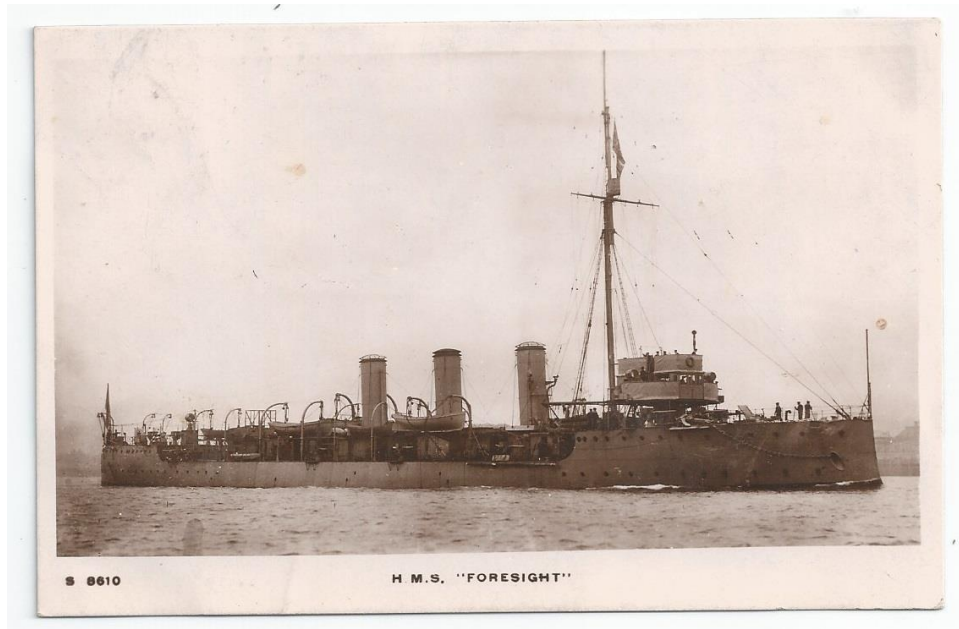


1912

## HMS Foresight



January 6 to March 23rd

**Chatham for refit**

January 16th

**Lords of Admiralty visit.** The Lords of the Admiralty came to Chatham for their inspection. In the afternoon, I attended their official reception and Mr Winston Churchill (the new First Lord) shook hands with us all. They then went down to the yard in the small railway train. Elsie with baby and nurse were also there and baby stared hard at Mr Churchill, who smiled at Elsie, perhaps amused with their presence.

January 17th

**Dinner.** Dined on board the yacht 'Enchantress' with the Lords of the Admiralty (Mr Churchill, Prince Louis, Captain Packenham, etc.). We had a most sumptuous dinner, vegetables, fruit, etc out of season and wines of the best. I sat next to Rear Admiral Beatty, Private Secretary to Mr Churchill. The weather was frightful, hail, rain and wind, and I had to go to and fro in my 'ball dress' on a bicycle, as there was no other means of conveyance.

## February 18th

**Coal strike.** The crisis in the coal trade very acute. It is feared that there will be a general strike of all miners in the country. If this takes place, the consequences are too disastrous to contemplate.

## February 20th

**Illness of Oliver.** Received a letter from Emily saying that my brother Oliver was suddenly taken ill on Saturday (17<sup>th</sup>) and went into a fit. He was unconscious for some time and we feared it must be very serious.

## February 28th

**Oliver.** I saw Walter and received the welcome news that Oliver was better and out of danger.

## February 29th

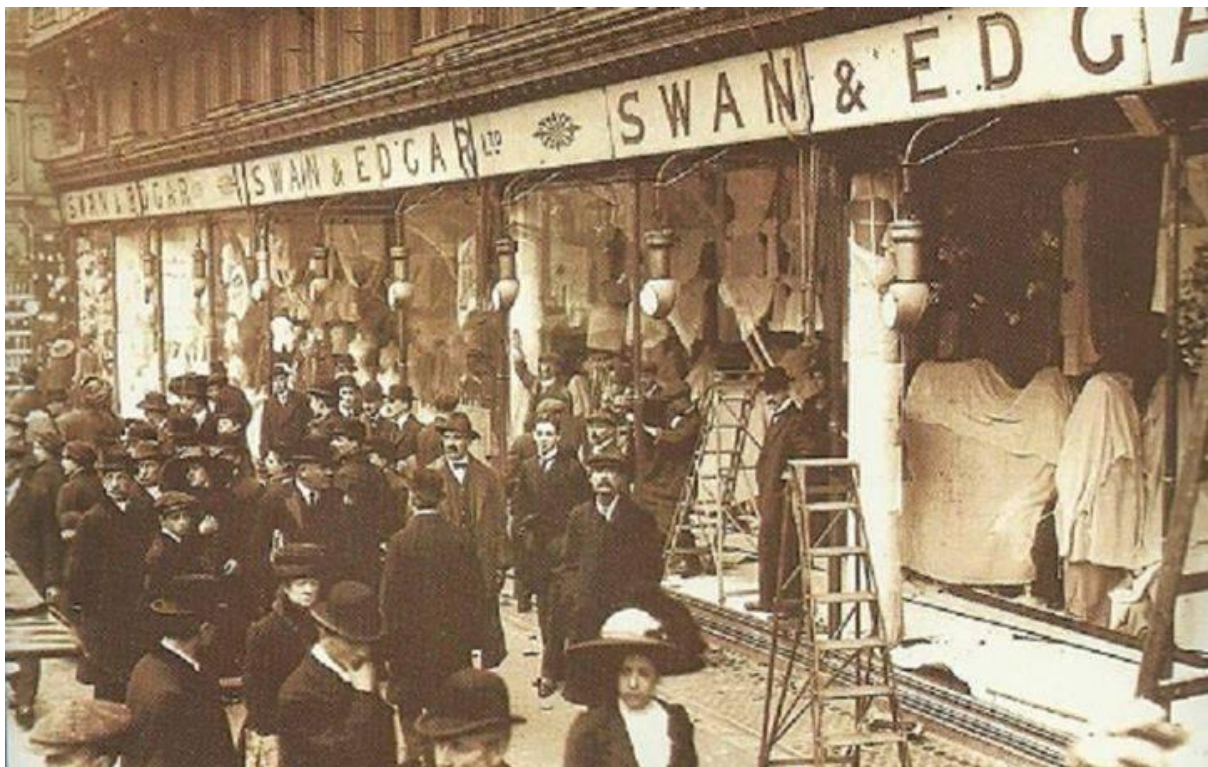
**Coal strike.** The terrible coal strike began today. Nearly a million in various parts of the country left work. It is the terrible distress that will be brought on other trades and so many millions of men out of employment that is the most serious aspect.

## March 7th

**Appointment – zoo.** To the Admiralty and saw Rear Admiral Beatty about my relief. He said he would probably be appointed about the end of next week and he promised me a billet at Portsmouth so that I came away very pleased with my interview. In the afternoon I took Elsie, baby and nurse, to the Zoological Gardens. Terrence was delighted with the animals, but was greatly concerned when one of the polar bears dived into the water, thinking that it had hurt itself.

## March 11th

**Suffragettes.** With Elsie to the Wallace Collection. Owing to the demonstrations by Suffragettes of the militant order, part of the collection was not open and valuable porcelain etc, put away. These women last week broke windows all over London valued at thousands of pounds and are now paying the penalty. *[note – on 1 and 4/3/1912 about 150 women simultaneously smashed shop windows across London.]*



*Smashed windows in the West End of London, March 1912.*

## March 13th

**Elsie's Relations.** With Elsie to Westminster Abbey. We saw the curious waxworks of Charles II, Queen Anne, Nelson, Pitt etc. That of Charles II bore a curious resemblance to Elsie's father, who is a descendant of Charles II, through the notorious Lady Castlemaine and the Duke of Grafton. We were both struck with this idea spontaneously.



*Wax models of Charles II, Queen Anne, William Pitt & Horatio Nelson at Westminster Abbey.*



## March 16th

**Oceana.** The shocking news was received this morning of the shrinking of the P&O steamer Oceana off Beachy Head with the loss of about 75 lives through collision with a sailing ship. *[note – on 16/3/1912 ‘Oceana’ collided with the ‘Pisagua’ a 4-masted German sailing ship. It was later determined that the ‘Pisagua’ was not at fault as ‘steam gives way to sail’.]*

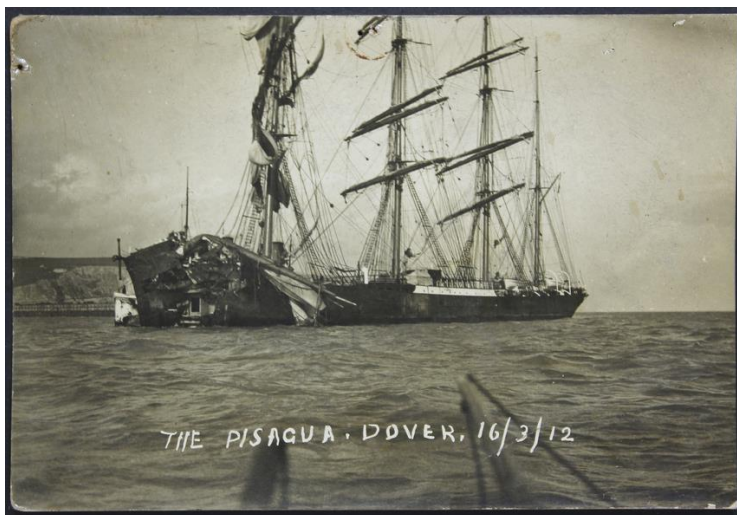


*The Oceana before 1912*





*The wreck of the Oceana after colliding with Pisagua on 16/3/1912*



*The damaged Pisagua being towed to Dover after colliding with Oceana on 16/3/1912*

## March 27th To April 27th

### At Harwich

### March 28th

**Coal strike.** The coal strike is now practically finished.

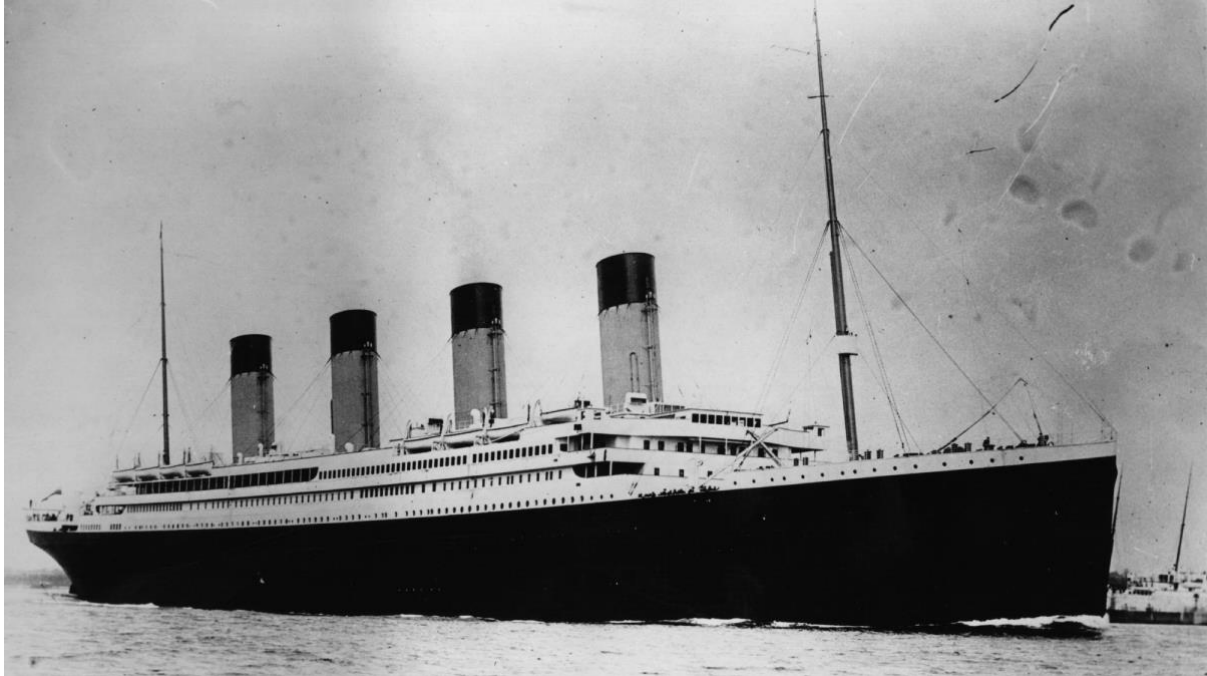
### April 8th

**Coal strike over.** The miners all go back to work today.

### April 15th

**Titanic.** In the afternoon for a pleasant drive somewhat marred though by a distressing rumour that the huge new White Star Liner 'Titanic' (which only left Southampton last Thursday the 11th on her maiden voyage) had collided with an iceberg. The wireless

message said that everyone was saved and there were conflicting reports as to this and also whether she was still afloat or not. On return to London, I found that the news confirmed about the 'Titanic' and it got worse and worse and is becoming terrible in its nature.



## April 16th

**Titanic.** News of the greatest disaster that has ever happened at sea appeared in today's papers. The Titanic collided with an iceberg about 11:20 PM on Sunday and sank at 2:20 AM on Monday. Over 1600 people perished amid most heart-wrenching scenes. The magnificent courage of all is the one striking feature. About 900 saved by ship's boats, mainly women and children. These were picked up by the Carpathia on Monday morning, which thanks to wireless was informed of the disaster. The loss of this magnificent ship and so many lives has cast a gloom over the whole world.

## April 21st

**Memorial Service.** As many Officers and men of the Third Flotilla as possible assembled on board the 'Diamond' in the forenoon for a memorial service held in all HM ships by command of HM King George in honour to the brave dead who perished in the Titanic. Captain Henderson gave a very impressive address and the burial service was read, colours being half masted, and afterwards three volleys fired by the marine guard and the Last Post sounded. Besides the hymn for those at sea "Nearer my God to Thee" was sung as it is said that this hymn was actually being played by the ship's band as she went down.

## April 22nd

**Inspection.** Captain Henderson inspected the 'Foresight' today. The ship was looking splendid throughout and there was nothing he could find fault with and so it was a great success.

## April 29th to May 24th

### Firth of Forth

## April 29th

**Alverstoke.** Elsie and baby went to live at Alverstoke today (20 Saint Marks Rd). She is going there in the hope that I should join her upon appointment to 'Renown' but so far I have heard nothing of my relief which is very disconcerting.

## May 24th

### Return to Harwich

## June 4th

### Elsie's 29th birthday

## June 9th

**Terrence walking.** Terence now able to walk by himself in the road.

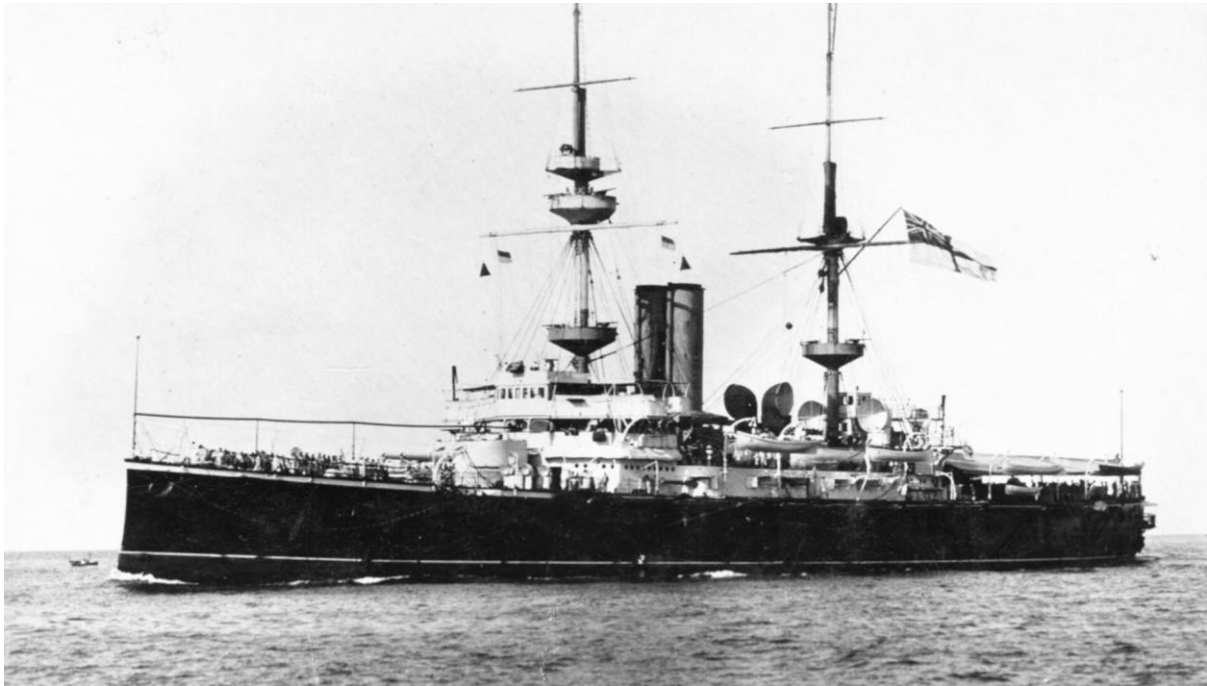
## June 13th

**Appointment.** I received my long-expected appointment at HMS Renown today which is very welcome through being so long deferred.

## June 15th

**Left HMS Foresight.** The Wardroom officers gave me a complimentary lunch and I am very sorry to leave them all as they have done well. I received a very kind message of good wishes from the ship's company and I was genuinely sorry to leave the old 'Foresight' after over two years and four months in her, but I am glad in a way to leave flotilla work as I have had just three years of it, counting my time in the 'Saracen'.

## HMS Renown



### June 17th

**Joined HMS Renown.** I am more than pleased with the billet. She is a training ship for second class stokers who come for a mechanical and discipline course in drafts from the RN barracks lasting six weeks. Moored alongside is my old command the 'Rattler' now used as an instructional hulk and fitted with a Belleville boiler.

### June 26<sup>th</sup>

**HMS Renown.** Elsie came onboard in the afternoon and was much surprised with the magnificence of my accommodation. I have what was the Admiral's quarters, with stern walks etc and some beautiful carved buffets, book cases etc, which were made specially for the ship when Admiral (now Lord) John Fisher fitted her out as his flagship in North America (about 1898). The ship was subsequently used for the regal tour to India, when the present King and Queen were Prince and Princess of Wales. King Alfonso of Spain also spent a considerable time on board, and there are still a few relics of those distinguished personages, the curtains in my cabin having, I am told, been chosen by the Queen Mary herself.

### June 30th

**Promotions.** I saw the list of promotions from Commander to Captain. They were very disappointing and some terrible jobs, worse than usual, so that one's zeal is somewhat stifled and prospects look worse than ever for some of us.

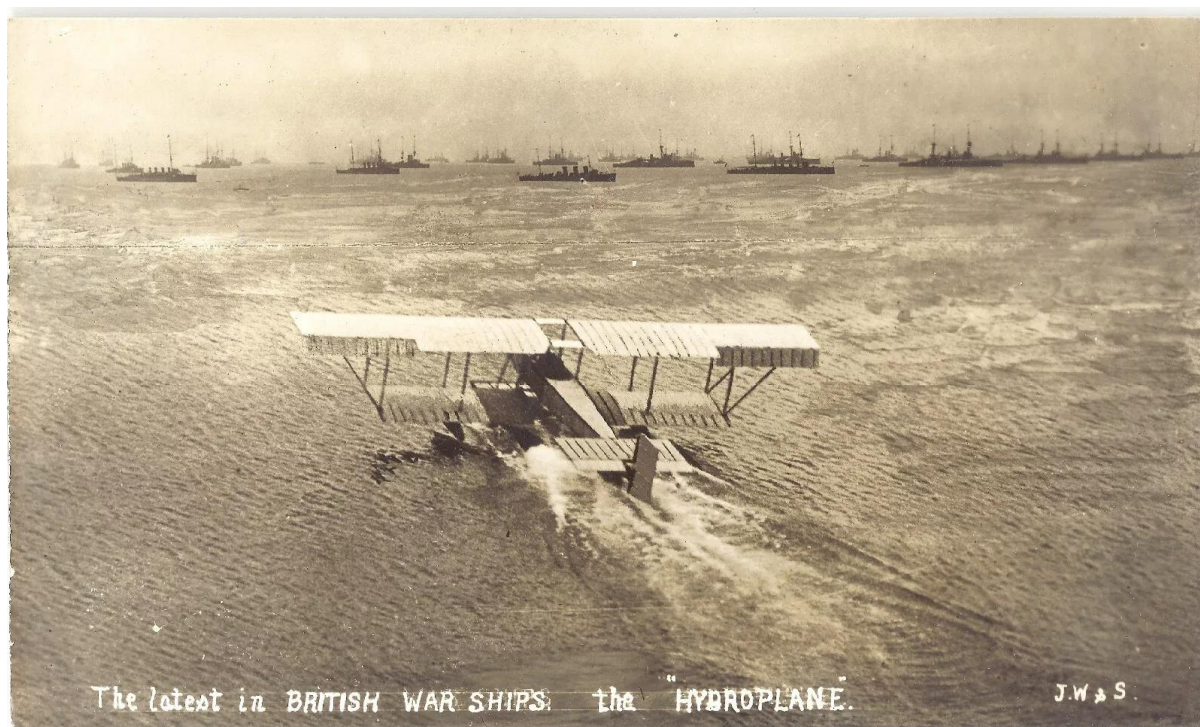


## July 5th

**Terence.** Baby now walking fairly steadily. He was profoundly interested in watching the ships assembling at Spithead for the review of the Fleet on the 9<sup>th</sup> before the Houses of Parliament.

## July 9th

**Naval Review at Spithead.** About 10:45 on board the R Fleet Auxiliary 'Harlequin' in which I have charge of the representatives of the press who go round the fleet. Elsie, Emily and Dorothy also came with me. I had a very tiresome day. The press-men proved very ill behaved and made themselves most obnoxious by clamouring for drinks all day. The Admiralty had provided them with an excellent lunch, with hock, whisky, etc, but they were out for what they could get, and apparently nothing else. They eventually succeeded in dragging Dr Macnamara on board, the Parliamentary Secretary who caused for their demands to be complied with. Apart from these diversions we saw a magnificent spectacle under very exceptional circumstances. The assemblage of ships is the greatest of display naval strength ever brought together, and we followed the SS Armadale Castle round the fleet, on board of which the First Lord (Mr Winston Churchill) and all the high Peerages were collected. After this round, we anchored at the head of the columns and the display of airships took place, and Samson made some flights in the new hydroplane, rising from and returning to the water. There were also sham (and very realistic) attacks by destroyers and submarines. Emily and Elsie thoroughly enjoyed it. The whole fleet proceeded to sea in the afternoon, a majestic sight never to be forgotten. I was personally very gratified when the press 'gentleman' landed, and I had on the whole a very trying and unpleasant duty.



*Commander Samson and the Latest in British Warship "The Hydroplane" at the Fleet Review 1912*

## July 13th

**Doom of Renown.** We were much disconcerted at receiving a letter from the Admiralty saying that they did not consider that the 'Renown' justified the expense and proposing to do away with her. They call for a report from those concerned to set forth any reason why she should not be abolished and the second class stokers trained in the RN Barracks instead. It appears to me though that she still she will not go for some time yet.

## August 9th

**Baby's illness.** About 1:00 AM baby was very ill with some internal complaint and I had to fetch Dr Lamplough who said he was suffering from gastric catarrh and was rather bad, so we were anxious for the next few days.

## September 7th

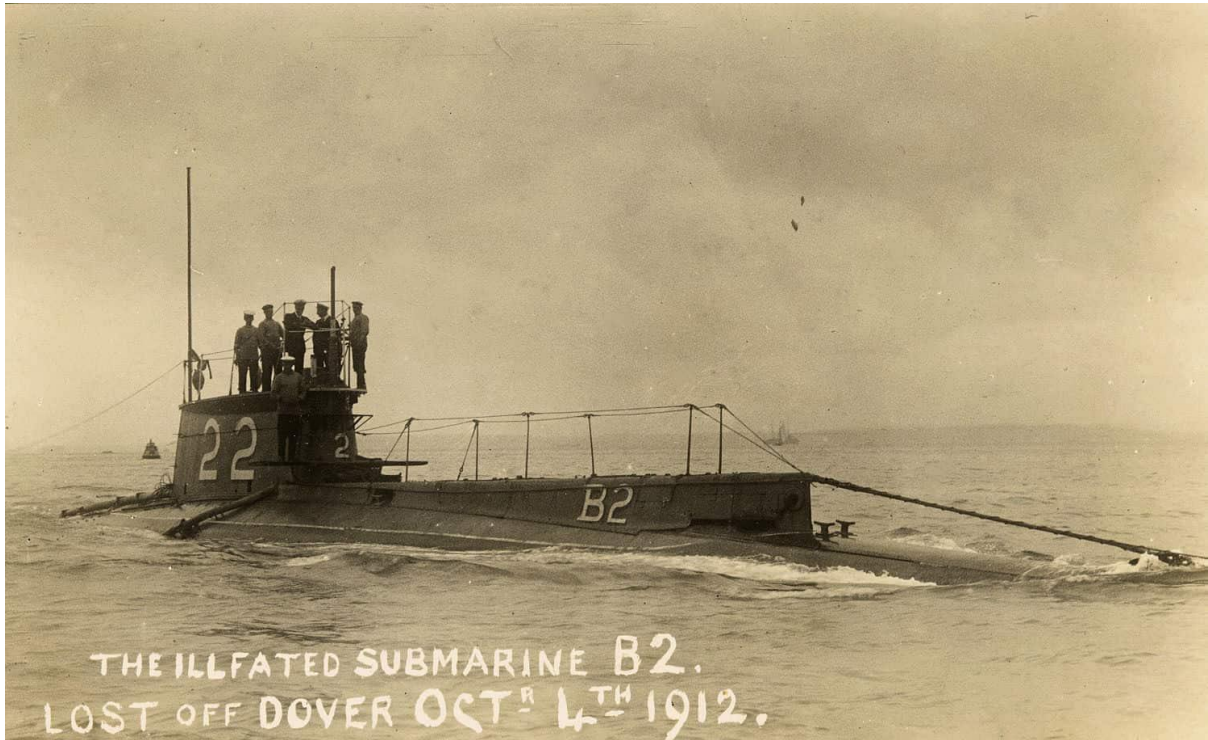
**Terrence illness.** Terrence practically well again.

## September 23rd

**Fate of Renown.** I received a letter today from the Admiralty to say that it had been decided to abolish the 'Renown' shortly, which was rather a sad blow as it was an ideal billet.

## October 7th

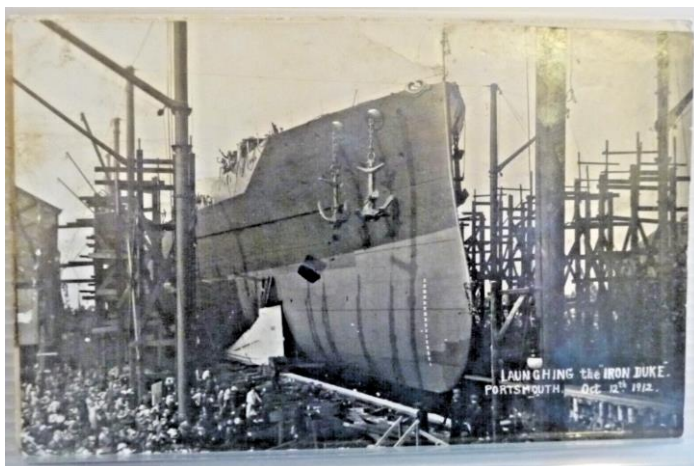
**Loss of submarine B2.** News received of shocking disaster to submarine B2, which was sunk off Dover by collision with German Steamer and all crew drowned except for one lieutenant.



*B2 was Rammed and sunk by SS Amerika off Dover 4th October 1912, of the crew of 15 there was only one survivor, Lt. R.I. Pulleyne.*

## October 12th

**Launching of HMS Iron Duke.** Elsie came with me to see the launching of the new battleship HMS 'Iron Duke'. A very grand sight. The ceremony was performed by the Duchess of Wellington. We afterwards lunched on board 'Renown', where the officers were entertaining a large party to witness the launch.



## November 3rd

**War scare.** A great deal of sight of excitement in Portsmouth Dockyard in consequence of the mobilising of the flotilla, which is to leave at once, in consequence of developments in Turkey due to the Balkan war. These scares which are becoming so frequent are very depressing and discomfoting.

## November 12th

**Promotion.** I had an interview with the Commander in Chief in the afternoon as to my chances of promotion. He said he would write to Prince Louis of Battenburg about me which is encouraging.

## December 6th

**Fate of Renown.** Received news that 'Renown' is to cease being a training ship on January the 1st.

## December 12th

**Visit to the Admiralty.** To London to see about my appointment to the 'Argonaut', which ship is to be substituted for 'Renown' for the training of stokers. I saw Captain Philpotts (Secretary to the Second Sea Lord) who advised me to try for her, which showed me fairly conclusively that I would not be promoted at the end of the month. Although this was depressing enough and so very disappointing, it was a relief to know the worst.

# HMS Argonaut

## December 26th

**Left HMS Renown - joined HMS Argonaut**

## December 30th

**HMS Argonaut.** I went on board HMS 'Argonaut' as I was appointed to her on Boxing Day. This practically dispels any hope I had of promotion. She is to begin as a training ship for stokers on the 1st of January when she becomes tender to the RN Barracks, so that I shall then come under the Commodore. Before taking up my appointment, I have to pay off the 'Renown', which would take about a month.