

Musical Jack Tars - Brass bands on board Royal Navy ships in the 19th and early 20th centuries

Gavin Holman, 30 November 2020

Ships' bands on British ships in the 18th and early 19th centuries, both merchant and navy, arose out of the ad hoc bands created by sailors with fiddles, fifes, bugles, and rudimentary drums. As the 19th century progressed, and with the advent of the saxhorn instrument family, more formal ships' bands were established, echoing the instrumentation and structure of similar bands in towns and villages onshore. They tended to have fewer players and have more variable instrumentation, due to the limited source of men and instruments available on board.

The Royal Navy embraced ships' bands in general, as they provided a recreational outlet for some of the crew and could help to entertain the other crew members on long voyages. Due to the shipboard and sea/weather conditions, the brass instruments were particularly well suited to this type of life and environment, although there were occasional woodwind instruments included.



At the same time, the occasional ship's band appeared on larger merchant ships, particularly those with a significant passenger complement. The passenger ship band soon migrated away from the brass/military style towards a more orchestral or salon band, appropriate to their audiences.

Very little is known about the activities of these bands, except when they reached ports and appeared, in some form, to the local populace. Even less is known about their members. Apart from their on-board 'in house' activities, the bands were often used to entertain visitors to the ships when in port, particularly local dignitaries or visiting aristocrats. They also often accompanied the ship's crew in parades or other on-shore activities. Photographs of some of the bands exist, and these are included here, together with a brief description of the vessels they served, sadly often in lieu of any real material about the band itself. A significant number of the larger navy vessels from 1850 to WW2 had their own band, but brief mentions of the musicians' activities are, sadly, rarely recorded in newspaper reports or other sources.

The costs of the bands, in the early days, was born by the captains and officers of the ship. In 1864, there was a suggestion by one of the Admiralty Lords that the government should foot those bills, but it was not accepted at that time, it taking until 1875 for the

Admiralty to provide some central funding for ships' bands. In February 1875 it was announced that ships with bands of 15 men and upwards would receive £20 a year to provide instruments, etc. Bands of 11-14 men, £17 a year, bands under 11 men, £14 a year. The Admiralty gave some consideration, in early 1886, to abolish ships' bands, with the exception of those of flagships, but it was not taken any further. The matter was raised in a similar fashion in June 1890. In October 1892, among a list of grievances submitted to the Admiralty by 1,300 naval officers, was that they should not have to support ships' bands out of their own pockets.

During a lecture by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, at Newbury in May 1897, he outlined the deficiencies in support for the crews and bands of naval vessels, their pay and the various deductions that were applied to the pay of officers. These included contributions to the upkeep of the ships' bands. *"The ship's band was the embodiment of the British Empire when exchanging compliments with foreign ships. The country only allowed a bandsman 1s 4d a day, and he need hardly say they could not get good musicians for that, while the total amount allowed each ship for uniforms, instruments, music, etc., was £17, so that the officers had to subscribe very largely to the band."*

In the early years the ships' bands were organised in a thoroughly 'go as you please' style but, from the 1870's onwards, the Admiralty took more of an interest in them and, aside from providing the nominal funding for instruments etc., gave instructions on their use and standards of accomplishments. The establishment of the boys' training ships around the British coast provided a ready supply of musicians for the naval ships' bands, as most of the training ships, which often had several hundred boys each, maintained a band, tutored by a professional bandmaster, which was used to help drill the boys, provide recreation and raise funds through concerts and parades on shore.

The boys who expressed an interest in becoming naval musicians had to pass an elementary examination comprising the rudiments of music, to play on their instruments the scales major and minor up to four sharps and flats, and to answer several questions on various sounds produced to prove that they were not tone deaf. The successful candidates then spent four years on training ships, where they went through a very thorough course of musical education, at the close of which they were promoted to the rank of bandsman.

When a ship, properly qualified to carry a band on board, was commissioned, the requisite number of those musicians was drafted on to her. The bandsmen's regular technical training was not neglected, they were proficient in the various skills required of an ordinary seaman, including musketry, cutlass drill, and pistol drill. However, on board, the bandsman generally did not take part in any work of the ship beyond looking after his own quarters (at least in the Victorian era!).

At the end of the 19th century the ship's bandsman's pay amounted to 1s 4d per day, with free rations; badges for good conduct were given carrying with them an extra 1d per day for each badge, and after three years' service an additional 3d per day was received. A

bandsman was eligible for promotion to band-corporal (equivalent to 2nd class petty officer), bandmaster (1st class petty officer), and chief bandmaster (chief petty officer).

The ship's band, under ordinary circumstances, played every night in the officers' mess, and once a week on the forecandle for the other members of the crew. While at home stations and foreign ports, the bands were often requested for engagements on shore. On those occasions it was usual for a royalty to be sought for benefit of the band fund, and an extra 1s 6d per day was awarded to each performer in lieu of provisions.

When a ship was decommissioned, the bands were broken up with the crews, the former generally being sent back to the training ships, there to mix with the lads under instruction.

The other ships' bands, mentioned above, that were established during the mid to late 19th century, were those of the "training ships" – real ships or shore-based establishments for the housing and education of boys (sometimes as a form of "off-shore" industrial school) and eventual fitting them for a career afloat. Details of these bands are not included in this paper, having been addressed in my earlier work: *"Music of discipline and reform - the bands of children's orphanages, industrial schools and asylums."*

Ships' bands were not limited to the British Royal Navy, other seafaring nations had bands on their capital ships, in particular. The French, Austrian, German, Portuguese, Spanish, American, Canadian, Australian, and other navies were welcomed into British ports at various times, and their ships' bands entertained their counterparts on British ships and local dignitaries.



H.M.A.S. Sydney Band, at Portsmouth, 1919

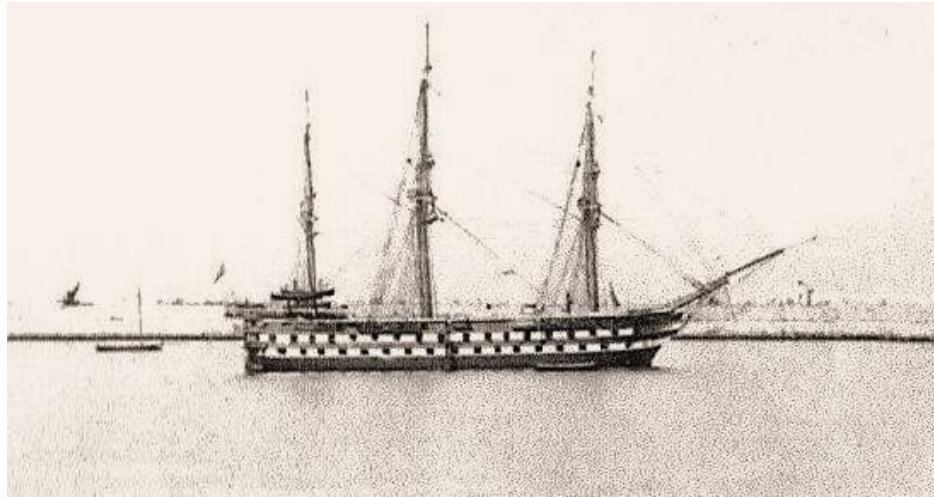
- **H.M.S. Aboukir** – the ship’s brass band performed at a grand gala at Moville when the Channel Fleet visited Lough Foyle in 1861. *H.M.S. Aboukir* was a 90-gun second-rate ship of the line launched in 1848. She was refitted with screw propulsion in 1858 and was sold in 1877.



H.M.S. Aboukir

- **H.M.S. Active** - the ship’s brass band entertained on Monday 19 June 1865, while the Navy Reserves practiced throwing the rocket for the preservation of life at Sunderland Dock. While at Sunderland the ship’s band performed for the public on Monday evenings. *H.M.S. Active* was a 36-gun Pique-class fifth-rate frigate launched in 1845, becoming a training ship in 1863 and being renamed *HMS Tyne* and then *HMS Durham* in 1867. She was sold in 1908.

- **H.M.S. Ajax** – the ship’s band performed in the harbour at Kingstown, Ireland, while the ship’s company were engaged in a sham fight on the shore in March 1863. After a 21-gun salute, to honour the marriage of the Prince of Wales, the band struck up the “*National Anthem*”. The band also played martial music as the ship left Kingstown in March 1864 en route to Devonport, her final destination. *H.M.S. Ajax* was a 74-gun third rate launched in 1809. She was converted to screw propulsion in 1846 and broken up in 1864. She had been a guardship at Kingstown, Ireland from 1858.

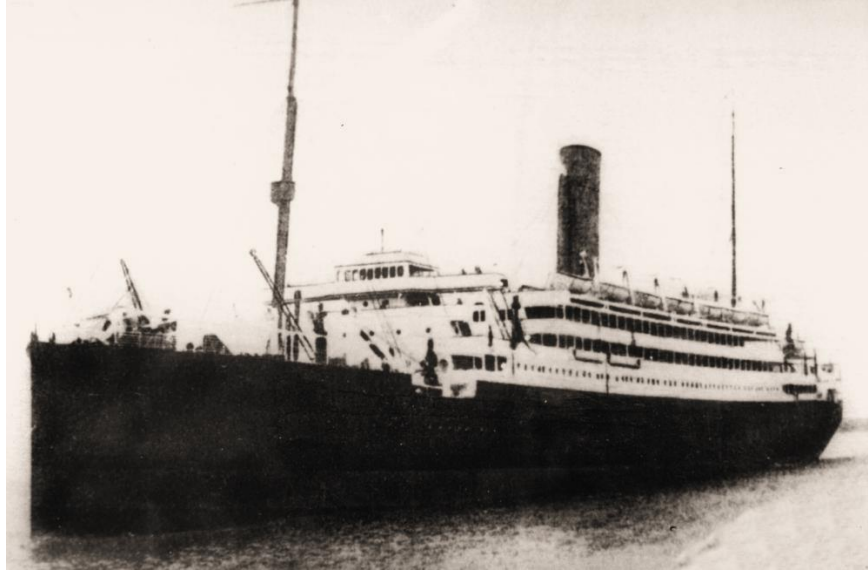


H.M.S. Ajax

- **H.M.S. Alcantara** – *S.S. Alcantara* was an ocean liner, launched in 1913, that went into service just weeks before the start of World War I, was converted to an armed merchant cruiser (*HMS Alcantara*) in 1915, and was sunk in combat with the German armed merchant cruiser *SMS Greif* in 1916

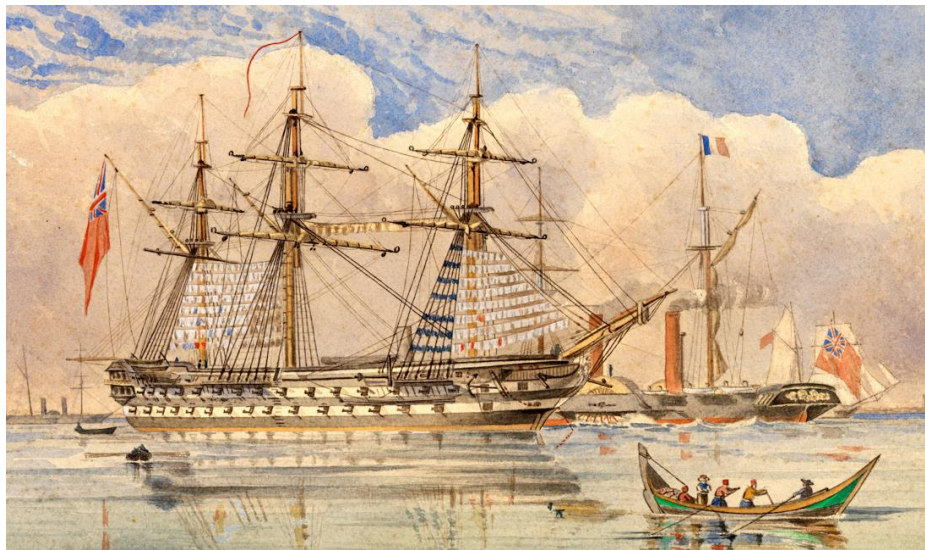


H.M.S. Alcantara Band



H.M.S. Alcantara

- **H.M.S. Algiers** – the ship's band entertained invited guests from Dunfermline on board when the ship visited that port in June 1860. It played for dancing also. *H.M.S. Algiers* was a 91-gun second rate ship of the line of the Royal Navy. The Admiralty ordered that she be fitted with screw propulsion while under construction in 1852. In May 1855 she took part in the capture of Kerch and Yenikale during the Crimean War. She was present at the 1856 Fleet Review at Spithead. She was sold for scrap in 1870.



H.M.S. Algiers

- **H.M.S. Argonaut** – was a Diadem-class cruiser. She was commissioned for service on the China station in 1900. From 1906 she served in the Home Fleet, and during the First World War she served in the Atlantic. She was converted to hospital ship in 1915, and was sold for breaking up in 1920.



H.M.S. Argonaut Band



H.M.S. Argonaut

- **H.M.S. Assistance** – was a repair ship purchased in 1900 and handed over to Ward shipbreakers in part payment for RMS Majestic in 1937.



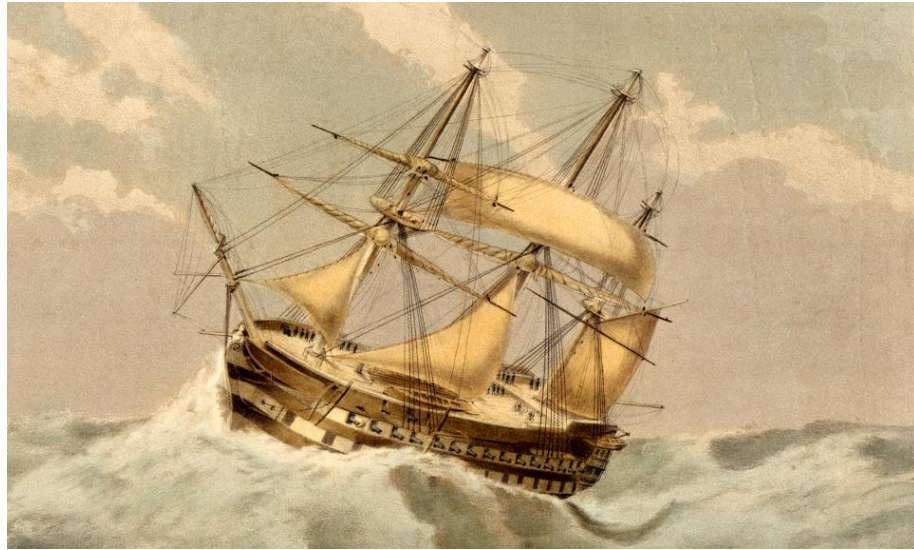
H.M.S. Assistance Band



H.M.S. Assistance

- **H.M.S. Aurora** – the ship's band played suitable music during the disembarkation of the 60th Rifles at Kingstown, Ireland in June 1864. *H.M.S. Aurora* was a wooden screw frigate launched in 1861 and broken up in 1881.

- **H.M.S. Bellerophon** – the ship's band played for the sick and wounded sailors of the ship when it arrived at Portsmouth on 5 April 1855, as they were taken off the ship, after returning from the siege of Sebastopol. *H.M.S. Bellerophon* was an 80-gun third rate, originally named *HMS Talavera* but renamed *HMS Waterloo* before her launch in 1818. She was renamed *HMS Bellerophon* in 1824, relegated to harbour service in 1848. She then saw active service at Sebastopol during the Crimean War 1854 - 56. Her gun crews manned off-loaded guns ashore and were nicknamed "*The Bellerophon Doves*". She sustained some damage during the bombardment of Sebastopol and was finally sold for breaking up in 1892.

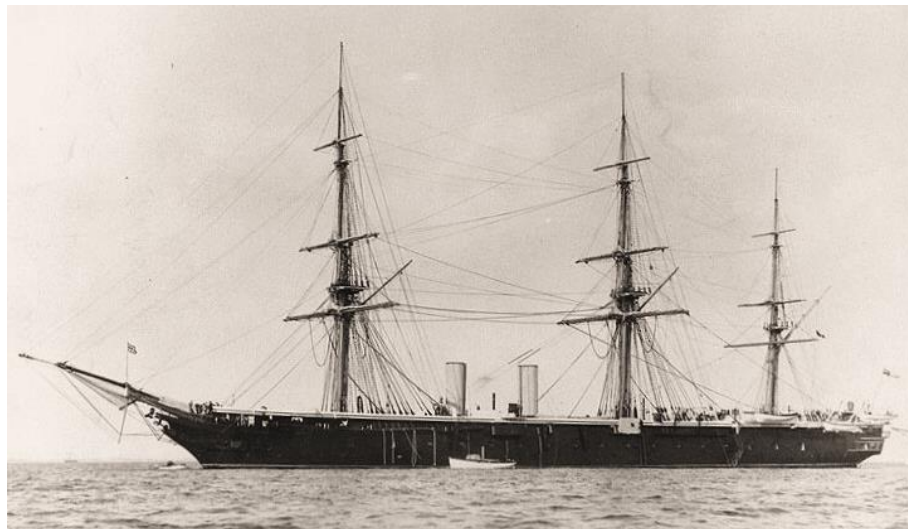


H.M.S. Bellerophon

- **H.M.S. Black Prince (1)** – the ship’s band entertained the nearly 800 visitors to the ship when it was moored at Dublin during the visit of the Channel Fleet in October 1863. A gale blew up during the day, which prevented the visitors from leaving the ship until between 11pm and 1am. In the meantime, the band performed to keep them amused and the ship’s company provided food and drink. *H.M.S. Black Prince* was a Warrior-class battleship launched in 1861. Retired to the reserve fleet in 1878; became a training ship in 1896; renamed *Emerald* in 1903; renamed *Impregnable III* in 1910; scrapped in 1923.



H.M.S. Black Prince Band



H.M.S. Black Prince, c. 1870

- **H.M.S. Black Prince (2)** – was a Duke of Edinburgh-class armoured cruiser built for the Royal Navy in 1904. She was stationed in the Mediterranean when the First World War began and participated in the pursuit of the German battlecruiser SMS Goeben and light cruiser SMS Breslau. After the German ships reached Ottoman waters, the ship was sent to the Red Sea in mid-August to protect troop convoys arriving from India and to search for German merchant ships. After capturing two ships, Black Prince was transferred to the Grand Fleet in December 1914. She was sunk on 1 June 1916 during the Battle of Jutland with the loss of all hands.



H.M.S. Black Prince Band



H.M.S. Black Prince, c. 1914

- **H.M.S. Calypso** – the ship’s band was active in 1920. *H.M.S. Calypso* was a C class cruiser of the Caledon sub-class of the Royal Navy, launched in 1917 and sunk in 1940 by the Italian submarine *Alpino* *Attilio Bagnolini*. *Calypso* was involved in the *Second Battle of Heligoland Bight* on 17 November 1917, when *Calypso*'s bridge was struck by a 5.9 in shell which killed all personnel on the bridge including the captain, and causing the accidental firing of a ready torpedo.



H.M.S. Calypso Band, 1920



H.M.S. Calypso Band



H.M.S. Calypso

- **H.M.S. Canterbury** – was a C-class light cruiser of the Royal Navy that saw service in the First World War and the Russian Civil War. She was part of the Cambrian group of the C class and was decommissioned in 1933.



H.M.S. Canterbury Brass Band



H.M.S. Canterbury Brass Band



H.M.S. Canterbury

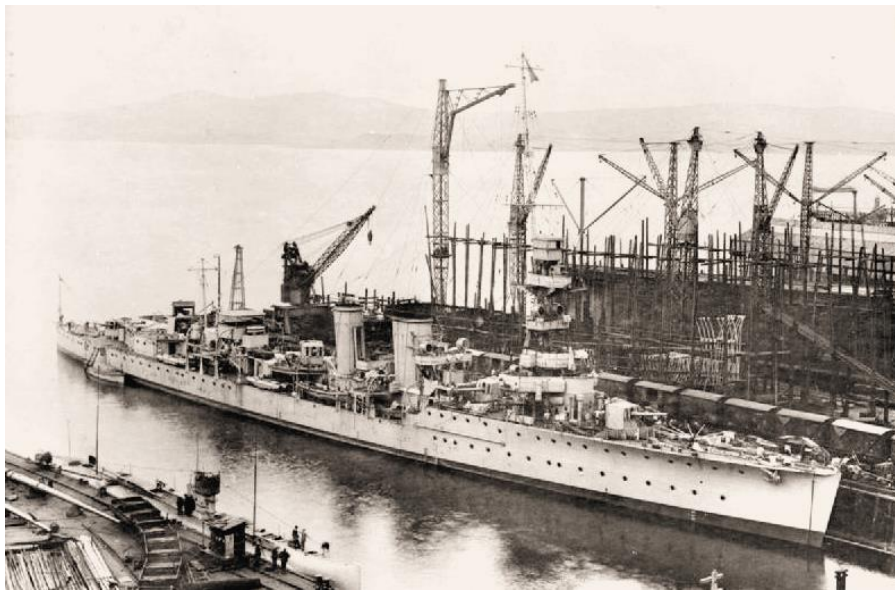
- **H.M.S. Caradoc** – was a C-class light cruiser built for the Royal Navy during World War I. She was one of the four ships of the Caledon sub-class. She participated in the Second Battle of Heligoland Bight in late 1917. Caradoc spent most of the rest of her time between the World Wars overseas or in reserve with deployments to the Far East and the North America and West Indies Station.



H.M.S. Caradoc Band



H.M.S. Caradoc Band



H.M.S. Caradoc

- **H.M.S. Centaur** – was a C-class light cruiser of the Royal Navy that served in the First World War and the Russian Civil War. She was the name ship of the Centaur group of the C-class of cruisers. On 13 June 1918 she struck a mine and had to undergo repairs at Hull. She was sold for scrap in 1934.



H.M.S. Centaur Band



H.M.S. Centaur

- **H.M.S. Ceres** – was a C-class light cruiser of the Royal Navy. She was the name ship of the Ceres group of the C-class of cruisers. The Ceres was launched on 24 March 1917. During 1920 was operating in the Black Sea in support of operations against Communist forces. On 30 March 1923 whilst in port at Constantinople, USS Fox collided with her stern causing damage to both ships. She was sold for scrap in 1946.



H.M.S. Ceres Band



H.M.S. Ceres Band



H.M.S. Ceres

- **H.M.S. Challenger (1)** - the ship's brass band was active in 1883. *H.M.S. Challenger* was a steam-assisted Royal Navy Pearl-class corvette launched on 13 February 1858 at the Woolwich Dockyard. She was the flagship of the Australia Station between 1866 and 1870. In 1878 *Challenger* went through an overhaul by the Chief Constructor at Chatham Dockyard. She remained in reserve until 1883, when she was converted into a receiving hulk in the River Medway, eventually being sold for scrap in 1921.



H.M.S. Challenger Band, 1883



H.M.S. Challenger

- **H.M.S. Challenger (2)** – the ship's band was active between 1911 and 1919. *H.M.S. Challenger* was a second-class protected cruiser of the Challenger-class of the Royal Navy. She was launched at Chatham on 27 May 1902. She was paid off into reserve on 10 October 1912 before recommissioning during the First World War. She initially served as part of the Ninth Cruiser Squadron off West Africa before serving in East African waters. She was sold in 1920 and was broken up for scrap.



H.M.S. Challenger Band



H.M.S. Challenger Band



H.M.S. Challenger Band



H.M.S. Challenger Band, 1912



H.M.S. Challenger Band, 1919



H.M.S. Challenger

- **H.M.S. Colossus** – the ship’s band played “Rule Britannia” and “Cheer, Boys, Cheer” as the ship passed H.M.S. Victory on their way out of Portsmouth harbour, on Wednesday 20 September 1854. In April 1856 the band played for the invited guests at a ball arranged by the ship’s officers at Ryde Town Hall, Isle of Wight. *H.M.S. Colossus* was a 80-gun second rate Vanguard-class ship of the line built for the Royal Navy in the 1840s. The ship was fitted with steam propulsion in 1854, and was sold for scrap in 1867.
- **H.M.S. Comus** - the ship’s band was active in 1899. *H.M.S. Comus* was a corvette (reclassified in 1888 as a third-class cruiser) of the Royal Navy. She was launched in April 1878. She was driven by both sails and a reciprocating steam engine; her hull was iron and steel but sheathed with wood and copper; and some of her muzzle-loading guns were replaced by rifled breech-loaders. *Comus* was active for about two decades, but in that time went to the ends of empire, from the British Isles to the Caribbean and Nova Scotia to southwest Africa in the western hemisphere, and in the eastern, from the southern Indian Ocean to the northwest Pacific, and from the China station to the Strait of Magellan. In 1898 the ship was reassigned to the North American and West Indies station. *Comus* engaged in fisheries protection, and was in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1899.



H.M.S. Comus Band, 1899



H.M.S. Comus Band, 1899



H.M.S. Comus

- **H.M.S. Constance** – was a C-class light cruiser of the Royal Navy that saw service in World War I. She was launched on 12 September 1915. She was assigned to the 4th Light Cruiser Squadron of the Grand Fleet from her commissioning until 1919, taking part in the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916. Sold for scrap in 1936.



H.M.S. Constance Band



H.M.S. Constance

- **H.M.S. Coventry** – was a C-class light cruiser of the Royal Navy. She was launched on 6 July 1917. She went into refit in late 1920 and once the refit was completed she joined the 2nd Light cruiser squadron. Damaged in an attack by German Junkers JU 88's near Egypt in 1942, and scuttled by H.M.S. Zulu.



H.M.S. Coventry Band



H.M.S. Coventry

- **H.M.S. Curacoa** – was a C-class light cruiser built during the First World War. She spent much of her career as a flagship. Curacoa was deployed to the Baltic in May 1919 to support anti-Bolshevik forces during the British campaign in the Baltic during the Russian Civil War. Shortly thereafter the ship struck a naval mine and had to return home for repairs. In late 1942, during escort duty, she was accidentally sliced in half and sunk by the ocean liner RMS Queen Mary, with the loss of 337 men.



H.M.S. Curacoa Band



H.M.S. Curacoa

- **H.M.S. Danae** – the ship's brass band was active in 1919. *H.M.S. Danae* was launched on 26 January 1918. She was one of the fastest cruisers of her time. She was also well armoured, with the sides and the command deck protected with 3 inches of reinforced steel, the tanks and munition chambers with 2.2 in, and the main deck with 2 inches. She took part in several North Sea patrols during the last months of World War I. She was scrapped in 1948.



H.M.S. Danae Band, 1919



H.M.S. Danae

- **H.M.S. Dauntless** – was a Danae-class light cruiser of the Royal Navy. She was built by Palmers Shipbuilding and Iron Company of Jarrow, launched on 10 April 1918 and commissioned on 22 November 1918. Completed too late to see action in the First World War, in 1919 she was assigned to operate in the Baltic Sea against the Bolshevik revolutionaries in Russia. She was then on detached service in the West Indies. Following this assignment, she was attached to the 1st Light Cruiser Squadron of the Atlantic Fleet for the following five years. Dauntless was a member of the Cruise of the Special Service Squadron, also known as the 'Empire Cruise', of 1923/24. Following this tour, she went with the squadron to the Mediterranean for the next few years. She was sold for scrap in 1946.

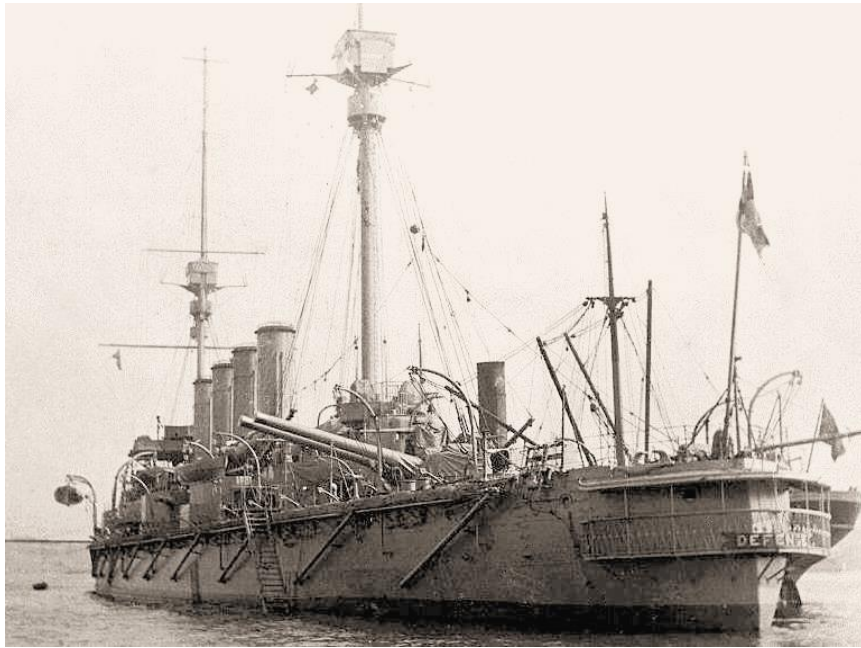


H.M.S. Dauntless Band



H.M.S. Dauntless

- **H.M.S. Defence** – the ship's brass band paraded with mourners at Invergordon, in September 1909, for the funeral of one of its sailors, Acting-Bombardier Davis. *H.M.S. Defence* was a *Minotaur-class* armoured cruiser launched in 1907. She was stationed in the Mediterranean when the First World War began and participated in the pursuit of the German battlecruiser *SMS Goeben* and light cruiser *SMS Breslau*. The ship was transferred to the Grand Fleet in January 1915 and remained there for the rest of her career. *Defence* was sunk on 31 May 1916 during the *Battle of Jutland*.



H.M.S. Defence

- **H.M.S. Delhi** – was a Danae-class cruiser that served with the Royal Navy through the Second World War, from the Caribbean to eastern China. She was launched in 1918 and commissioned for service in 1919, serving until decommissioning in mid-1945 due to extensive battle damage, and was to be scrapped in 1948 after lengthy war and peacetime service around the world.



H.M.S. Delhi Band



H.M.S. Delhi

- **H.M.S. Despatch** – the ship’s brass band was active in 1923. *H.M.S. Despatch* was a Danae-class light cruiser launched on 24 September 1919. She had a relatively quiet WW2 wartime career, compared to her sisters. She was operating in the South Atlantic for the early part of the war, where she captured the German freighter SS *Düsseldorf* and intercepted the German merchant ship *Troja*. Sold in 1946 for scrap.



H.M.S. Despatch Band



H.M.S. Despatch Band, 1923



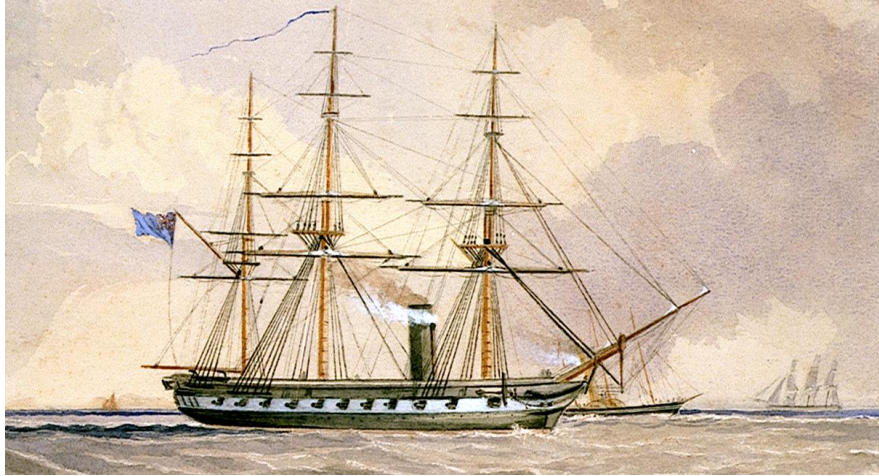
H.M.S. Despatch Band, 1926

Back row: E. Doughty Mne, L. Parrot SPO, N.H. Samson AB, H.E. Wharton Lgd Sea, T.W. Riggs AB, W. Beeby AB, G.V. Blake Sto, G.J. Holloway AB, C.G. White Ldg Sea, W. Weller AB, T.W. Whitfield AB. Centre: W.T. Allen PO Tel, C. Pike AB, T.E. Law Ldg Tel (bandmaster), Capt R.C. Davenport, Lt J.G. Moncrieff, N. Atkinson AB, W. Bell AB. Front: J. Dusman SPO, T. Peckover AB, G.J. Dolan AB, J.A. Walker Ldg Tel, W.J. Gidley AB.



H.M.S. Despatch

- **H.M.S. Diadem** – the ship’s band played for a grand ball given by the ship’s officers, on the ship, for the gentry and principal inhabitants of Ryde, Isle of Wight, on Wednesday 28 July 1858. *H.M.S. Diadem* was a wooden screw frigate launched in 1856 and sold in 1875.

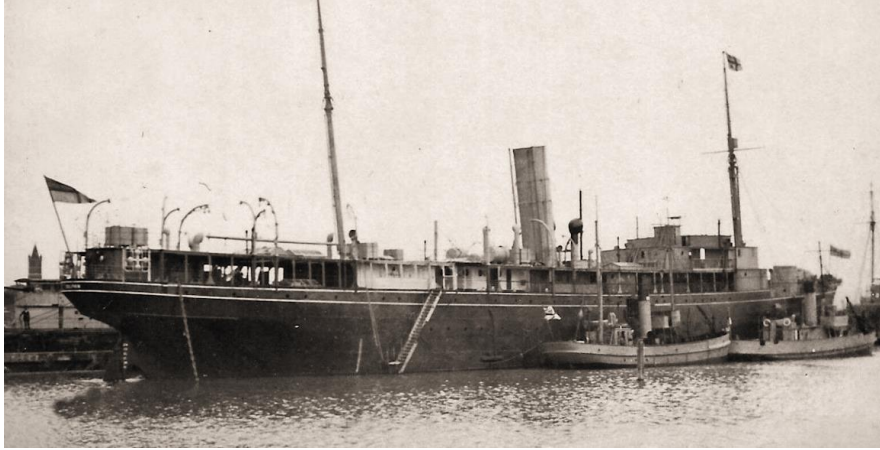


H.M.S. Diadem

- **H.M.S. Dolphin** – the ship’s brass band was active in 1926. *H.M.S. Dolphin* was originally the steam merchant ship *Seti* built in 1902. She was purchased by the Admiralty in November 1914, renamed *Pandora*, and used as a depot ship. She was renamed *Dolphin* in 1924 and was sunk by a mine laid by German submarine *U-22* in 1939, without loss of life. She was lost on her last trip while being towed to Cambois to be stripped of usable parts and scuttled as a blockship at Scapa Flow.



H.M.S. Dolphin Band, 1926



H.M.S. Dolphin

- **H.M.S. Donegal** – During the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Liverpool in November 1865, the Royal Yacht was saluted in many forms by ships in the Mersey, including H.M.S. Donegal, whose ship's band played "*The Prince of Wales Air*" after they had fired a salute as the yacht passed by. The captain hosted a grand luncheon for the Duke of Edinburgh and guests on his visit in June 1866, with the ship's band discoursing a variety of national airs. *H.M.S. Donegal* was a 101-gun first rate Conqueror-class ship of the line launched in 1858. She became part of the torpedo and mining school. She was scrapped in 1925.

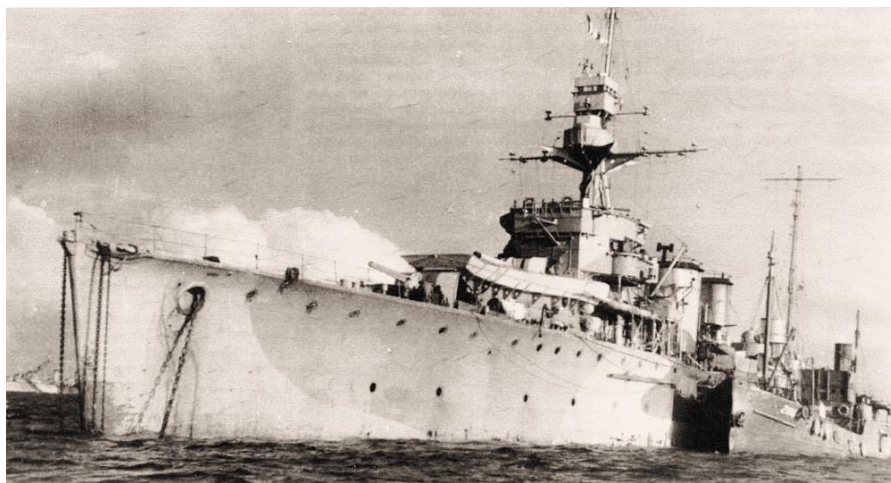


H.M.S. Donegal

- **H.M.S. Dragon** - the ship's brass band was active in 1928. *H.M.S. Dragon* was a Danae-class cruiser launched in Glasgow, in December 1917. On 20 December 1928, she was withdrawn from service and underwent a major refurbishment in Great Britain. She was scuttled after being hit by a torpedo in July 1944 off the Normandy beaches as part of the Arromanches Breakwater.



H.M.S. Dragon Band, 1928



H.M.S. Dragon

- **H.M.S. Duke of Wellington** – the ship’s band entertained the 200 guests of the officers at a ball on board on Thursday 3 September 1863. The band was stationed around the mainmast and kept the audience amused with music for dancing from 3pm to 8pm. *H.M.S. Duke of Wellington* was a 131-gun first-rate ship of the line. Launched in 1852, she was powered both by sail and steam. An early steam-powered ship, she was still fitted with towering masts and trim square-set yards, and was the flagship of Sir Charles Napier, and was broken up in 1904.



H.M.S. Duke of Wellington

- **H.M.S. Edgar** – the ship’s band entertained the Duchess of Roxburgh and other guests on board at the invitation of the Admiral, for luncheon and a tour, in August 1863. *H.M.S. Edgar* was a screw-propelled 91-gun second rate launched in 1858, on loan to the Customs Service as a hulk in 1870, and sold in 1904.



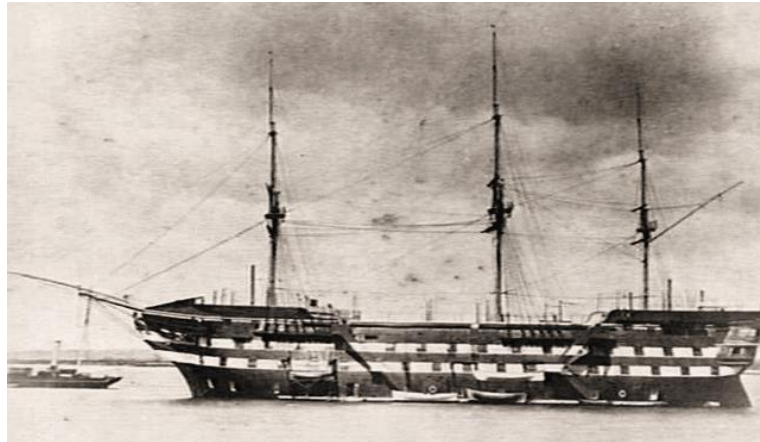
H.M.S. Edgar

- **H.M.S. Edinburgh** – the ship's band played for the funeral procession and service for the ship's paymaster, Mr Colman, on Saturday 21 January 1860, when the ship docked at Queensferry. *H.M.S. Edinburgh* was a 74-gun third-rate launched in 1811. She was converted to screw propulsion in 1846 before being sold in 1865.



H.M.S. Edinburgh

- **H.M.S. Frederick William**– the ship’s band accompanied the entire ship’s company ashore at Queenstown, Ireland, where they were marched to perform various evolutions and exercises. *H.M.S. Frederick William* was an 86-gun screw-propelled first-rate ship of the line, launched in March 1860. In 1876 she was renamed as *Worcester*, to take on a new role as a training ship at Greenhithe. She foundered in the River Thames in 1948.



H.M.S. Frederick William

- **H.M.S. Heliotrope** – was launched on 10 September 1915. One of the Azalea class of twelve minesweeping sloops were built under the Emergency War Programme for the Royal Navy in World War I. They were single-screw fleet sweeping vessels (sloops) with triple hulls at the bows to give extra protection against loss when working. Sold for breaking up 7 January 1935.



H.M.S. Heliotrope Band



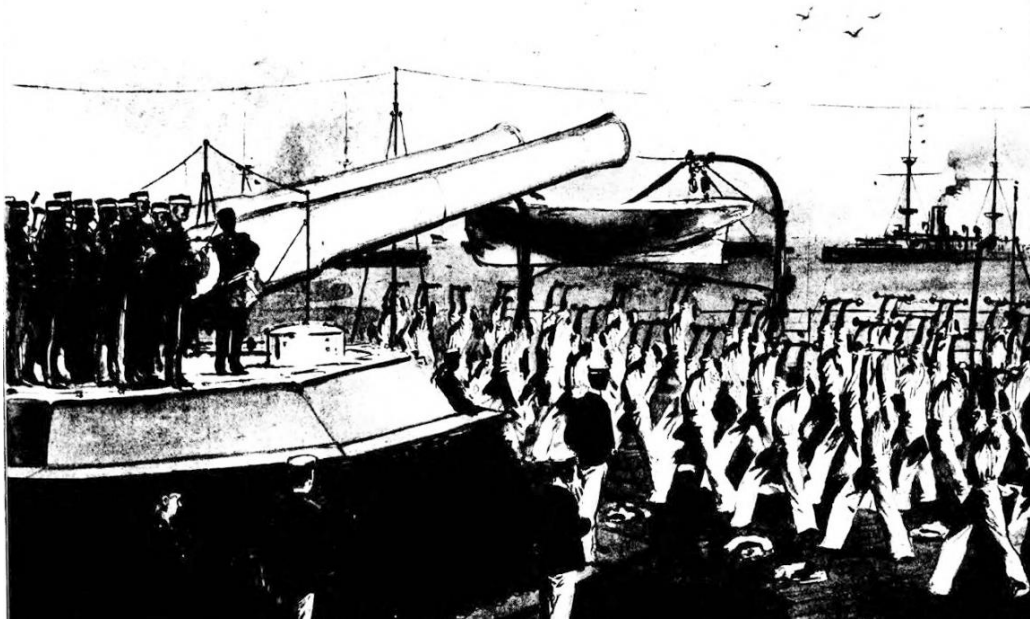
H.M.S. Heliotrope

- **H.M.S. Hogue** – the ship's band played in the procession and funeral of the ship's Chief Engineer, John Henty, on Wednesday 19 March 1861, at Greenock. *H.M.S. Hogue* was a third-rate sail, converted to unarmoured screw vessel 1849, broken up 1865.



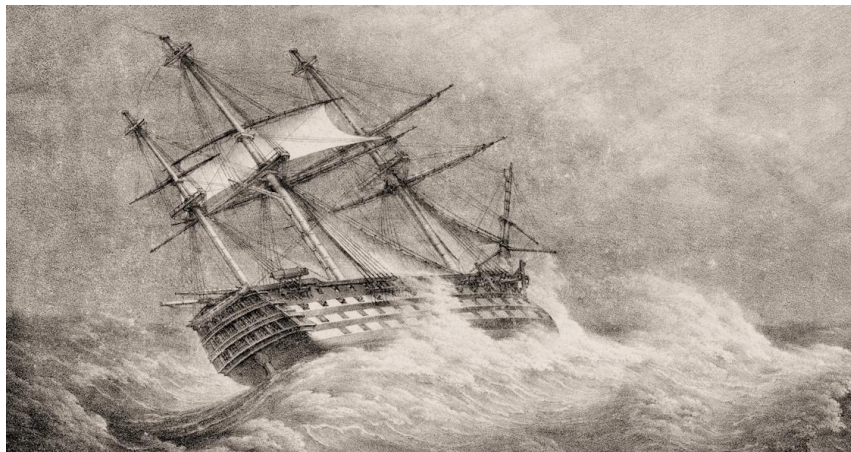
H.M.S. Hogue

- **H.M.S. Howe** – the ship’s band provided musical drills for the other seamen on board, in 1899, standing on the after barbette and playing various tunes while the crew exercised with bar-bells in their routines. *H.M.S. Howe* was an Admiral-class battleship, launched in 1885. She was sold for scrap in 1910.



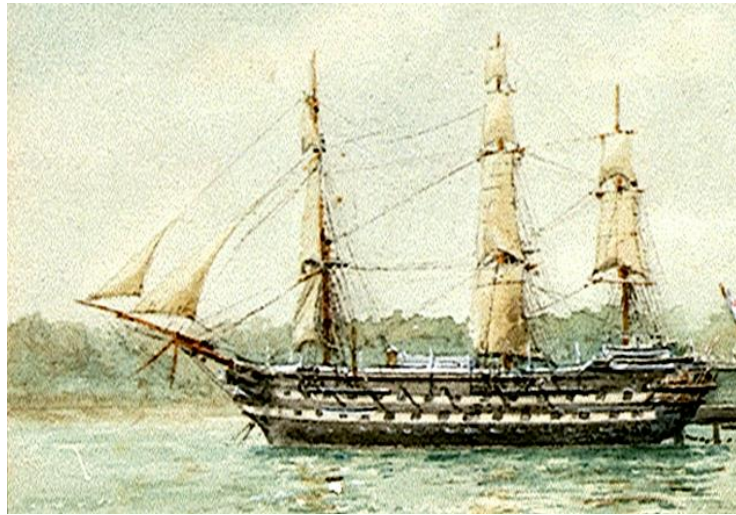
H.M.S. Howe Band, playing for crew exercises

- **H.M.S. Impregnable** – the ship’s band took part in a farewell banquet arranged on board to honour the officers of the United States steam frigate *Niagara*, before their departure, at Plymouth on Saturday 31 October 1857. The band played “*Hail Columbia*”, “*The Roast Beef of Old England*” prior to the dinner, and entertained the guests during the repast with selections from “*Il Trovatore*”, “*Don Giovanni*”, “*Le Chalet*”, and waltzes “*Imblingsleider*”, cavatina “*Lombardini*”, and polka “*The Chase*”. *H.M.S. Impregnable* was a 98-gun second rate launched in 1810. She became a school ship in 1862, was renamed *HMS Kent* in 1888, *HMS Caledonia* in 1891, and was sold in 1906.



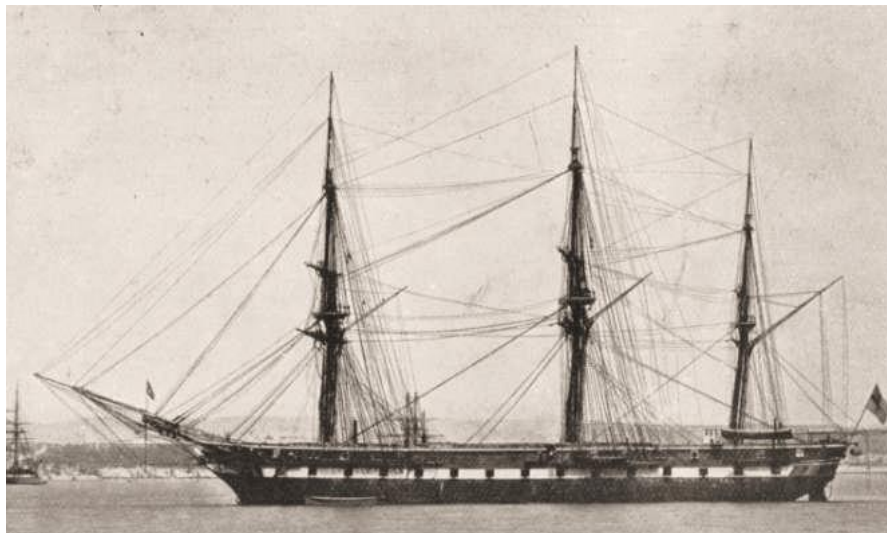
H.M.S. Impregnable

- **H.M.S. Lion** – the ship’s band entertained about 100 *elite* of the town of Greenock during their ‘sumptuous dejeuner’ on board in November 1864. Dancing continued through to 6 a.m. *H.M.S. Lion* was an 80-gun second rate launched in 1847. She was converted to screw propulsion in 1859 and became a training ship after 1871. She was sold for breaking up in 1905.



H.M.S. Lion

- **H.M.S. Liverpool** – the ship’s band entertained the 300 invited guests from Liverpool on board, when the Channel Fleet visited the Mersey in September 1863. *H.M.S. Liverpool* was a fourth-rate screw frigate launched in 1860 and sold in 1875.



H.M.S. Liverpool

- **H.M.S. Lowestoft** – the ship's band was active in 1915. *H.M.S. Lowestoft* was a Town-class light cruiser launched in 1913. She survived World War I and was sold for scrap in 1931.



H.M.S. Lowestoft Band



H.M.S. Lowestoft Band



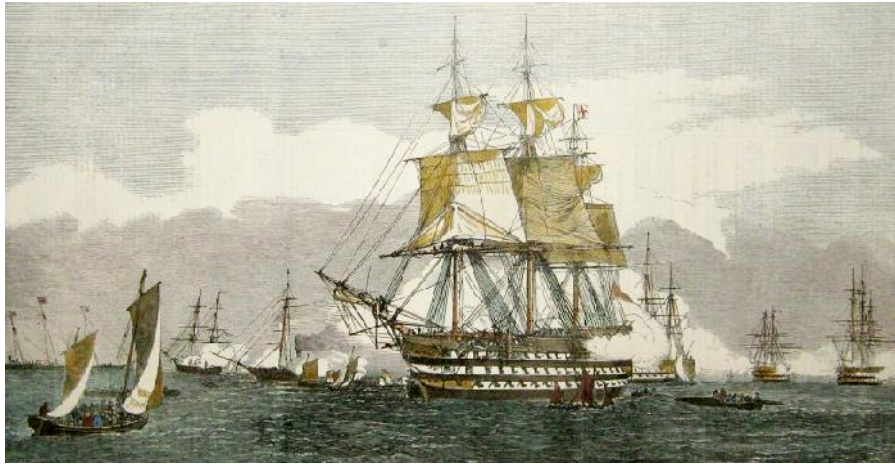
H.M.S. Lowestoft

- **H.M.S. Magnolia** – was an Acacia Class sweeping sloop, launched in 1915, sold off in 1932.



H.M.S. Magnolia Band, c. 1916

- **H.M.S. Neptune** – the ship’s band played many well-remembered tunes for the assembled crowds as the ship left Portsmouth for Spithead, in March 1854, following Her Majesty’s review of the Fleet the previous day. *H.M.S. Neptune* was a 120-gun first rate ship of the line of the Royal Navy, launched on 22 September 1832 at Portsmouth. She was fitted with screw propulsion in 1859, and was sold out of the service in 1875.



H.M.S. Neptune

- **H.M.S. Nile** – the ship’s band played “*Rule Britannia*” for the visit of the Lords of the Admiralty to the ship, at Cork, in August 1858. On a visit to Halifax, Nova Scotia, on 19 June 1860, the band entertained the spectators who crowded the quays as she steamed into port. *H.M.S. Nile* was a 92-gun second-rate ship of the line launched in 1839. She was converted to screw propulsion in 1854, renamed *HMS Conway* in 1876 whilst on loan as a training ship, and was burnt in 1956.



H.M.S. Nile crew members



H.M.S. Nile

- **H.M.S. Orlando** – When she docked at Devonport in December 1865, to have her masts taken out, the ship's crew left the ship, preceded by the ship's band in procession on three days' leave. The band marched them back on their return. *H.M.S. Orlando* was a wood screw frigate launched in 1858 and sold in 1871. At 336 feet in length, *Orlando* was nearly twice the length of *H.M.S. Victory*.



H.M.S. Orlando

- **H.M.S. Pembroke** – was a 101-gun screw propelled first rate launched in 1859 as *HMS Duncan*. She was renamed *HMS Pembroke* on her transferral to harbour service in 1890, renamed *HMS Tenedos II* in 1905 as a training establishment for boy mechanic apprentices, and was sold in 1910.



H.M.S. Pembroke Band



H.M.S. Pembroke

- **H.M.S. Powerful** – the ship's band was active in 1899. *H.M.S. Powerful* was launched on 24 July. She was initially assigned to the China Station and then provided landing parties which fought in the Siege of Ladysmith of 1899–1900 during the Second Boer War. After a lengthy refit, the ship was placed in reserve until 1905 when *Powerful* became the flagship of the Australia Station. Upon her return home in 1912, she was again reduced to reserve for a brief time before she was reclassified as a training ship. The ship remained in this role until 1929 when she was sold for scrap.



H.M.S. Powerful Band



H.M.S. Powerful

- **H.M.S. Queen** – the ship’s band entertained the crowds at the opening of the Steam Yard at Keyham Devonport, in October 1853, when the ship was the first to occupy the dock. *H.M.S. Queen* was a 110-gun first rate launched in 1839. She was the last purely sailing battleship to be completed - subsequent ones had steam engines as well although all British battleships were constructed with sailing rig until the 1870s. In 1859 the ship was fitted with a screw propeller and reduced to 86 guns. She was broken up in 1871.



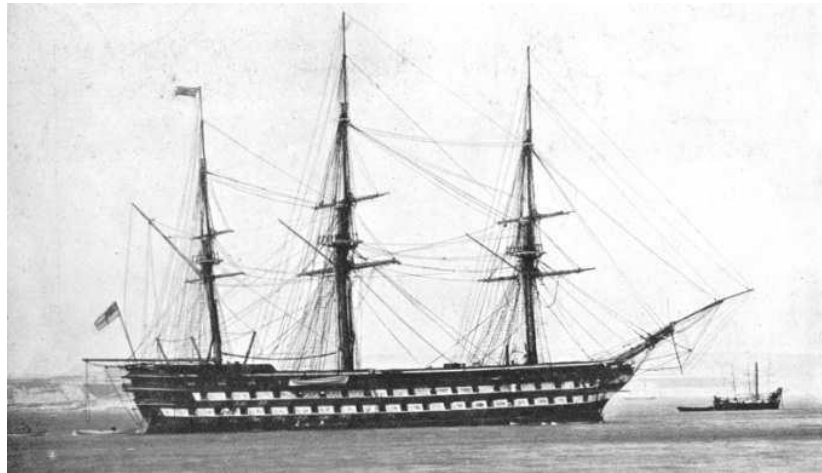
H.M.S. Queen

- **H.M.S. Resistance** – the ship’s band entertained the many visitors to the ship with waltzes and quadrilles, when the Channel Fleet visited Belfast in September 1863. *H.M.S. Resistance* was a Defence-class ironclad launched in 1861. She was the first capital ship in the Royal Navy to be fitted with a ram and was given the nickname of Old Rammo. She was used as a target ship from 1885, and was sold in 1898 but foundered in 1899. She was raised and scrapped in 1900.



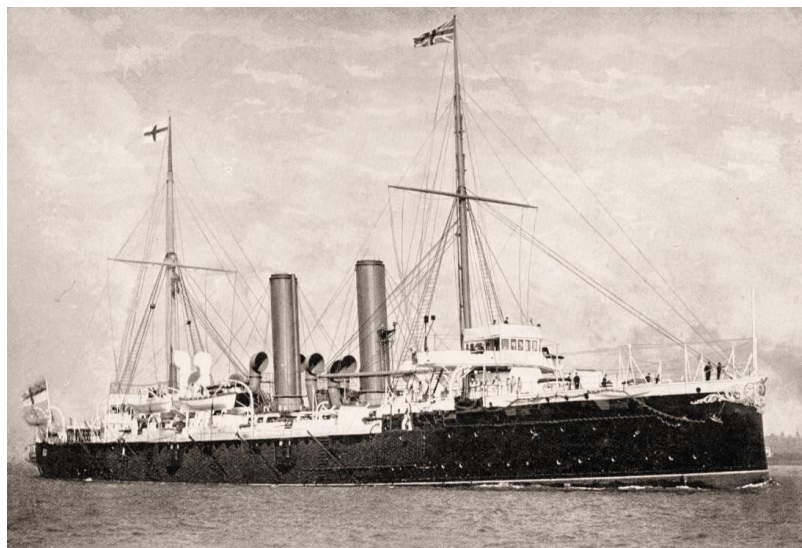
H.M.S. Resistance

- **H.M.S. Revenge** – the ship’s brass band entertained official visitors from Londonderry Corporation, when it was moored in Lough Foyle in September 1861, also providing music for dancing on board. While the ship was anchored near Spike Island, near Queenstown, Ireland, in April 1862, the ship’s band played many lively airs to salute the Steam Transport “*Victoria*” as it departed the port. It also performed many times on shore when the ship was moored at Hazelbeach and Neyland in Pembrokeshire in 1867. *H.M.S. Revenge* was a 91-gun screw powered second rate launched in 1859. She was used as a base ship from 1872, became a training ship and was renamed *Empress* in 1891, and was sold for breaking up in 1923.



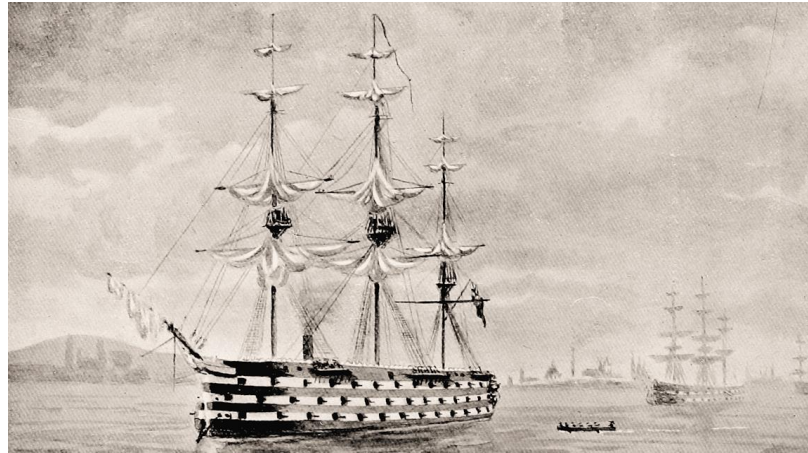
H.M.S. Revenge

- **H.M.S. Royal Arthur** – the ship’s brass band was active in the late 1890s, and disbanded in early 1904. The ship served as the flagship of the Australian Station from 1897 until it returned to Portsmouth in July 1904 when its brass band instruments and music sets were auctioned off. *H.M.S. Royal Arthur* was an Edgar-class armoured cruiser launched in 1891 and sold in 1921.



H.M.S. Royal Arthur

- **H.M.S. Royal George** – the ship’s brass band provided music for entertainment and dancing on board for the invited guests of Captain & Mrs De Courcy, during its duty at Kingstown, Ireland. *H.M.S. Royal George* was a 120-gun first rate launched in 1827, fitted with screw propulsion in 1853 and sold in 1875. On 27 October 1867, *Royal George* was driven ashore at Kingstown. She was refloated with assistance from *R.M.S. Ulster*.



H.M.S. Royal George

- **H.M.S. Russell** – the ship’s band played and marched with the Coast Volunteers as they were landed at Falmouth, and proceeded to Trefusis for their exercises, in July 1859. *H.M.S. Russell* was a 74-gun third-rate ship of the line, launched on 22 May 1822 at Deptford. She was fitted with screw propulsion in 1855, and was broken up in 1865.



H.M.S. Russell

- **H.M.S. Sandhurst** – the ship's brass band was active in 1928. *H.M.S. Sandhurst* was the former civil ship *Manipur*, hired in November 1914 and purchased in 1915. She served as the dummy battleship *Indomitable* before being converted to a fleet repair ship. She served at Scapa Flow from 1916 to 1918. Eventually broken up in 1946.



H.M.S. Sandhurst Band



H.M.S. Sandhurst

- **H.M.S. Sans Pareil** – the ship's band marched with the marines and seamen from the ship, on a visit to Greenock, on 20 July 1860, when the two forces held a naval review and sham fight, entertaining the audiences with music. *H.M.S. Sans Pareil* was a screw-driven 81-gun second-rate ship of the line launched in 1851 and sold in 1867.

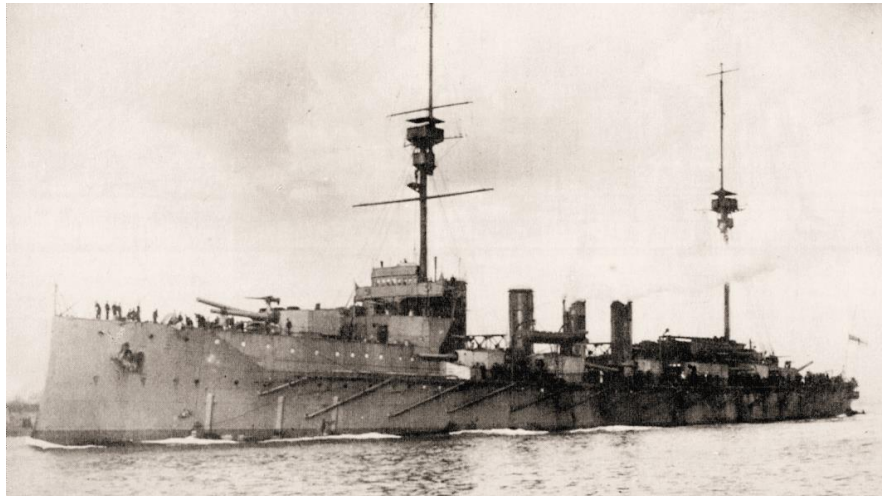


H.M.S. Sans Pareil

- **H.M.S. Shannon** – the ship's band was unusual in that it consisted of zobo or kazoo instruments, rather than the normal brass cornets and saxhorns. This type of band was more common in the USA, although there were quite a few in existence in Britain – and were usually established to provide comical musical entertainment at fetes and galas. - *H.M.S. Shannon* was a *Minotaur*-class armoured cruiser launched in 1906. Before the First World War, she served with the Home Fleet, generally as the flagship of a cruiser squadron. The ship remained with the Grand Fleet, as the Home Fleet was renamed when the war began, for the entire war, but only participated in a single battle, the Battle of Jutland in May 1916. Shannon spent most of the war unsuccessfully patrolling the North Sea for German warships and commerce raiders. She was paid off in 1919 and sold for scrap in 1922.



H.M.S. Shannon Band



H.M.S. Shannon

- **H.M.S. Tauranga**– was a Pearl-class cruiser of the Royal Navy, launched in 1889. During the Samoan civil war in 1899, she took part in operations with HMS Porpoise and HMS Royalist. She was sold for scrap in 1906.



H.M.S. Tauranga Band in Samoa



H.M.S. Tauranga

- **H.M.S. Tenedos** – the ship's brass band was active in 1885. *H.M.S. Tenedos* was a wooden Eclipse-class screw sloop launched in 1870. She was rated as a corvette from 1875 and was sold in 1887.



H.M.S. Tenedos Band

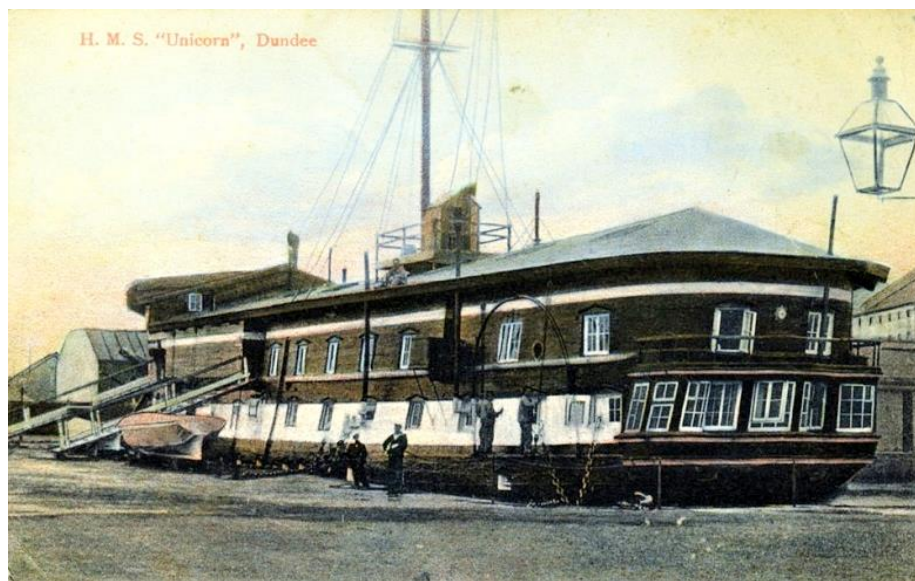


H.M.S. Tenedos

- **H.M.S. Unicorn** – the ship's brass band was active in 1906. *H.M.S. Unicorn* was a Leda-class frigate, launched in 1824 and converted to a powder hulk in 1860. She was a Royal Naval Reserve drill ship from 1873. She was renamed *Unicorn II* in 1913 and *Cressy* from 1941 until 1959. She was handed over to a preservation society in 1968 and is preserved in Dundee as a museum ship.



H.M.S. Unicorn Band



H.M.S. Unicorn

- **H.M.S. Victory** - during the visit of the French Fleet to Portsmouth in September 1865, the French Minister and other dignitaries were welcomed aboard Victory, and the ship's band played "*Partant pour la Syrie*". *H.M.S. Victory* was a 100-gun first-rate ship of the line launched in 1765, one of the most famous warships ever launched. She served in the American War of Independence, the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. She was Keppel's flagship at Ushant, Jervis's flagship at Cape St Vincent and Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar. She served as a harbour ship after 1824 and was moved to a dry dock at Portsmouth in 1922, where she has been the flagship of the Second Sea Lord (until 2012) and the First Sea Lord (presently), and is preserved as a museum ship.



H.M.S. Victory Bluejackets Band



H.M.S. Victory

- **H.M.S. Viper** – on visiting Killybegs Bay in June 1868, a large party of locals from the area was entertained on board for luncheon and dancing to nine o'clock in the evening, with music, including the 'mazy dance', provided by the ship's band. *H.M.S. Viper was an iron armoured gun vessel launched in 1865. She was used for harbour service from 1890, as a tank vessel from 1901 and was sold in 1908.*
- **H.M.S. Warrior** – the ship's brass band entertained the many visitors (5,568) to the ship when it took part in the Channel Fleet review at Sunderland on Sunday 26 July 1863. In April 1864 the band entertained the crowds and men on board on the occasion of the visit of General Garibaldi, the 'celebrated Italian patriot'. Playing selections from "Massaniello" and "Garibaldi Hymn" among other music. *H.M.S. Warrior was the Royal Navy's first ironclad ocean-going armoured battleship, and was launched in 1860. She became a depot ship in 1902, was renamed HMS Vernon III in 1904, and hulked as HMS Warrior in 1923. She was handed over for preservation as Warrior in 1979, and is preserved at Portsmouth as a museum ship.*



H.M.S. Warrior

Other ships known to have had brass bands [active dates of band]:

- H.M.S. Achilles [1881] – she was a broadside ironclad frigate launched in 1863. She became a base ship in 1902, and was sold in 1923.
- H.M.S. Agincourt [1886] – she was a Minotaur-class ironclad frigate launched in 1865. She was renamed HMS Boscawen and used for harbour service from 1904, and was broken up in 1960.
- H.M.S. Alexandra [1887] – she was a central battery ironclad, launched in 1875. She spent much of her career as a flagship. She was broken up in 1908.
- H.M.S. Ariadne [1869] – she was a wooden screw frigate launched in 1859. She became part of the shore establishment HMS Vernon in 1884, and was renamed HMS Actaeon in 1905. She was finally sold in 1922.
- H.M.S. Audacious [1889] – she was an Audacious-class battleship, launched in 1869, converted to a depot ship in 1902, and sold for breakup in 1927.
- H.M.S. Bacchante [1880, 1887] – she was a corvette launched 19 October 1876, and sold in 1897.

- H.M.S. Britannia (1) [1869] - she was a 120-gun first rate ship of the line launched in 1820. She was a training ship after 1859, and broken up in 1869.
- H.M.S. Britannia (2) [1877, 1880, 1881, 1888, 1892, 1894] – she was launched as H.M.S. Prince of Wales in 1860 - a 120-gun first rate ship of the line. She was renamed Britannia in 1869, replacing the previous vessel. She was broken up in 1916.
- H.M.S. Cambridge [1872] – she was a 116-gun first rate launched in 1858 as HMS Windsor Castle. She was renamed HMS Cambridge in 1869 when she replaced the 1815 vessel as gunnery ship off Plymouth. She was sold in 1908.
- H.M.S. Camperdown [1898] – she was an Admiral-class battleship launched in 1885, hulked in 1908 and sold in 1911.
- H.M.S. Curacoa [1897] – she was a screw corvette launched in 1878 and sold in 1904.
- H.M.S. Devastation [1895] – she was a Devastation-class turret ship launched in 1871 and sold in 1908.
- H.M.S. Eclipse [1899] – she was the lead ship of her class of cruisers, launched in 1894 and sold in August 1921.
- H.M.S. Endymion [1870] – she was a screw frigate launched in 1865. She was decommissioned in 1879 and lent for use as a hospital ship in 1881. Sold for scrap in 1904.
- H.M.S. Ganges [1887] – she was an 84-gun second rate launched in 1821, and scrapped in 1930. She is notable for being the last sailing ship of the Navy to serve as a flagship.
- H.M.S. Hannibal [1898] – she was a Majestic-class battleship launched in 1896. She served as a troopship during the First World War and was sold in 1920.
- H.M.S. Hawke [1897] – she was an Edgar-class protected cruiser launched in 1891. She was involved in a collision with the liner RMS Olympic in 1911. A U-boat sank Hawke in 1914.
- H.M.S. Hector [1867] – she was the first ship of her class of iron steam propelled battleships and launched in 1862, and scrapped in 1905.
- H.M.S. Hercules [1881] – she was an ironclad battleship launched in 1868. She was used for harbour service from 1881, as a barracks from 1905, and was sold in 1932.
- H.M.S. Inconstant [1880] – she was an iron-hulled screw frigate launched in 1868. She was finally sold in 1956.
- H.M.S. Indus [1888] – she was an 80-gun second-rate ship of the line launched in 1839. She was used as a guard ship from 1860 and was sold in 1898.
- H.M.S. Iron Duke [1870, 1877, 1889] – she was a battleship launched in 1870, paid off in 1893, converted to a coal hulk, and sold in 1906 for scrap.
- H.M.S. Jumna [1872] – she was an iron screw troopship launched in 1866. She became a coal hulk in 1893 and took the name C110. She was sold in 1922 as the hulk Oceanic.
- H.M.S. Minotaur [1872, 1881, 1883, 1884, 1886] – she was an ironclad battleship, launched in 1863. She was renamed Boscawen II in 1904, Ganges in 1906 and Ganges II in 1908, and broken up in 1922.

- H.M.S. Monarch [1869] – she was an ironclad masted turret ship, launched in 1868; sold and broken up in 1905. She was the first seagoing British warship to carry her guns in turrets.
- H.M.S. Narcissus [1877] – she was a wooden-hulled screw frigate in service from 1859 to 1883.
- H.M.S. Northampton [1894] – she was a Nelson-class armoured cruiser, launched in 1876, hulked as a boys' training ship in 1894 and sold for breaking up in 1905.
- H.M.S. Northumberland [1870, 1881, 1888] – she was a Minotaur-class ironclad battleship launched in 1866. She became a depot ship in 1898 and was renamed HMS Acheron on becoming a training ship in 1904, and was sold in 1927.
- H.M.S. Octavia [1867] – she was a 50-gun fourth rate launched in August 1849 and converted to a screw frigate in 1861. Broken up in 1876.
- H.M.S. Opal [1888] – she was an Emerald-class steam corvette launched in 1875 and sold for scrap in 1891.
- H.M.S. Prince Consort [1870] – she was a 91-gun screw second-rate line-of-battle ship, launched in 1862, and sold for scrap in 1882.
- H.M.S. Raleigh [1899] – she was an iron screw frigate launched in 1874 and sold in 1905.
- H.M.S. Repulse [1899] – she was a Royal Sovereign-class battleship launched in 1892 and sold in 1911.
- H.M.S. Rodney [1897] – she was an Admiral-class battleship launched in 1884 and sold in 1909.
- H.M.S. Royal Oak [1867, 1872] – she was an ironclad frigate launched in 1862 and sold in 1885.
- H.M.S. Royal Sovereign [1896] – she was a Royal Sovereign-class battleship launched in 1891 and scrapped in 1913.
- H.M.S. Shah [1878] – she was an iron hulled, wooden sheathed frigate launched in 1873. On 28 May 1877 she fired the first torpedo to be used in action, although without effect. Converted to a coal hulk in 1904 and wrecked in 1926 at Bermuda.
- H.M.S. Simoom [1869] – she was an iron screw frigate launched in 1849. She was converted to a troopship in 1852 and was sold in 1887.
- H.M.S. Sultan [1872] – she was a centre-battery ironclad launched in 1870. She was renamed HMS Fisgard IV in 1906, but reverted to Sultan while a training hulk in 1932. She was scrapped in 1946.
- H.M.S. Temeraire [1882] – she was an iron-hulled screw-propelled ship launched in 1876. She carried two disappearing guns on board. She became a training ship, and was sold in 1921.
- H.M.S. Terrible [1899] – she was a Powerful-class protected cruiser, launched in 1895 and scrapped in 1932.
- H.M.S. Topaze [1877] – she was a Liffey-class wood screw frigate launched in 1858 and sold in 1884.
- H.M.S. Triumph [1873, 1892] – she was a Swiftsure-class battleship launched in 1870. She was renamed HMS Tenedos in 1904, being used as a depot ship, and was sold in 1921.

- H.M.S. Undaunted [1876] – she was a wood screw frigate launched in 1861 and sold in 1882.
- H.M.S. Valiant [1879] – she was a Hector-class ironclad battleship, launched in 1863, scrapped in 1957.
- H.M.S. Victoria [1890, 1891] – she was a Victoria-class battleship launched in 1887. She was sunk in a collision with HMS Camperdown in 1893 in the Mediterranean with the loss of 358 lives.
- H.M.S. Volage [1871] – she was an iron screw corvette, launched in 1869. She was broken up in 1904.
- H.M.S. Warspite [1894] – she was an Imperieuse-class first-class armoured cruiser launched in 1884 and scrapped in 1905.