

TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association

Edition 207



December 2020



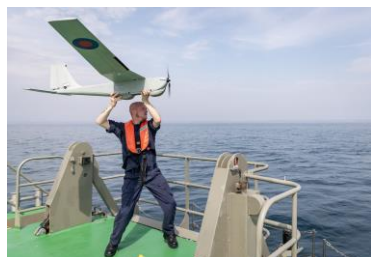
Tall Ships Christmas

TON Class Association

Patron HRH The Prince of Wales



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TCA Membership
£15 per annum
£150 Life Membership

Front Cover:
Tall Ships Christmas

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Founder: Jack Worth MBE

Editorial

TCA Website - All is going well. Visitor clicks are heading towards 1000. If you have not already done so, please visit www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk VMT to everyone who has visited the site and especially to those who have advised minor corrections and to those who have generously contributed additional details and photos for the Ship Histories; particularly Cdr Simon Nicholson, Tony Claxton, David White, Clive Haycocks and Brian Hargreaves, who have filled in gaps among the Hams, Leys and Fords and to Bill Stewart, (not yet a member), and Michael Cox for a correction about KEDLESTON. *Visit the website to see the update and Latest News.*

Virtual AGM A great success, even better than anticipated. 17 members on screen at once!. VMT to Vice Chairman Nobby Hall for taking the chair on a pierhead jump. No headaches with the technology. *See Abridged Minutes on pages 5 to 9.* It seems probable that we will have to hold the March Committee Meeting on the same basis.

NURTON 1988 Author Mark Hankin is writing a novel set in 1988 which features HMS Nurton in her deployment to Brighton in October of that year to protect the Conservative Party Conference from seaward attack. He would like to contact any member of that crew for background. Please e-mail him at mark_hankin@hotmail.com

Salut les Copains [*Wotcha Mates*] Delighted to report that we have extended TCA's International Liaison by linking with the Ecole de Guerre des Mines [Mine Warfare School] in Ostend which is a NATO Centre of Excellence, run as a Joint Venture by the Navies of Belgium and The Netherlands. RN Minehunters often participate in exercises conducted by EGUERMIN and operate within MCM Doctrines taught by the school. *See article on pages 16 & 17.* VMT to Vice Chairman Nobby Hall for making the initial contact via his NATO role.

More International Links Thanks to Cdr Ron Swart of the USN Association of Minemen, we have been put in contact with Dr Joshua Edwards, an Operations Research Analyst, with naval and mining experience. Dr Edwards has written an interesting "What If" paper exploring what the outcomes might have been had the Argentine Navy made more proactive use of mining in 1982. *See Further Information page on our website under Falklands Campaign.*

Deputy Editor – Just one response to the vacancy so far, but Granddaughter Emily is not yet so good with long words. Come on chaps. The helpful technology makes it child's play ...



Deadline for February's Edition is 20th January

pjd

Chairman's Corner

What an unusual and difficult year is now coming to an end. Who would have predicted at the beginning of the year that the world was about to change; for how long no one knows? Lock Down is not what anyone would choose: it is very restrictive of what we can do and can be very wearing on body and soul. I have found walking in my nearby park helps.

Looking forward to 2021 as the eternal optimist, I hope that a vaccine will be available by late Spring or early Summer. In the Autumn I am looking forward to the Annual Reunion in October. The Carlton Hotel part of the TLH Leisure Group in Torquay is booked. I attended my first Annual Reunion in 1996 and have enjoyed every one since. As one wife said to me recently – "I miss the hugging and kissing." No comment required.

It is possible that the Spring Committee meeting will have to a virtual meeting. No decision will be made until nearer the date.

The Final Draft of the revised Constitution was approved by the virtual AGM in October. The revised Rules and Appendices are now at Second draft form. Bill Pollinton has already reviewed the new Constitution and is now reviewing the Rules and Appendices. This is not an easy task and I am most grateful to Bill for this diligent attention to detail and his suggestions for changes and improvements.

The new website - **www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk** – has received many very positive comments. We have also received suggestions for information to be included. We plan to update the website every so often. There will be an update in December. I am grateful to Peter Down for not only setting up the website but monitoring questions, suggestions etc. and answering queries. This in addition to his everyday task as Secretary and his Editorship of TON Talk.

I hold six boxes of archives as we have no Curator of Archives. I have been going through the boxes slowly with assistance of a friend of mine. He started off as an apprentice shipwright in Devonport Dockyard, retiring as a Production Manager. So far, we have only found plans for detailed aspects of a Ton e.g. the electric wiring of the Wireless Office and Parts Lists. These plans are marked "As Fitted". This means they made after an update e.g. refit. We will continue to go through the remaining boxes to see if there are any gems we would wish to retain.

I wish you all a happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Safe New Year.

Peter Harrison

TCA Who's Who

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COMING EVENTS

March	Sat 12	TCA Committee Meeting Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth OR Virtual by Zoom - to be advised
October	Fri 1 - Sun 3	TCA AGM & Reunion Carlton Hotel, Torquay OR Zoom AGM - to be advised Booking forms will be circulated when Covid distancing confirmed

Chaplain's Chat

There is no doubt that this has been a very different year. We have had to face up to a reality which has meant not being able to do things as and when we like, for example: the pub, meet with family and friends, go on holiday, the cinema etc.

For our Association it meant missing the fun and fellowship of our Reunion weekend and holding our AGM on Zoom. On the other hand, we have a brand new website, updated Association Rules and vacancies have been filled on our Committee.

As I write, Lock-Down 2 is happening with an unescapable inevitability. It may have to go well into December or beyond. Not what any of us wanted. Being unable to share a family Christmas is already causing anxiety. Understandable as we love to be with our families and friends at Christmas. I remember being on patrol in the South Atlantic over Christmas and New Year. I think all of us felt that separation and the sense of sadness, perhaps loss, but we had to accept the constraints of the situation. But, of course, we were not alone, there was the rest of the Ship's Company.

Rosemary and I would normally invite a couple of people who may be on their own to share Christmas. This year we will have to use other means of sharing, so I am grateful for our modern video communications. Not the same, but it's more than would have been available even five years ago. Perhaps we know of someone who may like a chat over Christmas. Perhaps members of the TCA ?.

For Christians, Christmas is a time of hope as we celebrate the birth of the Messiah. Christ born into a dangerous world to show how we can be better and kinder people. In other words, to demonstrate God's love to those in difficult situations. There will be many more in this position this Christmas. So please pray for all those who are anxious about Christmas this year because it will be so different. A kind word can make a huge difference.

Finally, perhaps over our Christmas dinners, we should raise our glasses, full of course, in whatever situation we find ourselves and remember those who we miss and all TCA members and their families and wish joy to them and to the world in a better 2021.

May we all be surrounded by the Love of God and the Peace of Christ this Christmas and in 2021.

Every blessing,

Rev Trev

e-mail: trevor@fildness.org

Phones: 07785 568056 & 01752 881967,

AGM of the TON Class Association

Held by ZOOM Conference 10th October 2020

ABRIDGED MINUTES

Participating were President, Chaplain, 12 members of the Committee and three members of the Association = 17 on the Zoom screen all at once but Comms discipline was maintained.

Welcome

TCA Chairman Peter Harrison had offered his apologies that, due to a medical problem, he would not be able to join us. He noted that this would be the 33rd AGM of the Association but our first meeting conducted by video conference, and that it would include representatives from all areas of England, plus Belgium and Denmark. He hoped that Scotland, Wales and Ireland would be represented in future. He thanked Vice Chairman Nobby Hall for stepping into the breach at the last moment and hoped that his baptism of fire would not be too arduous.

Vice Chairman Nobby Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting and congratulated everyone on mastering the technology. He noted that, to save time, all reports from Officers of the Association had been circulated in advance to all participants. Officers might hence just mention highlights.

Crossed the Bar

Dennis recalled the 25 members and wives who had Crossed the Bar since our last AGM: Rev Trevor said a prayer in their memory.

Apologies for Absence were received from Peter Harrison, Bill Platt, Terry Hall and Bill Shepperd

Minutes of AGM 2019 had been published in TON Talk 201 of December 2019. They were accepted as a correct record. Proposed: Tony Standish Seconded: Allan Brown

There were **no Matters Arising** not covered by Agenda items.

Chairman's Report

Peter noted that the Covid virus had has some far reaching effects on the Association. We have had to cancel our Reunion and utilise Video Conferencing for our AGM. Social gatherings can only be held in restricted circumstances and members in "At Risk" categories are encouraged not to travel. Nevertheless, TCA remains an active Association, with the magazine and website contributing to maintaining the bonds between us.

Secretary's Report

HonSec thanked Officers for dealing with many matters in their "parts of ship", which enabled him to concentrate on some of the challenging matters that come our way.

We have vacancies on the Committee for Area Representatives in many parts of the country and also for Reunion Secretary, Archivist, CONA Representative and Deputy Editor.

RBL allocated TCA eight places for the Cenotaph Parade and seven members kindly offered to represent TCA. *However subsequent to the AGM, RBL advised that the Parade had been cancelled for this year, although a short Service would be held at the Memorial and televised.*

The new website was successfully completed on time and within budget. Feedback has been favourable and several ideas for expansion of scope are under consideration. They will each have to be costed and discussed before any action is taken.

Flow of new materials for TON Talk continues to be satisfactory. It was noted that the proportion of Subscription Income taken for Printing and Distribution of Ton Talk has fallen from over 85% in recent years to 76%. This is due to a switch to less expensive Digital Print technology and a "one-off blip" increase in subscription income due to the success in chasing up defaulters.

In recent weeks yet another folorn hope to "rescue Bronington and put her on display in Portsmouth" has attracted attention in a Portsmouth newspaper. Hon Sec was contacted by the originator of the idea and also the newspaper some weeks ago and he explained (politely) why he considered that the hulk was Beyond Economic Repair. Nevertheless the newspaper has run the story, apparently hoping that some form of crowd funding or sponsorship [by BAE] may result. TCA will not get involved in this doomed idea which has no finance or management resources.

Treasurer's Report

Stuart had prepared his usual detailed breakdown of Income and Expenditure for all accounts.

The General Account shows a surplus of Income over Expenditure of £ 2,545.69

The Number 2 Account shows a surplus of Income over Expenditure of £ 2,210.12.

Balances in accounts at latest statement are:

General Account	£ 6,532
No2. Account	£ 2,438
Reserves	£ 5,295.43 - including 12 months interest of £ 8.12
Welfare Account	£10,079.78 - including 12months interest of £10.10

The Accounts were accepted. Proposed: Mike Cox Seconded: Robbie Reid-Sinclair

Vice Chairman voiced the sentiments of everyone in thanking Stuart for the outstanding job he has done in maintaining our finances on a sound basis since 2000.

He proposed that, as a mark of our appreciation for his work, Stuart should be made a Vice President of the Association, Seconded by Peter Down and warmly applauded by all.

Auditor's Report

Bill Pollington advised that he had conducted an independent examination of the bank statements and records for each of the four accounts maintained by the Treasurer and that the Accounts that have been presented are a true and accurate statement of TCA's financial position at 31st August 2020.

He complimented Stuart on the accuracy and detail of the data which had made it easy to audit.

The Auditor's report was accepted. Proposed: Dennis Cook Seconded: Laurie Johnson

Membership Secretary's Report

Dennis advised that the composition of TCA membership was currently :

Paying members = 1093

Non-Paying Members = 103

Full Members	914
Life Members	155
Associates	24

Widows	58
Honorary	7
Associations	22
MCMVs	16

Grand Total = 1196

11 new members have joined, with 2 pending but we have lost 50:

Crossed the Bar 25, Lost Contact 11, Resigned / Lapsed 14

We chased up 256 Defaulters who had not increased their Standing order from £10. 101 of these did adjust and many made additional payments as well, however 129 have not met the new subscription from 2017, so they no longer receive the magazine. 16 of these have not increased their subs from the old £7.50 level. Regrettably there is still work to do but we no longer have regular communication with these "hardened defaulters".

Closer compliance with the new GDPR regulations on data security means that we no longer publish full contact details of members. If you wish to obtain the address, phone number or e-mail of an oppo, it can still be done via the Membership Secretary but he has to obtain your oppo's permission to disclose that information first.

Welfare Report

No report as there have been no requests for welfare assistance, hence no expenditure

Slops Report

£400 was transferred to the General Fund as the profit from Slops last year.

This year has been very poor for trading. It is possibly another impact from Covid, but sales are down markedly and there have been difficulties in obtaining stock from some suppliers.

Balance in Nationwide Account 31 July 2019	£ 1,297.84
Receipts (Sales) 1 Aug 2019 – 31 July 2020	£ 963.23
Purchases of new stock	£ 1,128.52
Balance in Nationwide Account 31 July 2020	£ 1,132.55

Stock Value 31 July 2020	£ 2,798.51
Petty Cash	£ 1.78

We have been advised by the Building Society that they are withdrawing the type of account that we use for Stores but opening an account with another bank is proving difficult due to travel restrictions.

Standard Bearers and Sea Cadet Reports

No reports due to Covid restrictions on attending funerals and Cadet units having to close.

Reunion Secretary's Report

This year's Reunion has been cancelled due to Covid restrictions. All deposits have been returned to members. Our deposit of £3000 with the Toorak Hotel has been rolled forward to next year. However, the Toorak was already booked for our usual weekend, so we have brought forward the Reunion to the weekend of 1st October and we will use the Carlton, another comparable hotel on the same complex.

Balance in the Reunion Account is £4,783.24. Booking forms will not be circulated until Government Guidelines confirm that we will be able to hold next year's Reunion as anticipated, so if that happens by (say) June/July, we may have to make decisions quickly.

The White Rose Branch plan to hold a social event in Yorkshire during 2021 and are currently looking for suitable hotels.

Peter Harrison has received information about a hotel in Nottingham which may be suitable for our Reunion in 2022 and has opened negotiations with the hotel.

More news will follow in TON Talk and our website as plans can be confirmed.

Revised Constitution

TCA's Constitution and Rules were drafted by Jeremy Stewart when he was our Chairman in 1987. Minor amendments have been made by Secretaries over the years to accommodate changes in practice and introduction of newer technologies but the net result is that these documents have become somewhat unwieldy to administer. Chairman Peter Harrison, assisted by Bill Pollington and with some inputs from Secretary Peter Down, has carried out a comprehensive review of the Constitution and Rules, which has resulted in significant re-structuring, reduction of administrative detail and a lot fewer pages.

The Constitution can only be changed by decision of an AGM, whereas the Rules can be changed by the Committee. The draft Revised Constitution had been circulated in advance so that members could give it due consideration.

Revised Rules will be put before the March Committee meeting

The Revised Constitution was approved. Proposed; Bill Pollington Seconded: Laurie Johnson

Vice Chairman's Observations

Nobby Hall thanked everyone for the warm welcome he had received and commented on the range of activities that the Association was managing to pursue, despite Covid restrictions. He has used his position as a serving officer, with access to people and databases not available to us retired sailors to make contacts which will benefit TCA. He has approached other serving officers with MCM experience as potential new members

He has also made contact with the Mine Warfare Training Unit at HMS Collingwood who have said that they would be delighted to give a home to our painting *Minesweeper Sailors Through the Ages*. Nobby will arrange a formal presentation when the establishment returns to being open to visitors which TCA Committee will be able to attend and receive a tour of the MW unit.

Similarly he has made contact with the Ecole de Guerre des Mines [EGUERMIN], the Mine Warfare School and NATO Centre of Excellence for Minewarfare at Ostend. The school is a joint venture between the Belgian and Dutch navies. RN minehunters regularly participate in exercises organised by EGUERMIN. The school would welcome exchanges of views with TCA and, in the fullness of time, TCA might organise a run ashore in Ostend – strong Belgian beer and moules frites are something to look forward to.

Nobby gave us an insight into more detail of the current major programme RN in Transition. He confirmed that the quality of new recruits, officers and ratings, is as good as ever and the training more rigorous than in our day. New ships and aircraft are being delivered to the Fleet and tactics will have to be adjusted to take advantages of their technology, as well as the changing balance of threats we face; now and into the future.

Any Other Business

Allan Brown advised that he had been impressed by the “feel” of the Zoom video conference and suggested that when we can resume face to face Committee meetings at the Royal Maritime Club, a Zoom facility should be incorporated so that members who were unable to travel to Portsmouth could participate in the discussions.

President's Remarks

Rear Admiral John Lippiett said how great it was to be able to see each other again and that he looked forward to being able to stand beside us at the bar to share a beer.

We are seeing some significant changes to the Committee. He welcomed Nobby Hall and David Woolgar and thanked them for volunteering to take on their roles. He had found the magazine and new website interesting and informative and believed that they contributed to the bonds between members, assisting us to keep in touch during the current restrictions.

TCA is in Good Heart. The core of the Association is our people and our comradeship remains strong. Regrettably he had no recent news of Lady Anne Cox.

Next AGM Sat 2 Oct , Carlton Hotel, Torquay - to be confirmed.

Up Spirits was piped at 11.30, although participants had to provide their own tots.

Vice Chairman Nobby reminded us that this year had seen the 50th Anniversary of Black Tot Day, 31 July 1970, and he treated us to an *Ode to the Rum Ration* that he had composed.

Note

Originals of all reports have been filed with the Master Copy of the Minutes.
Copies may be obtained on application to HonSec.

SEA KING DITCHING – BAY OF BISCAY OCTOBER 1977

Commodore John Madgwick

In the autumn of 1977, 819 Squadron was invited to participate in a major NATO exercise. This would involve sending a team of aircrew and maintainers to join HMS *Hermes* in Lisbon, and fly aircraft belonging to 814 Squadron, our sister squadron, also operating Sea Kings. Several dozen ships from a variety of NATO nations participated, together with submarines and various shore-based aviation assets, and the route would take us from Portugal, through the Bay of Biscay, and on towards the south west approaches. The trip south from Glasgow took us to Heathrow airport, and here all our bags were scanned prior to loading in the aircraft for the onward flight to Lisbon. The members of the detachment had each packed a large bag with all their paraphernalia required for flying duties, and everyone had included their anti-gas respirator. Being relatively fragile, these were generally packed at the top of the bag. As each bag went through the x-ray scanner a skull-like image, with what appeared to be two large eyes and a mouth appeared staring out of the screen, much to the consternation of the young lady operating the machine. She took some convincing that we were not exporting skeletons to Portugal.



Some days into the exercise, early on 25 October, and whilst the fleet was crossing the Bay of Biscay, my aircraft was routinely launched from *Hermes* for a long-range anti-submarine patrol - part of a rolling flying programme, which was planned to continue on a 24-hour basis throughout the exercise. Significantly, the fleet was operating in radio and radar silence due to the close proximity of Soviet intelligence-gathering vessels: and this would pose a problem in due course. The sea state was moderate to rough. As the aircraft, with full fuel load, began to transition into the initial hover in order to lower its sonar, two loud bangs were heard overhead and the Sea King began to rotate

extremely rapidly. Very shortly afterwards, and after several turns, it struck the water with tremendous force, capsized and sank. The flotation bags had been ripped off, and the two sponsons were too damaged to provide any stability.

The violence of the impact was somewhat unexpected, and probably similar to falling on concrete from height. Most of the heavy equipment secured to the cabin roof broke away and helped to complicate the escape effort. There were probably similarities with a washing machine operating on the spin cycle. The drill on these occasions is to remain firmly strapped by the five-point harness in one's seat until all movement has ceased, otherwise disorientation becomes a serious problem. And so we waited as the aircraft turned on its back and began to sink, before releasing our harnesses and attempting to escape through windows and doors.

Once in the water, it was clear that our difficulties were only beginning. Each crew member had his own individual liferaft strapped to his back. Once released, it inflated automatically, but clambering into the raft proved to be somewhat challenging. It is all very straightforward in a covered swimming pool back in the UK, but in the open ocean, with strong winds and an appreciable swell, the embarkation drill was far from routine. With cold, wet, and slippery hands, constant movement of the raft, and compression injuries to the spine incurred during the ditching, it took some effort to get in. But once in the raft, the first task was to pull the windbreak around one's shoulders to reduce the effect of wind chill. Then the baler was used to remove the water from the raft. At the same time the four rafts were secured together to ensure that no one drifted away from the main group. The four of us then waited on a grey, windswept and largely empty sea for something to happen. During this period, my navigation bag and its contents of secret cryptographic documents, which had gone down with the aircraft, suddenly burst out of the water, having been released from the depths. This was indeed fortunate, since the Soviet intelligence ships were not far behind. We were glad to retrieve the bag, since further grief from the authorities for misplacing highly sensitive material was the last thing on our mind.

We all carried a small radio beacon, known as the *Sarbe*. These were activated and red flares were fired as we bobbed about on a lumpy sea - but with little apparent effect. The masts of ships in the distance could occasionally be seen over the top of the swell, but it later transpired that no ship or aircraft had heard any of the radio calls. The red mini-flares, however, were eventually sighted, and it was immediately assumed by the Command in *Hermes* that a submarine was in distress: but a check of the operations room plot indicated that no submarines were in the area, and it was then surmised that a Buccaneer from *Ark Royal* (in the opposing force, one hundred miles distant) had crashed. Subsequently, the radar was switched back on, and we were found to be missing; an alert young seaman in *Hermes* on his first trip to sea, then spotted a flare, prompting a more focused search.

In due course, the frigate *Arrow* arrived impressively at maximum speed: the First Lieutenant was Tony Bull, an erstwhile neighbour in Devon, and following recovery by seaboat, the crew was transferred by Wasp helicopter to *Hermes*. This was one of the more interesting parts of the episode, as the Wasp had only a single engine, and no doors were fitted to enable a swift escape in an emergency. It so happened that media representatives from the NATO nations were enjoying a press day at sea, and so filmed our arrival in *Hermes*. In *Arrow* we had changed from our wet flying gear into a

survivors' outfit of working dress trousers, a seaman's jersey and plimsolls. The television footage of our passage from the aircraft to the after lift well and descent towards the sick bay was duly recorded and shown that evening on the BBC's John Craven's *Newsround* programme. Up in Scotland, the family watched proceedings but did not recognise us in our new gear. With most of the crew having suffered damage to a number of vertebrae, we then passed the remainder of the exercise in the sick bay.

The aircraft was lying on the sea bed at a depth of about 15,000 feet, and was never recovered from the Bay of Biscay; but the accident investigation team came to the conclusion that there had been a catastrophic failure of one of the gear boxes leading to the tail rotor. All Sea King aircraft were then grounded for a period whilst the problem was addressed, and the final assessment was that the aircraft manufacturer had specified the incorrect type of grease in the main tail fold gear box. Over time, this had dried out and become ineffective, with the inevitable result. With robust physiotherapy, all the crew were back in the air within three months, although in later years the back damage has come back to haunt me on occasion. Nevertheless, we qualified as members of the Goldfish Club, established for those select few who have ditched an aircraft into the sea. And as aircraft captain, I was presented with an invoice for £1.3 million pounds: a lot of money in those days.

Recently my wife and I enjoyed a cruise in the *Queen Elizabeth* which happened to transit the Bay of Biscay in a full gale. We reflected that luck had been with our Sea King that day.

Just having a Festive Laugh !



For her next checkup, the new doctor asked Granny to bring a list of all the medicines that had been prescribed for her.

As the young doctor was looking through the list, his eyes grew wide as he realised she had a prescription for birth control pills.

"Mrs. Smith, do you realise these are birth control pills?", the doctor asked.

"Yes, they help me sleep at night!" she replied..

"Mrs. Smith, I assure you there is absolutely nothing in these pills that could possibly help you sleep !"

Granny reached out and patted the young Doctor's knee.

"Yes, dear, I know that. But every morning I grind one up and mix it in the glass of orange juice that my 16-year-old granddaughter drinks... and, believe me, that helps me sleep at night !"

HMS MATAPAN (D43) 1947-77

Not quite the typical “Mystery Ship” of photo competitions but does any TCA member recall seeing this ship ? Or perhaps some of our UC or engineering colleagues may have served in her ..?



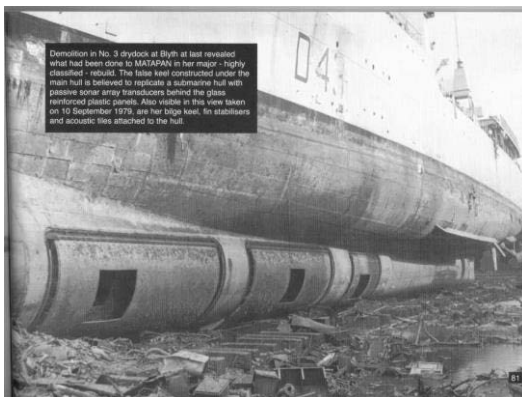
This article was triggered by a conversation with Lt Cdr Ben Warlow, the noted Naval Historian and prolific author of books about RN ships, who also just happens to be a term mate of your Editor from Dartmouth, in the 1950s. We had been pondering about the many “one-off” ships that have appeared in the Navy List. Some, especially during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, were trials ships experimenting with novel big gun mountings or engineering advances, soon overtaken by the progress of technology. Others, like the current HMS Bristol, had been intended to be forerunners of a class but were scuppered due to economic and/or political factors..

MATAPAN (D43) was the last of the Battle-class fleet destroyers. Built by John Brown & Company. She was launched on 30th April 1945 and finally completed on 5th September 1947. Too late for service in WW II, on completion of her sea trials, she was placed in long term reserve for twenty years and remained moored, first in the River Medway, then in the Tamar until, in 1961, she was selected to become a Sonar Trials ship, in succession to VERULAM. However lack of budget impeded her conversion which did not begin until 1970. MATAPAN was commissioned on 2nd February 1973, joining the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment (AUWE), based in Portland

In the process she outlived all of the rest of the Battle class destroyers in Royal Navy service

Advances in Soviet nuclear submarine performance during the 1960s, aided by the Portland spy ring scandal, rendered existing NATO sonar equipment obsolescent. In 1968 the Admiralty issued a draft Staff Requirement for the Type 2016 hull sonar, which was intended to replace not only the widely used Type 184, but other types of specialist sonars. Type 2016 had an effective range of up to 20,000 yards in calm conditions in coastal waters, and up to 8,000 yds in deep water, compared to 2,500 yds for the Type 177. It used pre-formed digital beams at lower frequencies than previous types and could track many more targets, whilst using fewer operators to process the information. The drawback of the use of much lower frequencies however, was the need for a much longer array.

Matapan was towed to Portsmouth where, in January 1970, she began her conversion. This resulted in her appearance becoming radically different. To house the 150 ft x 10 ft arrays on either side of the keel, required the addition of a deep skeg on the bottom of her hull, (*pictured right during her scrapping*) which increased her draught to 22 ft and her displacement to 3,835 tons.



Additionally, a large bulbous sonar dome was added to her bow. The new bow was welded, whereas the original hull was riveted, leading to speculation that she might split apart in a rough sea – She didn't !

All of her armament was removed and a new deckhouse and bridge were added forward, along with a plated foremast to house additional radars. Towards the stern, she was fitted with a second funnel to vent the exhaust gases from the extra generators needed to power the sonar, and a helicopter flight deck on a deckhouse aft. The ship was also re-wired and fitted with new operations and control rooms, and additional accommodation for scientific staff. Reconstruction work was completed in July 1972 and she began her sea trials, initially in British coastal waters, where the sonar operators found that their new equipment was so loud that they needed ear defenders.

During 1976 she operated in the Atlantic and Caribbean, undertaking trials with the United States Navy. During these exercises it was reported that the crew of the submarine *USS Tullibee*, claimed that Matapan's sonar ping was "like having a metal bucket on your head and someone hitting it with a sledgehammer."

Later in her career, Matapan undertook testing of an alternative Towed Array Sonar, Type 2031, which offered the improved performance of the Type 2016, without the cost and space needs of the hull mounted type. Type 2016 Sonar however, had already had a major influence on future warships, as the Royal Navy's Type 22 frigate was designed to mount the Type 2016 sonar, which resulted in a step change in hull size for frigates. Type 2016 also saw service in Invincible-class aircraft carriers and Type 42 destroyers. The towed array Type 2031 and its successor, the Type 2087, manufactured by Thales, have become standard equipment of the Type 23 frigates.

Matapan was decommissioned in August 1977 and laid up at Portsmouth. In 1979 she was sold to Vickers and was broken up at Blyth in Northumberland.

Does anyone have a dit about this Mystery Ship ?

Mystery Man on the Sweepdeck !



An old photo from YARNTON c. 1969. The distinguished gentleman in uniform is believed to be Lt Cdr George Pearson, her C.O., but who might the Pukka Sahib in the pith helmet be ? ?

Successful guesses may queue for him to buy you a tot when we are next able to hold a Reunion ...

TON Talk Naval Aviation Supplement

Further to Nobby Hall's update on the RN in Transition, herewith a handy guide on what the Wafus are up to ...

RN Trials Jet Pack Suit

Former Royal Marine Reservist and inventor Richard Browning soared into the Guinness World Record books with the new title of "fastest speed in a body controlled jet engine powered suit". The kit, created using six miniature jet engines and a special exo-skeleton, allows the user to take off vertically and fly. Richard achieved an impressive speed of over 30 mph, flying at an altitude of 20 feet for 30 minutes.



He has recently trialled the suit flying from the stern platform of HMS Queen Elizabeth, in US waters, where he "buzzed" some tourist boats and more recently, trained a group of Royal Marines who demonstrated how a team of three might quickly surprise, surround and board a suspect craft. For this demo they flew from a rigid raider and boarded a P2000 patrol craft. The jetpack flies close to the surface, so it could effect a stealthy/tactical approach.

Richard has also demonstrated use of the jet pack in Mountain Rescue scenario, allowing a paramedic to reach a patient stranded on a mountain even more quickly than a helicopter could position him there. - Courtesy Daily Mail and Wikipedia

847 NAS Make History Guiding F-35 Bombing Runs

For the first time the wings of the Royal Marines have guided F-35 aircraft flying from HMS Queen Elizabeth on a live bombing run.

Garvie Island – a rocky outcrop off Cape Wrath at the north-west tip of Scotland – was hit by two 500lb Paveway bombs, dropped by US Marine Corps pilots.



Directing the bombing runs was 847 Naval Air Squadron, whose Wildcat helicopters provide wide-ranging battlefield support for commandos on the ground.

An airborne Forward Air Controller in a Wildcat directed the F-35s of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 211, operating from the flight deck of the carrier, alongside Royal Navy and RAF F-35s of 617 Squadron.

Working hand-in-hand with the Wildcat crew was a specialist commando unit, 148 (Meiktila) Battery, Royal Artillery, who 'paint' the target by pointing a laser beam at it and the bomb rides down the reflected beam. – Courtesy RN website

Probably a lot quicker than "Up Ladder , Shoot !" in my day ... Editor

PUMA UAV - Latest Addition to the Fleet Air Arm

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles UAV ("drone" is un-pc) were first used by the RN on the ice patrol ship to spot leads opening up in the ice and have since been finding other uses for an "over the horizon eyeball". The Army uses them to see what may be waiting on the other side of the hill or to scan inhospitable terrain. In Afghanistan these little aircraft buzzing a village could turn assemblies of people to peaceful pursuits, as aggressive postures could result an airstrike. The naval parallel is spotting for bombardments and an inexpensive way of searching large areas of ocean for pirates, poachers or stranded mariners, plus scanning for potential minefields.



This third-generation Puma 3 AE (All Environment) is equipped with gimballed optical and infra-red cameras for use in day, night, or low-light environments and can download a tactical picture of a wide area, or a close up of a wanted man, via encrypted radio links. It can carry additional payloads such as flares or grenades and can be flown either by ground-based radio control or autonomous GPS navigation.

Wingspan 9.2 ft, Length 4.6 ft, Range 20 km, Weight 15 lbs, Endurance 2½ hours. Survives controlled crash landing ashore and in water for four hours in sea state 3

PUMA can be deployed by ships of all classes, (even a surfaced submarine). The "Air Wing" comprises three people: Officer (Flight Commander and Mission Planner), Pilot/Radio Control Operator and Crewman/Mechanic. The roles are inter-changeable and, as the photo shows, PUMA does not require an infrastructure of Cats and Traps.



The following information has been gained from the website of the Ecole de Guerre des Mines with permission of Commandant Christophe Muyleart BN, Director of the School.

EGUERMIN has a long tradition in the education of Naval Mine Warfare. It officially started as a Belgian-Netherlands school on 1st of April 1965. A few years later the school opened up its courses to other NATO members. Today partners from all over the world, including Partnership for Peace (PfP) nations are trained at EGUERMIN.

EGUERMIN has been the NATO Naval Mine Warfare Centre of Excellence (NMW COE) since 2006, with a focus on educating the navies of NATO and partners in Naval Mine Warfare, in addition to providing expertise and advice to NATO headquarters and agencies

That Belgium and the Netherlands should be seriously concerned about the threat of mine warfare is not surprising. Many will recall the challenges of clearing the great waterways of the Rhine and Meuse/Maas at the end of WW II, which continues to some extent today, as former minefields off the Frisian coast are being cleared of unexploded ordnance as wind farms and telecommunications cables are being installed. Imagine the chaos in international shipping if even one mine was found today floating in the approaches to Antwerp or Rotterdam.

Team Training Facility

The Naval Mine Warfare Team Training Facility (NMW TTF) has been in use at EGUERMIN providing training and support to ships crews, and training departments of the Belgian and Netherlands Navies. Courses are geared for training of individuals at all levels from sonar operator to commanding officer, in addition to training Mine Hunting and Mine Sweeping teams.

The facility can support up to three Task Units at any one time. The equipment and infrastructure are configured for the updated Alkmaar and Flower class MCMVs, of the Belgian and Netherlands Navies, but other nations with the same weapons system (**Seafox**) also use the facility.



The Team Training Facility consists of three cubicles each with six multifunctional consoles where either a team, or six individuals can receive training. All consoles are equipped with the same Integrated Mine Countermeasures System as the ships at sea, to provide the most realistic training environment. The technical infrastructure of TTF comprises 102 personal computers, 87 touch panels and 54 LCD monitors.

The system is capable of simulating almost every possible configuration used onboard with a large number of scenarios drawn from MCM experiences all over the world. Examples of configurations that can be used include Hull Mounted Sonar, Self Propelled Variable Depth Sonar, Seafox, and Minesweeping drones, or a combination of these systems. The training scenarios can be adapted to run sequences of events/incidents or paused to provide maximum training value by interactive feedback. Video cameras and computer screen replication allows instructors to monitor the students' progress and provide real time feedback.

An auditorium, with seating for 50 students/delegates, with three projection screens is used to brief students prior to commencing training and can replay training sessions for debriefing / educational purposes.



The Naval Mine Warfare Gaming System (NMWGS) creates a confrontation between the Naval Minefield planner and the Naval Mine Counter Measures (NMCM) Commander in a realistic scenario which can factor in national and commercial issues.

The NMWGS operates on a Windows based PC network and provides a dynamic user interface and an electronic map of a designated sea area. The software simulates the interaction between the sea mines, the sensors and sweeping gears of different MCMV's and various autonomous vehicles, other naval units, crisis response and economic shipping. The interaction is adapted to reflect relevant environmental factors in the area. During the wargame the NMWGS staff insert incidents to challenge the students. A wargame can be tailored to the requirements of the client navy between 5 and 15 days. A staff of experienced NMCM instructors is present throughout the exercise to assist and coach the students in planning, executing and evaluating the NMCM operations. Each year, over 200 NMCM staff officers train and exercise on the NMWGS. A 10-day wargame is organised biannually at the Canadian Fleet Forces School in Quebec and wargames have also been run in the US, Latvia and Sweden.

EGUERMIN awards NATO Principal Warfare Officer NMW and Staff Officer NMW qualifications. *For more detail see www.eguermin.org*

I'm glad I wasn't him!

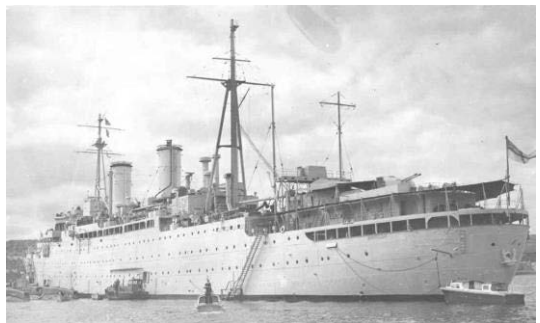
Doug Andrews, Ware

I should point out at the outset, that the events that are about to be revealed did not happen to me, but to my big brother Stan who, to avoid becoming a 'brown job' as an Army Cadet at his secondary school, joined the Sea Cadets as a bunting-tosser. At the end of his time with them he duly enrolled in the London Division of RNVr, again as a signalman.

On receiving his call-up papers in September 1949 he achieved what he had planned to do - National Service in the RN, but the only problem was that it already had its complement of signalmen, so the only way he could get into our Navy was as a Naval Airman, which left him somewhat unhappy, but which he reluctantly accepted.

Shortly thereafter, he found himself aboard HMS Illustrious, where his duties were to work his way round the ship, testing and servicing all the fire extinguishers, and he quickly found out that the chemicals from some of them burnt holes in his No. 8's. This was no joke, since his pay was something like 'five bob a day,' and as a National Serviceman he was not entitled to kit upkeep allowance - you were only there for two years, and your kit should last that long !. This added to his unhappiness, and to try and improve his lot, he volunteered for an Upper Yardman's Course. This brought about his swift removal from the 'flat-top' to Royal Arthur then to RNAS Eglinton, followed by a 'crash draft' to HMS Ceres for his training to become a Midshipman, which he duly did in October 1950. This 'stone frigate' was in the wilds of Yorkshire, where their sports field was Wetherby Racecourse (I followed him there three years later, to train as a Jack Dusty.)

His first draft as a 'Snottie' was to the submarine depot-ship HMS Montclare, at that time based in Rothesay Bay, Kyles of Bute. The ship had been built by John Brown of Clydebank, and was launched in 1921 as a passenger liner for Canadian Pacific Line, but was commandeered by the Admiralty in 1939 and fitted out as an armed merchant cruiser for the early years of the War. She was to be broken up at Ward's Yard at Inverkeithing in January 1958.



After leaving school, my brother got a clerical job in the newly-created NHS, and his 'work uniform' involved white shirts and a tie, and our dear mother did her best with her scrubbing board, soap suds and starch, to satisfy his demand for stiff collars - in those days, the shirts were collarless, and involved collar studs and separate collars. Big brother then found out about a company called Collars of Wembley Ltd., whereby on joining them, he sent them the cost of two dozen good quality collars (Van Heusen) and shortly thereafter received a stout fibre box in the side of which was a window which contained a reversible label, with his address on one side and the company's on the other. When twelve of the collars had been worn, they were posted to Collars who laundered and returned them - having credited his account with the postage he'd paid earlier! As part of their service, any collars showing signs of wear were replaced free of charge.



This system worked so well that, on joining MONTCLARE's Gunroom, Stan continued with it. Perhaps because of his smart appearance - or was it that he was the youngest 'Middy' on board? - on New Year's Eve 1950 it fell to him to welcome the New Year Year in on the ship's bell

A very dapper Young Officer, left ... Editor

MONTCLARE occasionally left her mooring and her flotilla of submarines, to venture off into the Atlantic for exercises or gunnery practice. It was on one such foray that the ship experienced problems with its radar. A signal was promptly sent ordering the necessary spare part, and MONTCLARE - all 21,550 tons of her - anchored somewhere off Londonderry a day or so later, having received notification a package was awaiting collection. A ship's boat was duly sent ashore to pick it up, and Stan actually saw it return and watched its recovery, at which point the depot ship returned to sea.

A little while later, he heard over the 'tannoy' that his presence was required on the quarterdeck. On his arrival, he was confronted by a somewhat unhappy Officer of the Day, who passed over to him the parcel containing the 'radar spare.' The only problem was, the box contained one dozen beautifully laundered shirt collars!

I think we've all experienced one of those moments - if only the deck would open and swallow one up.....

The Most Unusual Job I had in the Navy

Commander N J "Nobby" Hall RN

TCA Vice Chairman

Officer Commanding Royal Marine Band

I was serving in HMS ILLUSTRIOUS in January 1997, the Flagship for the OCEAN WAVE 97 Far East Deployment, when on the second day at sea out of Portsmouth I was summoned to the Commander's Cabin. The Cdr was a good bloke and I got on very well with him both personally and professionally as the ship's NBCDO. "Nobby you like all things military" was his opening remark, to which I replied in the affirmative. "How many do you currently have in your Division?" he then asked knowing full well I only had two, the ANBCDO and the NBCD Yeoman. Where is this leading I wondered and I was not left in suspense for very long. "Well now you have another thirty" he said without batting an eyelid.

As part of the additional personnel on the Admiral's Staff we had embarked half of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Band Plymouth. The Plymouth Band Director of Music, a Captain RM, had decided the first half of the Deployment would be boring and so was not going to join until we got to Singapore and he sent his WO2 Band Master to Command in his stead. Well QRRNs are very clear on this subject, if RMs are embarked in a HM Ship and no RM Officer is with them a RN Officer must be appointed as the Officer Commanding Royal Marines (OCRM). Step forward as 'voluntold' Nobby the OCRM Band.

This was not the first time I had been an OCRM, I previously had a RM Ships Detachment in HMS BROADSWORD, but they were Commandos. I certainly knew how to use small arms, Command the IS Platoon and lead Boarding Parties but I could not play a musical Instrument. Well no problem I doubled away smartly to obey the last order. My first move was to summon the four SNCOs in the Band to my Cabin to introduce myself, this included the Band Master, the Drum Major, a formidable character, and the two Colour Sergeants. My first impression of them was good, but I'm not sure they were keen on the idea of having a Matelot as the OCRM Band.

Having told them it was my intention to totally immerse myself in all the Band did, which I'm not sure they believed, I set about proving it. I started by attending their practice sessions held in a void space deep down aft in the ship and the marching practices on the flight deck. I then attended, in full No1s, their first official function at the caves in Gibraltar and every function thereafter. Likewise I attended Ceremonial Colours on the flight deck every morning, my No1s, sword and medals have never been used so frequently. Pretty soon I got to know all the Band members and quickly become accepted by them.

Then began one of the happiest times I ever had in my Service. The Musicians and Corps of Drums were undoubtedly the most talented group of men and women it has ever been my privilege to command. No form of music was beyond their capabilities and they could turn their hands to anything. They had rock, jazz, dance, folk bands, quartets, quintets and of course the best military marching band in the world. The Combined Services Entertainment (CSE) provided a show for us en route to the Far East which included a well known rock & roll band. Our rock band was considerably better and stole the show.



During the first half of the Deployment we had some great times, both professionally and personally, most memorably an epic run ashore in Toulon with my SNCOs ending up with the Drum Major playing the bongos in a brothel. On arrival in Singapore, where I was due to leave the Ship, some of the Band went ashore and found a live music bar where they arranged to play at my leaving run. It was one hum dinger of a night which was attended by many different members of the Ships Company, Air Group and Admirals Staff which culminated with me drinking wine with the Jossman in his Mess at silly o'clock in the morning. I left the Ship the next day with teary eyes not all caused by the hangover.

Post OCEAN WAVE 97 I kept in touch with RM Band Plymouth and when they had a new recording studio opened at their HQ at HMS RALEIGH, by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, I was invited to attend. Officially known as Alford Hall, after a former Principal Director of Music, hanging on the wall was a photo of the Band with me as OCRM and the studio then became known colloquially as "Nobby Hall". Another upshot of my time as OCRM Band was that for years afterwards I never had a problem getting RM Musicians for functions, including in Northern Island and Cyprus.

Finally it goes without saying that it was also a tremendous honour to be given the opportunity to Command the finest Military Band in the world and one I am inordinately proud of. One of the most unusual jobs I had in the Royal Navy, but undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable.

Gas Mask Diving

Spike Wheeler, CPO Diver 1, Wokingham

If the Health and Safety Executive had been invented in those far-off days, they would have had kittens ! A diver in overalls, canvas rope-soled boots (Pusser's forerunner of trainers, perhaps ?) and to cap the lot, an old-style gas mask rigged for diving.

The lifeline consisted of an inch and a half sisal line, the weight belt was a canvas waistcoat with pockets for slab weights. Incidentally the canvas boots also had foot-shaped lead weights, each weighing about one pound, which could be doubled up, if the diver was big enough and strong enough !



The 1941 pattern Anti-Gas Respirator (left) could be adapted for diving by replacing the corrugated hose connecting the facemask to the chemical scrubber container with an air hose connected to an air supply pump on the surface. Air was admitted via the inlet valve and exhaust/excess air just bubbled out through the sides of the mask.

Although it sounds hairy, this form of surface demand diving was both practicable and safe for shallow water (less than 50 feet deep) and less energy sapping jobs such as inspection of hull fittings, freeing wires tangled round screws and cleaning molluscs off screw blades. Note that fins were not part of the kit for Standard (copperhead) Diving, where the diver trudged along the sea bed, or climbed over underwater obstacles, wearing weighted boots to keep him upright.

The location was Car Nicobar, part of the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean, a couple of hundred miles to the south of present day Bangladesh. Part of the state of India, most of the islands are very low sand keys, suitable only for growing coconuts. They were known to Arab traders since the days of Sinbad as a useful way point and watering hole on the route between the Gulf and the Spice Islands,

The ship was HMS MAURITIUS, C80, a Colony-Class Cruiser, flagship of the East Indies station in 1952 and I was a young Diver 3 going through for Killick.

MAURITIUS was one of the first of the COLONY class of light cruisers: handsome ships built in 1937, length 555 ft x 62 ft beam x 16 ft draught, displacement 10,000 tons to accord with the Washington Treaty, speed 32 knots through four turbine-powered shafts.



Their main armament was 12 x 6-inch guns in four triple turrets, although X and Y turrets were later replaced by more anti-aircraft armament and the two aircraft removed as more effective radar was developed

The job was a poker gauge test, to measure wear on the starboard inner propeller shaft. We did carry, and use, standard diving dress – cumbersome canvas suit and copper helmet, with the Pattern 111 hand-cranked air pump. In the 1940/50's rubber suits, fins and self-contained underwater breathing apparatus were a rarity, confined to Clearance Divers and Special Operations.

Rigging for diving was a full-blown evolution, loading lots of gear and stand-by diver and team into the Kitchen gear cutter, so for minor jobs we used gas mask diving; OK for small jobs such as working on the ship's bottom, including shafts and tunnels. We would rig the pump on the quarter deck, which made for a steadier platform than having the pump in the cutter, as anyone who has been detailed off for the strenuous work of pumping party in the climate of the East Indies will agree – a slimming exercise far better than circuit training.



Above: Civilian standard diving team in Aberdeen harbour 1920's © Alamy. Note rotary hand-cranked pump amidships

Once in the water and screwing in the poker gauge, I was quite happy and cool, until I became conscious of something in my peripheral vision. Above and outboard of me was a very large, ugly shark, followed in line astern by several others. They showed no interest in me but slowly cruised past towards the stern.

My immediate concern on completion of the job was how to surface without attracting their attention. I can hear (modern) experts saying that sharks seldom bother with divers but I had not then read the books by Hans Hass and neither, I guess, had the sharks !

On giving five bells on my lifeline (signal for Task Completed) I prayed that the Diving Attendants would be on good form and gave them four bells plus two (Signal for Pull me Up). Moments later I was back on deck, wondering why I had been in such a panic.

I soon discovered the reason for the rush hour traffic below; a local headman in Car Nicobar had kindly donated a sucking pig for the Wardroom's table. Some young Midshipmen had hit on the bright idea of going fishing using a 40-gallon drum with the guts of the unfortunate pig dangling from a wire, without first checking that diving was taking place – that's why we hoist the flag !!!

Not for the first, or last, time in my career, I spoke my mind to these budding fishermen. As a young A.B I thought that I would soon be heading for the rattle, but the TASO took over and really roasted the Young Gentlemen, from whom I received an apology.



TRITONIA Armoured Deep Diving Suit with Standard Diver – 1930's

My Strangest Job in the RN

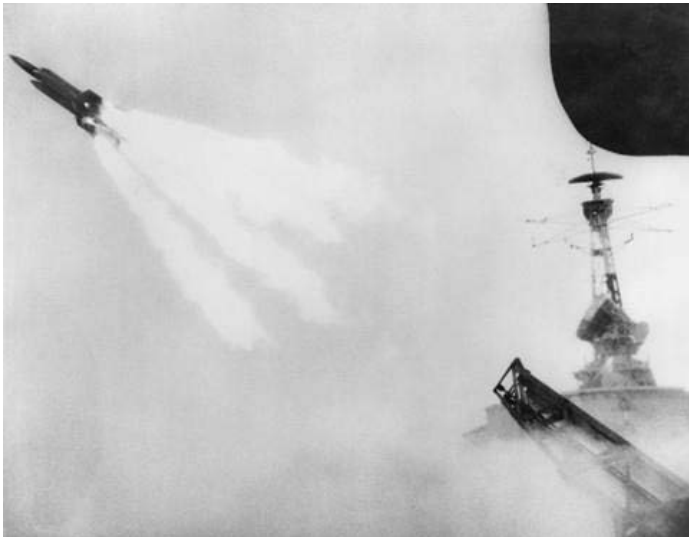
Arthur Maxted, Newquay

Early in 1963, I was posted to the Royal Aircraft Establishment Aberporth in Wales as Coxswain and part of the Seaslug weapon experimental team. My boss, a Commander, advised that the local community had asked him if he could provide a float for their carnival . "Can you do it Coxswain ?" to which I naturally said "Yessir ! "

I used an R.N. open back lorry and scoured Haverfordwest shops for odds and ends, cardboard carpet rolls of different sizes, confetti, compressed air cylinders, scrap wood, flashing, lights etc. My lads really entered into the spirit of the project with enthusiasm and after three weeks we were ready. The lorry was transformed into a ship with bowsprit, mast, crow's nest, canons and a twelve foot model of a Seaslug. We were ready for the carnival !

After the Grand Parade, the Mayor came to us and said "Well done lads, your float was the best but you are professionals , so we are giving the trophy to the Girl Guides, but don't worry, I have a pub in Haverfordwest and I have instructed them to give you all as much as you can drink ..." . far better than first prize, we thought

Getting there was easy, but driving back to Aberporth was not without its problems; our crow's nest cut through an overhead telephone cable (which we repaired), then our electrician fell out of the crow's nest and sprained his ankle, however eventually we were all applauded by the civilian population and the Naval staff !



Sea Slug Trials from HMS Girdle Ness 1950's

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

Kevin Hughes. A/B (MW) RNR, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex.
Served on HMS KELLINGTON 1982-87 F2474

Charles Knox REM RN Ayrshire Scotland, Served on HMS ILMINGTON
1955-56. F2475

Charles Buckle S/Lt - Lt RN Swanage Dorset Served on HMS WALKERTON
1967-68, HMS SHAVINGTON 1968-69, HMS GLASSERTON 1973-75 L2476

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

David F Creasy. To:- Grantham Lincolnshire. F0825

John Harvey To:- Camborne, Cornwall. F0090

Hans Andresen. To:- Wede, Holstein Germany. L0585

Anthony Holtham. To:- Plymouth Devon. A1043

LOST CONTACT.

Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary

Jack Leetch - Last Known address:- Antrim N Ireland F1713

David N Humphrey - Last Known Address Dunedin New Zealand L1653



Crossed the Bar

Anne, Lady Cox

*Widow of TCA First President Vice Admiral Sir John Cox
Peacefully, with family in Salisbury, 11th November after a long illness.*

CPO MW Frank Batty RN

Dunfermline

*Not a member of TCA but known to many
Served in HM Ships UPTON and LEWISTON 1978-84, CORDELLA 1982
EAGLET (Staff)*

Bill Roberts RN

Crosby, Merseyside

Served in HMS WASPERTON 1962-63. F0069

Brian Cox. RN

Rochester Kent.

Served on HMS SHAVINGTON 1957. F0055

Kaaren E Hogan

wife of Cdr Patrick Hogan, Cyprus

AB RN Richard Keech

Blyth. Not a member but well known

*GANGES 1971. Served in HM Ships ALCASTON,
SHAVINGTON, CARLTON, WALKERTON
Retired as a Regulator in NELSON 1982*

Don Norman AB RN

Wokingham. F0377

Served in HM Ships ESSINGTON & FENTON 1955-57

May They Rest In Peace

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TCA Beret Badge	£ 7.50		
RN Beret, Blue. Various sizes	£ 8.00		Price
TCA Embroidered Blazer Badge	£ 9.77	TCA" V" Neck Sweater, Navy or Maroon	£ 32.45
TCA Lapel Badge	£ 6.05	TCA Round Neck Sweatshirt	£ 29.16
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TCA Tie, Maroon	£ 11.60	Iron Man Tee Shirt, Navy	£ 15.37
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TON Talk Binder	£ 7.73		
TCA Mug	£ 9.91	M/S Sailors Painting	
TCA 10 th Anniversary Print	£ 5.50	- Notepad & TCA Pen	£ 5.00
TCA 25 th Anniversary Badge	£ 6.00	- A3 Gicleé Print	£ 30.00
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e-mail: lawrencej1055@gmail.com

MCMV NEWS

Rob Hoole

Operation KIPION MCM

Our MCM forces in the Gulf, based at the NSF (Naval Support Facility) at Mina Salman in Bahrain, currently comprise the Hunt class MCMVs BROCKLESBY (MCM 2 Crew 6/8) and CHIDDINGFOLD (MCM2 Crew 3/1) plus the Sandown class MCMVs SHOREHAM (MCM1 Crew 5) and PENZANCE (MCM1 Crew 3), all supported by RFA CARDIGAN BAY. BROCKLESBY surveyed a wreck in November and recovered an old fridge. In October, CHIDDINGFOLD organised a charity fun day in Bahrain which raised \$1,544 for Help for Heroes and the RN Clearance Divers Association. SHOREHAM interrupted operations in the Gulf to hold a moving sunset Remembrance Service on 11 November. Also in November, Lt Cdr Graeme Hazelwood, the CO of PENZANCE, was reunited with Cdr Mohannad Alnamat of the Royal Jordanian Navy, currently based in Bahrain. Both officers passed out from BRNC Dartmouth in 2007 and Cdr Alnamat underwent small ship command training in Faslane-based PENZANCE the following year.

HUNT Class

On 27 October, the Greek Hunt class minehunter HS KALLISTO (formerly HMS BERKELEY) was sliced in two by the container ship MAERSK LAUNCESTON off Piraeus. Thankfully, only two sailors suffered minor injuries. The master of the container ship, bound for the Turkish port of Canakkale, was arrested and his ship was impounded. As I was the first CO of HMS BERKELEY and the only Hunt class CO to see the launch of his own ship (3 Dec 1986 at V-T Woolston), you can imagine my feelings. LEDBURY (2/4) was seen alongside Bedenham ammunition pier in Portsmouth harbour on 11 November. She had returned from the Gulf to the UK on 11 September. CATTISTOCK (2/8) completed BOST (Basic Operational Sea Training) in November and has now resumed operational service.

SANDOWN Class

BLYTH (1/2) has been conducting maintenance following her three-year deployment in the Gulf on Operation KIPION MCM. BANGOR (1/8) started sea trials in November following her maintenance period at Rosyth. GRIMSBY (1/1) achieved Squadron Assurance in October and went on to undertake Explosive Ordnance Disposal validation.

MASTT (Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team)

MASTT's RNMB HALCYON remote minesweeping vessel and its TWC (Towed Wheeled Cradle) have undergone operational air portability trials and evaluation at JADTEU (Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit) at RAF Brize Norton.

See the 'Latest News' page of the MCD Officers' Association website at www.mcdoa.org.uk for more recent updates and photos.

Post Bag

FROM: Commander Richard Edwardes-Evans RNR, Ruarden, Glos

What a pleasant surprise when I opened the post and found the picture of MERSEY/POLLINGTON on the front cover. I served in Mersey Division RNR from 1961 to 1974, and I have many happy memories of that particular ship.

One of the idiosyncrasies I remember was that she seemed to have a permanent list of about 5 degrees to starboard, and no amount of trimming could correct it. The result was that she carried about 3 degrees of port wheel to hold a straight course

FROM: Lt Cdr Dan Nicholson, Poole,

I feel sure that I am not the only ex-Gulf squadron member to point out the error in Laurie Hopkins's article 'Life at the Sharp End of the Gulf 1969'. There were indeed seven Tons in the 9th MCM Squadron around that time. How, then, was HMS BRERETON omitted?

I enjoyed being her XO/MCDO from January 1970 to January 1971 under the Captaincies of Lt Craig Robertson then Lt Dudley Pound.

Halcyon days indeed !

Reply from Commodore Laurie Hopkins

A thousand apologies! I can't think how I left out BRERETON !

Doubly unforgivable when she had the best Jimmy in the squadron ...

FROM: Charles Knox, Ayr

Attached some photos to illustrate the construction of a radio-controlled model of ILMINGTON, which I have made and on which I served in 1955-56 in 105 MSS based at Harwich. She was later sold to Argentina and re-named *Formosa*. Are there any others from that commission out there ?



I built the model from a plan of the hull of IVESTON, the rest was from photos and memory. I have included little figure on the fo'c'sle of myself as a 21 year old.



Churchill - isms



In these times of stress, it may be worth recalling some words of wisdom from when we faced REAL problems ...

- Diplomacy is the art of telling people to go to hell in such a way that they ask for directions.
- **A nation that forgets its past has no future.**
- Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.
- **There is nothing government can give you that it hasn't taken from you in the first place.**
- A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.
- **However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.**
- One man with conviction will overwhelm a hundred who have only opinions.
- **Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision.**

VMT Gen Dit, Stowmarket RNA



One of the guiding Editorial principles for TON Talk is that there should be at least one story and one photo of a TON in each edition.

Sometimes we are short of a story, so herewith two photos to make up for it.

Above IVESTON looking tiddley and below SOBERTON clearing her uptakes

