



## Tim Ryley's Diary

### **R. Riley Q.S. (Qualified Signaller) HMS Shearwater Esquimalt**

<sup>1</sup>Left England for  
H.M.S. Shearwater Pacific  
Station (the day after  
my 20th birthday).  
5 Oct 24th 06. in S.S.

10 Lake Erie. arrived at Quebec Oct-27<sup>th</sup>  
1906. arrived Victoria B.C.  
Nov. 2nd 06 & commissioned  
Shearwater following  
day.

15 Recommissioned HMS  
Shearwater Nov. 7th  
1908. Left Esquimalt  
for San Diego  
Wednesday morning <sup>2</sup>

20 Nov. 10th 1908 arrived  
in San Diego. Nov 17<sup>th</sup>  
Left San Diego. Sunday  
Nov. 22nd 5 hands left  
for lemon picking

25 during our stay in  
San Diego. A marine  
joined up with the  
happy band but his  
heart failed him at

---

<sup>1</sup>Riley at this point is an English young adult who has not yet learned the ropes, the jargon or the disciplinary rules of the Royal Naval Service.

<sup>2</sup> Riley is confusing "commissioning" with activating his ship after repairs, maintenance, or reactivating his ship after a period alongside due to lack of manpower.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- the last moment.<sup>3</sup>  
Nov. 24th At sea  
off California one  
flying fish flew  
onboard & was
- 30
- immediately seized  
& had his wings  
clipped by Porky  
Williamson. Entered  
tropics today Wednesday
- 35
- Nov 25<sup>th</sup>. Took in  
sail after being under  
plain sail for 4 days  
from Point Loma  
to Cape San Lucas
- 40
- up to the present  
that is a record  
for keeping sail  
on 8 p.m. Starting  
to cross the Gulf
- 45
- of California  
Nov. 27th At sea  
crossing the Gulf  
of California  
with both jibs fore
- 50

---

<sup>3</sup> History shows that the attractions of freedom ashore in the 'New World' in comparison to the rigors of British Service life were very strong. The activities of American gangs whose purpose was to recruit able bodied servicemen for payment in order to make up numbers as crewmen for US ships heading out for long foreign voyages was also prevalent during this period. The practice was the bane of British Merchantmen who had difficulty holding onto their trained crewmembers, especially in light of de-facto approval of this internationally recognised illegal practice by American legal authorities. Thus a Marine re-joining and then deserting again would have been commonplace and only mildly remarkable. Perhaps it was something of temptation and a learning experience for Riley.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 55 & main try sail  
average speed of  
ship 8.7 knots<sup>4</sup>  
per hour  
Nov. 28th At Sea
- 60 Arrived at Acapulco  
Sunday Nov. 29th  
Dropped anchor  
about 9 A.M. caught a  
shark about 3 P.M.
- 65 Nov. 30th Coaled  
ship 130 tons  
average per hour  
25 tons  
Dec. 1st Pay Day
- 70 Drew 3\$ soon be  
a millionaire had  
to pay 1.75 for  
private bill  
Dec. 2nd Paint ship
- 75 Got jamed in the rattle  
How it came about, it  
was like this. The Q.M. (*Quartermaster*)  
comes up to me on the  
upper deck & asks
- 80 Who was Signalman  
of the watch, Of course  
I say's anybody.  
He say's The Sub wants  
one of you & me thinking
- 85 there was a chance  
of promotion doubles  
aft to see what he  
wants & gets put in  
the report for not

---

<sup>4</sup> Possibly a range of 8-7 knots, although it would be more normal to note the range as '7-8' or, perhaps it is 8.7 knots as an average speed as measured over a four day period, as example.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 90 seeing the Captain  
come alongside.  
I suppose when I  
come up before the  
Beak<sup>5</sup> tomorrow I
- 95 shall be sentenced  
to be strung up to  
the yardarm or  
some other punishment  
herin after mentioned.
- 100 Dec. 3rd Got up  
anchor at 10 A.M.  
& left Acapulco for  
San Jose Guatemala  
Went up before the
- 105 beak & after spinning  
a decent yarn, got  
let off with a caution  
Dec. 4th Weather pretty  
breezy sea choppy
- 110 crossing the Gulf of  
Teheantepec  
Dec. 5th At sea  
Dec 6th Arrived at  
San Jose dropped
- 115 *(symbol of an anchor)* 4:30 P.M.  
Dec 7th Got up *(symbol of an anchor)*  
at 9 A.M. left San Jose  
for Corinto in Nicaragua  
worked the church <sup>6</sup>&
- 120 1 Pt *(Pint?)* for the first time  
this commission  
also had a lively time  
mustering all the flags  
& Foreign Ensigns etc.

---

<sup>5</sup> Used in sense of Head Person or Disciplinarian, often used British schools to denote the Principal

<sup>6</sup> This was possibly a surveying term i.e. a church was used as a point of reference for surveying. There was also a Church pennant which was a special occasion flag used when padres were onboard or when the Captains were religious enthusiasts. Shearwater's C.O. sent his ship's company ashore for Church of England services whenever he could.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 125 Dec. 8th 1908 had morning  
watch sighted American  
Pacific Cruiser Squad  
Consisting of 8 four  
funnel cruisers. They
- 130 were steaming in single  
line ahead at about  
10 knots. They overhauled  
us at 5:20 & crossed  
our bows. They appeared
- 135 to be making for  
Amapala in Honduras.  
We had to alter course  
to **port** to allow them to cross  
our bows. Hoisted ensign
- 140 & M.H.Pt. (*mast head pennant*) to let them see  
we belonged to the  
largest & best Navy  
in the world, although  
we are only an old
- 145 Hookpot. Went to see  
the Apothecary at  
9 A.M. & had my ears  
syringed out. It all  
comes in with the old
- 150 saying, See the world  
in comfort plenty of  
pocket money & always  
return to your home  
port (Doctors attend
- 155 ance free). Although  
still at sea we have  
got the decks holy  
stoned <sup>7</sup> & every thing  
on top line ready for

---

<sup>7</sup> An attempt at sarcasm ... there was little point holystoning the decks just before the blackening them with coal dust.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

160 coaling. Arrived at  
Corinto 2 P.M. Coal came  
alongside in 3 lighters,  
at 3 P.M. commenced  
coaling, & finished at

165 5:30, had 1/2 hour for  
tea from 4:30 to 5:00 P.M.  
took in 50 tons of coal  
Dec 9th No leave  
given during our

170 stay in Corinto not  
even stewards allowed  
to land. Bought a  
parrot from the old  
lady who comes selling

175 fruit for 1\$ 25 c  
She wanted 1 \$ 50  
but after a lot of  
arguing on the point  
& amid cheers from

180 the Mocks I arranged  
it at 1.25.  
Got an old box  
& commenced to  
make a cage.

185 Broke the Armourers  
steel saw in my endeav  
our to saw a piece  
of wood. Expected  
a rub down but he

190 took it quite cool.  
finished the cage  
& stowed the parrot  
on the search light  
platform. Got under

195 way at 4:30 &  
left Corinto for  
Panama.  
Dec 10th At Sea  
had forenoon watch



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 200 weather choppy. Starbd (*starboard*)  
lifebuoy carried  
away. Reported it  
to O.O.W. (*Officer of the Watch*) But no  
steps were taken to
- 205 recover it on account  
of weather.  
Dec. 11th At Sea.  
Dec. 12th " " (denoting still at sea)  
Sunday Dec. 13th had
- 210 the last morning watch  
with 1st Lt. R.C. Dalgliesh  
before leaving for England.  
Sighted American  
Fleet 6:30 consisting
- 215 of West Virginnia  
Colarado Maryland  
Pensylvania Tennessee  
South Dakota  
Washington, California
- 220 Arrived at Panama  
& dropped (*symbol of an anchor*) at 12:15 p.m.  
American Cruiser  
Squadron already there  
& anchored we (*symbol for "anchored"*)
- 225 nearer the town than  
them about 1½ cables  
from the Yorkton  
a small U.S.A. Ship.  
Received a mail any
- 230 for your humble, I  
shall have to stop the  
half pay. Menu for today  
Breakfast. 1 piece of  
Stumps<sup>8</sup> Special made bread

---

<sup>8</sup> Stumps or Stumpy is a nickname for one of his messmates - Stump's special made bread was probably rock hard.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 235 & eggs & cheese fried on  
a plate. 2 basins of tea  
Menu for dinner. 1 basin of pea-doo (Cookie didn't  
put enough soap in the  
copper some messes
- 240 must have forgot to  
take up the usual  
bar) 2 spuds (*potatoes*) & 1 piece  
of salt pork. 1 basin of  
lime juice.
- 245 Tea. 4 basins of tea  
& 1 piece of the same  
special bread.  
Supper 2 basins of  
Cocoa & another
- 250 bit of duff <sup>9</sup>  
Soon be like an elephant  
if we keep living on high<sup>10</sup>  
Monday Dec.14th at Panama  
Jimmy (*a common term for the First Lieutenant*) our 1st Lieut.
- 255 Robin C. Dalgliesh left  
at 1 P.M. for England  
also an AB named  
Coleman who was  
ordered home by the
- 260 doctor on account of  
his health. The new  
1st Lieut arrived onboard  
about 11:40 A.M.  
Jimmy's leaving was

---

<sup>9</sup> RN term for any dessert, although it is derived from a variety of puddings, mainly plum pudding or plum duff ... the more famous pudding and probably more common was spotted Dick – flour, grease, sugar and currants)

<sup>10</sup> He is sarcastically referring to high living





## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

265 something like Sir John  
More's funeral.<sup>11</sup> I  
was asleep myself.  
proper thing for a  
Signalman to be.

270 Had 1st Dog.<sup>12</sup> Governor  
of Panama came out  
in a motorboat with  
his flag flying & went  
round the American

275 Fleet which Saluted  
him with 21 guns as  
he passed by. The  
West Virginia was  
the first to fire

280 a salute as he  
passed by us on his  
way back from the  
fleet I reported  
him passing & us

285 not being a saluting  
ship gave him  
the attention on the  
bugle.  
Tuesday Dec. 15th

290 At Panama in  
the evening prepared  
for sea.  
Wednesday Dec. 16th  
Got under way at

---

<sup>11</sup> He possibly means Sir Thomas More who was persecuted and eventually beheaded by Henry VIII, and was famous for cracking jokes for his executioner.

<sup>12</sup> Short for 1st dogwatch, the two hour watch from 1600 to 1800.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 295 6 A.M. & left Panama  
for Callas.<sup>13</sup> Weather  
fine had the first  
morning watch with  
the new 1st Lt. (*Lieutenant*)
- 300 Thursday Dec. 17th  
At sea. Great excitement  
in No 4 mess. Proffessor  
Bourne after an  
exciting chase caught
- 305 a cricket, but not  
before he had cleared  
the mess table by  
falling over it & upsetting  
the salt pot & ½ a
- 310 doz basins of tea  
Friday Dec. 18th  
At sea. Weather fine.  
exercised General Quarters  
in forenoon & abandon
- 315 ship after quarters for  
the first time with  
new jimmy the one (*1st Lieutenant*).  
Saturday Dec. 19th  
At sea crossed
- 320 the line off Ecquador  
Sunday Dec. 20th At sea  
weather fine, sea choppy  
speed of ship about  
6 knots.
- 325 Monday Dec. 21st 1908  
At sea weather  
fine sea choppy.  
Tuesday Dec 22nd  
At sea, weather fine

---

<sup>13</sup> Probably referring to Callao but not a spelling mistake, English sailors habitually anglicised foreign names so they wouldn't be caught mispronouncing a word that was obviously Spanish in this case.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

Wednesday Dec. 23rd 1908

At sea weather fine.

330 Got lined up for being  
to smart in turning out  
after being shook twice

335 by the crusher was  
interested watching the  
parrot it had just  
been on my hammock  
& woke me up by pecking

340 my nose & had a yarn  
& had proceeded to  
the next bloke's hammock.  
When I was suddenly  
woke up to the fact

345 that I was in the Navy  
by the terrible voice of  
the crusher singing  
out you 4 men fall  
in with your hammocks

350 when there lashed up  
& after counting 3 in  
their hammocks I came  
to the conclusion I  
must be Number 4.

355 We fell in before the  
beak & after the crusher  
had told him all about  
the awful crime we  
were charged with

360 he heard what we  
had to say. I told  
him I was only called  
a couple of minutes ago  
the next chap said

365 he couldn't turn out  
because the parrot  
was on his hammock  
& the other 2 had  
something similar &



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

370 after Jimmy had summed  
up the evidence he  
let us of (sic) with  
turn out quarter of  
an hour earlier

375 tomorrow.  
8 P.M. at sea run out  
of coal, had to start  
to saw up spare  
jib boom & boom

380 gear. Dec. 24th  
had morning watch.  
upper deck resembled  
a saw mill by the  
amount of sawdust

385 on the deck. The ship  
was making about  
6 knots per hour.  
Managed to get into  
Callas about 5 A.M.

390 dawn just breaking HMS  
Algerine already in  
harbour arrived the  
day before. One hand  
out of each mess

395 sent ashore to get  
Xmas dinner. Our  
mess brought off a  
Duck & a chicken  
some carrots & cabbage & a

400 bag of nuts. My word  
we going to have a  
feed tomorrow.  
Me being cook I  
suppose I had better

405 make a start plucking  
the Chicken.  
Christmas Day. Started  
by taking on chef of  
the mess rather a



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- responsible number  
having 8 lives on your  
slop chit. Made the  
lads a beautiful dinner  
consisting of Roasted
- 410
- goose, chicken &  
potatoes, cabbage &  
carrots, also a nice  
custard for the  
Xmas pudding which
- 415
- one of them had  
brought out from England.  
The dinner went  
down a treat.  
Spent the afternoon
- 420
- up in Lima Capital  
of Peru. visited the  
cathedral. Had a good  
Blow out for 60c peruvian  
\_\_\_\_\_? & came onboard at
- 425
- 6:30 p.m. One of my  
messmates named  
Stumps \_\_\_\_\_? a chap  
who stands a little over  
4 feet went ashore
- 430
- to get the green stuff  
for the mast & yards  
but he only managed  
to get enough to  
put up at the mast
- 435
- heads, because while  
he was ashore cutting  
it down a crowd  
of pigs set about  
him & chased him
- 440



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

back to the boat.<sup>14</sup>  
Boxing Day. Spent  
a nice quite (sic) day  
onboard at Callas.  
The parrot has been

445

qualifying for a  
gallant yard man.  
he did a trip up  
the foremast & back  
again.

450

Sunday Dec. 27 We had  
a sky pilot from Callao  
& had service on the  
Q deck. he brought a few  
ladies off with him to

455

attend the service I  
was on watch<sup>15</sup>  
Dec. 28th Coaled ship 170  
tons.  
Dec. 29th Cleaned ship Starbd

460

watch went on 48 hr gens<sup>16</sup>  
Dec. 30th Piped Hands to  
Bathe, temperature of  
water 60 <sup>17</sup>.  
Dec 31st Had a nice

465

job decorating Phoenix Club  
at Lima with the Q.S. (*Qualified Signalman*)  
of the Algerine landed  
with flags at 8:30 A.M.  
& took car to Lima.

470

---

<sup>14</sup> The Naval custom at Christmas is to dress the mast heads with christmas trees or branches, but when a ship cannot get fir or pine, any greenery is fine, the attempt at festive decoration is more important than the plant genus.

<sup>15</sup> A sky pilot is a heavenly navigator i.e. a padre, Q deck is the quarterdeck.

<sup>16</sup> Possibly 48 hrs off, a chance to travel a bit or at least spend a night ashore.

<sup>17</sup> Not in a tub, this refers to going swimming over the side



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 475 at Lima we took a  
hansom (*cab*) to the Phoenix  
Club. started decorating  
about 11 A.M. & went  
to dinner in the finest
- 480 hotel in Lima, we didn't  
half do things in style  
had about 5 different  
courses commenced  
decorating at 1:30 &
- 485 packed up about 4 P.M.  
the President of Club  
gave us 5 sols (*unit of currency*) each  
got back onboard Shear-  
water about 6 p.m.
- 490 Jan 1st Got awakened  
about 2 minutes to 12  
by all the Peruvian ships  
firing rockets etc. & all  
the ships in harbour
- 495 blowing sirens & whistles  
Seen some New Years  
Eve's (sic) in the Navy but  
this one beat the lot for  
noise. Landed about
- 500 9 A.M. to get down  
the flags at Phoenix Club  
where the dance had  
been held. On arriving  
at Phoenix Club
- 505 had a look round  
& came across all  
the cakes, wines, jellies,  
sweets, biscuits, etc  
what they had for
- 510 refreshments & spent  
a nice quite (sic) hour trying  
to see how much we  
could shift After  
we had a good Blow



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 515 out we made a start  
to get flags down  
My opposite number had  
to leave about 11 A.M.  
to play cricket so of
- 520 course I was left on  
my own. Whilst  
undecorating I found  
a beautiful brooch  
solid gold in shape
- 525 of a sword with a  
pearl for handle &  
another stone in centre  
returned it to some  
gentlemen who thanked
- 530 me very much & gave  
me a (sic) iced ginger ale  
Capt. came up to the club  
& I had another dinner  
at a swell hotel in
- 535 Lima for desert (sic) had  
strawberries & cream  
Got flags onboard  
Algerine about 2:45 p.m.  
& got onboard Shearwater
- 540 about 3:20 p.m.  
Jan. 2nd Got up (*symbol for anchor*)  
about 10:30 A.M. &  
the Pacific Fleet  
consisting of Shearwater
- 545 flagship & Algerine  
steamed out of Callao  
in single line ahead.  
Jan 3rd Had morning  
watch, Very foggy
- 550 Algerine off Starbrd  
Bow nice & clear  
about 8 A.M. sun shinging.  
At sea on way to  
Iquique. Jan 3rd





## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- At sea weather  
choppy. Jan 4th  
At Sea.  
Jan 5th At sea  
555 Had a few spasms
- with the old man.  
sighted land off the  
Port bow.  
Jan 6th Sighted Iquique  
560 about 8:30. Arrived at
- Iquique & anchored about  
ten picked up a billet  
between an English  
sailing ship & a Chilean  
565 steamer. Algerine (*anchor symbol*)
- off our quarter between  
2 sailing ships.  
Jan 7th at Iquique  
570 weather lovely, nothing  
exciting
- Jan 8th At Iquique  
had the British Consul  
& the Chilean Minister  
of State onboard. Bet  
575 a tin of salmon that
- the British Consul  
would fly the blue  
ensign without a  
badge in & lost  
580 There was an accident
- of (sic) the sailing ship  
off our Starbrd beam  
the Edenmore a  
British 3 master.  
585 A man fell from
- up aloft down the  
hold. They sent for  
our doctor. I don't know  
590 how the chap got on  
they took him ashore



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

at Iquique.

Jan 9th at Iquique

Mail steamer arrived

at 3 P.M. but have not

595 received any mail yet

only a few service letters

For the first time to

my knowledge the

ship has got a list to

600 port quite a relief

to No 5 mess for Saturday

scrub out. Polly very

nearly missed the boat

today for standeasy

605 Sunday Jan 10th Landed

C of E (*Church of England*) at Iquique, had

forenoon watch. Made a

start to catch the liberty

boat at 4 P.M. & after a

610 desperate struggle managed

to get ashore by 6:45 P.M

. \_\_\_\_?<sup>18</sup> up at 10 p.m.

Monday Jan 11th Had

a nice quite (sic) day bar one

615 or two little events. The

first was making a basin

of mustard & water for

thickening the pot mess

in mistake for a basin

620 of pea flour & the

next the dough-boys

were not quite done for

dinner so we put them

in a dish & sent them up

625 to the galley to be fried

---

<sup>18</sup> Catching the libertyboat is the exercise of mustering of libertymen prior to proceeding ashore to ensure that they are sober, well turned out, & clean. If any deficiency is noted it can be corrected prior to the next muster sometime, usually a half to two hours later.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

630 for supper. I had the  
afternoon watch perhaps  
a good thing I had or  
else there might (*not?*) have been  
any Tim Ryley now. I had

635 the honour of having the  
first basin of pot mess  
I tasted it and came to  
the conclusion it was  
quite hot enough without

640 putting any pepper in it  
but I managed to  
get through it alright  
goodness knows how the  
remainder of the mess

645 mates got on with it.  
but it couldn't have done  
them any harm, as I  
counted them at tea time  
to see if any had kicked

650 the bucket & much to  
my relief I found they  
were all waiting on top  
line for somebody to wet (*make*)  
the tea. The next event

655 was the quarterly  
flashing test between  
Shearwater & Algerine  
we beat them by  
1 point.

660 Tuesday Jan 11th  
At Iquique  
Very nearly had another  
They say "it never rains  
but what it pours"

665 One of the lads was making  
a cake & he asked me to  
hand him over the spice  
to put in & I gave him  
a tin of curry powder



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 670 instead. The mistake  
was only found out just  
in time, or else I am  
afraid it would have  
proved a better success
- 675 than yesterday.  
Wednesday Jan 12th  
At Iquique painting ship  
Thursday at Iquique  
Friday Dec.15<sup>th</sup>, Had a
- 680 slight attack of Berry  
Berry but managed to  
get over the effects at  
12 A.M. when the dinner  
appeared on the scene.
- 685 The parrot also had a  
slight attack of sea sickness  
but bucked up immense  
by towards dinner time.  
The Pacific Fleet
- 690 left Iquique for  
Coquimbo at 9:30 A.M.  
Weather lovely.  
Saturday Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> 1909.  
At Sea passed out
- 695 of tropics at 20 mins past  
10A.M. Ship averaging 8.5 knots  
per hour made 200 miles  
all but 1 point in 24 hours  
Since ship had her bottom
- 700 Scraped by the divers  
in Iquique She is steaming  
lovely. The parrot went  
on watch with me this  
morning & did lookout
- 705 man for it up in the fore-  
top from 8 A.M. till 2.30 p.m.  
when I went up aloft  
to fetch him down  
Sunday Jan19th



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- At sea, on way  
to Coquimbo weather  
choppy  
Monday Jan 18<sup>th</sup>  
Arrived at Coquimbo
- 710
- 2p.m. 4 American  
men o war in harbour  
& one Chilean. Names  
of American ships  
Tennessee, South Dakota
- 715
- Washington, California  
Chilean, Chacabaco.  
Had a little argument  
with the Old man  
on working dinner
- 720
- \_\_\_\_, but I failed to  
convince him on the  
point as he said  
something about  
putting his foot down *(some of subsequent journal pages missing)*
- 725
- Parrot had a\_\_\_\_  
feed off the frui\_\_\_\_  
I put him on his \_\_\_\_  
& he started eating  
her bananas(?) it was
- 730
- her who wanted to buy him  
undressed ship at  
\_\_\_\_ 10. Chilian ship also  
dressed overall with  
White Ensign at main
- 735
- Had a night of  
Dance club had  
dancing on quarter deck.  
Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> Saturday  
Received a mail from
- 740
- Victoria, & started to  
make a serge suit.  
\_\_\_\_ Bourne Esq. caught  
\_\_\_\_ weighing 230  
\_\_\_\_ which towed the
- 745



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

750 \_\_\_\_per punt for miles  
around the harbour eventually  
they had to send the  
dinghy to tow them back  
to the ship.<sup>19</sup> after a big

755 struggle they managed  
to get it onboard &  
served out \_\_\_\_ lb of fish  
per man. Stumps is  
making a duff(?)

760 Brooky alias Judea(?) is  
making a flannel<sup>20</sup>  
for tomorrow & Shyl\_\_\_\_  
is mending a pair  
of drawers that he

765 ought to give the mess  
for bright work rags.<sup>21</sup>  
The mess is on the bum  
for salt. Parrot  
retired to roost at 8P.M.

770 & cackling all day &  
pinching the firms  
C\_\_\_\_. Cummings.  
was first at the big  
fire the other night &

775 kicked the old man  
out of bed & pinched  
the old girls night –  
shirt which he is  
now swanking with.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Professor Bourne was mentioned earlier chasing crickets – this time he caught a large fish on a line strong enough to tow his punt around the harbour

<sup>20</sup> A new white gunshirt.

<sup>21</sup> Mending clothing that ought to be used as cleaning rags.

<sup>22</sup> Riley was on watch and when a fire started ashore he woke up the Captain to inform him of the event and possible need for assistance. Riley is possibly annoyed with his C.O., probably because he was criticised for his uniform some time ago and here he is being somewhat cheeky about his Captain's unauthorized clothing.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 780 Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> At Coquimbo  
Landed a C of E party  
Had forenoon watch  
Went ashore at 4:30 pm.  
had a walk to copper
- 785 mines & spent the rest  
of time till 9:30 on  
seat in Playa with some  
Chilian girls listening  
to the band
- 790 Monday Jan 25<sup>th</sup>  
Finished making a  
cage door & fastened  
it on cage  
Tuesday Jan 26<sup>th</sup>
- 795 Nothing serious occurred.  
Wednesday Jan 27<sup>th</sup>  
Decorated Poop & Q.D. (*Quarter Deck*)  
for a ball, The Captain  
had about 55 guests to
- 800 dance. There was a bit  
of a jam when Chilian  
Cruiser Chacabuca  
carried away her hawser  
& commenced to swing
- 805 round on us. A gale was  
blowing. Old man gave  
me a wet & a bun.  
had dancing on Q.D. at  
9 P.M.
- 810 Thursday Jan 28<sup>th</sup>  
Put the flaps on  
serge trousers instead  
of having a sleep (some-  
thing worth remembering)



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 815 Wrote to Sherlock Holme  
for first time<sup>23</sup>  
Friday Jan 29<sup>th</sup> Spent the  
afternoon watch trying to  
get the donkey to Gee<sup>24</sup> &
- 820 clewed up by breaking the  
needle, made the parrot  
another perch to break up  
Saturday Jan 30<sup>th</sup>  
Got another wet from
- 825 Old man. found a  
plum stone in pussers  
jam painted the  
cage green to match  
colour of bird Stumps had
- 830 a row with crusher & retired with heavy  
losses  
Sunday Jan 31<sup>st</sup>  
Landed with C of E party  
at Coquimbo, to church
- 835 ashore, had pot mess  
for dinner, having candle  
lights instead of electric.  
There is no jam in the  
mess so old father Neptune Stumps
- 840 had to go without jam  
for his doughboy. Great  
excitement at 7 A.M. Professor  
Bourne caught an enormous  
fish of the shark specie
- 845 which he generously  
distributed amongst the  
messes. At present we  
are patiently waiting  
for it to walk down from

---

<sup>23</sup> Possibly slang for 'wrote home'.

<sup>24</sup> The donkey here is the sailmaking sewing machine, a rather larger and more clumsy affair than the sort used by tailors. He is trying to get the beast to gee and haw but winds up breaking the needle.





## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

the galley.

Monday Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> 1909

Got the donkey to Gee  
went away for 1<sup>st</sup> time in  
racing whalers crew at

850

6 P.M. Drew 4 dollars from  
Table. Tuesday Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> 09

Fired pistol & got VGI<sup>25</sup>  
for not hitting the target.  
Had another wet from

855

the Old man when  
he came back from butter-  
fly catching. Dancing on  
Q.D. till 10 p.m.

Wednesday Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> 09.

860

Had a steam pie as  
an experiment never  
knew Cookie could  
make one.<sup>26</sup> Did  
a bit more towards

865

serge suit. Started an  
Angling Club.

Thursday Jan 4<sup>th</sup> 1909

Had a make & mend  
& prepared for sea

870

Friday Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 1909

6.30 A.M. letting off steam  
at the rate of knots. Mcfunnel<sup>27</sup>  
casing rushing about  
trying to get them to save

875

the steam, tying every-  
thing down, because they  
think we shan't be able  
to hold her back once  
she makes a start the

880

---

<sup>25</sup> VGI= Very Good, Inaccurate.

<sup>26</sup> Sea pie is layers of meat, vegetables and seafood separated by crusts of bread or broken biscuit, known as two or three decker by the number of layers.

<sup>27</sup> The engineer was evidently Scottish.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- old Honker on the bow  
isn't half flapping his  
wings.<sup>28</sup>  
885 7:30 Got the mud hook  
up & can hardly
- stand on deck, were  
going at such a terrific  
speed ie 2 and a onion<sup>29</sup>  
890 Chief Stoker come up on  
Bridge for permission
- to shut off steam off  
siren to give the engines  
a bit more.  
895 Saturday Jan 6<sup>th</sup> 1909  
At sea. Weather fine
- bg swells.  
Sunday Jan 7<sup>th</sup> 1909.  
Fair wind set sails.  
Monday Jan 8<sup>th</sup> 1909  
900 Ran out of bread Stumps
- tried the experiment  
with Baking Pdr & flour  
& it took nearly all the  
mess mates to fetch it from  
905 the galley.<sup>30</sup> fair wind
- under sail.  
Tuesday Jan 9<sup>th</sup> At sea  
under sail fair wind  
weather fine. On baking  
910 pdr bread.

---

<sup>28</sup> The engineer was obviously making much of the upcoming trip under steam, so much so that the shearwater bird carved into the ship's breastwork would be unable to remain in place without flapping its wings to keep up.

<sup>29</sup> Derisively meaning not much more than two knots.

<sup>30</sup> It raised too much or weighed too much.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

Wednesday Jan 10<sup>th</sup> 1909.

At sea. Sighted land

4p.m. On biscuits<sup>31</sup>,

arrived at Callao.

915 & dropped (symbol for anchor) 9.10.

piped Angling Club

Out fishing lines &

Bachelor Club Turn in

Thursday, Jan 11<sup>th</sup> 1909.

920 At Callao. Algerine

arrived about 4 p.m.

& anchored about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of

a cable from us. received

a mail paper about the

925 fight Burns V Johnson

Friday Jan 12<sup>th</sup> 1909

At Callao. Had a

prize fight in our mess

for breakfast. there was

930 table jabs & right hookers

flying all over the

mess. it ended in a

draw as it was hard

for the referee to

935 decide who won on

points. We had all

been living peacefully

until they saw the

papers & that started

940 it. I was cook of mess

& my cooking Chum

& the boy was the

combatants.

Saturday Jan 13<sup>th</sup> 1909

945 Peace once more reigns

---

<sup>31</sup> Becalmed and can't beat our own biscuits thrown over the side.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- supreme in the mess.  
Having fine weather  
at Callao.  
Sunday Jan 14<sup>th</sup> 1909  
950 Had church onboard
- Algerine, Doctor performed  
an operation on Battlea  
Had to go & get the  
parrot from aft  
955 because he was disturbing
- the Old Man by whistling  
& singing out. Nearly  
half the ships Company  
went ashore to see  
960 a Bull fight in Lima.
- Prepared ship for  
coaling tomorrow.  
Monday Feb 15<sup>th</sup> 1909  
965 Started coaling 6 A.M.  
took in 115 tons by 2 p.m.,
- took skiff in for Capt  
at 8 p.m. & stayed 2 hours  
at Callao pier for him.  
Got a wet to come<sup>32</sup>  
970 Got orders to do some
- decorating, passed  
the time away whilst  
waiting by pulling a  
bums leg.  
975 Tuesday Feb 16<sup>th</sup> 1909
- Went ashore to decorate  
a hall in Callao, had  
a pretty good time ashore  
landed at 9.30 A.M. &  
980 returned onboard 5 p.m.

---

<sup>32</sup> He owes me a drink.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 985 Went in a butchers shop  
ashore & asked them if  
they had got any of the  
bulls what was killed  
in the Bull fight, he
- 990 said yes, & told me to  
have a look at one of  
the horses which was  
killed. I went & he  
showed me a sheep So
- 995 I told him it must have  
been the little pony what  
got killed anyhow I  
chanced it & bought  
1 lb of steak & 2 lbs of liver
- 1000 for breakfast. I heard  
that there were 6 bulls  
& about a dozen horses  
were killed in the bullfight.  
Wednesday Feb 14<sup>th</sup> 1909
- 1005 Went ashore to take  
the flags down & had  
a pretty decent time  
ashore.  
Thursday Feb 18<sup>th</sup> 1909
- 1010 Algerine left at 9.30  
AM to do some surveying  
off Ecquador  
Friday Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 1909  
Had dancing on QD
- 1015 & got the parrot some  
corn for when we go  
to sea.  
Saturday Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 1909  
At Callao. foggy
- 1020 weather  
Sunday Feb 21<sup>st</sup> 1909  
At Callao had  
service onboard  
Monday Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- At Callao Weather  
foggy  
Tuesday Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>  
At Callao  
1025 Wednesday Feb 24<sup>th</sup>
- Left Callao. at  
1 pm weather fine  
for Galapagos Islands  
Thursday Feb 25<sup>th</sup>  
1030 At Sea. weather
- fine set topsail &  
\_\_\_\_\_ sail.  
Capt had every body  
aft & spun them a  
yarn after letting a  
1035
- chap off for  
chucking his hand  
in.<sup>33</sup>  
Friday Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 1909  
1040 At Sea beautiful
- weather.  
Saturday Feb 27<sup>th</sup> 09  
At Sea. Cook of the  
mess & give the lads  
an excellent gorge  
1045
- which was highly recommended  
Sunday Feb 28<sup>th</sup>  
At Sea.  
Monday March 1<sup>st</sup>  
1050 arrived at Chatham
- Isle Galapagos Islands  
about 8 AM &  
landed a securing (?)  
Drew 4<sup>th</sup> from tale  
party & had a  
1055

---

<sup>33</sup> Read the articles of war after trying and acquitting a man for desertion.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- pretty good haul.  
Tuesday March 2<sup>nd</sup>  
At Chatham Isle  
landed securing (?)  
party. had a concert
- 1060
- & I gave a piccolo Solo(?)  
Wednesday March 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Got under way about  
6 AM & left for  
Salina Cruz.
- 1065
- Wednesday Mch 3<sup>rd</sup>  
At sea, lovely  
weather nothing doing.  
Thursday Mch 4<sup>th</sup>  
At Sea had a
- 1070
- Make & mend.  
Friday Mch 5<sup>th</sup>  
At Sea. A Turkey<sup>34</sup>  
got jammed down  
below for refusing
- 1075
- Duty  
Saturday, Mch 6<sup>th</sup>  
The Turkey got weighed  
off with 14 days  
cabin & reduced to
- 1080
- 2 in 2<sup>35</sup>  
Sunday Mch 7<sup>th</sup>  
At Sea Spent  
most of forenoon  
trying to catch
- 1085
- turtles with a  
net, without success  
passed a school of  
whales in afternoon  
Monday Mch 8<sup>th</sup> 1909
- 1090

---

<sup>34</sup> Turkey, turkey neck, leather neck or lobster = marine

<sup>35</sup> Reduced in rank to two stripes.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

1095 Arrived at Salina  
Cruz about 3.30 pm  
& (symbol for anchor). Received a mail,  
washed a blanket  
& just put the parrot

1100 to bed 7.30 pm  
Tuesday Mch 9<sup>th</sup> 1909  
At Salina Cruz.  
Went ashore at 4.30 pm  
with the intention of

1105 buying a parrot but  
did not see any worth  
buying. ( Had a 50 Dollar  
bill gave me, but  
gave it back again)

1110 came onboard at 10 pm.  
Wednesday March 10<sup>th</sup> 1909  
Got under way about  
10.30 AM & left  
Salina Cruz for

1115 Acapulco, weather  
fine. Gave my tot  
away for a sugar  
cane for the parrot  
Thursday Mch 11<sup>th</sup> 1909

1120 At sea weather fine  
finished making  
serge suit  
Friday Mch 12<sup>th</sup> 1909  
Arrived at Acapulco

1125 about 4 AM & (symbol for anchor)  
U.S.S. Yorktown in  
harbour.  
Coaled ship 120 tons  
Saturday Mch 13<sup>th</sup> 09

1130 having lovely weather  
landed a securing (?)  
party & caught a  
few fish. USS Yorkton  
left for Amapala in





## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- Honduras.  
Sunday Mch 14<sup>th</sup> 09  
Went ashore had a  
stroll round Acapulco  
went to see a cock
- 1135
- fight & then went for  
a bathe & got a  
few shells.  
Monday Mch 15<sup>th</sup> 1909  
Got in a stock of
- 1140
- eggs & pineapples for our trip to  
San Diego & prepared  
for sea. cut out 2 flannel<sup>36</sup>  
Tuesday Mch 16<sup>th</sup> 1909  
6.30 Swing compasses.
- 1145
- 7 AM left Acapulco  
for San Diego had  
forenoon watch.  
Wednesday Mch 17<sup>th</sup> 1909  
At Sea went up on
- 1150
- the focle with the sewing  
class & put the \_\_\_ neck<sup>37</sup>  
on one flannel  
weather fine  
Thursday Mch 18<sup>th</sup> 1909
- 1155
- Sighted two American  
cruisers. commenced  
to cross the Gulf of  
California about  
6 AM. Sea choppy.
- 1160
- The ship beginning to  
cock a chest.  
Friday March 19<sup>th</sup> 1909  
Crossing the Gulf of  
California on our way
- 1165

---

<sup>36</sup> Two white gunshirts.

<sup>37</sup> Boat neck meaning the blue trim around the square neck opening.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

1170 to San Diego. Course  
N55 1/2 W. Speed of  
Ship 7 knots. Head  
sea running.  
Saturday March 20<sup>th</sup> 1909

1175 At sea. got out of tropics  
crossed the Gulf of  
California & sighted  
Cape San Lucas  
in morning watch.

1180 Head wind & sea  
speed of ship 5 knots  
course N 61 1/2 (degree) W.  
Had fresh air for tea<sup>38</sup> &  
supper. The parrot

1185 didn't do so bad, he  
had a plate of rice  
pudding  
Sunday March 21<sup>st</sup>  
Sea gone down a

1190 lot not doing our  
Submarines for it on  
the mess deck.<sup>39</sup>  
Monday March 22<sup>nd</sup> 09  
Sea calm with heavy

1195 Swells. lit up another  
boiler & making our  
9 knots per hour.  
Tuesday March 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Strong wind blowing

1200 & heavy sea running  
speed of ship 7 knots.  
Course N 31 1/2 (degree) W.  
expect to get in San  
Diego between 2 &

---

<sup>38</sup> Had nothing to eat.

<sup>39</sup> Water is no longer sloshing around.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 3 pm.  
Wednesday March 24<sup>th</sup> 09  
Arrived in San Diego  
about 11.30 AM.  
weather fine went
- 1205
- ashore to see friends.  
Thursday March 25<sup>th</sup>  
Commenced coaling  
ship about 6 A.M.  
took in 91.2 cwt & 1 lb
- 1210
- of coal. finished coaling  
about 10 A.M. & cleaned  
ship.  
Friday March 26<sup>th</sup> 09  
Went ashore decorating
- 1215
- for a concert & Dance  
Had tea with the  
British Consul &  
finished decorating  
about 6.30 P.M. attended
- 1220
- the concert & had  
a job of exhibiting<sup>40</sup>  
myself & drawing  
the curtain for  
a sketch called "Penelope".
- 1225
- after the concert we  
had dancing at 12 p.m.,  
took my friends to  
the car, stayed on  
shore to take flags
- 1230
- down at 8.30 AM.  
Saturday March 27<sup>th</sup>  
Took the flags down  
& got onboard by  
10.30 A.M. Consul
- 1235

---

<sup>40</sup> Appeared on stage to work the curtains.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

1240 gave us some cake etc  
for mess. took the  
parrot ashore & stayed  
to dinner at friends  
Sunday March 28<sup>th</sup>

1245 One of our mess mates  
Sal Freeman gone  
but not forgotten  
left me his private  
bill to pay. All the

1250 mess mates landed  
to search for him  
but could not find  
him<sup>41</sup> Had Frank onboard  
for dinner & went

1255 ashore at 1.30 AM.  
& spent a good time  
up at their house  
returned onboard at  
10 pm.

1260 Monday March 29<sup>th</sup>  
prepared for sea  
& left San Diego  
for San Francisco  
at 10 AM weather fine

1265 rounded point Loma  
& shaped our course  
N. 51 ½ W speed 8 knots.  
Tuesday March 30<sup>th</sup>  
At Sea, weather fine

1270 sea choppy. speed of  
ship about 6 knots  
passed Cape Conception  
better known as Cape  
Horn of the Pacific

---

<sup>41</sup> He jumped ship without paying for his share of mess funded food.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- about 1 PM.<sup>42</sup>  
Wednesday March 31<sup>st</sup>  
At Sea. Head wind  
& heavy swells.  
1275 passed Cape Blanco
- about 2 AM.  
Thursday April 1<sup>st</sup> 09  
Arrived at San Francisco  
1280 about 2 AM. In the  
morning a heavy fog
- hung over the bay &  
to all appearances  
according to the papers  
& no Official visits  
1285 we have arrived &
- anchored without  
being perceived by  
lookouts on sea shore  
Gave leave to the watch  
1290 from 1:30 p.m. to
- 7 AM, in forenoon  
weather cleared up &  
fine  
Friday April 2<sup>st</sup> 1909  
1295 Liberty men came off
- 7 A.M. 4 adrift  
clinker knockers  
2 stokers, 1 flatfoot &  
1 turkey, Turkey came  
1300 off 8:30 A.M. Flatfoot
- came off at 11:30 A.M.  
The 2 stokers have been  
given up as lost to the  
Navy. Mac Engines<sup>43</sup>  
1305 very nearly going Bald<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> The Japanese current circles north and east somewhat below Alaska, heads south along the West Coast and heads back out west at Cape Conception. The weather changes here from tropical to temperate.

<sup>43</sup> Nickname – the Scottish engineer's name is probably McInnes, or something close to that.

<sup>44</sup> Going bald = pulling his hair out.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 1310      Headed over it &  
             threatend to stop all  
             stokers leave. Went  
             round the table at  
             1 p.m. to draw months
- 1315      pay & draw the  
             enormous amount of 1 \$  
             to pay a 2\$ Mess Bill  
             & keep me in pocket money  
             for remainder of month
- 1320      So there is not much  
             chance of getting drunk  
             this month unless  
             Pa sends the check  
             pretty soon. I went
- 1325      up to pay bob &  
             asked him if he had  
             not made a mistake  
             in reckoning up my  
             pay-day but after
- 1330      going through my  
             pay & subtracting  
             10/- (*shillings*) here & 3D/ (*threepence or thruppence*) there  
             he brought it down  
             to 4/2d i.e. 1\$ so
- 1335      I thanked him kindly  
             & went on my way  
             rejoicing. Went ashore  
             at Frisco & had  
             a lovely time.
- 1340      Saturday April 3<sup>rd</sup>  
             At Frisco. cleaned  
             ship & got the cheering  
             news that we leave  
             San Frisco tomorrow
- 1345      Sunday at 1 A.M.  
             very windy & heavy  
             swells running.  
             Give leave from 4:30  
             till 7 A.M.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- 1350 Sunday April 4<sup>th</sup> 1909  
7 A.M. Liberty men  
returned 2 adrift  
one stoker & 1 P.O.  
P.O. returned about 11 A.M.
- 1355 Motorboat full of visitors  
came alongside to have  
a look round. visitors got  
onboard, but were  
ordered back by O.O.D.<sup>45</sup> re
- 1360 Now. Got under way  
at 1 A.M. very windy  
& heavy head sea  
Shaped course  
for Esquimalt (8 p.m. (anchor symbol))
- 1365 Had to put in Drakes Bay  
for shelter. Steaming 112 revs  
& only making 3 knots.  
Several ships in for  
Shelter.
- 1370 Monday April 5<sup>th</sup> 1909  
8 A.M. All the ships left  
Shelter & proceeded to  
sea bar us & a tug  
with sailing ships in tow
- 1375 9:45 A.M. got up (anchor symbol) &  
proceeded to sea.  
Made signal to American  
Ship passing, asking  
what weather she had
- 1380 encountered, but got  
no reply. Steaming  
112 revs (*revs*) but only  
making 4 knots &  
heavy sea running & **strong**

---

<sup>45</sup> O.O.D. Officer of the Day.



## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

- head wind.  
Tuesday April 6<sup>th</sup>  
At Sea a slight  
change in the weather  
for the worse only
- 1385
- making 3 knots  
Land in sight off  
Starbd (*starboard*) beam  
Wednesday April 7<sup>th</sup> 1909  
Sea gone down a little
- 1390
- strong head wind  
speed of ship 5.5 knots  
4 p.m. Wind & sea gone  
down increased speed  
to 6 knots.
- 1395
- Thursday April 8<sup>th</sup>  
Passed Cape Blanco  
at 2 A.M. Speed of  
ship 8 knots. set fore  
& aft sail. took in
- 1400
- fore & aft sail at 12 A.M.  
weather fine.  
Friday April 9<sup>th</sup> 1909  
At Sea, Head wind &  
sea sprung up 4 A.M.
- 1405
- speed of ship 6 knots.  
Chef making hot X  
buns in galley. I had  
a look at them I expect  
that's my share<sup>46</sup> got
- 1410
- forenoon watch. No  
wonder we are having  
bad weather, when  
it was a bit fine &  
them aft there could
- 1415

---

<sup>46</sup> All he got was a look.





## Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

1420 manage to get on deck  
The Sub (*sub-lieutenant?*) couldn't find  
nothing better to do  
than shoot Sea-gulls  
what had been follow-

1425 ing us all the way  
from Frisco.<sup>47</sup>  
Had prayers at 10  
A.M. & piped down  
Came off forenoon

1430 watch at 12:30 to  
find everying (sic) rolling  
about on mess.  
Ship pitching &  
rolling heavily

battened down  
forward

1435

1440

---

<sup>47</sup> Sailors believe that killing seabirds is bad luck, especially since Coleridge's Ancient Mariner was condemned to wear the albatross he killed around his neck.



Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)

1445

1450

1455

1460



CFB Esquimalt Naval  
& Military Museum

---

Tim Ryley's Diary (cont.)