

# ***TON Talk***

**Newsletter of the TON Class Association**

**Edition 221**



**April 2023**



**Painting at the Home Club**

**Spot the Error**

*Answer on Contents page*

# TON Class Association

## Contents



	Editorial .....	1
	Chairman's Corner.....	2
P 4	Who's Who & Coming Events .....	3
	Committee Minutes .....	4
	Trending Technology.....	9
	Reunion Details .....	11
	Reunion Booking Form .....	12
	Scribe Required .....	14
	Stormbound off St Kilda .....	15
	Fittleton Memorial .....	17
P 15	TCA Ship's Badge .....	18
	Cenotaph Parade .....	20
	Having a laugh .....	22
	Area Representatives .....	23
	Membership Update .....	24
	Bickington/Killiekrankie .....	26
	Way we Were .....	27
	German Yachts & Français .....	28
	MCMV News .....	31
P 20	Slops .....	32
	Post Bag .....	33
	Coincidence - Models.....	36

**TCA Membership**  
**£15 per annum**  
**£150 Life Membership**

P 28	<b>Front Cover :</b>
	Wall paintings in Below Decks at Royal Maritime Hotel.
	Excellent views of Runs Ashore but a Maltese Dghaisa [Diso] off Gibraltar ?
	A long pull, but a good fare ...

**[www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk](http://www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk)**

## Editorial

**Old age and Infirmary** are catching up with me and I would like to arrange to step down from active management of the affairs of our Association. I hope that this may be achieved as a phased withdrawal, so I may hand over the various responsibilities I have inherited to successors in an orderly manner and ensure continuity. I have discussed options and opportunities with our Chairman.

It has been my privilege and pleasure to serve as HonSec from November 2003 to October 2021, doubling up as Editor of TON Talk since April 2011, so perhaps the time is right for a change. *See also page 14 for the role of Deputy Editor.*

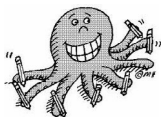
To ease the burden on a new Editor, we have agreed to reduce TON Talk to four editions per year; Spring, Summer, Autumn & Winter, commencing in June, but to restore the number of pages in each edition to 36, starting with this edition.

I would like to retain the role of Webmaster to enable me to keep in touch with members and also to field enquiries from the public.

May I thank you all, dear readers, for putting up with my scribbles and occasional typos. I am most appreciative of those who have kindly thanked me over the years and I am particularly grateful to the many members who have contributed articles and photos to our Newsletter. I believe that TON Talk makes a significant contribution to keeping our Association alive and well.

During this time we have produced three books and four monographs detailing the history of TON Class ships and the experiences of those who served in them. We have continuously updated our admin to adopt business practices, most recently adding on-line joining and payment by BACS transfer. In parallel we advanced our use of technology from Jack Worth's Amstrad word processor and photocopier, to e-mail, lithographic, colour and lately, digital printing, and now Zoom. Plus we have a comprehensive website that has attracted favourable comment. Our membership now extends to 24 countries round the world. We attempt to maintain contact with the shrinking Royal Navy and to keep abreast of developments in MCM technology.

None of these could have been achieved without effective teamwork from a lot of enthusiastic volunteers and I thank all of you for your support during some of the challenges we have encountered. I hope that TCA may continue to promote the Spirit of the TONs for many years to come



**Deadline for June's edition 20<sup>th</sup> May**

***Peter Down***

## Chairman's Corner

We had a very successful Committee meeting in Portsmouth – see *Minutes at page 4*. Congratulations to **Ian 'Snowy' Barden** for accepting the appointment of Vice Chairman of TCA. I look forward to working with Snowy, as we move forward. At this juncture I wish to pay tribute to our outgoing Vice, Peter Down, who has supported me so ably, and continues to do so as Editor, TON Talk – please see his Editorial for his relief plan. Peter will continue as our dedicated Webmaster, for which we should all be thankful.

### **Congratulations to TCA Members**

**Terry Hall** has been commended in a Points of Light award by the Prime Minister's office. These awards recognise outstanding individual volunteers – people who are making a change in their community.

Terry has worked tirelessly over the past twenty years to ensure that the crew lost in the W5795 Wellington Bomber crash in 1942 are remembered. He helps coordinate an annual parade and memorial service, arranging flypasts to mark significant milestones, including the Lancaster aircraft for last year's 80th anniversary of the Dam Busters' attack.

Terry has also supported the Poppy Appeal in his village for over half-a-century, and is the editor of the 'Derbyshire Submariners', a regular magazine bringing together the local veterans' community. Terry was nominated by his local MP **Pauline Latham OBE**.

**George Creasey** who has received the much belated Atomic Tests medal. He served in ALERT for the second test at Monte Bello and subsequently at Christmas Island, the Hydrogen Bomb! Ann reassures us that George does not glow in the dark ...

He is also a FITTLETON survivor, Cox'n on that fateful day, George recalls scrabbling uphill to reach the screen door of the wheelhouse, as the vessel capsized.

### **HMS CALEDONIA (CALE)**

In other news, the MOD CALEDONIA site has been recommissioned as 'HMS', with an Initial Operating Capability of 1 Apr 23, its mission being: Naval Support Activity (NSA) Rosyth. Your Chairman is honoured to be dual-hatted as the initial CO HMS CALEDONIA, which has been saved not so much to preserve the 'old CALE' but to provide a RN strategic footprint and stake in the novel Rosyth Green Freeport initiative.

Warm wishes to you all,

*Bob Hawkins MBE*

# TCA Who's Who

## President

Rear Admiral R John Lippiett CB. CBE. DL

## Chairman

**Commander Bob Hawkins MBE RN**

*A serving officer, so contact via Secretary only*

### Secretary

**Matthew Salisbury**

143 Redlands Road  
Penarth, South Glamorgan  
CF64 2QP  
Tel: 02920 308 351  
E-mail:  
matthew@cavamh.org.uk

### Membership Secretary

**Dennis Cook**

5 Manvers Street,  
Workshop,  
S80 1SD  
Tel: 01909 481 745  
Mobile: 07919 897275  
E-mail:  
dcook1727@gmail.com

### Vice Chairman &

**Face Book Systems Admin  
Ian Barden**

Tel: 07799 772589  
E-mail: i.barden@btinternet .com

### Editor, TON Talk & Website

**Peter Down**

Tel: 01449 721 235  
E-mail: peter.avoca@gmail.com

### Chaplain

**Rev. Trevor Filtness**

24 Orchard Road  
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PL8 2FE  
Tel: 01752 881 967  
Mobile: 07785 568 056  
E-mail: trevor@filtness.org

### Treasurer

**David Woolgar**

Lime Tree House  
Sandford Avenue  
Church Stretton  
Shropshire  
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Tel: 07410 988 470  
E-mail:  
djwoolgar@gmail.com

### Welfare Officer

**Robbie Reid-Sinclair**

68 Brookside  
Carlisle  
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Tel: 01228 542114  
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E-mail:  
crofton1216@gmail.com

## COMING EVENTS

<b>September</b>	Sun 17 15.00	<b>Dedication of Fittleton Memorial</b> St Mary's Church, Fittleton, near Salisbury
<b>October 2023</b>	Sat 14	<b>TCA AGM &amp; Reunion</b> Carlton Hotel, Torquay <i>Booking Form in April's edition of TON Talk</i>

# **Minutes of TCA Committee Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

## **Royal Maritime Club Portsmouth**

### **THOSE PRESENT**

Chairman Bob HAWKINS, Vice Chairman Peter DOWN, Secretary Matthew SALISBURY, Treasurer David WOOLGAR, Auditor Bill POLLINGTON, Sys Admin Ian BARDEN, Vice President Chris GREEN, Sam ARTHUR, Sam COOK, Rob HOOLE, Malcolm KEMP, Jim VIRGO.

### **1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The Chairman announced that he is now resident in Scotland, employed as Chief of Staff to the Naval Regional Commander Scotland. Among his duties are recruiting and retention in the Royal Navy. He has been to sea in eight Tons including HUBBERSTON and UPTON, but never as a member of the ship's company and he is delighted to be Chairman of this association.

HMS CALEDONIA is being returned from the MOD to the Royal Navy.

A request has been made to the King to remain as our Patron.

### **2. CROSSED THE BAR**

Ray ASHFORD, David BURSTALL, John CAUGHTY, Michael COSGROVE, Christopher DAVIS, Keith FULLER, Peter GREEN, David FLETCHER, Robert HANSON, Richard HAPGOOD BEM, Ian HARKNESS, Andy HARRIS, Rodney HOGAN, Cyril KEEN, Sinclair LIVINGSTONE, Harry MARTIN, Dave McHENRY, Albert PEARSON, Sidney REYNOLDS, Nigel ROZIER, Leslie SHARPE, Peter SKELTON, Richard THOMAS, James TURNER, Anthony WALKER, John WATLING.

The Vice Chairman offered a special tribute to John Watling.

### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

John LIPPIETT, Terry HALL, Peter HARRISON, Trevor FILTNESS, Robbie REID SINCLAIR, Laurie JOHNSON. Dennis COOK,

### **4. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF MARCH 2022**

Acceptance proposed by Bill Pollington and Seconded by Rob Hoole. Unanimously agreed to be a true record.

### **5. MATTERS ARISING – None**

### **6. COMMITTEE MATTERS**

#### **a. Committee Vacancies:**

Peter Down advised that he wished to step back from his commitments. He will continue to manage this year's Reunion and AGM and will continue Editorship

of TON Talk until a suitable replacement is found, A Deputy Editor is being sought to “learn on the job” for the next few editions.

Jim Virgo bravely volunteered to run the Reunion from 2024 and Ian Barden was nominated to take over as Vice Chairman, following a briefing by Peter.

- b. Vacancies for Area Representative: White Rose/Yorkshire is the only active area, New area representatives, ideally younger (60?) are needed. The role will be promoted via our Facebook page and magazine
- c. CONA Representation: The Chairman said that TCA was an independent, self-supporting association and while it can be associated with CONA there is no benefit in being absorbed by it. It will be sufficient to send a representative to CONA meetings.
- d. Draft Complaints Procedure. It was considered that there ought not to be a need for a complaints procedure in an association based on friendship. However, after much discussion, it was felt that it would be advantageous to have a formal Grievance Procedure, so that potential disagreements could be aired and concluded in a controlled and open manner.

Proposed by Bill Pollington and seconded by Sam Cook.

Peter Down will revise the draft proposal so it can be discussed at the next Zoom conference.

## 7. SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary said that he had received an email from Royal British Legion asking for bids for the Whitehall Remembrance Day Parade. It was suggested that an attempt should be made to increase the TCA numbers on parade and the bid should be for 30 tickets.

Dave Walker would be requested to write a short article about the parade to attract more members to participate (*see page 20*).

The Secretary added that in 1973 he had been a member of the ship's company of the Ton, HMS MERSEY in a deployment to Canada to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Volunteer Reserve. He intended to celebrate this 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first Exercise Maplehaul this September by sailing to Canada, but this time in a cruise liner.

## 8. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer reported that the TCA is in a healthy position.

A second donation of £500 had been sent to the HMS FITTLETON Memorial Fund. £5000 had been received in subscriptions and £4000 spent on printing and distributing TON Talk.

The Reunion Fund, Stores Account and Reserves have been consolidated into the Barclays No.2 Account. The Nationwide and Lloyds Bank accounts are being closed.

A new signatory to replace retired members is being arranged.  
Most transactions are now made via by BACs

Balances held in accounts are :

General Account:	£5,395.61	
No 2 Account	£23,132.89	
Made up of	£10093.95	Welfare Fund
	£5302.40	Reserve Fund
	£907.60	Stores Fund
	£4844.00	Reunion Fund
	(plus £1154 still with Lloyds)	
	£1984.94	Operating Fund
	(excluding £500 for FITTLETON)	

As interest rates are beginning to revive, Treasurer will give consideration to opening a deposit account.

## 9. EDITOR'S REPORT

Peter Down as Editor of TON Talk and Webmaster, advised that there was little to report because things are going very well in both areas.

He remarked how often coincidences arose from enquiries made to the website. A recent one about HMS TRESHAM, was accompanied by photographs of her after she had been sold to the University of Wales Department of Maritime Studies and became MARGHERITA. In 1994 the vessel was re-fitted by Vosper Thorneycroft and contracted to provide training in coastal navigation for Cadets at BRNC Dartmouth under the command of Cdr David Willis, who as First Lieutenant of CHAWTON, had won a DSC for his part commanding the lead raiding craft at Limbang in December 1962. Our informant was his brother Ian, who was not aware of the link with TCA. The photos of TRESHAM/Margherita are now on the Ship's History on our website.

The Chairman and others expressed thanks to Peter for the enormous contribution that he has made to TCA.

## 10. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The new application form and on-line joining facility have resulted in 19 new members since the AGM. Well done to all concerned, especially to the Chairman's persuasive abilities.

There are now 884 Full members, 149 Life members and 21 Associate members =1054 paying members , plus 75 Widows,6 Honorary members and 30 MCMVS, and related organisations = 111 non-paying members, making a grand total of 1165.

There are still problems with people not paying the correct subscription. 42 are still paying £10.00 and 16 paying £7.50. These do not receive Ton Talk or other communication. Members are reminded to let the Membership Secretary know of changes to their contact details.



## 11. STORES OFFICERS REPORT

Sales of slops had dropped off significantly and because of Laurie's wish to stand down, consideration is being given to transfer to Forever Jack, an MoD authorised supplier of naval souvenirs, take over sales of TCA-badged slops. Forever Jack will not take over our existing stocks but will provide items with TCA logos from its own suppliers.

Consideration is given to disposal of existing TCA stock; either by transfer to Divers Gifts (an organisation with which we have contacts) and/or a clearance sale at the Reunion.

*Subsequent to the Meeting, Laurie agreed to carry on for another year and Diver's Gifts advised that they were not interested in taking our current stock.*

Total members using the Slop Room	7
Stock items sold	38
Special orders	4
Profit	£125.74
Balance in Stores Account at 31/7/22	£938.50
Receipts from sales 1/8/22 to 28/2/23	£365 85
Total	£1304.35
Less expenditure 1/8/22 to 28/2/23	£396.75
Bank account balance	£907.60

£192.00 has been transferred to the No.2 Account.

Laurie was thanked for his diligent work.

## 12 WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT

There had been no welfare cases until yesterday, when a member in distressed circumstances had requested a loan from TCA.

It was confirmed that TCA is not authorised to make loans [Rule 8]. The maximum grant possible from the Welfare Officer is £500 with an additional £250 at the discretion of the Chairman.

Sam Cook, who knows the member concerned, was requested to seek further information.

## 13 INVENTORY OF ASSETS

This inventory was produced at the request of then Chairman Peter Harrison. The items have been supplemented by 91 drawings of Tons on linen, some showing the conversion of sweepers to hunters. Among them are drawings of HMS BRONINGTON. Drawings can be offered to members at a cost £15.00 for postage. Sam Cook has taken over the TCA assets held by Bill Pollington.

## 14 STANDARD BEARER'S REPORT

Sam Cook reported that he had paraded the TCA standard at Weymouth and will be at Armed Forces Day in Falmouth on 24<sup>th</sup> June. He will attend funerals when possible.

The secretary advised that HMS CAMBRIA will be granted the Freedom of the City of Cardiff on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2023; the TCA standard is not required.

#### 15 SEA CADET LIAISON

There is very little contact with the affiliated units. The question whether TCA should continue contact was raised. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to affiliated units asking what reasonable support might TCA offer and what future communication would they like.

#### 16 ANNUAL REUNION UPDATE

The Carlton Hotel in Torquay has been booked. Application forms will be available in the April edition of Ton Talk. After this year, Jim Virgo will take over as Reunion Secretary, probably retaining the services of a professional Events Organiser to short list suitable hotels in locations of our choosing.

It was considered that the Reunion should be retained in its current format but the AGM be moved to the afternoon, commencing at 1330 and securing at 1530. A zoom facility at the AGM is to be included. (David Woolgar to arrange)

#### 17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Operational requirements for our shrinking number of warships make arranging visits to them difficult to arrange. The Chairman will explore possibilities.
- b) Apart from lining the route of the procession, it appears that the Armed Forces will have little role to play in the Coronation
- c) The service of dedication for the FITTLETON Memorial will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 15.00 The Parochial Church Council, assisted by President Old Hands Association are making the arrangements. TCA is NOT involved . It is understood that an allocation of tickets will be made to TCA - see [www.hmsfittleton.org](http://www.hmsfittleton.org) The TCA Standard will be paraded.

A note about the service will be published on TCA website and magazine.

- d) The Chairman will follow up proposals for a Ton Class Trophy for the Rating of the Year among the PUXD community, using the Silver Cup kindly donated by Dennis Cook

#### 18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at the Royal Maritime Club Portsmouth, commencing 11.00

There being no further business, the meeting secured at 1440

# Trending Technology

Acknowledgements : Royal Navy website

An uncrewed boat that can detect underwater threats has arrived in the Gulf, in an important step towards autonomous mine-hunting operations, and a demonstration of the UK's continued commitment to the Middle East.



Royal Navy Motor Boat *Harrier* is part of the ten-year programme for replacing the Navy's current mine counter measure vessels.

While deployed for operations, the 11-metre boat will work with host ship RFA Cardigan Bay to conduct a series of demonstrations and trials that will explore her ability to operate in the harsh and demanding weather conditions of the Gulf.

*Harrier* is capable of operating both autonomously (pre-programmed to conduct a mission) or remotely from a ship or shore-based control centre. She tows a side-scan sonar to search for mines on the seabed, alerting units ashore or at sea of their whereabouts. It is envisaged that in the future, she will also work with remotely operated underwater vehicles and a mine sweeping system.

*The concept has previously been described in articles in TON Talk, together with the related ARCMIS system. The Israeli Navy is believed to have had a similar USV MCM system at sea for a couple of years and is reputedly developing an anti-submarine variant for harbour defence ...* **Editor.**

*Harrier* will be put through her paces integrating with Royal Navy personnel and units in the region, primarily mine counter measure battlestaff at the UK's Naval Support Facility in Bahrain and with allies who work to protect shipping and the freedom of navigation in the Gulf.

Lieutenant Commander Mark Shaw, Commanding Officer of Mission System Team One in the Mine Threat Exploitation Group, said: "This is the future of Royal Navy MCM and we are proud to be at the leading edge of its delivery, which will transition the Royal Navy from a ship-based MCM capability to maritime autonomous off-board systems. This is a step change in the way the Royal Navy conducts MCM, and we are not just proving the equipment and operating procedures, but setting the template on how we operate and integrate within the wider force".

This move towards autonomous mine-hunting will assist the Royal Navy to counter the rapidly evolving threat of modern sea mines while reducing the risk to sailors. The deployment of this cutting edge technology to the Gulf signals the UK's commitment to the region and to freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce.

**The Royal Navy will shortly have a new 'eye in the sky'; uncrewed aerial technology to find and track threats as part of a c.£20m contract.**

Powerful Thales I-Master radar systems will be fitted to the proven Austrian Schiebel S-100 unmanned helicopter to feed real-time images and radar data back to Royal Navy warships.



Known as '*Peregrine*', after the Royal Naval Air Station in Ford, West Sussex, the UAV can be launched in challenging conditions, day and night, and will be deployed to protect warships, greatly extending detection range and fidelity, for surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence gathering; vital for operational tasks including identification of threats, countering pirates, terrorists and smugglers.

The S-100 has a rapid launch ability and takes off from the ship's flight deck like a helicopter. It will be the first uncrewed rotary wing aircraft to operate alongside the Wildcat helicopter. Working out the tactics for coordination and control of manned and unmanned aircraft working together will be priorities to achieve round-the-clock aerial surveillance with a mission endurance of several hours.

High-definition imagery and radar data from *Peregrine* is fed directly into the ship's Combat Management System, giving improved situational awareness to the command team. *Peregrine* will be deployed to the Gulf from mid-2024, initially for two years.

## **TCA REUNION WEEKEND**

### **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

This year we will be returning to the Carlton Hotel, Belgrave Road, Torquay. They looked after us very well in 2021 and we have used the facilities of TLH Leisure Group, particularly the Toorak Hotel, co-located on the same site, for several years previously. They have always been attentive and given us good service at economic rates.

The Full Reunion package includes Dinner, Bed and Breakfast on each day, an informal dinner on Friday, AGM on Saturday afternoon, Reception and Formal Dinner on Saturday and optional Church Service on Sunday, with optional informal dinner, plus free on-site parking. *Note that the AGM has been re-scheduled to Saturday afternoon.*

In order to minimise costs, we will not have a photographer on Saturday, nor an organist on Sunday. We will also do without the disco after dinner on Saturday but background music will be provided and, for those who wish to dance, there will be entertainment in the Starlight Room elsewhere in the complex.

We have paid attention to feedback received from recent meetings, in particular from those who prefer to make their own arrangements for accommodation and we are able to offer four options, as well as the possibility to pay by BACS transfer, in addition to our preferred method, by cheque.

However, in order to keep the admin to reasonable levels, both for TCA and the hotel, we have continued with the Conditions of Booking and introduced a Cut-Off Date of 7<sup>th</sup> August. *Options and Conditions are detailed on the Booking Form overleaf.*

**You are advised to consider holiday insurance.** If you have to cancel after 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023, you may then be able to recover your costs.

**Please let me know, via the Booking Form, if you have any special requirements such as Disabled-Friendly Room, walk-in shower, special dietary needs, or may need assistance in the event of a Fire Alarm.**

The hotel will do its best to accommodate any special requirements, within the scope of its resources.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Reunion.

*Peter Down*

## TON CLASS ASSOCIATION REUNION WEEKEND

Carlton Hotel, Belgrave Road, TORQUAY TQ2 5HS Phone 01803 400600  
Friday 13<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023

### PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

NAME .....  
TCA MEMBERSHIP No. .... Telephone: .....  
Address .....  
.....  
Post Code ..... E-mail .....

**OPTION A 3 nights:** Arrive pm Friday – Depart am Monday  
**Double/Twin Room £ 460 per room    Single Room £ 283 per person**

**OPTION B 2 Nights:** Arrive pm Friday – Depart am Sunday  
**Double/Twin Room £ 330 per room    Single Room £ 204 per person**

**OPTION C Saturday Night only and Dinner**  
**Double /Twin Room £ 180 per room    Single Room £ 114 per person**

**OPTION D Dinner only (no room) £ 42 per person**

*Please indicate your choices by circling Option A, B, C or D and Preference for Double/Twin beds*

**NAMES OF THOSE ATTENDING :**

.....  
.....

I enclose the sum of £ ..... being my deposit/ part/ or full payment.

Minimum deposit £25 per person.

Please make **cheques** payable to "**TON CLASS ASSOCIATION**"

OR use the **BACS option**, using your own bank's facility

TCA receiving Bank: Barclays Bank Ltd, South Leicestershire Group,  
PO Box 483, Leicester LE3 0ZR

Sort Code: 20-49-08    Account No: 603395    Name: TON Class Association No.2 Account

Reference: Your Surname + REUNION

**Please note the following conditions :**

1. All balances are to be paid by 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023
2. Cut off date for bookings is 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023
3. Any refunds will be subject to an administration charge of £5.00 per person.
4. Regrettably, no refunds can be made after 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Please send completed Booking Form, plus deposit/payment, if paying by cheque, to:

**Peter Down, 39 Anderson Close, Needham Market, Ipswich IP6 8UB**

*Please advise any special requirements such as Disabled-friendly room, Walk in shower or Dietary needs etc.*

## Scribe Required

As our current Editor is about to retire, we are on the lookout for a volunteer to become Deputy Editor of TON Talk, with a view to taking over the role of Editor, possibly by year-end.

Although the role is challenging, it is also immensely satisfying. As Editor you are at the heart of TCA, serving on the Committee and liaising with colleagues to help direct the future of the Association, whilst liaising with members via Post Bag and dealing with enquiries, plus touching upon the technology of the print industry.

The job entails gathering articles and illustrations for future editions. We maintain a “Shot Locker” of materials contributed by members (including a few corny jokes), which are useful “fillers”, but the Editor often has to write a piece to commemorate an anniversary or note a national event.

The biggest challenge is shuffling the materials into a presentable layout suitable for printing. This can sometimes resemble solving Rubik’s Cube but, thanks to the “Flat Plan”, an idea borrowed from member Peter Cook, formerly Editor of Yachting Monthly, we have a tool which simplifies this task.

The draft of the next edition then has to be e-mailed to our printer, Gipping Press, using their File Transfer Protocol. We try give them at least two weeks to do their technical stuff. We confirm the number of copies to be printed at this stage and, if different from previous print runs, Gipping prepares a quotation.

The printer then “polishes” the text, adding page numbers and, if necessary, improving old photos, before returning a draft of the finished magazine in PDF format for approval. This is the last chance to make any minor corrections that may be necessary. Once approval is given, the job enters the printer’s production schedule and within a few days the printed magazines are handed over to Royal Mail for delivery. envelopes having been sorted into post code sequence and bagged,

All that remains is to verify the printer’s invoice and pass it to our Treasurer for payment.

Then the cycle begins again. We are fortunate to receive a steady inflow of materials from members and can often work on two editions in advance.

No need to worry if you have no previous experience of publishing – neither had the current Editor, nor his predecessor !

Good skills in word processing, e-mail and organisation are essential for the role, although some flair with words and design/layout would be an advantage. On the job training will be given by the current Editor covering the tools and techniques used to produce the magazine, together with an introduction to the printer’s team.

The Editor’s role attracts a small Honorarium of £200 p.a.to recognise the time and use of e-mail involved. Please contact me **peter.avoca@gmail.com** for more information.



## March Gales During Fishery Protection Patrol Stormbound off St Kilda

Rear Admiral John Lippiett CB. CBE. DL, TCA President

Having recently come across some sketches I drew while commanding HMS Shavington in the FPS, I offer this salty dit about a few days of my first patrol. Of course as you will all recognise, the waves were far higher in those far off days and the winds much stronger; perhaps our memories are a bit faded these days, but I have also found my report of proceedings of the first patrol I completed in the spring of 1976.

We sailed out of the Firth of Forth into an easterly gale, turning northwards to search for fishing activity. Embarked for the patrol was a BBC film crew, given the task of recording the ship's activities on fishery protection duties for a documentary about the Law of the Sea. With the large sea on the starboard beam, our motion became unbearable for our visitors to a degree that their acute seasickness had them demanding to be put ashore; there could be no filming as they were totally incapacitated. I decided they should be landed, so sent the signal back to headquarters: 'Film crew dead. Heading for Aberdeen to land them'. I well remember entering the narrow harbour entrance between the break waters, surfing down the steep waves and nearly broaching as we have corkscrewed through the entrance.

Approaching the jetty, I was alarmed to see the blue flashing lights of ambulances and a police car on the jetty. Oh dear, they had taken my short signal far too literally !



We passed through the Pentland Firth, thankfully in calm waters, and headed for Stornoway to refuel before heading off to passage around the Butt of Lewis to St Kilda. There we were to conduct radar trials for the Royal Artillery range. We established radio communications with the shore base soon after midnight but a gale was blowing up

quickly and in the morning watch, by the time we reached the islands, the seas were extremely rough. Our radar became unserviceable in the storm, but far more worryingly we lost our gyrocompass through the hammering the ship was taking. Navigation was challenging with our open bridge, to say the least, and the trials were cancelled by the army ashore due to the weather conditions. Injuries were now increasing amongst the crew who were being thrown around below, cracked ribs being the worst. I decided that we must run for the nearest shelter available on the west coast of the Isle of Harris, some 40 miles to the east of us. Thankfully this was directly down sea, so we surfed our way on huge Atlantic rollers with the wind waves breaking on their tops. Spectacular and frightening at the same time.



Above: Shelter in Loch Tarbert

Right : C.O John and OOW Steve Ramm, Navigator



We entered West Loch Tarbert and I made our way cautiously up to the far eastern end. It was very hard to find any safe anchorage with shelter from the storm , by now Force 11. I tucked into a tiny bay, bows as far to the west as I dared and the lee shore worryingly close astern, and dropped both anchors. In such restricted waters, I couldn't lay out much cable to make us more secure. We remained fully closed up in sea watches thereafter keeping our engines running throughout, sometimes steaming slow ahead on both engines to take the strain off the anchor cables.

As dusk approached that first day I decided we should land lights onto the shore, one ahead on the bow and one on the beam, so that we could take bearings to ensure we did not drag. Surviving that first night with little sleep, we remained in this situation while the storm raged for the next two days and nights before the weather calmed. On leaving the loch, luck was not on our side and an unmarked fishing pot line fouled the port screw, so we had to proceed on just one engine for our passage to Oban.

Character building stuff for a young commanding officer in his first few weeks in the FPS, but this was the start of an appointment that remains one of my fondest memories of my time in the Andrew !

## Fittleton Memorial Service



*Circled Arnold Jeacock on the capsized hull waiting to be rescued by Harry Sharpe.*

The service is scheduled to be held on Sunday 17 September 2023 at St Mary's Church, Fittleton, near Salisbury, commencing at 15.00.

The event is being coordinated by the Parochial Church Council, assisted by President Old Hands Association. TCA has donated £1000 but is not otherwise involved.

The Bishop of Salisbury wishes to preside at the Service and TCA Chaplain, Rev Trevor Filtness, has been invited to participate.

The church is quite small, with a seating capacity of about 200, so it will be necessary to make it an ALL TICKET event.

It is likely that the event will be over-subscribed, so consideration is being given to how to accommodate any "overspill" via audio or CCTV link, together with tentative plans for a reception.

Current information on arrangements is being posted on the website **[www.hmsfittleton.org](http://www.hmsfittleton.org)** which will be updated as planning progresses.

You can register your interest in attending the service but please note that priority for allocation of tickets will be given to survivors, relatives of those lost, then members of President Old Hands Association and TON Class Association.

## TCA BADGE AND LOGO

*As a result of requests from members using the revised TCA Facebook page, it may be of interest to recall the origins of the TCA badge and conditions for its use .*

The TCA Badge is more correctly known as Coastal Minesweepers (General) Badge. (depicted right)

The Heraldic Description of the Badge is:

HELM: A Naval Crown

FIELD : Barry-Wavy of Ten, Argent and Azure

BADGE: Two Keys, Wards downwards, Or ,  
surmounted by a naval mine, Sable, with chain  
downwards, Proper.



The name of individual ships was customarily displayed in the tablet beneath the Crown.

The message is that mine clearance holds the key to safe navigation at sea.

It is an official badge registered by the Ship Names and Badges Committee of the Ministry of Defence, which owns the copyright for the Badge.

It ranks alongside badges of HM ships including aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates, submarines and shore establishment as an official, registered emblem.

Shortly after its foundation in 1987 the TON Class Association was authorised by the Ships Names and Badges Committee to use the Coastal Minesweepers (General) Badge on its letterhead.

Since that the time TCA Committee has restricted use of the badge to official purposes of the Association such as ceremonial, with the Standard. publications and display materials, items of publicity and merchandise authorised by the Association.

Applications for use for the badge for other purposes may be considered by the TCA Committee but its use as a personal identifier by individual members of the Association is not encouraged.

In extreme cases of unauthorised use MoD could bring legal action for Breach of its Copyright – which would be expensive !

It is noted that Commanding Officers of some TON vessels preferred to use the arms of the village after which their ships were named (Dartington and Burnaston are examples) but these variations were usually informal.



By contrast, the TCA Logo, (illustrated left), resulted from a competition among schoolchildren organised by then TCA Vice Chairman Chris Green.

The logo is not a Registered Design, although its use is controlled by the TCA Committee

The Logo is used by TCA for less formal purposes and publicity, such as website, magazine and Facebook page.

**TCA does not currently have an emblem that could be used as a personal identifier by members.**

Suggestions for images from those members wishing to have such an identifier would be welcomed by the TCA Committee, or they could consider using a photo of their favourite ship.

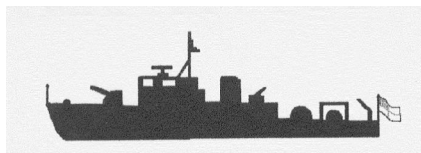
Photos of all TON Class vessels can be downloaded from the Ship Histories section of the TCA website [www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk](http://www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk)

Another possibility might be to use one of the silhouettes of TONs that have been devised by members, as they are free from copyright and jpg images are available from the Editor by e-mail for no charge e.g.

**Silhouette 1**



**Silhouette 2**



# CENOTAPH REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE

Dave Walker, Lindfield, West Sussex



Some years ago I was approached by a colleague and former member of the TON Class Association to attend the Royal British Legion parade in London.

I duly attended and I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and wished I had taken part somewhat earlier. It was superbly organised and run by the RBL. It is now an occasion that goes on my calendar for the ensuing year.

It is open to all ex-serving and serving members of all three services, both regular and reservists. Many other civilian organisations are now invited to attend.

The TCA is invited by the RBL to attend and any members wishing to attend apply to our secretary for a ticket. These tickets are very much personalised and cannot be transferred. Security being what it is today it is quite necessary.

Getting to London isn't a problem as most railway companies now offer free rail travel if you can provide proof of attendance on the day. Although, if you are in the 'rig' you are waved through. This can save a few bob (to be spent at the pub !).

On arrival at London termini transport is laid on, free of charge, by the London 'Cabbies' (God Bless 'em) to take passengers to the Whitehall area. What a great bunch of chaps they are. So, any members who are a little less active than some are looked after.

All attendees subsequently muster on Horse Guards Parade where very strict security takes place very efficiently. The sight of so many people on the parade ground is quite mind blowing. It's seething!

The RBL organises the parade into Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force and other services. Each service alternates in being the lead service each year which gives us a chance to finish sooner and possibly get our 'mugshot' on TV when it's the Royal Navy's turn to lead. It has occurred in the past!

The assembling of all the service organisations creates quite an atmosphere. Meeting old shipmates and 'oppos' from other ships and services. You would be surprised who

you can meet. It is also good to meet up with TCA members who have also attended for some years.

The parade generally moves off at about 1030ish onto Whitehall where we form up prior to the 1100 gun and two minutes silence.

The sight of thousands of men and women in their different uniforms sporting their medals is quite an awesome sight. Most of whom having served Queen and country for many years during her long reign. The atmosphere is electric.

The support and camaraderie is brilliant. There is so much friendly banter between services (especially the 'Crabs'). Respect, though, is very much in evidence. It is truly a wonderful experience and also very humbling when one sees the determination of many marchers. Contrary to rules by the organisers the hip flasks are quite evident. Helps to keep us warmer.

Whilst on Whitehall there are television screens sited at intervals along the road so one can see/hear what is going at the Cenotaph.

Sometime after the two minutes silence at 1100 the parade prepares to march off. This is when pride really kicks in. The support by the general public witnessing the event is tremendous. The appreciation never ceases for the whole of the parade which can take some time to complete.

When the parade approaches Horse Guards toward the final stages we get to look one of the senior royals in the eye as we salute him/her with an 'eyes right' prior to returning to the parade ground.

Again, the respect, friendly banter and admiration is evident. The supporting crowd at this point is again tremendous. Also at this point there are some regular supporters cheering the Royal Navy in particular.

When the parade has returned to Horse Guards we disperse to our favourite 'drinking holes' for much needed refreshment.

The TCA's favourite pub is 'The John Cribb'. This is quite a famous which is housed in the Haymarket district of London quite close to the Haymarket Theatre. Here, the landlord very kindly provides a range food. During this session, being close to 'Tot Time', (with rum, of course) Loyal Toasts are made to the monarch and the various associations present. This always much appreciated.

Over the years several other organisations have joined us at this hostelry. For example: Bomber Command (RAF), HMS Tiger, HMS Ark Royal and RN Photographers associations.

This is when the 'lamp swinging' takes place together with many ditties, brilliant!

In conclusion, I have to say that it is well worth the effort to attend. It's an experience difficult to describe fully. You really have to experience this ! Roll on the next Parade.

## *Only Having a Laugh*



**Husband:** You are Negative

**Wife:** And you are stubborn, arrogant, a low life, who cares about no one but yourself and your friends. All you are interested in is your own self. In all your life you have not fulfilled even one of your promises I am putting up with such a miser and insensitive man. You are a good for nothing, fat, ugly man. Even your hair transplant failed.

**Husband:** I was just informing you that your Covid Test result is negative.

**Wife:** Oh. Sorry !

**I was a bit bored**, so I swapped all the sweets into different wrappers in a tub of Celebrations.

My wife was not amused. - *She has her snickers in a Twix.*

**My Neighbour** is a single girl and I was surprised when she knocked on my door yesterday evening, so I rushed to open it.

She looked at me, and said, "I've just got home, and I am feeling so sexy. I have this strong urge to have a good time, get drunk, and make love all night long. Are you busy tonight ? "

I immediately replied, "No, I'm free. I have no plans at all"

Then she said, "Good. In that case, please could you look after my dog ?"

*Sometimes it's really tough being a pensioner ...*

VMT. Terry Hall, Derbyshire Submariners



## MORE AREA REPRESENTATIVES NEEDED

An encouraging start has been made to our Recruitment Campaign for new members; four enquiries about membership were made via our website in the week following the Committee meeting and 11 new members have joined this period. Additional members are likely to result in increased emphasis being placed on the role of Area Representatives.

Area Representatives provide a local focus for comradeship among members. By attending Committee meetings they can communicate up to date news and views from their Areas to the Committee and feedback to members more detail of Committee discussions than can go in formal Minutes. They can also suggest matters for consideration on the Agenda of the meeting.

Until recently TCA had several active Area Representatives but currently we have only one, covering Yorkshire, so the hunt is on for more willing volunteers to set up groups in their areas. Ideally at least two more; one for Scotland and one for the South coast, possibly based on Portsmouth, though why not also the West Country, Bristol/Wales and the North East ?

The advice from Buster Brown, who coordinates the White Rose Group, is to start small with an informal meeting in a pub for a wet and some lamp swinging, then gradually to expand by organising a meal and inviting wives to participate. Eventually visits to tourist spots, County shows or Remembrance Parades etc can be considered.

If you would like to set up a group in your area, names and locations of members adjacent to you can be obtained from Membership Secretary Dennis Cook [d.cook1727@gmail.com] and you can use TON Talk and our website to advertise for members to join your group. Please keep Secretary Matthew Salisbury informed of progress, so you can be invited to the next Committee Meeting.

E-mail is an easy and inexpensive way of keeping in touch with members.



The TCA Committee regularly uses Zoom Conferencing for discussions and decision making. This technology allows people to confer from their homes, or elsewhere, avoiding the inconvenience and costs of travel. Area representatives can participate in these conferences.

*Above: Setting up a Zoom link from the Royal Maritime Hotel for the recent Committee Meeting. All went well until we plugged in an external video camera, whereupon the laptop computer froze – it was possibly overloaded ! We will try again for the AGM, but next time take a more powerful computer ... **Editor***

## Membership Update

*To comply more closely with GDPR Data Protection rules, contact details of members are not disclosed in full but friends can obtain them from the Membership Secretary, subject to permission of the member.*

### **NEW MEMBERS – Welcome Aboard**

**Stanley Arthur.** REM-LREM RN Portsmouth. Served on HM Ships NURTON 1972-73, UPTON 1973-74, YARNTON 1975-76. F2521

**Alasdair MacTaggart.** A/B - S/Lt RNR. Glasgow Lanarkshire. Served on HM Ships HODGESTON 1980-83, LALESTON 1981, CROFTON 1982-83. KEDDLESTON 1985. F2522

**Andrew Blake.** A/B- Captain SAN. Forfar Angus. Served on SAN Ships PORT ELIZABETH 1983-85, KIMBERLEY 1989-90 UMZIMKULU 1990-91 UMGENI/ UMHLOTI 1991-92 WALVISBAAI 1995, UMHLOTI 1996-97 EAST LONDON 1999, UMHLOTI 2000-2001. F2523

**James R Nolton. MBE** Mid-Lt Cdr (E) (ME)RN Dunfirmline Fife. Served on [ HMS WASOERTON 73. F2524

**Dorian M Simmonds.** Sea (MW )-CPO(MW(O)RN. Street Somerset. Served on HM Ships WOTTON 1978-80, SOBERTON 1982-84, WALKERTON 1985-86, ATHERSTONE 1986-88, HURWORTH 1989-92 FLYING FOX 1992, RNR SOLENT 1992-93. F2525

**Karen Reeve.** Sudbury Suffolk [Daughter of late Brian Matthews] A2526

**Mark Emerton,** S/Lt-Cdr RN Portsmouth Served on HM Ships BICKINGTON 1980, MONKTON 1982. F2527

**George Willis** (RO2(G)RN Weymouth,. Served on HM Ships WOLVERTON 1960-61, MONKTON 1963-64, LEWISTON 1964-65 F2528

**Tony Tremlin.** (RO2 )RN, Weston-Super-Mare. Served on HM Ships HIGHBURTON 1964-65, CARHAMPTON 1965, CALTON 1965-66, PENSTON 1966-67, WOOLASTON 1967-68. F2529

**Nigel Horsey.** Mid-S/Lt RN. Newton Abbot. Served on HMS WOLVERTON 1969. F2530

**Stephen Glyde.** A/B-S/Lt RNR. Southampton Served on HM Ships KELLINGTON 1971, THAMES 1969-79, UPTON 1970 ISIS 1969-79, THORNHAM 1974. F2531

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

**Raymond Smith.** To Southsea Hampshire. F2338

### **RESIGNED – May fair winds attend you**

**Harold Smith** OEM 1 RN Alfreton, Derbyshire GAVINTON 1968-70. F1818,

### **LOST CONTACT.**

*Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary*

**Ian Smith** Last Known address:- Nairnshire Scotland F2161



## Crossed the Bar

**Sub Lieutenant Christopher Davis SCC, RNR, Malvern, L0438**  
*Served on HM Ships Kilmorey 1973, Crofton 1982*

**Lieutenant Commander Edgar Bradley RN, Aylesbury L1215**  
*Served on HMS Myrmidon 1966-67*

**LRO Peter Meakins RN, Somerset**  
*Not a TCA member but well known among 104/6 MSS in Borneo*  
*Served on HMS Dartington during Confrontation 1963-64,*

**LRO (G) Mick Cosgrove RN, Shirebrook, Mansfield F2254**  
*Served on HMS Flockton 1964-65*

**RO John Hale RN, Weybridge, F1101**  
*Served on HM Ships Upton, 1963-64 & 1966-67, Wiston 1967-68*

**Captain John Gunning RN, Petersfield, F2485**  
*Served on HM Ships Wiston 1969-70, Brinton 1975-77*  
*C.O. HMS Jupiter 1973-74 when Lt Prince Charles was Comms Officer*

**CPO (OPS(S) Peter Green RN, Portsmouth. F1217**  
*Served on HM Ships Highburton,, Glasserton, Shoulton 1970-71*

**RS Richard Hapgood BEM RNVR/RNR Camarthenshire F0048**  
*Served on HM Ships St David, Killiecrankie, Dufton,, Thames,, Kellington 1965-78*

**Lt Cdr David Fletcher. RNR Birmingham. F0613**  
*Served on HM Ships Clyde 1955-60 & 1961-62 Mersey 1963-81.*

**PO John Whatling RN. Upminster Essex. F0208**  
*Served on HM Ships Dartington 1962-64, Wolverton 1966-67.*

**LRO(T) Grenville Beal RNR. Warwickshire. L0921**  
*Served on HM Ships Wiston 1977, Kellington 1977, Repton 1978, Kedleston, Crofton, Upton, Hodgeston.*

**May They Rest in Peace**

## HMS BICKINGTON aka KILLIECRANKIE

The photo of BICKINGTON on page 29 of December's edition of TON Talk, prompted this memory from Lt Cdr Richard Green of Colchester, one of the C.O's of the ship in her RNR days at Forth Division (Claverhouse).



She is pictured above entering Bordeaux in September 1973, with Richard and the French pilot at the front of the bridge.

When commissioned in 1954, BICKINGTON was allocated to Sussex Division, RNR as CURZON. In 1960 she reverted to BICKINGTON for conversion to Deltic engines and in 1962 was transferred to Leith to become KILLIECRANKIE where she remained until 1976, when she was transferred to the Fishery Protection Squadron, reverting to BICKINGTON, where she remained until paid off in 1986.

She participated in several Exercises Rockhaul (later Mainhaul), visiting Gibraltar with other RNR vessels and in 1968 took part in the live minesweeping operation off Borkum to clear an old WW2 minefield in preparation for laying communications cables between Denmark and Germany.

In April 1982 her C.O. and most of her crew transferred to JUNELLA for the Falklands Campaign.

Although Lt Cdr Green is an Essex man, he had friends in Claverhouse and, following National Service, he transferred from PRESIDENT to Scotland.

## From The way we were ...

From Ray Brooks whose uncle Fred was the Stoker PO on right of the guard.  
Devonport late 1940's



## ... To the way we are

**Three Not-So-Wise Men** missed the turning for Bethlehem, so met up for Chrimbo in the Kings Head in Richmond, North Yorkshire. L to R Terry Foreman, Michael Martin, and Peter Down. Pincher and Peter served together in FISKERTON 1961-63.



## German Yachts and Parlez-vous Français

Commander David Frost, High Wycombe

I was interested in your note on the Windfall yachts in February's TON Talk. By the time I got to Dartmouth in January 1960 only *Martlet* remained of the 50-footers and I sailed in her once before she was sold to R.A. Hopkins.

The newer Sail Training Craft were excellent boats and I sailed extensively in *Pegasus* whenever the opportunity arose. *Capella*, the 90-footer, was there throughout my time and I last sailed her in the mid-70s when she was in Plymouth and I was refitting SALISBURY. We used to have a lot of fun sailing her in half a gale in the Sound – conditions to which she was well suited.



The photo above is of the French Cadet Training Squadron in August 1961. Five of us Midshipmen went, one per ship. The avisos were still there – *Pimodan* and *d'Inville*, but the rest, including my ship *Le Corse* (sister to the one in the foreground), were the newish fast frigates, roughly equivalent to a Type 12. We joined in Norway and returned to Brest via Copenhagen and Amsterdam. I did my first watch as OOW2 in *Le Corse* as we headed down the Belgian coast and into the Dover Strait. Apart from the usual heavy shipping and numerous sandbanks, we were still under NEMEDRI routing so it was a busy four hours, not eased by having to handle the Regle Crasse (a sort of protractor) for fixes rather than a rolling ruler. I got a BZ from the OOW who at no time left the captain's chair, so I was quite chuffed.

We were a mixed bunch onboard with an assortment of civilians as well as trainees from other navies with whom the French worked, in addition to French aspirants. The messdeck was quite crowded and we all slung hammocks (as was then the case in the Dartmouth Training Squadron). Cleanliness fell well short of what was acceptable in the RN. When you got up in the morning you scrunched your way over the previous day's breadcrumbs which were scattered all over the deck. Food was quite reasonable and there was a daily issue of cheap wine – all French ships had tanks of it. The heads for junior rates and midshipmen were of the footprint variety but I discovered the POs had proper ones and used to sneak in there when the coast was clear. Daily routine was the usual mix of watchkeeping and classes. When we got back to Dartmouth our tutor was not overly impressed with some of the terminology we had picked up, although he liked the improved fluency !

I did the four-month interpreter's course in Paris over the winter of 1965/6 and was immediately sent to navigate an LST in the Gulf. As it happened French came in handy when one of their ships – *Commandant Riviere* - visited Aden and we later went to Djibouti. In a bizarre twist of the small world effect I met the ship's postie thirty five years later whilst shooting in France. I was from time to time called on to do a bit of interpreting. The most interesting was accompanying FOST (I was his Flag Lieutenant) to visit his opposite number in Toulon; the most demanding trying to sort out modifications to a Puma helicopter at Fleetlands with a couple of French engineers. I also enjoyed the eight years during which I delivered an annual lecture to a French run NATO EW course, first in Paris then in Rennes.

When I was Jimmy of SALISBURY off Beira we spent two days in company with the little frigate *Amiral Charner* (no idea who he was but no doubt he'd seized some small Brit ship in an earlier war). Keen for a change of diet, I suggested an exchange of officers by jackstay. We started with theirs which was a rather natty seat – *see below*.



They had about a dozen hands on the jackstay and sent over a sack of spuds as the test weight which, as the intended first passenger, I considered woefully inadequate. I unhooked this and replaced it with our usual collection of concrete lumps which nearly pulled their sailors out through the turning block. We paused whilst they mustered some more hands. I spent an agreeable time onboard – it's not often you get to see your ship from another, and with a decent lunch too.

In 1965 I spent a week at sea in the destroyer *Kersaint* in the Bay of Biscay (Gulf of Gascony to them). Fortunately I had a good grasp of naval history and was able to deal with the 'Why did you sink the French fleet in 1940?' question without difficulty. I hadn't been onboard for more than five minutes before they lobbed that one at me.

I was a reasonable bridge player in those days which came in handy. Four of us played bridge every afternoon and it was a skill that also came in handy when I was the range liaison officer during NORFOLK's Seaslug firings off Toulon in 1972.

### **Footnote by the Editor**

*Cdr Frost: Merci bien de votre mémoire intéressant ...*

*In my time at Dartmouth Martlet was assigned to Drake Division, as was I, so we seized any opportunity to skive off round Start Point over weekends, as one of the few legitimate ways of avoiding Sunday Divisions, I recall an expedition/race to St Malo during which we encountered a basking shark which seemed to be larger than the yacht. Not knowing much about that fish in those days, it gave us all quite a shock !*

*My trip with the French Cadet Training Squadron in 1958 was in "Chevreuil", a venerable and rusty Despatch Vessel, (aviso) built in the 1930's for Colonial Service and recently returned from Indo China.*

*We transited the Kiel Canal and swanned around the Baltic, visiting Helsinki and Turku in Finland and were warmly greeted in Riga, then very much under Russian control. France was outside NATO at the time, so was allowed to visit. We RN Mids were told not to go ashore and to keep a low profile.*

*The only time I used my French in anger while in the RN was in late 1959 when CRANE showed the flag in Saigon, in the days before the USA became embroiled in Vietnam.*

*Although my Captain had a French name, he did not speak the language, so he took me on his official calls to interpret – a great opportunity for me to meet some enchanting daughters of senior Viet officials. Among my best runs ashore ever !*

*Later on I also used my French in Da Nang attempting to teach elements of wire minesweeping to skippers of fishing junks, but they taught us more about local fishing practices...*



# **MCMV NEWS**

Rob Hoole

## **Operation KIPION MCM**

Our MCM forces, based at the NSF (Naval Support Facility) at Mina Salman in Bahrain, currently comprise the Hunt class MCMVs MIDDLETON (MCM2 Crew 4) and CHIDDINGFOLD (2/2) plus the Sandown class MCMV BANGOR (1/4), all supported by RFA CARDIGAN BAY. RNMB (Royal Navy Motor Boat) HARRIER, an autonomous mine hunting boat, has also arrived in the Gulf for trials. HARRIER tows a side-scan sonar to look for mines on the seabed and can work autonomously or by remote control from a ship or shore station.

In February, BANGOR supported UK trade and investment at the Navel Defence Exhibition in the UAE. Also in February, Commander UK MCM Forces and CO RFA CARDIGAN BAY hosted their Saudi Arabian counterparts to discuss mine warfare cooperation within the Gulf during a defence engagement visit. On 8 March, MIDDLETON hosted a networking event for International Women's Day.

## **HUNT Class**

BROCKLESBY (2/1) has been operating in the Plymouth area and conducted Officer of the Watch manoeuvres with PENZANCE (1/1). CATTISTOCK (2/8) is in refit at Portsmouth. Like her sister ships, CHIDDINGFOLD (2/2) paused in silence on 24 February in support of Ukraine. HURWORTH (2/6) completed her OST (Operational Sea Training) in early March before participating in Ex JOINT WARRIOR (formerly JMC, NEPTUNE WARRIOR, etc.) off Scotland where she worked with MCM AUVs operated by members of MTXG (Mine Threat Exploitation Group). LEDBURY (2/3), in refit in Portsmouth, has provided the children of Lee-On-The-Solent primary school with access to three new raised ponds and a nature walk-way in support of their education and play while her Warfare department has been utilising her retired sister ship BRECON at HMS RALEIGH for training.

## **SANDOWN Class**

PEMBROKE (1/5) successfully completed OST in early March before participating in Ex JOINT WARRIOR. MCM1 Crew 8, manning PENZANCE, disbanded for the last time on 3 March following ship visits to Falmouth, Belfast and Glasgow.

The UK has been training the Ukrainian crews of ex-RN Sandown class minehunters GRIMSBY and SHOREHAM (now serving in the Ukrainian Navy as CHERNIHIV and CHERKASY) in UK waters for the best part of a year.

It has now been announced that the Netherlands intends to provide Ukraine with two Alkmaar-class minehunters, starting in 2025. Ukrainian crews will start their training in the second half of 2023. The Netherlands will carry out the training, together with Belgium and possibly other allies.

See the 'Latest News' page of the MCD Officers' Association's new website at [www.mcdoa.org](http://www.mcdoa.org) for more recent updates and photos.

# SLOPS

Stock Items	Price	<i>Please ring Stores before placing order to confirm items are in stock</i>	
TON Talk Binder	£ 7.73	TCA Mug	£ 9.91
TCA Baseball cap. Logo 1 or 2	£ 11.20	TON Profile badge Silver or Gold	£ 8.00
TCA Beret Badge	£ 7.50	TCA 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Badge	£ 6.00
RN Beret, Blue. Various sizes	£ 8.00	TCA Wall Shield 8 ins	£ 37.00
TCA Embroidered Blazer Badge	£ 9.77	Beanie/Ski woollen hat Navy with TCA badge	£ 8.72
TCA Lapel Badge	£ 6.05	TCA Polo Shirt, Navy logo 1	£18.44
TCA Mouse Mat	£ 4.00	Blazer Badge (Gold Wire)	£16.00
TCA Tie, Blue	£ 9.90	TCA Notepad plus Pen	£ 5.00
TCA Tie, Maroon	£ 11.60	TCA Pen	£ 3.00
Blackfoot Tie	£ 13.00	TCA Car sticker – Logo 1	£ 1.25
<b>Special Order items</b>			
<b>State size, colour and logo required</b> <i>Logo 1 = Mine and Keys,</i> <i>Logo 2 = Mine and TON silhouette</i> <b>Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery</b>			
TCA V-neck sweater. Navy or Maroon	£ 32.45	<b>BOOKS</b>	
Blazer Badge, Embroidered + ships name	£ 34.20		
TCA Polo Shirt in Navy with ships name	£ 18.44	<b>Jacks of All Trades Clearance sale Special Offer</b>	<b>£ 3.50</b>
Iron Man Tee Shirt, Navy	£ 15.37	<b>Last of the Wooden Walls</b>	<b>£ 24.99</b>
Iron Man Polo Shirt, Navy	£ 18.44	A4 Hardback and E-book	
TCA Round Neck Sweatshirt	£ 29.16	Order from	
TCA Polar Fleece Jacket	£ 38.30	<a href="http://www.halsgrove.com">www.halsgrove.com</a>	

**All prices include P&P (within UK only)**

**Please make cheques / postal orders payable to TON Class Association**

Laurie Johnson, 4 Downham Close, Cowplain, Hants

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## Post Bag

**FROM: Lt Cdr George O'Connor,  
Holsworthy, Devon**

With reference to Commodore Ian Berry's letter about open bridges, I served in WOTTON in 1971 and LALESTON in 1973.

In WOTTON the bridge team soon learned to trot uphill from bridge wing to bridge wing as the ship rolled, in order to keep warm.

A couple of years later I was appointed to LALESTON. She had an open bridge with an aluminium 'Gazebo' fitted with vertical perspex windows. The windows had no wipers so were often slightly obscured with raindrops, but the worst aspect was the reflections of buoys and ships which we had already passed. One day off the South coast the officers turned to in order to remove the bridge roof and ditch it. I took a fix and recorded it in the log so that it became 'Jetsam', not 'Flotsam'.

Another aspect of LALESTON's open bridge was that she was still driven by Mirlees engines. When one of the cylinder head gaskets blew, the first people who heard it, through the open engine room hatches, were the OOW and lookout, so we would phone the MCR to tell the on watch POME !

Happy days ...

**FROM: Commodore Ian Berry RNR,  
Bridport, Dorset**

In December's TON Talk there was a piece about the RNBT receiving additional funds to provide Welfare assistance for former sailors and Royal Marines of non-commissioned ranks.

RNBT also supports members past and present of the Naval Reserves.

The RNVR/RNR BT had been going for many years but was merged into the RNBT about 4 years ago. The current RNR Commodore used to act as its chairman.

**FROM: Denise Fairclough**

My husband (David Peter Fairclough) was in the RNR (Chief Bosun's Mate) on HMS Kellington (Mine hunter) and in 1984 was part of a team that was filmed for an advert to Recruit for RNR.

He was promised a copy of the film (about 3 mins long) at the time but was never given one. Now in his 70's he is always talking about it and I was wondering if you could point me in the right direction to a link or to get a copy for him as I know this would make his day.

Thank you for any help.

*Imperial War Museum Film Archive does not have a copy. **Please pass any other leads to Editor to forward to Mrs Fairclough***

**FROM: Kapitan zur See Hans Andresen, German Naval Reserve**

it is always a pleasure to receive the TON TALK, well done again ! My interest was very much focused on the story about USCGS Eagle ex-Horst Wessel. With your kind permission I would like to give you some more details about this class of German built sailing ships. There were in fact six in total:

- Gorch Fock I, built 1933, scuttled in 1945, salvaged and served in the USSR and Ukraine as training ship, bought back to Germany and is now moored in Stralsund (unfortunately poor condition!)
- Horst Wessel, built 1936, which later became USCGC Eagle
- Albert Leo Schlageter, built 1937, which later became Sagres in Portugal – see *opposite*

These three ships served as training ships in the former „Kriegsmarine“.

- When the war broke out number four to be called Herbert Norkus was in the process of construction. It had an early launch because the launch slip was needed for the construction of U-Boats. The never finished hulk was scuttled in 1947 off Jutland.
- Number five called Mircea was built in 1938 for Romania and is still in active service.
- Number six is today's well-known Gorch Fock II of the German Navy, built at Blohm & Voss Dockyard in

Hamburg to the original plans under consideration of modern security.

I had the pleasure as a naval cadet to serve on her for three and a half months in 1964 !

I am always open for more questions because there are many stories behind these ships.

*VMT Kapitan Hans. More stories about these beautiful, historical sailing barques would be very welcome ...*  
**Editor**



**FROM: John Woodcock**

I am researching my late father in law Kenneth Huntington, Royal Engineers.

It seems he was posted to HMS Narvik in 1952 in relation to nuclear testing in Monte Bello Islands.

Does any shipmate have any info about Operation Hurricane or have memories of Kenneth ?

Please reply to [bozzinev@hotmail.com](mailto:bozzinev@hotmail.com)

**FROM: Sym Taylor, Petersfield**

As ever, I have much enjoyed TON Talk. A few observations from me concerning TT220.

First, many congratulations to our Chairman for achieving 45 years in uniform - glad that he is giving the Scots the benefit of his great experience - as one, I know we need it.

The article on the Torrey Canyon Oil Spill reminded me that I flew from Lyneham to Gib to join HMS CHILCOMPTON as a Midshipman (the only one) courtesy of the RAF on 13th April 1967. The Captain of the Britannia aircraft informed us that he had permission to deviate from the flight path to do a close pass over the wreck of the Torrey Canyon - so we all had a good look.

As I was at that time, a Scottish resident, I had been instructed to go to Port Edgar to collect two FPS funnel badges and bring them with me on the flight. The RAF were a bit bemused when I told them what they were - but they came with me in the cabin.

CHILCOMPTON, after some time in the Persian Gulf followed by unmaintained reserve in Gib, was being resuscitated to join the FPS. To say she was in poor condition is to completely miss the point, she was in dreadful state and the Dockyard would not believe that we were destined for Scotland and the FPS - so they spent time refitting the air-conditioning system, we had no other form of heating onboard: we had Mirrlees engines, an open bridge and the slow motor boat. All in all, not ideal for a Port Edgar based FPS ship! We eventually arrived in Scotland with one operating main engine and one generator. Nonetheless, I learned a

huge amount from my time in my first RN Ton.

On a more positive note, I was reminded of a fantastic sighting of the USCG Sail Training Ship EAGLE. In 1991, I was the Defence Advisor and RNLO Caribbean (worst job in the RN?) based in The Bahamas. We had a visiting Admiral staying with us for the weekend and on the Saturday night we were all invited to a Midsummer celebration by some Swedish friends in Nassau (my wife is Swedish). The admiral, who will remain nameless, was amazed at the Swedish tradition of dancing around a bonfire on the beach as the sun set (not much beachwear was required !) but after a period of head shaking he joined in the spirit of the evening.

Almost on the point of sunset, we could see a large full rigged sailing vessel approaching the shore and as it got dark she illuminated all her sails before anchoring about 5 cables off our beach. Naturally the Admiral was congratulated for arranging this fantastic tribute to our host - but only he and I knew that it was a total co-incidence.

Naturally, we did not let on.

**FROM:       Graham       Gatehouse,  
Chairman,   President   Old Hands  
Association**

On behalf of my Association, may I thank the TON Class Association for the kind donation towards the Fittleton memorial.

# The Long Arm of Coincidence Strikes Again !

Editor

Enquires sent to the TCA website sometimes result in further dits and amazing coincidences.

One such was an enquiry about paint schemes for TONs received from Nigel Edgell, an accomplished modelmaker from Bristol, who is currently building a 1/350 scale model of a TON.

It was easy for me to find several colour photos of TONs in our Archives and I sent a selection to Nigel. He thanked me and a conversation developed.

Nigel did not serve in the RN but obviously has an eye for ships' lines. Illustrated opposite (top to bottom) are his models for HM Ships Vanguard, Ramilles, Matapan and a WWI armoured cruiser, which could be one of the four in the Drake class. All models were cut down to waterline from full hull kits.

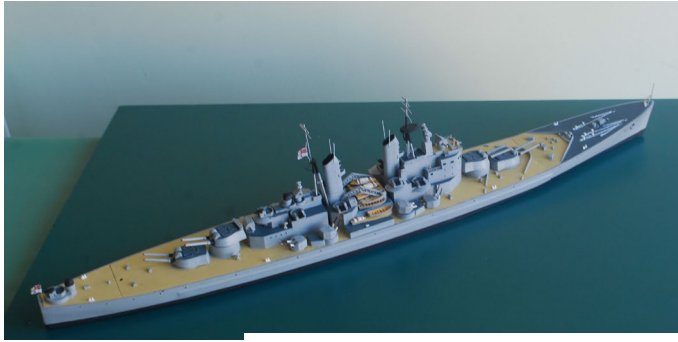
Nigel explains "The most outrageous flight of fancy is the armoured cruiser. I really got interested in British armoured cruisers but couldn't find a model manufacturer who made one So, I decided to make my own representation, based loosely on the images in the book "British Cruisers in World War 1" by R.A. Burt.

I used as a starting point an old model of mine of a Russian cruiser. I added a fourth funnel, remodelled the superstructure, stern and masts, drilled out portholes, changed the armament, to depict single 9.2-inch main turrets fore and aft, then made the 6-inch secondary armament from bits and pieces. The sailors are from various 1/350 RN crew figure sets painted using a tiny 2 bristle brush and magnifying glass ! "

**By coincidence** your Editor's maternal grandfather served in HMS Drake in 1905 as a signalman, so I sent Nigel a few dits and photos from grandfather's log.

Nigel has also sent photos of his C-Scale TON and the rest of his "MCM Flotilla" comprising Algerine, Bangor and Halcyon classes. All from 1/600 Skytrex kits.

We can look forward to seeing the completed larger model of a TON.





For the keen modeller, Nigel recommends.

Atlantic Models of Easington, Co. DURHAM

[www.atlanticmodels.net](http://www.atlanticmodels.net)

This pair, NURTON and WILTON, dealing with a floating mine, were made by Peter Hall.

*Photos © Atlantic Models*

