

Every Now and Then the school has the most touching and tangible reminders of our great schools' history and impact on our former students and families. In January 2023 we were very honoured to have a school visit from Micky, Vivienne, Genevieve and Cliff who are the children and daughter in law of Alumni Donald Vivian James, pictured below.



Figure 2 Donald V James circa 1934

Donald (Don or *Jimmy*) was born and brought up in Clapham, South London. He was the middle of four brothers. From a young age Don was keen to enter a career at sea and experience what the world had to offer. He was lucky enough to obtain a place at the *London Nautical School* for his secondary education when it was based in Rotherhithe close to Surrey Docks (Silwood Road). We think he joined the school in 1934 aged 11 and remained until 1938.

Captain Harvey, a teacher at the school, arranged for him to be recruited by The Hain Steamship Company as an apprentice on S.S. *Trekieve* prior to training as an Officer. The Port of London and the docks both north and south of the Thames were very busy and vibrant at the time with cargo being exported and imported from across



Figure 1 - SS Trekieve

the world. Don travelled to India and countries in the Middle and Far East Asia and North and South America. During the Second World War he was commissioned as an Officer and worked on bringing essential supplies to the United Kingdom and joined convoys which were frequently under attack from enemy submarines. Don experienced his ship being sunk; as at 14.46 hours on 4th November 1942 the unescorted SS *Trekieve* (Master Edwin Aubrey Grant Jenkins) was torpedoed and sunk by U-178 east of Maputo in the Mozambique Channel. Three crew members were lost. The master, 38 crew members, six gunners and two passengers (DBS) made landfall at Inhaca Island, Portuguese East Africa.

Unfortunately, his career in the Merchant Navy was cut short as a result of contracting tuberculosis which was a significant health hazard at the time, particularly for seaman. He was required to spend time in a TB sanatorium in Liphook (Hampshire) where the main treatment involved rest and being in bed in the fresh air.

Afterwards Don was unable to return to sea after recovery, so joined Decca and was able to contribute to safety at sea and in the air by the manufacture of navigation equipment for shipping and the aircraft industry.

Don's ashes were buried at sea in the Solent which was very fitting for a man whose passion for being at sea remained throughout his life. In memory of Don, his family very kindly have agreed to sponsor a prize that will be presented in his memory at our 2023 Prize Giving.



Figure 3 - Don ready to join SS Trekieve

In memory of Donald Vivian James - January 1923 to March 1978.