse Tung. After the surrender of the Japanese in late 1945, open warfare broke out between them as the Japanese withdrew and, by early 1948, despite the efforts of the Nationalists to hold northern China after effectively occupying it, the Communists marched southwards.

By mid April 1948, the Communists were a short distance from Nanking, which was the seat of the Nationalist Government and were building up forces to cross the Yangtze River. At that time, to demonstrate protection and endeavour to give safety and re-assurance to the many British and Commonwealth subjects and their Embassies in Shanghai and Nanking, it had been decided that the Royal Navy would station one large ship (a County Class cruiser) and two smaller ships at Shanghai and one small ship at Nanking.

DISPOSITION OF ROYAL NAVY SHIPS MID-APRIL, 1949.

On 17th April, LONDON sailed from Hong Kong for Shanghai to relieve SUSSEX, which had already left Shanghai. LONDON was due to arrive in Shanghai on 20th April and hold a St George's Day Ball on 21st. Lying at Shanghai were the frigates AMETHYST and BLACK SWAN. Lying at Nanking was the destroyer CONSORT.

The Naval Attaché at Nanking had advised that the Communist army intended to force a crossing of the Yangtze on 21st April and it had been decided that the Royal Navy ships should avoid any involvement. CONSORT had, however, been at Nanking for some time and was running short



of provisions, so it was planned that CONSORT would come down river to Shanghai on 20th April while, on the same day, AMETHYST went up to relieve her. Thus the river would be clear for the Communist army to cross on 21st April.

These ship movements had been agreed to by the Nationalist Government and had been publicly announced to the Communist authorities.

Much has been written about AMETHYST; here follow four accounts of the 20th and 21st April by personnel in LONDON. Written individually, there is some repetition and overlap but this only adds to the immediacy of each.

Captain D E Bromley-Martin was a Commander on the Staff of Vice-Admiral A C G Madden CD, CBE, both of whom were taking passage in LONDON and writes as follows; "On 20th April, HMS LONDON, flying the flag of Vice Admiral Madden, was approaching the mouth of the Yangtze River bound for Shanghai on a flag-showing visit.

During the forenoon, hands were busy preparing illuminating circuits. On receiving information that AMETHYST had come under unexpected, heavy and accurate artillery fire from the north bank of the Yangtze near Chingkiang, work was switched from the illuminating circuits to fusing 8" shells, the frigate BLACK SWAN was ordered to sail from Shanghai and join LONDON. Both ships proceeded up the Yangtze and anchored for the night off Kiangyin; this city, on the south bank was strongly held by the Nationalists and was about 30 miles downstream from AMETHYST. The Admiral was faced with an appalling problem. We could not do nothing to help, but to take a large ship upriver under the noses of clearly hostile shore batteries was asking for trouble. An expedition by ships boats up a narrow southern arm of the river was considered and rejected. No air support was available, there being no aircraft carrier on the station and the nearest strike aircraft were in Malaya.

The Admiral decided to weigh at 0930 on 21st April and to proceed upriver with BLACK SWAN in company at maximum safe speed, flying white flags as well as British colours and keeping all guns trained fore and aft. He hoped to reach AMETHYST in about 2 hours and escort her down stream.

It was a still, cloudless but misty morning with the great brown river looking at its most peaceful. Thick green reeds lined both shores and beyond them, one caught glimpses of the great earth dykes that aimed, not always successfully at keeping the Yangtze in its place. Junks and sampans were everywhere. The sun was breaking through the mist astern of us and there seemed complete silence except for the noise of the ship doing revolutions for 20 knots and her considerable wash.

We were still some way from the first battery that had fired on AMETHYST and although we felt properly apprehensive, it did not seem that anything could happen to disturb the peaceful scene. Something very soon did. I was standing on the starboard wing of the bridge, keeping a wary eye on the north bank when suddenly there was the most appalling clang and a jagged hole appeared in the bridge plating about 10 feet aft of me. I got the impression of a puff of smoke in the reeds 400 yards away before I dived behind the no doubt illusory shelter of the 8" director stalk. There were more clangs almost at once and what seemed to be an interminable wait while the 8" director and our 3 operational turrets trained on the beam. The shudder and noise of the first broadside and the darkening as the cloud of cordite smoke from A and B turrets gave us courage to look and see the effect of 8" shells at close range. It was certainly impressive, particularly when backed up by the 4" guns and the pom-poms.

Our problem was clearly greater than we had feared, for here were Communist batteries many miles downstream from the first that had fired on AMETHYST the day before. Moreover, they were clearly in no mood to respect white or British flags.



The hits had been fairly accurately grouped on or near the bridge structure and although they appeared to be 3" or below and had not detonated inside the ship, they were making things very untidy.

The Admiral wisely decided to establish a command post in the unmanned Y turret at the after end of the ship and with some relief I accompanied him there. It was not a very good command post because it lacked essential communication facilities but these I provided by going in person to the bridge and the Main Wireless Office (abreast the mainmast) from time to time. I was on my way forward when we came to a second battery and the previous pattern was repeated. A hail of accurate fire and a massive reply which, combined with our progress upstream provided relief and eventual silence from the shore.

It seems astonishing we only had lost 15 killed but blood was beginning to appear about the decks and everyone from the Admiral downwards was torn between the need to succour AMETHYST and the danger of being reduced to her condition.

We were now past Bate Point and halfway to her. We came to a third battery and, as before, suffered more damage and casualties before our return fire took effect. The 8" director circuits were cut and the turrets went into local control. We ploughed on and waited for the fourth battery. By this time the bridge was pretty adept at spotting that first tell-tale puff of smoke in the reeds - eerily silent because the shell arrived before the report. This time a shell detonated on or very near the compass platform. It killed one of the Chinese river pilots, mortally wounded the Navigating Officer, wounded the Captain and put the forward steering out of action.

The after steering position, under the Commander, took over and, unable to see ahead, endeavoured to control 10,000 tons doing 20 knots up a winding river less than a mile wide. We were still under fire so it was not a healthy place to stop or even slow down. The Admiral decided with reluctance that enough was enough and, in the face of the Communist attitude, he must not go on. He signalled to AMETHYST "Am sorry we cannot help you today. We shall keep trying. Stay where you are unless forced to move, in which case go upstream. Further instructions will follow."

The after steering position was told to turn the ship. Although firing had ceased, the process seemed interminable. The water was shallow. The whole hull shuddered. The Yangste boiled to a darker brown. We seemed to have chosen a place with no guns, or perhaps they were slow off the mark. The reeds along the bank seemed pretty inscrutable as they crept past the turning bow until, at last, we were pointing downstream. Forward steering was restored, the compass platform was cleaned up, revolutions for 20 knots were rung on and we approached our latest opponents with some trepidation. They were still there but we got past with more damage but no serious rise in casualties. And past the others as well until, in the early afternoon, an action dinner was laid on. I was sucking a welcome orange when it all started again and the orange rolled under a grating, never to be recovered in an edible condition. Clearly 'the Communist army was deploying very rapidly and I made a drawing later purporting to show LONDON under fire from a battery commanding her actual anchorage of the night before. BLACK SWAN follows astern. LONDON looks relatively undamaged but inside there were few electrical circuits left intact. There was, as I recall, one more engagement after this and then a most welcome peace until, in the evening, we arrived at Holts Wharf, Shanghai. Here an American hospital ship took our wounded and we landed and buried our dead. Immediate repairs were made and in a few days we were ready for sea. In the meantime, the Nationalist defence had collapsed and we steamed past the forts at Woosung knowing them to be occupied by the Communists. In the event, all was quiet and LONDON and BLACK SWAN, the last of a long succession of western warships to exhaust their crews in Shanghai for many years, passed unmolested to the open sea. LONDON was already near the end of her useful life; she was not repaired and steamed home to



be paid off and scrapped. AMETHYST remained captive in the Yangtze for over three gruelling months before breaking out and making her epic escape.

But that is another story."

Mr P Midgley, then a Chief Petty Officer Writer in LONDON recalls;

After we met CONSORT who had steamed down from Nanking and had been heavily shelled and damaged en route, she lay alongside us overnight.

I was informed that my Action Station was with the First Aid Party sited in the Pay Office in the Sick Bay Flat. The Party consisted of myself and two young writers (their first ship). Our only equipment was a first aid bag with a modicum of equipment.

On proceeding up the river next day, all scuttles had been closed and dead lights fastened; lighting was poor both in the Pay Office and the Sick Bay Flat - side lighting only; this situation lasted throughout.

My first intimation of action was the noise of intense gunfire which, from my experience of WW II made me think it was our own guns all opening up, with consequent vibration of the ship and falling fittings. I was not aware that we were being fired upon from the river bank, as there was no information of what was happening from the ships tannoy system or from the Pay Office telephone.

After some considerable time I heard from a sailor that the bridge had been hit. I proceeded alone to the Upper Deck to the bridge but on the way met a number of hands trying to get someone down a ladder and I assisted them in this, eventually getting the man, who turned out to be the mortally wounded Navigating Officer, Lt Cdr Grice-Hutchinson, into the Petty Officers mess.

Other personnel were now appearing in various states of injury and we assisted these people into the Sick Bay, which was rapidly filling. I spent some time with a Chief Mechanician who was seriously wounded in his abdomen and had to wait for up to ½ an hour for skilled medical attention. He required my sole attention until he could be stitched up. Skilled medical attention seemed to be short, but was probably at the Wardroom and Upper Deck First Aid Stations. The Sick Bay became congested and one section was curtained off to allow staff to operate. Eventually, the Sick Bay doors were locked owing to congestion. My party then attempted to deal with injured and shocked men appearing at the Sick Bay, until they could be admitted. We tried to make them as comfortable as possible and gave them re-assurance.

Much later, I heard from a passing rating that there had been extensive damage on the 4" gun deck, so I proceeded there. I came across about 10 men lying on stretcher beds in various states of serious injury and shock. All were fully clothed. The Padre, Rev Denlegh-Maxwell and I were the only ones in attendance and we did what we could to re-assure them and put blankets over them and offered them iced water. When the action had ceased, the Sick Bay personnel took over from us.

I did at one stage proceed to the bridge to look for injured men but this must have been much later than the shell hit as the injured and dead had been removed. The only impression I got was of intense activity to get the ship off the mud and under way again.

About half way through the action and after the bridge had been damaged, I saw a small body of men forcibly escorting a Chinese man in a soft hat along the Sick Bay Flat back to the bridge. I was told it was the surviving Chinese pilot who had panicked and absconded from the bridge to seek sanctuary in the Engine Room. He was probably in deep shock at the time as his associate pilot had been killed on the bridge alongside him.

I did not see much of the action drama and heard nothing from ships tannoy about developments



until nearly the end of the incident. Between intense firing, a deadly calm seemed to descend and most of my time was spent assisting and calming the wounded. An interesting point was that when I eventually went to the CPOs Mess for lunch, I did not hear anyone discussing the incident and it was almost as if it had all been part of the ships routine.

Overall, I was very impressed by the bearing, fortitude and bravery of all the ships company with whom I came into contact. I never heard any complaint of signs of panic; just a great deal of stoicism based on Naval training, but many of the ships company seemed very tired after the action, including myself.

Commander G Dalrymple was the Senior Midshipman and his Action Station was on the bridge. His Midshipmans' Journal is a useful source whence the track chart is taken and it gives a good indication of the difficult situation which all ships faced.

Firstly, a brief comment on an Australian Connection. The source of this is the report by the Commanding Officer SHOALHAVEN (HMAS SHOALHAVEN's minute SH/18/49 of 1st May, 1949 to The Secretary, Navy Board, Melbourne. The relevant facts are;

SHOALHAVEN arrived in Shanghai on 24th March and was due to relieve CONSORT at Nanking on 12th April. This was postponed owing to the possibility of the Communists crossing the Yangtze at that time.

AMETHYST arrived in Shanghai on 16th April when the decision was made that she would proceed to Nanking on 20th April and SHOALHAVEN would remain in Shanghai.

She finally left on 25th April.

So SHOALHAVEN came very close to being the focus of the whole operation. Also, SHOALHAVEN's doctor, Surg Lt N S Chalk transferred to LONDON, via BLACK SWAN, to help with CONSORT wounded and then remained in LONDON. He was certainly needed.

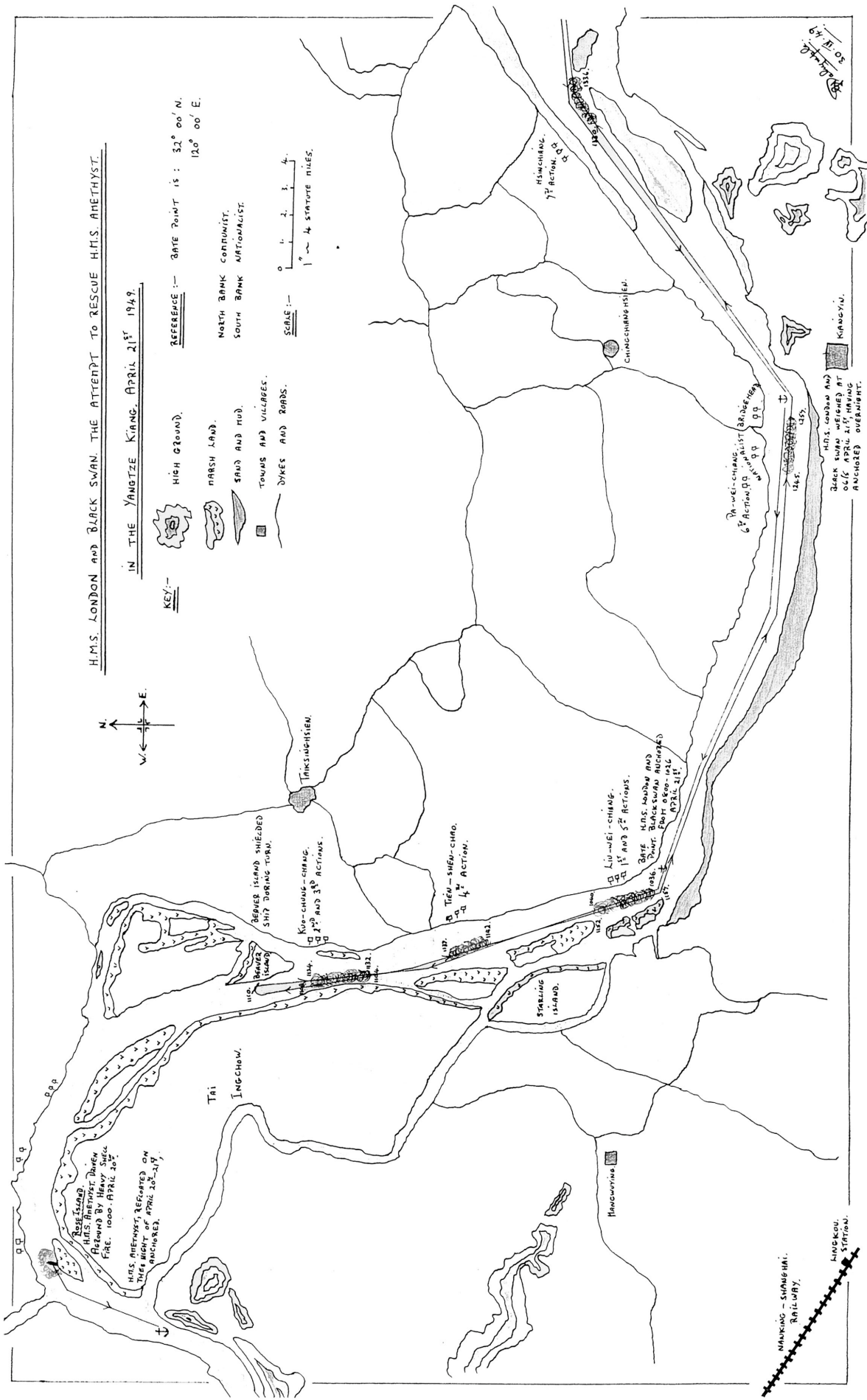
On 21st April, I went on watch on the bridge at 0400. Little did I know that, apart from running a few duty trips through the ship, I would be there until 1830, when we secured alongside at Holts' Wharf at Shanghai.

All was calm and quiet for the first hour as we lay in the great, fast flowing river - then much noise and activity from both banks. At this point, Kiangyin, the Nationalists still had a bridgehead on the north bank. I was sent to call Captain Cazalet and subsequently, he, Admiral Madden (FO2, FES) and Cdr Bromley-Martin held a staff meeting on the bridge; the decision was made to move up river. At 0615, we weighed and, with BLACK SWAN astern, proceeded and anchored off Bate Point at 0800. Overnight, the Admiralty had laid down the Rules of Engagement - we were only to open fire when engaged by the Communists. The ship was at Action Stations and a minimum number of personnel were to be in exposed positions (apart from shellfire, AMETHYST had reported heavy strafing by small arms fire). So the Captain's Secretary, whose normal job would be to keep the action narrative, was sent below and Mid Lorrimer and I were given that job.

At 1026, we weighed again and started up river, nervously confident that with flags flying we would be allowed to proceed. Ten minutes later we came under fire and realised our confidence was misplaced. This was a four minute action without much damage. On the flag deck, the Chief Yeoman was slightly wounded.

There were two Chinese pilots on board; one on the bridge and one in reserve in the Wardroom. Also on board was Captain Sudbury, a former Yangtze pilot. Charts were not a lot of use in the river. Captain Sudbury advised the Captain that the Japanese had built gun emplacements on the north bank connected by dirt tracks along which self-propelled guns were seen moving past the ship. Admiral Madden refused permission to engage them. Captain Sudbury was sent below





decks; a wise decision.

Twenty-four minutes after the first action, we came under heavy fire. My head was inside the chart table at the after end of the compass platform writing in the narrative when I heard a shout, turned and saw the Captain standing between the Chinese pilot and the Navigating Officer. Next, I woke up! There was no gunfire but the compass platform was not a good place. Later I learned that in the same engagement the 8" Director had been hit and the main armament was in local control. The Chinese pilot was dead, the Navigator was mortally wounded and the Captain was holding his lower back and thighs saying "Can someone help me". Mid Lorrimer was unconscious. No one else was there and I tried to respond. I looked forward and saw we were heading for the north bank. I called the Lower Steering Position and discovered the After Conning Position had taken over. Told to go there, I crossed the 4" gun deck (also not a good place) and up behind the after funnel. The Commander was yelling down a sound powered phone probably telling Lt Stewart to go Full Astern. I was told to return to the bridge and inform the Captain "The Commander has the ship". Not that he could see where he was going! Back to the bridge across the 4" gun deck where the guns crews were frantically closing up on the port mountings. The bridge was now a scene of much activity; Captain Sudbury, a watchkeeper Lt and a First Aid Party were there. The ship was still heading for the shore with the helm hard a-starboard and engines full astern.

The ship was heeling to starboard and we ran into the mud. After a pause, we suddenly moved astern, the bow was caught by the current and we swung round, pointing down river. Fortunately, we had turned while Beaver Island sheltered us from the Chinese batteries.

The bridge took control again and the Captain put control in the hands of Captain Sudbury, a true Master Mariner, later awarded a well-deserved OBE. I returned to tell the Commander that the bridge was back in control; he came to the bridge and suggested that the Captain seek medical attention but the Captain would not leave until after the final action.

We were 19 miles from AMETHYST when we turned.

Coming from behind Beaver Island, we ran into another heavy engagement from the same battery that had forced the turn. After this, the Captain sent me to the Sick Bay to find out how they were coping; this was yet another shock for a seven shillings and sixpence a day midshipman! I stayed there during another five minute engagement, talking to a wounded Royal Marine. I returned to the bridge and reported to the Captain, then started sorting out the action narrative with Mid Lorrimer. A few minutes later, we were back where the first action had taken place for a repeat dose as action number five, hoping it would be the last.

Next, I was sent to find the second Chinese pilot in the Wardroom, along the main deck through First Aid and Damage Control Parties struggling in semi-darkness. He was not there (I later learned he had taken refuge in the After Engine Room) and as all was quiet decided to return to the bridge along the Upper Deck. The ship was doing at least 20 knots; suddenly the stern dipped and I was looking **UP** at the stern wave. It must have been a little shallow!

Back on the bridge it was quiet until an hour after the fifth action when we were nearly back to where we had anchored overnight and a new battery opened up and we had a twelve-minute engagement. The Nationalist bridgehead on the north bank joined in. Half an hour later we went to Relaxed Action Stations and some Action Messing food was distributed but a little later there was a final action.

So back to Shanghai, just a few weeks before it was finally occupied by the Communists. A city we had all come to know well. On this, our final visit, we handed our seriously wounded to a US Hospital Ship, buried our dead and had essential repairs done - plates welded over the holes, quite a few of which were near the waterline, electric cables repaired. Our 'LOVELY LONDON'



had come through the war unscathed only to become a victim of a foreign civil war.

We had been a large target, nearly 200m long, 6m high at ranges of 1 to 2 km. Fire had been concentrated on the fore part of the ship and as we were the main target, BLACK SWAN had escaped damage. Most damage was sustained on the way down river; there were 23 holes in the port side below the Upper Deck, mostly caused by 105 mm HE shells and 37 mm armour piercing anti-tank shells. By the end of the day we had only X turret, the 4" guns in local control and 50% of the close range armament.

To finish my story;

- In Shanghai we welcomed on board a number of AMETHYST Ships Company who had got ashore and come by train. We called them the 'Overlanders'.
- It was the greatest moment for us when, just before we sailed for UK from Singapore, AMETHYST escaped.
- Lastly, a few years later, I saw AMETHYST alongside at Lisahally, at Londonderry in Northern Ireland - deserted and waiting to be scrapped. A sad ending.

Commander N S Stewart was a Lieutenant (E) watchkeeping officer in LONDON.

During the forenoon watch on 20th April, we were approaching the Yangtze bar at 16 knots on one boiler room with the second boiler room being flashed up for navigation in confined waters when the signal from AMETHYST that she had been fired on was received. Speed was increased to 25 knots and as we crossed the bar, we touched the bottom. Both forward turbo generators tripped with condensers full of mud and, standing on the quarterdeck, I could see the stern wave higher than the deck which was quite something for a County Class cruiser with 17 ft freeboard. We picked up BLACK SWAN, two Chinese pilots and a British Huangpo pilot off Woosung and steamed 60 miles up the Yangtze before anchoring for the night with BLACK SWAN alongside to port and CONSORT to starboard.

CONSORT had been badly shot up and had 10 dead and 30 wounded, including the Captain. LONDON engineering staff spent the night giving assistance to patch up CONSORT.

At 0615, we weighed and went up river with BLACK SWAN. CONSORT went to Shanghai; her ships company badly wanted to come with us but common-sense said no, she was steering from aft and her electrical system was badly damaged. Before we set off, the ship went to action stations and, as Action Engineer Officer of the Watch, my place was in the Forward Engine Room. We steamed slowly for an hour and then anchored at Immediate Notice. At 1030 we set off again at 20 knots and quite soon after were fired on. In the Engine Room, the thud of shells arriving could be heard but blotted out by the noise of our 8" and 4" guns and close range armament. The shudder of the main armament brought the usual snow-storm of asbestos lagging. There were a few clangs as shells hit the 4" armour plate - a most re-assuring sound.

The first I knew that the bridge had been hit and the Commander had taken over was when summoned to the telephone cubicle and told by the Commander to go Full Astern on all engines. Utterly astonished, I gave the order and passed it to the Senior Engineer in the After Engine Room. I noticed the helm repeat indicator showed 35° to starboard. Quite shortly after this, I felt the ship gently but firmly check its way. The Chief ERA and I exchanged glances; we knew the ship had run aground. It was not a happy moment.

But a little later, further engine orders showed we were afloat. Probably the fact we were turning and with the wash of the propellers going astern, together got the ship off the mud. We knew we had completed the turn because the clangs on the ship side armour were now on the port side.

There were no problems with the machinery during the action and at about 1600 I was relieved as EOOW and went to see if I could help with Damage Control - and found myself up to my



chest in water trying to staunch a hole in the ships side. After that I went forward to check that a fire in the paint locker up forward was out and passing through the port hangar saw our 13 dead laid out. Besides structural damage, the electrical systems had suffered badly and emergency cables were strung everywhere between decks.

Needless to say we never held our Ball but spent 5 days at Holts Wharf having 1" plates welded over the holes and electric cable repaired so we could close the watertight doors and hatches. All the armament was made operative.

BLACK SWAN, although fired on was not hit.

THE AFTERMATH.

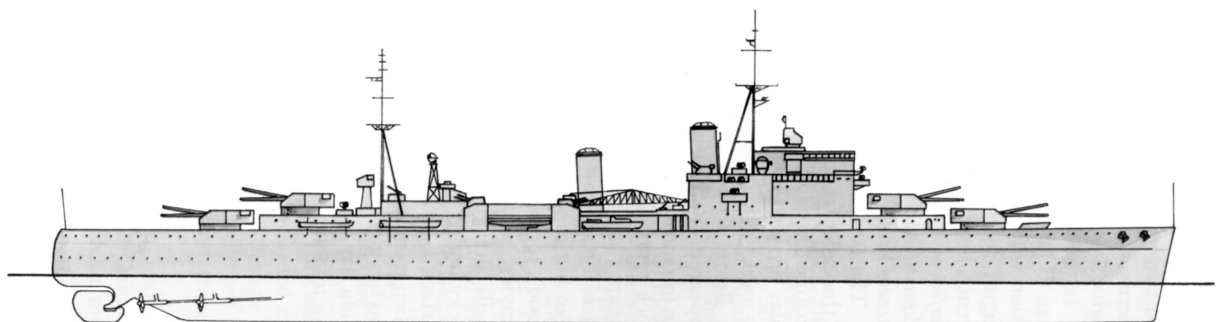
LONDON had been under fire for 48 minutes in an overall period of 3 hours. We had suffered 13 dead, 14 seriously wounded (of whom 2 died later) and 45 less seriously wounded. The ship had fired 155 rounds of 8", 449 rounds of 4" and 2625 round of close range ammunition. Casualties were mainly suffered on the 4" gun deck where the ammunition numbers were in the open. Our dead were buried in Shanghai Hung Au Christian cemetery, now built over by towers of workers flats.

It caused much heartache when it was decided to scrap LONDON. We were proud of our ship and her fine looks and she was a very "happy" ship. From an engineers point of view, she steamed well and a little later we did a trouble-free Full Power Trial, reaching 31½ knots at 16,500 tons displacement.

No one knew or knows why the Communists opened fire on AMETHYST and us, but the popular theory was that the local army commander made a mistake and was told to get out of the matter as best he could. As is well known, after much prevarication, AMETHYST escaped after over 3 months detention.

The Yangste Incident was a minor action of the sort the Royal Navy had been involved in many times over the centuries. And it seems to have been about the last of its sort. Long may it stay so.

But each year, as near as possible to 21st April, the HMS LONDON Association meets either in Chatham or Portsmouth to recall our happy ship, remember our dead and those who have passed away and enjoy the companionship of those who attend.



自由西報
(自由西報)
報

China Daily Tribune

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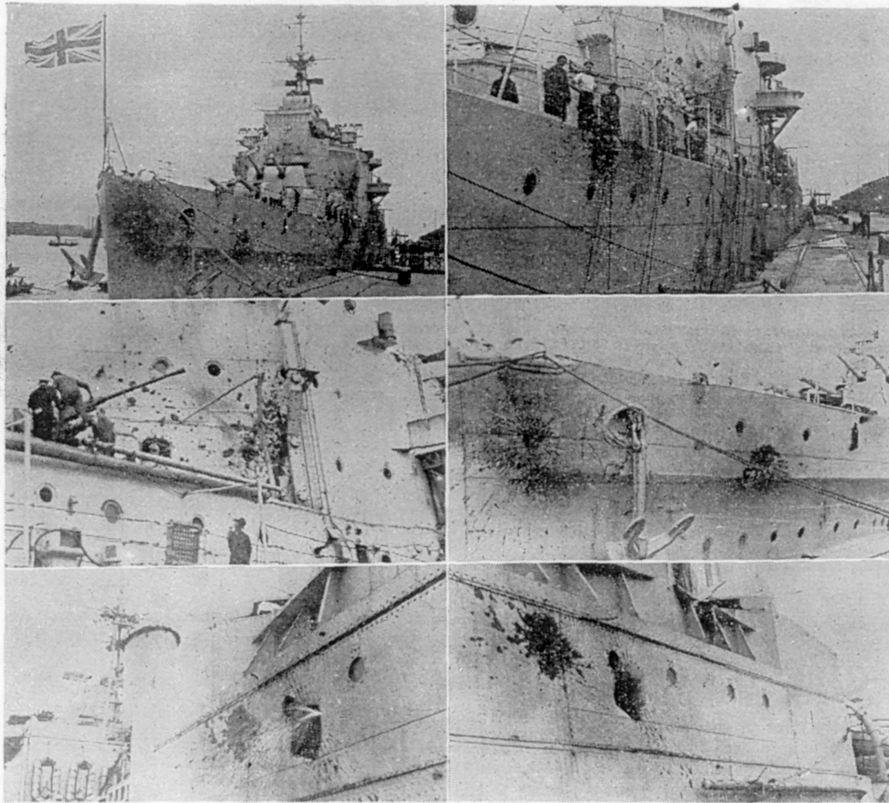
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H.M.S. LONDON NOW IN SHANGHAI AFTER
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MACHINERY ARRANGEMENTS

Boiler Pressure: 250 psi (17.6 kg/cm²)

Shaft Horse Power: 80,000 (60,000 kw)
For'd Turbo

Turbo-driven: Turbo generators
Main Feed Pumps
Extraction pumps
Main circulators

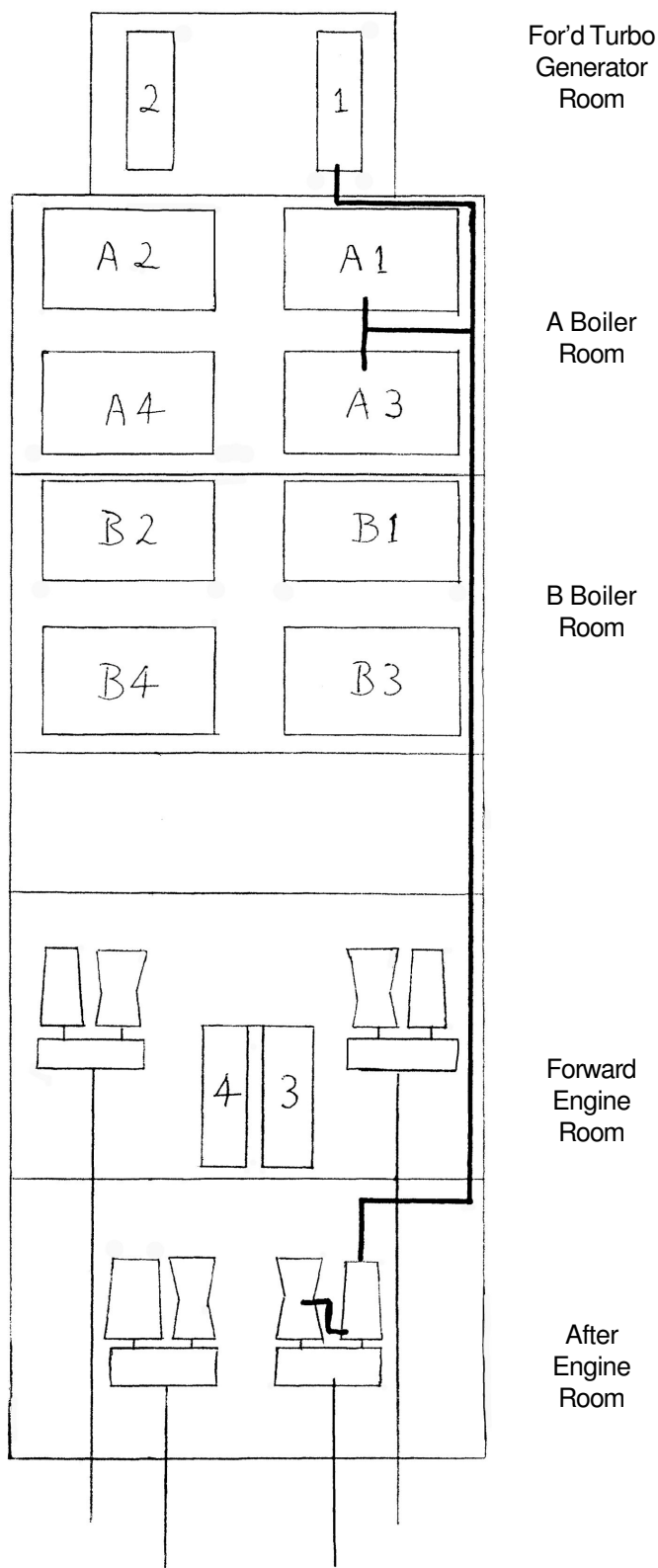
All other auxiliaries reciprocating.

A1 and A2 boilers supplied steam to:

- No1 Turbo generator
- Starboard Inner Main Engine
- Associated auxiliaries

This constituted a unit of machinery.

Cross connections enabled any machinery to be supplied from any pair of boilers.



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