

1905

HMS Leda

January 15th to 20th

Passage to Sheerness

January 20th to March 1st

At Sheerness

January 22nd

Hangover. Walked to the cemetery with Oliver in the afternoon, and saw the stone which has been erected on the grave of our dear mother and father after being inscribed. It looks very well. In the evening the executors (John and Arthur) unearthed some Curacao which had been lying in the cellar for many years, and of which I regret to say, I imbibed 'not wisely but too well', with the result that I was fearfully ill all night and felt seedy all the next day. There was something in it which disagreed with my composition!!!

February 17th

Assassination. News was received in the evening of the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergius of Russia, who was blown up with a bomb when in his carriage. He seems to have been a great oppressor in the troubled times in Russia, and very little sympathy is felt for him in this country. Great sorrow is expressed for his wife, however, who was a daughter of the Princess Alice. His carriage was shattered to atoms, and there was little left of the poor occupant. The state of affairs in Russia is terrible just now, and the countries is in a state of rebellion and anarchy.



The remains of the carriage of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich of Russia after his assassination by Ivan Kalyayev who threw a bomb was thrown on to his lap.

March 1st to 4th

Passage to Greenock

March 4th to June 26th

At Greenock

April 19th to 27th

Leave

April 19th

Death of Uncle Stanley. He [note – Oliver] told me when I arrived of the sad news received yesterday of the death of my uncle Stanley Bird, which took place suddenly on Monday (17th). He was just a little older than my mother and died at his house in Tunbridge Wells. I saw him last Feb and he seemed quite well then.

April 27th

Death of Uncle Charlie. News was received today of the death of my Uncle Charlie Bird, who died at Monte Carlo. Following closely upon the death of his brother Stanley, who died on the 17th makes it particularly sad. He had been ill for some time with a tumour of the brain which caused his death. It is curious that the eldest and youngest sons should have died within 10 days of one another, and it is also remarkable that he was a keen volunteer, and was for some years, like his brother, Colonel of the Victoria and St. Georges Rifles, whom he relieved when the former gave up command. He is to be buried at Pinner, Middlesex, where my grandmother died.

May 29th

Great Japanese Victory. News was received today of the Japanese fleet's great victory under Admiral Tojo, of the Russians under Admiral Rojismenki [note - Zinovy Petrovich Rozhdestvensky] in which practically all the ships have been sunk or captured. The Russian fleet has been almost annihilated and the loss of life on their side must have been terrible. The Japanese casualties are very small, and they are said to have lost two destroyers only, and so it seems to have been a complete 'walk over' *[note – it has been estimated that there were about 5000 Russian dead and a further 6000 captured compared with only 117 Japanese deaths]*. It is thought that this terrible disaster to the Russians may now lead to peace and so end this shocking war which has cost more lives than any in history. It is curious that this is the greatest naval battle since Trafalgar and took place almost 100 years afterwards.



[On May 29th, 1905, the Japanese Navy, under the command of Vice Admiral Heihachiro Togo, achieved a decisive victory in the Battle of Tsushima against the Russian Baltic Fleet. This battle was a pivotal moment in the Russo-Japanese War and marked a turning point in global naval power.]

June 7th to 14th

On leave at Warwick

June 19th

Promotion prospects. I was very much elated today when the Admiral *[rear - Admiral Reginald Henderson, Commanding Coast Guards and Naval Reserves]* told me that he thought I had a very good chance of being promoted on the 30th June. He said this quite spontaneously and so it raised my hopes considerably. He told me that if I got it, it would be entirely due to my record at the Admiralty and to former service and not to his recommendation as he said he has been unable to forward my name as there were too many senior to me. This was the best news that I had had for many a day.

June 24th to 26th

Passage to Milford Haven

June 26th

Official mismanagement. Our sister ship the 'Circe' is also here. She has received orders to tow another craft to Devonport, but she will not be ready for months and so the Circe leaves tomorrow having been sent on a fool's errand. I also find that the 'Bowser' which we have been ordered to tow will not be ready for some time and so we also were hustled away in a hurry for nothing. This bungling is really very disappointing and involves wasteful expenditure of coal.

June 29th

Promotion. I was on my way to the boat to the Dockyard Steps, when I met a telegraph boy who had a wire for me. The contents were the best news I have ever received, viz "Lieutenant Tibbits promoted Commander June 30th". I was so delighted that I took it to Captain Dennison, who was the first to congratulate me. The relief to me is intense, for as no one knows how much my life depended on obtaining this step, and I have been in hopes and fears for the last year. If I had been passed over, I'm afraid I should have become a hopeless case and perhaps have drifted into the coastguards. The news soon went round the ship, and everyone seemed pleased that I had obtained it

July 1st to 2nd

Passage to Portland

July 2nd to 10th

At Portland

July 10th to 11th

Passage to Milford Haven

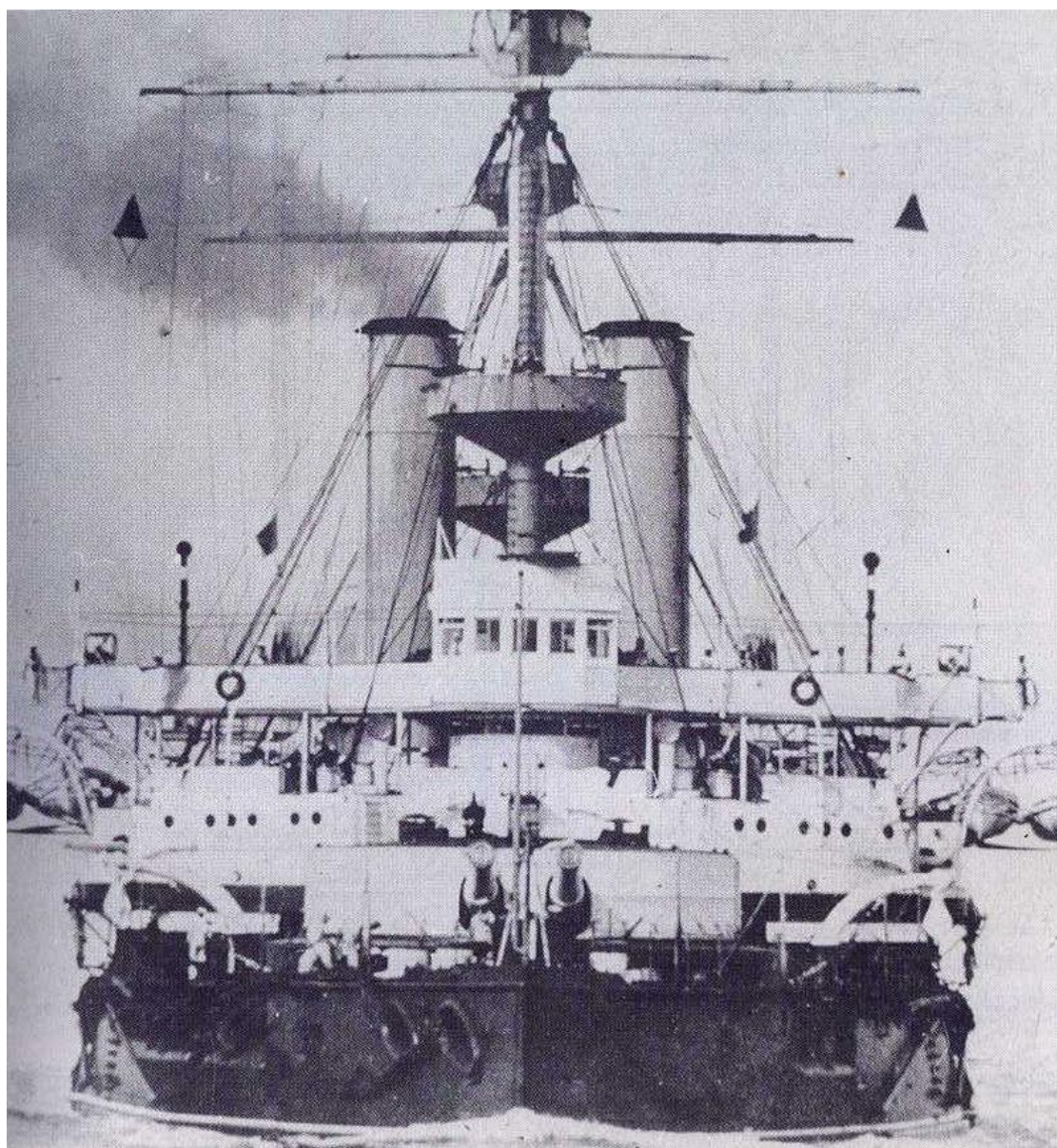
July 11th

Appointment. I was much surprised and not little taken back, when Captain Simmons informed me that my appointment to the battleship 'Hood' appeared in yesterday's paper. I had quite expected to have some half pay before receiving my appointment and was wondering where I should go and so it was to some extent a relief to find that I was to be kept employed. The 'Hood' is a nucleus crew ship at Devonport and I have to join on being relieved on the 18th by Lieutenant JB Hancock, with whom I was shipmates in the 'Volage' in '91

July 18th

Left HMS Leda

HMS Hood





The outline of the wreck of Hood can be seen between the breakwaters of Portland Harbour. On 4 November 1914 Hood was scuttled in Portland harbour to block the Southern Ship Channel, a potential access route for U-boats or for torpedoes fired from outside the harbour. Her wreck became known as "Old Hole in the Wall". Despite her 1914 scuttling, the Royal Navy included Hood on its sale list in both 1916 and 1917.

July 20th

Joined HMS Hood. HMS Hood is a 1st Class Battleship of the Royal Sovereign Class but is slightly different to these ships, having turrets instead of barbettes and consequently lower freeboard. 14,150 tonnes, 13000 horsepower, armament 4 x 13.5 inch 67 tonne guns, 10 x 6 QF and light guns. Two submerged torpedo tubes and one above water tube. I find that we do not go to sea much, but are ready to go at any time and could join the fighting line as soon as the complement is completed.

July 21st

Duties. Entered upon my new duties as Executive Officer, which are onerous and a great change after the 'Leda'. I turned out at 5:50 AM daily and am practically on the go all day until the evening rounds at 9:00 PM. The whole welfare of the ship depends upon my efforts and so it is necessary to keep one's nose to the grindstone.

July 25th

Death of Edward Morley. I was greatly shocked at receiving the terribly sad news that my brother-in-law Edward Morley died last Sunday at Calcutta from dysentery. He married my sister Emily on 31st of December '96, and they lived together for some years in Assam, where he is tea planting. My sister had contemplated rejoining him this year, but now she is a widow with four fatherless children, and we shall all be anxious as to her future prospects. They were such a devoted couple that his death will be a crowning blow to my sister and will cause her a hard struggle in life. Fortunately, my brother Walter was with him during his illness and last moments.

August 8th

'Entente Cordiale'. Today the papers are full of the expected arrival of the French fleet at Spithead, and there is great enthusiasm at Portsmouth, and everything is being done to make the visit successful. Our fleet was recently splendidly entertained at Brest and much is hoped for in maintaining the peace of Europe through this 'Entente Cordiale'.



August 21st to September 4th

On leave at Warwick (by bicycle)

October 2nd to 13th

Reserve Squadron cruise to Penzance and Falmouth

October 21st

Trafalgar day. The 100th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. In Plymouth flags etc were displayed to celebrate the event and in London Nelson's Column was profusely

decorated and many thousands assembled in Trafalgar Square to attend a short service held there in honour of the great Admiral and those who fell. No very great notice was taken, however, of this glorious achievement, which free England from Napoleon, and was the beginning of our prosperity, chiefly because I think the French might take exception to any extra rejoicings which might upset the 'entente cordiale', which now exists between the two countries. My uncle Nelson Ward is a grandson of Horatia, Nelson's daughter, who together with Lady Hamilton, was left by him to the 'gratitude of the country' which dying request was passed unheeded, for Lady H died in penury, and Horatia was left with a guardian and subsequently married the Reverend Mr Ward, vicar of Tenterden, in Kent, where my uncle was born. It is now considered certain that Horatia was the daughter of Lady H. She died at Pinner at an advanced age, in 1881, and my mother visited her often and had yarns with the old lady.

November 6th to 20th

On leave

November 7th

Motor car. We went for a trip in the afternoon to Southampton in Mr Hoare's *[note - founder of the training ship 'Mercury']* motor car, a magnificent de Dietrich. This is my first experience of motoring and I found it most exhilarating and I am not surprised at people being so enthusiastic about it for it is such a quick and comfortable way of getting about the country.



[The Training Ship Mercury was founded in 1885 by Charles Hoare, a wealthy London banker, as a charitable venture to provide nautical training and education for "poor but honest working-class boys". He aimed to give these boys a chance to be prepared for life at sea, particularly in the Royal Navy.]

December 10th to 11th

To sea for steam trials

December 25th

Christmas Day. As there were hardly any men left onboard the ship, the event past unnoticed excepting for a little evergreen in the messes and some at the yardarm and masthead. I had a tete a tete lunch with Marsham (Captain RMLI) and slept most of the afternoon.