

HELLO SAILOR! WARSHIP SKIPPER IS NOW A MISS



OLD RIG: Seadog Oskar when he was a tough destroyer captain.

From DENNIS NEWSON in Bonn

WEATHER-BEATEN seadog Oskar Berning was one of the toughest destroyer captains in the West German navy.

But the crew who used to jump when he bellowed from the bridge wouldn't recognise him now.

For the "Old Man" wears a mini-skirt, is known as Claudia, and has taken up needlework as a hobby.

Captain Berning has had a £20,000 sex-change operation.

As a man he was twice married and divorced, and fathered four children.

Now he hopes to figure in a third wedding—this time as the bride, wearing white and carrying a bouquet of irises.

'Wanted'

Claudia, 49, said yesterday: "When I was up there on the bridge I wasn't really in my element."

"Secretly I always wanted to be a woman."

After the operation there was only a tattoo left to remind her of her days as a sailor.

The tattoo, on her right forearm, depicts a muscular cowboy figure.

It seems strangely out of place on Claudia as she does some neat crochet-work in her cosy Berlin flat.

Claudia has taken a secretarial course, and is looking for work.

In her spare time she loves to go dancing. "I've already met seven nice boy-friends," she said.

Cop this for a start!

THE Keystone Cops couldn't have bettered it.

Just like a scene in their jerky, early movies the farce in the quiet English village went like this:

A woman telephones the police that raiders are stealing apples from her orchard.

Police car races to the scene. . . .

Raiders have gone but a group of youths are standing nearby. Police line them up against a wall and interview them one by one.

"HOW CAN MY SAVINGS KEEP UP WITH THE COST OF LIVING?"



NEW RIG: Ex-Captain Berning steps out in a new role—as Claudia.