

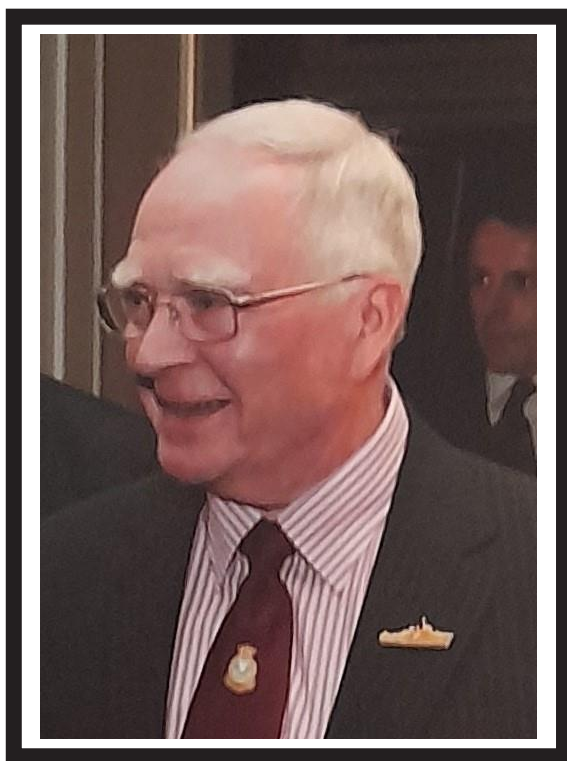
TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association



Edition 208

February 2021



John Soanes

1937-2020

TCA Chairman 1995-2018

TON Class Association

Patron HRH The Prince of Wales



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TCA Membership
£15 per annum
£150 Life Membership

Front Cover:
John Soanes

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Founder: Jack Worth MBE

Editorial

Anne, Lady Cox, RIP - Messages received from her children:

Thank you for your kind messages. We wish you and friends in the Association good health and an excellent year ahead, despite adverse conditions; and thank you once again for remembering our parents. - James Cox

Thank you for your very kind email and fond recollection of our mother. I know my brother James has already written to you, and I echo all his sentiments. I thought you would be pleased to hear that Anne kept a pile of TON Class magazines on the stool next to her favourite arm chair. Woe betide anyone who tried to move them! Your Association remained dear to her, right to the end. It was so nice to see [on the website] the photograph of the family at the Arboretum for the unveiling of the plaque. I visited it a couple of years ago with my husband and young grandson and have a lovely image of him toddling up to the plaque, with the tree behind it.- Alexandra Ormerod.

Cry LIBERTY ! When the Editor was compiling December's edition he looked for a suitable "Christmassy" photo of a ship to put on the front cover. This proved to be remarkably difficult – were TONs averse to snow ? Eventually he found the impressive photo of the Tall Ship festooned with fairy lights but had no details of her identity. This was not a problem for Captain Juan Frias of the Argentine Navy. A TCA member and former C.O. of ARA CHACO (*ex-Rennington*), Captain Juan recognised her as Argentine Sail Training Ship LIBERTAD, classed in the Armada Republica Argentina as a Frigate. See more interesting details on the Rear Inside Cover. BZ and VMT to Captain Juan.

MCMV Newsletters have been added to the Further Information section of the website. See the latest TWO from HMS Brocklesby, with a fascinating description of Route Surveys, during which they found (among other contacts) that the position of one wreck had been incorreced charted (perhaps where she sank, rather than where she ended up ?), the wreck of a dhow no-one had reported missing (possibly a smuggler ?) and a fridge ! Plus Christmas at sea.

HMS BREARLEY M2003 We have been contacted by Lt N. Brearley, currently serving in HMS TYNE, requesting information about her name ship. Unfortunately apart from one photo and date of launch, April 1955, (possibly sold in 1971), we have no information about this ship. Did anyone out there serve in her or, have a dit to share ?

Deputy Editor We could do with someone to monitor Social Media and to maintain contact with our printer and web site support in case of emergencies. For an informal talk on possibilities and details, please contact HonSec.



Deadline for April's Edition is 20th March

pjd

Chairman's Corner

John Soanes, RIP

We regret to advise that John Soanes, our much-respected former Chairman (1995 - 2018), Crossed the Bar on 30th December after a long illness, bravely endured. John had been in a nursing home in Torquay since 10 December and had become quite frail. Anne and daughters Louise and Judy had been able to visit him daily and had been with him during the previous evening.

I recall first meeting John at the 1996 Reunion at the Trecarn Hotel in Torquay. Over the following years I grew to know John well. In 2005 I took over as the Vice-Chairman when Chris Green stood down. In 2007 I took over as the Reunion Secretary. John was my mentor for both roles and I valued the guidance from him. He seemed to know most of the members. He was methodical and conscientious and respected by the members. John was always ready to assist me but never interfered.

At the 2017 Reunion in Derby, John approached me, saying he wished to stand down as the Chairman of the TCA and implied that I was the obvious person to take over as the Chairman. There was no direct persuasion, just gentle hints !

I will miss John. He had been the Chairman for over 20 years and was a guiding light for the TCA throughout that period. He became a respected colleague and a great friend. I am delighted that Anne wishes to remain part of the family of the TCA.

March Committee Meeting Given the uncertainty about future COVID Rules and Guidance on meetings and travel, it appears prudent to plan to hold our Committee meeting on Saturday 13th March as a ZOOM conference.

With the successful experience of holding October's AGM via this medium, we can be reasonably confident that Committee members can handle the technology and we have established precedents for circulating working papers in advance and "TV voting" which worked well.

As we did for the AGM, HonSec will circulate the Agenda in advance and request Officers to provide him with a brief summary of their reports which he will circulate to all participants before the meeting.

Members are welcome to participate in the Committee meeting and should advise HonSec by 1 March, so he can provide them with Joining Instructions and relevant documents. Please note that Voting is limited to Committee Members.

We will hold a rehearsal so that participants can refresh their ZOOM-ing Skills.

Peter Harrison

TCA Who's Who

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COMING EVENTS

March	Sat 13	TCA Committee Meeting Virtual Meeting by Zoom 10.30 – 12.00 Contact Hon Sec before 1 st March for Joining Instructions if you wish to participate. Minutes will be published in April's TON Talk.
October	Fri 1 - Sun 3	TCA AGM & Reunion Carlton Hotel, Torquay OR another Zoom AGM - to be advised Booking forms will be circulated when Covid rules are confirmed

John Soanes – An Appreciation

A founder member of TCA, John served the Association, initially as Vice Chairman then, from April 1995 - April 2018, as Chairman. He was Coxswain of PENSTON 1964-66, nominally in Hong Kong, but mainly on patrols off Borneo during Confrontation. John subsequently had a second career in Essex Constabulary. He Crossed the Bar on 30th December 2020 after a long illness, bravely endured. John's funeral was held on 20th January at Torquay Crematorium. TCA was represented by Commander Rory Jackson and Derek Potter. Torbay RNA Branch, of which John was also Chairman, paraded their standard and a Guard of Honour.



John joined the RN in 1953. He specialised in Underwater Weapons, becoming a Petty Officer UW1. He served in HM Ships IMPLACABLE, CYGNET, SAVAGE, URSA, ROTHSAI and PENSTON. In addition to courses at VERNON, John was Ships Company and had two periods as an instructor at GANGES.

On leaving the RN in 1967, John joined Essex Constabulary, serving for more than twice as long as the 14 years he spent in the RN, in Harlow, Saffron Walden, Southend on Sea and Chelmsford. A CID officer, John became Acting Detective Superintendent and Head of Special Branch. These duties brought him in contact with many VIPs visiting the County.

John and wife Ann both come from Beccles in Suffolk and were at school together. They married in 1955 and have two daughters and two adult grandchildren.

John's tenure as TCA Chairman was distinguished by his unfailing courtesy and diplomacy. He presided over the considerable expansion of our membership, progression into publications and adoption of e-mail to speed up our admin. John had a remarkable range of contacts of all ranks throughout the Navy and beyond, which he gently used to advance awareness of TCA.

We have lost a good friend and one of nature's gentlemen. John will be long remembered with affection.

9th MCM Gulf Memories

Lt Cdr Jeremy Davies-Webb, Deal

I joined HMS KEMERTON at Bahrain in early January 1965 as a Midshipman. My journey was there was somewhat protracted. I left HMS EAGLE in Mombasa, overnight train to Nairobi then RAF Argosy to Aden. Stayed for a couple of nights in the Red Sea Hotel then took another Argosy up to Bahrain. I did not endear myself to the RAF Loadmasters as I was accompanied by my pusser's tin trunk. However, my view it was a big plane with not a lot in it!



KEMERTON was part of the 9th MCM Squadron along with APPLETON (MCM9), CHILCOMPTON and FLOCKTON. On arrival I took over as Corro and Boats Officer. Being Corro was a baptism of fire as I had very limited typing skills. Using a typewriter at sea was certainly a challenge. I had also to pay the ships company and do money changing where appropriate. The sailors were paid in Reserve Bank of India (aka Persian Gulf) rupees at an exchange rate of 13.33 to the pound. Hardly an easy sum to work on before the universal availability of electronic calculators. All I had was a “steam driven” adding machine. When visiting Iran it was an exchange rate of 205 rials to the pound translated to $205 \div 13.33$.

Conditions onboard were hot especially when alongside. At sea we often ran a fire house to soak the forecastle to keep below decks cooler. Oddly enough it got cooler in Bahrain in December and January – the winter when we wore blue uniforms instead of whites. One unpleasantness was the cockroach infestation. The routine was to put several peanut tins on the deck. The cockroaches, who were cannibals, once in could not climb out up the greasy sides. Once a day we emptied the tins down the heads. During the annual slipping at the Bahrain Shipyard the galley and wardroom pantry

were fumigated. The result was as my cabin was between them; the cockroaches took up residence there, leading to intense peanut tin activity.

Our main patrol role was anti arms smuggling along the western coast of the Arabian Sea, between roughly the Musandam peninsula and Muscat. We usually spent two weeks on patrol governed by our fuel and fresh water endurance. We embarked water from the "sweet water" barge just before sailing and fuel on the way out from Sitra oil terminal. On one patrol, on changing over fresh water tanks at the halfway point, the whole ships company were struck down with dysentery from the water. We immediately aborted the patrol and returned to base. Later on in my time, we were allowed to top up with water stern-to the seawall from a bowser in Muscat.

Our routine on patrol was to patrol around Fujairah looking out for suspicious dhows. Our legality was based on a request from the Trucial States to prevent slavery. We carried a Somali LEP CPO who was our Arabic interpreter for boardings. We boarded with small arms having brought the dhow alongside. Our boat, a 16ft slow motor boat (SMB), was a liability in any seaway as I found out in the approaches to Dubai. Surfing down sea going over the bar we topped up with water and very nearly capsized. Very occasionally we would intercept a fast dhow that was on a gold smuggling trip mainly to India or occasionally to Sri Lanka. They were speedier than us so the interception had to be well planned. Their cargo usually consisted of small gold ingots, embarked in Dubai, at the British Bank of the Middle East, having been flown in from Switzerland. The value of this cargo usually amounted to around two hundred thousand pounds. The trade was legal at our end of the route but we checked them for any other nefarious items. From time to time we encountered a dhow packed with pilgrims of all ages and sexes from Pakistan. They would be dumped on the shore nearby and told that Mecca was over there, over a thousand miles away over mountains and several deserts. Once or twice we had to give them some of our precious fresh water as they had run out, before sending them back to Pakistan. We did very occasionally land on an Omani beach in the middle of nowhere to meet up with a "Lawrence of Arabia" type from special forces. He was generally after some more .303 rifle ammunition which we willingly provided before he returned to his mountain warfare.

Navigation within the Gulf was usually easy as there was good Decca Navigator coverage. Outside the Gulf it was tricky as the coastline was featureless with no navigational lights or marks. Radar and radio propagation was subject to various odd effects caused by ducting. Sometimes a radar contact would be at double its true range and give you quite a turn when it came into range zero before displaying again at 40 miles (its true range) and closing. At night the OOW would also call up merchant ships entering the Strait of Hormuz by Aldis lamp, pre VHF days, asking "what ship – where bound" which was duly recorded in the Ship's Log (e.g. Exchanged identities with mv Marie Celeste bound nowhere!)

The top of the Musandam peninsula was an interesting spot. On our way back from patrol we would take a short cut called Fakh al Asad through which it was possible to pass with Double Oropesa streamed, a bit challenging at night though. Just inside the Gulf there was Goat Island leading south west to Telegraph Island which provided a nice sheltered anchorage. Further down was Elphinstone Inlet (now called Khor ash Sham) which was a tropical version of a narrow fjord about 6 miles long between high red sandstone mountains. It was baking hot around noon, over 45°C. There were a couple of small villages at the end who made their living by fishing. They would happily give us the pick of their day's catch in exchange for one of our empty luboil drums which we could not return to the Bahrain refinery where we collected them from on sailing.

We kept our minesweeping skills up to date by several exercises in support of the Amphibious Warfare Squadron (AWS). The AWS consisted of 2 LST's, 2 LCT's and HMS MEON, their Headquarters Ship. They would be escorted by a couple of the Gulf Tribal class frigates. We would conduct several days of MCM operations, firstly Double Oropesa then Influence sweeping. The influence sweeping was a noisy operation onboard accompanied as it was by the Mirlees pulse generator. Early in the morning, just before dawn, we would anchor off the landing beach, usually off Yas Island (part of Abu Dhabi) and watch the landing operations. We did also exercise with the Iranian Navy in the North of the Gulf off Kharg Island. They had about 4 US built MSCs. Passing them "in a lap" was sometime fairly challenging to avoid getting our sweep gear tangled with theirs. Wash deck transfers were the norm when operating in company with one of the other ships in the squadron. We also came alongside when underway and stayed for afternoon tea in very calm weather. Once settled alongside a head rope was passed through the bullring. It was even accomplished between three ships and also with the Iranians.

Bahrain was a very quiet run ashore at this time. You could only get a drink or meal at two venues, respectively the Speedbird Hotel in town and the Airport Hotel over in Muharraq Island. Most of our time therefore was spent in the HMS JUFAIR Officers Club. Team sport was limited to Rugby and Hockey on a sand pitch which would give you a nasty rash, which took ages to heal, if you skidded on it. Other sports included tennis at the Residency and open air squash at the O Club.

There were not many ports to visit in the Gulf at this time. We visited:

Abu Dhabi – to the oil company jetty which involved creeping over a very shallow reef. There were very few buildings there at that time but quite a few oil company expats.

Das Island – which had an international airport. The highlight was a trip to the North of the island to experience the large oil flare which was visible for miles.

Mina al Ahmadi, Kuwait – which was “dry”. However there was a significant home brew industry. The output was generally checked for suitability by the oil company chemist. To respect local sensitivities re alcohol we would anchor off the port then bring our guests back by berthing alongside at the end of the official cocktail party.

Khorramshar, Iran – was the main Iranian Naval Base. They were very hospitable hosts. Some of their officers were contemporaries of ours at BRNC Dartmouth.

Muscat, Oman – was an old walled town with no jetty. There was a curfew after dark which you were allowed to break if you were carrying a lantern.

Doha, Qatar – was a quiet place. There was one main street, with traffic lights, called Palace Road. The various palaces were in ascending order of size and grandeur.

I enjoyed my time in KEMERTON, passing my Fleet Board in April 1965 and being promoted to Sub Lieutenant in May. I left in September bound for HMS PALLISER and thence submarine training. I did not come back to the TON class until December 1976 when I took command of HMS CUXTON.



*DHOWS – These days
rarely seen under sail.*



Boarding on the Dangerous

Lt Cdr Johnny Martin RN

Leaving the plane on arrival in Bahrain in August 1966 was like hitting a brick wall of heat. A heat which meant that keeping our whites from melting was impossible without aircon or cool sea breezes. This will be familiar to others serving in the area at this time. (see Laurie Hopkin's article in October's edition)

On arrival onboard HMS Kemerton (below), my first ship as a Midshipman, and commenting on the apparent bullet holes sweeping across the bridge superstructure, I was informed that everyone goes a little crazy out in the Gulf and these holes were the result of a previous Coxswain of the Boat who had finally cracked whilst in possession of a sten gun. I never did confirm the truth, but this did seem to be happily accepted by everyone else on board as being perfectly likely.



Shortly after joining, we were despatched to intercept a dhow carrying two dangerous terrorists who were reportedly heading for Dubai. We quickly embarked an interpreter and set sail. After two days we arrived off Dubai and, unaware of how long we would have to wait for the target dhow, the decision was made to board the next dhow coming from the direction of Bahrain to ascertain how long it had taken to get this far.



In full boarding rig complete with a huge Webley revolver (no smooth line 9mm Browning, sadly) strapped very securely into a completely inflexible canvas holster at the waist, I led my intrepid boarding party of four sailors armed with pick axe helves up the side of the dhow from the ship's Gemini.

Having assembled the crew of the dhow, our interpreter began to question the master about their recent movements and timings. Within a short period of time it became apparent from the demeanour of the interpreter that this was in fact the very dhow that we were looking for. Alert levels shot up as I tried desperately to work out just how I was going to access the bullets inside the cardboard box which I had only been allowed to put in my left hand trouser pocket on the grounds that a completely untrained Midshipman (or even probably a fully trained one) could never be put in charge of a loaded gun under any circumstances.

Making the judgement that fumbling around removing a revolver from an impossible holster whilst at the same time trying to open a box to transfer several bullets to the gun's firing chambers was more likely to provoke an aggressive reaction than by simply looking forceful and entirely competent, I fell back to total reliance on my small boarding party and their pick axe helves.

This transpired to be a sensible decision and I felt completely safe under the protection of my trusty party, who by this time were glaring like Pirates and brandishing their weapons ominously.

As it happens the two “dangerous” terrorists transpired to be rather more timid than they would almost certainly be in this day and age and we were able to hand them over without difficulty to the police dhow which was sent out from Dubai to collect them.

As a footnote we were subsequently informed that they had each had a hand removed but we were unable to confirm whether this rumour was true or simply put out “to encourage the others”.

Happy days, for some !

Only Having a Laugh



- The easiest way to find Something Lost Is to buy a Replacement !
- In this life, there is nothing quite as wonderful as being awoken with a kiss by someone who loves you, unless, of course, you're in prison.
- My wife asked me to pass her tube of lip balm, but by mistake I handed her my tube of super glue. It was an honest mistake but she hasn't spoken to me since.
- When I lost all the fingers on my right hand, I asked the Doctor, 'Will I be able to write with the stump ?'

'Probably' He said, 'but I wouldn't count on it.'

VMT - Derbyshire Submariners

Salvage of SS Great Britain

Stuart Whatley, Salisbury

Short history of the ship, courtesy of Wikipedia

SS Great Britain is a museum ship and former passenger steamship, which was advanced for her time. She was the longest passenger ship in the world from 1845 to 1854. She was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806–1859), for the Great Western Steamship Company's transatlantic service between Bristol and New York City. While other ships had been built of iron or equipped with a screw propeller, Great Britain was the first to combine these features in a large ocean-going ship. She was the first iron steamer to cross the Atlantic, which she did in 1845, in the time of 14 days.



The ship is 322 ft (98 m) in length and has a 3,400-ton displacement. She was powered by two inclined 2 cylinder engines of the direct-acting type, with twin high pressure cylinders (diameter uncertain) and twin low pressure cylinders 88 in (220 cm) bore, all of 6-foot (1.8 m) stroke cylinders. She was also provided with secondary masts for sail power. The four decks provided accommodation for a crew of 120, plus 360 passengers who were provided with cabins, and dining and promenade saloons.

When launched in 1843, Great Britain was by far the largest vessel afloat. But her protracted construction time of six years (1839–1845) and high cost had left her owners in a difficult financial position, and they were forced out of business in 1846, having spent all their remaining funds refloating the ship after she ran aground at Dundrum Bay in County Down near Newcastle, County Down, Northern Ireland, after a navigation error.

In 1852 she was sold for salvage and repaired. Great Britain later carried thousands of immigrants to Australia from 1852 until being converted to all-sail in 1881. Three years later, she was retired to the Falkland Islands, where she was used as a warehouse, quarantine ship and coal hulk until she was scuttled and sunk in 1937, 98 years since being laid down.

In 1970, after Great Britain had been under water and abandoned for 33 years, Sir Jack Arnold Hayward, OBE (1923–2015) paid for the vessel to be raised and repaired enough to be towed north through the Atlantic back to the United Kingdom,

and returned to the Bristol dry dock where she had been built 127 years earlier. Hayward was a prominent businessman, developer and philanthropist. Now listed as part of the National Historic Fleet, SS Great Britain is a visitor attraction and museum ship in Bristol Harbour, with over 200,000 visitors annually.

The salvage and restoration of SS Great Britain was extensively covered on TV by BBC Bristol and there is considerable material, both video and still photographs on the Internet.

Stuart Whatley's part in the salvage of SS Great Britain, in his own words.

I joined GANGES in September 1957, graduated to RALEIGH in September 1958, then served as a Mechanical Engineer in TYNE in December 1958, LOCH FADA 1960, ALERT 1961/63, transferring to DRAKE/VERNON in January 1964 for my Clearance Diving course. I then served in BOSSINGTON in 1965/68, BRONINGTON 1968/69. I left the RN as Leading Seaman, CD2, to join the marine salvage company Risdon Beasley in Southampton. Stuart was also TCA's first Member of the Year in 1991.

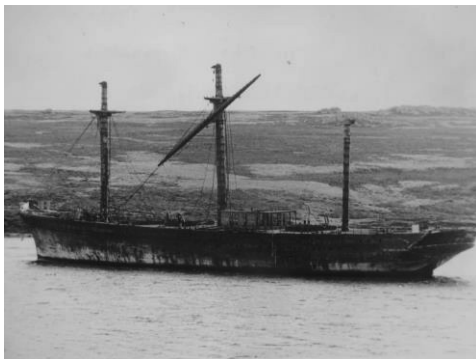
My first job with Beasley's was in Le Havre on wreck clearance of the outer harbour using Standard Diving dress (copper helmet) , Lyle Craigie Helkett, a Falklands Islander, was my dresser. We became great friends and Lyle later became a diver. He told me of a big job coming up in the Falklands, salvaging the SS Great Britain. I had never heard of her but it sounded interesting, so said I would go with him.

We left UK on March 1st 1970 and flew to Montevideo, where we met the German part of our team, on The ex-Deep Sea Trawler Varios 2. She was towing a massive pontoon called Mulus 3. We had to change this platform into a floating dock to salvage the ship and bring her home.

We spent the next two weeks laying keel blocks and put up Dolphins to guide her in and stop her tipping over. We then sailed to the Falklands to Port Stanley, arriving about March 25th and went alongside a ship that was waiting for us with our salvage pumps and other equipment which we loaded straight away .

Next day we sailed out from Stanley to Sparrow Cove where we saw the SS Great Britain for the first time. We moored the pontoon alongside and prepared some sheer legs to hoist the pumps aboard.

Because the decks were rotten and very dangerous, Royal Marines from Stanley helped us by laying out tons of planks around the decks so that it was safe to work on. We hoisted the pumps aboard and secured them ready for use.



The next job was the removal of the 8-ton yard arm, and hoist the masts out, which weighed 20 tons each. While the German team did this, it was the divers' job to search, then to fill the inside with concrete, which took about a week.

Year ago when the hull had been used to store coal, a large port had been cut into the starboard side to facilitate loading the coal, but this had caused a split in the hull, extending down to the keel. The after section of the keel had also twisted, as the ship settled, causing concerns about lifting it.

We used an air lift (like an underwater vacuum cleaner, which is very effective) to tunnel through the mud underneath the ship to get to the damage and inspect it, working out the implications for lifting the hull.

Patching the many holes kept us busy and a message went out to the islanders for any old mattresses they might have for us to put into the split up the starboard side. We



had a great response and when the mattresses arrived, we stuffed them into the split dragging, them under water and getting them in as best as we could. Then we put the wood sheets on the outside with the hook bolts in through everything and tightened up as tight as we could .

The next big job was fitting the long steel plates into position and bolting them down, just in case the ship twisted when she

left the seabed and fell apart. .

While all this was going on, the German team were busy taking the masts out. The first mast broke while being lifted and smashed through the small deck house we had built as our shelter, so the decision was made to cut the other two off at -inch pumps. This was about April 5th and one of those blew a head gasket due to over heating and the water pump was stuck. As a former stoker, I took it to pieces, repaired it and had it running again the next day. We pumped day and night for about two days and the water level was going down quite well.

The next phase was moving the pontoon away from the ship and sinking it in a spot that would give us enough depth of water to enable us to float the ship onto it.

As we were looking for suitable places for this manoeuvre, the weather got up and the ship started moving and we realised it was coming afloat. Since it was late at night and

we had no way of securing it to anything, we stopped pumping and allowed her to settle back firmly on the sea bed again till we were ready and the weather had improved. By this time the wind was force 11 and snowing.

April 10th (my 28th birthday) .We started the pumps again, and by this time we had lowered the two smaller 4-inch pumps into the hull to get as much water out as possible. On the 11th, we moved the ship over the pontoon, but due to all the rubbish in the hull, she was drawing more depth than we thought and would not sit squarely on to the pontoon, so we had to bring her back, move the pontoon and start again the next day.

We had her in position by April 12th and started to pump out the pontoon, from the bow end. As the tanks emptied we gradually saw the front of the ship begin to lift, and the more tanks we pumped, she came up. We were in about 30 ft of water and the back of the pontoon was on the seabed to keep it stable. As we progressed the rest of the pontoon gradually came up, lifting the ship. It was an amazing sight to see the ship come right out of the water. We continued pumping the pontoon until she was right up, as far as we needed and everything was stable. The next phase would be to take her back into Stanley harbour.

By April 14th we were back alongside in Port Stanley and ready to secure the ship, lashing her to the pontoon for the sea voyage home .We spent 10 days alongside passing wires over the ship and pulling them down tight to stop all movement while on passage . This proved very effective, as nothing moved throughout the long tow.

We had a few evenings enjoying the local company and a dance at the local hall; everyone very friendly and looked after us well.

We all boarded the tug for the passage back to Montevideo, arriving May 2nd , where we did a few more jobs and generally tidying up. On May 6th the tow sailed for Avonmouth and the diving team flew home

The tow arrived at Avonmouth on June 23rd where we rejoined it to prepare the pontoon for removal of the ship. We put the pontoon into a dry dock at Avonmouth on July 1st.

The dock was emptied and as the ship was released from the pontoon we had to make her safe to be towed up the River Avon into Bristol .



A few tons of concrete were poured over our repairs, as we didn't want her to sink on the way up river.



The last problem we had was when we lowered the dry dock we refilled the pontoon, so that it would stay on the bottom while the ship lifted off. While the dock was filling, the front of the pontoon came up as well, so I had to get my gear on and remove a tank lid to allow the water in to sink the pontoon; a valve stem had parted and the tank was

still empty but all went well and the ship came away safely.

The ship was towed up to Bristol July 5th, with TV covering her every mile of the passage. Sadly I missed, as is always the case with divers, I had been called out to another job. She had to wait for a high Spring tide on July 29th to get her in her dry dock, where she was restored to exhibition standard..

.We did re-assemble for her opening ceremony on completion of her extensive refit and have visited her many times since then.



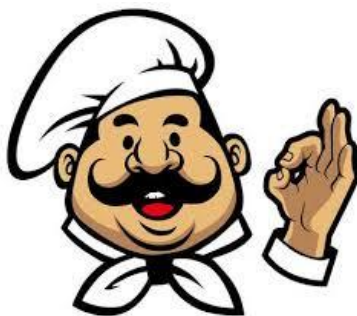
SS Great Britain is now a major tourist attraction in the fair city of Bristol, attracting over a quarter of a million visitors each year.

A Cook and Two TONs

Bryan Player, Solihull

I suppose that this dit should really be entitled "A TON and a Bit", but I will explain shortly.

My first minesweeper had been HALCYON so when I saw my first TON in 1957 at Sheerness, HMS CARLTON, how small it looked.



As a Leading Cook I was on my own, looking after a Ship's Company of about thirty men, including Officers. I had come from GANGES, the Boys Training School, where I was in a large team of cooks, including a Chief and several Petty Officers, cooking three hot meals a day for several hundred boys. In CARLTON, besides myself, the Supply Branch was represented by an Officer's Steward.

My draft to CARLTON did not last long as I was involved in an accident when we were alongside VERNON. I was taken to Haslar Hospital with a dislocated shoulder and was subsequently returned to RNB Chatham.

In the Autumn of 1957 I was drafted out to HMS MESSINA, an LST used as headquarters and communications ship for Operation Grapple, the atomic tests performed at Christmas Island in 1957-58 – but that is another story.

My second TON was HMS Highburton (*below*) at Portland. Most of her time was spent working with the Underwater Weapons Establishment. So 1959 saw me once again as the Cook looking after a ship's company of twenty nine, including three officers. There was a Leading Officers' Steward, L/Std Mount, on board.



Having joined the ship and settled in, I was informed that, as a married man, I was entitled to a Married Quarter, but there was a waiting list, so in the meantime I found some lodgings in Weymouth for myself, wife and baby son.

Shortly after settling into our lodgings, one evening my wife, son and I were out for a walk in Weymouth when I was "hailed" from across the street; "Cookie !" . It was my C.O Lt Cdr Roslyn. I introduced my wife and we had a pleasant chat. Then he smiled as he realised not where, but what my lodgings were; the Albion public house !

The following Saturday evening all the ship's company, including the officers, were at the pub for a jolly. Two friendly submariners were invited to look after the ship- Oh what a night that was !

I was also detailed for a second job as the ship's De-Coder. This entailed me being with telegraphist and completing a set of exercises at regular intervals, so I was kept busy.

Soon after the night out I came to the top of the waiting list for a Married Quarter in Wyke Regis; a nice three-bedroom semi. I had also obtained a bike as transport.

HIGHBURTON spent much of her time working with UWE; out to sea for the day with some boffins, testing new equipment and back alongside in the late afternoon or evening.

Combining my job on board as Cook with having a Married Quarter became very interesting. Most days I cooked Breakfast, Dinner and Supper for all on board. However sometimes, having finished our work for the day, I would leave something easily prepared for supper and one of the ship's company would finish and serve it, enabling me to slope off home early.

On occasion, with a n early finish, I would be on the upper deck, in uniform, and as sson as teh ship nudged up to the jetty, I was over the side, dropping the headrope over a bollard, salute the Bridge, then grab my bike and away !

I would be back on board early enough to cook Breakfast and catch up on the ship's programme for the day .

We did leave UK waters once, for a visit to KØGE , small town on the eastern side of Denmark, about 39 km south west of Copenhagen.. From Portland we sailed to Cuxhaven, through the Kiel Canal and onwards. A week showing the flag with lots of visitors on board. KØGE was an attractive run ashore; an old medieval town with many well-preserved half-timbered buildings in the town centre and hospitable people.



We returned to Portland via Harwich with some unpleasant roughers during a night crossing from Cuxhaven.

One incident of life on board HIGHBURTON sticks with me. We had embarked a Midshipman and, having completed the day's work were entering Portland when he was instructed to put us alongside our berth. Having had a busy day, I was down below having a kip, my berth being on the port side and near the waterline. Suddenly there was an almighty bang, right next to me and I thought the ship's side was coming in. I was seen to be moving very rapidly up through the hatch and shouting to the Bridge "Who is driving this ### boat ?". The Mid had taken us in a little too rapidly. It gave us a laugh afterwards, though.

Some time after that incident we were in Chatham Dockyard for a short refit. We were assisted into the basin by a small tug. I was standing on the upperdeck, just outside the screen door, when I heard my name being called by one of the tug's crew. Bill Cullen had been a friend of my father before the war and served on submarines. My father was killed when his ship, HMS SOUTHAMPTON, was lost in 1941. It's a small world.

The two weeks flew past and we returned to Portland.

At the end of my time in HIGHBURTON I was promoted to Petty Officer Cook and posted to Malta. Following an enjoyable time there, I went to HMS SHEFFIELD, the "Shiney Sheff" as part of the Reserve Fleet at Portsmouth.

I read on a recent edition of TON Talk about the Chef having a Baby Chef to help him. I have to say that I never saw any other TONs with two cooks – I was always on my own.

I spent twelve years in the RN then twenty five in the police in Warwickshire and the West Midlands. My wife and I are now in our mid-eighties and, having recently celebrated our Sixty Third Wedding Anniversary, are making the most of every day.

The Most Unusual Job I had in the Navy – continues ...

Commander Neil “Nobby” Hall RN, TCA Vice Chairman

Carry On Up the Jungle

I knew something was seriously wrong when I was six feet up in the air hanging onto a roofing pole and still ascending. It was in the millennial year 2000 and I was serving as the First Lieutenant in HMS OCEAN during the Relief of Sierra Leone. While the Bootnecks and Paras were busy doing their thing quelling the Insurgents, the Royal Navy were doing what they do best in these situations, helping the civil population. I had been leading efforts ashore providing running water and electricity to schools and hospitals amongst other things, when I was re-tasked to take a team deep up the jungle to a village where a school had suffered damage, due to the down draft of our helicopters. A simple task I thought. Oh how wrong could I be.

I set about putting a ten person team together, including a Medic and a cross section of seamen, stokers, greenies and S&S. I asked our Ships Caterers for any victuals they could spare that we could give to the villagers which they duly provided. These included a case of crème de menthe used for cooking, to this day I fail to understand what they were thinking adding this, but it becomes important to the outcome of this narrative. As we were loading the RAF CH 47, (Chinook), one of the bottles of crème de menthe got smashed and the smell obliterated even that of the avgas, which is no doubt where the subsequent buzz began.

We duly arrived in the village and I disembarked from the Chinook to recce the job while my Team of Matelots unloaded the light repair kit and other stores. Meanwhile like a scene from a Vietnam War movie there were Lynx Gunships circling overhead and Sea Kings disembarking the whole of Lima Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, (L Coy, 42 Cdo RM) to form a perimeter, provide patrols and protection from any Insurgents who might have ideas about removing our limbs. I subsequently developed strong links with L Coy, dating back to Limbang, which I still retain, but that is a tale for another time.

Having decided that we could repair the school roof I gave the thumbs up. The cowboy flying the Chinook then took this as his queue to leave, pulled in the stick and banked hard over the school rather than depart over the clearing on the other side. The locals who obviously knew the drill from their Sea King experience grabbed hold of the struts supporting the roof and anchoring it to the deck. However, the down draft of a Chinook, having two rotors and more powerful engines, is considerably more powerful than that of a Sea King. Likewise I joined the villagers to help, but then the roof turned into a giant corrugated tin sail and, as previously stated, I took off. The upshot of all this was that the roof peeled back ripping large chunks out of the building. In order to make it

safe therefore we had to take the entire roof off and knock down most of the walls - thus effectively destroying the school.

It gets better. We obviously didn't have the kit to fix this so as a consolation we built them a palm leaf shelter instead; the villagers were less than impressed. Then the Commandant General Royal Marines, (CGRM), turned up by helo to visit his Bootnecks in the field and view our contribution to the hearts and minds campaign. Having done so in short order he decided that he would stay to lunch and so all efforts were then put on hold to focus on that. Finally just to add insult to injury CGRM decided he wanted a group photo, so all of L Coy were called in from their defensive positions to be in it. During all of this the locals were becoming increasingly more restless and so after CGRM departed myself and the Officer Commanding, (OC), L Coy decided it was time to get out of Dodge City.

So we then patrolled off into the jungle to form a protective perimeter while we waited for our helos to return. Unfortunately the clearing we chose to lay up in turned out to be the village's crop growing area and we then, unknowingly, trampled their allotment. As you can imagine on top of everything else this was, to put it mildly, not well received.

Also because we had moved locations to under the jungle canopy we couldn't get the radios to work, (what's new?), and the returning helos went to the village where they couldn't find us. By this time I was busy prepping my Browning 9mm pistol as angry faces started to appear in the surrounding bush. Finally I suggested to the OC L Coy that if his men had any smoke grenades now would be a good time to use them. It was just starting to get dark as a CH47 circling the village spotted the smoke and landed in the clearing completing the destruction of the village vegetable patch. We took off just as the sun dipped below the horizon; was it my imagination or did I hear the chatter of AK 47 fire over the noise of the rotor blades??

We arrived safely back onboard and before I could do anything else I was immediately summoned to the Captain's Cabin, still in my very sweaty and grubby combats. Thinking that this was to receive a BZ for dealing with what had become a difficult and dangerous situation I doubled away smartly. Not so, the metaphorical jungle drums had been beating onboard, and I was met by a very angry Commodore, Captain and Commander all of whom believed that my Team and I had got pissed on creme de menthe and in a drunken orgy of destruction had pulled the school down.

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry !

This was one of the most unusual jobs I have had in the Navy, and one I feel lucky to have come through unscathed, but certainly not one of the most successful.

Fortunately no diplomats or reporters anywhere near, so no comeback. It was still a pretty dodgy place. However, the Bootnecks did return to the village the following day with a generous contribution of financial restitution.

Off to the Gulf - 1964

RO1(G) Mick Cosgrove HMS Flockton

Early on a rainy, foggy and cold miserable morning in the first week of October 1964 a BUA VC10 hurtled down the runway bound for Bahrain touching down a few hours later just after midday where we disembarked and scrambled under the wing of the aircraft presumably to obtain some element of shade and relief from the intense heat which had just been unleashed upon us. The sight of dozens of pale white men stripping off overcoats (we were in civvies), jackets, jumpers and the likes to try and cool down must have appeared hilariously funny to those who had been there quite a while and were acclimatised.

We all piled into buses to take us to our ultimate destinations and quickly found most of us were for 9th MSS, my new ship was HMS Flockton M1137 and we were soon on board and going through the changeover with our predecessors then with some trepidation settled into our new home.



I was the ship's RO2(G) and soon found my opposite number LRO(T) John (Buck) Taylor, we seemed to be a suitable match and got on quite well together, after fifty odd years we are in touch once again - thanks to the TCA.

It was a quick learning curve being the only RO(G) (just left HMS Defender with a few RO's) but I soon settled into my new routine, getting to know all my shipmates, unfortunately some 56 years later I fail to recall most of the crew. The late Jeremy

Stewart was C.O. (Lt Cdr) with the Jimmy being Lt Dave Codd, our D.O was our Navigator S/Lt McLean, Coxswain was CPO "Jimmy Green", we had a Killick Stoker by name of Jim Newton, and his sidekick Jack ??? aka "Diesel", a Greenie Taff Evans and there sadly ends my recollection of the names of the crew.

The Squadron consisted of HMS Appleton (MS9), Kemerton, Chilcompton and Flockton but we tended to be in the company of Appleton for most of my recollection, doubtless someone will know if that is correct or not. A very good friend of mine RO2(G) Brian D Bush (B.D) served on Appleton at the same time so there was always a friendly face around.

Not a great deal happened in the Gulf area during our time there but we covered most of the Gulf and visited Karachi during exercises with the Pakistani and other Navies from around the Gulf area, plus visits to Sharjah, Oman, Kuwait, Doha and several other "exotic" ports of call were often a welcome change of scenery.

In September '65 we left Bahrain (having been relieved by Beachampton) to sail the Flockton to Gibraltar for de-store and decommissioning, calling at Aden and Malta to refuel and fill up on essentials. When we arrived at Gib we moved into HMS Rooke for a couple of weeks and then flew home in the middle of October for some well-earned leave and a wait for another of Draftie's Chits.

Spanish Interlude – Cdr Charles Wylie, Fareham

We had a bilateral exercise with Spanish minesweepers, and because I spoke Spanish (like an Italian cow) I was seconded to the Spanish Squadron Commander's ship. It gave me huge pleasure at 1100 on the first day, as we steamed past LEVERTON, to raise my glass of Fundador Brandy in a toast to my captain.

On completion we all visited Mahon, where my Spanish friends took me to a scruffy shack where the fishermen ate. "Just order fish soup," they said. It arrived in a soup bowl holding almost half a gallon, with huge chunks of all kinds of seafood piled high above the rim. I've never had such a magnificent meal, especially as it took two bottles of white wine to sharpen the appetite.

It was there that I heard of the British siege (when it was occupied by the French during the Napoleonic Wars). Once they had eaten all the dogs and cats, and were down to rats and mice, one of the chefs, trying to make a palatable meal, mixed together all the bits of stuff that he could find: egg yolks, white wine vinegar, olive oil, water, and a touch of sugar.

It made a yellowish sauce which so pleased everyone that it was named after the town (pronounced 'My-yon'): hence Sauce Mayonnaise.

Anne, Lady Cox – an Appreciation

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

I first met Vice Admiral Sir John and Lady Cox at the TON Class Association in 2004 when attending the annual dinner in Torquay as the speaker. Sitting next to Anne, I quickly learnt what a lively and interesting lady she was. Little did I realise that I would be attending John's memorial service just two years later, having had the mantle of President of the TCA handed on to me. Thereafter Jenny and I kept in regular touch with Anne, exchanging news and views over the years.

She remained enormously interested in the goings on in the Association, always showing a great fondness for the members and an appreciation of the continued development of their activities. Having witnessed the continued development of the TON Class for over 30 years,

I found she was always impressed by achievements such as the publication of the history of the TONs, the quality of TON Talk and the website, all of which displayed to her how much strength was present amongst the membership. Her fondness remained to the end.



photo © Rob Hoole MCDOA

Anne was a brilliant artist, and her communications with Jenny and myself were invariably within a card displaying her excellent work. Jenny once held a lunch for four lady artists whom we knew, with Anne being one of three who actually held the title of Lady. The fourth artist was Jenny Stewart ! Our conversations were always sparky and fun, for her outlook on life was wonderfully positive.

I had learnt that she was seriously ill in hospital some months ago, but I am told by her daughter Alexandra that she was able to return home for a while before going to a hospice for her last couple of weeks. Despite the lockdown, thankfully Alexandra and her brother James could be alongside her for her last twelve hours. Her indomitable character and courage remained with her to the end; a remarkable and lovely lady, and one who made her individual mark on the TON Class Association.

“...and lastly, whatever you do, men, do not touch the Greek flags !”

Lt Cdr David Ince RAN

That was the immortal and very clear advice freely given by our Jimmy, Lt Robin Swain, over the main-broadcast as HMS GAVINTON sailed into Piraeus, Greece on 20th October 1984. At the time I was an AB Muppet and we were in company with KIRKLISTON, BOSSINGTON, WILTON and BRINTON and this was to be our first run ashore following Operation HARLING, the Red Sea mine clearance operation conducted during the previous three months.

It had been an arduous and tense operation, working to clear Libyan-laid mines in the northern reaches of the Red Sea, just south of Port Suez. Three months mine hunting in the warm clear waters through the steaming Egyptian summer with no air conditioning and very little recreation – we were berthed during off cycles at a rat infested fly blown grain port. The operational pay offs were good though. The Gavi had two significant runs on the board, a brace of mine finds including the now famous Soviet 995 ground mine. A type previously not seen and hence the subject of a dangerous recovery, render safe and exploitation operation, earning the key players involved, Lt Cdr Bernie Bruen (our CO) and CPO(D) Terry Settle of the FCDT a few gongs. The rest of us got gifted some natty silver cufflinks by the Prince of the Red Sea for turning up. The 995's discovery caused a great deal of excitement at the time.



So we were definitely ready for a good run ashore and, due to our previous endeavors the small squadron of TONs was greeted with much pomp and ceremony which included a Royal Marine band. That's me (sans lid) watching said Bootnecks from the

foc'stle alongside AB (MW) Paul Hilton. BRINTON the 'Banana boat' can be seen out-board.

It wasn't long before we were dressed in our finest 80's regalia and stepping ashore to the tourist traps and fleshpots of Athens, wallets full of drachma ikkies and a short time later bellies full of beer and tzatziki. Like me, my two AB(MW) 'Muppet' oppos, Jimbo and Nobby, (full names deliberately suppressed in case of embarrassment) weren't holding back and we made the most of the delights of Athens, we even took in a bit of history and culture, I think the Parthenon may have been visited at some point that day. The afternoon wore on to the evening and evening on to the night. Eventually our homing gyros kicked in and high on alcohol and success we jumped in a taxi and headed back to the port.

The return journey to the ship was uneventful until we arrived close to where we were berthed. Climbing out of the taxi and paying the driver we took drunken stock of our surroundings. To our collective delight we had been deposited in a large square and around the edges of the square were about 40 flagpoles. On the top of each flagpole there was a crisp clean Greek national flag snapping in the breeze. We looked at each other and as one came to the same decision, we would conduct our own Colours ceremony and have one of those flags back in Three Mess as a 'gizzit'.

"Whas waz zat the sh'Jimmy said again?" we slurred.

It didn't matter, in seconds we were the smug proud owners of our own Greek flag and off we staggered with our ill-gotten gain, it was but a short walk to our berth from here.

We hadn't gotten more than 100 metres when three cars raced up, I clearly remember one of them being a Volvo estate. The Volvo pulled on to the pavement in front of us, one car to the side and the other on to the pavement behind. We were boxed in. Before you could say "Jack-me-back flap-burberry-button" a group of 10 or more very angry men leapt from the cars and set about us with fists, feet and batons.

We were then unceremoniously stuffed into the back of the Volvo and driven off at high speed. No one said a word in the car, we were now terrified and our captors were not offering any clues as to who they were or our ultimate destination. Careening around the backstreets of Piraeus we soon arrived there, it was a Police Station. It was clear that these blokes were cops and we were in an unmarked Police car. This was an official kidnapping then. However, our relief to be in the hands of Police rather than some random gang was short lived, we were bundled out of the car and taken to a cell where the beatings continued.

Now, at this juncture I feel I need to add that we had sobered up somewhat, but unfortunately I had not sobered up enough. During a pause in the beatings a fat Greek Policemen was ranting at me in broken English and gesticulating wildly. For some reason I decided it would be a really good idea to make a gun shape with my hand, point it at him and break wind loudly. The fart sounded like a moose coughing and in normal circumstances would have cleared a compartment of live bodies very effectively. The result here was spectacular to say the least and I very nearly came a proper cropper with the possibility of a permanent disability. Why the apoplectic cop decided not to shove his baton up my backside in the end I will never really know, but I was extremely relieved during the ensuing violent struggle when he changed his mind! I think he may have considered the marsh gas stench that I had just emitted to be the harbinger of much much worse. Hey ho, that was the by-product of our Leading Cook 'Tiny's' culinary delights, it did that to a man's guts you see. Thinking they'd likely be next for a 'spine stiffener', Nobby and Jimbo were likewise very grateful when the cop left the cell, no doubt due to his smarting eyes and breathing difficulties.

Things quietened down somewhat after that and we were left in the cell for a few hours in the lingering toxic cloud to nurse wounds and consider our very poor choices that night. By the time the British Consular official arrived we were as sober as judges and very contrite. I must say the bloke was really good to us given the circumstances and he convinced the Police to let us go, telling them we were sort of war heroes, loved Greece and that we had meant no disrespect to the Greek flag. Our release was on the condition that we did not step over the brow again whilst the ship was in Piraeus, or it could have been that we weren't to step foot in Greece ever again (I haven't). Either way we didn't need to be told twice. Returning onboard battered, bruised and abused, much to the delight of our shipmates we volunteered to be duty for the remaining days in port. To his credit our Consular saviour didn't even tell Command of our misdemeanours, he reckoned that our beatings from the Police were sufficient. When asked about our bruises we just told our Seniors that we had been mugged.

So the moral of the story is Don't. Touch. The. Greek. Flags ! ...Oh, and don't fart in the general direction of an irate Greek Policeman.

However, I also learnt that day that telling sailors explicitly NOT to do something is a sure fire way for them to go and do it anyway, so I made a point when I became a Jimmy, and later a Commanding Officer, never to issue such edicts.

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) and CHIDDINGFOLD (2/1) plus the Sandown class MCMVs SHOREHAM (1/5) and PENZANCE (1/1), all supported by RFA CARDIGAN BAY.

Adm Tony Radakin CB ADC, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, visited the ships in Bahrain in mid-December. ET(ME) Shepherd of PENZANCE won the 'Sailor of the Month' award in December. In the same month, PENZANCE and CHIDDINGFOLD participated in an MCM exercise with US Navy minesweepers and helicopters before operating in the Northern Persian Gulf with ships of the US Coast Guard and Kuwait Naval Force.

In early January, the ships hosted Cdre Dean Bassett, the Bahrain-based UK Maritime Component Commander (UKMCC), at sea. Later in January, CHIDDINGFOLD raised over £3,000 for its affiliated charity, the Rainbow Centre for Conductive Education, after each member of her ship's company completed 37 km (matching the ship's age) by cycling, running, rowing or swimming the distance in seven days.

HUNT Class

In early December, Lt Cdr Gemma Britton assumed command of HURWORTH (2/5) and her ship's company was awarded the MCM trophy for their efforts whilst deployed in the Gulf. Cdr Rich Talbot superseded Cdr Simon Cox as Commander of the Portsmouth-based Second MCM Squadron on 11 January. LEDBURY (2/4) has been seen operating from Portsmouth. MIDDLETON (2/2) has been in maintenance in the Minor War Vessels Centre of Specialisation hall in Portsmouth. She is due to return to Bahrain in the summer.

SANDOWN Class

PEMBROKE (1/4) successfully completed a post-maintenance work-up and operational assessment in December. BANGOR (1/8) returned to Faslane in mid-December after a year-long refit at Rosyth.

MASTT (Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team)

Lt Cdr Jason Munsen superseded Lt Cdr Dave Stanbury as the OIC of MASTT on 17 December. Also in December, PO (MW) 'Flash' Gordon, the Coxswain of MASTT, was presented with a Hebert Lott award for service above and beyond the call of duty.

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

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

Richard A Shuttleworth. Lt RN, London
Served on HMS HUBBERSTON 66-67 L2477

Noel Atkins. Lt Cdr RNR. Worthing West Sussex
Served on HMS THAMES 64-78, HMS KELLINGTON 78-84 F2478

Terry Cochrane. (OEM)1 RN. Seaford East Sussex.
Served on [HMS HOUGHTON 68-69 F2479

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

David G Morris BEM. To:- Fleetwood, Lancashire. F2005

John Madgwick. To:- Langport, Somerset. F2003

LOST CONTACT.

Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary

Eric S Wootton. Last known address Famagusta District, Cyprus F2249



Crossed the Bar

TCA Vice President John Soanes

PO UW1 and TCA Chairman 1995-2018

*Torquay, Served as Coxswain, HMS PENSTON 1964-66
F0021*

Lieutenant Commander David Gaulding RNR

Not a member but known to many in Claverhouse , Edinburgh, Division

Telegraphist Stanley Cobb MBE RN

Southend on Sea. Served in HMS Boulston F1344

Trevor Watson P/SBA & REM RNR/RNVR

*York. Served in HMS GRAFTON 1958, Humber Division RNR 1954-59
F2019*

CPO (MW) Ken Dibnah

*Portsmouth. Served in HM Ships VERNON 1959, PUNCHESTON 1963-64,
YARNTON 1972-73, BRONINGTON 1974-76, CROFTON 1977. F1342
Ken was HRH's Buffer in BRONINGTON*

CERA Bill Hall. RN/RNR.


*Strandon, New Plymouth 4312, New Zealand.
Served on HM Ships AMERTON 1957-59, MERSEY (Pollington) 1959- 71.
National Service HMS Superb
Not currently a TCA member but known to many in Merseyside RNR.*

Trevor Watson RNR

*Terrington North Yorkshire.
Served on : HMS GRAFTON 1958. Humber Division RNR 1954-5
F2019*

May They Rest In Peace

SLOPS

URGENT ! Due to the latest "Lockdown" all supplies of clothing for slops are suspended until further notice.		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	TCA 10 th Anniversary Print	£ 5.50
TCA Beret Badge	£ 7.50	TCA 25 th 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	TON Talk Binder	£ 7.73
Car sticker – Logo 1 Clings to inside of windscreen	£ 1.25	TON Profile badge - Silver or Gold	£ 8.00
TCA Tie, Blue	£ 9.90	Blazer Badge (Gold Wire)	£16.00
TCA Tie, Maroon	£ 11.60	TCA Pen	£ 3.00
Blackfoot Tie	£ 13.00	TCA Notepad & Pen (pictured below)	£ 5.00
Special Order items <i>State size, colour and logo required</i> <i>Logo 1 = Mine and Keys,</i> <i>Logo 2 = Mine and TON silhouette</i> Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery			
TCA V-neck sweater. Navy or Maroon	£ 32.45	BOOKS	
Blazer Badge, Embroidered + ships name	£ 34.20	Jacks of All Trades	£ 11.50
TCA Polo Shirt in Navy with ships name	£ 18.44	Last of the Wooden Walls	£ 24.99
Iron Man Tee Shirt, Navy	£ 15.37	A4 Hardback and E-book	
Iron Man Polo Shirt , Navy	£ 18.44	<i>Order from</i> <i>www.halsgrove.com</i>	
TCA Round Neck Sweatshirt	£ 29.16		
TCA Polar Fleece Jacket	£ 38.30		

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
 PO8 8UD Phone: 023 923 65729
 e-mail: lawrencej1055@gmail.com

Post Bag

FROM: Richard Coles, Grantham

With reference to the latest edition of TON Talk. The illustrious HMS Matapan has brought memories flooding back

As a trainee stoker in the autumn of 1964 we were taken from RALEIGH and boarded MATAPAN for our sea training.

All went well until we were at sea and hit by a force 10. We had to get ready for O.O.D's evening rounds. It later appeared that someone forgot to inform us that rounds were cancelled due to the weather conditions.

There were some very poorly sailors in that mess and those of us that were shipshape had to clean up, much to the amusement of the regular crew.

FROM: Barry Barcock, Villelongue d'Aude

Reference to the article on HMS Matapan. I joined the RN in September 1963 at HMS Fisgard as a very baby Tiff.

During the first 4 weeks, ships visits were arranged to places such as HMS Cambridge and RNAS Culdrose. A visit to Devonport dockyard followed and the first ship I ever set foot on was MATAPAN, then PALLISER and TYNE.

Thanks for an enjoyable read. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all TCA members.

FROM: Warren Zahra, Malta

Greetings from Malta, I do hope you are keeping well.

I was doing some last minute Christmas gift shopping in Sliema last night and I took a few pictures which I thought that members would enjoy.



I also found some old family pictures, including one of my father Frank who went to England as a 16-year old in 1952. He did his National Service in the Royal Tank Regiment, drove a Centurion Tank and was based in Munster, Germany.



The other picture shows my Grand Father Francis Bajada, my mother's father; he is the tall one... next to him are cousins of my mother and in centre is a relative who I never met but recently was told his name was Alfonso Attard. He was in the RAF as a Priest and it seems, he was awarded the OBE. I believe this was the presentation at the President's Palace. He also served in WW1 in France.



We are lucky to have one of my elder cousins who was a correspondent for the BBC here in Malta. He is also an avid

historian and has lots of photographs and stories of our family from the early 20th Century.



The same Alfonso is also present in the above picture with the Prince of Wales [later Edward VIII] believed to be 8th November 1921. It is interesting to see that all the Friars wore medals, presumably from WW1 when Malta became a major hospital for the wounded from Gallipoli.

I do hope we will have the opportunity to meet again next year when all this Covid business is over.

Wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year.

FROM: Poopalu Nagiah. Malaysia

Selamat Hari Kerismus dan Tahun Bahru [Season's Greetings to all TCA members]

Buster Brown : a-brown35@sky.com

The White Rose Branch has formed a Committee to organise a social weekend to celebrate our tenth anniversary in June this year. Corvid permitting, we have opted for the weekend Friday 11th - Sunday 13th of June. People would have an option of one, two or three night stays. Terry is looking at hotels in Scarborough, as it is on the coast and with good road and rail links. We hope to have a formal dinner on the Saturday (blazers and ties) but the rest of the weekend will be casual and informal.

ARA LIBERTAD

Designed by Rio Santiago shipyard, Buenos Aires and launched in 1956, LIBERTAD's dimensions are: length (including bowsprit) 103.75 m; beam 14.31 m; draft 6.60 m; and displacement 3,765 metric tonnes, making her the world's sixth longest tall ship, with the third largest displacement and one of the fastest. In 1966 LIBERTAD established a world record, crossing the North Atlantic from Cape Race (Canada) to Dursey Island (Ireland) in six days and 21 hours .

Her complement is 357, including 24 officers, 187 crew and 150 naval cadets. Junior officers from the Argentine Army, Air Force and Coast Guard, plus cadets from friendly nations and selected civilian organisations, may also join her training cruises.



Her rig is that of a typical square-rigged windjammer; with a clipper bow and carved figurehead representing *Liberty* in a long flowing robe and a cruiser stern bearing the Argentine coat of arms. Her three steel masts have a circular cross section, formed of welded steel between 9.5mm and 12mm thick. Height of the main mast is 56.2m. Each mast has double topsails and five yardarms, which can be trimmed up to 45 degrees on either side. The bowsprit carries five jibs. All masts have five square sails, with the foremast and mainmast having three staysails and the mizzen, a spanker, adding up to 27 sails with a total area of 2,652 square metres. She has a steel hull and two MAN 6L23/30-D diesel auxiliary engines, with a range of 12,000 nautical miles at 8 knots.

In October 2019 LIBERTAD, berthed in Canary Wharf, London, marking the half-way point on her 48th training cruise for Midshipmen, which took her over 23 thousand miles, visiting 15 ports in 10 countries, including: Salvador de Bahía (Brazil); Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Cadiz, Lisbon, Brest, Antwerp, London, Dublin, Boston, Miami, Bridgetown (Barbados), Recife, Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo.

A beautiful ship and fortunate Cadets to experience sailing in her.

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