

Picture this: postcards and letters beyond text, Picture this: postcards and letters beyond text

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Travels with Mike: from HMS Goodwill to Yacht Jester

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Abstract

[Selected correspondence of Michael William Dugdale Mills Richey MBE, Hon FRIN, first winner of the Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize for Literature (1942), b. 6 July 1917, 9 Chiswick Place, Eastbourne; d. 22 December 2009, 16 Lewes Crescent, Brighton.]

It's difficult to write when you are at sea on a minesweeper, first of all on the lower decks as an ordinary seaman and then, having survived the sinking of your first ship, as an officer learning and quickly perfecting the art of navigation in the Second World War. Censorship prevents a full account of one's activities and destinations, and letters could take months to arrive.

*This visual essay, drawn from images in his official archive at Georgetown University and from his sea-chest at home in Brighton at Lewes Crescent, focusses on the wartime correspondence of Michael Richey. His brother Paul Richey wrote the classic account *Fighter Pilot* (published anonymously during the war), while Mike's own story of the HMS Goodwill, 'Sunk by a Mine', won the very first Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize for Literature in 1942.*

Post-war, Michael Richey went on to have a distinguished career as the first director of the (Royal) Institute of Navigation, and became a legend for his single-handed sailing adventures in the famous little boat Jester. He had signature postcards printed for his solo voyages. On the front, a black and white photograph of himself sailing the boat, on the back, the incomplete address in black type, 'Yacht Jester at _____'.

This is a snapshot of one of the most fascinating figures in the 'twentieth-century story' who was also one of its most reluctant autobiographers [See Libby Purves http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/libby_purves/article6968938.ece].