

GEORGE MALE
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10 Dec 1993.

Dear Ken,

Thank you very much indeed for your letter and the copy of the photograph taken aboard H.M.S. Mecla in the summer of 1941 when we were in Hvalfjord, Iceland and an E.N.S.A. group from U.K. visited us. The performance was in the open air on the well deck when a temporary stage was erected.

In the fore front (2nd row) hatless + ~~bearded~~ bearded is my friend Don Preece, a gifted artist who died 11.11.42. on his left, round faced is Buckingham, Regulating Petty Officer, his senior is the Master-at-Arms, Johnnie Harber who is half way back, 3rd in from left, short hair, round face, flattened nose with visible collar badge.

The front row of officers from the left is Lt Cdr D'Arcy (bearded) he was a relative of the Royal family + had a signed picture in his cabin of King George VI, Queen Elizabeth + the young princesses. Next to him is Captain Colthart who left the ship later + was replaced by Captain Law. Colthart has his hand to his face. Smiling beside him and also with 4 rings on his arm is Paymaster Captain Monk who went down with the ship.

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Immediately behind Captain Colclart the smiling thin-faced officer is Surgeon Lt Steve Hetherington. Unfortunately I cannot identify anyone else but as there was almost 900 aboard, obviously only a small section is in the picture.

I did try to convey to you the high esteem and affection we had for your father, like Nelson he was a small man but ^{we} were left in no doubt where authority lay - and that applied to the 2 medical officers as well - like me they were 'civvies' in for the duration. As you know, service life is strictly hierarchical and the Chief should have messed separately. It is a measure of the man that Norman Brown was able to live with his men 24 hrs a day and still maintain his authority. I am glad you were able also to meet Les Rowles sons John + Andrew and they too were able to talk with you.

My last memory of your father is that late in the night I was with him, the Medical Officers and other Sick Bachel Staff when we mustered aft in the Quartermaster's lobby. We had by then done what we could for 2 men who, badly burned had come up from the boiler room. I know your father got off the ship but did not see him again.

I wish we had been able to meet before but am privileged to have met you and hope we will meet again.

Best Wishes

George Hale