



HMS ST. VINCENT

1692 — 1965

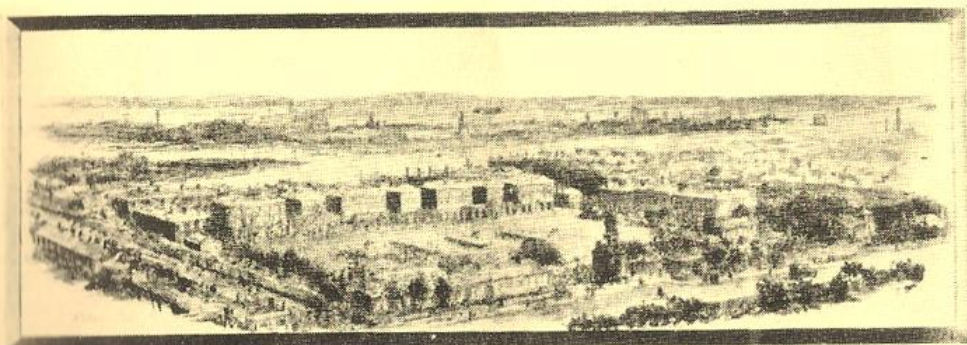


Plate 1—*Forton Barracks 1848*

Plate 1 - Forton Barracks, 1848

AN ILLUSTRATED
HISTORY
OF HMS ST. VINCENT
1692 – 1965

By
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Finally the author is grateful to the 'Blockmakers' who transformed so many almost unrecognisable photographs into illustrations, and to the whole staff of Messrs. Holbrook & Son Ltd., the printers, and especially the Managing Director, Mr. R. Matthews, who between them assisted 'far beyond the call of duty'.

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INTRODUCTION

In April of next year the last boys will leave HMS 'St Vincent', thus bringing to a close an era of some thirty eight years during which juniors have been trained for the Royal Navy in Gosport. Thenceforward all such training will be carried out in HMS 'Ganges' at Shotley, which is at the moment a sister establishment. Indeed since 'St Vincent' started life as an overflow depot for the boys from Ipswich, this relationship too, will obviously change; for in May 1966 'St Vincent' will become an Adult Entry Training Establishment, similar to HMS 'Raleigh' at Torpoint.

This publication is the last of its type, largely because of the 'quick turnover' of the adult entries; it therefore seemed pertinent to look back over the years during which the magazine has been produced, in order to provide some kind of 'record' of events which may otherwise be forgotten. The ordinary occurrences of day to day life have little significance when they happen, and they therefore tend to be pushed into obscurity; nevertheless it is these same ordinary events which help to mould the future. A knowledge of the past, whilst not rationalising the present, can, at worst, help to explain apparent enigmas.

In this age of visual aids, illustrations are almost a prerequisite of any publication, but it is salutary to think that someone perhaps thirty years hence will be amused by our 'atomic age' photographs, in just the same way that we, in turn, tend to ridicule events and customs depicted in thirty year old photographs. The text of this magazine together with illustrations attempts to portray HMS 'St Vincent' from the inception of the name to the present day, in the hope that it may be of some interest to 'St Vincents' past, present and future.



Plate 2 — *HMS 'St Vincent'*, 1896

Plate 2 - HMS 'St Vincent', 1896

THE SHIPS

It is sometimes suggested that the name 'St Vincent', passed into the ship nomenclature Of the Royal Navy after the events Of St Valentine's Day. 1797. However, the first vessel to bear that name came into English service in June. 1692 when a French fireship the 'San Vincente' was captured. She was of some 200 tons and mounted eight guns. The nautical origin of her name is uncertain. All that can be said is that there are four villages named St Vincent in France. and Capes as far apart as Portugal and Tierra del Fuego bear the name. It is reasonable to assume that the captured fireship was named after one of these, and she retained her insignia though she changed nationality. She remained in Royal Naval Hands, and was part of the English 'Grand Fleet' until May 1698 when she was sold. She was succeeded by an armed cutter which came into service in 1798 and lasted until 1806 When she was scrapped.

The name was immediately utilised. for in the same year. the Admiralty ordered the Royal Dockyard at Plymouth to undertake the construction of a 'first rate' ship of the line. Ships of the time were divided into 'rates' rather than classes, the 'rate' of a ship depending almost entirely on the number of guns which she carried. Thus ships which carried over one hundred guns were known as 'first rates'. 'second rates' had between eighty and ninety cannons, 'third rates' between sixty four and eighty four, 'Sixth rates' carried fewer than thirty guns. The 'battle fleet' proper was composed of the first three rates, which were called 'line of battleships' while the lower rates or frigates corresponded to the cruiser section of later fleets. First and second rates again differed from third rates in the fact they were three deckers - that is to say that they had three gun decks, besides carrying guns on the forecastle and quarterdecks, and sometimes even on the poop.

The ship already named 'St Vincent' was laid down in May 1810, and on 11th March, 1815, she was finally launched. She and her sister ships 'Nelson' and 'Howe' were 204' 11" long, had a maximum beam of 54' 7" and carried a crew of about 950 men. When first commissioned the 'St Vincent' had one hundred and twenty guns, though she was later converted to carry a mere one hundred and two.

From the date of her launching until 1849 she did duty as flagship Of the Commander-in-Chief. Plymouth, the Commander-in-Chief. Portsmouth, and the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean. In 1854. after acting as a troopship as part of Sir Charles Napier's expedition against Russia,* her life as a front line vessel came to an end - not so much because of her age, but because of the enormous technological advances of the first half of the nineteenth century. She went into reserve and became 'Guardship of the Ordinary', Portsmouth.

The Royal Navy was beset with recruiting problems in the last century to a very much greater extent than it is in this, and although long term service was introduced in 1853 the scheme did not provide sufficient trained men. A Royal Commission was set up to investigate the problem and issued its report in 1859. This advocated, among other things, the establishment of at least five ships for the training of boys for the Royal Navy. Therefore in 1860 the old 'Implacable' was recommissioned as HMS 'Lion' at Devonport as the first Boys' Training Ship. Another 'Boscawen' was moored at Portland in 1861 and was followed on 1st January 1862 by 'HMS St Vincent', which was moved to a mooring off Haslar Creek.

The 'routine on board this Old ship was somewhat different to that experienced by boys today. for according to a 'semi official' description†. . . 'The boys "turn out" at five in the summer, six in the winter, and breakfast at a quarter to seven. From half past seven, for an hour, there is sail drill aloft, followed between half past eight and nine, by inspection, and prayers by the Chaplain. Then from nine o'clock to half past eleven, comes drill in the various classes, and after that, drill aloft until the dinner at noon. For an hour the boys are left to their own devices, and then the first hour and a half of the afternoon course begins for instruction, according to the class in which the boy may... in seaman, ship, signalling, gunnery, and school Work proper . . . From half past three to half past five the boys devote to clothes mending, boat exercises, athletics and so forth ...'

* In August 1854 a landing was made at in the Aland Over prisoners were taken — the 'St Vincent' was used to transport them. - ('The Sea, the Sword and the Baltic' - Oliver Warner).

† The Navy and Army Illustrated. 6th March, 1896 Also 3rd April.

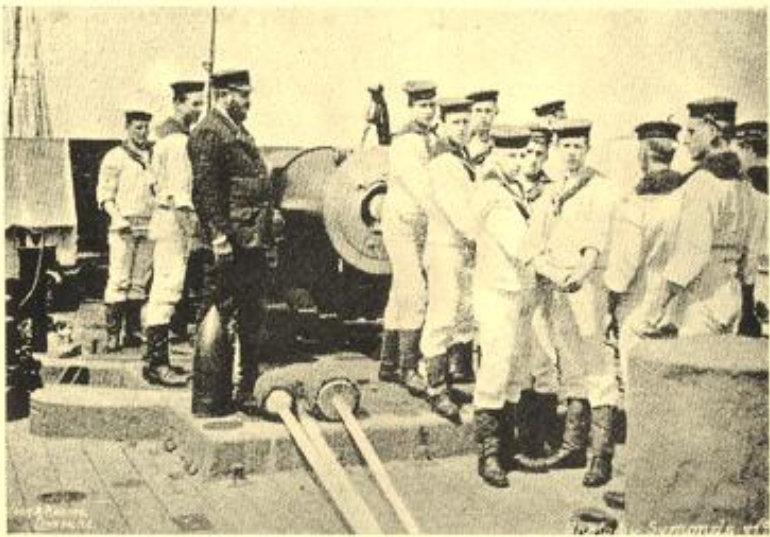


Plate 3 — Heavy gun drill
 Plate 3 - Heavy gun drill

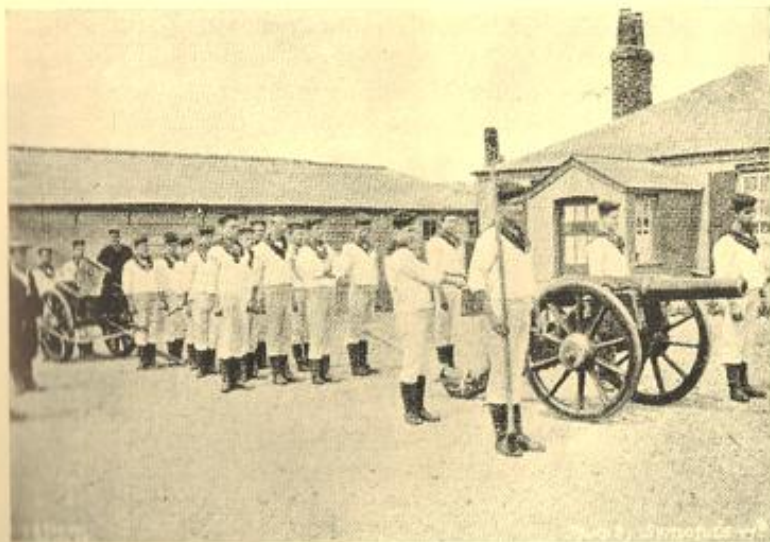


Plate 4 — Field gun drill

Plate 4 - Field Gun Drill

‘The boys are entered at the age of from fifteen to sixteen and a half, and are recruited from all over the country . . . each has to sign an agreement to serve continuously in the Royal Navy for twelve years from the age of eighteen then the recruit becomes a “boy. Second class”. Training for active service begins at once . . . instruction in knots and splices, boat pulling, flags, compass . . . As a “first class boy”. The next stage. He learns the art of signalling, rifle and cutlass drill, field and big gun drill . . . the course closing after some twenty months with a six week cruise in a training brig . . . *- (the ‘Martin’, which was of 600 tons, was two masted and square rigged. It was impossible to stand upright between the decks!)

Whilst serving on board ‘St Vincent’. A ‘boy, second class’ earned the princely sum of twelve shillings and ninepence a month, and a ‘boy, first class’ fourteen and three pence. In addition each boy was allowed ‘one pound of bread, one gallon of beer, one ounce of cocoa, one and a half ounces of sugar, one pound of fresh meat, half a pound of vegetables, and a quarter of an ounce of tea’† per week. Milk was not added to the rations until 1903 and ‘tea’ consisted of dry bread at 17:00; whilst supper at 19:30 was enlivened twice a week by the addition of dripping to the bread. There was no canteen ‘but a bumboatman came off in the silent hours’.

Perhaps a more realistic assessment. Certainly a personal one comes from an ‘ex boy’ . . .

‘As for comfort the boys wore neither shoes nor stockings unless landing or attending Sick Bay. A boy always left the training ships in debt as all his clothes had to be paid for. Candles were the only means of illumination and the heating system was almost non- existent.’‡

Boys were divided into 4 Divisions and 2 watches. The Division and watch were distinguished by stripes sewn on the Seam of the sleeve and shoulder. Shorts were never worn.

* Navy and Army Illustrated, op cit

† Navy List, 1870

‡ St Vincent’ Magazine. Christmas 1947 ‘Reminiscences by Lt Cdr A. E. Wray, MBE.R who joined the Boys’ Training Ship HMS ‘St Vincent’ in 1889.

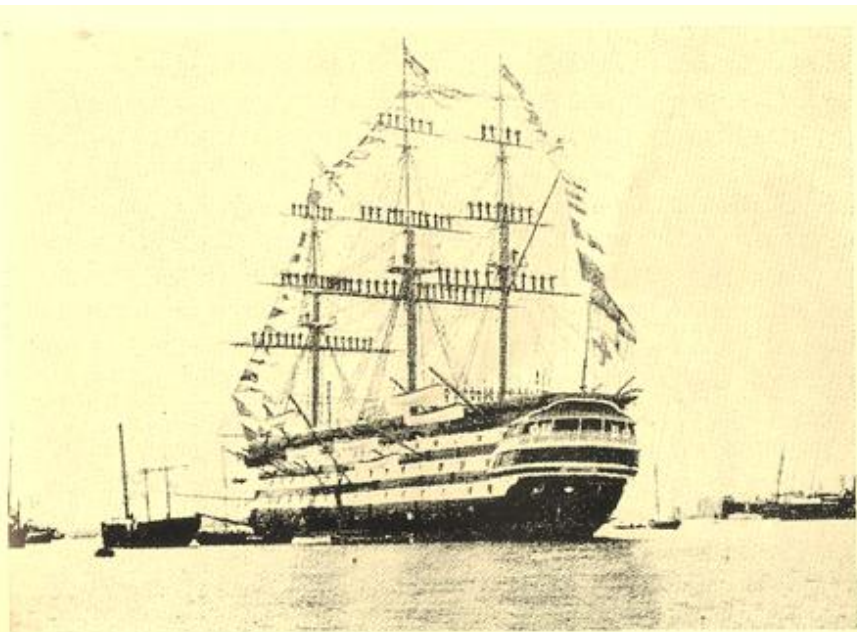


Plate 5 — *Manning the yards*

Plate 5 - Manning the yards



Plate 6 — *Instruction in furling and reefing sail*

Plate 6 – instruction in Furling and reefing sail

In general the treatment which the boys received was brutal. 'Ships corporals (RPO's) always carried canes. whilst the instructor has his "Stonarchy" and these were used on every possible occasion.' . . . 'nearly every day thirty or so boys were punished by cane or birch.'*

Recreation and amusement bore more relationship to work and boredom. As 'summer time' had not then been thought of, football hours were short. Draughts, ludo and reading were the only general amusements on board — the boys did however have four weeks leave at times — almost certainly because conditions at that time were so bad. Short leave was given Thursday and Sunday afternoons, and petty Officer Boys had Saturday afternoons.

The boys turned in at 2 1:00 — very hungry though occasionally a lucky few 'were able to collect the leavings from a Ship's company mess at night.'†

It should be noted that General Messing was not introduced to 'St Vincent' until 1905 and 'parcels from home' were more welcome than ever.



Plate 7 — Cutlass drill

Plate 7 – Cutlass drill

*St Vincent Magazine op. cit.

†St Vincent Magazine op. cit.

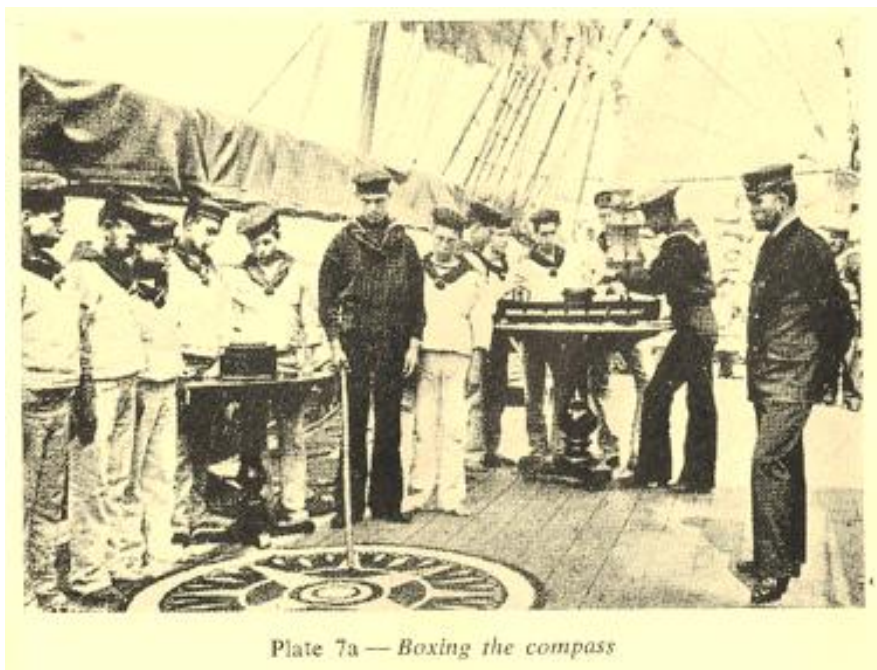


Plate 7a — Boxing the compass

Plate 7a – Boxing the compass

Boys' training continued on board until 1906 when the ship was sold to Messrs. Castle and Company to be broken up, the boys being transferred to other ships,

The next 'St Vincent' was constructed under Lord Fisher's programme to build up the British Battle Fleet, an operation necessitated by the advent of vessels like HMS 'Dreadnought' (1906) which made all ships built prior to her hopelessly outdated and outclassed. She was 'class leader' of a class of three battleships. Her equivalents being HMS 'Collingwood' and HMS 'Vanguard'. 'St Vincent'. Launched on 10th September. 1908 was of 19,250 tons, had ten twelve inch guns and eighteen four inch guns, (which were later changed, four of the four inch guns being replaced by three inch anti-aircraft guns, when the significance of air power became apparent), and she had a ten inch armour belt. The hull was built in Portsmouth Dockyard, and her engines which developed some 24,500 HP and would propel her at a maximum speed of 21 knots. Were manufactured by Scots of Greenock.

Immediately after commissioning she became flagship of the Rear Admiral Commanding the First Battle Squadron, and she remained



Plate 8 — *HMS 'St Vincent', 1913*

Plate 8 – 'HMS St Vincent', 1913

in this squadron until 1916 when she joined the Fourth Battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet. As part of this fleet she took part in the action off Jutland in the May of that year, commanded by Captain W. W. Fisher, later Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.

In 1919, she went into reserve as flagship of the Rear Admiral Commanding Reserves until in December 1921 she was sold for Scrap.

The name then descended to the realms of Dockyard craft. for the next 'St Vincent' to appear was a steam launch. Number 288. which was used Within the Portsmouth Command.

FORTON BARRACKS

In 1713, the first ever Naval hospital was opened at Gosport; known as the 'Fortune' or Forton Hospital it had some seven hundred beds and was founded by one Nathaniel Jackson. who ran it under contract to the Admiralty. Whilst this system had potential advantages. private enterprise was more often turned to private advantage, the inmates of the hospital being the victims. Indeed Jackson left the running of the hospital entirely to his servants and very rarely visited it.

However. between 1746 and 1762 the Royal Naval Hospital at Haslar was built by John Turner, at the investigation of the Earl of Sandwich and when it was opened, the patients from Fortune Hospital were transferred, the premises at Forton now being used for a more suitable purpose. that or housing French prisoners of war. Nevertheless. it was soon found that 'Fortune Hospital', still under private management, was unsuitable even as a prisoner of war camp, so in 1755 the prisoners were sent to Portchester Castle - where they were guarded by a regiment of 'Old Buffs'.

The American War Of Independence had broken out in 1755, the colonists being considered guilty of treason against the British monarch, after a special act of Parliament which 'empowered His Majesty to secure and detain persons charged with. or suspected of, the crime of high treason. committed in any of His Majesty's colonies or plantations, in America . . . or on the high seas . . . or of the crime of piracy', Any who were taken prisoner were transported to England to be incarcerated at 'a certain messuage or building known as Forton.' Between 1775 and 1777 eighty-seven prisoners broke out — a fact which speaks clearly of the conditions which they had to endure, inadequate supervision and probably of patriotism — towards America.

In spite of its none too admirable record. Forton went from strength to strength as a prison. From 1793 to 1815 it was used as a place of confinement for Frenchmen captured during the battles of the Napoleonic Wars, beginning in 1793, with a mere thousand prisoners. and ending in 1815 with four thousand: the majority being housed in hulks moored in Forton Creek. It is not surprising that large numbers of them died — the highest rate of death being

achieved between 1776 and 1795 when one third of the prisoners perished. Their graveyard is near the site of the present open-air swimming bath. It should of course be remembered that prisoners with life sentences were not sent to Botany Bay in Australia until 1787.

On 22nd July, 1807, the old wooden buildings at Forton were destroyed by fire and the present 'Main Blocks' were constructed, to be used as hospital wards for prisoners of war. The only part of Forton Barracks dating back to the eighteenth century is part of the naval store — the remains being part of an old cell block, which seems to have consisted of eight cells about fifteen feet long, six feet high, and twelve feet wide, a small barred window on the outside wall admitting a little light.

After the cessation of hostilities Forton became a military barracks, consisting of 'four lofty and extensive brick pavilions, connected by arcades of great extent, with a parade ground of some acres and with apartments for

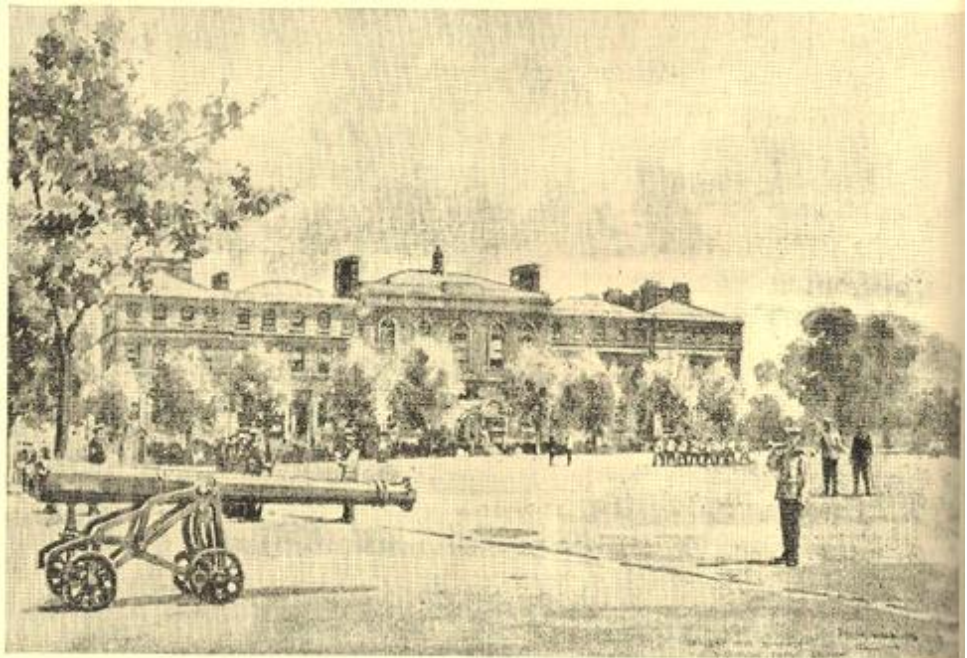


Plate 9—*Royal Marine Officers' Mess 1860—(The cannon in the foreground is now at the Royal Marine Barracks, Eastney. It was captured from the Burmese and was brought from Mandalay by Sir Harry Prendergast)*

Plate 9 – Royal Marine Officers' Mess 1860

officers. These are the most airy and elegant barracks in the neighbourhood.* In 1848. they were handed over by the Department of Ordnance of the War Department, to the Royal Marine Light Infantry — 'The Royal Marines of this division, after repealed orders and counter orders are now in the course of removal from this garrison (Eastney). to Gosport. Four companies of the Division crossed the harbour yesterday, (31st March), for Forton Barracks. and the remainder of the companies with the Headquarters will follow on Monday . . . † Henceforward Forton Barracks were gradually altered to be more in keeping with their purpose. The Forton Arms which stood just outside the Barracks made way for the Commanding Officers' residence. In 1865. three additional blocks were built and the site of the Open Air Swimming Bath was reclaimed between 1841 and 1856 and 1867 and 1885. A new galley was constructed in 1852 to provide better 'domestic' arrangements for the Marines. Millpond was bought by the Admiralty from the Bishop of Winchester in 1858 for £775 — and was reclaimed at a cost of £11,789 2s. 6d.!

Forton Field was purchased in three separate strips. the last in 1856.

East House and West House were built in 1849. as was the Wardroom. the Band Gallery being added at a later date, and the whole being converted in 1900. The two rooms downstairs became the ante room and library — the ante room being previously the breakfast room. ‡ Cedar Cottage, dating from 1849 was bought by the Admiralty in 1857, and in 1898 the Sick Bay, previously a Cottage Hospital, was added to the Establishment. In 1891 the school at Millpond was taken over for the education of the children of Marines serving in the Barracks. The theatre was opened in 1893 — though at the time it 'trebled' as theatre, cinema and gymnasium. The stage was raised to its present elevated position in 1894. §

Since the Barracks had been a POW camp, and contained within its boundaries two cemeteries, a number of 'legends' were rife. The most 'popular' concerned the 'Ghost of Gunnery Park' ¶ The post was

* Colonel Field. 'Britain's Sea Soldiers'.

† Royal Marine Orders.

‡ see Plates 13 and 14.

§ see Plate 26.

¶ Even in 1965 is a 'legendary ghost' — that of a Royal Marine who committed suicide in the Wardroom.

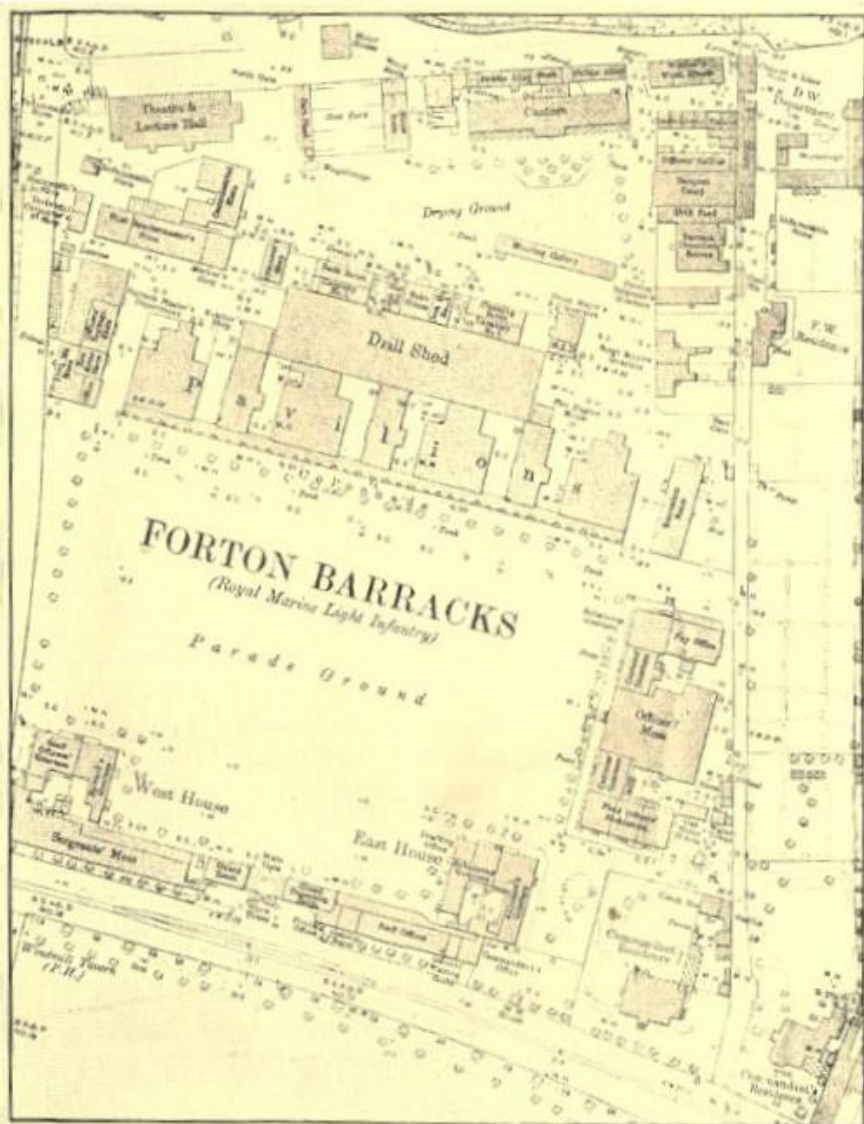


Plate 10

Plate 10 – Plan... Forton Barracks

was most unpopular with the young soldiers — and the locality was lonely and depressing, the beat extended round the old Gun Battery which had a reproduction of a line of a battleship minus its masts, round the swimming pool, which was surrounded by a high wooden palisade; and two derelict graveyards*¹ - whence the ghost was supposed to walk.

However, since the Commandant's donkey was kept in the one cemetery, one suspects that this innocent animal was responsible for most of the scares!

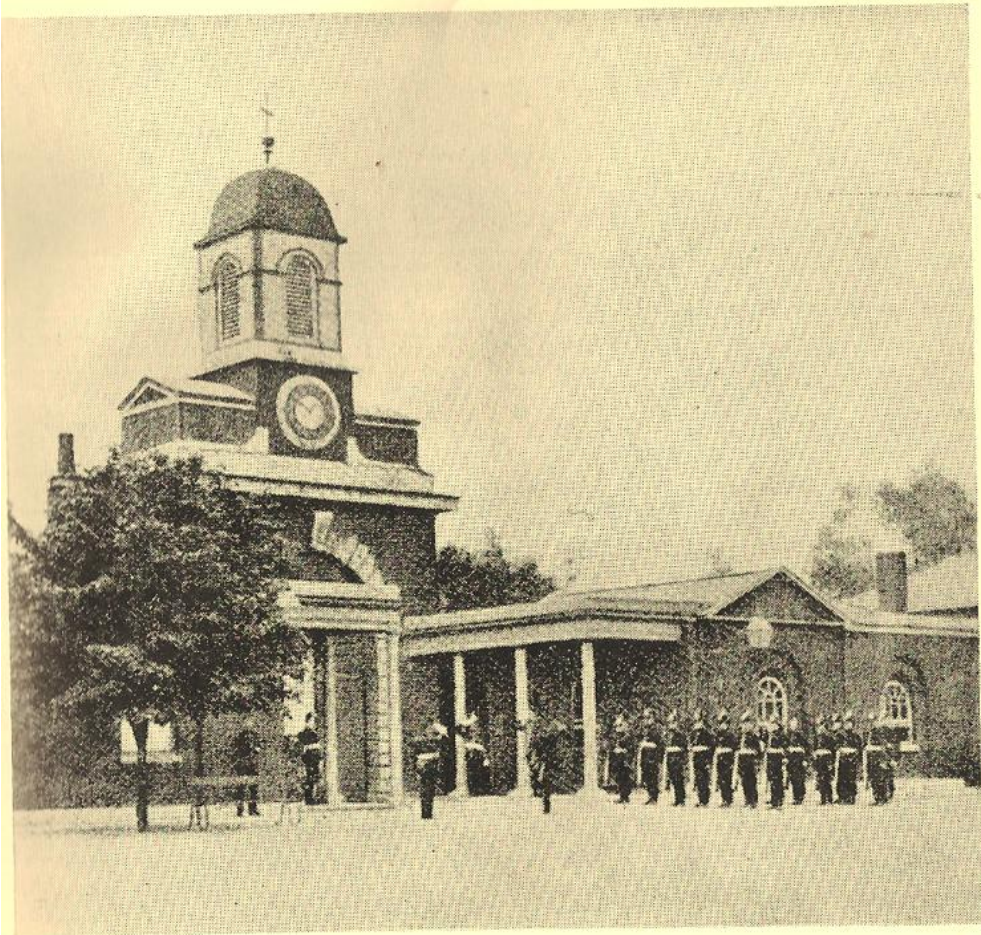


Plate 11 — *The entrance gate to Forton Barracks 1896*

Plate 11 - Main Gate, 1896

* The Globe and Laurel. March, 1929.

There were no further significant changes to the fabric of the Barracks during the next two decades — but in 1923 the Royal Marine Light Infantry and the Royal Marine Artillery were amalgamated, the whole being accommodated in the Barracks at Eastney. The last of the Marines left Forton Barracks on 5th September, 1923, the colours having been transferred to Eastney on 1st August. The buildings were to stand derelict and deserted for almost four years.

On 30th August, 1923 a Committee was appointed to 'Examine and report the possibility of utilising Forton Barracks as an overflow Boys' Training Establishment.'* This committee met several times at the Admiralty and visited the Barracks. It reported that the fabric of the Establishment needed modernising, but that with suitable modification it would be suitable for the purpose, it being possible to accommodate '684 boys. the basis of approximately 600 cubic feet, and 60 superficial feet per boy . . . in the four

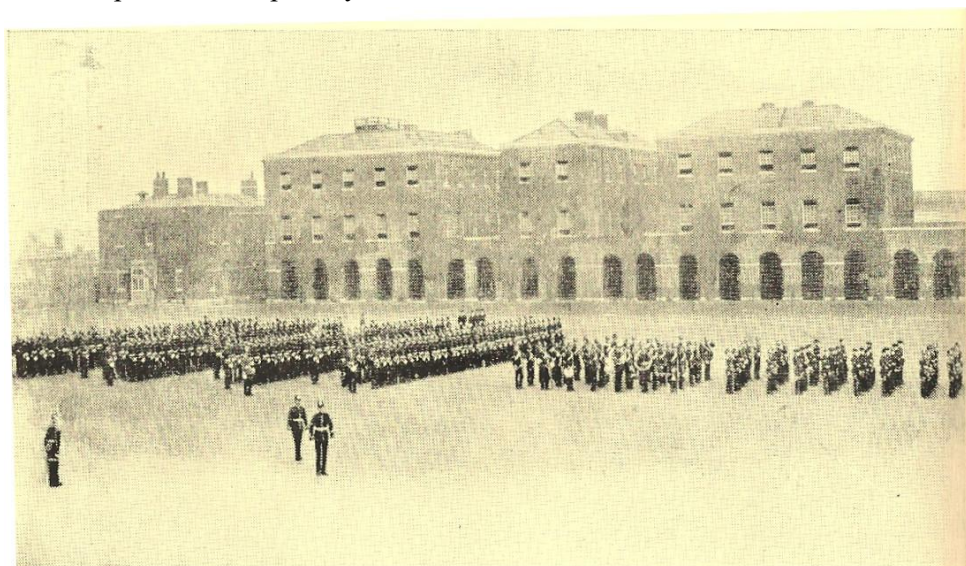


Plate 12 — *Church Parade. The Royal Marine Light Infantry 1899*

Plate 12 – Church Parade

*Letter from the secretary of the Admiralty to the Commander in Chief, the Nore.
30th August, 1923.

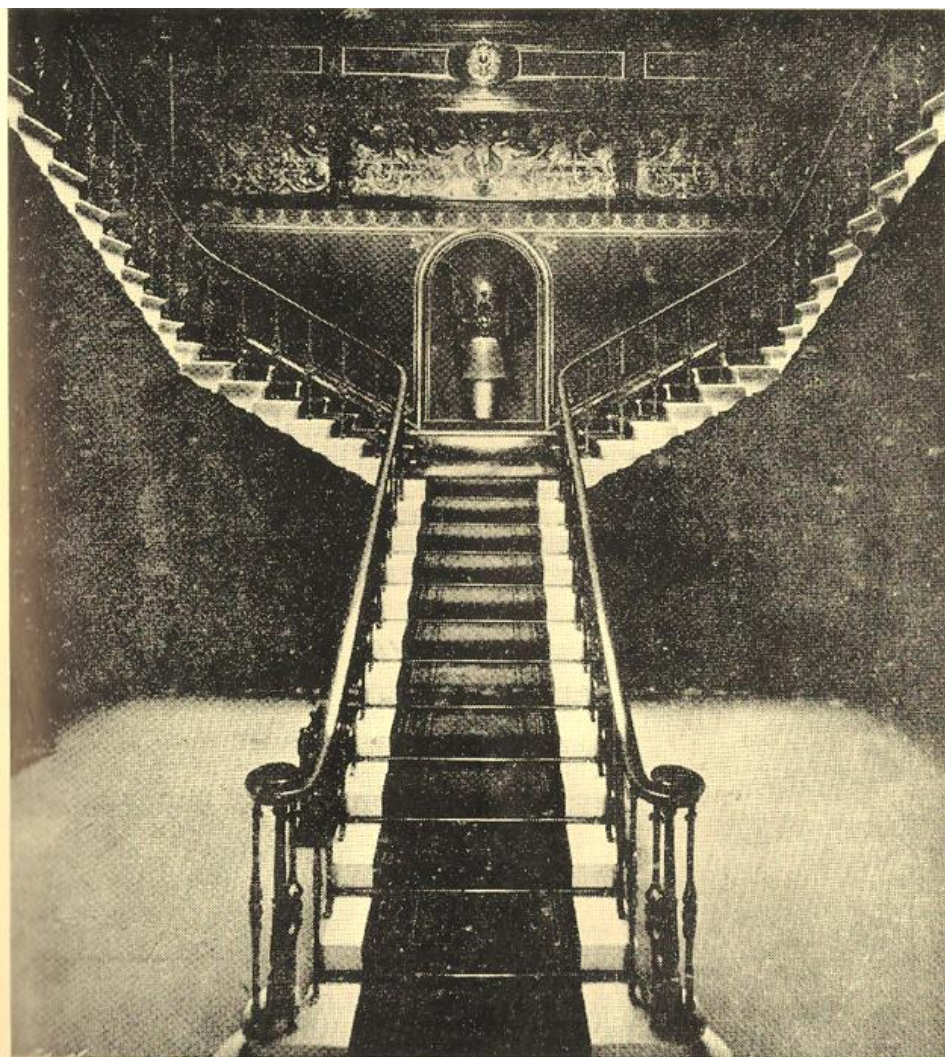


Plate 13 — *Staircase to the Officers' Mess (before addition of band gallery)*

Plate 13 – Staircase of the Officers' Mess (before addition of band gallery)

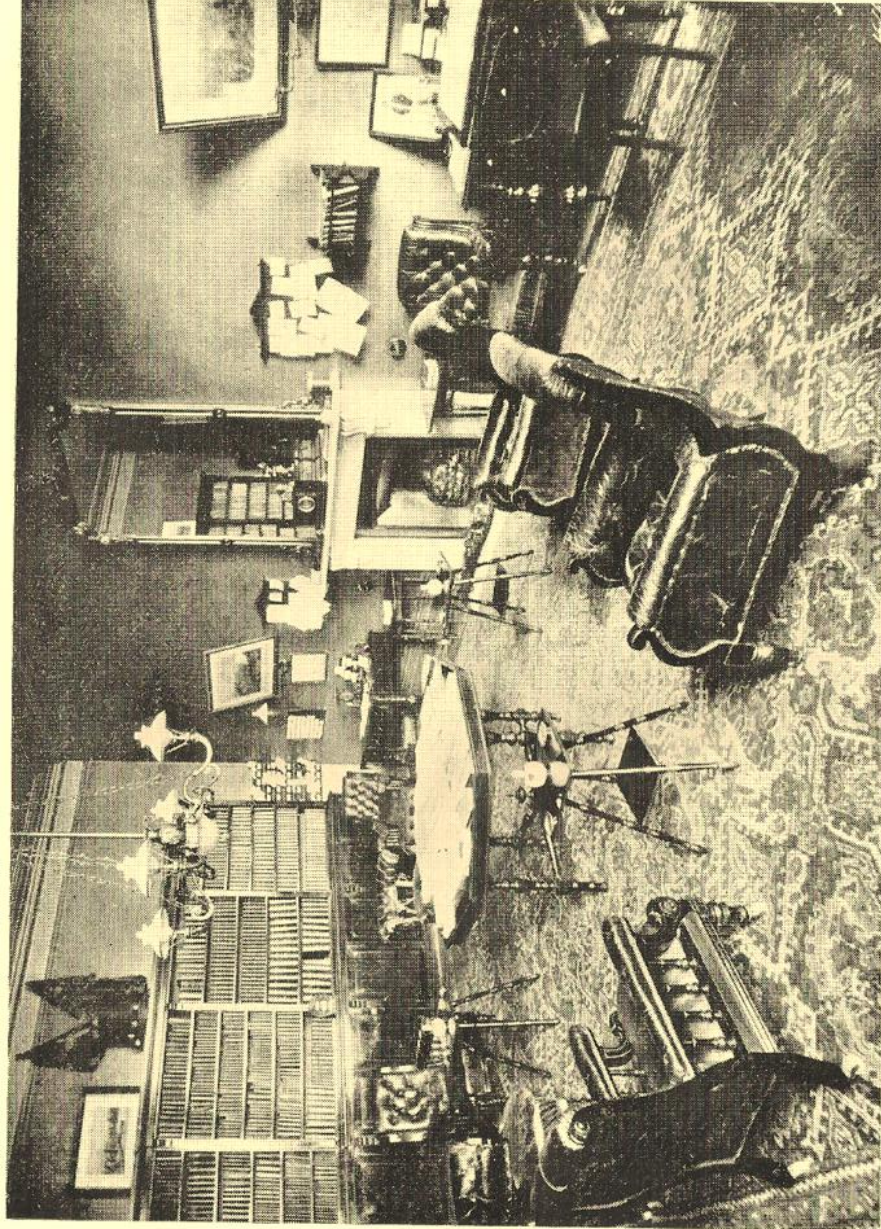


Plate 14—Officers' Mess Library, 1899. (This is now the Television Lounge!)

Plate 14 - Wardroom Library

large and three small Barrack Blocks.* The total complement required for the boys would consist of 19 Commissioned Officers. 32 Warrant Officers, 31 Chief Petty Officers. 62 Petty Officers, 152 Ratings and 25 Civilian Pensioners. The cost of the necessary repairs was estimated at £130,780. this figure including provision for the fitting of electric lighting. The cost of running the Establishment for a year, excluding the maintenance of the boys, was estimated at £88,975.

The proposals were accepted by the Admiralty and the necessary alterations were put in hand. These included a new indoor swimming bath.† However the whole works programme was much delayed by the General Strike of 1926. more especially the installation of the machinery for the new boiler house. Indeed for some months steam for cooking was provided by 'portable auxiliary boilers:

Further tangible progress came on 1st March. 1927 When the Board of Customs and Excise 'Added the old Headquarter Barracks at Forton to the "Privilege List" or shore establishments to which special permission has been given for the supply of duty free victualling yard Stores. rum and Service tobacco.'‡

In October 1926 the name of the new Establishment was decided upon, 'St Vincent' was proposed because 'a Boys Training Ship of that name was moored for many years off Gosport. and consequently the name has local associations. Moreover the use of this title should stimulate the interest of the boys in the character and career of Admiral Lord St Vincent, who was peculiarly distinguished for a high sense of duty and of discipline.'§

* Report of Committee_

† See Appendix A.

‡ Letter from secretary of the Admiralty to Commander In Chief. Portsmouth.

§ Letter Commander in Chief, Portsmouth (Admiral Sir O. de B. to the Secretary of the Admiralty_



SIR JOHN JERVIS, AFTERWARDS LORD ST. VINCENT.
(From the portrait by Sir Wm. Beechey, R.A.)

Plate 14a - Earl st Vincent

THE ROYAL NAVY MOVES TO FORTON

On 17th May, 1927, the present HMS St Vincent was first commissioned as a Boys' Training Establishment, with Captain P. L. H. Noble. CVO, in command. On June 1st, 434 boys arrived from HMS 'Ganges' to make up the first 'Main Course', the first New Entries arriving on 7th June. It would be fair to say that they were not exactly impressed by the condition of their new home.

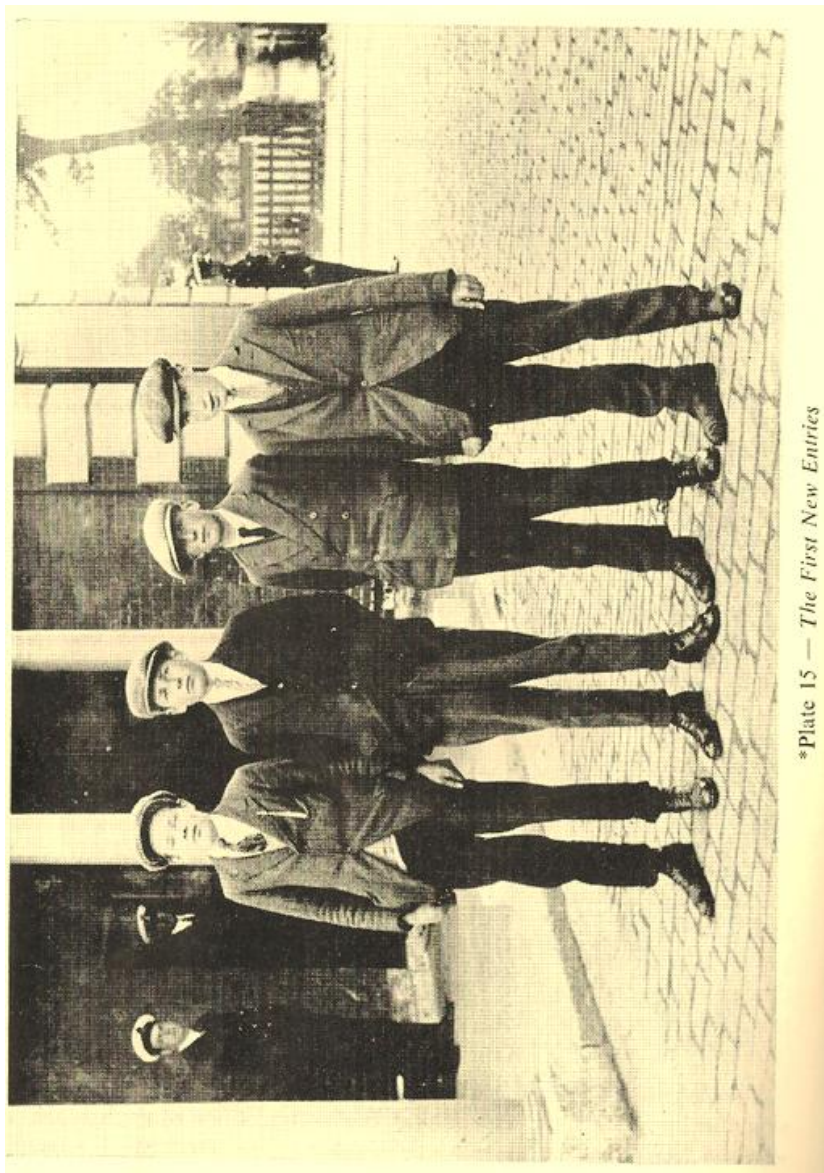
First the Swimming Bath was poor.
Full of mud and eels and dabs.
Stones and rocks and concrete slabs.
Little water, lots of crabs.
All were there.
The Seamanship Department,
Keeps us fit.
As the water's miles away.
To reach the boat takes half a day.
And we walk the whole darned way —
Every bit.
The Gunnery Department,
Has a park,
At least they call it one;
It looks dreadful in the sun,
And they say that 'ghosties' run
After dark.*

That most essential part of the Establishment, the Parade Ground, had been refurbished, prior to commissioning with best quality gravel, 'A frosted glassy substance with rough top and efficient drains'† — something that was to keep scores of boys under punishment occupied with a large roller — whether this is preferable to 'doubling under arms' is a matter of opinion.

The 'Main Blocks'—Hawke, Anson, Duncan and Blake—were structurally as in 1965, except that the ground floor of each block was the Mess for the appropriate division, The Drill Shed. (now

* St Vincent' Magazine Vol. 1 _ No. 1.

† St Vincent' Magazine, op cit.



**Plate 15 — The First New Entries*

**Plate 15 - First New Entries*

the Dining Hall) being used as originally intended. The meals were cooked in the galley adjacent to this shed with the result that the meals 'arrived on the plate of the consumer in a fairly unpalatable condition.'*

After initial clearing operations, and those tasks still familiar to us all. some new buildings were opened. On 20th June both the Open Air Swimming Bath and the Rifle Range were used for the first time, the former having been reclaimed for use in addition to the new indoor pool. In October, the Chapel was dedicated by the Chaplain of the Fleet, whilst in August the first edition of this magazine had appeared.

Although 'St Vincent' as viewed from the Main Gate bore a very close resemblance to the Establishment as we know it, the buildings behind the main divisional blocks. (then, Forecastle, Foretop. Maintop and Quarterdeck) were very different.

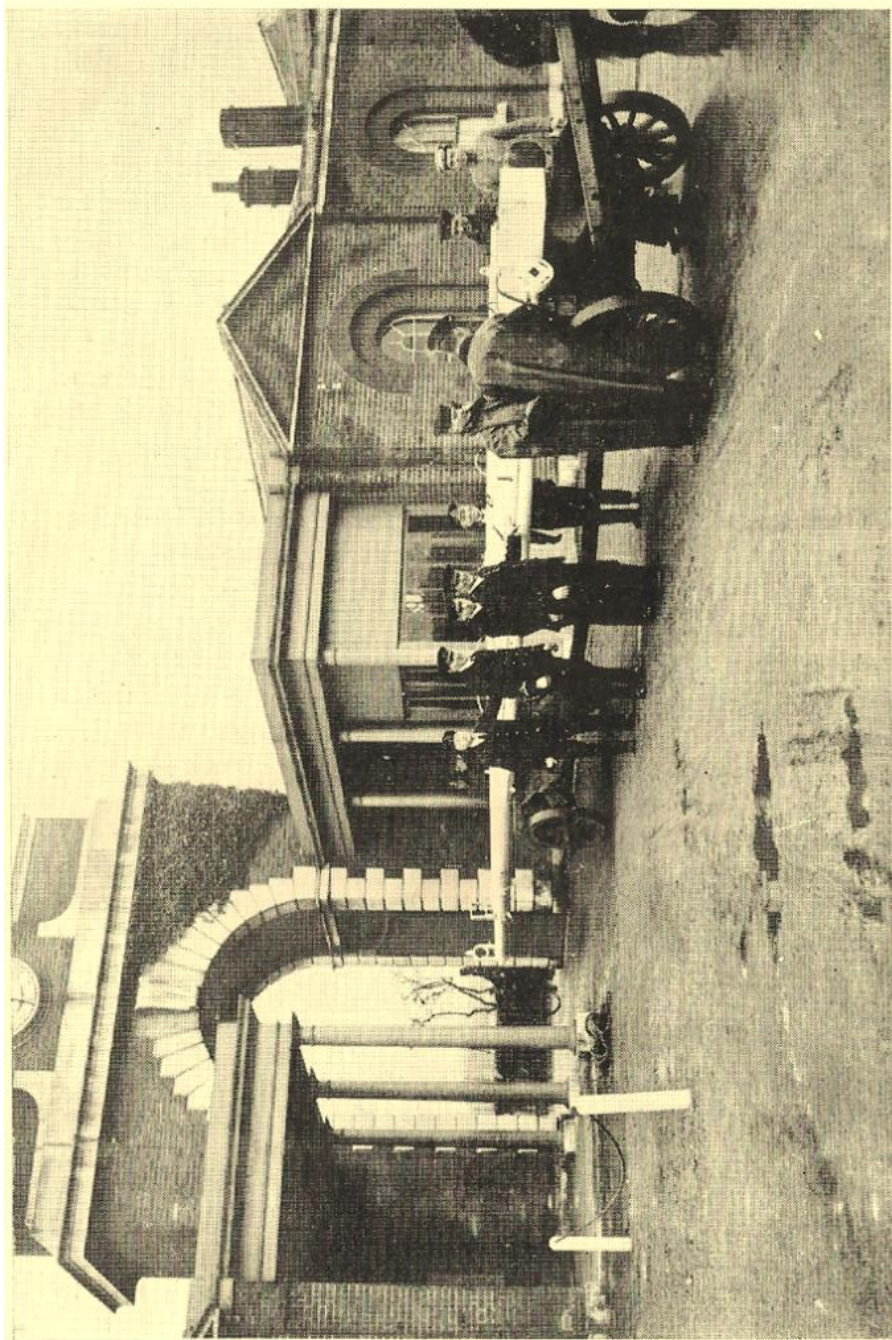
On the site of the present Seamanship Block and its immediate environs was 'Gunnery park'. To judge from the remarks pertaining to it 'the green grass on the newly laid lawns'† 'the avenue of trees' — 'a very fine rock bank',‡ the gunnery staff spent more time gardening than instructing, more especially one CPO Fletcher. There was also a building known as 'The Old Ship' fitted Out to represent the deck of a ship. The Seamanship rooms themselves were in the ground floor of the present DUNCAN block — canvas curtains making the 'classrooms'.

The school buildings were in very much the same shape as at present, except that none of the wooden huts had yet appeared, their being occupied by yet another rock garden. Indeed it was only a relatively short time before, that Millpond itself had been divided up into allotments for the benefit of members of the old Royal Marine Establishment.

It was not until 1933 that the mast arrived — so for six years 'New Entries' were spared at least one of the terrors of the first few weeks in the Navy. The lower part of the mast arrived on the 1st November, and by 1st March the mast as we know it — except that it had a weather vane instead of the 'button' — was completed. The lower part of the mast came from the German battleship 'Baden' which was scuttled after the surrender of the High Seas Fleet at Scapa Flow. She was salvaged and towed to Portsmouth in 1920 to

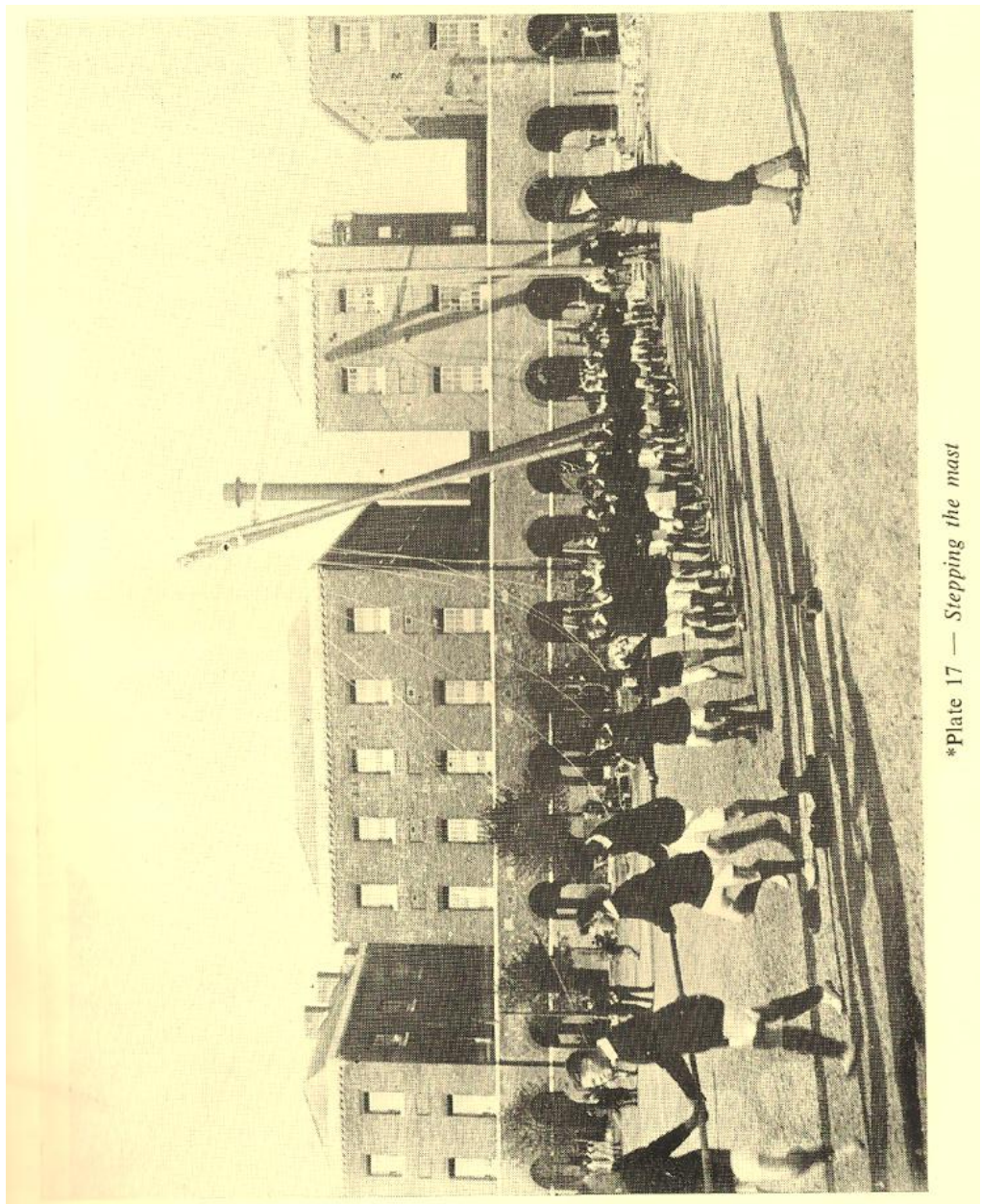
*Letter from Captain M. N. Tufnell, DSC. RN, to the Author.

†'St Vincent Magazine. vol. 1. No. 2. P, 58.



**Plate 16 — The arrival of the mast*

**Plate 16 – Arrival of the Mast*



**Plate 17 – Stepping the Mast*

be broken up. The mast was then used as a derrick post in the dockyard until its removal to 'St Vincent'. The top mast and the topgallant mast came from HMS 'Emperor of India' and the Upper Signal Yard from HMS 'Calliope'. The weather vane was not removed until 1964 when it was replaced by a button. The 'record' for climbing the mast stands at 1 minute 8 seconds — a rate of climb which is not likely to be officially altered simply because mast 'racing' is not now encouraged.

The next major change to the Structure of the Establishment took place in 1936 when Seamanship Instruction was transferred to newly erected huts on Millpond. However, these huts were transferred to school in 1938 when the seamanship Block was erected on what had been known as 'The Old Ship'. In the same year, the majority of the Ship's Company was drafted because of the threat of war with Germany and for a few months the establishment was cared for entirely by pensioners. After the Munich Agreement things returned to normal — for a while — although the Army retained control of Forton Field.

With the clouds of war still gathering ARP trenches were dug and air raid shelters constructed around the establishment — even under the Parade



**Plate 18 — The passing of the 'Old Ship'*

**Plate 18 – The passing of 'The Old Ship'*



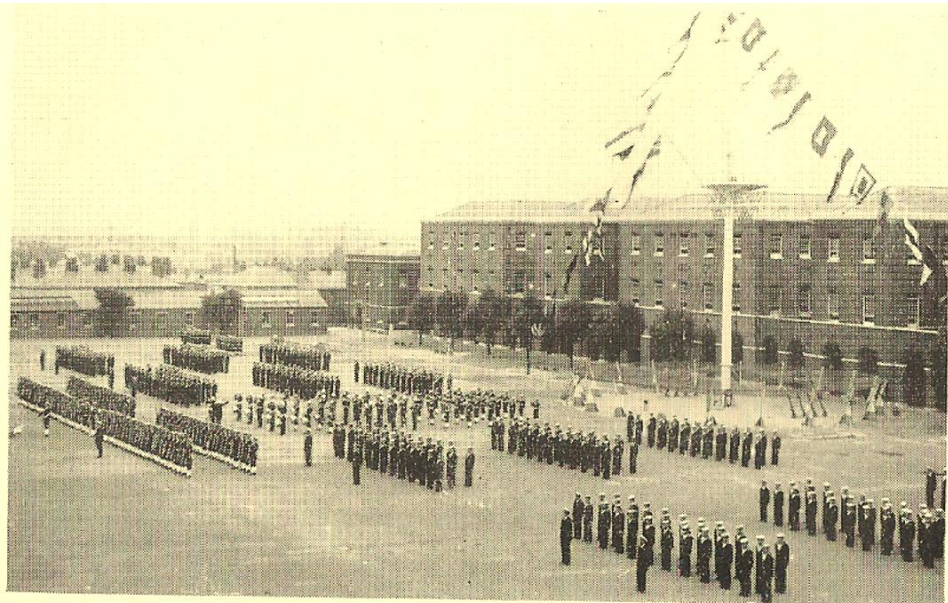
**Plate 19 — Evacuation 1939*

**Plate 19 – Evacuation 1939*

Ground; but this work was not allowed to interfere with Sunday Divisions! (See Plates 38 and 40.)

On 28th January, 1939, the Indoor Swimming Bath was reopened after being considerably extended, but the boys did not receive immediate benefit since on the outbreak of war they were transferred to the Isle of Man. Here, together with the boys from 'Caledonia' they had the pleasure of occupying Cunningham's Holiday Camp (now the Douglas Holiday Camp) for the duration. The Camp became HMS 'St George'.

Throughout the war HMS 'St Vincent' was used as a training centre for potential members of the Fleet Air Arm. At first Telegraphist Air Gunners and Pilots received their naval training in the Establishment, but were later joined by Observer Courses, at the same time that the last 'Air Mechanics' Course passed out. The establishment remained relatively unscathed during the war, the only real damage being caused by a bomb which fell just inside the Main Gate during the heavy bombing raids of January 1941. A small signal mast was destroyed and a shelter damaged. A further bomb fell on Forton Field and this 'knocked out' a Barrage Balloon Unit killing 14 men.



**Plate 20 — Victory Parade 1945*

**Plate 20 – Victory Parade 1945*



**Plate 21 — Victory March Past*

**Plate 21 – Victory March past*

On 20th February, 1946. 'St Vincent' recommissioned as a Boys' Training Establishment, her Commanding Officer, Captain J. W. M. Eaton. DSO, DSC. having been appointed on 14th December, 1945.



**Plate 22 — The first post war New Entries*

**Plate 22 – the first post war New Entries*

The figurehead of Earl St Vincent immediately inside the Main Gate arrived early in 1946. It is a plaster cast of the figurehead of the old ship which was transferred to HMS 'Ganges' in 1900 when she was broken up. ('Ganges' being commissioned in the previous year). Just after the war, the decrepit condition of the figurehead was detected and two casts were made; the one is now here, and the other at Shotley†.

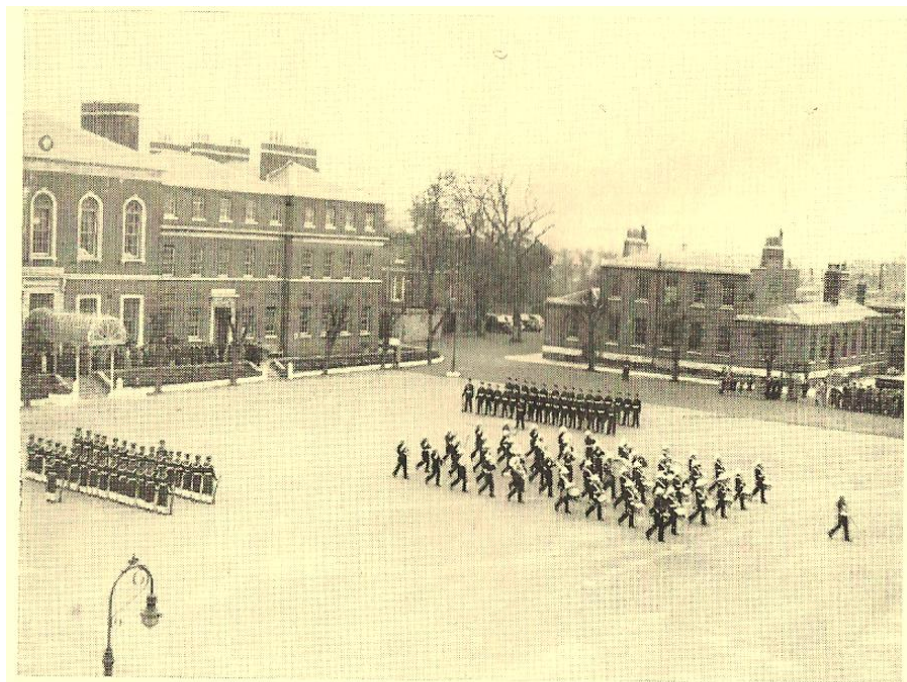
The Christmas Term of 1948 saw a major change in the aspect of the Establishment. The Parade Ground was resurfaced with 'delicious black, sticky tar Macadam — and four tons of the very finest granite chippings — lightly strewn upon the surface', The old parade Ground was last used for ceremonial on 7th April in the same year;

† see Plate 50.

for on that day 'After an absence of twenty five years from Forton Barracks, Gasport, Royal Marines who first took possession of the Establishment in 1848 marched across the parade Ground in a stirring Ceremony — the Centenary Celebrations .†

The last real innovation before the present commission, was the opening of the Museum by the Viscountess St. Vincent on 2nd July, 1955. in what had been the old WYT room. However mention should be made of the good ship 'Droxford'. which was commissioned for 'St Vincent' on 7th July. 1959 and has since taken thousands or boys for trips round the Channel, or 'Sea Training' as these exercises are more properly called.

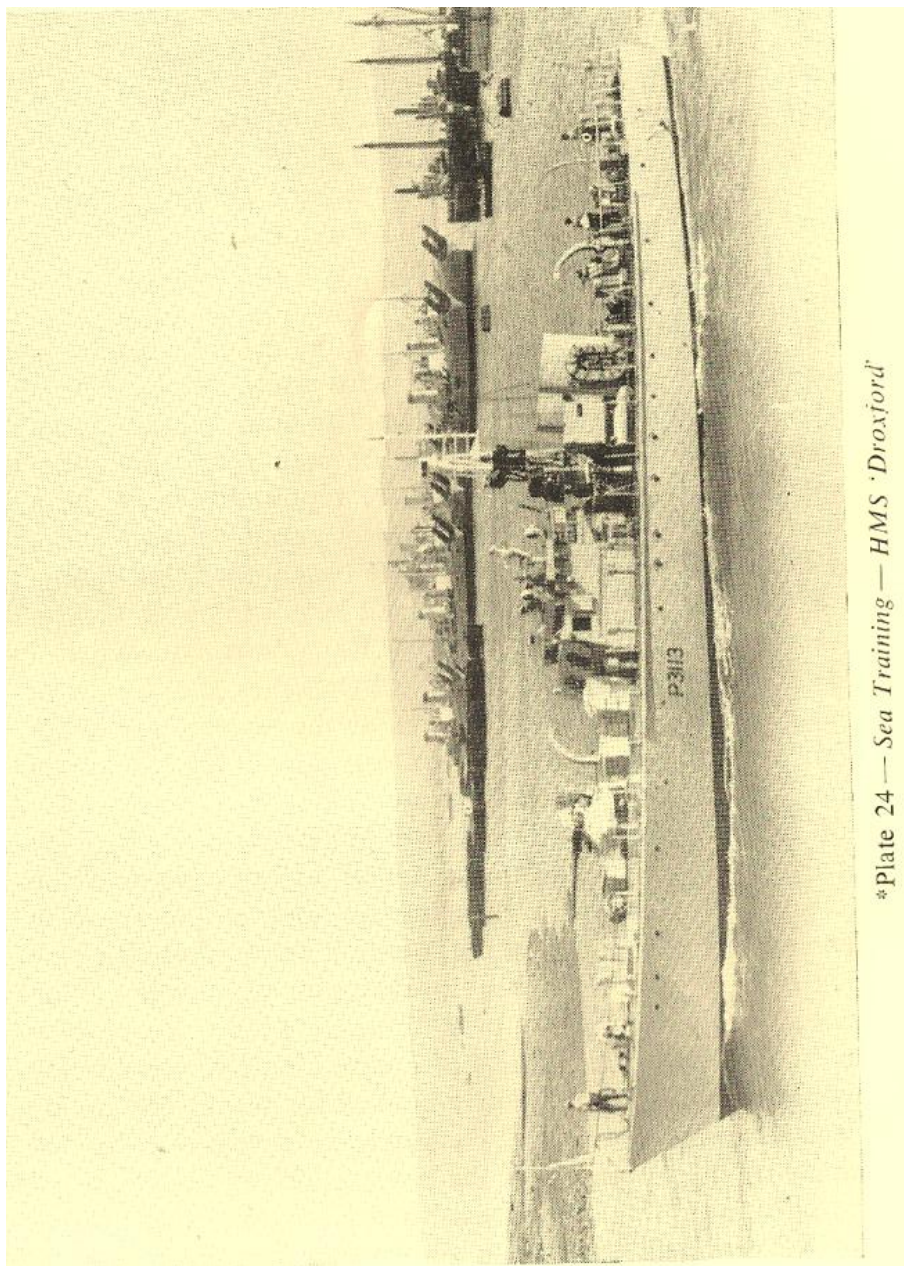
Nevertheless. there have been in recent years numerous external and internal changes to the buildings — notably those of the Petty Officers' Mess and the Chief Petty Officers' Mess. Moreover. most of the boys' blocks now have luxuriously appointed bathrooms. The ship's company too, have been provided with different accommodation — Twineham huts, though these could scarcely be described as



**Plate 23 — The Centenary celebrations 1948*

Plate 23 – The Centenary celebrations 1948

† Portsmouth Evening News 8th April,



**Plate 24 — Sea Training — HMS 'Droxford'*

**Plate 24 Sea Training – HMS Droxford*

permanent! Finally in the summer term of 1965, 'St Vincent' was given a Drill Shed — not quite too late for the boys to savour its delights!

The closing of HMS 'St Vincent' as a Boys' Training Establishment will bring to an end an era, for, perhaps surprisingly, the activities which have taken place within its walls, as well as without, have not changed a great deal since it first opened. There have certainly been changes in emphasis, and indeed the changes which have taken place in the Royal Navy have been reflected there: but certainly as far as the citizens of Gosport are concerned, the events which they see are much the same, though performed by different boys.

It is this aspect of the activities of the Establishment which will change, and, one suspects, it is this aspect which will be most missed. The following pages attempt to show typical events of the past which are most unlikely to be seen again 'this side of the water' The activities depicted are representative of those which have taken place over the last thirty years; the uniforms change, as do the personnel involved — the background, but rarely.

Until the Easter Term of 1956 all boys joining 'St Vincent' were seamen, but in that year the 'Boy Entry' was extended to include the Engineering, Air and Electrical Branches, the 'Electrical Boys' being sent to 'St Vincent', as well as the seamen. Over the years since then, the proportions have changed, so that at the present time the vast majority of the Boys are Junior Electrical Mechanics.

The age at which the boys have joined has not varied, indeed it is the proposed change in the school leaving age which has been largely instrumental in changing the task of the Establishment. Their 'condition' whilst at 'St Vincent' has improved a great deal . . . from the shilling a week pocket money and a bar of soap received by the New Entry of 1927 to the £1 a week of today's recruit. (These figures do not of course take into consideration the money which is automatically banked for them.) There is a tendency to compare pay and conditions in isolation: there is for example no doubt at all that the boy of 1927 was less well paid and that the food which he received had less variety. . . BUT. . . the general standard throughout the country was not so high as it is now. Certainly life was hard in the navy, but there is no real reason to suppose that it was so much worse than life outside, more especially during the 'Great Depression'. Emphasis is sometimes placed on the fact that punishments were

much more severe — but so was chastisement in a civilian school. It has to be remembered that the Navy is a part of Britain, and as Britain changed and changes — so does the Navy. Perhaps, regrettably, naval changes tend to take somewhat longer, as the 21,512 boys who came into the service via 'St Vincent' will no doubt agree.

The citizens of Gosport will immediately detect the shift in emphasis of 'St Vincent' no more 'Fireworks Nights' or Sports Days for example: but these events, spectacular though they are, represent only the tip of the iceberg. They are a very small portion of the overall picture and in many ways the least important part of it. The real task of training men for the sea will go on as it has in the past — less obvious, but there just the same.

Pages 42 & 43 are missing

Pages 42 & 43 are missing

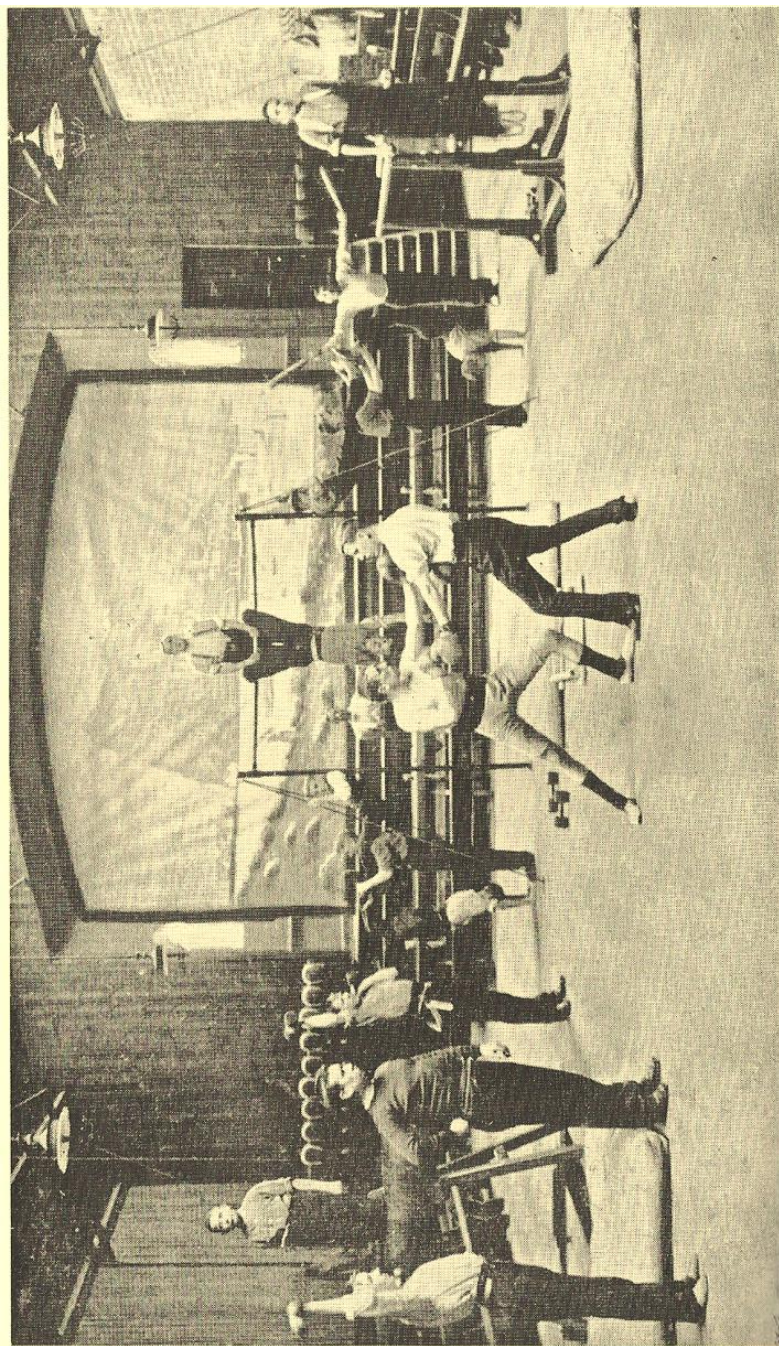
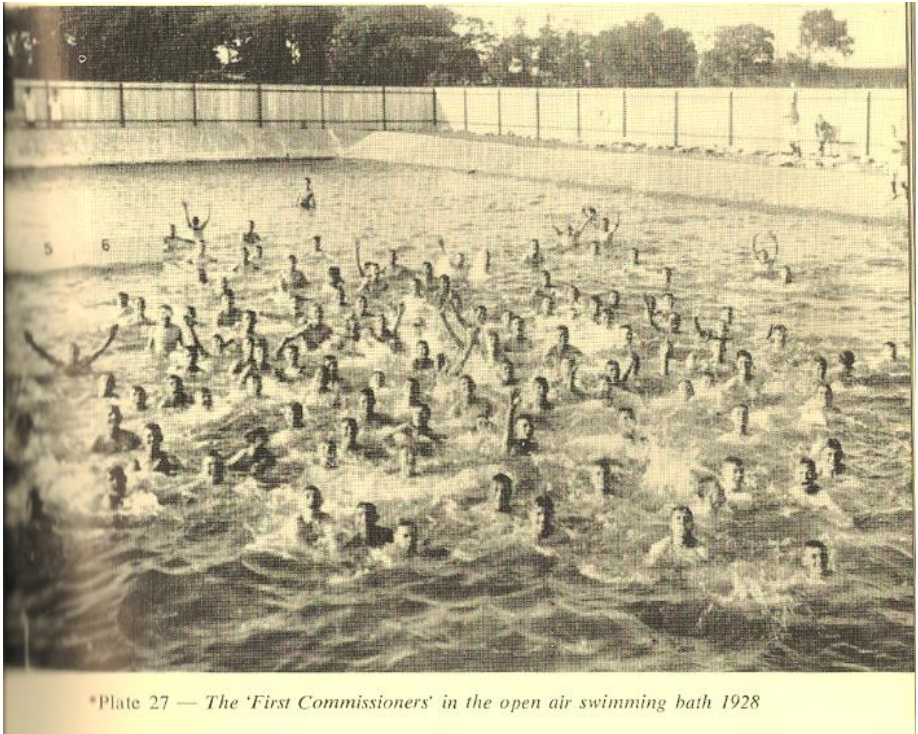


Plate 26 — Boxing 1899 in the new gymnasium theatre

Plate 26 – Boxing in the new gymnasium theatre

Plate 26:

Part of what is now the Dining Hall Was a gymnasium when HMS 'St Vincent' was commissioned in 1927, But because the theatre represents the largest single covered accommodation within the Establishment it has been used, and is used, for an enormous variety of purposes. These vary from the Christmas revue and the Drama Festival productions in the Spring, twice weekly film shows and the Saturday morning Current Affairs lecture, to kit musters for the passing out Entry. Moreover on Sundays for the past thirty years it has been transformed into a place of worship, the existing Chapel being too small to accommodate the congregation. (Church going being obligatory to juniors under training.)



**Plate 27 — The 'First Commissioners' in the open air swimming bath 1928*

**Plate 27 – 'The first Commissioners' in the open air swimming pool 1928*



**Plate 28 — St Vincent Roller Party, 1930*

**Plate 28 – St Vincent Roller Party 1930*

Plates 28 and 29:

The uniforms Which the boys in illustrations are wearing was part of their initial kit issue, differed from the existing clothing in that they were given 'crude white sailor suits (made) of a coarse material' - duck suits. These were worn instead of the present No 8 working dress. A black cap was also issued in addition to a white one, for members of the Royal Navy wore a black or white cap according to season, until comparatively recent times. (Black being used between October and May.) The 'soft nappy hat' by the hornpipe was also given for use within 'St Vincent'. It Was known as a 'Gibby'.



**Plate 29 — The Hornpipe 1931 style.
(Last repeated in 1965 for the British Trades Fair in Amsterdam)*

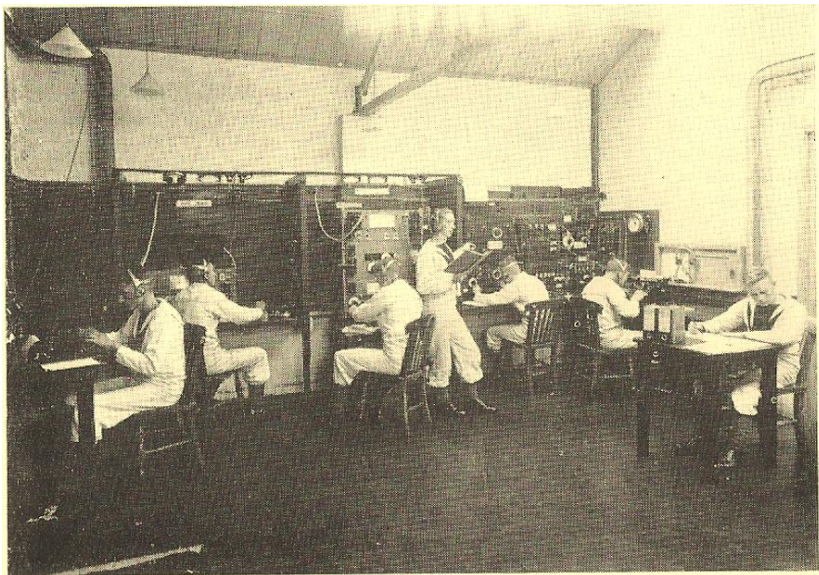
**Plate 29 – the Hornpipe 1931 style.
(Last repeated in 1965 for the British Trades Fair in Amsterdam)*



**Plate 30 — Field Gun Crew, 1933*

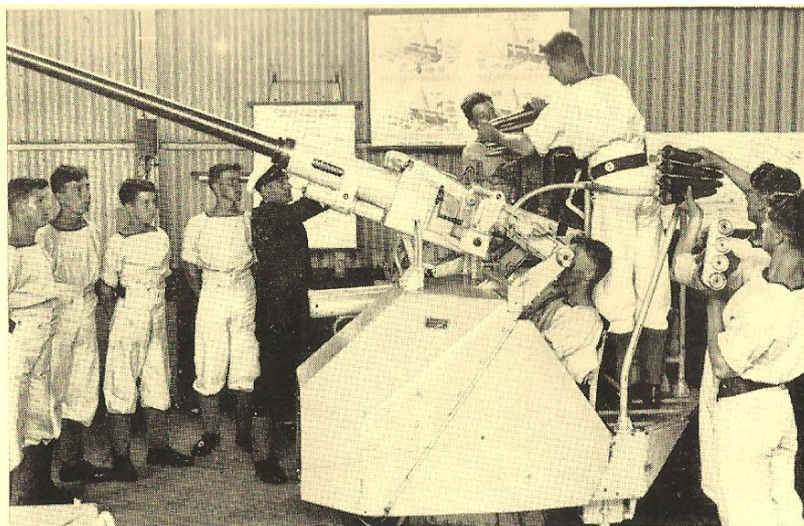
**Plate 30:- Field Gun Crew 1933*

The field gun competition had similar rules to that which is now held annually at the Whale island Tournament. The course consisted of a first leg from the Armoury to the Wardroom across the gravel parade ground. During the course of this leg a wheel had to be changed on both the limber and on the gun, while on reaching the Wardroom the limber had to be completely dismantled and three blank rounds fired. During the second leg, from Wardroom to Armoury all wheels had to be removed half way across the parade ground, the gun and limber had then to be reassembled and the whole thing pulled over the finishing line as quickly as humanly possible.



**Plate 31 — W/T instruction 1936 — in what is now the museum*

**Plate 31 – W/T instruction 1936 – in what is now the museum*



**Plate 32 — Gunnery instruction 1937*

(The vast majority of this instruction, parade training excepted, of course, is now carried out during visits to HMS Excellent)

Plate 32 – Gunnery instruction 1937 (The majority of this instruction, parade training excepted, of course, is now carried out at HMS Excellent)



**Plate 33 — Hands to Supper 1937*

**Plate 33 : Hands to supper 1937*

Food was collected and distributed by 'cooks of the mess' 'on a two for me one for you basis'. These boys had no part in the actual preparation of the food, but they had to wash up afterwards.



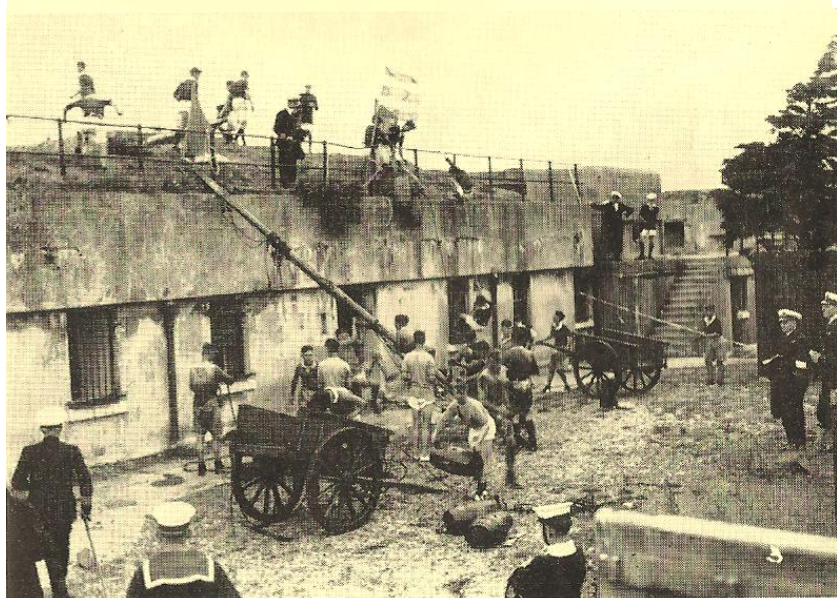
**Plate 34 — The .22 range 1937*

**Plate 34 – the .22 range 1937*



*Plate 35

THE COMMANDO CUP



*Plate 36

**Plates 35 & 36 – The Commando Cup*



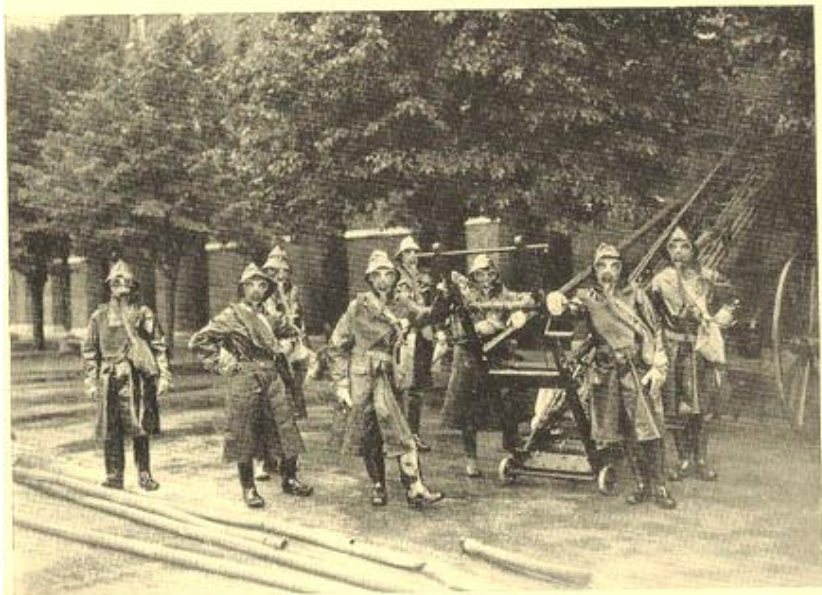
*Plate 37

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR, 1938



*Plate 38

**Plates 37 & 38 – Preparations for war*



**Plate 39 — Passive Defence, 1938*



**Plate 40 — Divisions as usual, 1939*

**Plate 39 – Passive Defence, 1938 - *Plate 40 Divisions as usual, 1939*



**Plate 41 – King's birthday parade 1951*

**Plate 41 — King's Birthday Parade, 1951*

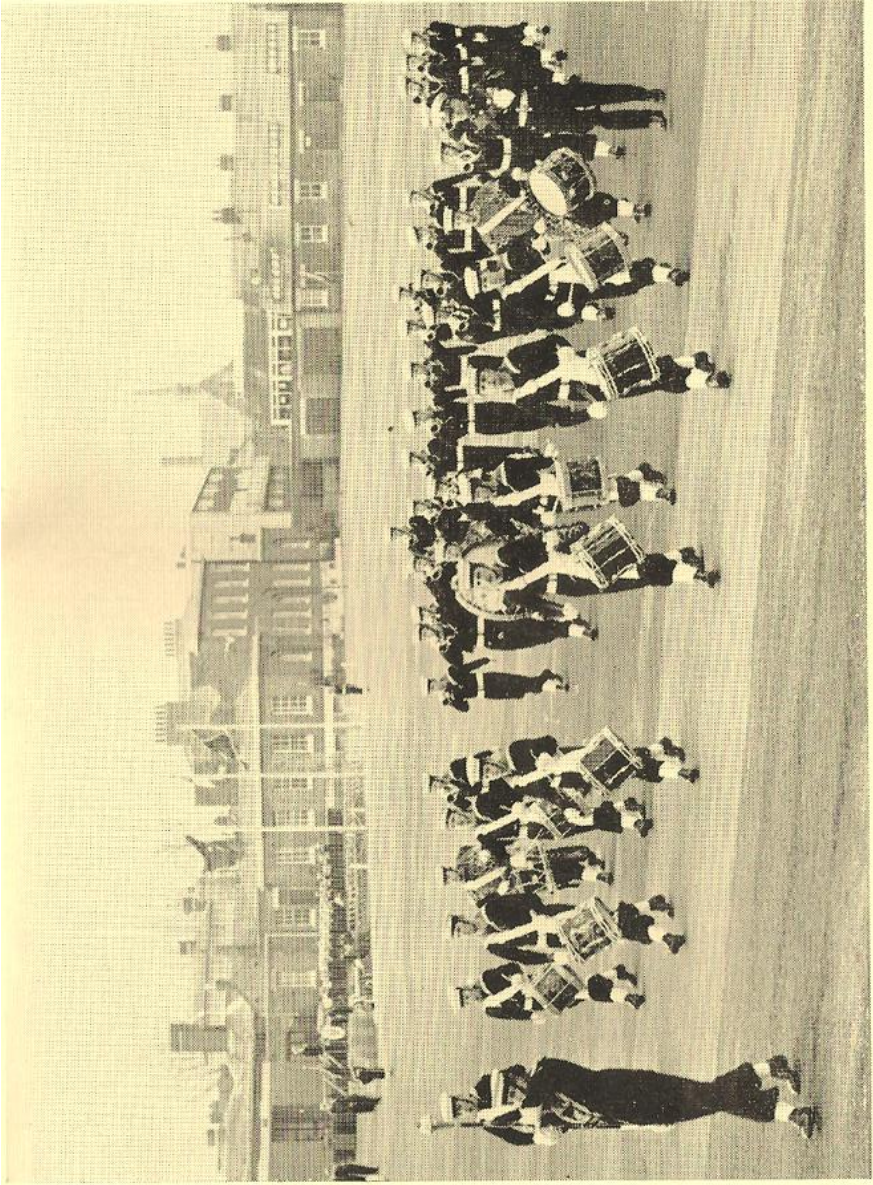
(In the past St Vincent was represented by a contingent at the Command Parade on Southsea Common)



**Plate 42 — Manning the mast*

This photograph, taken on 5th November 1964, shows the 'Button Boy' on the newly erected platform. (The Golden 'ball' and weather vane having been removed)

**Plate 42 – Manning the mast*



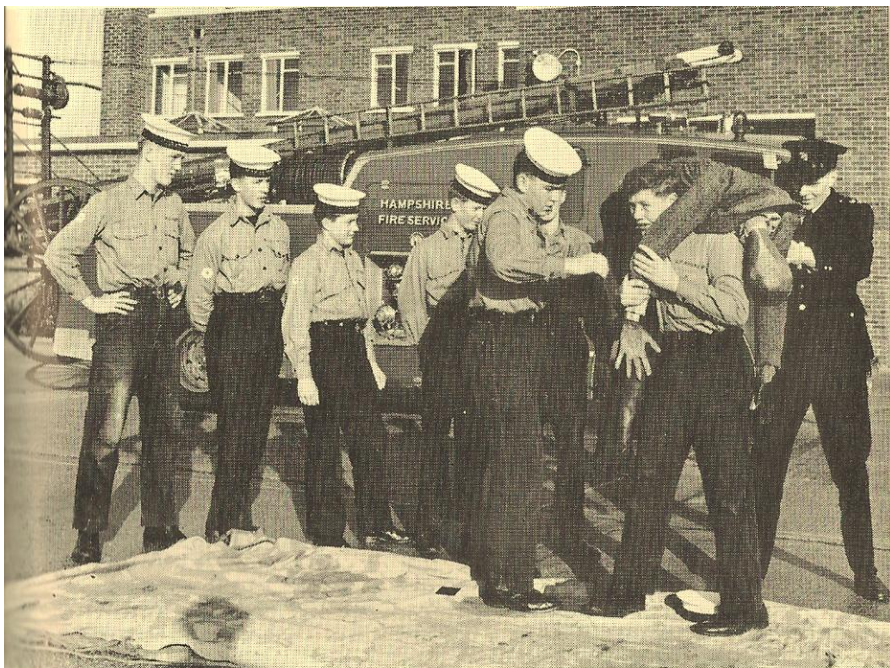
**Plate 43 — The Bugle Band, 1964*

**Plate 43 – The Bugle Band, 1964*

'Kit musters' have not varied very much since 1927. Nevertheless it would be fair to say that the further back from 1965 that one goes the more exacting were the requirements. For example in 1933 '*every* piece of clothing had to be rolled to the exact length of a Seamanship Manual and stopped the exact width. The stops had to be secured with a reef knot'.



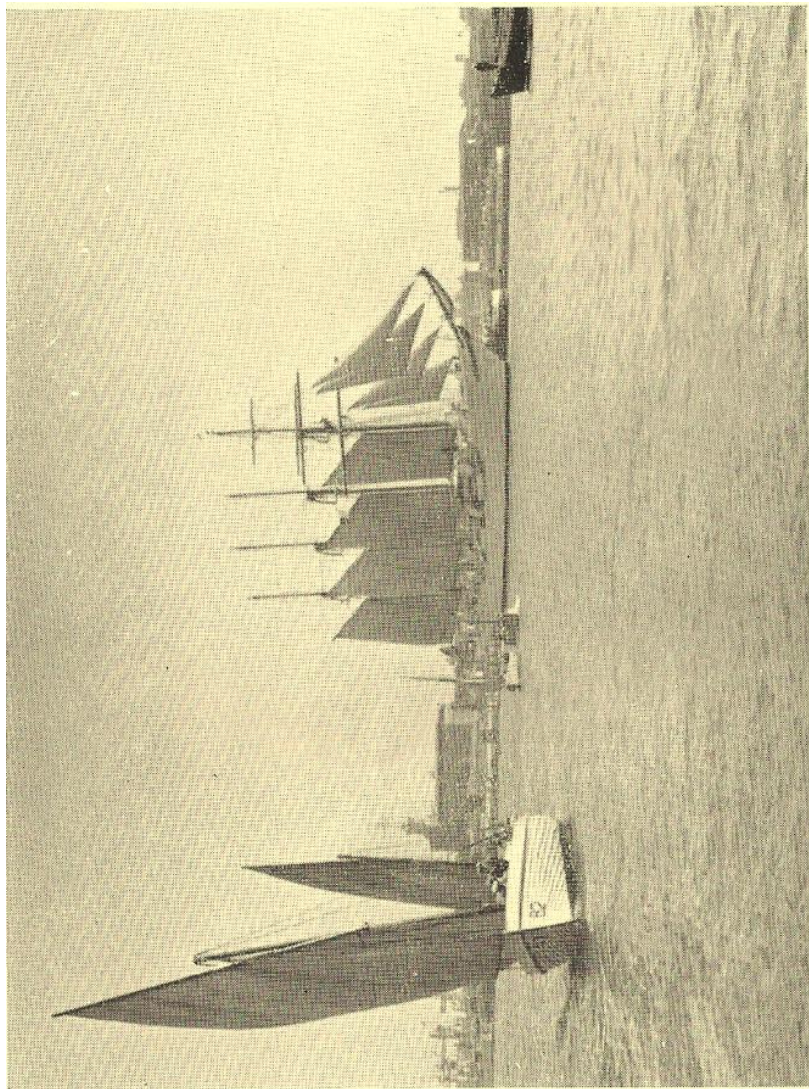
Plate 44 — *A kit inspection, 1964*
(*The Inspecting Officer, Vice Admiral Hawkins, is a Past Captain of the Establishment*)



**Plate 45 — The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, 1964*

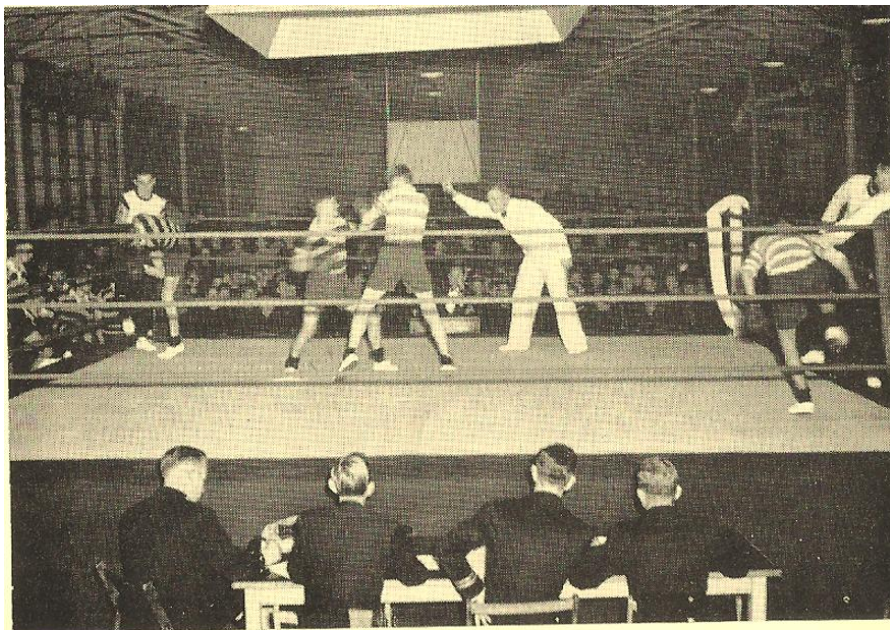
**Plate 45 – The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme*

Character training is of the most important tasks of a New Entry Establishment. To this end Boys are encouraged to participate in activities in many fields, just one of which is illustrated, Mention might be made of the weekends which are spent on Dartmoor, 'Dartex', the time spent in the New Forest with the Leadership Courses from Whale Island. and of the less strenuous extra curricular activities such as model making, stamp collecting and almost every sport which exists — from Archery to Underwater Swimming.



**Plate 46—Sailing (Spanish ship 'Juan Sebastian Elcano' in background) 1964*

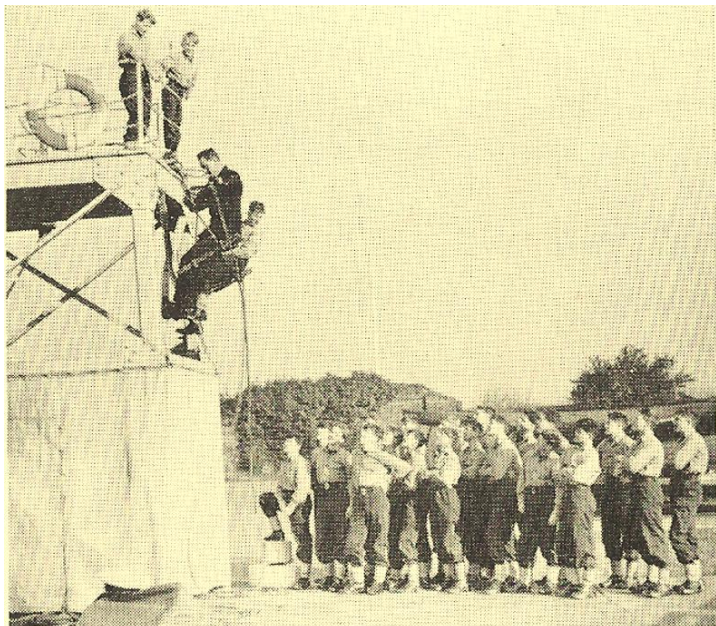
**Plate 46 – Sailing (Spanish ship 'Juan Sebastian Elcano'
in background, 1964*



**Plate 47 — Inter-Divisional Boxing, 1960*

**Plate 47 – Inter Divisional Boxing, 1960*

It was not until 1958 that competitions took the sole form of rivalry between divisions. Prior to this date many matches took place between classes. The divisional system as it exists, arose largely out of efforts to give boys better academic instruction. At present two divisional officers look after the welfare of the boys and attend their administrative requirements. Three or four instructor officers are attached to a division and they are responsible the academic life of that division only. The boys receive instruction from a particular officer in a particular subject throughout their stay. Professional tuition is dealt with in a similar manner.



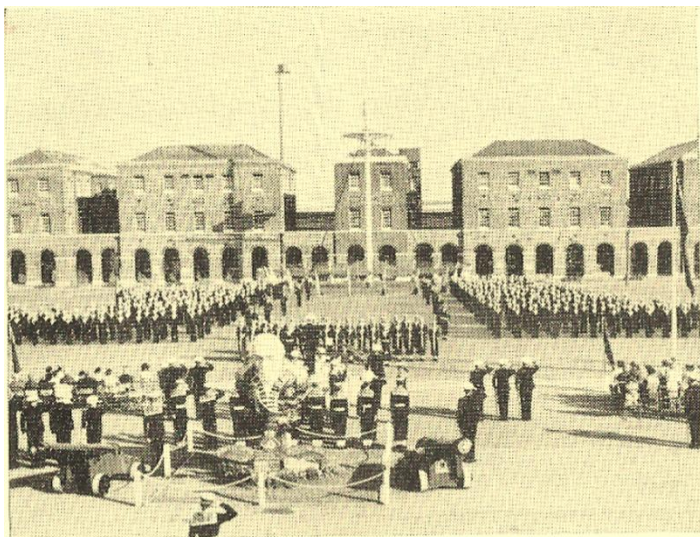
**Plate 48 — Seamanship, 1963*

**Plate 48 – Seamanship, 1963*



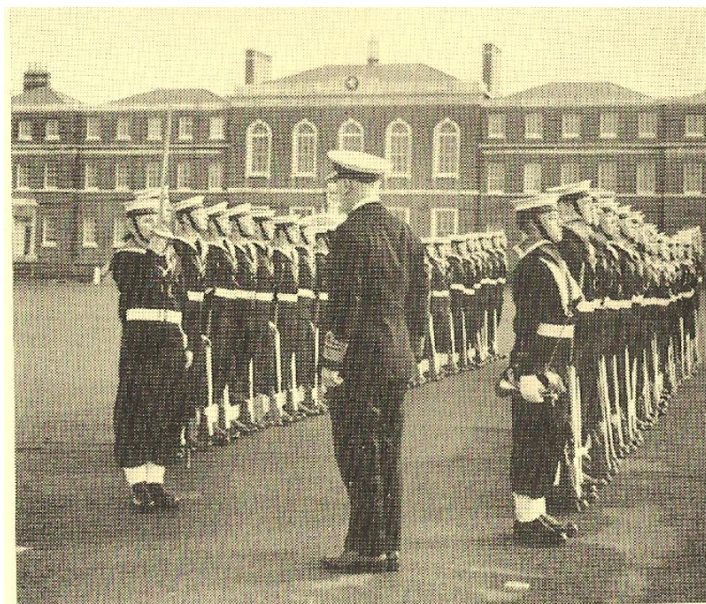
*—Admiralty Photograph
Plate 49—Fireworks, 1964 (This has been an Annual Display since 1936)*

**Plate 49 – Fireworks, 1964 (This has been an annual display since 1936)*



**Plate 50 — Sunday Divisions 1964*

**Plate 50 – Sunday Divisions, 1964*



**Plate 51 — Ceremonial Guard 1964*

**Plate 51 – Ceremonial Guard 1964*

APPENDIX A

Repairs and alterations necessary to Forton Barracks before it could be used as a Training Establishment.

For Commisioned Officers

The Captain's House to be repaired and redecorated and 'suitable' furniture installed. The Mess was also in sad need of repair, though it was thought more important to ensure the segregation of the Warrant Officers from the others. To this end the Subalterns' Quarters in the Mess and in East House Were refurbished.

For Chief Petty Officers

Alteration of the Second Quartermaster's Store and the Sergeants' Mess Block.

Other Ratings

Alteration of the first and second floors of the First Quartermaster's Store as dormitories, a new cook house to be erected . . . though the existing canteen could be 'adapted' for messing.

For 684 Boys

Reconstruct the floors in the four main barrack blocks and replaster the walls. Remodel existing cook house, bath house and ablution rooms. Refloor the Drill Shed and re-arrange the Recreation Rooms, Erect a new Boiler House and construct an Indoor Swimming Bath,

School

Adapt the existing buildings of the Infants' School so that 15 class, rooms may be used.

Office Accommodation

Remodel guardroom and cells on either side of the Main Gate for Guard House and Regulating Ollice.

Hospital

Reorganise the existing Cottage Hospital and provide room for 16 beds. Request the British petroleum Company to terminate the lease on their offices which form part of the building.

Workshops

Use original buildings.

Store Accommodation

Adapt original stores,

Recreation Ground

Drain, level and sow area of land to the West of the School Blocks.

Parade Ground

Regrade and tar spray,

Boats

Boat pens to be made available at Clarence Yard.

It is interesting to note that there were five official residences provided for 'St Vincent', to be occupied by: the Captain. The Senior Medical Officer, The Chaplain, The Senior Instructor Officer and the Boatswain. The two senior officers without residences were the Commander (Executive Officer), and the Paymaster Commander. At this time it was the custom in Training Establishments that the Commander should be unmarried, or if he were married, his wife was not allowed to live 'in the port'.

Early in 1927 it was proposed to convert the Commandant's House of the old War Department Detention Quarters for the use of a Senior Officer from 'St Vincent'. The Admiralty turned the proposal down ... firstly because the Commander was not 'entitled' and secondly because the claims of the Paymaster Commander were not considered adequate.*

* Letter from Secretary of Admiralty to the Commander in Chief. Portsmouth. 21.331.

APPENDIX B

The Chapel window

The window was designed by Archibald Nicholson for the Empire Exhibition at After the exhibition the designer a friend of the then Captain offered it to 'st Vincent'. This offer was gratefully accepted, more especially when it was realised that a copy of the window had been sold to the Australian Government for exhibition in the Public Art Gallery at Sydney. Nevertheless it was over six months before Admiralty sanction could be obtained for its erection. This was done by a builder . . . Jno. Croad of Fareham . . . the princely sum of sixteen Shillings, the money having been raised by the Ship's Company. (One might note that the tender from the Ministry of Works for the same job £28.)

The figure in the centre of the window represents St Nicholas . . . Patron of Sailors and Boys. On either Side are figures of King Alfred with one of his Ships, Drake with the 'Golden Hind'. Nelson with the 'Victory' and Craddock with the 'Good hope'. The inscription below is from psalm 107 and reads (translated):

'They who go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in Great Waters, these men see the works the Lord and his wonders in the Deep'.

The Window is 4' 9 1/4" by 2' 6 5/8" and was dedicated on 28th April, 1929 by the Chaplain of the fleet.

Some two years later Nicholson designed a sash depicting the Coat Of Arms of Earl St Vincent, also for the Chapel,

The Cross

Was presented by Rear Admiral J. K. Imthurn in 1930.

The Paten

Was presented by Cdr B Hamnett in 1931. He bought it in a bazar in Constantinople and it is said to have been pillaged from a Russian Church.

The Chapel

This was the old Band Practice Room and was converted for the modest sum of £30.

APPENDIX C

Commanding Officers at Forton 1848 – 1965

Royal Marines

29th MARCH, 1848

The Royal Marines moved from Clarence Barracks, Portsmouth to
Forton Barracks, Gosport

Charles Menzies	Colonel 17th Aug., 1848 - 20th June.	1854
George B. Bury	Colonel 21st June, 1854 - 31st July,	1854
James I. Willes	Colonel 1st Aug., 1854 - 1st Feb.,	1855

Royal Marine Light Infantry

James I. Willes	Colonel 2nd Feb., 1855 - 21st June,	1855
Fortesque Graham	Colonel 22nd June, 1855 - 19th Feb.	1857
Thomas Hurdle	Colonel 20th Feb., 1857 - 20th Nov.,	1859

21st NOVEMBER, 1859

Royal Marine Artillery Reformed as a Separate Branch.

Alexander Anderson	Colonel 21st Nov., 1859 - 15th May,	1862
John G. A. Ayles	Colonel 16th May, 1862 - 4th Nov.,	1864
William H. March	Colonel 5th Nov., 1864 - 20th Nov.,	1865
Hayes Marriott	Colonel 21st Nov., 1865 - 12th Feb.,	1867
William S. Aslett	Colonel 13th Feb., 1867 - 12th Feb.,	1872
Richard K. Clavell	Colonel 13th Feb., 1872 - 28th July,	1876
Charles W. Adair	Colonel 29th July, 1876 - 1st Sept.,	1878
Hamond W. Gkyn	Colonel 2nd Sept., 1878 - 3rd July,	1880
William H. W. Bennett	Colonel 4th July, 1880 - 3rd July,	1883
John M. De. C. Meade	Colonel 4th July, 1883 - 6th Nov.,	1885
Howard S. Jones	Colonel 7th Nov., 1885 - 17th July,	1886
Ardley H. F. Barnes	Colonel 18th July, 1886 - 28th Aug.,	1888
John Cairncross	Colonel 29th Aug., 1888 - 19th Nov.,	1889
John M. Moody	Colonel 20th Nov., 1889 - 19th Nov.,	1892
Joseph Phillips	Colonel 20th Nov., 1892 - 19th Nov.,	1895
Edward W. G. Byam	Colonel 20th Nov., 1895 - 19th Nov.,	1898
Christopher S. F. Fagan	Colonel 20th Nov., 1898 - 28th Feb.,	1900
Robert B. Kirchhoffer	Colonel 1st March, 1900 - 22nd April,	1902
Arthur E. Chapman	Colonel 23rd April, 1900 - 22nd April,	1905
Thomas J. P. Evans	Colonel 23rd April, 1905 - 22nd April,	1908
Albert F. Gatliff	Colonel 23rd April, 1908 - 21st Feb.,	1910
Francis G. Cotter	Colonel 22nd Feb., 1910 - 20th Nov.,	1910

Royal Marine Light Infantry

John R. H. Oldfield	Colonel
(Brigadier General 14.10.1913)	21st Nov., 1910 - 20th Nov., 1913
Edward C. B. Roe	
Brigadier General	21st Nov., 1913 - 20th Nov., 1916
Charles N. Trotman	
Brigadier General	21st Nov., 1916 - 20th Nov., 1919
Herbert E. Blumberg	
Brigadier General St George	21st Nov., 1919 - 29th Nov., 1920
B. Armstrong Colonel Commandant	
(Major General 15.1.1923)	30th Nov., 1920 - 5th Sept., 1923

22nd JUNE, 1923

Royal Marine Artillery and Royal Marine Light Infantry Amalgamated into the Corps of Royal Marines. Forton Barracks Closed 5th September, 1923.

HMS 'ST VINCENT'

Commanding Officers

Captain	P. L. H. Noble, CVO	1927 - 1928
Captain	w. C. G. Maxwell, CMG	1928 - 1930
Captain	R. H. T. Raikes, DSO	1930 - 1932
Captain	E. C. O. Thompson, DSO	1932 - 1934
Captain	G. C. Harrison	1934 - 1936
Captain	H. T. Baillie-Grohman, DSO, ORE	1936 - 1938
Captain	G. Warren	1938 - 1940
Captain	L. C. P. Tudway, DSO, DSC	1940 - 1942
Rear Admiral	S. Holbrook, MVO, (Retd.)	1942 - 1945
Captain	M. Eaton, DSO, DSC	1945 - 1947
Captain	C. P. Frend	1947 - 1950
Captain	G. C. Colville, OBE	1950 - 1952
Captain	M. S. Townsend, DSO, OBE, DSC	1952 - 1953
Captain	G. L. Farnfield, DSO, DSC	1953 - 1955
Captain	O. C. Hayes, OBE	1955 - 1957
Captain	R. S. Hawkins	1957 - 1960
Captain	M. N. Tufnell, DSC	1960 - 1962
Captain	A. R. Aldous	1962 - 1964
Captain	C. B. Fetherston-Dilke	1964 -

APPENDIX D

The Crest & Motto of The Earle of St. Vincent The Whole

is called the Heraldic Achievement of the Earl of St- Vincent.

The Crest Above The Helmet

In Old time Tourneys and Jousts a Knight carried a device (usually a model of some Object or animal) which could clearly distinguish the owner, otherwise hidden in his suit of armour. The Crest in later times was given to a peer by the King to perpetuate the memory of his services to the country. In the case of Earl St. Vincent, a Naval with a green wreath signifies victory at sea, and the "Pegasus" above the crown is a smaller version of right-hand supporting figure.

The Left Hand

**Supporter of the
Shield**

represents
Captain Jervis's
own ship—the
Foudroyant (84)
and shows an eagle
holding a thunder-
bolt in its claw.
Foudroyant is the
French for thunder

The Helmet and its Mantling

is of silver bars of gold showing that the
wearer is a peer of the realm of England

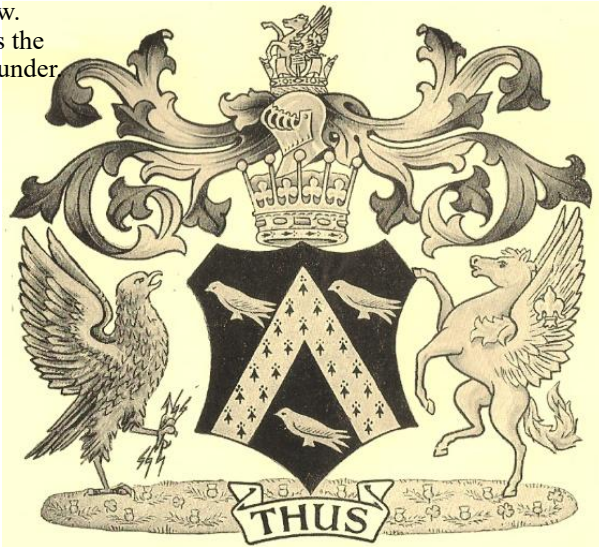
The Coronet above the Shield

is that of an Earl.

The Right Hand

**Supporter of the
Shield**

represents
the winged horse
Pegasus
It Commemorates
the Earl's capture
of the French line-
of battleship *Pégasé*
in 1872



The Central Sheild

represents a war shield bearing the personal
device of the Jervis Family.

The Motto

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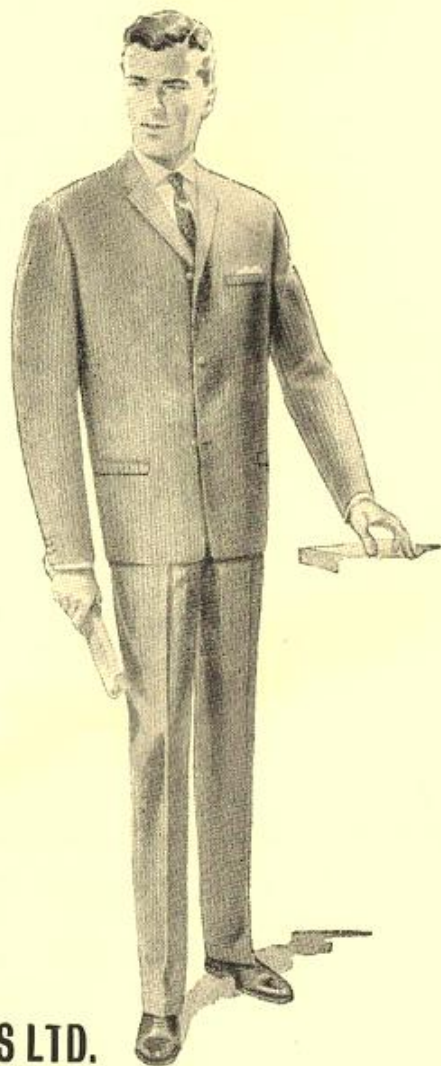
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