

1907

HMS Challenger

January 2nd to 8th

At Fremantle

January 5th

Perth races – Family. Attended Perth races, and having complimentary tickets, lunched with the Committee. There were a few bookmakers, but most of the business is done in the Totalisator. I had a small bet on each race for a place, and each time my horse was nearly last, so this, my first experience backing horses, was not much of a success, although it afforded me some excitement. There was a great demonstration of bad feeling, shown to the winner of the cup, the public at one time assuming a threatening attitude and accompanied by a great deal of hissing and booing. This was due to some law in the handicapping I believe, which might have turned out very seriously for those responsible. In the evening Mr Felix Coule came to dine with me on board. He married my cousin Mary Bird (daughter of Mr F Bird of Albany. He is a solicitor and barrister and practises at Kalgoorlie. They were married about 10 years ago I find.

January 8th to 15th

Passage to Singapore

January 15th to 22nd

At Singapore

January 19th

Admirals. The 'Hermes', flagship of the East Indies Station (Vice Admiral Sir E Poe) arrived today, so that we have now three Admirals. They are to meet together today to discuss matters concerning the disposition of the three fleets in the event of war, and this is the main object of our visit here.

January 22nd to 31st

Passage to the Fremantle

January 31st to 13th February

At Fremantle

January 31st

Cousins. I received a visit from Harold Bird for tea and also his brother Bruce, whom I had not yet met. He has had a varied career, having served in the Australian Light Horse in the South African War and for some time he was in the back country of Western Australia farming.

February 1st

Scandal about Lieutenant Foote. About 1:00 AM I was roused out by the 1st Lieutenant, who told me that two detectives were on the jetty with a prisoner 'Lieutenant Foote' of the 'Encounter'. It appears that when we left Fremantle on January 8th, he was adrift from his ship which was delayed sailing on that account. It subsequently transpired that he had made away with about 92 pounds belonging to the ship's canteen with which he had been entrusted. He went ashore on January the 9th with a view of trying to borrow money to replace what he had misappropriated, but finding he could not do so, he deserted and went few miles up country, where he adopted a workman's rig and obtained a job filling trucks with ballast. This proved too hard for him, and he then got work in a vineyard. After being away for three weeks, he apparently went to Perth to see a doctor where he was arrested, a warrant having been issued for his apprehension before his ship left. He was placed under close arrest in a cabin pending his trial by court martial. The charge against him is a most disgraceful one and it is particularly so for a man of his position and more especially as he has a wife and two children at home!

February 1st to 12th

Leave.

February 2nd to 5th

Visit to Kalgoorlie

February 4th

Golden Horseshoe Mine. Went down to the Golden Horseshoe mine which is very rich and in about ten years has paid about 2.25 million in dividends. We went down about 1300 feet in the cage, an experience I have never made before. It is lowered very fast and it is only a few seconds before we reached the bottom. We then came up again to the 700 foot level and walked about one of the passages where we saw the load being blasted and then we climbed up a connecting passage with the 600 foot level. We had to crawl about through holes and up vertical ladders which Coule did not at all appreciate and he was glad when we reached the surface.

February 8th

Lieutenant Foote Court Martial. A Court Martial assembled today for the trial of lieutenant Foote on a charge of misappropriation and desertion. It was a very disgraceful case and he was found guilty and adjudged to be imprisoned for six months with hard labour, at the expiration there of to be dismissed from HM service with disgrace. No sympathy is left for him for he has brought a stigma on the whole service, but everyone is very sorry for his wife and children. It is considered that he got off very lightly, but the sentence is a very terrible one as he becomes a social outcast.

February 13th to 18th

Passage to Hobart

February 18th to March 27th

At Hobart

March 11th

Lieutenant Foote. Lieutenant Foote was discharged to the 'Cambrian' today for passage to Sydney, where he goes to Darlinghurst prison.

March 20th

Port Arthur. We found Port Arthur a pretty spot, situated on Opossum Bay at the head of a completely landlocked harbour. The settlement now contains only about 100 people, but the extensive ruins tell their own tale. We first visited the ruined church, a substantial building of stone erected by the prisoners. Adjoining is a house which I suppose to be originally occupied by the chaplain. Both have been destroyed by fire, and nothing but the bare walls remain. On the opposite shore of the Bay are the ruins of the new prison. The walls are standing, and also some of the cells, which, however, are partially destroyed. They seemed smaller than those nowadays, but as the prisoners were always employed in the open during the day, I suppose they would consider large enough. The Watch Tower buildings bear the date 1835, the settlement was first formed in 1831. On the Bay is a tiny island called the 'Isle of the Dead', in which about 2000 convicts are said to have been buried. We also visited the old prison, which, like all other the other buildings, has been burnt out, and it is said that in all cases this was purposely done in the hope of removing all traces of their former usage. It has done good though, for the skeleton remains are even more conspicuous. It is sad to contemplate the amount of pent up human misery which once existed here. *[note – it seems that the Port Arthur complex was burnt in a bushfire in 1895. Burning leaves fell on the shingle roofs due to the high winds, setting fire to all of the buildings and leaving only the walls.]*



The bushfire burning behind Port Arthur which subsequently set fire to the buildings destroying them all.

March 27th to 30th

Passage to Sydney

March 30th to June 20th

At Sydney

May 24th

Empire Day. Celebrated ashore by display of bunting and more or less a general holiday. We dressed ship for the occasion and in the evening illuminated ship. She looked very striking, the hull, the masts, funnels, bridge, etc, being outlined by about 800 lights and a wallaby or kangaroo in lights triced up at the main mast.

June 19th

My 35th birthday

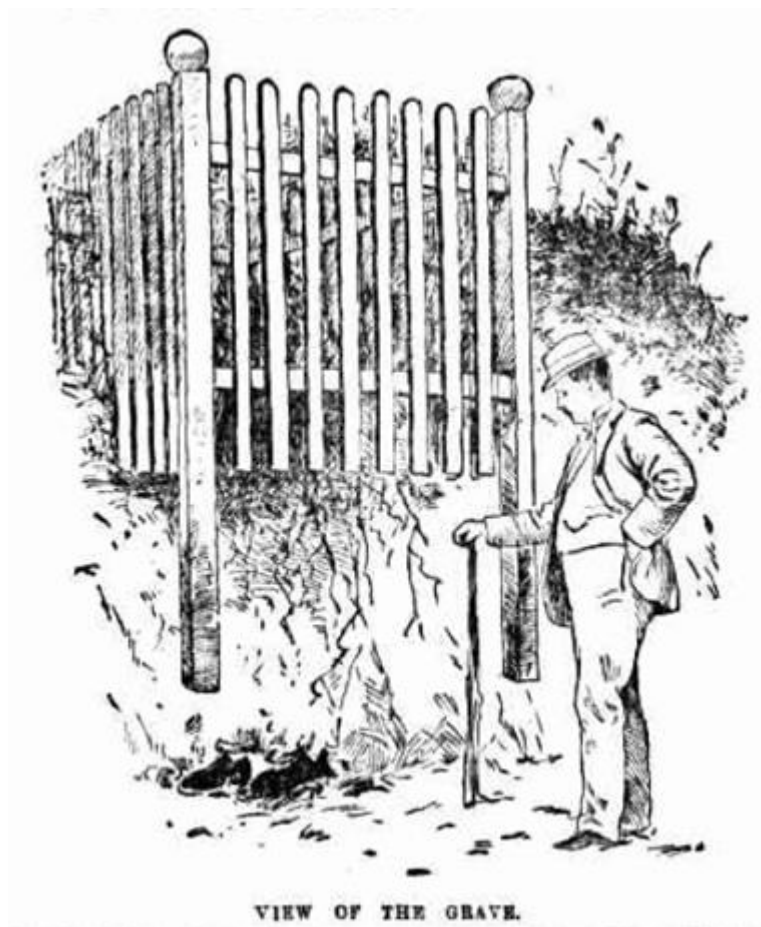
June 20th to 25th

Passage to Melbourne

June 20th to 21st

In Jervis Bay. Anchored in Jarvis Bay, a very spacious harbour, but rather exposed. Anchored off the settlement called Huskisson in the evening. I was rather troubled through the gig, which I had sent ashore for sand being left high and dry on the beach and the crew unable to launch her because of the surf. This through the fault of her

coxswain, a man of little sense. It necessitated my sending in a cutter's crew to lend a hand and they returned without mishap, much to my relief. The beach is dangerous at times and some men in the 'Orlando' lost their lives near the spot where our gig was, through the boat capsizing. One of them was buried in the sand and the coffin was twice washed out in bad weather. It was afterwards deposited further up the beach, and the cross now marks the spot. Huskisson is only a small hamlet and so there is no inducement to land. [note – the 'Orlando' was in Jervis Bay in April 1892 when one of the boats capsized, Ordinary Seaman C Johnson, was drowned as reported in the Sydney Morning Herald or Robert Johnson as it says on the gravestone.]



Robert Johnson's grave exposed by the high tides.



And his grave further up the beach where he was laid to rest in 1900

[note – CT's grandson, CST was seconded to the Australian Navy and based at Jervis Bay between 1994 and 1997.]

June 25th to July 8th

At Melbourne

July 7th

City of Melbourne. It is a beautiful city but very American looking and somewhat monotonous through being so rectangular and the streets so straight. Some of the buildings are very fine and Collins Square quite one of the finest streets I have seen.



July 8th to 10th

Passage to Adelaide

July 10th to 27th

Adelaide

July 12th

Wireless. We established another record in wireless telegraphy in having gained communication with the 'Powerful' at Sydney, a distance of over 700 miles overland, which really is a great achievement.

July 12th

Foxes. There are any amount of foxes in the neighbourhood, but owing to the wire employed everywhere, they are not hunted, but shot as vermin. Two were introduced into Victoria a few years ago and they have now overrun the country and commit great depredations. *[note – European red foxes were introduced to Australia from about the 1850s as recreation – the wealthy wanted to recreate fox-hunting as in Britain!]*

July 23rd

Ship's dance. Preparing for the dance all day. This took place at 8:30 PM, the guest being brought from Adelaide by special train right alongside the ship, a most convenient arrangement. HE, the Governor and the Lady le Hunte came. HE Governor was received with a guard and the usual ceremony and Lady le Hunte was presented with a bouquet and also Mrs Bridson from the Captain and Officers. The dance was a huge success. The upper deck and quarterdeck well decorated with flags etc, and brilliantly lit by electric lamps. Our band provided the music and did excellent work. Supper for the vice regal party in the Captain's cabin and refreshments in the Wardroom. The only pity was it was too short for we had to finish at 12:15 because of the special train. The ladies thoroughly enjoyed themselves and as the train left we fired Very's lights to keep them amused and sang parting songs. It was a great novelty to most of the people as it was the first ship's dance many of them had been too.

July 27th of 31st

Passage to Sydney

July 31st to August 2nd

At Sydney

August the 2nd to 4th

Passage to Brisbane

August 4th to 20th

At Brisbane

August 9th

Oliver's Engagement. Heard by the Mail today of the engagement of my brother Oliver to Miss Mildred Corbett, daughter of the late Mr JE Corbett of Leamington, which pleased me very much.

August 12th

City of Brisbane. Had look around the city in the afternoon. It lies on both sides of the Brisbane River, across which is a fine iron bridge, replacing one which was washed away by a 'freshet' [*note – a flooded river from melted snow or heavy rain*] which also deposited the Gunboat 'Paluma' in the Botanical Gardens! The curious thing about this latter was that another 'freshet' came and washed her back into the river again. The Parliament House, Government buildings and Art Gallery are the principal structures of importance. The Queensland Club, of which we are members, is also a handsome building. The Botanical Gardens opposite which we are moored, are very pretty and exceedingly tastefully laid out. There is an excellent system of electric trams, said to be best managed in Australia.



HMS Paluma in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens after the flood of the Brisbane River in February 1893, this was actually one of three ships that ended up in the Botanic Gardens.

August 20th to 21st

Passage to Sydney

August 21st to September 9th

At Sydney

September 9th to 14th

Passage to Auckland

September 14th to October 21st

At Auckland

October 21st to 23rd

Passage to Wellington

October 23rd to November 2nd

At Wellington

October 26th

Dominion Day. Today has been fixed for the reading of the Proclamation raising New Zealand from a colony to the dignity of a Dominion. There seems to be a good deal of interest evoked locally, but in the other parts of the country the matter seems to have been treated almost with indifference. At 11:00 AM. Captain Bridson and myself were invited to attend at the reading of the Proclamation from the steps of Parliament Buildings, rig full dress. The ceremony was very short. HE, the Governor (Lord Plunkett) read a message from HM the King, wishing prosperity to the new Dominion and the Premier, Sir Joseph Ward, read the Proclamation. There was a fair crowd assembled in front of the buildings, who received it with acclamation, and then dispersed. After lunch, the Captain and myself drove to Newton Park – rig full dress - wither our men about 170 strong had preceded us. There were about 1000 troops drawn up on the ground taking part in the review. Soon after the arrival of the Governor, our men marched past to the strains of ‘Life on the Ocean Wave’ played by our band and they were received with loud cheers. The field gun created quite a sensation. On our return to Wellington, we shifted shifted into ‘frock coats’ and went to a garden party and reception at Government House where there were crowds of people. After dark, the public buildings were illuminated and quite the best of the illuminations was the ‘Challenger’ which was outlined by over 800 lamps. Dominion Day for me was a very busy one and for most of us, and I was not sorry when it was all over.



Reading of the Proclamation of Dominion 26th September 1907 Wellington. CT is standing at the top of the steps on the right.



Dominion Day, Newtown Park, Wellington, 26 September 1907. During the military

inspection. Shows the gun from the HMS 'Challenger'. Photograph taken by Joseph Zachariah.

October 28th

Dominion? I do not think the people themselves care a rap for the new distinction, in fact, many would prefer the old honourable title of 'colony'. I cannot see what difference it makes, except I understand now the Governor's wife is entitled to be styled 'Her Excellency'!

November 2nd to 4th

Passage to Auckland

November 4th to 17th

At Auckland

November 17th to 21st

Passage to Fiji

November 21st to 28th

At Fiji

November 24th

The Governor. Landed in the afternoon to write my name in the Governor's book. Sir Everard in Thurn, who is High Commissioner of the Pacific, is to take passage in the 'Challenger' to the New Hebrides to proclaim the Anglo-French Convention.

November 28th to 30th

Passage to New Hebrides [note – now Vanuatu]

November 30th to December 11th

At Vila, New Hebrides

December 2nd

Anglo-French Convention. Today being fixed for the reading of the Proclamation concerning the convention entered into between France and England for the better government of the New Hebrides groups of islands. We dressed the ship at 8:00 AM. After breakfast, we landed our band and a guard of honour. The 'Kersaint' [note - a French battleship] also landed a guard. We were obliged to limit our guard to 40 men only, as the 'Kersaint' could only land that number. She is a small ship, and we heard the French Governor was rather annoyed at seeing such a large ship as the 'Challenger' appear on the scene and there's no doubt that our importance was enhanced in the eyes of the natives through this. The gist of the proclamation was that the two nations have decided to exercise joint control of the islands with a view to advancing trade, through having a proper system of government, and also the contentment and peace of the natives.

December 11th to 13th

Passage to Fiji

December 13th to 15th

At Fiji

December 15th to 19th

Passage to Auckland

December 27th to of January 9th

In Calliope Dock, Auckland

December 31st

Review of the year. The past year has been full over worries for me, chiefly on account of the colonial scheme, which makes it a matter of extreme difficulty to keep things up to the mark, as in an ordinary man-of-war. We are expected to carry out drills, etc, in the same way as other ships and this has been done, and I think efficiently. Owing to the large number of men constantly under training, it is sometimes impossible to keep pace with refitting. Whenever we arrive anywhere a number of men go on 14 days leave (to which they are entitled once a year), and being their own country, prodigious numbers go ashore every night, leaving me short handed in the morning, besides which I have parents letters etc to deal with which often occasion a lot of worry. Altogether, I am thankful that the year has concluded, with my being able to 'keep my end up' and that of the ship.