

Norman Powell was an apprentice on the *Obuasi* from September 1956 to September 1957. Here he recounts an amusing incident at Lagos.

**SALUTING HMS CEYLON
BY
NORMAN POWELL**

The article about HMS *Ceylon* and seeing Jerry Crangle attended the meeting in New Brighton brought back some memories.

After attending the Gold Coast/Ghana independence ceremonies the *Ceylon* showed the flag at Lagos some days later. I was a cadet in *Obuasi* anchored in Lagos Pool when *Ceylon* passed close by with all hands dressed in whites, standing to attention at the rail while the marine band played "Life on the Ocean Wave" on the afterdeck. Us cadets found this very impressive so that when *Obuasi* shifted to Customs Wharf later in the day and had to pass *Ceylon* which was at the buoys, the lads (I was steering) dragged out the old stereogram, hid it from the bridge behind the poop deckhouse, and as we came by *Ceylon* dipped the ensign plus the skull and crossbones which we also flew on such occasions, and played the newest record we had – "You Aint Nothin But A Hound Dog" by one Elvis Presley.

This was not audible on the *Obuasi's* bridge because of the funnel noise of the diesels but it was certainly heard aboard *Ceylon* as all work on deck stopped. The lads also stood at attention dressed in their working gear – oil stained shorts.

Obuasi swung to the tide while berthing so that I could see *Ceylon* from behind the wheel. When we had a line ashore she signalled with the Aldis: "Thank you for your music and salute". Captain Johnny Brooks was nonplussed for a second muttering what the hell do they mean music and salute before the penny dropped and he started to call for the "Head Man", (senior cadet Ron Hayden) demanding to know what the hell we had been up to now!

Ceylon was very nice about the incident and invited Johnny aboard for drinks. He returned quite late in the evening having obviously had a good time and advised that we were playing *Ceylon* at rugby. If memory serves the first game was against their stoker's mess – a bunch of older guys with beer bellies who we destroyed so badly that *Ceylon* was demanding a re-match before we had even got back to the ship, but this time against their first team. I think the second game took place at Port Harcourt in a rainstorm – I don't recall the score so I guess *Ceylon* must have beaten us!!

Jerry Crangle was the long-suffering mate. The Chief Engineer was Hennigan who was tragically killed in the engine room a few trips later while the ship was picking up the pilot off Point Lynas.