

JIMMY FRITH AND THE 'ARPIC

It was the usual scenario, new hands joining the ship and milling around being given contradictory instructions by a multitude of would be P.O.'s.

In less than half an hour we had managed to sort ourselves out, find our quarters, stow our gear and report to the relevant authorities. One of my new shipmates, Jimmy, had already found the Chief Steward, a portly gentleman whose name was Foote-Wegler, an Irishman with a German father (no further comment!). "Footsy" as he was known handed Jimmy a canister of Harpic and told Jimmy to go and clean the senior P.O.'s toilet. Jimmy who hailed from the London suburb of 'ackney said "wot am I supposed to do wiv this?" It was quite obvious that Harpic wasn't on Jimmys mum's shopping list "you peel back this sticky label thing on the top and then you sprinkle it over the toilet" replied Footsy. "OK Chief" said a slightly puzzled Jimmy and disappeared down the alleyway.

Everything was running reasonably smoothly after a couple of hours. We turned to, and reported to the Officers Saloon to get ready for the evening meal. The Cook was throwing a "shitty" in the galley the Second Cook was threatening to take a knife to the Cook's most important appendages and there was a lot of pots and pans being banged about. We had laid the tables and loaded up the dumb waiters and were just attending to minor details.

Jimmy, who had just come back from having a smoke said "cor I washed me 'ands cos they was stingin' a bit an' now they stink worse than ever". He was right, the combination of Harpic and cigarette smoke was not very nice. Better nip in the galley and wash them again we advised. At that moment a scream followed by "Get some water! Get some water!" Came from down near the Chief's cabin. We grabbed jugs of water off the tables thinking that there was a fire, somebody grabbed a fire extinguisher and we all raced towards the screams. In the alleyway just outside the Chief's cabin was "Footsy," bollock naked and bending over with the largest brightest red horseshoe running from mid thigh up and over his rotund deriere down to mid thigh on the other side. In spite of our mirth we managed to douse his arse down and restrain him until more water arrived. The fire extinguisher wasn't needed! (shame) Jimmy had done exactly as he had been told! Telling "Footsy" later "You didn't tell me to lift the fxxxxg seat."

- Brian Chaplin