

# ***TON Talk***

**Newsletter of the TON Class Association**

**Edition 214**



**February 2022**



**Grog Issue — Page 22**

# TON Class Association

## Patron HRH The Prince of Wales



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

**Front Cover:**  
**Grog Issue**

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

**Founder: Jack Worth MBE**

## Editorial

**WEBSITE ENQUIRIES** As well as Members using the "Contact Us" facility to advise Changes of Address etc, we also receive more challenging requests :

- a) A chap in South Africa compiling a biography of Vice Admiral Sir John Cox, our first President, for his old school asked for photos of Sir John. After suitable checks, we provided three and were thanked.
- b) A gentleman (not RN) advises that he has been told that was christened in the ship's bell of STUBBINGTON, when his father was C.O, and his name was engraved inside the bell (so probably more than 50 years ago). He wished to know if this was usual and where might he see the bell. He was assured that this was quite customary and that the bell is believed to be in the Parish Church of Stubbington village. It was suggested that he contact the vicar.
- c) John Barber, following up the article on the Slow Motor Boat recalls that when THAMES was issued with a Gemini for Op Grenada patrols, a temporary stowage for it was found in the port waist, stood upright, obscuring the daylight from the wardroom deadlights.
- d) John Woolley (not yet a member) advised that he served in MONKTON, THAMES and BEACHAMPTON during 1962-64 and asked if we had the names of the Commanding Officers. He was advised that TCA does not maintain Crew Lists. **Can any member assist him ? Please reply to Editor.**
- e) Justin Drysdale, manager of Margate Marina in Tasmania, advises that they have pulled the ex-**HMAS CURLEW** ashore and are currently looking to dismantle the vessel for scrap He asks if TCA has any contacts who would be interested in purchasing items such as anchors and chains etc. We have put him in contact with the TEAL project in Cyprus.

**TON Talk Accounting** - Costs for producing TON Talk are currently :

Printing £482, Postage £680, Printing envelopes and Insertion £180,  
VAT on UK Post and insertion £133 TOTAL= £1475 per edition or c. £1.64 each  
And we obtain very good value and support from our printer.

*AGM to consider the case for going electronic and saving c. £8k p.a ?*

**JOHN ROBBIE** - Correction to the entry in October's edition: John was a Lieutenant and spent all his RNR service at HMS Graham in Glasgow. Apologies to John's family for any confusion caused.



**Deadline for February's Edition is 13<sup>th</sup> February**

*pjd*

## Chairman's Corner

It is with a heavy heart that I have to advise members that long term problems with my health, have brought me to realise that I cannot perform the duties of Chairman of TCA and Reunion Secretary.

For the immediate future Vice Chairman Commander Bob Hawkins will lead the Association, assisted by Secretary Matthew Salisbury and all members of TCA's Management Committee.

I anticipate that the March Committee Meeting will elect a new Chairman and other appointments could be confirmed.

As a temporary measure, Editor Peter Down will take over liaison with the hotel to complete arrangements for the Reunion in October 2022 and Secretary Matthew Salisbury will account for payments from members.

In the longer term we need a volunteer to take over as Reunion Secretary and plan the Reunion in 2023, for which a reservation has been made at the Carlton Hotel, Torquay, which looked after us so well this year.

We could do with at least two more active members to serve on the Committee to share the load and take our Association into the future.

Organisations in Business and Industry devote considerable attention to Succession Planning to ensure their future continuity and all that training that we did in the RN had a similar objective. Now TCA needs to do the same to secure our future.

If you would like to offer your services as a Committee Member, please notify Secretary Matthew Salisbury, advising any special skills or knowledge that might be useful to TCA. An Internet connection and familiarity with e-mail is important, so you will be able to keep up with the frequent communication between Committee Members, which can include making decisions on expenditure up to £500 by e-mail conference.

I remain a member of TCA and am committed to the further development of our Association. I will support the Committee as much as I am able.

*Peter Harrison*

# TCA Who's Who

## President

Rear Admiral R John Lippiett CB. CBE. DL

**Chairman - Pending**

## Secretary

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## COMING EVENTS

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

## **From the Secretary's Desk**

I will shortly be compiling the AGENDA for our Committee meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. I plan to send it to all Committee members at least one month before the meeting, so they will have time to prepare their reports and consider the implications of the various matters we have to discuss and upon which decisions must be made.

As you will have read in Chairman's Corner, among the most important matters to be decided is appointment of a new Chairman for our Association.

Vice Chairman Commander Bob Hawkins has stepped up to the crease and is heading our affairs, assisted by other members of the Committee. He has courageously offered to take the weight as Chairman, if the Committee agrees. Similarly former HonSec, Peter Down has offered his services as Vice Chairman to provide some continuity.

Other nominations for these roles are invited. We are a democratic group and all members are encouraged to have their say.

We need a volunteer to take over as Reunion Secretary. Currently Peter Down and myself, with Treasurer David, are liaising with the hotels for the reunions in 2022 and 2023. We already have details of contracts and requests for deposits from the two hotels involved.

It has been suggested that it could be beneficial for us to have someone to monitor Social Media, such as Facebook and Twitter and perhaps for us to have a presence on these media. If you have appropriate technical skills, please contact me.

Please give serious consideration to the SURVEY on the following page so that I may put a consolidated summary before the Committee meeting.

**Matthew Salisbury**

# **Your Wishes for the Future of TCA**

The TCA Committee will shortly be meeting to elect a new Chairman and possibly make other appointments. It may therefore be appropriate for Members to give some thought as to what they would wish to have from our Association in future years.

Please use this checklist to advise Secretary Matthew Salisbury of your views or, if you have other suggestions, send him an e-mail at [matthew@cavamh.org](mailto:matthew@cavamh.org)

## **Governance of TCA**

1. I am happy to leave the Committee to guide our direction and activities.  
*If it ain't broke, don't fix it ...*
2. I would prefer ordinary Members to have more say in how things are done.
3. How could this be achieved ? e.g. Regional Representatives to canvas opinion or by regular (e.g. Quarterly) Zoom Conferences etc
4. Would you be prepared to volunteer to join the Committee or to be an Regional Representative ?

## **Reunion**

1. Would you prefer the same location for our Annual Reunion each year ?
2. Which region would you suggest; Scotland NW, NE, Midlands, Wales, SW, SE, London ?
3. Can you suggest a town or hotel that might suit us ?
4. Would you prefer a short regional gathering, such as lunch in a pub – like White Rose Branch, rather than make the Reunion a whole weekend ?

## **TON Talk**

1. Would you prefer the circulation of our magazine to be electronic-only, capable of being read/downloaded from our website, as at present, thus saving approx. £8000 per annum ?
2. Would you prefer a small number (say 200) copies to be available in paper form for those without an internet connection, or who seriously prefer paper ?
3. Would you be prepared to pay extra for these paper copies (say £1.50 per edition) ?

## **Activities**

1. Would you be prepared to travel to visit HM Ships ?  
N.B. MCMVs are based in Clyde and Portsmouth.
2. What other activities would you support ?

***N.B. These proposals would require approval by an AGM.***

## Christmas Lights

*This article is reproduced with kind permission of the Editor of the Parish Magazine of St Mary's Church in Richmond, North Yorkshire, where your Editor was privileged to attend the Children's Christmas Carol Service.*

*The article was written by Rod Hall, a parishioner who has led an exciting life; stepson of a soldier based at Catterick, an itinerant folk musician, trawlerman, grave digger and lighthouse keeper. He used his time on the lighthouses to study for A levels (self taught) and achieved grades that enabled him to enter teacher training college specialising in music and early years primary education. Rod was heavily involved in community music in Stony Stratford, writing music for local history-based drama projects before bringing his family back to Swaledale to teach in local primary schools. He brought up his three children on his own and saw them all successfully through higher education.*

Dylan Thomas called them 'sea shaken houses' which is a fair description of the tower lock lighthouses that stand sentinel over our coastline.

I had a good view of one of them—the Wolf Rock lighthouse— as I dangled from a rope in a Breeches buoy, thirty feet above the Atlantic Ocean on a freezing day in December 1967. Made fast to the Trinity House launch beneath me and a derrick on the 'set-off' of the lighthouse above, the rope slackened and tightened playfully as the launch entered a trough or surged upwards on the peak of a wave.



As the rope slackened, I descended into the cold water. As it tightened, I was 'pinged' aloft and spun merrily round, observing, on each revolution, the cheery waves of the keepers standing safe and dry on the 'dog steps' in the doorway.

But I was a youngster and swinging above the sea was far more exciting than Latin declensions at my grammar school—although slightly more dangerous. There was no Health and Safety in those days. No hard hats, no hi-vis jackets etc. Nowadays, such ways of working which we accepted then would be incomprehensible.

Eventually, the combined efforts of the keepers and a saucy little breaker beneath the launch conspired to deposit me onto the base of the lighthouse. With surprising presence of mind (for me) and with 'cricketing speed', I slid out of the harness seconds before the breeches buoy was catapulted back over the waves.

I was on Wolf Rock lighthouse which was to be my home for the next two months. What I had just experienced was normal procedure for effecting the relief of the three keepers on a tower rock. It is rare for the sea to be calm enough for a boat to come alongside the rock.



Of all of the lights I was stationed on, 'the Wolf' was the most dramatic. Firstly, its bleak position—eight miles from land off the coast of Cornwall and in the Atlantic. The tower itself is only 110 feet high which is short for a tower light. Then, because there are no other rocks around the Wolf, it has the potential to experience the largest wave impacts of any of the other twenty rock lighthouses. Colossal waves which gather momentum over three thousand miles of uninterrupted ocean hurl themselves at the first object in their way—the Wolf Rock Lighthouse. Such is the power of these waves, 'growlers' we called them, that as they strike the base of the tower, they curl completely over it.

It was quite exhilarating for me to be in the lantern at the top of the lighthouse when one of these gigantic waves struck. The light would suddenly turn a greenish hue as the wave passed over. If it happened at night, the light would be obliterated for a second or two.

And, of course, lighthouses are not rigid structures. Skilfully constructed by Cornish tin miners, each stone is dovetailed with the next, binding using joints of molten lead. This makes the lighthouse 'pliable' and able to move perceptibly with the impact of large waves. If it was a rigid structure, it would disintegrate—as Winstanley on the Eddystone light found to his cost.

But on Christmas Day 1967, the sea was a 'still, small voice of calm,' mill pond flat, like glass and reflecting an azure sky—quite different from the mad, roaring beast of two days previously that howled, raging and shrieking, trying vainly to extinguish the glim that, for two hundred years, had warned sailors not to come too close.

At breakfast on Christmas morning, the three of us sat and opened Christmas presents by people all over England and just addressed to 'The Lighthouse Keepers, Wolf Rock.'

Touchingly simple gifts like pencils, rubbers and notebooks (presumably for our memoirs) oranges, toffees, a tin of treacle and, of course, packets of 'Fishermens' Friends. All sent with that precious commodity nowadays—love.

Wolf Rock is on a pinnacle, so on calm days, it is possible for vessel to pass quite near the tower. As we sat with the range glowing warmly and the kettle on the hob singing that Christmas Day, we were surprised to see the mast of a boat pass by the window of our small, round kitchen. A French fishing boat hove to in the lee of the tower and we could see the crew waving up at us and beckoning.



We scrambled down the 'dogsteps' onto the 'set-off' to hear 'Bon Noel' from the crew in their reefer jackets and French fishermen's hats. One of them heaved a line to us and, as we hauled it in, we found a net tied to it, containing a huge sea bass and three bottles of French wine.

With cheery waves and a puff of smoke from its smokestack, the little green and white fishing boat steered away—but it has never left my memory. I have never forgotten an act of kindness by strangers at Christmas Day in the morning.

And a nice sequel. That evening, when we switched on the radio transmitter for the coastguard's report, we found that the emergency (Mayday) channel was jammed—by a very French skipper's voice singing Charpentier's Christmas music—Agnus Dei, to be precise- with gay abandon. Was it our French visitor, I wonder?

Each Christmas morning, I always hum Charpentier's and I am back once again on Wolf Rock Lighthouse.— a special time of my life.

## **MCM News from other Navies**

Culled from USN Naval News website - *More of removing the sailor from the minefield.*

### **United States Navy**

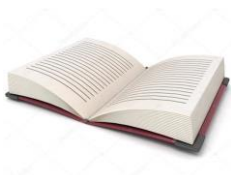
The prototype **Unmanned Influence Sweep System** (UISS) successfully underwent shock tests from underwater explosions in September 2021 at the Aberdeen Proving Range in Maryland.

UISS is capable of being controlled from a Littoral Combat Ship, shore bases or "Vessels of Opportunity i.e. STUFT. It provides an acoustic and magnetic minesweeping capability, coupled with unmanned, semi-autonomous, diesel powered, aluminium hulled MCM surface vessel.

The system is due to become operational in 2022 to replace ageing AVENGER class MCMVs and SEA DRAGON helicopters with towed minesweeping sleds.

### **French Navy - Marine Nationale**

In November 2021, DSG, the French equivalent of MoD Procurement, took delivery of the first prototype of **SLAAF** (Système de Lutte Anti-Mines Futur), based on a small unmanned surface MCM vessel, possibly akin to ARCMIS. This may evolve into a joint French - UK - Belgian and Dutch project for a common future class of MCMV.



## BOOK REVIEW

### **Spying on the Royal Navy and NATO** Military Activity in the Firth of Forth during the 1980's

Colin Hendry, Oatfieldmilitaria ISBN 978-1-3999-1089-7

Colin Hendry joined the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland in 1973 and in 1978 the museum moved to the vacant premises of the former HMS LOCHINVAR at Port Edgar on the south bank of the Firth of Forth. There he found that his new office, in the former anaesthetist's room in the medical centre, had a large picture window which commanded a magnificent view of the river, encompassing, directly opposite HM Naval Base, Rosyth, westwards upriver towards Grangemouth Oil Terminal and Stirling and eastwards the Forth Road and Rail Bridges, leading to the North Sea. Equipped with a notebook, camera with telephoto lens and later, a marine band radio, he was perfectly placed to record movements of ships and aircraft along the river.

His book is a treasure trove of delightful nostalgia; a regular sampling of ship movements, RN, NATO and the occasional "innocent" Russian merchantman, legitimately collecting a cargo at Grangemouth, albeit loitering past Rosyth. Visiting aircraft also receive a mention.

The responsibilities of Colin's day job restricted his observations to a couple of days each week, but his annotated lists are copiously illustrated with photographs and the occasional delightful cartoon, and relevant newspaper clippings

Not surprisingly TONs feature frequently among the movements.

Colin served in the RNXS and concludes his book with some interesting notes on the work of the RN Auxiliary Service

**SPYING**, at 276 pages A4 softback, will bring back memories for many who served at Rosyth and Lochinvar and is highly recommended.

The book is available from the author at [www.oatfieldmilitaria@yahoo.com](mailto:www.oatfieldmilitaria@yahoo.com) at £ 24.99 including UK postage.



## White Rose Branch



On 14<sup>th</sup> January, Sue and I joined Dave Parrish, Terry Foreman, Clive Dennison, Trevor Dixon and their ladies for a meal in the hotel they were staying in for the weekend. On Saturday we all met in the Longboat bar of the Premier Inn for our meeting. Attending were Clive Dennison, Alan Hewitt, Pincher Martin, Dave Parrish, Trevor Dixon, Terry Foreman and myself. We were hoping to welcome two new members Dave Cox and Roy Croysdale but they went AWOL. We were a bit depleted in numbers due to ill health and covid restrictions but a good time was had by all.

*Photos Courtesy of Clive Dennison*



## JAGO's MANSIONS

*With thanks to Robin Dwane, Plymouth Naval Retired Officers Association*

**Most of us recall that “Jago’s Mansions” refers to RN Barracks, Devonport, but who was Jago and what was his claim to fame ?**

One hundred years ago, in 1921, HMS DRAKE (then known as HMS VIVID before its later name change in 1934), had the distinction of becoming the first major RN shore barracks to adopt the General Messing system. At the time **Alphonso Jago** was the senior naval cookery specialist in Devonport and being the man on the spot, became responsible for the successful implementation of this revolutionary change in naval catering practice.



At the beginning of the 20th century the Canteen Messing system was the normal means by which a ship's company would be fed. Under this system individual messdecks were responsible for preparing their own food, which would be taken to the galley on board, or a central kitchen ashore, for heating and cooking. The heated meals were then collected and issued out for consumption on the messdeck. Any savings from food not taken up from the ration scale could be used by messes to make purchases from the ship's canteen or elsewhere.

***Alphonso Jago***

The great downside of Canteen Messing was that so much depended on the skill and expertise of individual mess cooks. The result was that meals were often poor quality, unappetizing and furthermore could be cold, having been transported back from the galley.

To try and improve its standard of catering the Admiralty trialled the General Messing system in the ironclad battleship, HMS DREADNOUGHT. Under the new system the entire ship's company was treated as one mess and provided with cooked meals to the value of the standard ration together with a messing allowance. The food was prepared and cooked in a hygienic environment by trained chefs and served in a central dining hall. The most important aspect was that the lower deck now received four wholesome meals a day although Individual tastes were not catered for, with no range of choices as exist today.

The trial proved to be such a success, that in 1910 the scheme was introduced into Boys' Training Establishments and the Stoker's Training Establishment at Portsmouth. It was further extended to the boys embarked for training in the Fourth Cruiser Squadron.

The General Mess system did have some disadvantages, mainly due to its cost implications. Extra space was needed to equip galleys fully, more sophisticated kitchen equipment, and serveries were now required with heaters. Large general mess machinery was also needed, and worse, the complement of cooks had to be doubled. More costs arose in 1916 with the introduction of frozen meat to the Navy necessitating the installation of large refrigerators. However, the Admiralty remained convinced the General Mess system provided a much better service to the men and Jago's efforts in Devonport in 1921 only served to reinforce this view. By 1923 five seagoing capital ships and six shore establishments had been moved onto General Messing, and all new construction ships were being built with General Mess facilities in mind.

Of course, not everyone was convinced, and as usual, old habits died hard, with one messdeck poet writing:

What is it fills our bitter cup?  
And makes our hearts feel sore?  
Why does the dismal queue line up?  
Outside the canteen door?  
Why can't we put a quid away?  
Ten bob or even less?  
O messmates, 'tis misfortunes sway:  
The woes of 'General Mess'  
O 'tis not to my liking.  
My wife, my only friend,  
Believes I'm hunger striking  
Or 'going round the bend.'  
She moans for her poor hubby,  
She's not to blame, I know  
They used to call me tubby  
They call me Snakey now.

Following on from this poem, perhaps one predictable shortcoming of the new system was that men no longer had experience of food preparation, so that when they joined older Classes of ship still on Canteen Messing, they were unable to cope. To try and resolve the problem, the Admiralty ordered classes of instruction for men, with one day's training in cookery/food preparation being given at Shotley. This was an unsatisfactory solution and never fully resolved, with many smaller ships remaining on Canteen Messing until well after World War 2.

And what of Alphonso Jago himself? The son of a coastguard, he was born in St Just, Cornwall on 30 Dec 1875. His father's career had taken Jago and his eight siblings across the West Country from Dorset to the Scilly Isles, and by 1891 they were living in Falmouth although by then his mother Elizabeth had been widowed. Jago started his working life as a roper's apprentice but looking for better prospects, he joined the Navy in Falmouth in October 1892 as a 'Boy Domestic.' His initial training took place in HMS GANGES which was then an old 84-gun second-rate ship of the line converted into a

training school and anchored in Carrick Roads. He later trained as a cook under the Chef to Prince Louis of Battenburg, where he showed undoubted talent as a chef being progressively rated Ship's, Captain's, and then Admiral's Cook. He was predominantly Devonport-based, but his career also took him to the Far East to the China Station whilst serving in the pre-Dreadnought battleship HMS BARFLEUR during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 and later to the Australia Station onboard HMS PYRAMUS.

Just 5ft 2½ins in height Jago's diminutive size didn't prevent him from becoming the China Fleet lightweight boxing champion 1900-1903 and later the Australian Fleet lightweight champion in 1904. He became a Chief Petty Officer Cook in 1908 and then on 1 Oct 1911 was commissioned Warrant Instructor in Cookery.

As we have seen Jago's great moment came in 1921 with the General Messing trial in the Devonport barracks. The scale of the operation was sizeable, with new dining halls being constructed.

## GENERAL MESSING IN PRACTICE

With the introduction of General Messing HMS RODNEY, a battleship of the 1920s, was happy to boast that, "the ship herself would fail from want of harbour attention before her reserve of rations ran out. Every day the bakery, with its great electric ovens and motor driven dough mixer, turns out 1500 lbs of perfect bread. And cakes too, when required. And in the 'kitchen', alongside, the meals for a thousand men are cooked to an equal perfection in oil fired galleys and huge steam chests. While in the scullery one machine slices the bacon; another removes the jackets from potatoes. The onion alone defies the inroads of science, and that men must tearfully peel."

The ship's menu, of which the following may be regarded as a typical Two-day sample, was the same for all ratings and the state was 1s 3½d per man per day:

### BREAKFAST

Bacon and tomatoes or Sausage & egg

### DINNER

#### DAY 1

Soup  
Roast beef  
Roast potatoes  
Marrowfat peas  
Apples

#### DAY 2

Soup  
Beef & kidney pies  
Boiled potatoes  
Cabbage  
Jam Tart

## TEA

Bread and Jam  
Buns

## SUPPER

Steak and chips  
Liver & bacon

In 1925 the daily standard ration was:10oz bread (reduced from 1lb as a Great War economy that was made permanent in 1920)

2oz sugar (It had been 4oz, another War economy similarly made permanent)  
½lb fresh Meat  
1lb fresh vegetables (or 4oz haricot beans/marrowfat peas when fresh not available)  
1/8pt spirit  
½ oz tea (or 1oz coffee for every ¼ oz tea)  
½ oz chocolate (or 1oz coffee)  
¾ oz condensed milk  
1oz jam, marmalade or pickles  
4oz corned beef on one day of the week in harbour or two days a week at sea  
Mustard, pepper, vinegar and salt as required

It became Jago's proud boast that he could pack up to 3000 men into the dining halls a in the basements of Raleigh and Exmouth Blocks and have them out within the hour.

Beyond any official measure of Jago's success, perhaps the best gauge is that his name passed into local folklore such that right up until the 1960s bus conductors referred to HMS DRAKE as 'Jago's Mansions.'

On his return from the Far East in 1902 he married Emily Crofts Hill in Devonport and they later set up home in at 32 Craigmere Avenue in Keyham. They had a son Harold who also followed his father into the Navy, but as a Writer. Height clearly didn't run in the family, Harold was just 4ft 11 ins!

Alphonso Jago was also a Freemason having been initiated into the Cambrian Lodge of Australia in 1906 whilst serving in HMS PYRAMUS and later the Tamar Lodge in Plymouth.

Jago was promoted to Instructor on 1 Oct 1925 and the same year wrote the Naval Handbook of Cookery, being assisted in the task by his son who typed the manuscript. This book became recognised as the textbook for all Cook ratings and remained in use by the Navy until 1974.In 1928, just prior to being invalided from the Service due to cancer in 1928, Jago was promoted to Lieutenant Instructor in Cookery, but sadly passed away that same year at RNH Stonehouse on 27 June, aged 52. His funeral took place three days later in Weston Mill Cemetery where he was afforded full military honours including a band and firing party, and flags flown at half mast.



## LET'S GO FLY A KITE ...

A trip down memory Lane from Lt Cdr John Clark RNR of Petworth.

One of London Division's sweepers – probably early 1970's



Painful memories of sorting out a bunch of b#ggers in the wire, then re-calibrating the kite.

*At least this time it was not in the dark, blowing a hooly and raining hard ...* **Editor**

# TON CLASS ASSOCIATION REUNION WEEKEND

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Wollaton St, Nottingham NG1 5RH Phone: 0115 936 9988  
Friday 28<sup>th</sup> - Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

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

**OPTION A 3 nights:** Arrive pm Friday – Depart am Monday

**Double Room £ 245 per person.      Single Room £ 365 per person.**

**OPTION B 2 Nights:** Arrive pm Friday – Depart am Sunday

**Double Room £ 197 per person.      Single Room £ 291 per person.**

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

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

**NAMES OF THOSE ATTENDING :**

.....

.....

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

Minimum deposit £25 per person.

Please make cheques payable to “TON Class Association” .

**Please note the following conditions :**

1. All balances are to be paid by 8<sup>h</sup> August 2022
2. Any refunds will be subject to an administration charge of £5.00 per person.
3. Regrettably, no refunds can be made after 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022
4. Please send completed application form, plus deposit/payment to:

***Matthew Salisbury, 14 Redlands Road, Penarth, South Glamorgan CF64 2 QP***

**You are advised to consider holiday insurance.**

If you have to cancel after 8 August 2022, 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, special dietary needs or may need assistance in the event of a Fire Alarm.**

I look forward to seeing you all at the Reunion.

*Matthew Salisbury*

## ANTELOPE's ASCHENBECHER

Mike Smith of Marshland Maritime Museum is pictured receiving the donation of an ashtray from HMS ANTELOPE, sent by TCA Member Kapitän zur See Hans Andresen MBE of the German Navy Reserve.



As Kapitänleutnant (Lieutenant Commander), Hans had received the ashtray from the Wardroom Officers to thank him for his services as Liaison Officer during the visit of HMS ANTELOPE to the City-State of Hamburg in late 1977. Commanding Officer of the ship at that time was Commander Patrick Rowe MVO RN, who later became Rear Admiral Sir Patrick Rowe KCVO, CBE and Deputy Master of Trinity House, having previously served as Jimmy of DARTINGTON during Confrontation and navigated the Royal Yacht.



ANTELOPE was a Type 21 Frigate, F170, launched in 1972. She was sunk on 24 May 1982 in the Falklands Campaign by a detonation during a render-safe operation of an unexploded bomb dropped by Argentine aircraft, resulting in a dramatic explosion in the magazine which broke the ship in half.

## TOWED GRADIOMETER

Mention of the Towed Gradiometer in the mystery photo of LALESTON and NURTON on the rear cover of October's edition of TON Talk has sparked some earnest, but as yet inconclusive, correspondence about this device.

Some asked what was its purpose and how did it work ? It has also shown up a hole in our Archives, in that we do not appear to have a photo or suitable illustration.

Others offered half-formed memories but we have yet to discover a TASO or Buffer who will admit to having operated the device – **Is there someone out there who could enlighten us and, perhaps provide a picture ?**

The consensus of views offered is that the Towed Gradiometer was form of Magnetic Anomaly Detector; four (or six) bronze balls, towed astern, each containing a magnetometer, which gave a twitch when it detected something metallic on the sea bed beneath it.

The balls were suspended from the port sweep wire, together with a power cable, rather like Christmas lights. The twitches from the magnetometers were relayed to a multi-pen display in the Ops Room, with one pen for each magnetometer, giving traces similar to a seismograph or lie detector.

As serious twitch agitated the pen indicating that there might be mine-like object below.

How the gradiometer may have been “tuned” for various depths and target gaussses (magnetic fields) is not known.

Memories of what happened next are somewhat varied; this was in the early 1960's when all sorts of Bosun's Nightmares were being trialled by AUWRE in Portland and before GPS and underwater video were Pussers' issue, so it appears that the spot was probably marked by a hastily-laid danbuoy and subsequently a diver was sent to take a look.

One correspondent says the balls were diverted to starboard in line abreast, to give a “swept path” but all agree that the detector vessel had to enter the minefield and drive over the suspected area without operating other sweeps – sounds even more hazardous than usual !

There is much speculation about this device and its method of operation and it certainly did not enter general MCM service, being effectively superseded by the Plessy 193 minehunting sonar so, if you know better, please advise the Editor, preferably with a diagram.

## ROBIN SWAINE – HMS Gavinton 1984/5 - by the ‘Gavvy Boys’

It is truly said that a Ship’s success is measured by the character of her First Lieutenant. This was certainly the case for HMS *Gavinton*, whose legendary status in the mid ‘80s was largely due to Lieutenant Robin Swaine – her much loved and respected ‘No 1’.

During the 1984 international effort to clear the Red Sea and Gulf of Suez of the sea-mines that had been damaging ships in the area, it was Robin’s watch of Mine Warfare ratings who detected and pinpointed the Russian ground-mine, laid by the Libyans, that was what we had been looking for. He thus became the first man ever to have successfully prosecuted an unknown, ‘enemy’ mine by high-definition sonar; an enviable achievement in anyone’s book.

On returning to UK, the ship anchored for the night off Burnt-island. Our First Lieutenant was seen to shoot away in the gemini and stop HMS *Manchester* midstream, by standing up in the boat, one hand raised like a traffic policeman on point duty. He then collected from her two giant white ensigns for us and *Brinton* to wear for the ceremonial entry to Rosyth Naval Base the next day. It was such inventive attention to detail that characterised our ‘Jimmy’.

Apart from running a tight, professional and effective ship, Robin was also instrumental in hosting very successful ‘*Gavinton* Tea-Parties’ (oft times for the whole crew), which became a preferred method of entertaining guests onboard. Under his leadership the ship’s company thrived, the punishment return reduced to zero and the saying, “*It’s great to be a Gavvie!*” became the catch-all. On one occasion when refuelling at a remote NATO jetty on the wild, west coast of Scotland, it being a beautiful June day, the *Gavvies* went ashore for a picnic. Unfortunately the 1st Lt had to stay behind to look after the ship, which was a shame as it was his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, as the crew returned, each man picked a posy of wild-flowers from the verge and presented them to ‘Uncle Robin’ as they came over the gangway; a nice touch that quite moved him.

We were visiting King’s Lynn in November ‘85 when his appointment ended and he moved on. It was a cold, wet and windy, grey day that did little to alleviate the sadness of his departure – despite the champagne breakfast he was given. To mark and illustrate the occasion, the following poem was found on the Bridge:

### *For ‘Uncle’ Robin*

*Oh, we have the East Wind.  
Cold it blows across the open Sea;  
Cold across the dykes and black-earthed Fens  
Until it comes to Lynn, my Ship and me.*

*Cold it blows from Russia’s far-off Steppes  
In November’s darkling, morning gleam;  
Sharp amid the grey of early skies  
While sullen seabirds sit and stem the Stream.*

Those of us who were fortunate enough to serve in the ship with him will always remember ‘Uncle Robin’, our revered and much loved ‘Jimmy the One’, the finest gentleman of them all.



# APPROACH TO THE GREEN

(Fiddler's Green\*)

for Robin Swaine by Bernie Bruen

I look across the chart that is my life  
And see, like ports and harbours,  
Little creeks and streams,  
All the happy times and oft' the ones of strife  
That filled me with a joy of living and of dreams.

Yet many, lying soft like pools of misty grey,  
But half remembered, never whole and clear to see,  
Quietly and unnoticed, slide away  
And softly lock their doors and hide away the key.

No more shall they be seen, nor bide  
With me, that others share what  
I still know they are.  
Like unknown shadow shapes of eventide  
They fly, they fade in misty dreams afar.

And as I drift and let life slide me by,  
So one by one each hatch is shut and locked and barred;  
'Til only one direction, one last door I spy  
And there a shining figure, sword in hand, stands guard.

*\* Fiddler's Green – the legendary Valhalla for all who go down to the Sea in Ships.*

## Black Ooze and no Argentine Air Force

*Alan George, then an MoD Information Officer and formerly of South Wales Division RNR, recalls a sticky Incident during the Falklands Campaign.*

I found myself in this situation, having travelled South in Canberra with some civilian journalists, then transferred to Stromness and later to FEARLESS.

There were three of us in San Carlos Water at the time, Allan Percival who was living in a tent ashore at Ajax Bay adjacent to the sitcom tent and the hospital, Martin Helm in Canberra, which had just returned from South Georgia carrying 5 Inf Bde, and me living in HMS Fearless. Martin and I were visiting Allan with some goodies to make his life a little more comfortable. It was surprising how tins of sweets seemed to stick to my hands as I doled out 10 man compo packs to the hacks.

Anyway we hitched a lift in an LCU and soon we were approaching Ajax Bay. As the vessel's ramp lowered, not exactly on a beach, just a muddy foreshore, a soldier rushed out from the sitcom tent 200 yards away, blew a whistle and fired a shot in the air – the alert for an Air Raid Red.

Allan also emerged from the sitcom tent and dived into a trench. We legged it across the boggy ground towards him, well actually I took three paces and measured my length in black ooze.

Covered from head to foot in black slime I raced to the trench, jumped in to discover it was waterlogged.

Nevertheless, the three of us cowered for 45 minutes as deep as we could, never mind the six inches of water at the bottom, bellyaching furiously. and after all of that, the Argentine Air Force didn't have the decency to actually send an aircraft over.

# GROG Issue

Doug Andrews, Ware

In common with the vast majority of ex-Royal Navy personnel, my mind all too often goes back to those far-off days and recalls some of those experiences which have somehow stuck in the memory, some happy, some sad but all very nostalgic. Having spent quite a large proportion of my brief naval career 'absorbed' - if that is the word - in the daily tot, carrying out the vital calculations in the forenoon (when totally sober), working with the two 'tankies' (seaman butchers) carrying out the routine in the Spirit Room then at the rum tub on the upper deck, all the while closely watched by the Officer of the Day, that is the source of most of my reminiscences.

Having been called upon to serve in the early 1950's, I was fortunate enough to enjoy a 'Splice the Mainbrace' after less than four months in uniform, following the Coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey on 5th June 1953. The harsh routine of my Part 1 basic training at the York Road section of the 'stone frigate' had passed, and my class were almost being treated as human beings as we undertook our trade training at the Moorlands Camp of HMS Ceres in Wetherby, Yorkshire (where the race course was our sports field).

Being 'under age' at that time, my 'splicers' was not taken in rum, but 3/8ths of a pint of lime juice! I am not sure if my mind is playing tricks here, but I have the feeling that the order to Splice might have been issued again, after the Fleet Review at Spithead on the 15th of June - however, I stand to be corrected on this point. The day of the Coronation is crystal clear in my memory, because the ship's company, which under the normal daily routine was divided into four watches - red, yellow, blue & green, or 1st & 2nd of port & 1st & 2nd of starboard, with two watches on duty - had three watches closed up of that day, with just one watch (yellow) watch doing double whacks, and I was of course in yellow watch.

The majority of the ship's company were therefore able to watch the ceremony on a large black & white TV screen in the mess hall, while I was the Main Gate sentry, standing out there in the pouring rain. When I was quite well soaked, a member of the Regulating staff told me to stand under the over-hanging roof of the Guardhouse, which I interpreted as an opportunity to shelter from further soaking, but I found out later that there was a fear that with my bayonet fixed to my Lee Enfield .303, I might be struck by lightning!

With my mind still recalling with affection the long-standing tradition and process of the rum issue, I thought back to Queen Victoria's long reign, and wondered if My Lords At The Admiralty had made any provision as it approached its inevitable close, to provide every ship in Her fleet with the additional brass letters that would be required when 'The Queen God Bless Her' gave way to 'The King God Bless Him' for King Edward VII. This would of course, require the retirement of the letters QUEERE and the production of GIMIK - suitably burnished, of course.



Bringing this train of thought into the 20th-21st century following Black Tot Day at the end of July 1970, Her Majesty still has the power to order Splice the Mainbrace, and to my simple mind this means that all RN ships must have a safe store-room somewhere, serving as a Spirit Room, in which would be held the odd oak cask of Pusser's Rum plus the copper measures, spirit pump, barricoe etc., all absolutely necessary in its issue (not forgetting the concentrated lime juice). On a visit to one of our warships a few years ago I raised this point with a member of its Wardroom, whereupon my positive thoughts were shattered. I was informed that, not only do ships no longer carry Navy rum, but that in the rare event of a Splice being ordered, a junior officer would be sent ashore to find the nearest supermarket in order to purchase sufficient of the amber liquid for their requirements! Goodness only knows what brand he would end up with, or how it would be dispensed and by whom, but one thing is certain - it would not be of the 96.4% proof standard as it was quoted in my day.

Herewith, my modest collection of spirit measures, described in the Victualling Manual as 'measures, spirit, copper, lipped round', used when dispensing the neat rum in the Spirit Room (as against 'measures, spirit, square' for those employed on the upper deck dishing out the grog.) Those shown range from the 1 tot measure up to a quart. The one- and three- tot ones were part of the set I actually used on a daily basis all the time I had that job.

One of the memorable Officers of the Day witnessing the issue would always remind the ratings in the queue to "Step up smartly, bang your fanny on the tub and say Sir !" Funny the little things you remember ...



On reflection, I am so very glad that I left this Royal Navy tradition behind, rather than it left me. I cannot imagine that issuing cans of beer on a daily basis would have the same mystique, and I might well have found myself out of a job

## Glasserton Dit

Lt Cdr Malcolm McKeag RNR, Belfast

An 8mm video of the 1974 One Ton Cup, sailed off Torquay, has emerged in Ireland, discovered by well known Irish sailmaker Jonny McWilliam and has been digitised by his son Jamie.

Written and narrated by the doyen of yachting journalists, Bob Fisher, the video gives an excellent insight into the way offshore racing was conducted prior to the era of the full-time professional sailor. It features many of the well-known sailors of the sport - Richard Creagh-Osbourne, John Oakley, Hugh Coveney, Ron Holland, Jeremy Rogers and others.

The series won by Gumboots (UK), a Contessa 35, designed by Doug Peterson, built and skippered by Jeremy Rogers with High Tension, skippered by her builder George Stead (UK) second and and Hati IV, a charter boat also a Contessa 35 sailed by Chris Bouzaid (NZ), placed third, in the 34 boat fleet.

Sailed in boats of around 35ft to the IOR Rule the One Ton Cup was a level rating series i.e. there were no restrictions on dimensions, but there was a maximum rating allowed for the series

*GLASSERTON may be the grey smudge on the distant wall in the screen shot below.*



## **More Dits from Mick Donoyou**

### **Bofors**

On one occasion at sea, a 40/60 Bofors shoot was due to take place. A significant amount of ammunition was brought up from the magazine, the boxes were unpacked, the shells were greased up and loaded into the ready use racks and lockers.

With the guns crew closed up and the Bofors cleared away, the "Bridge Team" announced that no actual firing would take place and that the "Aimer" would, instead, shout "BANG" several times.

Apart from the inconvenience of subsequently having to de-grease the shells and then re-pack them and take all the cases back down to the magazine, the "Aimer" decided that instead of shouting BANG he would remain silent.

After several minutes the Gunnery Officer leaned over the front of the Bridge and shouted "come on L/S J, I want to hear a few BLOODY BANGS - Whereupon the latter sighed and shouted back "Oh very well Sir - BANG, BLOODY BANG, BLOODY BANG, BLOODY BANG".

### **Op Grenada**

In the 1970's during the troubles in Northern Ireland, I was away on another occasion when a "small arms" shoot was arranged.

As the "Gunner's Yeoman" I was responsible for amassing all the ammunition behind the sweepdeck winch and loading all the SLR and SMG magazines.

I was in the process of loading all the magazines when the Cox'n appeared and told me I would be fully accountable for all the numbers of rounds fired and those that were not, reminding me of the troubles in Northern Ireland etc.

Either not aware, or forgetting my own Irish Ancestry, the Cox'n said all rounds had to be accounted for and he did not want any of the ammunition to come into the hands of some bloody mad Irishman - to which I smiled sweetly at him and replied.... Too Late !

### **Pongoes**

One Weekend we took a number of the 10th Para (TA) Regiment to sea and a "small arms" shoot was arranged for one afternoon.

During midday drinks in the S/R's Mess, the couple of Army Sergeants revealed that a particularly young and gullible squaddie would volunteer for anything suggested.

Come the afternoon with the Larne Target attached to the end of the Kite Wire and hanging off the stern, a volunteer was called to be the "Cox'n" of the Larne Target and, as expected, the young squaddie was only too keen to volunteer.

He was dressed in a Hi Viz Jacket, a Hazzardous Duty Lifejacket and a Hard Hat and he was briefed that he merely needed to sit on and steer the Larne Target whilst it was being towed astern.

He was all set to clamber over the stern and on to the Larne Target when, suddenly, several seamen appeared from behind the Sweep Deck Winch carrying SLR Rifles and Sterling Sub-Machine Guns and the squaddie was told that they would be firing at the target that he would be steering.

He turned very pale and promptly "Un-volunteered" himself.!

### **Promotion**

On one occasion I was due to sit a Promotion Board along with one of my contemporaries "Smudge".

"Smudge" had previously been in the Merchant Navy, first going to sea as a Cabin Boy and rising through the ranks. He was a very competent seaman of imposing stature. He was over 6 feet in height with a bushy beard, and all year weather beaten tan, plus an impressive collection of tattoos - some said that only the parrot was missing ...

Smudge's one drawback was that he was a very slow writer and the week before the Board he expressed this concern to the Training Commander who assured "Smudge" that no writing was involved and, in an unfortunate choice of words, said he merely had to orally satisfy the Board - to which "Smudge" replied - "That's what you think Sir".

# **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 MIDDLETON (MCM2 Crew 4) and CHIDDINGFOLD (2/3) plus the Sandown class MCMVs BANGOR (1/6) and PENZANCE (1/3), all supported by RFA LYME BAY.

PENZANCE reported a beautiful sunrise and sunset while at sea on 29 December. CHIDDINGFOLD reported being at sea on operations on 2 January. BANGOR has celebrated her 22nd birthday and she and MIDDLETON tweeted greetings from the Gulf on Christmas day. BANGOR exercised with RFA LYME BAY and a US Navy MCMV in January.

## **HUNT Class**

HURWORTH (2/5) emerged from a maintenance period in November and hosted Sea Cadets from Portland and CCF from Budmouth Academy while visiting Portland in December. She tweeted New Year greetings to all from Portsmouth. BROCKLESBY (2/6) commemorated Remembrance Day by laying a wreath at Kirmington and Croxton (Brocklesby Village's local service). LEDBURY (2/8) did the same in their affiliated village. After being taken over by MCM2 Crew 2, BROCKLESBY ammunitioned at RNAD Bedenham in Portsmouth harbour in January and later conducted weapon training including gunnery, diving, firefighting, damage control, seamanship evolutions and man overboard exercises off Portsmouth, as did LEDBURY. BROCKLESBY celebrated her 40th birthday in January with a barbecue on the sweepdeck.

## **SANDOWN Class**

GRIMSBY (1/2) completed Operational Sea Training off Scotland in December. SHOREHAM (1/5) hosted members of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme while alongside Faslane in November. The following month, her CO helped prepare Christmas dinner for the ship's company.

PEMBROKE (1/4) watchkeepers underwent bridge simulator training at Portsmouth in December and she conducted weapon training off Scotland in January.

## **MASTT (Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team)**

MASTT carried out towed sonar trials using an autonomous minehunting vehicle in January while based at Turnchapel in Plymouth harbour.

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

## Membership Update

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

### **NEW MEMBERS – Welcome Aboard**

**Douglas Toogood.** OS COMMS Hedge End, Hampshire.  
Served on HMS WARSASH 1968 F2492

**Gavin Dunbar.** Midshipman RNVR. Wargrave, Berkshire  
Served on HM Ships GLASSERTON 1954-55. HICKLETON 1955-56 F2493

**Terence Woodward** A/B-L/S RN. Marsham, Norfolk.  
Served on HM Ships Highburton 19 65-66, Mermaid F2494

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

**Simon Skeen** To:-Yeovil Somerset E-mail. F0993

**Robert Macpherson. To** - Rosyth Scotland. E-mail. F0517

**Neil G Sowerby.** To:- East Herrington Sunderland. F2245

**Tim Brunt:-** To-Skipton North Yorkshire. F2068

**Rodney Hogan,** To:- Ipswich Suffolk. E-mail:-. F2178

### **LOST CONTACT.**

*Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary*

**Robin E D House.** Last Known Area London F0466

**Hamish G Murray.** Last Known Area:- Musselburgh F0470

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

**Christopher Mellor F2385**



## **Crossed the Bar**

### ***CPO RS Patricia Barber MBE RNR***

*Wife of TCA Member L/S John (Lofty) Barber of Ilford*

*Patricia held the LS&GC Medal and Bar. She had been Captain of the RNR Ski Team for many years and was Secretary of the HMS PRESIDENT Old Hands Association. During the Falklands Conflict she returned to work as a volunteer in Whitehall ComCen and handled traffic for 11 MCMS.*

### ***CMEM Henry (Gary) Jones RN/RNR***

*Barry, Served in HM Ships Chrichton and Brereton (as St DAVID),  
KELLINGTON & UPTON 1954-90 F2288*

### ***POME David Evans RN/RNR***

*Glasgow. Served on HM Ships REPTON, HODGESTON. CROFTON.  
WALKERTON, LALESTON. L0497*

### ***CPO ERA 3 Edward Gooch RN***

*Camberley. Served on HM Ships DALESWINTON 1955-57, LOCHINVAR F1459*

### ***Lieutenant Commander Hugh Mulleneux RNR/RNVR.***

*Wadhurst, Sussex. Served on HM Ships CURZON 1959-71 NORTHUMBRIA 1965.  
F1752*

### ***CMEM Brian Mitchell. RN/RNR***

*Crawley, Served on HM Ships CURZON/ FITTLETON 1960-76,  
KELLINGTON 1976-84 F0262*

### ***Flt Chief Mech Frederick Roberts BEM RN.***

*Pershore. Served on HM Ships CRICHTON 1968-69. BRERETON 1970-71 F2031*

**May They Rest In Peace**

# SLOPS

Stock Items	Price	<i>Please ring Stores before placing order to confirm items are in stock</i>	
TON Talk Binder	£ 7.73	TCA Mug	£ 9.91
TCA Baseball cap. Logo 1 or 2	£ 11.20	TCA 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Print	£ 5.50
TCA Beret Badge	£ 7.50	TCA 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Badge	£ 6.00
RN Beret, Blue. Various sizes	£ 8.00	TCA Wall Shield 8 ins	£ 37.00
TCA Embroidered Blazer Badge	£ 9.77	Beanie/Ski woollen hat Navy with TCA badge	£ 8.72
TCA Lapel Badge	£ 6.05	TCA Polo Shirt, Navy logo 1	£18.44
TCA Mouse Mat	£ 4.00	Blazer Badge (Gold Wire)	£16.00
Car sticker – Logo 1 Clings to inside of windscreen	£ 1.25	TON Profile badge - Silver or Gold	£ 8.00
TCA Tie, Blue	£ 9.90	TCA Notepad	£ 3.75
TCA Tie, Maroon	£ 11.60	TCA Pen	£ 3.00
Blackfoot Tie	£ 13.00	<b>TCA Notepad plus Pen</b>	<b>£ 5.00</b>
<b>Special Order items</b>		<p>When paying by cheque, please do NOT write on the back of the cheque, as it confuses the optical reader at the bank and brings the process to a halt, delaying our paying in.</p> <p>VMT Laurie</p>	
<p><b><i>State size, colour and logo required</i></b> <i>Logo 1 = Mine and Keys, Logo 2 = Mine and TON silhouette</i> <b><i>Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery</i></b></p>			
TCA V-neck sweater. Navy or Maroon	£ 32.45	<b>BOOKS</b>	
Blazer Badge, Embroidered + ships name	£ 34.20		
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Iron Man Tee Shirt, Navy	£ 15.37	<b>Last of the Wooden Walls</b>	<b>£ 24.99</b>
Iron Man Polo Shirt , Navy	£ 18.44	A4 Hardback and E-book	<i>Order from www.halsgrove.com</i>
TCA Round Neck Sweatshirt	£ 29.16		
TCA Polar Fleece Jacket	£ 38.30		

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## Post Bag

### FROM: Ray Brooks, Gosport

I recently found this photo of the old Gosport ferry.



I used it regularly as a kid when we lived in Southsea. My Dad worked at HMS St Vincent as a Civvie on demob in '47 after WW2, having served 12 years as a Jack Dusty, mostly on Destroyer Depot Ships and finally with Combined Ops Pay and Admin at HMS COPRA at Largs in Ayrshire.

I can see why my Dad was keen to work there. OK, the workload was tremendous with the war's end in sight and having to process all those returning servicemen and women, pay and kit them out for civilian life. But there were 300 WRNS and 300 Women POs & Officers stationed there.

The remains of the old Ferry still lay in Forton Creek.

### FROM: Nic Griffin, Ryde, Isle of Wight

I was an RNVR Sub Lt on watch on HMS Penston in December 1957 on passage from Cyprus to Malta in quite a storm. A fire broke out in the generator room due to a split fuel pipe.

Despite the terrible conditions, the pulse generator was connected to the electrical supply.

I recall a PO Electrician running down the port side of the ship with a huge cable at the sort of speed you would only otherwise get for "Up Spirits".

I think, but am not sure, that we had to use manual steering for a time. This episode gave us Christmas in dry dock and cost me my leave to the UK.

I may say that I thoroughly enjoyed my National Service and was extremely lucky to get this posting.

### ROM: Nigel Brearley via TCA Website Enquiry

I am interested to discover how the Ley class vessel HMS Brearley acquired her name.

I am aware of a noted Steel manufacturer and developer of stainless steel and early 20th century professional football player and a signatory of the US constitution, were relatively well known but hardly the likely inspiration for the naming of an RN ship and I am unaware of a place name with this spelling.

Any information gratefully received with thanks.

*Regret we may not be able to assist re: naming of the inshore minehunter HMS BREARLEY.*

*I have checked with Google maps and, to my surprise, there does not appear to be a village called "Brearley".*

*There used to be, possibly still is, an august body in the darker corridors of the Admiralty charged with deciding names for HM Ships.- the Ship Naming Committee.*

*Given the number of ships built for the RN in time of peace, they were probably not kept very busy.*

*The members were probably Admirals and Senior Civil Servants imbued with a sense of tradition and history. How they came up with imaginative names such as for the Flower Class Corvettes and TON Class minesweepers is a wonder.*

*Decisions on naming the LEY class minehunters would have been taken in early 1950's. Given the absence of suitable mine detection sonar at that time, the vessels mainly served as Diving Tenders and in seamanship training roles.*

*I will publish this plight in our magazine so perhaps one of our members may know better than I ... **Editor***

**FROM Mike Harvey, Yacht Trade Wind, Australia**

I served on the Wilkieston 64/66. Many years passed and in 1996 my wife and I decided to go cruising on our 45' ketch. We spent quite a few years around the "Far East" visiting all the old haunts.

The only place we hadn't been to was Borneo as we knew it. After a final dive

stop at Pulau Tioman it was head east for Tanjong Po and Kuching. Believe it or not Biawak jetty and the Shell fuel tanks are still there! We then continued around Borneo and one day ended up in Sandakan.

As all good sailors do we sought out the nearest watering hole which happened to be the yacht club. Whilst enjoying a cold Tiger or two I happened to spot three ships crest high on the wall, you know the ones handed out by visiting ships. They looked in pretty bad condition so on taking them down I was amazed to find one of the WOOLESTON, one of the WILKIESTON and the third one that blew me away was one of the BELFAST, my first ship.

With the Commodore's blessing I took them on board and completely refurbished them.

The reason I am contacting you is I have photos of the finished crests and also a Borneo Post article of the handing back to the Commodore of the Belfast crest. If you like me to forward them to you, possibly for your archives or any other use you may have I would be more than happy to send them.

*The article from Borneo Post can now be read on our website under Latest News... **Editor***



# Only Having a Laugh ...



## DANGER TO SHIPPING ?

Edinburgh Evening News 7<sup>th</sup> March 1978

Rosyth-based Fishery Protection vessel HMS JERSEY, investigating a report of a body in the English Channel, has recovered an inflatable rubber woman doll three miles east of the North Goodwins lightship.

*Just one of the helpful snippets in Colin Hendry's book "Spying on the RN and NATO" – see Book Review on page 8.*

## PET SHOP

An angelic little girl went into the pet shop and enquired "Pleath do you have any baby Wabbits ? "

"Certainly" said the kindly owner, crouching down, the better to speak to her.

"Would you like a fluffy little white bunny, or the brown one with cute little ears or the silver one with a long shiny coat ?"

"Oh", said the Cherub, "I don't think my pet python really minds what colour they are ...."

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## Radio-Controlled Model of BRONINGTON

A seven foot long model made by Ron Slater of Nantwich, who served in INTREPID and AMAZON and is a friend of Malcolm Coulson, BRONINGTON's original shipkeeper, Ron based construction on photos he took on board.

Sea Trials are due in February , so stand by for further news

