

TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association

Edition 213



December 2021



Christmas Tree Schooner

TON Class Association

Patron HRH The Prince of Wales



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TCA Membership
£15 per annum
£150 Life Membership

P 24

Front Cover:
Christmas Tree Schooner

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Founder: Jack Worth MBE

Editorial

GENEROUS MEMBERS The Reunion was a great success – see Chairman's Corner and photos. The generosity of those attending was impressive.

The Raffle raised £290, Sales of Notepads and pens £29 and the Church Collection £220. Additionally, a "Wine Cooler Whip Round" was held to say "Thank You" to the restaurant staff who looked after us. Many of these young people had been recruited and trained only in the previous few weeks. Their courtesy and proficiency was outstanding. This view was fed back to their managers by several members.

Thanks to Doreen, Joanne and Marcia for organising the bottle raffle. We will continue with this format, as it is both easier to arrange and quicker to do.

Due to the overhang of Covid, Sea Cadet Units have been limited in their activities, [See reports on page 27]. We will defer decisions on use of the Raffle proceeds until the March Committee meeting.

The Church Collection has been sent to the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, as is our usual practice.

APOLOGIES to the family of Vice Admiral Rory Mclean for the Editor's error in the notice in October's Crossed the Bar. A correction has been included in this edition.

ALSO Missing Caption and acknowledgement of copyright to the photo on page 29

"Aftermath of the fire and explosion in Ostend harbour © Library and Archives Canada"

Regret no MCMV News this time to make way for a Sitrep from our Affiliated Sea Cadet units as they return to activity.

BZ on passing 2200 Visitors to our new Website.

COVER PICTURE *Rouse Simmons* was a three-masted schooner famous for having sunk in a violent storm on Lake Michigan in 1912. The ship was bound for Chicago with a cargo of Christmas trees when it foundered off Two Rivers, Wisconsin, killing all on board. The legacy of the schooner lives on with frequent ghost sightings and tourist excursions tracing its final, fateful route.

Happy Christmas to all readers of TON Talk and to HM Ships at sea.



Deadline for February's Edition is 20th January

pjd

Chairman's Corner

Christmas is fast approaching, and I hope we can look to happier times next year. This year has seen some light at the end of the tunnel.

The Annual Reunion took place at the Carlton Hotel in Torquay from Friday 1st – Monday 4th October. Despite the numbers being below 60, there was a great atmosphere with members being able to enjoy the company of friends. The hotel had all the facilities that we needed, and we have provisionally booked the Annual Reunion for 2023 at the Carlton Hotel. The AGM went well. I was pleased to see a good turnout of members. The AGM is important as our Constitution can only be updated at the meeting

The Gala Dinner was a most enjoyable evening with our Guest of Honour Commander R H Hawkins MBE Royal Navy AFNI. Bob's address was a fascinating review of today's Royal Navy and wider joint service matters. As he was the First Lieutenant of HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH for its first commission. His enthusiasm for the ship very evident. Bob is a long-standing member of the TCA.

A major concern, after the sad death of Cdr Nobby Hall, has been to fill the vacant post of Vice-Chairman. I managed to "persuade" Bob to volunteer, and he was formally elected at the AGM. It only cost me a large whisky and water !

On Sunday morning we held a Memorial Service for John Soanes, conducted by our Chaplain - Lt Cdr the Rev Trevor Filtness BA, RN rtd. We were joined by members of the Torquay Royal Naval Association (RNA). I was delighted to be able to provide the eulogy. The Chairmen of the RNA recounted an amusing recollection of Jones's time as the Cox'n of HMS PENSTON. It concerned a pig – I will say no more!

The Annual Reunion next year will be at the 4-star Crowne Plaza Hotel in Nottingham from **Friday 28th – Monday 31st October 2022. Please note this is different to the date advised at the AGM.** The RNA was well satisfied with the hotel this year when they held their Annual Conference there. The hotel is right in the centre of Nottingham close to the Castle. To keep costs down, dinner on the Friday and Sunday Night is **not** included in the price. However, there are a number of excellent restaurants in the area, should you wish to try different cuisines. I have had helpful discussions with Liz Whittaker Director of Sales and Marketing. The hotel has all the facilities we need including parking for 600 cars!

Finally, may I wish you a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Peter Harrison

TCA Who's Who

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COMING EVENTS

March 2022	Sat 12	<p>Committee Meeting Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth 10.30</p> <p>Hopefully a ZOOM link will be enabled</p>
October 2022	Sat 15	<p>TCA AGM & Reunion Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nottingham</p> <p>Booking Form in February's edition of TON Talk</p>

TCA Annual General Meeting

2nd October 2021, Carlton Hotel, Torquay

Abridged Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE

John Lippiett President: Peter Harrison Chairman: Bob Hawkins Vice Chairman: Peter Down Secretary and Ton Talk Editor: David Woolgar Treasurer: Dennis Cook Membership Secretary: Robbie Reid-Sinclair Welfare Officer: Reverend Trevor Filtness Chaplain: Matthew Salisbury A/Sec: Michael Cox London Representative: and 19 Members.

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Peter Harrison welcomed all and mentioned that this AGM differed from the last being an actual not zoomed. It is an important event because it enables members to ask questions and if necessary for changes to be made to the Constitution.

Sadly we have said goodbye to some notable people; Lady Cox, John Soanes, my predecessor as Chairman and Nobby Hall.

We have financial stability, a membership of over 1100 and valued connections with the Royal Navy, so we can look forward to 2022 with confidence. I would like to welcome our guests Lieutenant Commanders Simon Reeves and Matthew Brown serving in HMS CHIDDINGFOLD and Lieutenant Commander Alex Coleman on MCM2's staff.

2. CROSSED THE BAR & CHAPLAIN'S PRAYER

Members stood to remember the 30 members and wives who had crossed the bar since 2020

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from eleven members

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM.

These were published in TON Talk in 2020 and unanimously were considered to be a true record of the meeting. There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Following on from his opening remarks, the Chairman reflected how different life has been since we all met face to face two years ago. Members have managed to keep in touch and some have learnt new tricks. Anne Soanes and members of her family will be joining us this evening for dinner and again tomorrow for our service of thanks for John.

The Chairman thanked the members of the committee for all their support during this difficult period.

6. SECRETARY'S AND EDITOR'S REPORT

The Secretary thanked other members of the Committee for looking after their parts of ship and remembered those who had Crossed the Bar. John Robbie had been a founder member and TCA's first Historian. He mentioned too our Patron's father Prince Philip. We have new people on the committee, David Woolgar our new Treasurer and Matthew Salisbury who will be Secretary from today. Bob Hawkins is our guest speaker and was appointed Vice Chairman.

It has been a year of consolidation, learning the new techniques of Zoom, which enabled meetings to continue. The new website was delivered on time, within budget and has been

generally well received. The 'Contact Us' panel generates an average of three enquiries per week. Some are easy to answer, others need some research. The Ship Histories continue to be updated with input from members and information from significant events. Two more short films have been added to the website, thanks to the Imperial War Museum. John Robbie's collection of photographs have added to the assets identified by Bill Pollington's audit.

We continue to receive newsletters from the USN Association of Minemen and the Vancouver Island Military Museum. Nothing has been heard from the Norwegian Minesweeper ALTA since her decommissioning and whether that association still exists is not clear.

We are grateful to Sp-Des-ign for their technical assistance on website design. Similarly thanks are due to Gipping Press for their advice on producing TON Talk. In spite of postage rising above production costs, we continue to find economies, and expenditure on producing TON Talk is now lower than when I took over in 2011. The 150 members who receive TON Talk electronically make a significant saving to postage costs. Switching to an all electronic delivery of TON Talk would save nearly £8,000 per year, but the social impact of doing that needs careful consideration. Going electronic but reducing the print run to 150 or so for members without computer facilities is feasible.

Mine Warfare and Diving, the Annual Review of MCM has invited TCA to submit articles, and maybe some new members may result. Copies of TON Talk are sent to the deployed MCMVs and we receive their newsletters. which are published on the TCA website.

The Future. Consideration should be given to how TCA should respond to the challenges presented by lockdown, whether we can continue to hold traditional reunions, or whether we should consider holding zoom committee meetings to save the expense of travelling. Consideration could be given to regional social events to avoid travelling long distances. Better means should be found to liaise with the Sea Cadets. Attendance of TCA Standard Bearers at parades and funerals brings TCA into the public eye which may enhance membership numbers.

It is doubtful whether TCA will be involved in another large project such as the publication of another book. However consideration could be given to shorter publications such as the four monographs we have already produced on Suez, the Falklands Campaign and the final cruise of HMS KING GEORGE V. A visit to Eguermin (the NATO Minewarfare school in Ostend) may be a major expedition next year, if/when Belgium opens its borders, and a visit to Malta would always be popular. A visit to HMS COLLINGWOOD is planned for next March on the day after the Committee meeting.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

Because of Covid there have been few transactions other than subscriptions.

Last year TCA made a substantial investment to update the website and expenditure exceeded income last year by £367.81. However subscription income has covered the cost of TON Talk and the maintenance of the website. TCA has healthy reserves:-

	Aug 21	Aug 20
General Account	£ 3,906.74	£4861.45
No 2 Account	£ 1942.87	£2438.86
Welfare account	£10,074.76	£10074.75

Reserves Account	£ 5295.43	£5300.73
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(No expenditure from Welfare or Reserves Accounts)

Barclays General Account

Income		Expenditure	
Subscriptions	£10,862.00	Ton Talk	£9010.37
Life Subscriptions	300.00	Website Maintenance	440.91
Donations		Administration Expenses	243.54
Advertising Sales	120.00	Honoraria	1200.00
Stores	245.00	Royal Maritime Club	60.00
		Grant for MMM website	250.00
		Subs refund	15.00
		I W M Film fee	180.00
Total	£11,528.00		£11399.82

No 2 Account	Wreaths	£100.00
	Final payment for	
	TCA Website Development	395.99
Total		£495.99

NB Consideration should be given to reducing the number of accounts.

8. AUDITORS REPORT

Bill Pollington's audit undertakings were scrupulous and exemplary. He had examined every aspect of TCA's financial records and was pleased to report that TCA's accounts for the year ending 31st August 2021 were a true record of its financial status.

This audit revealed a continuing receipt of miscellaneous standing order payments which never equated with the membership subscription. These are :-

2@£5 = £10.00	17@£7.5= £127.50	85@£10=£850	1@£10.50=£10.50
1@£11.50=£11.50	1@£12.00= £12.00	2@£12.50= £25.00	

109 entries adding up to £1046.00

TCA policy is that defaulters do not receive TON Talk therefore a saving has been made on 109 copies, ie. £1046.00. Bill reported that his compilation of TCA assets is continuing with a sitrep on the current situation in the current edition of TON Talk.

9. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Dennis Cook reported that there had been 16 new members, 2 resignations and contact had been lost with 12 members who still paid their subscriptions. 30 members had Crossed the Var since the last AGM. Since becoming Membership Secretary in 2011, 906 people have joined, a healthy reflection for an association of ships' companies of warships no longer in service. Dennis congratulated all on keeping alive the TCA whose new members are of an older generation. He requested to be informed of any changes in contact details.

10. WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT

Robbie Reid Sinclair reported that there had been one application for a stair lift which was declined because the applicant had sufficient funds.

11. STORES OFFICERS REPORT

Laurie Johnson reported that he had paid £400 to TCA representing profit from sales of 36 items for the year ending in July 2020. 76 items were sold from 2020 to July 2021 providing receipts of £799.56.

Opening Balance Nationwide BS 31 st July 2020	£1132.55
Receipts 1 st August 2020 to 31 July 2021	£ 799.56
Expenditure	£ 754.50
Balance in Nationwide on 31 July 2021	£1176.61
Value of stock	£2641.77
Cash	£ 14.67
Balance on 31st July 2021	£3834.05

The Nationwide Building Society did not wish to continue this type of passbook account but every effort made to negotiate this was declined by them.

12. STANDARD BEARER'S REPORT

Two important parades, Weymouth and Portsmouth were cancelled and Falmouth happened while Sam Cook was on holiday. There was no minor activity but Sam said that he would be on duty for Remembrance Sunday in Newlyn, Cornwall and of course at the dinner this evening.

13. SEA CADET LIAISON OFFICERS' REPORTS

The three affiliated SCC units have been closed because of lockdown. In any case we need to have representatives nearer these units. The two TCA representative live 80 miles from their unit. We need a better solution.

Jumper Collins remarked on the paucity of Armed Forces representation at Remembrance Day events. Bob Hawkins said that he was in touch with four Naval Regional Commanders who said that there is no lack of willingness to participate, just fewer and fewer people. There is a large number of veterans who need to be involved. A TCA contingent of ten members, led by Mike Cox, will parade on Remembrance Sunday in Whitehall.

14. REUNION SECRETARY'S REPORT

57 members are attending this year. Some members were declined because their applications had been adrift. It is necessary to pay the hotel booking in full ten days before today. Malcom Kemp asked if this was the only reason numbers are low, what about, Covid, old age and costs of travelling? **Next year the Reunion will be held at the 4 Star Crown Plaza Hotel in Nottingham. on Friday 28th – Monday 31st October 2022, as we cannot get an earlier date.** N.B. *This date was confirmed to us after the AGM.* The Committee has to decide whether to make the Reunion Dinner an informal affair without a guest speaker and whether to retain the Sunday service.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 Michael Cox provided a detailed account of his prodigious activities on behalf of TCA in the London Area. These included attending funerals of TCA members, providing background

information on queries in Ton Talk, clarification on funnel numbering etc. Mike's report will be published in full in due course.

15.2 Buster Brown sent his White Rose Branch report which stated that the Yorkshire men had held three socially distanced meetings. Ill health is preventing some members attending but two new members, Phil Pallent and Derek Arundale have joined. The Branch welcomed Bob and Dee Dean at the June meeting. Clive Dennison and Terry Foreman are hoping to arrange an excursion next year and the next meeting will be on 15th January 2022.

It is suggested that Ton Talk be reduced to quarterly instead of bi-monthly. Peter Down said that there was no lack of new content, the main reason for the suggestion. He had an ample supply of material in reserve in the Shot Locker.

15.3 Terry Russell had received an email from Graham Gatehouse regarding a memorial for those lost in HMS FITTLETON in 1976. Members of Fittleton's Parochial Church Council had requested a permanent memorial because the current one is too small. The estimate for the proposed memorial is £7,000 and TCA's assistance was requested. The Chairman stated that the PCC needs to obtain a faculty from the diocese. Unfortunately the new chairmen of the PCC was thought not to be interested and the Salisbury Diocese was ambivalent. A stone mason has offered to make the memorial.

15.4. Raffle: The bottles only raffle would be drawn in secret, with winning numbers attached to the prizes. Proceeds would normally be given to the Sea Cadets but since they are temporarily inactive, this matter will be referred to the March Committee, possibly to be given to RN & RM Charity.

15.5 The Chairman proposed that Mrs Ann Soanes be made a vice president of TCA. This was accepted by the members unanimously. He also proposed that Commander Bob Hawkins be made Vice Chairman following the death of Nobby Hall. This too was accepted by all.

16. PRESIDENT'S CLOSING REMARKS

Admiral Lippiett expressed his joy at being present in person. He now felt zoomed out and delighted to see a responsive audience. Sadly he had attended many more funerals this year; Lady Anne Cox, Nobby Hall, John Soanes, a true gentleman, who had a very good turn out from the RN and RNA at his funeral. His contribution to TCA was immense. We are all getting older but perhaps we can get a wave of new joiners. The President thanked the Committee, especially the Chairman, for steering TCA through the rocks and shoals of the year. BZ to Peter Down for producing TON Talk brilliantly. The service tomorrow will be in memory of John Soanes. The President made a presentation to Dennis Cook in recognition of his outstanding service running the membership of TCA.

The meeting closed at 1226 with Up Spirits.

The mood of the meeting is suitably described by Lord Tennyson:-

*"Though much is taken, much abides,
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven.
That which we are, we are !
One equal temper, of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield !"*

AGM & Reunion



TCA Committee, Guests and Wives



President John Lippiett presents Dennis Cook with a statuette of a Petty Officer in the rig of Nelson's Navy in thanks for his 22 years' service as our Membership Secretary



Guest of Honour and our
new Vice Chairman

Cdr Bob Hawkins MBE RN



Memorial Service for John Soanes with members of Torbay RNA



BOOK REVIEW – “Not for the Glory”

Mick Fellows MBE, DSC, BEM *, FIExpE FWEODF MSM, MSUT

Amazon £18.99 in Softback or £2.50 for Kindle

Adventure, Determination and Courage are the key words to describe this book and I am proud that Mick Fellows is a longstanding member of TCA.

This is a book for sailors, written by a sailor, in the direct speech of the Lower Deck. The odd typo and glitch of syntax cannot detract from the pace and impressive tale of Mick's autobiography.

From the bewilderment of New Entry Training and initial drafts to frigates and an Algerine, through qualifying as a Clearance Diver and some extraordinary incidents in Bomb and Mine Disposal in the UK and overseas, Mick recounts his journey through the RN, including spells as Buffer of KIRKLISTON and Coxswain of GAVINTON, culminating as Inspector of Clearance Diving, as a Warrant Officer. Mick had a roving brief to inspect CD teams around the world and prepare improvements to Standard Operating Procedures and equipment, resulting from first-hand experience of Explosive Ordnance Detection and Clearance.

Without giving away details of his story, Mick's description of the role of RN Clearance Divers in the Falklands is truly heroic and contains details not previously published, including some blunt observations on the few seniors who did not pull their weight. His description of the response to the disaster of the *Herald of Free Enterprise* and removal of bodies is truly horrifying and a tribute to all concerned.

After he left the RN, Mick had a 26-year career in civilian remediation of EOD in places as hairy as Kurdistan, Eritrea, Greece, Angola, Laos and Cyprus, as well as clearing wartime airfields in UK and clearance preparations for the London Eye and undersea pipelines. LOTS of technical detail and interesting photos – **a highly recommended buy** – see advert on Rear Cover.

*Curiously our paths may have crossed at an early age. I was a Midshipman in ACUTE when Mick was a young AB in her and I later qualified as a Ship's Diver as a Sub Lt in CRANE when he was in St BRIDES BAY, both in the 3rd Frigate Squadron in the Far East. We may even have dived at Stonecutters Island at the same time to keep up our underwater minutes. We certainly both encountered the formidable Arthur Checksfield who was Fleet Clearance Diving Officer in Hong Kong at the time and his renowned Second Dickie, Bob Lusty ... **Editor***

Slow Motor Boat

Did you know that there is a specialist group, part of the Naval Section of the World Ship Society, that researches the small craft used by the Royal Navy, including Admirals' barges, cutters, whalers and even the Slow Motor Boat originally employed by TONs ?

TCA Member Dave Fricker of Ryde, IoW brought the group to our attention when he discovered this photo of the SMB originally allocated to QUANTON who served with the RNR as NORTHUMBRIA from 1960 to 1972.



The provenance of the boat was established from her number and Pusser's broad arrow stamped into her counter. A mast has been stepped to allow her to sail !



The photos above were provided by John Wardale of the Small Craft Group, who advises that they maintain records on the small boats that were carried by the larger ships and those used in the dockyards. The late Jeremy Stewart, TCA Historian, was a member of this group.

The group provides free historical reports for owners of such surviving craft and has begun to compile a spreadsheet listing the SMBs that served on board TONs. Where possible, the spreadsheet will be supported by a photograph of the survivors and details, including owner and location. Compiling such information is likely to be a long job and will take members into rivers and creeks to conduct their research – excuse for a banyan ?.

The Small Craft Group has noted that Slow Motor Boats were replaced in the TONs, first by Gemini inflatables and then by RHIBs [Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats] in a somewhat piecemeal fashion; starting with the Fishery Protection Squadron, which made boarding quicker and safer, then rolling out to the MineHunters for use by their diving teams, The Hong Kong Patrol Vessels and ships involved in Op Grenada Northern Ireland patrols also carried RHIBs but dates of such innovations are not clear.

Can any TCA member assist with dates and details ?



Now (above) and Then

– Cyprus 1956



Nostalgia

Peter Down, Editor

As part of the handover of HonSec's duties to Matthew Salisbury, I have been going through the many papers, reports and correspondence that have come with the job. Much that comes across the desk of HonSec ends up in Minutes of Committee and Annual General Meetings or is transformed into articles for TON Talk or our website.

During a recent rainy day, I indulged by myself by re-reading all the Minutes of AGMs and Committee meetings dating from the first ones in 1987/88. What interesting memories they evoked of the various milestones in the development of our Association and the projects we have undertaken. It was also instructive to note that many of the issues that concerned us in the early days are still with us today – albeit in slightly different guises.

At our very first gathering in the Chiefs' Mess in HMS Nelson, prior to the official formation of the Association, hope was expressed that the Association might have a life of "at least 40 to 50 years" and a broad policy was identified for the disposal of any financial assets to naval charities should the time come to wind up the Association. Thankfully, 34 years on, we are on track to fulfil that initial aspiration and currently have considerable assets, financial and otherwise, plus more detailed policies and processes.

At that meeting Jeremy Stewart advised that the on-going discussions about preserving BRONINGTON should be kept quite distinct from the formation of TCA. He was concerned that the new Association risked being perceived as merely a fund-raising arm for the Bronington project. Later reports from Malcolm Coulson and John Clark, who had been helping prepare the ship for conversion to her new role, advised that she was in poor condition; much equipment has been stripped out for re-use by the surviving TONs and AHO (aluminium corrosion) was evident in some bilges. Subsequent reports highlighted financial concerns with Trafford Park Development Corporation, the Imperial War Museum (North) and the Bronington Trustees, all of which have contributed to the regrettably sad situation of the hulk today. How prescient had been Jeremy's warning !

There was much debate about the location of meetings, with considerable urging by John Robbie for greater presence in Scotland, where he was striving to extend the Port Edgar Museum to accommodate some TONs memorabilia. The alarming increases in costs for travel and accommodation since the 1990's mean that geography continues to be an issue, exacerbated as we grow older. There is no easy answer – wherever we pick will be too far, inconvenient, or too expensive for some people.

Jack Worth produced very detailed Minutes, often verbatim records of discussions, so somewhat lengthy. As the number of members grew, challenges arose about the

appropriate equipment needed to produce TON Talk. Jack was quite apologetic about the increased costs of moving from typewriter to word processor then on to PC and moving from ink-jet printer to using the services of a professional print shop. The debates about special offers from friends of members were reminiscent of our recent major investment in developing a new website to keep abreast of technology and provide some headroom for the future.

As early as 1990 we began to have concerns about late payments of subscriptions – see Auditor's report by Bill Pollington in the Minutes of this year's AGM !

There was significant coverage of the valiant efforts of Bob Dean, Stan Hudson and John Robbie in creating a TCA Display for Navy Days at Portsmouth and Clyde.

Many names of blessed memory came and went as Officers of the Association as age, health and work commitments took their toll: including Sir John and Lady Anne Cox, John Soanes, Captain Fred Swindells, Peter Barrie, Dave Goulden, Ray Amphlett, Derek Lodge, Stuart Whatley, John Wetherall, John Preston, Barry Barnes, Chris Hales etc. We have been very fortunate that as circumstances have changed, members have risen to the challenges and have not been slow in coming forward to offer their services with an impressive range of skills, expertise and contacts.

A constant theme throughout the years has been the search to encourage greater involvement by members in the activities of the Association. There has been no shortage of bright ideas and suggestions; some more practicable and economically viable than others. Our achievements in this respect include the Display Team, our three books and four monographs, the Seminar at the RN Museum in 2003, visits to Malta and the very fact that, until Covid intervened, we have held at least one very successful social gathering every year. For a long time, when we had active Area Representatives, they organised events in their areas. Perhaps the increasing costs of travel may bring us to re-consider that option ?

I have been reminded that in order to progress, organisations have to adapt to changes in circumstances and take advantage of suitable opportunities. Without being complacent, we have not done badly in the management of change and have evolved a strong management team [aka Committee] with effective communications with all members via letter, phone, e-mail, TON Talk and website, so that everyone who wishes, is able make their views known about challenges and opportunities.

While full of appreciation for our past, I look forward to our future with Matthew's steady hand on the tiller and I fly HonSec's paying of pennant with pride.



Crossing the Line HMS RAMILLES December 1942

More fascinating historic photos from the collection of Mark Gilmore's Grandfather Surgeon Lieutenant Thomas Brooking-Snell. This selection features Crossing the Line.



The C.O., Commander Leslie Brownfield, greets King Neptune, together with Guard and Band and onlookers - just look at all that lovely heavy cable gear.





Neptune's Court above – Note bath and greasy pole on right

Commander ducked (below Left. Note the Barber) . Right: PMO gets it !



Cenotaph Parade

One of the knock-on effects of Covid precautions has been some reduction in those who braved the elements to participate in the Cenotaph Parade on Remembrance Sunday this year. The parade had been cancelled last year, so BZ to all who participated this year.

TCA's contingent was just nine : Lt Cdr Mike Cox RNR RD *, CPO (MW) Graham Gatehouse (marker), POME Ian Campbell, AB Dennis Dynan, AB Arnold Jeacock RNR, CPO Malcolm Kemp, CPO Anthony Robinson, LME David Stott and CCY Thomas Walker.



Tom Cribb was full to the Gunwales. Not just TIGERs, but many others (even Bomber Command again), all spilling over into Oxendon Street. The beer was Shepherd Neame, which was very nice. No cash taken at the bar - debit cards only. There was general agreement that I should organise toasts. Others had arranged for Rum to be procured and Cribb management arranged all the pouring into a lot of tot glasses.

At the due moment, I stood prominently, removed my blazer to reveal Naval epaulettes on my white shirt. In Larry Grayson style I Commanded "Shut that Door." Bar staff had distributed all the tots and the Landlord rang the bar bell. I called everyone to Attention. Then made THE LOYAL TOAST. I then followed with THE TON CLASS ASSOCIATION. The bar bell was rung again a few more times for others to do their toasting ... So all went very well and VMT to the Landlord !

John Robbie – Valedictions

Sym Taylor, Nyewood

I write to add a few words about my good friend John Robbie whose death was reported in TT212. John and I were at school together, though he was in the year above me and we were both in the school RN Section of the CCF.

John had already joined Clyde Division RNR and he was wholly responsible for persuading me to join (and this subsequently led to me having a full career in the RN). At school during the CCF parades we both wore RNR uniform with HMS GRAHAM cap tallies - to the dismay of some but to the delight to our Lieutenant CCF (and English teacher) who had served in the RN during the war. We must have looked a little odd as all other cadets had masses of badges and we had none !

We also had great fun in the RNR with many truly amazing weekends, and outstanding runs ashore, in HMS CLYDE in the depths of places like Tarbert, Campbeltown and Ayr.



It was John who in the early days of the Association "strong armed" me to join as he knew that I had served in a couple of RN Tons. I last met John at the Clyde RNR "Old and Bold" mess dinner in 2019, sadly the pandemic has caused postponement of this event for the past two years and so we did not have the chance to meet again. John was an excellent friend and a kind and loving father to his two daughters and a wonderful husband to Sheila and I will miss his friendship.

Tony Quick, Luton

I first met John Robbie at the inaugural TCA General Meeting at Kenilworth in 1987.

He was seated in front of me and I was impressed with his seemingly deep knowledge of all items on the Agenda. This quiet Scotsman appeared to be well-versed in all matters concerning the formation of the TON Class Association and I was not surprised when later I learned of his original connections with our Founder-Secretary, Jack Worth in the launch of the Association.

Later, when I spoke to him and asked him to elaborate on a few of his views, I was impressed by his response. We struck up a lasting rapport. He had strong views on the way that the Association should go in defining our objectives and direction.

Early in TCA's existence, John had to retire into the background for a combination of reasons, including declining health and stressful demands from his employment as Sales Manager of a large steel tubes stockholder. We were thus denied further valuable contributions from the talents of this remarkable Naval Historian, but we should pay tribute to his esteemed place in the history of our Association.

May I give just one example of his helpful and ever-ready advice As a member of the RNVR and RNR Old Hands Association, London Division, after a regular meeting in 1992-ish, their Secretary asked me for a word in confidence. He knew that I was also a member of TCA and advised me that, because of MoD budget cuts, the Division was to lose its sea training tender and was likely to become "shipless", with the loss of HMS Humber. However serious confidential enquiries were being made about purchasing a seagoing replacement. The Division had been offered significant financial support by a former senior naval officer, currently an executive in British Petroleum.

I was requested to make some discreet enquiries, via TCA, which might help to identify a suitably sound vessel for this project. The RNVR practice of privately purchasing its own ships dates back to 1903 and was quite common among wealthy officers during World War 1, who donated their family steam yachts to become patrol and HQ vessels.

I agreed to try and immediately got in touch with John Robbie, who used his extensive network of contacts to identify suitable TONs in commission, in reserve and listed for disposal.

As TCA's first Historian, John had compiled an extensive archive about "all things TON" and he soon came up with a list of candidates, itemising the service history of each ship, current survey state and anticipated price. He also passed on some useful tips about MoD sales and disposal practices.

To back up the Old Hands' enquiries, I arranged for their Secretary to visit HMS Wotton, then moored downstream at Erith Reach, as a Sea Cadet training vessel, whose C.O was Brian Killick, a fellow TCA Member.

Brian welcomed us all aboard one bright Saturday afternoon and kindly answered detailed questions about running costs for the ship and many other relevant details.

We had a tour of the ship and were generously entertained by Brian, his wife Lesley, instructional staff and cadets. The Secretary left with a well-filled notebook.

However, despite all this useful information, regrettably the project foundered as the Naval Authorities would not allow the ship to display the BP corporate logo.; it being unacceptable for an RN warship in commission to display commercial advertising.

The ship would have been berthed alongside HMS President at St Katherine's Dock by Tower Bridge; a prime site for advertising !

My final point is that John Robbie was a Founder Member of our Association although many members who have joined in recent years may not have heard of him, but he will be remembered with pride and thanks by us “Old Boys” for he was always there when needed.

Poopalu Nagiah, Port Dickson, Malaysia

TT October issue just reached me and gave me another unexpected shock with the sad demise of John Robbie my old friend.

To his beloved family my family extend our heartfelt condolences.

John and I had corresponded for some years before he visited me in Port Dickson in May, 1994.

He knew of my interest in TONs and brought a huge pile of papers (almost 3,000 pages) containing all the history of TON movements while based in the Far East which I treasure with much care.



*Sheila Robbie has kindly gifted to TCA John's extensive collection of photographs of TONs, These are now being safeguarded by the Editor. A selection from his RNR file follows ... **Editor***



Busy Sweepdeck



Firing Squad – Presumably trying to sink a “Floater”



Temperamental power supply to
the Acoustic Displacer

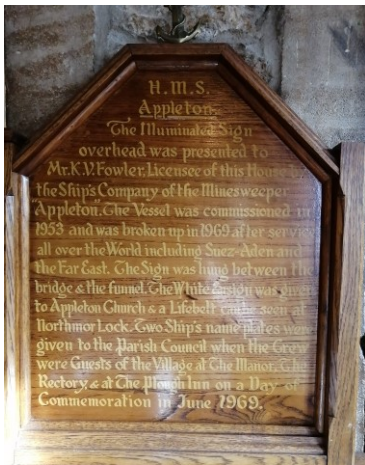
APPLETON

Andrew Salmon, who lives in the village of Appleton, near Abingdon, Oxfordshire, recently contacted TCA via our website. He is interested in building a model of the APPLETON M1106, famed for her exploits at Suez and later up the Gulf, to accompany other artifacts from the ship, including her photograph, on display in the Plough pub in the village,

We were happy to provide him with detailed plans of PENSTON, another Mirrless-powered TON in Sweeper configuration, and Andrew has kindly thanked us with some photographs from the village. We look forward to seeing the completed model



The Plough" in Appleton (above) has a Date Stone set in the wall for 1683 and an oak plaque in the bar commemorates a visit to the village in 1969 by members of the Ships Company of APPLETON before she was de-commissioned.



The ship's name plate is now displayed in the village hall and an Ensign was presented to the church. A ship's lifebuoy (since gone adrift) was placed at nearby Northmoor Lock.

This lock is the last "paddle and rymer" weir on the Thames; an ancient way of controlling the flow of a river by placing large wooden posts – rymers – into the bottom of the river and inserting paddles of different heights against them. Rymers and paddles are now made of fibre glass; both lighter and easier to position and longer-lasting than the old wooden ones.

New Role for TEAL

Richard Barratt, formerly Leading Diver, Girne, North Cyprus

I have recently received information that the former HMAS TEAL, ex-HMS JACKTON, currently afloat as a Hydrographic Research and Training vessel for the University of the Near East, is about to become a museum ship here in the port of Girne, formerly known as Kyrenia, in North Cyprus.



I have visited the proposed museum site and discussed their plans with the Project Manager.

The diggers are in and the bulldozers are busy moving earth to enable her to be floated into her new dock. TEAL is in the background (see opposite page).

I will keep TON Talk advised of progress.

***TCA records** indicate that JACKTON was put into reserve immediately after completion and was never commissioned into the RN. The only photo we have of her is the one at left, possibly taken at DILIGENCE in 1962 when she was being prepared for transfer to the RAN.*



I am liaising with Richard and friends in the former RAN 16 MSS to prepare a short history of the ship to present to the new museum, together with photographs

and replicas of her RAN and RN badges. The history of TEAL is now on our website.

*With DURBAN and BRONINGTON sunk at their moorings, and the dilapidated condition of CURLEW unknown, **TEAL is now the last TON afloat ... Editor***

FROM: Cagri Deliceirmak,

Captain of Research Vessel Teal (ex. HMAS TEAL, ex. HMS JACKTON).

First of all, I want to thank TCA for your support and interest in our project.

Thanks especially to Richard Barratt who has arranged the communication and contact with you and the TCA, whose support in this project is very welcomed and valuable.

I will update you with the detailed history about the ship soon. For now, I shall summarize that TEAL has been owned by the Near East University since 1994 and operated as a training and research vessel for the Department of Maritime Studies.

Since then, more than 1500 national and international students from all around the world have been trained onboard and graduated from the TEAL. I am the first student who graduated and hopefully I am going to be the last Captain of the boat, so the boat and the project is personally important to me.

To summarize the project; Our aim is not to ground her or place to the land but to construct a dock for her safe stay and afloat her from time to time. We aim to keep her afloat as long as possible.



I will be in contact with you and Richard continuously and hope to hear your full support for the final voyage of the TEAL to her dock where she will continue to serve as historical and cultural heritage in the form of a maritime museum.

*Photos of dock construction courtesy of Richard Barratt .. **Editor***

Dits from Michael Donoyou

Wes This one features an unpopular and pedantic First Lieutenant and an AB of West African origin. To avoid causing embarrassment or offence, I have omitted their names.

The sweeper was making an overnight visit to a port and was berthed alongside a jetty on a very dark winter night. Shore Leave had been granted and the duty watch included our very dark skinned, West African AB, who was known as "Wes".

Wes had the middle watch on the gangway and in the early hours of the morning, the 1st Lt returned on board, The night was very dark, Wes was wearing the usual long, dark watchcoat and was standing a few yards back from the gangway under cover of the Bridge overhang and thus was not seen by the 1st Lt, who did not bother to call out for him.

The following morning "all hell broke loose" with the 1st Lt sending for the Cox'n and sarcastically wanting to know what sort of routine was being run. Both the Cox'n and the Killick of the watch insisted that the QM had been on the gangway at the time.

Wes was then summoned and he also asserted that he was present on the gangway when the 1st Lt returned on board. The latter refuted this and said he spent the next hour scouring the upper deck, bridge and other parts of the ship looking for the QM, to which Wes replied "Oh I did wonder what you were doing, Sir".

Needless to say that Wes, who was very quiet and reticent by nature, instantly became a "lower deck hero" given the 1st Lt's unpopularity.

I should also mention that Wes was also known for his unique version of making pipes via the Tannoy. Instead of using the traditional "Do you hear there" Wes always prefixed his pipes with "Are you listenin ? , delivered in his unmistakable West African Accent ...

This dit features the late **Chris Hales**, (past Editor of TON Talk), who I knew well and went to sea with on many occasions.

Chris worked for British Rail as a Station Manager and was affectionately nicknamed "The Fat Controller" by those of us who knew him. He was a CPO (MW) in the Reserve and took a degree of banter about his Branch Lapel Badges when it was suggested that these should be replaced with "Crossed Rail Tracks and Crown".

In 1983 we undertook a deployment in the North Sea where, after several days' minesweeping and other exercises, with Chris as Cox'n and myself as Buffer, the ship sailed to Esbjerg in Denmark for a 4-day visit. Once berthed alongside, with main engines rung off and Special Sea Dutymen fallen out, Chris left the wheelhouse and went below to his cabin.

But immediately upon arrival he heard the pipe "Cox'n to the Bridge". He went back up to the Bridge whereupon the Skipper greeted him with "Ah there you are Cox'n" and pointing, he said "There's a train over there and we thought you would want to see it ! "

SEA CADETS SITREP

FROM: Petty Officer (SCC) Danny Hodgson, TS DRAGON, Thurrock

We got back to parading outdoors at our unit in Tilbury in March and have been at full steam from then on; really back to running a full unit nights as soon as we could and bringing the standard back of dress and bearing. We had our Area Review visit and got top marks for that, achieved a Burgee for that we are all delighted.

Cadet numbers are up to 35 that is good for Thurrock unit. Pre lock down we had 24 Cadets and have had a boost in numbers and they really are getting a good cadet experience. We have had Cadets on first aid at work, marine engineering, seamanship, drill, navigation, windsurfing, rowing and kayaking.

We have held three fund raising events and generous help from our sponsors, the Worshipful Company of Brass Founders to buy us a newer minibus, as our one reached the end of its economical life.

Thurrock Sea Cadets is really back in full strength and steaming ahead.

FROM: Lieutenant (SCC) Simmy Dawson, TS Highburton, Huddersfield

We have been parading face to face since late May this year. There has been disruption to training but things are gradually falling into place with boating and wider training and we took part in Remembrance ceremonies (photo, right), which is very positive.

Obviously we hope that things will stay on a more stable Covid footing and we will be able to continue to a more normal state. Cadets are now reporting that that are getting access to vaccines which will help overall



FROM: Colour Sergeant Paul Hume RM Cadets, TS KELLINGTON, Stockton on Tees

As the new Officer in Charge, I am settling in and am pleased that the Cadets are able to return to face to face instruction and outside activities. We are being supported by Lt Tim Clyburn, Deputy District Officer and a former C.O of the Unit.

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

Thomas Ellingham. (RO2 (RC)RNR. Ipswich Suffolk. Served on HM Ships THAMES 1963-69. ISIS 1967, CLYDE 1966 F2488

Graham White. (Jnr Sea) RNR, .Mansfield Nottinghamshire Served on HMS FITTLETON 1976] F2489

Graham Pallent. (REM) RN. Middlesborough Cleveland.. Served on HMS LEWISTON 1970-72 F2490

Stephen G Morris. (MEM)1 RNR. Cardiff South Glamorgan. Served on HMS CHRICHTON/ST DAVID 74-78. F2491

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Dave Fricker. To:- Isle of Wight Hampshire A0619

Douglas L Woolner BEM. To:- Helensburgh Argyll & Bute. F0187

Michael Henny.To:- Newcastle-upon-Tyne. F0133

Peter Daye. To:- Auckland New Zealand F0292

CHANGED E-MAIL ADDRESS

Ken Douglas F1178

Eric Wild F2051

LOST CONTACT.

Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary

Robert Macpherson Last Known Address:- South Queensferry F0517



Crossed the Bar

Correction to October's entry

Vice Admiral Rory Mclean CB, OBE

*Not a TCA member but known to many.
A Fleet Air Arm pilot, he commanded HM Ships UPTON, JUPITER, BRAZEN,
FEARLESS and INVINCIBLE and was later Director of
The Royal United Services Institute*

CPO (SCC) William Barratclough

A1686. Sunderland. Served on HMS KELLINGTON SCC

LOEM 1 Gerald Hacker RNR

L 1517. Brentwood.

Served on HM Ships THAMES, FITTLETON, CURZON 1970-80

PO Cook Desmond E Slade RN

F0412, Worthing Sussex.

*Served on HM Ships FITTLETON 1967-76. KELLINGTON 1977-84. ALFRISTON.
BRERETON, GLASSERTON,. HOUGHTON*

ME1 Don Devlin RN

Served on HM Ships BOSSINGTON, SHERATON, CAUNTON, HUBBERSTON

May They Rest In Peace

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TCA Tie, Maroon	£ 11.60	TCA Pen	£ 3.00
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Special Order items		TCA Christmas Cards	
State size, colour and logo required Logo 1 = Mine and Keys, Logo 2 = Mine and TON silhouette Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery		Two Designs “Snowman” & “7 MCMS Leaving Malta” £5.50 for 10 cards, with envelopes	
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e-mail: lawrencej1055@gmail.com

Post Bag

FROM: Cdr Graham Taylor, Linfield

Pennyworth thoughts arising from October's TON Talk

p7. 'Stopgap' sounds likely but RNR CMSs might well have doctors on board for 'Mainhauls'. The object was to get as many as possible trained at sea. Often the cabin between the WR pantry and the galley held three officers – EO, LO(WEO) and MO. I remember, at one meal, the very senior consultant from Bristol Hospital leant over and said quietly "See your GP when you get home. I think you're getting Shingles". There's personal service for you!

p8. Obviously a POME or CERA will give you the best answers but a few thoughts from a Green-E who was, at times, the only Technical Officer on board and so 'took an interest'!

The job of the pulse generator engine was to drive an electric generator. Pulses of current were sent out round a loop of cable behind the ship to produce an electric field and detonate magnetic mines. Large currents were involved and the generator would have had to be of special construction to prevent repulsion between its conductors tearing it apart. I do not recall the manufacturer(s).

With the Mirrlees, each pulse almost stopped it and large lumps of soot flew out of the funnel – instant de-coke ! - onto the Jimmy's snow white decks.

With the Deltic, you could hear the load come on as the note deepened.

Cooling was by seawater (I assume for both Mirrlees and Deltics). I remember on a Rockhaul crossing a rough Bay of Biscay with the water inlets rolling out of the water. An ME sat in the bilges working the valves to prevent air being drawn into the larger main engines and causing an air-lock!

Three more pulse generator stories:

The Mirrlees was started using compressed air and after several attempts this was exhausted and we had to wait for it to recharge (We? I was merely observing but it was more pleasant for me to be in the generator room than on the bridge subject to the baleful gaze of the CO!). In the end, barring by hand moved the piston concerned from bottom-dead-centre position and the next compressed air start was fine. (The Deltic was started using an explosive cartridge).

On one 'Stand by for never mind' exercise, orchestrated by the Admiral, we received the signal to supply the ship from the pulse generator. This usually took at least ten minutes because it involved unbolting some links, moving them and re-bolting them and some other switching. We were already on pulse generator supply because there had been work going on on the ship's three Foden generators. We waited a good

minute before reporting the job done. Unfortunately there was a delay in getting the signal off to the Admiral so we were only third to report of the ten assembled minesweepers.

On another occasion, having taken on water-contaminated fuel from a lighter, all three Fodens failed and had to be bled (luckily we got back alongside, but there was water in the lines to the main engines).

The pulse generator had not been running so, after dealing with the supply tank, could be used to power the ship. The Foden starter batteries having been flattened turning the motors over to bleed them, the electrical party was called on to use the shore supply lead to connect a supply from the main ship's low-power battery for the purpose.

FROM: Commodore Ian Berry RNR

Picking up the piece on Deltics in October's TON Talk..

I was serving in DUFTON in the 108th in Malta in 1957. It had been decided that in May 1957 we would return her to the UK for refit and with the same crew take over Highburton and return to Malta.

In the event it was decided that it was more pressing to return Aldington to the UK, so our crew took over Aldington and we left Dufton in Malta.

Meantime Highburton had been having problems with funnel fires and so we were unable to take her over until the problems had been resolved. We still

took Aldington to Sheerness Dockyard and then returned to Diligence at Hythe and commissioned Thankerton for return to Malta in place of Highburton !

The funnel fire problem was eventually solved by the fitting of scrubbers to stop exhaust particles building up in the funnel and avoiding revs in the 250-275 range when the build up was most likely.

Funnel fires could still occur if there was prolonged running at 375 revs - of which I had experience when steaming at full speed to the help of a motor yacht on fire in the Irish Sea.

I would have thought there were more than 17 CMS converted from Mirrlees to Deltics ? I often wonder what happened to the redundant Mirrlees - can any members throw any light on this ?

The Mirrlees had gearboxes which initially were not up to the job and - on one occasion we had to abort a passage to Cyprus and return to Malta to repair such a problem.

Rooms with a View: To complement Kapitän Hans' photo of Westminster in the Elbe, herewith Argyll entering the Tamar, as seen from Chairman Peter H's Executive Apartment ...



Only Having a Laugh ...



A shipmate had to chuckle the other day when he was sent a video clip by one of his daughters of her son (not yet 4) spelling out loud.

The child confidently spelled, "M - U - M" and "D - A - D", and his own name.

Then he told her that Granddad had taught him how to spell 'Granddad'. "Go on then", she said. "How do spell Granddad?"

Looking straight at her, he said, "G - O - D, spells Granddad".

Granddad has now been banned from helping with spelling.

VMT Gen Dit, Stowmarket RNA

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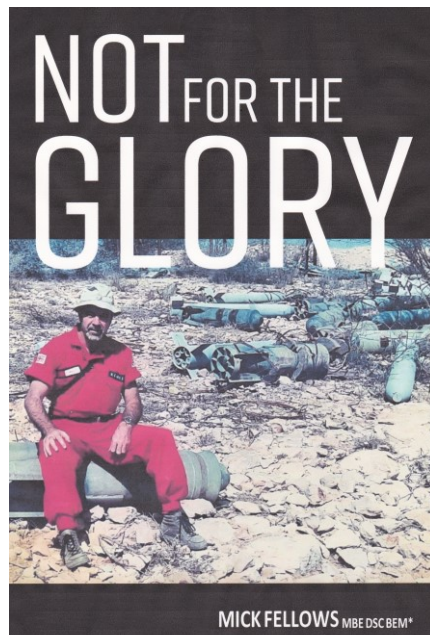
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