

1895

HMS Grafton

January 5th to 7th

At Warwick. On arrival at Warwick station found Walter, Lucy and Ida to meet me. The telegram had roused it out all at home and by great exertions they managed to get to the station in time. Found mother looking slightly ill and upon further questioning, I found she had been very ill, about the same time that I was, with a broken blood vessel in the nose causing great loss of blood. As they did not know that I had been ill, we were both in ignorance mutually, which perhaps was a good thing. My appearance with a beard caused great amusement. I went up to Saint Mary's Church with Mother and Walter and saw the new pavement and altar rail in the Chancel, put there as a memorial to our dear late Father [note – *John Tibbits M.D. died May 1891*]. It is certainly very beautiful, and with the reredos it made the Chancel look very fine.

[The following was noted by Tim Clark, St Mary's church historian - The chancel altar rails and sanctuary marble pavement were installed in 1894 in memory of John Tibbits, died 24 May 1891. The rails are made of alabaster and are by Bridgeman of Lichfield to a design by Chetwin, who was the church's architect at the time.]



(c) St Mary's Church, Warwick

January 9th

Medical Board. We [note - with Mr Broarch] preceded by bus to the Medical Department of the Admiralty where I saw the Director General (Doctor Dick) and I told him about my recent illness with a view to avoid being sent to a malarious climate

again. Afterwards I went to see Mr. Brooks, secretary to Lord Walter Kerr, who told me he would try to get me a home appointment

January 19th

HMS Grafton Payoff. Lord C Beresford arrived about 9:30 AM and the men were paid by about 11:00 AM. I was told off to take all the Plymouth men down by special train, having two Warrant Officers also to assist. There was a saloon carriage for the Officers. We eventually arrived at Devonport station about 6:30 PM and I found that there was a large crowd of relations of the men assembled outside the station and keeping order was out of the question. I managed to get a few men together, however in these I marched through the rain to the RN barracks. Luckily the remainder, except two turned up later and having duly reported them, they were given their liberty tickets and went on leave. I was very glad to see the last of them for they were rather a trouble.

January 20th to February 28th

On leave in Warwick.

January 29th

Call on Mrs Morley. Called on Mrs Morley at Leycester Hospital and had tea. Minnie [*note - Morley?*] showed me over the house, which is the most quaint old place I have ever seen. The exterior in the quadrangle is beautiful enough, but the interior more so. I saw the old minstrel gallery which used to open into the hall and is a beautiful specimen of old oak carving.



[note – CT's son, CTB Tibbits was made Master of the Lord Leycester Hospital 6 months before he died in]

January 31st

Farewell to Walter. To my great regret to Walter left for the Curragh (from Milton) in the evening. As he will be going to India soon, I was especially sorry for we may not meet again for some years. After seeing him off with Jack, I went to the Saint Nicholas' Parish rooms to recite, at the request of Hamilton *[note - the vicar]*, "The Yarn of the Nancy Bell" *[note – a humorous poem written in 1866 about a shipwrecked sailor eating his shipmates!]* to a very disorderly audience. The programme was decidedly 'Tibbitian'!

January 4th

Aunt Jessie in the afternoon? Aunt Jessie (nee Bird?) arrived from London on a short visit. *[The following was added by the author in January 1940]*. Aunt Jessie married Nelson Ward, son of Horatia, Admiral Lord Nelson's daughter.

February 22nd

Woodyat. Had a yarn with Woodyat in the North Signal Box. *[note - whilst I was on exchange Service, I had an AB Woodyat on my staff at the Royal Australian Naval School of Survivability and Ship Safety at HMAS Creswell in 1995. It appears that his great, great grandfather was an engineer driver in Warwick at the time - is this the same person? Note from my father (CST)]*

February 26th

Appointment at HMS Minotaur. I was surprised to receive my appointment in the morning to HMS Minotaur, Portland. She is at present an overflow ship for boys from the other training ships and is temporarily attached to the 'Boscowan'. I was at first disappointed as I wanted to go to the 'Wanderer' but as events turned out I found she is very good billet to have.

February 27th

Joining instructions. I sent a telegram to the 'Minotaur' in the forenoon asking when to join as no date was stated in my appointment and received a reply to join 'at once' so started getting my gear together.

HMS Minotaur

February 28th

Joined HMS Minotaur. *[note - HMS Minotaur was built by the Thames Ironworks and was completed on 19th December 1868. She was of 10,690 tons and was the longest single screw warship ever built. She was on with 17 x 9 inch MLR, two x 20pdr guns and a max of 58 revs achieved 14 knots. She was sold in 1922 for scrap, 61 years after the laying of her keel.]*



March 6th

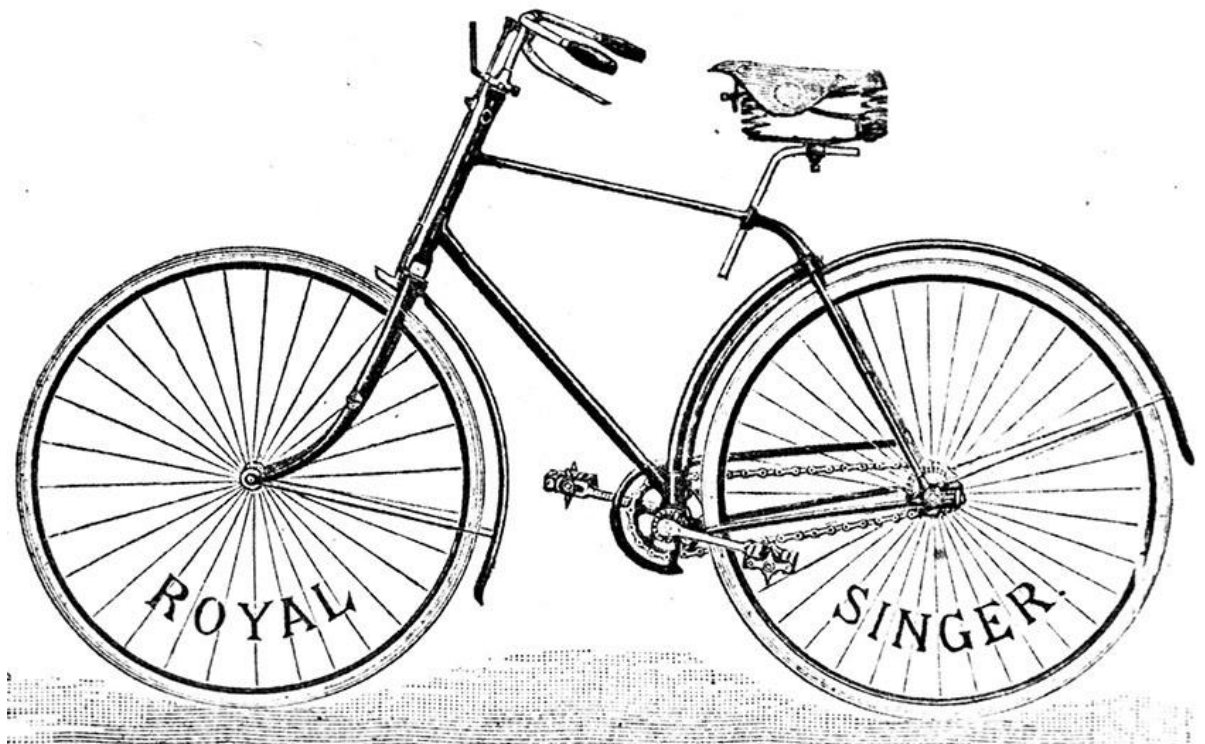
Punishment. A boy named Short, hailing from Warwick, today received 24 cuts from the birch for insubordination and threatening language, etc, to Wilkin [note - Lieutenant DSO]. In addition he got 42 days hard labour. [note - the following noted by the author January 1940.] Would seem a savage punishment now a days!!

March 11th

Eclipse of the Moon. Turned out about 1:00 AM to see the eclipse of the moon. The night being exceptionally clear, I had a splendid view of the phenomenon which was intensely interesting. I saw the first contact of the penumbra and also the eclipse of totality but did not wait for the last of the penumbra. I also saw an occultation with a star and the moon very clearly.

March 16th

Bicycle arrived. My bicycle arrived. It's one I bought from Jack for £8.00, Singer's make with cushion tyres and is a very substantial machine [note - weighing about 56 lbs].



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See also SINGER & Co.'s Illustrated Catalogue.

Note our New Address.

[Note – from editor (CST). Life in HMS Minotaur appears to have been reasonably easy. Much of the narrative of his time on board is taken up with the bicycle rides that he undertook on an almost daily basis. At the end of each month there is a summary of journeys undertaken and mileage achieved, much of which is of little interest within the context of this edition, some rides will, for illustrative purposes, be included as will one or two of the monthly summaries.]

3rd of April

Maiden Castle. Rode to Maiden Castle, which lies about 1.55 miles on the Weymouth side of Dorchester and crowns the summit of a hill. It is about the finest specimen in this country of an ancient earthworks and is supposed to have been a British settlement. It consists of five or six ditches, one outside the other with entrances. It is elliptical in form, the interior space being 760 yards long and 275 yards broad, and the area within is about 45 acres. Some of the ditches are very deep, the main ramparts in places measuring 60 foot from top to bottom. The name castle is rather misleading, for it is really nothing but a huge stronghold, in the area of which a town is supposed to have once existed.

April 11th

Bicycle accident. I caught the train to Weymouth and started to ride back to Portland, but upon turning the sharp corner to the right after the turning at the top of Rodwell Hill and going fast with my feet up, I failed to turn quick enough and so went head first into the ditch (which I had to steer for to avoid the bank with the barbed wire). I emerged unhurt but a very sorry spectacle, covered in mud, but to my surprise found that the bicycle had suffered no injury except the saddle clamp was broken and so I had to get back to Portland riding on the step and working with one leg, but congratulating myself on my fortunate escape.

April 18th

The training squadron. The training squadron came, in consisting of the 'Active', 'Volage', 'Calypso' and 'Ruby'. In the evening, I went onboard the 'Calypso' after dinner to see Corbett [*note – an old friend from Britannia*]. The last time we met was at Plymouth (21st August 19, 1893) and since then he has been very ill from 'Malta Fever', from which he nearly died, being invalided home from 'HMS Collingwood'. [*Note – Malta Fever, now called Brucellosis, is a bacterial infection contracted from unpasteurised milk, nowadays treated with antibiotics.*] The late trip to the West Indies seems to have him right again however. They had rather a bad time this cruise, the 'Ruby' and 'Volage' having had the yellow fever on board from which they lost some men, the consequence being that they spent a good part of the time in quarantine.

April 29th to 30th

Bicycle ride to Warwick. [*note - the author covered a distance of 74.5 miles on the first and 65.6 miles on the second day of this journey to Warwick*]

June 8th

Lords of the Admiralty Visit. We *[note - Mother, Lucy, Ida, Emily and Oliver on a visit to Weymouth]* received news that the Lords of the Admiralty were expected in the afternoon so I arranged with Wilkin stop for dinner and see the yacht arrive. Their coming at this time was most fortunate for they were able to see the yards 'manned', and the salute of 19 guns fired from each of the ships in the Channel fleet. The mastless ships 'manned' the superstructure etc. *[note – this was the transition period from sail to steam]* As the 'Enchantress' *[note – HMS Enchantress was a paddle steamer and the Admiralty Yacht that was originally called HMS Helicon, built in 1865]* past I had to hustle them into the Chart House, but they saw everything very well and the weather was delightful. After dinner we went out onto the sternwalk and saw the Channel Fleet illuminated. This was done for the benefit of the Lords of the Admiralty, the ships having been specially fitted up for the review at Kiel on the occasion of the opening of the Baltic Channel *[note – the Baltic or Kiel Channel was opened on 20th June 1895 by Kaiser Wilhelm and connects the North Sea to the Baltic close to the Germany-Denmark border]* They look very beautiful. The sea was dead calm and each ship was brilliantly lighted with hundreds of incandescent lights, the outlines of the superstructure, mast and funnels being shown. The reflections in the water made the effect very striking.

June 9th

The Italian fleet. The Italian fleet left for Kiel in the forenoon *[note – for the opening of the Baltic Channel]*. The Lords of the Admiralty consisting of Earl Spencer, Admiral Sir F Beresford, Sir V Kay-Shuttleworth and Captain G Noel attended service onboard and walked round the divisions.

July 13th

A tea party in the afternoon. Captain Lacy *[note – captain of the Minotaur]* asked me to a tea party he was giving on board, preceded by a sail. We left the ship at 2:00 PM in the sailing pinnacle and picked up the ladies, consisting of Mrs Lacy, Miss Martins (2), Miss Anderson and others, at the at the upper pier and sailed round the hulks in the roads. As the day was anything but fine, I found the occupation rather monotonous and was not sorry when we got aboard. Upon arrival however, we amused ourselves with firing at bottles from the stern walk with the Morris tube rifle *[note – this could be the Morris Aiming Tube, a tube that could be inserted into the barrel of a rifle that allowed it to fire smaller calibre bullets]*, which I thought was very tame sort of amusement. The tea also rather bored me and it was not a great wrench to part afterwards.

July 18th to August 7th

Leave in Warwick and London

August 1st

Lady cyclists. I very much wanted to see the lady cyclists in Battersea Park, which has lately created such a sensation and so took a bus thither. I arrived rather late (12:20 PM) for most of them leave about noon, but I saw a great many riding about. They drive up from the West End in their carriages and either hire bikes on the ground or send them on beforehand. My opinion was that they look very becoming on bicycles when riding properly and far from the pastime being imperious, I cannot see that it can be anything but beneficial.



Bicycling became a craze in the late 19th Century and contributed significantly to the feminist movement as it presented women with newfound freedom and mobility]

September 30th

Bike rides (miles) for the month of September.

5th	49	7th	9	9th	11
11th	10	12th	56	13th	10
14th	28	16th	11	18th	10

19th	59	23rd	9	25th	13
26th	17	28th	10	TOTAL	300

Average per ride 21.43 miles.

October 11th

A dance. About 10:00 PM left for the dance which is being given by the officers of the brigs and 'Wanderer' at the Jubilee Hall. Although a little late, I had no lack of partners, as unfortunately ladies were in the majority. It was a most brilliant dance. The hall, which is a bleak, barren room, was well decorated and a very good floor obtained by hard work. The supper was laid on the stage from which there was a fine view of the ballroom. There must have been three or four hundred people present, which made a fine spectacle. I danced nearly every dance and took Miss Henley in to supper. Altogether I spent a most enjoyable evening and the arrangements to my mind were most creditable to those in whose hands they were. The dancing ended about 3:00 AM.

October 12 to 18th

On leave at Warwick and the 'Mop'. On arrival home, I found Mabel Bird staying in the house (cousin). I had not seen her since 1892 when I was going through torpedo at Portsmouth [*note – there was a torpedo training facility that opened in 1889 on Horsea Island, Portsmouth*] and she was over at Ventnor [*note – Isle of Wight*]. After some tea I went up to see the 'Mop' or Statute Fair in the marketplace, which takes annually on this date [*note – Friday & Saturday after 12th*]. In former times it used to be the great 'hiring' fair but registry offices etc have long done away with the hiring, and the fair takes the form of a general jollification with the usual complement of merry-go-rounds, shows, shootings and galleries, the whole thing being a veritable pandemonium. It is 11 years (1884) since I was last at home for the 'Mop', but the thing seems as popular as ever. The usual 'fat ox' was roasted whole but when I arrived there was very little of it left except the bones.

October 13th

Evening Service. Attended evening service at Saint Mary's and had the pleasure of listening to an extempore sermon of about three quarters of an hour, consisting of about the most arrant twaddle I have ever heard delivered from a pulpit.

October 14th

Bicyclists. It is curious to note the reversion in feelings which has lately taken place amongst cyclists. A year or two ago, anyone riding a bicycle was looked upon as an arrant 'bounder', so much so, that one could not expect to be 'noticed' when mounted. Since it has become fashionable, which I thought it certainly would, things are just the

opposite. In the case of ladies riding, the mere thought of it was enough, now however, nearly every lady rides and she is considered unfashionable if unable to do so.

November 2nd

Walter's visit. Went by the 2:55 train to Weymouth to meet Walter (brother) who arrived by the 3:45 PM train from Warwick. I asked him to come and spend a few days of his leave with me as he most probably goes to India next month (being in the Army Medical Service) and I thought I might not get a chance of seeing him again.

November 13th to 18th

On leave at Warwick.

December 25th

Christmas Day. Landed about 2:45 to go to the 'Avalanche' Church, Southwell (Portland) to the afternoon service. Arrived just after the second lesson. Doctor Lilley [*note – medical officer of the prison on Portland and a good friend*] was outside the door when I arrived, being afraid to stop inside owing to his recent illness. They sang some carols, one of which was a composed by Eva Lilley (aged 13) the music being written by Doctor Lilley. It sounded, I thought, very pretty indeed. [*note - The carol in question is 'Unto Us A Child Is Born'*]

December 28th

A visit to Portland Prison. Being Saturday afternoon, the convicts were all in the prison, cleaning up, etc. The place is very much like Dartmoor, except that the cells are much smaller, indeed, they were extremely small. There are about 1100 prisoners here. It was rather a depressing sight, especially as everything was so quiet, the prisoners never being allowed to converse with one another. The accommodation is now considered insufficient and they are gradually rebuilding the blocks on a new principle. The kitchens were a model of cleanliness, the bread etc is made on the premises. The food appeared very good but is apparently only enough to keep them going with the hard work they have. The visit had a very depressing effect on me, the whole place seemed dismal in the extreme. We [*note - with Jack*] went back to Doctor Lilley's afterwards for tea and he showed Jack his curiosities, consisting in the various devices that prisoners have for self-mutilation, in order to get put on the sick list.

December 31st to January 21st

On leave at work and London.

