

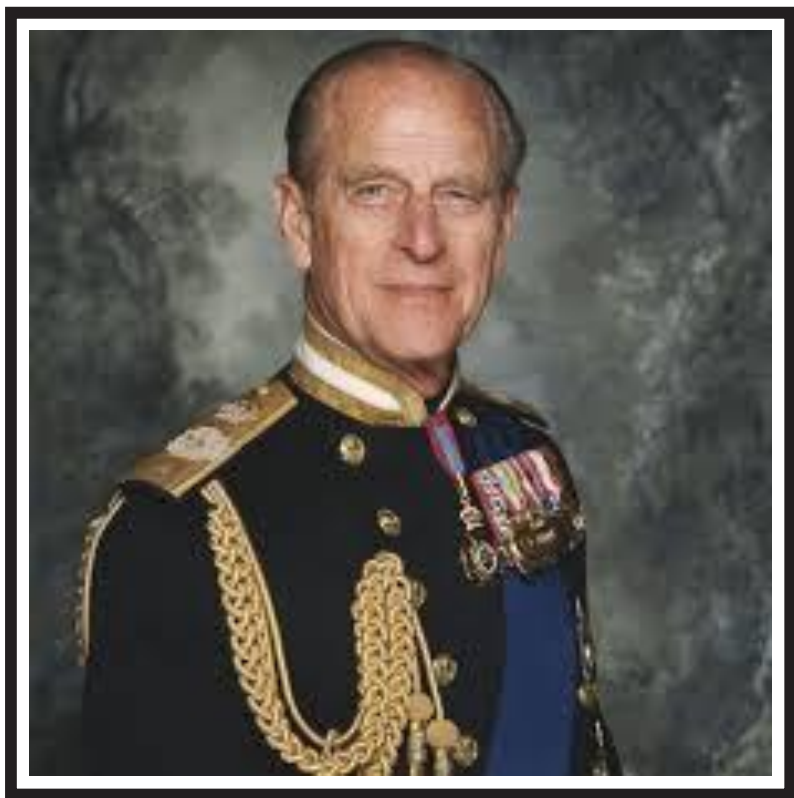
TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association



Edition 210

June 2021



**HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh
In Memoriam
1921-2021**

TON Class Association

Patron HRH The Prince of Wales



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TCA Membership

£15 per annum

£150 Life Membership

Front Cover:

HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Founder: Jack Worth MBE

Editorial

Meetings

Now that Covid restrictions are beginning to be eased, our thoughts can turn to meeting each other once again for those VITAL conversations held at the bar and socialising with our Ladies.

This edition contains the Booking Form for October's AGM and Reunion and Chairman Peter includes some thoughts on the 2022 Reunion in his Corner. The old chestnut of **"Do we always have to go the Portsmouth for the Committee Meeting ?"** has also been raised again. **The short answer is NO !** We can hold that meeting anywhere that members are prepared to travel to and pay the going rate.

In defence of Portsmouth; we always receive a very warm welcome and excellent service from the Royal Maritime Club and, as Corporate Members, we benefit from discount for Rooms, Meals, Bar and Parking – and most of us remember how to get to Portsmouth by road or rail, so any other venue has a lot to beat. **But the ball is in your court.** If you would like the Committee meeting to be held closer to your home, then please suggest a venue to HonSec and he will check it out.

The ideal profile for a venue for the TCA Committee Meeting would be :

- Located within 30 mins drive of a motorway exit or convenient taxi ride from a mainline rail station
- Able to offer a private conference room for 20-30 delegates
- Able to provide a dozen or more rooms on B&B basis, including facilities for disabled guests
- Able to provide an informal dinner in-house, or at a good pub nearby
- Opportunities for Retail Therapy for our Ladies within convenient reach.

Reports on Trip Adviser and Bookings.com only go so far. It would be preferable if you could first visit any venue that you may recommend and consider its suitability for TCA. Smaller hotels that do Wedding Receptions may be better value than large chains but, since weddings are most popular at weekends, we may have to consider holding our future Committee meetings mid-week.

Please send your recommendations to HonSec, who is prepared to negotiate with venues. Deadline for a decision on the March 2022 meeting will be before Christmas.



Deadline for August's Edition is 19th July

pjd

Nobby Hall

I regret to report that Cdr Neil (Nobby) Hall, our Vice Chairman, Crossed the Bar on 20th April. Nobby was a larger-than-life character, about whom numerous dits will be told at naval gatherings for many a year. Some have recently appeared in TON Talk.

Nobby joined the RNVr as a teenager, transferring to RN service after a couple of years and qualified as an MW rating. He was selected as an Upper Yardman and transferred to RP to gain Ops Room experience before he was commissioned. Thereafter his career followed the conventional route for a Warfare Officer; watchkeeping, Principal Warfare Officer and command of patrol craft. He served in every class of ship in the modern RN, except submarines, and retired on reaching the statutory age but was brought back to active service in a new role overseeing cyber security. His most recent appointment was a NATO role in SHAPE at Mons, Belgium. Our condolences have been sent to his wife Helen, a former CPO WRNS.

In his brief tenure as Vice President, Nobby made a significant impression on TCA, chairing our recent AGM and Committee meetings at short notice, resolving some knotty issues, and making positive suggestions for the future of the Association. He will be greatly missed and will be a challenge to follow.

TCA was represented at Nobby's funeral on 12th May by our President Rear Admiral John Lippiett. We hope to obtain some photos of the Standards and Guard of Honour which will be displayed on the Latest News page of our website.

Assistant Secretary

I am pleased to announce that Lt Cdr Matthew Salisbury RNR has courageously volunteered to become Assistant Secretary, with a view to taking over as Secretary later this year [see *his profile on page 24*].

Matthew is well known to many members, having been in TCA since the early days and attended most Reunions. He served in CAMBRIA South Wales RNR Division in HM Ships St David, Crichton and Hodgston/Upton. We wish him all the very best of success in his new role.

Next Year's Reunion

Negotiations are progressing with the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nottingham for the Reunion in 2022. We are fortunate that the RNA recently held their Annual Conference at this venue, so they understand the requirements of sailors and have been most helpful.

Peter Harrison

TCA Who's Who

President

Rear Admiral R John Lippiett CB. CBE. DL

Secretary and Editor, TON Talk & Website Peter Down

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COMING EVENTS

October	Fri 1 - Mon 4	TCA AGM & Reunion Carlton Hotel, Torquay Booking form in this edition OR from HonSec
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TON CLASS ASSOCIATION REUNION WEEKEND
CARLTON HOTEL, Falkland Road, Torquay TQ2 5JJ Phone: 01803 400500

Friday 1st - Monday 4th October 2021

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

NAME
 TCA MEMBERSHIP No. Telephone:
 Address

 E-mail

RESIDENTS : SINGLE or DOUBLE ROOM

OPTION A
 3 nights: Arrive pm Friday – Depart am Monday **£ 240 per person.**

OPTION B
 2 Nights: Arrive pm Friday – Depart am Sunday **£ 200 per person.**

Please indicate your choices by circling Room Preference and Option A or B.

NON-RESIDENTS

Priority will be given to those attending for two or three nights.
If you wish to attend only the Saturday Banquet, please contact the Reunion Secretary.

NAMES OF THOSE ATTENDING

.....
.....

I enclose the sum of £ being my deposit/ part/ or full payment.
Minimum deposit £25 per person.
Cheques to be made payable to “TON Class Association”.

N.B All balances are to be paid by 17th August 2021.

**Any refunds will be subject to a £5.00 administration charge per person.
Regrettably, no refunds can be made after 17th August 2021.**

**Please send completed application form, plus deposit/payment to:
Peter Harrison, 151 Discovery Road, Plymouth PL1 4PR**

You are advised to consider holiday insurance.
If you have to cancel after 31 August 2021, you will then be able to claim to recover your costs.

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

I look forward to seeing you all at the Reunion.

Peter Harrison

MCM in the Snow

Now we are sweltering in a summer heat wave ... Do you recall your Editor's dilemma trying to find a photo of a sweeper in the snow for the cover of our Christmas edition ? A recent post on the VERNON MONUMENT Facebook page has provided an answer for next Christmas ... VMT to Rob Hoole

From 16 until 19 February, Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1 visited Kristiansand in Norway. BLYTH pictured alongside.



"SNMCMG1 is glad to be able to carry out a short logistical stop in Kristiansand, despite the ongoing pandemic. Although we cannot visit the city, the port stay offers the necessary supplies and opportunities to recharge our batteries after a period of challenging weather and historical ordnance disposal operations off the coast of Belgium and the Netherlands. This makes us fit and ready for further training and assignments, said COM SNMCMG1, Commander Jan Wijchers"

In the upcoming weeks, SNMCMG1 will carry out exercises in Norwegian and Danish waters, before heading to the Baltic Sea to conduct Historic Ordnance Disposal Operations (HODOPS), Allied exercises and training.

NATO Maritime Command - Stronger Together

*Belgian Navy, Bundeswehr, Eesti Merevägi (Estonian Navy), Koninklijke Marine,
Royal Navy*

Swords into Ploughshares and Beyond

David White, Hoylake

In the opening shots of each episode of the television series ***Father Ted*** there is a brief view of a rusting wreck of a ship ashore on Craggy Island. It is not a studio prop but a real ship. At the time of her loss she was the coaster mv *Plassy*. Though spellings vary (*Plessy*, *Plassey* etc) her entry in Lloyds Register is *Plassy*. She had an interesting career but her owners and crew could not have known her eventual claim to fame.



In the early years of the war there was a considerable shortage of armed trawler/sweeper/escort vessels and a major building programme was in place. The Shakespearian class, totalling only twelve ships, was a sub-class of the more numerous Isles class. Of the twelve Shakespearians, three were built on the Clyde, one in Aberdeen and the others on the east coast of England, four of them by Cook, Welton & Gemmell at Beverley. HMT *Hamlet* (T167) was completed in 1940 with *Juliet* (T136), *Horatio* (T153) and *Laertes* (T137) in 1941. Top speed was 12 knots with a crew of 40. Armament was a 3" gun, three 20mm Oerlikons and thirty depth charges.



Juliet entered service in home waters in April 1941 then in November 1942 took part in Operation Torch, the Allied landings in North Africa. She continued to serve in the Mediterranean for two years before returning to the UK and being withdrawn from service.

She escaped the breakers yard by being bought in 1947, converted to a coastal cargo ship and renamed *Peterjon*. During the conversion her triple expansion steam plant was replaced by

an eight-cylinder oil engine by Crossley of Manchester and DF, Echo Sounder and MF R/T were fitted. She was owned by Regent Coasters Ltd and registered in London (Roycroft, Managers).

In 1951 *Peterjon* was bought by the Limerick Steamship Company and renamed *Plassy*, (Roycroft Ltd, Managers). Though Mr S J K Roycroft was a Director of the Limerick Steamship Company, a Director of Cork Dockyard Ltd and a Board Member of Limerick Harbour Board, *Plassy* appears to have retained her London registry. Be that as it may, *Plassy* traded successfully with general cargo around the coast of Ireland with occasional trips to Belfast and Liverpool.

In March 1960 on passage from Fenit to Galway she was caught by extremely bad weather, a southeasterly severe gale Force 9, and grounded on Finnis Rock close to the island of Inisheer, Aran Islands, off the west coast of Ireland. Finnis Rock is a flat granite ledge some way off the actual shoreline and it took the determined efforts of the Inisheer Rocket Crew to bring the eleven men safely ashore by breeches buoy under very difficult conditions.



At the time of the stranding, the media always referred to the ship as “Irish” with no mention of her London registry, while her upgrade from steam engine to oil engine resulted in strange phrases such as “the steamer mv *Plassy*”.

An indication of the munificence of ship owners is that the Marine Superintendent and another manager came out on a fishing boat to inspect the ship. They gave the crew £1 each to buy drinks. Two weeks later the £1 was deducted from their wages.

Over the years, subsequent severe weather has lifted the wreck up from the ledge and onto the shore proper. Local opinion is divided over her future. Some believe she should be broken up while others value the wreck as a tourist attraction. There are modern ferry services to the island and a recent quick look at YouTube showed a group of people admiring the wreck.

For a more detailed description of the stranding and its immediate aftermath, see Michael Kirwan’s article on the Maritime Institute of Ireland website

CAP TALLIES

Reproduced with kind permission from GEN DIT, Newsletter of Stowmarket RNA Branch. Editor Peter Chivers – aka Chivs, formerly PO Scribes.

Did you ever wear a Cap Tally ? Ratings were wearing cap tallies in the 1840s as part of their uniform, when the uniforms for ratings as we know them now were being established. Cap tallies were first formalised in the Uniform Regulations for Petty Officers, Seamen and Boys published 1857, with hat ribbons bearing the name of the ship of the wearer were recognised as part of the uniform. The regulations did not state specifically how the cap tally would be marked, but it had been customary for sailors to print the names of their ship in large capitals.



In February 1858, gilt wire lettering was officially introduced and it was adopted first by the Commanding Officer of HMS WATERWITCH, Commander P.R. Sharpe. He had purchased some tallies from Thomas Stevens in Coventry and issued them to his ship's company at one shilling each.

In the same year ribbons with letters woven in silk were submitted for issue as an article of seaman's clothing but the gilt wire woven ribbons issued to WATERWISH were adopted as official uniform issue. At first the regulations did not state how the cap tally were to be tied, although there were illustrations in the Uniform Regulations published 1879 that show ribbons tied at the back of the cap with long ends hanging down. Between 1893 and 1911 cap tallies were tied in a bow over the left ear. From 1911, they were tied with the ends of the bow equal and not more than two inches (5cm) long.



With the outbreak of war in 1914, the Admiralty issued orders that cap tallies were not to be worn ashore as a security measure, though in 1915 orders were issued that ship's companies when ashore should wear the cap tally of their depot. In the Second World War, Royal Navy cap tallies were only issued with HMS, or HM Destroyer/Minesweepers, and in the Royal Canadian Navy, it was ordered that only HMCS was to be worn on cap tallies in May 1942, followed

by the Royal New Zealand and Australian Navies giving orders for HMNZS and HMAS respectively. At the end of the war cap tallies were reissued with ship's names, which remains the standard practice for Junior Rates in the Royal Navy, RAN, and RNZN and other navies.

The shortest ship's name the Editor had on a cap tally was F.O.F.3. What was yours and does anyone know what ship or establishment name has the longest name on a tally? The Editor remembers FLAG OFFICER PORTSMOUTH, which if you count the letters is longer than H.M.S. QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Only Having a Laugh ...



*Apologies to our new A/Sec but this one is from Richmondshire Rugby Club , still locked down - or should that be Locked Out ? ... **Editor***

Wayne Pivac flies to Baghdad to watch a young Iraqi boy play Rugby. He is suitably impressed and arranges for him to come over and sign for the Scarlets, with an eye on Welsh Selection in time for the RWC.

Two weeks later Scarlets are 16-0 down to Ospreys with only 20 minutes left, the young Iraqi gets the nod and on he goes.

The lad is a sensation; scores 2 tries, sets up another 2 and kicks 4 goals in 20 minutes and wins the game for Scarlets. The fans are delighted, the players and coaches are over the moon and the media love the new star.

When the lad comes off the pitch he phones his mum to tell her about his first day in Welsh Rugby.

'Hello Mum, guess what?' he says 'I played for 20 minutes today, we were 16-0 down but I scored 2 tries, set up 2 tries and kicked 4 goals and we won. Everybody loves me, the fans, the media, they all love me.'

'Wonderful,' says his mum, 'Let me tell you about my day. Your father got shot in the street and robbed, your sister and I were ambushed, beaten up then raped and now your young brother has joined a gang of drug dealers - and all while you were having such great time.'

The young lad is very upset. 'What can I say Mum, but I'm really sorry ...'

'Sorry !!! Sorry , he says !!!' screams his mum, 'It's your bl***y fault we moved to Llanelli in the first place !

Joining the WRNR

Elizabeth-Ann Gibbs, widow of Ted Gibbs F2081.

I moved from what I thought was the dull North West (Southport) down to London, but soon found life to be quite lonely. One day I was walking along the Embankment and was looking at the old ships tied up - HMS President, HMS Chrysanthemum, HMS Discovery, and HQS Wellington. There was a notice board on the gangway of HMS President inviting male and females to join the RNR, so I excitedly wrote off for an application form.

I filled it in as soon as it arrived was asked to attend for an interview on the ship. It was a Tuesday evening, the Female Officer was quite intimidating, and I was asked why I wanted to join, what I did in my spare time, where I worked etc and did I have any relatives in the Forces. I could say that my Mother was a Drill Sergeant in the ATS, and my Father was an Army Captain - that went down well.

It was explained that in a time of crisis, we COULD be called up for regular service. When asked, what did I do with my time travelling on the tube - I thought that was a funny question - *what did* one do on the tube apart from travel from A to B. so I said 'nothing'. I was told I should use my time to knit or read, and if I did read, what was my chosen subject ?

I began to feel that I was failing. I then had to sit a written examination, English, Comprehension, Maths and Coding. Before the exam, one had to state the category one wished to apply for. So, as I was a Secretary, I chose the Secretarial Branch. I had to wait a whole week before the results came through and again I returned to HMS President. The Officer said that 'they' had looked over the results, and that I was not suited for the Secretarial Branch; immediately I knew I had failed and had not come up to the mark but was *amazed* to hear that I had scored very well indeed and was being selected for the Communications Department as my cipher/coding section part of the exam was excellent!

A few weeks later, 20th July 1967 there was a new intake, and about 12 of us signed on and were issued with our uniforms as per the regulars, but our badges always contained the letter R. - we were shown our 'tiny tin' lockers. Our drill nights were 19.00 – 21.00 on Tuesday and Thursdays. As new recruits, we had to learn all about the history of the Royal Navy, traditions, flags, branches, and then after a few months, each of us went off to our appointed branch. It was mandatory that we compile a booklet with regard to our lectures, (and Wren Knight's was the best in section!!). Many girls joined the Degaussing Dept, but Communications WAS the elite. Obviously the branches in the RNR were limited, but we did have MEN on board to make up for any boredom...



HMS President had many older male hands, and I learnt that these were guys who had served their time in the R.N. and were encouraged to join the RNR in order to keep up their skills and instruct the new recruits, and also to feel useful. The Unit had two inshore minesweepers which used to go out each weekend, and 95% of the crew were the old experienced sailors, there to help and show 'new bees' the ropes. HMS Isis and HMS Dufton. (The name Isis would not be popular now).

When our 12 months initial training was complete, we had to attend The New Entry Course at HMS St Budeaux in Devon (which was the female barracks for HMS Drake). When the train stopped at the station there was an R.N. Tilly waiting, so I said to the driver 'are you going to St Budeaux' and climbed aboard. Little did I know at the time that the transport had been specially sent for an eminent scientist, and all ratings were supposed to use a taxi from the station to barracks!! The wooden hut accommodation was very basic indeed, dormitory of 20 with no privacy, and the same in the wash rooms. We had to walk a distance to the canteen for our meals, which were pretty grim and I remember some of the cooks - all female - were the size of, and acted like navvies! Part 1B consisted of girls from all over the UK and I think there were only 4 of us from HMS President. Each morning we would be on the parade ground early, and really drilled and taught how to smarten ourselves up and brush our uniforms! We had general class room work, (as we were from mixed categories) and received homework, which was a bit of a shock.

Part of the Course was physical, so we went on a day's walk over a Tor, it was hard work, and then we were given tasks to complete in our own time. I remember my group had to find out why Dr Beeching was closing various railway lines, so we interviewed the Station Master at the local railway station. He was not very eager to impart information, in case we gave away 'secrets'. The results had to be written up in a multi page essay. During the weekend we were free, and several of us borrowed bikes and rode over to Saltash in Cornwall.

The Course lasted for 2 weeks, but first of all we had to get permission from our employers to release us for the fortnight. We received Navy pay of 16s 9d per day, and we were allowed to buy cigarettes called Blue Liners for 4d per 20!

The following year I went back to HMS Drake in Plymouth for my Able or Advancement Course. This time we stayed in the actual brick building, where the accommodation was good, with a degree of privacy. HMS St Budeaux had been demolished as unfit for habitation! Here, we worked on voice, contacting ships, telex machines, and crypto. In those days we wore black seamed nylons, tights had not been invented, and it was the delight of the regular male instructors to see if our skirts had ridden up while sitting in the class room!!

It must have been a long standing thing that Wrens from HMS President were always welcome at RMR White City for drinks, dances and fun. We were also invited to join the guys for exercises now and again. It would be about 4 girls and 25 men! Once we were invited to a demolition weekend at Lulworth Cove. We set off in a 10 ton truck riding in the back, and arrived about 01.30. I was really ready for bed, but we went straight out into a night exercise, which was not my idea of fun. We arrived back at camp 0430 and up again by 0700. We learnt how to make a ring main, blow up a tank, and had a shooting competition with GPMG's.

Each November the Division would take part in the Lord Mayor's Show. We would march through the City of London, usually behind the band of H.M. Royal Marines. Our timing all depended on the Officer in Charge and if she put her foot down firmly, we all caught sight of it and kept in step.

Sometime later the Wrens were invited on to HMS Thames for a weekend 'Jolly' to the Channel Islands. We arrived at Alderney after working hard in the Galley, and put our names down for the Dinner Dance at the Grand Hotel. The 'best' bar in the town was the Divers, and a crowd of us went along a lunch time and I remember making 3 dates to meet different guys all at 6 o'clock. !!All in all the London Division was great fun and also known as Her Majesty's Marriage Bureau.

I met my future husband, Ted Gibbs, on this trip, He had completed 12 years in the Royal Navy and had served in HMS Highburton 1959. After marriage he joined the Merchant Navy as Chief Electrical Officer and thereafter became Electrical Superintendent responsible for new build cruise ships with Carnival and Holland America lines. I spent many happy years accompanying him on his adventures, and then we retired to Anglesey. Sadly he passed away in 2013.

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Rear Cover Colour £50

Advertiser to provide print-ready artwork [pdf]
20% discount for 3 editions (6 months) payable at Booking

Contact Editor at peter.avoca@gmail.com

HMAS TEAL (ex - Jackton) – Her Third Life

Captain Julian Blatchley
Marine Pilot & Consultant

See also <https://dialabull.net/draw.html> for some interesting photos

In about 1985 TEAL was bought by an entrepreneur, who was a colourful chap... a larger-than-life trucker who spent his time crossing the Nullarbor Desert and designing barbecues. He then started a large Aussie company to manufacture BBQs, which is still around. He converted TEAL to a viewing platform for the Fremantle America's Cup, putting an observation deck and bar over the sweep deck. Then he put another layer on top of that, filled it with cabins, and started using Teal as a dive ship for 49 guests in Queensland.

The Owner fairly quickly crossed swords with the unions, and then took the ship to Singapore. She still had all her dive gear on board (50 odd sets) and he decided to take a cruise. He arrived in Poros, a safe anchorage near Athens, in about 1988, which was where I met them.

Now, diving in Greece was all but forbidden then as the Greeks were worried about antiquities being stolen, so when the owner declared 14 automatic weapons (mostly M14s, but I think there was a M60 in there too), it was bad enough. When he added 50 sets of diving gear and announced that he head 'come to dive on the antiquities', it was a bit like Lord Elgin turning up with a JCB and an empty truck. The Greeks didn't have a clue what to do with her. She ended up stuck in Poros for a few years, the owner living quite happily on board. The crew skeddadled, and the Greeks just wanting Teal to do the same.

Eventually the owner fell out with his bank and just walked away. The Australian bank now owned a minesweeper in Greece, which, of course, was just what it had always wanted... not ! I was living in Poros at the time, and frequently had the job of moving her when locals complained that she was obstructing the view. I think she had Deltics originally, but they had long been replaced with Detroitis, I think they were, and she was a lady to drive, except that we could never find the wheel... the owner had removed it, and replaced it with a table for his beer! The NFU steering lever was eventually found, but it had been built into the console and you had to take a panel out to use it.

Eventually the ship was sold to a German company, who wanted to use her for dive charters in the Caribbean. I took her to Piraeus for handover, certification and survey, and then got a run-job to take her to Pula, Croatia, for dry-dock. We took her through Corinth, but this was the end of the Croatian War of Independence, and there was a NATO blockade on Serbian-led Yugoslavia.



We weren't going to Yugoslavia, but I didn't want to explain why an old warship was there at all, so I snuck through the blockade away from the shipping lanes. Danish and Dutch warships were yakking away on the VHF, talking so much that I could pretty much work out where they were, and I thought I'd made it; but the cold light of dawn revealed a companion... HMS GLOUCESTER, quietly shadowing us. We'd just about talked our way through to some young Subby on the VHF, and she was just starting to turn away, when I could almost hear some old Chief on the bridge say 'That's an old Ton-class, that is !'. She came right back round, we got an end-on view of the main gun, and a Pacific alongside. I was actually chuffed that it was the RN that had got us, not the others.

They let us go after we'd shown them all the paperwork, and we handed the ship over in Pula. Last I saw of her, but I followed her story. The German company went bust (couldn't have happened to a nicer bunch of toss-pots) and around 1996 I believe she was bought by the Sea Faculty of the University of Kyrenia, in Turkish-held Cyprus. She does oceanographic research and also trains merchant navy officers. A mate of mine saw her at sea in 2019.

I mentioned her a little in a book I wrote about Greece called "*The Trojan Walrus*", but I changed her name, just in case the owner still knows a lawyer ! ...

CENOTAPH PARADE

Hopefully back to normal this year

Names to Secretary if you have not already
been contacted.

TCA has sent our most sincere condolences to Her Majesty the Queen, to our Patron and to all members of the Royal Family on the loss of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

Many of us had the privilege of meeting Prince Philip, either during Naval service or subsequently, and we all retain the warmest memories and deepest appreciation for his many qualities.

He was an un-reconstructed naval officer, typical of his era, who demonstrated warmth, understanding, firmness and humour, as appropriate to circumstances. He was also widely-read, with a keen wit and a deep appreciation of science and engineering, plus an eye for detail.

Prince Philip epitomised the values of duty, loyalty and patriotism. He was a man we were proud to follow.

TCA Chairman sent our condolences to our Patron and has received a personal reply.



Aboard BRONINGTON, November 1976, Pool of London



UK Maritime Component Command (UKMCC)

403 men and women from all three services - the full train set - muster at Joint Service Facility, Bahrain to say farewell to Commodore Bassett on handover of command to Commodore Ed Ahlgren.

The role also involves serving as deputy commander of the Combined Maritime Forces, the coalition of more than 30 nations and navies committed to the safe passage of shipping from Suez to the shores of Pakistan and as far south as the Seychelles.



Pictured left to right on the wall : USN Avenger-class MSOs; *Gladiator* and *Sentry* , Sandowns; *Shoreham* and *Penzance*, Hunts; *Brocklesby* and *Chiddingfold*, Escorting frigate *Montrose*, with HQ ship RFA *Cardigan Bay* on the distant arm.

VMT to Lt Cdr Sarah Vines RN, UKMCC, SO2 Media Operations
and Lt Fai Lee RN, Watch Captain, RFA Cardigan Bay

Charles Paris, Leading Steward

In recent editions of TON Talk Warren Zahra, TCA's Man on Malta, kindly shared some of his family's fascinating history and many links with London, Here he continues with a poignant story of one of his cousins who served with distinction in the Royal Navy, during WW2. This article originally appeared in the Times of Malta



Charles Paris was born in Valletta in 1921. At 18, in January 1940, without his parents' knowledge and before waiting for his conscription papers, he joined the Royal Navy as an assistant steward at the Naval Depot.

After two months training, he was drafted with other Maltese cooks and stewards to the County Class cruiser HMS Sussex, which had made a brief stop at Malta on its way from South Africa to the UK.

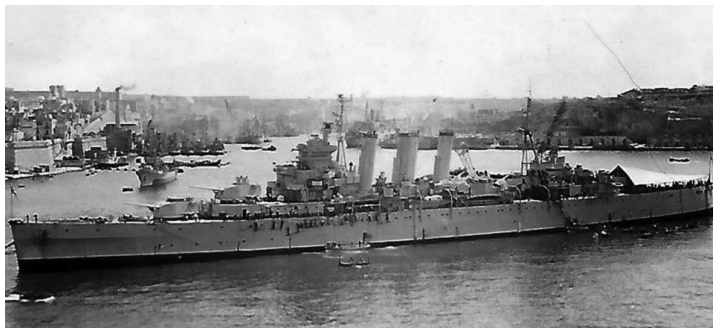
Left: Leading Steward Charles Paris in June 1940.

The vessel docked in Liverpool in March for a two-month refit and then joined the Home Fleet at Scapa Flow. But the ship developed a propeller fault and proceeded to the Clyde in Scotland for repairs. On the night before it was due to leave on 18th September 1940, at about 1am, a lone German bomber dropped three bombs on Yorkhill Quay, one of which fell on the cruiser, which fully loaded with ammunition.

The bomb went through the officers' pantry and down into the engine room. Paris was halfway down to his action station – 'A' turret magazine – when the explosion threw him some distance away against the bulkhead. The lights went out and the vessel was deliberately flooded in shallow water to prevent it from exploding and killing the crew and the inhabitants living in the area.

Paris felt terribly cold and knew he was hurt. His throat burned from the blast and smoke inhalation. He tried shouting for help but was choking. The ship's crew ran in all directions flashing their torches but failed to notice Paris as he was lying in a corner

Finally, a stoker recognised Paris and tried to pick him up, but Paris pushed him away because he was in terrible pain. So the seaman told Paris to grab his overalls and follow him, crawling slowly until they came to a gangway and up to the first flat. Rescuers, including Maltese seamen, laid him on a stretcher and carried him up to the upper deck and down the gangway to one of the waiting ambulances.



When HMS Sussex was bombed in the Clyde in September 1940, Charles suffered severe burns and was hospitalised for three months in Glasgow.

.The injured were taken to the Western Infirmary in Glasgow. Two of the crew were dead and 16 injured. As Paris was being wheeled to the operating theatre, he passed out. He regained consciousness four days later, bandaged from head to foot with second-degree burns, and he was being given morphine every half hour. After four months in the infirmary and in a hospital outside Helensburgh, he was granted sick leave, which he could ill afford those days, spending Christmas and the New Year 1941-2 in Glasgow.

Paris was then sent to Devonport Barracks where he met the rest of the Maltese staff. They all agreed it was a miracle how he had survived. Chief Messman Andrew Micallef told Paris he was going on the York Class heavy cruiser HMS Exeter which was still being repaired in the Clyde. He invited Paris to join him and the latter agreed. HMS Exeter left Devonport Dockyard in March 1941. It sailed around Africa to the Middle East, and later proceeded to Sri Lanka where it arrived in September 1941.



The heavy cruiser HMS Exeter entering Grand Harbour, circa 1937-38.

After Japan attacked the US Navy at Pearl Harbour on 7th December 1941, HMS Exeter was involved in protecting convoy duties from repeated attacks by Japanese aircraft.

When Singapore fell on 15th February 1942, Japanese land, air and sea forces dominated the southeast Asian theatre of war and EXETER was sent to reinforce the Eastern Striking Forces under the Dutch Admiral Karel Doorman.

The squadron, comprising the Australian cruiser PERTH, and American and Dutch warships was overwhelmed by a Japanese naval force in the Java Sea, and was decimated in the first battle. Only two Allied ships and the damaged EXETER were left afloat.

She managed to limp to Surabaya in Java and thereafter tried to escape to Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, EXETER was ambushed by a superior Japanese force consisting of four heavy cruisers and three destroyers and was lost in the ensuing Second Battle of the Java Sea.

Right: HMS Exeter sinking on 1st March, 1942.



Maltese ratings formed part of the ammunition parties on the guns and gave first aid. However, their position was untenable for the vessel started sinking, and as they had expended all their ammunition, the Captain gave the order to abandon ship. Over 2,000 Allied seamen, including about 90 from Exeter, perished in the battle. Paris leaped into shark-infested waters. The survivors were left clinging to flotsam for over 27 hours before they were picked up by a Japanese destroyer and taken to the island of Celebes.

Paris recalled his POW experiences as too horrendous to relate and still an emotional subject

For Paris and the other survivors, it was the start of over three years of unbelievable suffering – a hell on earth. They were guarded by armed soldiers, and any lagging survivor was immediately thrashed with bamboo sticks. On arrival, they were kept at the former Dutch barracks at Celebes island until the Japanese built a camp at Klapa Grove and housed the prisoners there. The place consisted of huts where the prisoners-of-war (POWs) slept on the floor. They were treated as slaves, doing menial work for their masters from 8am to 6pm with an hour's break at noon.

Jobs included clearing the jungle for new roads, breaking rocks into small stones with a sledgehammer for runways, cutting into the face of tin mines and even unloading war material from ships, which went against the Geneva Convention. Prisoners were

treated like beasts of burden and anybody who was unable to work was beaten senseless. The prisoners were separated in groups of 10 and warned that if any member tried to escape, the others in the group would also be promptly beheaded with a Samurai sword by the evil camp commandant Yoshida. None of the POWs' parcels or letters were ever received at home.

Paris recalled his POW experiences as too horrendous and still an emotional subject. Many prisoners were sick, without any medical care and treated like beasts of burden. They suffered from various illnesses such as beriberi, scabies, dysentery, malaria, pellagra, Weil's disease, ulcers and foot rot. No medicine was available. Some men even went mad.

Worst of all, added Paris, was the gnawing hunger as the POWs were being starved to death. Those who survived did so on a handful of rice with a little sugar thrice a day with an egg on rare occasions. The Dutch doctors encouraged the prisoners to eat eggshells for the vitamins they contained. These were dried in the sun, crushed and mixed with rice. Some risked their necks to survive, stealing even from dustbins.

But there was a ray of light. Maltese Petty Officer Cook, Ugo Calleja, was put in charge of the camp kitchen with Paris as his assistant and a staff of 30 prisoners, including the other Exeter Maltese, comprising canteen assistant Maurice Dimech who survived when the destroyer HMS Encounter was sunk. They fed some 26,000 English, Dutch, Australian, New Zealand, American, Malaysian and Filipino inmates daily.

On one occasion, Calleja made pane di Spagna sponge cakes from ducks' eggs which so pleased the Japanese that they ordered him to make these for their New Year celebrations, enough for 14,000. Calleja also cooked cats and dogs brought to him secretly by other hungry POWs, at great risk as he would have been severely punished had he been caught.

When Germany surrendered in May 1945, the news took some time to filter through to the camp. Only when some Dutchmen on a working party were given a leaflet with the news dropped by an Allied aircraft did these welcome tidings reach the POWs, narrated Paris.

He explained that they had to take extra care not to let this news excite them outwardly as the enemy were likely to rave and carry out mass beatings. In fact, the Japanese became more beastly and erratic, making all the working parties of very sick prisoners walk some four miles and working extra hours until dark. What was worse was the fact that the Allies did not know of the prison camp and since it was near the Makassar dockyard, they had to endure bombing raids and there were near misses.

On August 6 and 9, 1945, American B-29 bombers dropped the first atomic bombs, laying waste the Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing, maiming and burning thousands of people. Consequently, Japan surrendered on 2nd September 1945. When the Japanese finally informed them that the war was over without saying who had won, the prisoners went down on their knees, crying with joy and embracing each other.

It was several weeks before an Australian party arrived in three small ships and they were greeted by a guard of honour of 20 tattooed and emaciated POWs. However, only two could stand as the others were so weak that they could only sit or lie down.

When the Japanese admiral entered, he saluted, bowed and offered a bouquet of flowers to the senior Australian officer. But when the latter saw the sorry sight of the prisoners, he tossed them disdainfully into the sea. But his men reacted differently. Angered by the sorry plight of their colleagues, they vented their feelings and instantly raised their guns in revenge ready to mow down the enemy, but were restrained by their commanding officer.

A few days later, HMS Maidstone, a submarine depot ship, called at Makassar and all the British, Australian and Maltese prisoners embarked for Freemantle, Australia. Once on board, the starving ex-POWs scrambled for the pantry. Thus, the POWs' misery, beatings, disease and mental torture finally ended. Paris arrived home on board the destroyer HMS Lauderdale and was reunited with his family.

In November 1948, Paris married Mary née Bajada and they had three children: Tony, Rita and Marthese. He retired from the Royal Navy in 1956 and never wavered from his faith in the Lord. He used to recite the Holy Rosary every day with a special set of rosary beads given to him by an atheist Scotsman, with whom he had lost contact in the foundering of his ship.

Paris was a cobbler by trade and during his imprisonment, he used to retrieve worn-out truck tyres to make clogs for his colleagues at Makassar. He donated a sample of this footwear to the National War Museum, and the present author presented the museum a poster featuring Paris' story on 8th May 2012. Exactly three months later, the tough and resilient Charles Paris passed away peacefully, aged 91.



TCA salutes Charles Paris as a brave sailor and stalwart family man.

The wreck of HMS Exeter was located on 21st February 2008, by a team of divers of the Australian - New Zealand Chapter of the International Explorers Club, 90 miles north of the small island of Bawean, off the north coast of East Java, at a depth of 200 feet.

On 24TH August 2008, the Royal Navy frigate HMS Kent laid wreaths over the wreck in the presence of a number of veterans and descendants. Kevin Denlay the diver who had discovered the wreck tied a White Ensign to the EXETER's port torpedo tubes.

Lt Cdr Matthew Salisbury RNR TCA Assistant Secretary

Matthew joined the Royal Naval Reserve in May 1960 while still at school. Entering as a JREM, one of his first challenges was to be a sentry for the Royal Yacht BRITANNIA which visited Cardiff in June that year.

Keen but frequently sea sick, Matthew served on board HMS St DAVID, reaching the dizzy heights of REM1 before his superiors realised he would not go any further in the Electrical Branch. At the time he was a student at Cardiff College of Art, so he became a Writer in 1964 and was promoted to Probationary Acting Sub Lieutenant in 1966 as a Supply Officer. This at least enabled him to continue going to sea on the Divisional sea tender.

He was promoted to Lieutenant in 1969 and in 1976, was awarded a Bridge Watch Keeping Certificate. In addition to training on the minesweeper, he was fortunate in being able to carry out Supply training in HM Ships LEOPARD, ARGONAUT, INTREPID and LYNX.

Sea going in minesweepers provided three crossings of the Atlantic, half a dozen or so visits to Gibraltar and several northern European ports. Promoted to Lieutenant Commander in 1977, Matthew retired from the RNR in 1994 after 34 years. It was time to go, the RNR River Class ships were withdrawn from service, thus terminating the RNR's main seagoing function.

Matthew lives in Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan with his wife and two cats. He works part time for a mental health charity dealing mostly with people living with dementia. Within this, he formed a veterans' mental health support group, and provides art classes for veterans. He is also a church warden for a thousand year old church, founder member and secretary of the Captain Scott Society, and is currently editing a history of HMS CAMBRIA to celebrate its 75th Anniversary.

His long suffering wife Margaret is a keen supporter of TON Class annual meetings. He has two sons; the older is an accountant and the younger a serving RN Lieutenant Commander. Margaret and Matthew have six grandchildren.

In 1992, as a member of the British Makalu expedition to Nepal, he claims the record for the world's highest pay parade at 18,000 feet. As a Pusser, he was responsible for looking after the expedition's finances and paying the porters.



Action Stations

Richard Gleed-Owen, Mansfield

At the Duke's funeral service at Windsor Castle, the bugle call ACTION STATIONS brought back memories of being on patrol in WILKIESTON in the straits between Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia by day and night. The night was the 15th/16th January 1965; we could see Indonesia very close at hand and the Strait was busy with shipping, going in all directions.

This was the first time I have ever heard the emergency call. The klaxon sounded after midnight and the urgent sharp sound penetrated our sleep. It was loud enough to awaken the dead and all we knew was that we must get up quickly to action stations but why, we didn't know. Immediately the lights went on and we slid out of our bunks, half asleep without a word, got dressed in record time and raced up the two ladders to the FX - in my case as aimer of the Bofors.

It was darkened ship as usual and as I was nearest, our black pet mongrel Oggie was already ahead and made straight to the bulwark where he barked non-stop at the suspected danger below. Before I could drag him away - we saw a now illuminated friendly patrol boat of the Royal Malaysian Navy, just slightly ahead of us with both bows pointing towards each other.

Along with the other TONs in the squadron we already had a good record of catching armed infiltrators before and recognised the false alarm but it was a just another event in our busy patrol.

--- o0o ---

And eagle-eyed **Bernie Bruen** has pointed out that whoever placed the Duke's cap on his coffin, was obviously not aware that the Cap Badge should be aligned with the centre seam !

A Cadet at Dartmouth in our time would have spent the First Dog Watch doubling round the ramps, repenting for such lack of attention to detail



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 8) and CHIDDINGFOLD (2/3) plus the Sandown class MCMVs SHOREHAM (1/7) and PENZANCE (1/1), all supported by RFA CARDIGAN BAY.

In April/May, MCM staff embarked in CARDIGAN BAY led the UK involvement of BROCKLESBY, SHOREHAM, PENZANCE and divers from the Fleet Diving Squadron in the two-yearly MCM Exercise ARTEMIS TRIDENT. Also involved were the American minehunters USS GLADIATOR and USS SENTRY with a supporting diving team, US minesweeping helicopters, US patrol boats, the French minehunters FS CEPHEE and FS L'AIGLE with a supporting diving team, and Royal Australian Navy MCM personnel.

HUNT Class

LEDBURY (2/4), the oldest operational ship in the Royal Navy, returned to the Fleet in mid-May after an eight-week maintenance period and immediately began weapon training. MIDDLETON (2/2) and CATTISTOCK (2/7) have also been seen running from Portsmouth to engage in weapon training.

Sandown Class

In May, GRIMSBY (1/6) and BANGOR (1/8) participated in Exercise STRIKE WARRIOR (the latest iteration of JMC / NEPTUNE WARRIOR / JOINT WARRIOR / UNMANNED WARRIOR) off the north-west coast of Scotland. This exercise involved more than 20 warships (including NATO's Standing Maritime Group 1), three submarines and 150 aircraft from 11 nations. It also served to prepare the aircraft carrier QUEEN ELIZABETH and her strike group for their forthcoming deployment to the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific.

Following the release of BLYTH (1/2) from SNMCMG1 (Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1) on 25 March and her return to the UK, PEMBROKE (1/4) joined the group in Klaipeda, Lithuania on 11 May for historical explosive ordnance disposal operations in the Baltic. Interestingly, she has been working with the Estonian minehunter ENS UGANDI (ex-HMS BRIDPORT) and the Lithuanian minehunter LNS SKALVIS (ex-HMS COTTESMORE).

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

We Value Your Call

True in this case - herewith a selection of enquiries received via the TCA website in recent weeks. Details have been anonymised and actions taken by the Editor noted:

- Several dits of personal experiences, including service history of HMS Brearley and award of the Wilkinson Sword of Peace to HMS Kirkliston in 1971, believed to be the only occasion that a TON has been so honoured - Dits added to the respective Ship Histories on the website
- History of HMAS TEAL after naval service – Converted to an article for this edition of TON Talk.
- Model maker seeking dimensions and layout of sweep deck fittings - Plans and photograph sent.
- History buff seeking details of armament and variations - Details found.
- Why was the small village of Bronington selected for the name of a warship ?

Enquiry from a teacher writing the history of the village school and *forwarded to us by Clarence House* – Enquirer referred to details of naming given on TCA website, together with information on successful “twinning visits” to villages by ships companies.

- News from members in exotic places including Australia and America, North and South. – Forwarded to friends of members.
- A lady who had discovered items from BRONINGTON among her father’s effects, offering them to TCA – Accepted for display at Marshland Maritime Museum.
- In preparation for re-opening an RNA Branch it was proposed to introduce piping Up Spirits. The Bubbly Bos’un has a Call but, as a former Stoker, has never made a pipe before. Could we advise him on the drill ?

Rather than attempt to whistle down the phone, Editor sent him copies of the pages from the Admiralty Manual of Seamanship showing how to use the call and diagrams of the various pipes.

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

John Gunning. (Cdr) RN. Hampshire
Served on HMS WISTON 19 69-70. F2485

Colin Alexander. (A/B) (CD3+2) RN. Aberdeen
Served on HM Ships IVESTON 1978-79, WOLVERTON 19 83]. L2486

James (Jan) Virgo. (A/B (R0) RN Cornwall.
Served on HMS WOTTON 1975-77. F2487

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

David Shipley. To:- Dawlish Devon .F2382

Michael W Jones To:- Midlothian Scotland F2100

LOST CONTACT.

Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary

Charles E Taylor. Last Known Address:- Corby Northamptonshire F2118



Crossed the Bar

***Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh
Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom
1921-2021***

***Commander Neil (Nobby) Hall RN
TCA Vice Chairman***

Worthing. F0930

Served in HM Ships FITTLETON, 1975-76, KELLINGTON 1976-77, WASPERTON 1981

Commander J. Robin Hutton OBE, RN & RNR

Inverclyde. L1655

*Served in HM Ships BURNASTON 1953, CARLTON 1953-55,
MARYTON, as C.O. 1960-61*

POME Keith Rossiter RN/RNR

Bermuda. L0165

Served in HM Ships CURZON, SHERATON, St DAVID 1955 – 65

POME David McCoy RN

Drumbeg, County Antrim, F 1554

*Served in HM Ships MAXTON 1973-75, POLLINGTON 1976-79,
WOLVERTON 1979-81, ALFRISTON 1985-87, KIRKLISTON 1981*

CPO TASI Alan Yates RN

Gloucester, F2020

Served in HMS WALKERTON AND 7MCM Support Staff, Malta

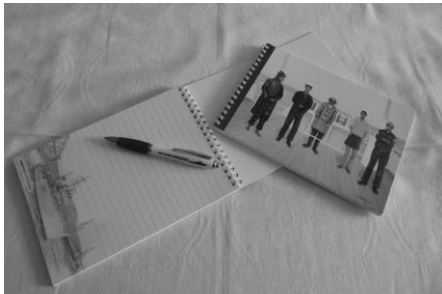
Martin Hallett RN, RNR.

West Sussex, F2449

Served in HM Ships KELLINGTON 1982-85, MAXTON 1985-87, LEDBURY 1987-88

May They Rest In Peace

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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			
State size, colour and logo required <i>Logo 1 = Mine and Keys,</i> <i>Logo 2 = Mine and TON silhouette</i> Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery			
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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: Doug Andrews, Ware

Give Way, Together

Your recent comment about whalers reminded me of an active afternoon in the summer of 1952.

At that time, I was a rookie and part way through a period of training - my very first with the RN - on board HMS Redpole (Officers' Navigational Training Ship) - out at sea somewhere. Her crew were shortly to take part in a regatta in Pompey Harbour against several other vessels. I dimly recall that perhaps Blackwood and Starling might have been some of the opposition.

The Skipper was anxious that his boys should get some sneaky practice in, out of sight of them, and to this end the Jimmy 'cleared lower deck' and the hands were detailed off to lower the whaler in the traditional manner, out of sight of land.

The ship duly slowed right down, and the orders came thick & fast. 'Man the falls,' 'Marry the falls', 'Give way handsomely,' 'Roundly,' 'Well!' and so on... Then, with the whaler poised just above the waves and waiting for a trough, - 'Slip !'

The memory of it is still with me, 69 years later, and it is a memory I treasure.

Naturally, we had to recover the boat & crew afterwards, not once but several times, since the exercise was repeated.

At the regatta a few days later, our efforts did not earn the rewards we felt were due, since our whaler did not exactly come first in any of the races, despite the vociferous efforts of our 'chucking-up party.'

The verdict of the subsequent inquest came to the conclusion that the sneaky practice had had the effect of making our whaler heavier than the others by its frequent immersion in salt water !

Ah - Happy Days.....

FROM: Dave Morris, Fakenham

41 years ago today HMS Bulwark had a major fire in A1 boiler room whilst alongside in Philadelphia. We were rudely awakened at 0530 to a broadcast alarm and pipe "Fire, Fire, Fire, Abandon ship, Muster on the jetty", which we very quickly did - and it was snowing !

We stayed on the jetty, fallen in by divisions, throughout the whole morning as we continually provided personnel to form additional fire parties. The heat in the boiler room was so great that it turned into a hydrogen fire, the first ever recorded in a British warship.

This could only be fought with foam and as with most ships we only carried a limited amount of foam, the US Navy and Philadelphia Fire Department supplied extra by lorry throughout the morning. The boiler was never repaired or replaced, just by-passed.



The picture shows a little bit of what was left of the boiler.

We had a little boiler
It's name was Alfie One
We had a fire in Philly,
Now poor Alfie's gone.

**From: Mike Smith,
Marshland Maritime Museum**

Our latest acquisition is a Silver hip flask
11cm / 4½ ins diameter, which we have
placed in the TONs Gallery.



Can anyone who served in Sussex Division RNR tell us the story of this item ?

**FROM: Kapitän zur See Hans
Andresen German Naval Reserve MBE**

With great surprise and pleasure I received the news that the Committee of the TON Class Association unanimously agreed to award Honorary Membership to me.

I feel very much honoured as foreigner and German Navy Reserve Officer to receive this distinction. I want to express my gratitude to you all.

This very moment I am recollecting the 1970s in the TONS. A week-end in Tiger Bay because HMS Mersey found water in her tanks and could not sail. Weeks before HMS Fittleton was on her way to Hamburg I took part in sea-training.

Later I waited on the pier in Hamburg to be liaison officer for MCM 10 for the visit. Then came the sad news! It is quite a long time which connects me with friends in TCA.

BZ to David (Spidy) Ince RAN

A regular contributor to TON Talk and author whose books have been enjoyed by many of us, now advises :

"After 38 years in uniform, I have finally been given my brass hat and will take over the RAN's international training team (Sea Training Group - Defence Cooperation Program) on 1st July 2021.

I only did 23 years as a Lt Cdr - I'm not sure if that is a record ! "

As an officer in the RAN's Reserves, David has been coordinating the training of Pacific Island Nations in handing Oz-built aluminium patrol craft for a year or so, mainly in north and west Australia.

The 20 + craft have been gifted to the Island Nations by Australia under a mutual support arrangement.

Commander Ince joined the RN as a MW rating and was in GAVINTON with Bernie Bruen when they discovered THAT Russian mine in the Gulf during Op Harling in 1984. He was later commissioned and qualified as an MCDO. After several hair-raising adventures, including loan service with the United States Navy, he transferred to the RAN about 20 years ago.

Among other appointments, he commanded the patrol craft HMAS BUNDABERG and co-ordinated EOD operations in Kabul. About five years ago David was RAN Representative (aka Naval Attaché) in Tonga.

From TCA Archives ...



DIY MCM

Anyone prepared to own up ?

Med, Ceylon, Singapore - 1950's perhaps ?

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