

## Excerpt from the diary of Malcolm Blane, 1906

(GB0232/D543/1/1/6)

Chapter 147 – Away to see the channel Squadron

Nairn, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>

I, M Jay, Mim Set out for the Nairn Harbour at 11:05 to catch the special boat starting at 12:00. We walked down to the wrong side of the pier by mistake & found that we had to go up the river, which runs between the 2 piers, that make the harbour, and cross the bridge & come down the other side, on the other pier. When we were 30yds off the steamer a bell rang & they pulled up the gangway & the boat was about to start, when our releaser a certain Mr Faine, said to the gangway pullers, "Look there are lots more coming". They, luckily, pushed back the gangway & he rushed on & then, & we who had caught up by now managed to scramble in, being the last people on board. The boat left 10 minutes before its time, lots of holiday makers as it was a town holiday, mist it. But I believe some got onto a sailing boat & followed us. But we were the last. 140 were admitted on board & we were 138, 139 & 140.

(Map found 629)

It was worse than our escape at Gollanfield, for they can easily stop a train, that has just gone a few yards beyond the platform, where as with a steamer with all its ropes & gangway it is a great business.

1. Mr Fane accompanied us all the way.
  2. The water was like a duck pond & a warm slight misty breeze blew over it.
  3. We passed to men of war outside the firth. One followed us into the firth to Invergordon.
  4. We were now entering the firth, as as you go in, you see on the left a cave called "Bleauhaud's Cave" where two boys were kidnapped by the tied & had to stop most of the night. But, a passing ship came & raised a hail & were rescued. 12 yds beyond that you see two things that you see well at Nairn: two rocks, called the Suitors Rocks. I don't know the history of them but they look very grand, the red sandstone.
  5. As we pass round the corner we come in front of the TOWN OF CROMARTY (in which is a monument to Hugh Miller, Cromarty being his birthplace) (The ville is pretty, set on an angle of the mountain.)
1. We pass the 2<sup>nd</sup> cornor and are in sight of the men of war anchored outside Invergordon pier. We pass first of all round them. These are the names of them.

HMS Majestic  
HMS Doris  
HMS Magnificent  
HMS Prince George  
HMS Hogue  
HMS Sutlej  
HMS Hannable  
HMS Jup-i-ter

There were two others which we could not see the names of. One was a very much smaller thing & the other was the ordinary siezed ship. After we had sailed round we stoped alongside of HMS Magnificent we got on board and got a sailor to take us round. He first took us to a gun & carefully explained how it worked & the in and outs of it. Then we passed by where they were scrubbing one man was washing another soeing, doing medle work. We wend down stairs & looked at all the places where the sailors kept their clothes in little bags among the different little lockers. We passed over the ammunition rooms, by some of the endgine rooms, up through the turret in the turret hydrolic endgines we saw different electric shaft lifts.

We ended in coming up through the turret, of the two 60 ton guns. It was along time up & down everywhere on those thin iron ladders, generally perpendicular without any railing of any description. We then went up on the high bridges up the mast to the steerage platform & all over the upper deck. We, having forgotten to bring our louncheon baskets from S.Y. Forth our former vessel, it now being past three o'clock were getting slightly hungray. Our own vessel came back at 3:30 so we were then able to receive our [?]. Well I have given a brief account of the interesting day. We came home to Nairn. Our steamer tickets in VIII.