

HMS COLLINGWOOD is the keeper of a very Special Gun Carriage. Compared with the State Gun Carriage which is kept in HMS EXCELLENT it is small and ordinary, and the combined gun and limber are pulled along with the use of very few men. Until recently it was kept in HMS DRYAD.

Today it is painted black, except for the woodwork on the wheels which is plain and heavily varnished. The limber has highly polished brass plates on the outside of the box lids. On the towing bar of the gun, just behind the eye, and facing upwards therefore hidden by the coffin platform, are several brass plates each telling of the history of the gun, who owned it, and who was conveyed to their funeral ceremony on it.

The first attached brass plate mentions that this gun belongs to HMS PEMBROKE and that it was used for the funeral of none other than **Admiral of the Fleet Sir Charles Madden** at Westminster Abbey 7th June 1935.

Subsequent plates show that it was also used for the funerals of:-

Admiral of the Fleet Earl Jellicoe November 26th 1935 at St Pauls Cathedral;
Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty March 16th 1936 at St Pauls Cathedral;
Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Kelly November 6th 1936 at St Martin in the Fields;
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound October 25th 1943 Westminster Abbey;
Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes January 4th 1946 Westminster Abbey;
Vice Admiral Sir St John Tyrwhit October 19th 1961 at sea;
Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Cunningham June 18th 1963 at sea;
Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield March 22nd 1967 at sea.

A brass plate on the limber shows that it was made at the ELWICK WORKS in 1895, given the name "Admiralty No 5 Gun" and its weight is recorded as being 139 cwt {'c' meaning 100 and 'wt' meaning weight, thus 'cwt' = HUNDREDWEIGHT, where 1 cwt = 50.802 Kg x 139 = 7061.478 Kg = 6.95 tons or 7.061478 tonnes [metric tons].

One might rightly assume that this gun is/was used for our most senior admirals, but in actual fact it is used today for the funeral of any Royal Sailor, officer or rating, should the request be made known to the Navy by the next of kin. Several persons have taken their last ride on this vehicle since 1967 {Lord Chatfield's funeral} but the events are no longer recorded on the gun.

See my site page for The Ceremonial Funeral of Lord Mountbatten to see who the State Gun Carriage has been used for to date.