

## H.M.S. "GANGES"

As autumn draws on, the leaves pile up into the main entrance of the Signal School. As we begin to look forward to the Christmas festivities, let us cast our minds back to see what we have accomplished since the last edition of THE COMMUNICATOR.

H.M.S. *Bruce* has closed down and H.M.S. *Ganges* is now the sole establishment engaged in training Communication Boys. A great pity—we shall miss the friendly rivalry, and the inevitable argument whether *Bruce* or *Ganges* produced the better Communication Boy.

The first Boys to complete the new thirty-five-week course have been drafted to sea, but it is still difficult to say whether we are producing a more efficient Boy under the new conditions. Results are satisfactory so far, but there are a number of factors which may affect the quality of output. Although the Communication Course is actually more extensive, it is rather more concentrated, and there has been a considerable reduction in the "leavening" of seamanship, field training and P.T. But the principal factor remains, as always, the quality of the Instructor.

We hope that senior Communicators will not neglect the Boys' training at sea, or the greater part of our work will be wasted. The training of Boys is hard work, but to see a class in their final week Morse typing at 22 w.p.m. is ample compensation, to say the least, for one's efforts. In any case, we should be glad to hear your comments—good or bad—on the results as you find them.

Boys are boys the world over, and when looking at them it is rather difficult at times to cast one's mind back and say, "Was I different as a boy?" or "Would I have tried as hard—or harder?" These thoughts must occur to every Officer or Instructor who has been fortunate (the previous word is not a misprint) enough to train boys.

The modernisation of the Signal School is proceeding slowly, hampered mainly by the man-power situation, but we are hoping that the following incident will not be repeated. An ex-C.P.O. Tel., an official who is now employed in a civilian capacity, had cause to visit *Ganges* in connection with his work. Looking into the classrooms, he said: "The place hasn't changed since I was a boy here in 1924." Looking closely at one of the walls, and being questioned as to whether he was interested in interior decorating, etc., he casually replied: "Oh, no, I was just looking to see if the mark my head made, when knocked against the wall by the Instructor, was still there."

We do not train Boys that way now, but try to regard each Boy as an individual, and try to understand his problems. Provided he co-operates, I am sure we accomplish more by this method. Life at *Ganges*, especially in the Signal School, provides its humorous moments. We have met the individual who, endeavouring to improve his somewhat limited knowledge of W/T organisation, was mystified to

find that we utilised a port wave, but where the dickens was the starboard wave? Also the Boy who thought "W.M.P." was the abbreviation for "Women's Military Police," and another who identified it as "Will Mail Parcel."

We were very sorry to say good-bye to Lt. Cdr. Bray on his relief by Lt. Paterson, and we wish him the best of luck on the Staff Course.

To old *Ganges* Boys the School layout is very much the same. The "Buntings" still read flashing in the Long Covered Way, but the Signal Tower veterans still say: "It was never like this in my time."

To you all, wherever you may be, we wish you a merry Christmas and the best of luck in 1950.

### WHO HELPED YOU?

It would be interesting to know just how the average senior Communication rating views the prospect of a job at a boys' training establishment. There seems to be quite a strong consensus of opinion that an Instructor's job is a queer mixture of gunner's mate, regulating petty officer, P.T. and W. instructor, seaman petty officer, schoolmistress and wet nurse—in fact, everything bar Signal or Wireless Instructor—and a job to be avoided at all costs.

This is, of course, partly true—there's never smoke without fire—but it is worth considering the other side of the story.

We are dealing with youngsters straight from civil life, from every conceivable form of background, at a very impressionable age. Their first Instructor has an arduous responsibility. There is no doubt that his influence determines to a considerable extent the Boy's future attitude to the Service, and to life as a whole. His influence may make or mar a Boy's character. It is astonishing to see the difference in results, both domestically and professionally, that lie between two groups of Boys, one taken by an average and the other by an outstanding Instructor.

A frightening responsibility? Possibly. Certainly not the job for a Yeoman or P.O. Telegraphist? I don't agree.

No senior Communication rating worth his salt, who is professionally competent and confident, and who has defined his own ideals and aims, should be in the least reluctant to accept it. Anyone who has, in full measure, the qualities required of a chief petty officer, petty officer or leading hand should have no fear of fostering them in his juniors, by reason of his example. Should not one of the primary aims in life be to acquire knowledge not only for the proper performance of one's professional task but also to impart it to others, so that by our learning and experience others may profit?

A really competent Communication Instructor will take the domestic side of his duties in such an establishment well in his stride. He has the chance of making a satisfying and valuable contribution to the Service and to the individual Boy—the benefits of his own experience, character and ability.

Who helped you?