

Story 07

Another A.I. Inspection

This particular year the event took place at Killock

Bernard and I met the Cmdr just after breakfast with a view to show him the new Cabin and have a stroll over Little Hill.. I had booked lunch at the Buckatree Hotel All went well the stroll, tea and coffee at the cabin Lunch at the Buckatree, it's surprising how much attention you receive once the Maitre D' has a twenty pound note in his pocket as soon as we entered. Suddenly he knew all our names, serving the Cmdr like royalty.

The rest of the arrangement was to collect our I.O. from Baron's Court at 18.30 hours "Three Bells" and take him to Killock.

The evening had been carefully planned. The format was several work stations. Two in the Hall; One in the Ward Room; One in the Lounge; Two on the Half Deck; One station in the Boat Yard; Two in the Boat Shed.

The Cubs covered Whippings; Scouts covered other subjects. The Harbour; Hand held Bearing Compass; First Aid; Rig the Merlin Swanilda; Boat Maintenance; pressure lamps; Radio Communication & routine; Semaphore.

The Major set piece was in the capable hands of the Ventures, comprising, The Rocket Life Saving Equipment, to be erected on the lawn, with the mast nearest the canal.

The Commander had seen all the other stations saving this one to be demonstrated in the gloom of the evening when I thought the fireworks would look better. Our little entourage emerge from the front of Killock just in time to see the distress signal rockets from the Mast being answered by a genuine Coast Guard Maroon from the Car Park. All very theatrical. The I.O. and I made our way to the high end of the lawn to watch the Land Rover arrive with the equipment on a trailer. The "Whip and rocket line were carefully laid out correctly; the Hawse flaked down in readiness, the tripod placed carefully on it's mark, snatch block hooked into place, the Breaches Buoy placed just in front of the tripod. The I.O. showed us how to jamb the three fold purchase when tensioning the hawse. The last item to be positioned was the rocket launcher. There is a vital operation here, the first six feet of the rocket line needs to be thoroughly wetted to avoid the flame from the rocket burning the line. It did not happen.

With all this activity going on ground anchors and knots galore the I.O. wanted to see the other end, to watch the rocket arrive. We had almost walked as far as the second fire door which was open, when the rocket passed us, just over the Cmdr's left shoulder. He bolted inside. The line had burned through and the No 8 rocket was free all the way to the canal. An expletive escaped from the I.O. saying

"All that time I spent in the Falklands and never came so close to rocket attack."

We still passed the rest of the evening was spent yarning in the lounge.