

TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association

Edition 215



April 2022



**WO 1 (MW) Steven Moss accepts the painting on behalf
of the Minewarfare School from new TCA Chairman
Commander Bob Hawkins MBE**

TON Class Association

Patron HRH The Prince of Wales



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TCA Membership
£15 per annum
£150 Life Membership

Front Cover:
WO1 Steven Moss receives the
painting " Minesweeper Sailors
through the Ages" from Cdr Bob
Hawkins MBE, new TCA Chairman

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Editorial

NO POLITICS ! It is just as well that TCA Policy is to steer clear of political statements but the temptation to comment on matters in Downing Street, the Palace and Ukraine has been difficult to resist.

APOLOGIES for two serious typos on February's edition. Both down to the Editor, despite frequent proof reading:

Correct address to send Reunion Booking Form to Secretary Matthew Salisbury is: **143 Redlands Road**, Penarth, South Glamorgan CF64 2QP

The form has been reprinted in this edition and is also available on our website

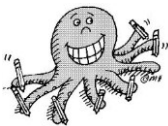
Similarly, the original date for the Reunion was given in Coming Events on page 3, though the revised date 28-31 October and explanation was given on pages 2 & 7.

PETER HARRISON's Health continues to be a matter of concern. The problem will not be resolved until he has a laser treatment operation, hopefully during Summer. Meanwhile he has had a series of secondary infections which have necessitated frequent visits to A&E.

I have passed on to Peter the many expressions of concern and best wishes received from members, for which he says "Very Many Thanks".

VERNON MONUMENT Dedication of the two divers monument which was delayed from March 2020 by Covid, has been re-arranged for Friday 15 July; take seats by 09.30. A Ticket-only event, but no charge, so names to Editor ASAP. Closing date end-April.

CROSSED THE BAR with 13 entries in this edition, we have had to change the format. If this rate keeps up, we may soon have to allocate an additional page ...



Deadline for June's edition is 16th May

pjd

Chairman's Corner

Dear fellow TCA members, what a huge privilege it is for me to be elected Chairman – Thank You. Peter Harrison's health challenges precipitated my elevation, and in my inaugural Corner I pay tribute to our outgoing Chairman, and wish him a speedy recovery, with a **public vote of thanks to him on behalf of us all**. Peter said in TON Talk 214, *"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."*

As your new Chairman may I be a wee bit self-indulgent in my first Corner. My membership was encouraged by the late, great Cdr Neil 'Nobby Hall', who we lost nearly a year ago (RIP). I pointed out to the then Vice-Chairman that I'd never been assigned as a Complement Officer in TONs but with membership approved, my conscience is clear as I've had significant sea time in the CONISTON class, including completing the last TON class syllabus applied to the Long Minewarfare and Clearance Diving Officer course* in 1982. These searides were, in order: HM Ships WALKERTON; MONKTON; HUBBERSTON*; UPTON*; and IVESTON.

Having reviewed my predecessor's direction, as your new Chairman I'd like to reinvigorate a couple of areas: **Succession Planning** and **Extending Membership**. The former is less acute now, but we should continue to strive to encourage younger members to succeed in the Committee. Age speaks loudly to the constituents of our august, yet increasingly elderly, Association – I am a mere spring chicken at 61½ years young! Yet the vitality of our fine organisation can be kept alive by bringing in new blood, and this we can do in two ways:

1. Encourage those former TONs now in their fifties and sixties; contemporaries of mine, to join;
2. Extend membership to those who have served in the TONs' successors – the HUNT, RIVER and SANDOWN class sailors. Please send me any of your thoughts or ideas via Secretary Matthew Salisbury.

A successful ACM was held on Sat 12 March, where TON Talk Editor, Peter Down was elected Vice-Chairman – thank you Peter. Also, you'll see in this edition that the painting, **"Minesweeping Sailors Through the Ages"** was presented to HMS COLLINGWOOD Minewarfare School via WO1(MW) Steven Moss [See front cover]. The painting will be displayed in the new MW school rest room dedicated to the **late, great WO1 (MW) Robert 'Dixie' Dean MBE**.

May I end by promoting the **highlight of our year – the Annual Reunion, AGM and Dinner**, to be held at the 4-star Crowne Plaza Hotel in Nottingham from **Friday 28 to Monday 31 October 2022**. Amended Booking Form in this edition.

Bob Hawkins MBE

TCA Who's Who

President

Rear Admiral R John Lippiett CB. CBE. DL

Chairman

Cdr Bob Hawkins MBE RN

A serving officer, so contact via Secretary only

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COMING EVENTS

October 2022	Sat 29	TCA AGM & Reunion Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nottingham Booking Form in APRIL's edition of TON Talk
March 2023	Sat 11 11.00	TCA Committee Meeting Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth All members welcome. Zoom Link to be attempted
October 2023	Sat 14	TCA AGM & Reunion Carlton Hotel, Torquay

Minutes of the Committee Meeting 12th March 2022

Royal Maritime Club Portsmouth

PRESENT

Peter Down, Mick Hilder, Laurie Johnson, Bill Pollington, Robbie Reid-Sinclair, Matthew Salisbury, Jim Virgo, David Woolgar,

Vice Chairman Bob Hawkins had been delayed, so Peter Down took the Chair.

CROSSED THE BAR

The committee stood to remember members who had died in the previous 12 months: William Barraclough; Roy Foster; Gerald Hacker; Neil 'Nobby' Hall; Richard Holden; Michael Hughes; Gary Jones; Alan Mold; Alan Padwick; Frederick Roberts; George Robertson, Desmond Slade; Ian Stancliffe; Jonathan Windust.

APOLOGIES

Jim Broadbent; Buster Brown; Brian Cook; Dennis Cook; Sam Cooke; Mike Cox; Trevor Filtness; Chris Green; Peter Harrison; Bob Hawkins

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Published in TON Talk 209, April 2021. Proposed to be a true record by Laurie Johnson and seconded by Robbie Reid-Sinclair, Agreed unanimously.

MATTERS ARISING

a) Buster Brown's suggestion of reducing the publication of TON Talk from six to four editions annually to save money and a reflection of lack of content about TONs, was considered by the committee. It concluded that TON Talk is the main method of contact with most of our 1200 members, worldwide, so reducing the frequency would seriously harm the relationship with very many members. TON Talk is the largest item of expenditure, publishing and posting 1000 copies, takes approx. 90% of income from subscriptions, it is produced economically and costs are closely monitored. If we really wished to save money then going all-electronic and reading/downloading the magazine from our website (as is currently possible), would save over £8000 p.a To save money would mean reducing the paper print, and according to the majority of members who responded to the last TT survey, a paper version is preferred. About 25% of members have not disclosed an email address, so may not be able to access the internet. As far as content is concerned the TT Editor said that dits were being received and that having enough material is not a problem. Laurie Johnson was concerned that loss of paper TTs would compromise his stock of TT book binders and the Treasurer confirmed that subscriptions covered production costs and there were few other calls on TCA funds. The Editor added that the printer uses a Fulfilment System which means he prints and posts TON Talk, and TCA receives a 30% discount on UK postage.

b) **HMS FITTLETON Memorial Update:**

One email had been received stating that £3000 had been raised for a new memorial in the village of Fittleton and the Parochial Church Council has applied to its diocese for a faculty to erect the new memorial. No reply from the diocese appears to have been received to date.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

- a) **Election of Chairman:** Bob Hawkins in his absence, was proposed by Peter Down, seconded by David Woolgar and agreed unanimously.
- b) **Election of Vice Chairman:** Peter Down was proposed by Matthew Salisbury, seconded by Laurie Johnson and agreed unanimously.
- c) **Volunteers for Area Representatives:** The only active area is Yorkshire. There is a need to reinvigorate as previous areas have faded.
- d) **Beneficiaries of £290 raised at Reunion Raffle:** The Treasurer proposed increasing the sum to £300 and giving each of the three affiliated sea cadet units £100 each. This proposal was seconded by Laurie Johnson and agreed by all.
- e) **Inventory of Assets:** Peter Down said that since its conception, TCA had amassed a huge number of artefacts. It is sensible to compile a list and Bill Pollington was asked to do this. Bill presented a comprehensive list of current TCA artefacts compiled from the input of members.

There were several considerations: -

- 1. The large amount of information received from Clive Dennison is included in the inventory .
- 2. Information on non-TON Class ships would not be included.
- 3. Neil Edden, a TCA member, belongs to the Portsmouth Dockyard Historical Trust and is about to dispose of obsolescent material. Bill is happy to visit the dockyard and acquire any TON drawings on linen relevant to TCA's objectives.
- 4. Future storage is a difficulty. Members currently holding assets are requested to retain them but to advise Bill of anything that may be surplus to requirements and/or may not have any historical significance.
- 5. Bill will compile a list of this surplus material which can be advertised in TON Talk and on the website for transfer to other members.
- 6. We have more than ten paper-backed copies of General Arrangement Drawings, none of which have ever been accessed for reference. Editor has PDF versions of Minehunter (Bronington) and Minesweeper (Penston) variants which he sends to model makers .
- 7. Those wishing to obtain this surplus material should be prepared to pay the postage and packing from those currently holding the assets.

- f) **Amendment to Rules.** It was proposed by Bill Pollington and seconded by David Woolgar that the requirement in article 9.6 of the Rules for the Stores Officer to report monthly be revised to twice a year i.e. for the AGM and the Spring Committee meeting. The proposal was agreed by all.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Nine members had responded to the questionnaire in TON Talk. The observations were:-

Under Governance, 5 were happy for the committee to run matters and 2 were not. 5 wished the members to have more say. Two did not wish to join the committee with one definite maybe.

Under Reunion, 1 was happy with existing arrangements, 3 wished for some other venue, and 1 was not happy. 2 wanted a shorter reunion and 1 did not.

Under Ton Talk, 1 was happy with electronic publication and 5 wished to retain paper versions. 3 were happy to pay extra for paper and 2 were not.

Under Activities, 2 would like ship visits and 2 were not keen. One suggested sailing as a possibility.

TCA member Captain Sir Norman Lloyd Edwards has suggested a reunion in Cardiff.

TREASURER'S REPORT

David Woolgar said that there had been little activity since the AGM. Subscriptions had been credited, and TON Talk was the main expenditure. £6330 had been received primarily from subscriptions and £3257 had been spent on TON Talk resulting of a surplus of just over £3000. The Barclays No 2 account is being used for 2022 and 2023 Reunions and the bulk of the existing Reunion account will be transferred from Lloyds. There has been no movement in the Welfare or Reserve Accounts since 2018.

Balances:

General Account	£ 6,979.18
Barclays No.2 Account	£ 1,982. 87
Welfare Account.	£ 10,074.76
Reserve Account	£ 5,295 .43

The Treasurer suggested reducing the number of accounts held with different organisations and will propose this at the AGM.

EDITOR'S REPORT - TON TALK AND WEBSITE

Peter Down said that the flow of material for TON Talk is satisfactory, but swings from feast to famine. He receives a number of enquiries requesting historical information, Operation Musketeer, the Suez campaign, still features among them. We continue to receive dits about Hams and Leys, which he adds to their ship histories. The website costs £40 per month for maintenance and provides back up and spam protection.

On line joining facilities are being considered, which could be beneficial for overseas applicants. Pay Pal is being considered as a means of paying subscriptions. The Membership Secretary could benefit from this.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY's REPORT

Dennis Cook offered his apologies and stated that there had been 7 new members and two applications this week. It was interesting that the membership is increasing considering that the TONs are no longer operating.

There are 910 full members, 156 Life Members, and 23 Associate Members.

Of the Non Paying members, there are 7 honorary, 70 widows, 23 associations, 15 MCMVs and Patrol craft, making a total of 101.

18 members have been lost since the AGM. 14 have died and 5 have lost contact.

Dennis's local Barclays Bank does not provide counter service now and Dennis requests that members who paid by cheque now change to standing order to avoid the delays of paying in cheques through the cash point.

Dennis wishes to be informed of any changes of address etc.

STORES OFFICER's REPORT

Income

C/f to 1 st July 2021	£ 1177.64
Sales	£ 364.88
Interest for period ending 31.12.21	£ 0.46
Total	£ 1542.95

Outgoings

Profit from sales to TCA General A/c	£ 246.00
Sales from Special Orders	£ 93.90
Replenishment of stock	£ 211.17
Stationery and postage	£ 79.48
Petty cash withdrawn for contingencies	£ 40.00
Total	£ 670.55

Balance Nationwide a/c	£ 873.40
Value of Stock at cash price on 28.2.22	£ 2747.61
Petty cash in hand	£ 12.82
Profit on sales	£ 120.76

The Nationwide Building Society wishes to discontinue this account. Arrangements are to be made to merge with the TCA General Account under a reserved heading.

WELFARE OFFICER's REPORT

There have been no calls on this fund for a number of years. The Welfare Officer expressed concern that the scope for offering members assistance may be too narrow.

STANDARD BEARERS' REPORTs

Sam Cook reported that little had happened to date but he will participate in the Weymouth Parade in June this year, where he will lead the RN contingent, together with national Standards of Submariners Association and MW Association. Sam will attend the Dedication of the Vernon Monument on 15 July.

No report from Dave Parrish re: Northern Standard

SEA CADET LIAISON

All the affiliated units have restarted training and Stockton is starting a RM section. We need a better mechanism for liaising with Affiliated Units. *Subsequent to the meeting, Peter suggested setting up a small group to consider options.*

ANNUAL REUNION UPDATE

The Reunion Secretary position is probably a bigger job than for just one person and functions could be divided among others, Many thanks to Jim Virgo for volunteering.

The Secretary said that he had received 17 applications to date. He had given the Treasurer 17 cheques for the Reunion totalling £2046.

Peter Down said the contract with Crown Plaza Hotel has been signed and £1000 deposit paid. TCA will supply its own rum for Up Spirits. Jim Virgo has offered to be Rum Bosun Six bottles of Pussers will be required.

The Reunion account will be closed in due course and costs for the Reunion will be met from TCA General Account.

TCA is committed to going to Torquay in 2023 and Peter has started to make enquiries for suitable venues for 2024.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) The group interested in raising and restoring HMS BRONINGTON has created a trust fund and are looking for crowd funding. It has been explained to them why BRONINGTON is a lost cause. The hulk has been stripped of anything valuable and is waterlogged. TCA's position is that the ship is beyond economic repair.
- b) The postponed Dedication of the Vernon Monument will be held on 15th July Applications for tickets for the ceremony should be made to Peter Down. Closing date end-April.
More information can be found at <https://vernon-monument.org.uk/>

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This will be at 1100 on Saturday 11th March 2023 at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth.

Current Developments in MCM Technology

The notes are abridged from a very interesting and informative presentation given to the TCA Committee Meeting in March by WO1 (MW) Steve Moss RN, OIC Minewarfare School at HMS COLLINGWOOD.

Modern developments in MCM kit include autonomous and robotic devices in the air, on the surface and underwater; all gridded into a common Command and Control network that can be operated from a mother ship or shore station. The policy of removing the sailor from the minefield is actively being pursued by all nations with ports to protect. A SEAFOX Users' Group has been formed among NATO and allied navies to exchange experiences and develop ideas for future concepts and tactics. The pace of change with this technology is very rapid; beyond parallel for those of us used to developing gunnery and machinery systems: 18 months is enough to render today's bright idea obsolete.

The chief realisation for senior officers is the need to gather considerable information about water conditions tides, visibility, weather and potential types of mines to be encountered, before launching a clearance operation. This points to, possibly prolonged, intelligence gathering by unmanned aircraft, surface and submarine vehicles, plus humint from all sorts of sources, including fishermen who may have witnessed the mines being laid e.g. small craft or merchant ships acting suspiciously.

The current aim is to develop capabilities to clear mines laid to a depth of 200 metres up to the shoreline and in harbours. Three types of unmanned remotely controlled surface vessels are currently being trialled by the RN under Project WILTON. **Harrier** and **Hazard**, 11 metres each, have been designed to operate autonomously, even running laps like we used to, but current Rules of the Road for Safe Navigation require there to be a person aboard who can take the helm in an emergency. **Hebe**, a 15 metre workboat also used by the new carriers, is semi-autonomous but all three can tow side-scan sonars and other instrumentation to gather information about water conditions and potential mine-like contacts to be analysed in Mission Control to plan the clearance operation. All this points to compiling a very large data base and using Artificial Intelligence software to analyse the data and present the Control Staff with prioritised short lists and pictures of likely contacts and ambient conditions.

Remus, a self-propelled and self-guided, unmanned underwater vehicle, about 2 metres long, has already been proven on operations in the Gulf, collecting data on water temperature, salinity, tidal drift and even magnetic signatures and sonar images of suspect objects. It can follow a pre-computed track and monitor its battery power and bring the UUV back to the mother ship, without further instruction.

Remotely Operated Vehicles, akin to the devices used for oil field and pipeline maintenance (and treasure hunting) are also under consideration, together with the operator/maintainer practices used by civilian companies. ROVs could extend search capability to 500 metres depth.

All this Gucci kit looks to be more fun than a train set, but it is all still under development – nothing is operational yet. However, the RN is de-commissioning Hunts and Sandowns with nothing to replace them that can kill a mine. "At least we know where they are and can avoid them" does not seem to be a sound defence policy, especially for narrow coastal waterways. ... Editor

Pusser's Noah's Ark

*Reproduced from GEN DIT, Newsletter of Stowmarket RNA Branch, by kind permission of **Editor Chivs**, - formerly PO Scribes ...*

Forty one years ago, probably one of the most unusual signals ever received by a naval warship arrived in HMS CARDIFF's MCR for the attention of the then Captain. Captain M. Harris, Royal Navy. To transport two horses from the UK to Belgium, accompanied by their riders; two officers from the Lifeguards, who were taking part in some PR exercise that was happening in Brussels.



CARDIFF had just returned from a work-up at Portland, which had been followed up with a hugely enjoyable stopover for the crew to the City of Cardiff, and was now back in Pompey for a short period before heading back out to sea for a trip to Antwerp and a couple of other European ports. So, somebody in the MoD had thought it a good idea that CARDIFF would assist in the carriage of both horses and riders across the sea. Clearly, carrying non-naval personnel onboard was a given – but horses ! This was something new and it was agreed that somebody from the ship's crew should help with liaison and safety whilst the 'precious' cargo was in the navy's charge.

So, in Daily Orders a request was made for any volunteers to step forward and help look after the four and two legged 'guests'. With also a flurry of signals going back and forth between the ship, the MOD and Brussels, all of which landed in the Ship's Office, one of the Scribes professed to having had some experience of looking after horses. With some 'gentle' nudging from the others in the office, and in his messdeck, Scribes was convinced that he should put his name forward to be the 'Acting Stable Lad', which was gratefully accepted.

He was now officially in charge of making all the necessary arrangements for the horses to be kept safe whilst onboard. It was a given that the largest space available to stable the horses would be the ship's hangar, and Scribes was soon told that the horses could have this space all to themselves as the Captain had arranged for the ship's Lynx helicopter to fly directly to Belgium.

All confirmed by the signal traffic that was still going back and forth and seen by Scribes. Indeed, Scribes found himself put effectively in charge of looking after the horses as the recognised 'expert' onboard.

Over the days leading up to the arrival of the horses, which would be a couple of days before the ship sailed (to allow them to 'acclimatise' to their new 'stable' arrangements), Scribes was given a 'crash course' by the Buffer in the use of rope and how to tie knots, useful when it comes to tethering. Confirming with the Chief Stores what stores mainly hay and oats) would be required and their delivery. Being shown by the Chief Stoker how the main water system worked onboard, including use of a mobile pump, so sea water could be used to 'muck out' the hanger. And lastly, speaking with both the PO Cook and Caterer on preparing the feed these 'thoroughbred' horses would require.

The Coxswain was briefed about keeping a steady helm when the horses were taken out onto the flight deck for their daily exercise, and the PO Writer looked up where in Naval Pay Regulations it said that Scribes could receive 'special' payment for undertaking 'additional' duties.

So, a week before the arrival, and by now having also read a couple of books on looking after horses, Scribes was asked by the Supply Officer if he was still sure he was okay with 'helping', to which he said he was and informed the SO that the Chief Stoker had just issued him with his overalls, hard hat, ear defenders, rubber boots and a bucket and spade. With the Chief Stoker also confirming that the spade was of a type that wouldn't cause sparks on the hanger deck and frighten the horses! Scribes was all over it – and if necessary, he would sleep in the hanger during the journey. The Supply Officer mulled this over for a minute and rang the stores office to enquire about a hammock.

A day before the horses and Life Guards were due to arrive, several hay bales arrived, along with blankets for the horses, rope (for tethering) and a small horse jump (a plank nailed to two uprights, no more than a foot high), and a bag of oats. The following day, CARDIFF and the other ships on Fountain Lake Jetty were bathed in brilliant sunshine and at the pre-agreed time, up pulled a PSTO(N) naval stores lorry at the bottom of the ship's gangway and out jumped the driver, who informed the QM that he had a delivery for the attention of Scribes. So, with the QM having piped for Scribes to come to the gangway, it led to most of the ship's company (including the Captain) finding any vantage point on the upper deck to watch the 'special' arrival.

Scribes arrived at the gangway, dressed in his newly issued overalls and wellington boots, where he signed the delivery docket presented to him by the driver, and made his way down the gangway to help bring the horses onboard.

Scribes face was an absolute picture when the tail gate of the lorry was dropped, and on peering inside he found himself looking at two wooden horses staring back at him. The penny finally dropped, and now hearing the laughter of the whole ship's company watching from their vantage points, he climbed into the back of the stores lorry, took one of the horses under his arm, jumped back off the lorry and carried it up the

gangway, where he requested permission from the Officer-of-the-Day to bring his new charge onboard, which was duly given to loud cheers from those watching.

To his absolute credit, Scribes was laughing as much as anyone, especially when he was reminded by the Officer-of-the-Day what day it was – April 1st.

This really did happen. It was this Editor [Chivs] who started the spoof, though he didn't realise just how enthusiastically everyone else would join in.

Advertise in TON Talk

Quarter page Mono £10

Half page Mono £15

Full page Mono £25

Half page Colour £30

Rear Cover Colour £50

Advertiser to provide print-ready artwork [pdf]

20% discount for 3 editions (6 months) payable at Booking

Contact Editor at peter.avoca@gmail.com

Dits from John Speight

Reading the dits from Mick Donoyou in February's Ton Talk, and particularly his reference to the late "Smudge" Smith of HMS President, put me in mind of a couple of incidents involving the said Smudge.

When I joined London Division RNR as a RO2(T), Smudge was a killick and, as Mick said, had a wealth of experience as a former merchant mariner. He really had pretty much been everywhere and done everything, but he had his doubts about trying for advancement to PO.

He was killick of the mess when I was a RO1(T) during a period of continuous training in 1980 which took us down to Lisbon in HMS Glasserton. The ship was showing her age, she still had the open bridge, and the Bofors had been replaced with a giant Uckers board affixed to the deck. As my place of work was on that open bridge, and we experienced some pretty bumpy conditions in the Channel when on our way down, I had some very damp moments, particularly if signalling by light. **Here's a picture** of Glasserton attempting to take off and join the Fleet Air Arm during that passage.



Smudge was something of father figure for everyone, he really was morale in a box. On our 2nd or 3rd day out, he asked one of the young guys to go to the 1st lieutenant's cabin and collect the newspapers which had been delivered by helicopter overnight. He fell for it hook, line and sinker but, unfortunately, I didn't witness the Jimmy's reaction when the request was made from his cabin doorway.

We needed 2 or 3 attempts to get alongside in a tight berth in Lisbon, complicated by other TONs manoeuvring astern of us. The Jimmy decided that at least part of the fault lay with the guys on deck heaving the lines and ordered all the seaman branch ratings to muster for "heaving line practice" an hour or so after berthing. Smudge thought that

was somewhat unwarranted, so, at his prompting, the entire lower deck, other than those on watch, mustered for the practice, stokers, greenies, comms, chefs, jack dusty, you name it and they were there, most of us didn't really know one end of a rope from the other. The "practice" was abandoned in quick time!

I can't remember if it was during the same trip or another when Smudge decided that morale would receive a distinct boost if we had a ship's pet. I don't remember the name he came up with for it, but let's say, for the sake of argument, it was "Diamond". One day he appeared at the back of the bridge and asked if he could bring Diamond up to meet everyone? The skipper looked puzzled and asked, "Who's Diamond?" At that, Smudge dragged a piece of cardboard, roughly hewn into the shape of some poor, deformed dog, attached to a piece of string onto the bridge, announcing "Ship's pet Sir".

Eventually, as Mick mentioned, Smudge did go forward for P.O. It was at the same time as my own advancement to C.Y. so we entered the S.R.'s mess together.

In 1984 I was in a crew which flew down to Gib to join Wotton and bring her home via Porto. We had a Middie with us on that occasion as well and, no matter what the weather or the sea state, he was seasick every single moment that we weren't fast alongside. During our passage up the Channel, nearing the end of the trip, he was in his customary position on the bridge wing with a bucket wedged firmly between his knees. The skipper came onto the bridge and exclaimed, "Hello Mr XXX, I thought you'd be getting better by now", at which the Cox'n, an ex-regular Chief for whom nothing was new, replied, "He is Sir, he's hitting the bucket now!"

Of course, it wasn't always roughers, although as we all know it was sometimes difficult to tell in a TON. In 1983, we crossed the North Sea in Lewiston and experienced great hospitality in the small Danish port of Hanstholm. It was like a sheet of glass. We stopped on the way across for a "hands to bathe",.

The wardroom gave a cocktail party in Hanstholm and the skipper decided it would be pretty good if we could rig some kind of lighting to illuminate the funnel badge. I was duty comms but with little to do I volunteered my assistance to the duty greenie to help him with it. His name escapes me but as the party got underway, he came up to me and proclaimed hesitatingly that one of the female guests had expressed a desire to "share her favours" with him. I was a bit greenie (with envy) myself on hearing that but, nevertheless, encouraged him as best I could, to which he replied, "I can't, I'm duty !"

Now that's dedication !

Disposal of Ships' Bells

We recently had a rash of four enquiries on the website within ten days seeking information about the whereabouts of Ships' Bells; both TONs and others.

TCA does not have much information about bells, apart from the few that we know were laid up in village churches, so we took this question to the top: Lt Cdr Bob Lane, a TCA member, who is i/c Ship Disposals and Sales. He replied:

Up until three or four years ago ship's bells were disposed of as follows:

1. Returned to stores (usually Portsmouth), where they would be retained until a dozen or so were ready, thence sold by an auction house (i.e. Bonham's, or Phillips etc).
2. If of special interest, bells may have made their way to the RN Museum – or have been "gifted". This latter procedure was usually only successful once a strong and formal association with the ship was established: e.g. by a city or town council connection. Private individuals being gifted a bell was very rare.

Things are now somewhat more muddled. Notionally they should first be offered to the the National Museum of the Royal Navy, however, they are pretty much "full". The stores route has been lost as the result of a new contract procedure and thus, in the interim, I am the custodian.

I currently have several bells awaiting disposal. If I cannot find a proper Service home for them, I will declare them to the Defence Equipment Sales Authority (DESA) for commercial sale as described above. I hope that soon the MoD will have sorted out a new disposal route, since I am not resourced to deal with these memorabilia.

No private individual has a claim on a publicly funded ships bell; christening of children inscribed thereon or otherwise.

Below the bell recently recovered from HMS HOOD



TON CLASS ASSOCIATION REUNION WEEKEND

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Wollaton St, Nottingham NG1 5RH Phone: 0115 936 9988
Friday 28th - Monday 31st 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^h 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 8th August 2022
4. Please send completed application form, plus deposit/payment to:

Matthew Salisbury, 143 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

Only Having a Laugh ...



How many people does it take to change a lightbulb?

- Only one Dockyard Matey is needed to change a lightbulb, but it will take nine years.
- It would take two WAFUs to change a lightbulb: One to call the electrician and one to fix the martinis.
- Only one Jenny is needed to screw in a lightbulb, but she'll be on the phone for five hours telling all her friends about it.
- We can't confirm how many Dabtoes it takes to change a lightbulb, as we left them to it after the first hour and a half.
- It takes two stokers to change a lightbulb: One to hold it; one to hammer it in.
- Nobody knows how many submariners it takes to screw in a lightbulb, because when any light comes on, they all scatter.
- Two officers are required to change a lightbulb: One to promise a bright future, the other to screw it up.

VMT Scribes, Gen Dit, Stowmarket RNA

The church was packed for Uncle Tom's funeral, with representatives from all the various denominations in town.

He had nicked the lead off the roofs of all of their churches and the clergy wanted to be sure he had really gone ...

VMT Jason, ex REME, Wattisham

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 (1/8 ex-1/6 as of 8 March) and PENZANCE (1/3), all supported by RFA LYME BAY. The ships' companies now rotate every four months. All ships dressed to mark Commonwealth Day on 14 March. In February, BANGOR joined forces with warships and auxiliaries from 60 nations and organisations around the world for IMX22 (International MCM Exercise 2022), the largest maritime exercise in the Middle East. She struck up a particularly close relationship with Japanese MCMVs while working with them then carried out gunnery and mine warfare drills, along with seamanship evolutions in March. PEMBROKE (1/4) reported conducting a TOWEX on 5 March. PENZANCE made Engineering Technician Thompson 'Sailor of the Month' in February and celebrated the promotion of AB(MW) Barratt to AB1 with a presentation by Cdr Jim Lovell (MCM1).

HUNT Class

HURWORTH (2/5) has been seen in and around Portsmouth. BROCKLESBY (2/2) spent a week operating in the Scottish exercise areas in mid-March.

Sandown Class

PEMBROKE (1/4) started OST (Operational Sea Training aka Work-Up) on 21 February. Having completed OST, GRIMSBY (1/2) joined SNMCMG1 (Standing NATO MCM Group 1) in late February, transited the Kiel Canal and then participated in Exercise COLD RESPONSE off the coast of Norway in mid-March. Also in the group is her sister ship, the Estonian minehunter ENS SAKALA, formerly HMS INVERNESS. BANGOR's ship's company was able to get in some skiing during their visit to Stavanger earlier in the month. SHOREHAM (1/5) entered Dales Marine 1 dry dock in Troon on 1 March for some routine work.

MASTT (Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team)

MASTT is now under the Command of the newly formed Mine Threat Exploitation Group. MTXG will also inherit the future mission system teams that will operate future autonomous systems. The team was visited by Vice Admiral Christopher Gardner (Director General Ships, Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S)) during towed sonar trials based at Turnchapel in Plymouth harbour in March. The team has also been trialling an autonomous minehunting platform's Mine Obstacle Avoidance Sonar.

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

Membership Update

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

NEW MEMBERS – Welcome Aboard

Christian Haw. AB RNR. Weymouth. Served on HM Ships GLSSERTON 79, KELLINGTON 80, LEWISTON 81, ALFRISTON 82, LEWISTON 82 L2495

Nigel Waterton. A/B (MW) RN. Washington USA. Served on HM Ships BRINTON 84-86, WILTON 86-88 L2496

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Chris Park. To:- Old Buckingham. Norfolk F2317

Robin House. To:- Romsey Hampshire F0466

Douglas Woolner. To:- Argyle & Bute F0187

CHANGED E-ADDRESS Eric Coates F2265

LOST CONTACT.

Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary

Derek C Lawson Last Known Address:- Portsmouth Hampshire F0625

Ian Williams. Last Known Address:- Mold Mid Glamorgan F1533

John E Smith. Last Known Address:- Waterlooville Hampshire F1595

Dennis Hitchiner. Last Known Address:- Watrooville Hampshire F2286

Paul E Braddock. Last Known Address Truro Cornwall. F0537



Crossed the Bar

May They Rest In Peace

Sylvia Andrews Wife of TCA Member Doug Andrews of Ware, Herts.
Much loved and a frequent attendee at TCA gatherings

Steward Stephen Hadden RN. Barrow in Furness. Not a TCA member, but known to many. Served on HM Ships UPTON 1972-74, WALKERTON 1974-75, WILTON 1975-77

Mr Ian Stancliffe A long serving member of the Parish Council of the village of Coniston, Mr Stancliffe was awarded Honorary Membership of TCA for his role in developing the Affiliation with TCA.

Commander Alan Padwick OBE, RN. Devizes F0282 Served in HM Ships STUBBINGTON 1961, SHAVINGTON 1961, BEACHAMPTON 1965-66, NURTON 1967-68, LALESTON 1971-72

CPO MEA (P) Alan Mold RN. Gosport. F0243 Served in HM Ships CALTON 1966, KILDARTON 1966-67, KIRKLISTON 1968-69, SHOULTON 1969-70,

Lieutenant Commander JAL (Tony) Harries RNR. Not a TCA Member but known to many in South Wales RNR. Served in HM Ships BRERETON AND CHRICHTON (as St David)

Commander Cecil E. Robins OBE, RN. Cowplain. F1546 Served in HMS KIRKLISTON 1965-66

CERA Stuart Johnson RN. Burntwood Staffs, F105 Served in HM Ships CUXTON 1963, HOUGHTON 1962-63 TCA Treasurer 2000 – 2021

REM Michael Hughes. RN. Pontyclun, Glamorgan. Served on HMS STUBBINGTON 1970-71 F1835

A/B Jonathan Windust. RN. Hayling Island Hampshire. Served on HMS WOOLASTON 1965-66 F0110

CPO (GA2) Richard J Holden BEM., RNR, RNVR. Bognor Regis West Sussex. Served on [HMS FITTLETON 55-76. HMS LELLINGTON 77-82. HMS ALFRISTON, HMS GLASSERTON, HMS THAMES] F0410

ERA1 George Robertson. RN. Dumfries Scotland. Served on HM Ships MULL OF KINTYRE, BLAXTON, CONISTON 966, LOCHINVAR 1968-69, KEDLESTON 1969 F1176

Lieutenant Roy Foster RNR. Stoke Mandeville Buckinghamshire. Served on HM Ships ALCASTON 1955. KILLIECRANKIE 1962 F1508

Fire in the Hole

Alexander (Sandy) Ross, Cambuslang, Lanarkshire

I was interested to read in TON Talk Nic Griffins' article about a fire in PENSTON's generator room in 1957.

It seems PENSTON was a bit accident prone in this regard. In 1964 when I was an EM in her we were on passage to Hong Kong after a stint in Borneo when we were caught out in some vicious weather.

I was part of the three-man wheelhouse watch, along with AB Dave Hill and L/S Brian Webber. It was the middle watch, the ship was all over the place when we lost power. I immediately thought a Genny had tripped out but when I went to investigate I found flames coming from the switchboard. This was well above my pay grade, so I shot to the Senior Rates mess to roust out the Chief Electrician who was called Bligh (no relation). Chiefly was suffering badly with sea sickness but just had to get on with it.

After isolating the switchboard and dousing the fire we set about rigging emergency supplies. We had to get the shore supply cables from their stowage and drag them aft to the main winch and hook them up to two terminals on the winch. A few months previously when we were practicing this very manoeuvre, I got a wee bit enthusiastic when tightening up the terminal nuts and sheared one of them, so I made sure I didn't do that again. If it hadn't been for that practice drill, I might have boomed on the night and we'd have been right up the creek anyway, that done the drill was to run up the pulse Genny and supply the switchboard via the winch. Only thing was we couldn't use the switchboard as the bus bars were burned out, so we had to re-route to an emergency board and got power to emergency services.

As you will imagine all this took time and all spare bods had to get aft to the tiller flat to wrestle with the emergency steering gear, which in a force 10 was no picnic.

Later that morning the weather moderated somewhat and we put into Subic Bay for repairs. Amazingly we got spares the same day and as Chiefly and I had done all the prep work it didn't take too long to get them fitted and we were good to go - just in time for me to go back on watch - lucky white heather...

A wee footnote to this story is that non-essential personnel had been given afternoon leave in Subic and, as was their duty, they proceeded to get as many down them as time allowed. So we're closed up in the wheelhouse ready for sea when the last straggler was hauled over the gangway. This AB was normally quite a sensible chap but whatever he had been on ashore convinced him he was the very man to take the ship out of harbour.

He came crashing into the wheelhouse, grabbed the wheel and proceeded to give the bridge bods abuse much to our amusement. Understandably the Jimmy who was on the receiving end of much of this, got a bit peeved. But rescue was at hand in the appearance of our beloved Cox'n who was none other than our own John Soanes. In his usual quiet

but firm manner he convinced the belligerent AB to relinquish the wheel had him escorted below to "get his head down".

And so we headed of for Hong Kong and a well-deserved rest. There was nothing more said about the wheelhouse incident.

Where else but on a TON could you get away with that ? Great memories.



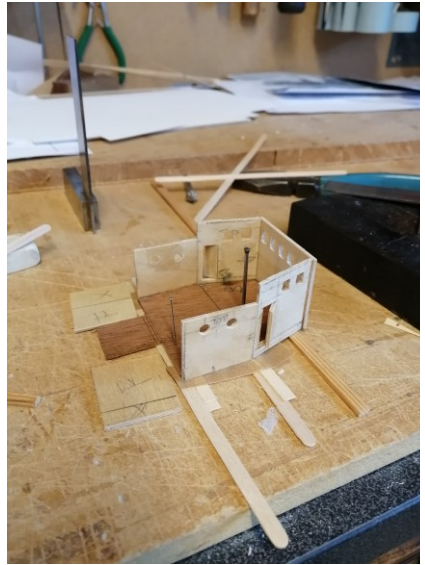
PENSTON in Mirs Bay Hong Kong

Painting by Tony Standish presented to John Soanes

P.S. What caused the switchboard fire?, Well an anonymous member of our motley crew forgot to close the port side access hatch to the generator room after doing his rounds and a big goffer came over the side and doused the board, shorting everything out.

PROGRESS with APPLETON MODEL

Andrew Salmon, Appleton



Sid the Mid

Lt Cdr Martin Fisher RN Rtd, Virginia

An edited extract from his recent book “Words Flying off the Pages”, describing his experiences in the RN as a Weapons Engineer and later working with Boeing and the US Department of Defense.

I had entered the Royal Navy under the Murray Scheme for officer training and had spent an initial year as a Cadet at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, which included time at sea working “part of ship” in a frigate of the Training Squadron. Then, as a new Midshipman, I was appointed to the cruiser HMS Tiger for six months for the second phase of our training. In 1966, I had just turned 19 and I had left TIGER and the warmth of a free Mediterranean cruise, to find myself in HMS Lochinvar in Port Edgar, standing on the jetty staring at what seems to be a tiny ship, not much bigger than one of TIGER’s liberty boats. I was looking at HMS Bronington, a TON class minehunter, named after a small town in North Wales. She will become my home for the next six months.

Recent History

BRONINGTON had recently spectacularly failed its Annual Inspection because some officers had been seriously hungover when they left harbour. The previous Captain and one other officer were removed from the ship; careers over. The problems stemmed from a serious issue with alcohol consumption and an Executive Officer who, even to one of my limited experience, appeared incompetent, and for whom the ship’s company had no respect.

Following the inspection fiasco, although dry at sea, the Wardroom still got through astronomic quantities of booze in harbour. At just 12 measures to the bottle, entertaining guests or just playing drinking games, including Liar Dice and the notorious Cardinal Puff. At the end of the month, I now had a bill that was divided between the five officers, regardless of who drank what and what their rank was. The seemingly endless drinking games we played meant that we often got through 20 of the standard 26 oz bottles of liquor between the five of us each month. As the new Mid, I assumed this was normal.

This was all quite different to the strict rules of the wardroom in TIGER, which had 30 measures to a bottle dispensed through the optic and also a Midshipman-friendly system where you paid for cocktail party drinks according to your rank. Mids had to pay only 1/4 of a share, whereas a Commander had to pay 3 shares. Hence, I could – and did - drink 12 times as much booze as a Commander for the same cost. Unusual democracy for the RN !!

Enter, BRONINGTON’s new Commanding Officer

Lt Cdr John Guild was a graduate of the “Long N” Navigation Qualification, who had previous minesweeper experience as Squadron Navigating Officer of 104 MSS in HMS HOUGHTON in the Far East in the early 1960’s; a gentleman gliding on the classiest,

smoothest wheels ever. He had to fix the ship, aided by Lt Paddy Ross, a new, highly capable, helicopter Observer doing his surface ship stint as Navigating Officer.

John Guild would always go home each night that we were in Port Edgar, hence he hardly drank, but come the Monthly Mess Bill, his share was one fifth of all the alcohol consumed. Rightly he was not amused and among his first reforms was that the binge drinking and games were much reduced.

When he brought HMS Bronington alongside for the first time at serious speed, with just two steering/engine order commands to the helmsman, I knew I had met a superstar ship handler.

John Guild did everything with style. It was very important for the ship's company to be able to boast to other ships how great their captain was at ship handling. Our crew would also walk through a forest fire for our new captain. He let me bring the ship alongside once and I was beyond terrified. The ship was well aligned but was 30 feet or more off the pier, with no way to close the gap.

John Guild's family had run a cyder apple business, at Aspoll Hall in the village of Debenham in Suffolk for seven generations. John knew that if his father needed help, he would have to leave the Navy to run the business. In 1970, that call came and John, although a rising star, destined for high rank, resigned from the RN. He turned the company around, adding non-alcoholic apple juice and cyder vinegar, both endorsed by environmentalists and vegans, to their product range and got it accepted in high-class retail stores, including Harrods. The international brewers Molson-Coors has recently acquired the business, although sadly John is no longer with us.

My Duties

As a "Midshipman, Additional for Training" my duties were varied as the C.O determined, so I could gain experience that would be relevant to my future career in the Navy,

At sea I joined the Bridge Watchkeeping Rota. I knew I was prone to seasickness before I went to BRONINGTON. Several times I had to retire to my hammock or bunk to endure the "mal de mer" - just keep horizontal and pray. The motion of wooden mine-hunter "bobbing like a cork" was really hard for me. On BRONINGTON, I sometimes put two buckets - one on either bridge wing, so I was always close and fast, when needing a "technicolor yawn".

When we were hunting mines, my job was to be the bridge Officer of the Watch on the bridge, sometimes alone for 24 hours at a time, with only the helmsman below to talk to via monosyllabic wheel orders. Apart from following directions from the Mine Hunting Control Officer in the Operations Room, I controlled a device on the roof of the bridge above me called the 'Tiger's Tail'; a black and red striped pointer, moved by twisting a handle on the roof above me, to indicate to the Gemini dinghy carrying the divers, the bearing of the suspected mine. It was not a demanding job but, during one exercise, I did 36 hours straight on the bridge. That was pretty much iron man stuff. You actually go through a point where you no longer feel tired and then you cannot sleep when you finish. Thank God, our bridge was enclosed from the weather.

I was also BRONINGTON'S foc'sle officer with precisely zero knowledge of the seamanship involved, but I had four experienced sailors to do the real work.

My third job was sheer purgatory. I was the Captain's Secretary and Correspondence Officer. We had an old manual typewriter with a messy ink duplicator called a Gestetner with a waxy 'skin' to make copies of documents. My first letter was three lines to the UK passport office. Seven times paper went in that typewriter. Three hours later, the three-line letter was done.

Sea Time

Our sea time was mostly spent in the North Sea practicing our mine hunting skills on non-lethal practice mines laid by a minelayer. We also "Showed the Flag" in small ports, British and foreign, including Seaham, Scheveningen, Amsterdam and Bordeaux: all memorable runs ashore for various romantic and alcoholic reasons.

We became adept at fishing Navy style. Since our booze was duty-free we would approach a suitable fishing craft and suggest "How about a Johnny Walker Black for each lobster or whole cod?" We never failed to obtain great fish for almost nothing.

Korean Container Ship

I was on the bridge as a 19 year-old watchkeeping officer. It is a summer, it is just me and the only other person around is the helmsman, one deck below, manning the wheel. It is 5 am and dawn has passed. We are going up the east coast of England. It is quiet, so I go to the back of the bridge where the chart and the radar are, as well as a chair. I am throwing up with alternating buckets on port and starboard bridge wings and that gets to you.

There are strict rules for every ship as to when to call the Captain to the bridge in the event of a potential emergency. On TIGER, Standing Orders were to inform the Captain of any ship 10 miles away, if that ship was going to pass within three miles. As OOW of BRONINGTON, it is my responsibility to call the Captain for a ship at three miles, if it may pass with one mile.

I was I am now watching a large ship on radar coming towards us on our port bow – we were on his starboard bow, so we have the right of way and it is his responsibility to alter course. However, I think I might be prudent to call the Captain.

I belatedly leave my comfortable chair in the radar area at the back of the bridge and come to look out the windows. OMG, out the port forward window, this ship is easily 100,000 tons. It is so big it fills the port window. I do not have time to call the Captain. I have to take action. BRONINGTON has right of way according to the International Rules for navigating at sea, however merchant ships of some nations are notorious for leaving changes of course to avoid collision to the last minute, or sometimes ignoring the rule altogether, especially if the other vessel is a small craft. The merchantman should have turned to starboard and gone down my port side, "Red to Red", however, he looked like he was going to pass very close in front of our bows.

Fatally, I turn 10 degrees to port, hoping to pass “Green to Green”, just as he turns 15 degrees to starboard ! If we had been on something of a collision course before, we now have a much more dangerous risk of collision and he is getting closer every minute. Time to panic !!!

I immediately reversed the 10 degree turn to port and order a really big turn, 25 degrees to starboard – which is what I should have done in the first place. However, we are doing 15 knots so when we turn to port and then immediately to starboard. BRONINGTON slaloms through the water and heels over, first to the left and then a lot to the right. How much was a lot? Well the Captain came on the intercom. *‘Martin, I just fell out of bed. Is there something I should know ?’*

Officer of the Watch (me): ‘You might want to come up sir’. Thirty seconds later, John Guild joins me in his pyjamas. He looked out the front windows and he saw nothing. *‘Martin, I do not get it. What happened ?’* he says. I point silently astern out the rear facing port window where a monster 100,000 ton Korean container ship still fills the entire rear window from close in !

I admired John Guild already and now he said *“Call me a little earlier next time, Martin”* and left me alone again, still responsible for HMS Bronington on his behalf.

Many a C.O. would have ripped me to shreds and banned me from being Officer of the Watch, but John never mentioned it again because he knew I had learned a life lesson that I would never repeat.

Sid the Soccer Player

The military is very big on nicknames. I had never had a nickname in my life before BRONINGTON. So it was a big honour to be invited to the forward sailors’ mess for a ‘wet of rum’. They said “we would like to call you ‘Sid’ Sir.” ‘Sid?’ I say., “Yes, Sir, as in ‘Sid the Mid’”. I am pretty flattered.

Sport is very important in the Royal Navy, especially soccer – all ships have a team, often more than one. I was 13 years in the Navy before I ever had to work a single Wednesday afternoon. Instead we played Wednesday sport – our teams vs other Navy bases, ships, and foreign countries and intra-mural. My primary sport was soccer and I was pretty decent. I had played rugby at school, so all my soccer had been learned in informal games on recreational parks. I tracked down BRONINGTON’s football captain (not hard in a 150 - foot ship) and said I would like to try out for the team. The football captain said “Well sir, we are pretty good, however I will see what I can do to get you a trial”. Two days later, he got three of his team to join us for a kick about. After 10 minutes, he conferred with the others and then he said “Sir, we would love to have you play for us”. I am quite surprised. I become the central mid fielder in a not very good team but then we only have 33 people in total to select from.

I am the only officer on the team and I suspect that none of our team have played with an officer before, so immediately we are into social issues. Normally, I am addressed as ‘Sir’ by the sailors and they are ‘Able Seaman Morgan’ to me. So, when passing the football, from me “Here is the ball Able Seaman Morgan’ and from AB Morgan, “Here it

is back to you Sir, why not redirect it over to Petty Officer Rogers ?” was unwieldy at least. At half time, I gathered our team around me and said “OK guys – this is not working. When we are on the pitch, or in the bar next to the pitch, you can call me ‘Sid’. At all other times, it is ‘Sir’ ”. We never ever had an issue with this convention and I now have seriously exalted status with the ‘lower deck’ of HMS Bronington - I am breaking some officer-sailor stereotypes and it is so important.

Sid Grows Up

‘Sid the Mid’ eventually moved to his next phase of training, leaving BRONINGTON with great sadness. Her sailors were really good people, although I had to go through more farewell sessions of “You must come to the Mess for a farewell wet, gulpers, or sippers of rum ...- Hidden meaning, “... so we can try to get you smashed ...”

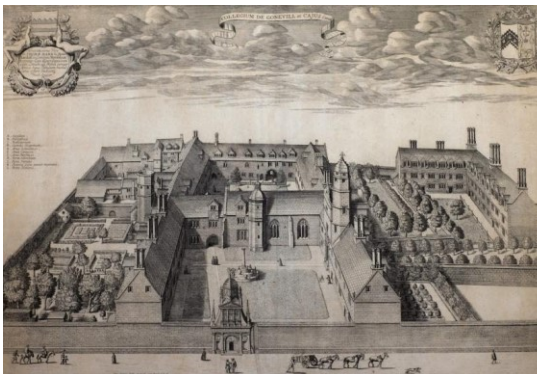
I was not to know that it would be my last wet of rum ever and my last ‘Up Spirits’ ever because the rum ration was to become history on 31 July 1970, when it was judged no longer appropriate for sailors working on complex equipment, often with life-critical consequences, to be issued with a significant amount of strong drink.

The replacement daily allowance was three beers for the sailors. Petty Officers and Chief Petty Officers were allowed limited quantities of wines and spirits in their mess, but such refreshment was normally restricted to the evening, after scheduled work had ceased.

I had grown up immensely with all the responsibility and I knew I was going to find the social aspects of Cambridge University pretty easy with all my new advanced social experience and expertise, as well as my somewhat amusing sea stories.

My new ability to drink like a fish and stay sober, as well as my salary, were not too shabby dating tools either.

I had loved my 12 months sea time so much. Now it was time to earn a degree at Gonville and Caius College Cambridge [illustrated below], one of the best universities in the world, so I could try to persuade people that I knew something about engineering.



When I arrived at College, I decided not to talk much about my Navy time, especially my last few months, because it would have been so different to the experiences of other students.

They would not understand it and, even less, believe it.

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 th Anniversary Print	£ 5.50
TCA Beret Badge	£ 7.50	TCA 25 th Anniversary Badge	£ 6.00
RN Beret, Blue. Various sizes	£ 8.00	TCA Wall Shield 8 ins	£ 37.00
TCA Embroidered Blazer Badge	£ 9.77	Beanie/Ski woollen hat Navy with TCA badge	£ 8.72
TCA Lapel Badge	£ 6.05	TCA Polo Shirt, Navy logo 1	£18.44
TCA Mouse Mat	£ 4.00	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	TCA Notepad plus Pen	£ 5.00
Special Order items		<p>When ordering slops members are requested to include their Membership Number with the order.</p> <p>The reason for this is to cut down on FRAUD which is now on the increase.</p>	
<p>State size, colour and logo required</p> <p><i>Logo 1 = Mine and Keys, Logo 2 = Mine and TON silhouette</i></p> <p>Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery</p>			
TCA V-neck sweater. Navy or Maroon	£ 32.45	BOOKS	
Blazer Badge, Embroidered + ships name	£ 34.20		
TCA Polo Shirt in Navy with ships name	£ 18.44	Jacks of All Trades	£ 11.50
Iron Man Tee Shirt, Navy	£ 15.37	Last of the Wooden Walls	£ 24.99
Iron Man Polo Shirt , Navy	£ 18.44	A4 Hardback and E-book	
TCA Round Neck Sweatshirt	£ 29.16	Order from	
TCA Polar Fleece Jacket	£ 38.30	<i>www.halsgrove.com</i>	

All prices include P&P (within UK only)

Please make cheques / postal orders payable to TON Class Association

Laurie Johnson, 4 Downham Close, Cowplain, Hants

PO8 8UD Phone: 023 923 65729

e-mail: lawrencej1055@gmail.com

Post Bag

**FROM: Captain Charles Buckle,
Swanage**

I can add a little bit of background to Malcolm Mckeag's article 'GLASSERTON Dit' as I was in command at the time. The grey smudge in the distance of his photo was indeed GLASSERTON.

We were the committee vessel for the RORC'S 1974 One Ton Cup yacht race series held over a week in July in Torbay.

Luckily the weather was fair and we berthed alongside the harbour wall each evening. On board each day we had an RORC team of their Assistant Secretary, Alan Green (later the Secretary), who was Race Officer and Janet Grosvenor (who followed in Alan's footsteps to become secretary in due course). In the middle of the week Sir Maurice Laing (RORC Commodore) joined for the day. He spent lunch time using the wardroom cutlery to demonstrate the process of building his company's latest construction project! Shortly after the start of one of the races, I noticed that a fishing boat had snagged the windward mark. With no time to spare we weighed anchor and sailed at full power up through the fleet flying the blue flag (indicating that we were a temporary mark of the course). We anchored with only moments to spare.

As a dinghy sailor I was fascinated to see these yachts being raced as tightly as dinghies - giving no quarter particularly on the starting line.

Being the middle of summer the town was humming which made for a very reasonable run ashore for all. Ken Dodd and Dick Emery both had shows in town, both were entertained on board and both gave the ship's company tickets to their shows.

Later in the summer we were the escort vessel and finishing mark for the RORC Cowes/Dinard race, also sailed in fair weather and preceding an excellent weekend in St Malo. Locking out with a hangover and surrounded by expensive racing yachts all trying to be first home was yet another interesting experience !

FROM: John Caffrey, Pembrokeshire

Some time ago I made a 100 scale model of DARTINGTON, on which I served during Confrontation, and started on a another 75 scale model of a TON.

Unfortunately I have recently had a stroke and feel that I will not be able to complete the second model.

The model has been built from a kit; the hull has been completed and all other parts from the kit are "in the box", together with components from a model of a Vosper MTB, including Bofors and Oerlikon, which would fit the TON.

I would like to offer the part-built model and remaining components to anyone contemplating building a model of a TON – No reasonable offer refused !

My email address is
vendettafb43@btinternet.com

Those interested please contact John directly ... Editor

FROM: Lt Laurie Francis, Eastbourne

With regard to the question about CO's of MONKTON, THAMES and BEACHAMPTON, in 1962-63, I can partly answer the question.

I was Coxswain of those ships from August 1962 to November 1963.

The Captain from my arrival as Coxswain in August 1962 to January 1963 was Lieutenant Commander Vic Sheather. He was relieved in January 1963 by Lieutenant Trevor Chapple, a Gunnery Officer, who was still there when I left in November 1963.

That was a very interesting time for a number of reasons. I can bore you rigid with details if you are interested.

I rate that time as one of the most enjoyable experiences I had in the service, topped only by my time in Chatham Field Gun Crew.

Lt Cdr Roger Richardson RNR of Teddington has also responded. He was C.O of THAMES during mid-60.s, Both officers have been put in touch with Mr Woolley, who has been invited to join TCA ... Editor

FROM: Commodore Sym Taylor, Petersfield

A few thoughts based on the note in Post Bag concerning BREARLEY. You will recall that I wrote to you time ago about my short spell in that ship but I am unable to offer any more thoughts on the reason for the naming. However, when I was on the Staff of the Fleet Commander many years ago, I was a member of the Ship's Names Committee though I never attended any meeting. As I recall the majority of members were RN officers supported by civil servants and decisions made were only recommendations as the final outcome had to be ratified at a higher level (Navy Board I think) and finally by Her Majesty.

The only recommendation that I ever made, and passed on at a meeting by my Deputy, was to rename the RFA FORT GRANGE to FORT ROSALIE - I am pleased to say that this was accepted and the change occurred.

You may ask - why? When I was at sea we regularly got confused by which RFA was expected was it FORT GEORGE or FORT GRANGE and it was made worse as we tended to use abbreviations - such as Ft G.

I therefore suggested that the name of one be changed to FORT ROSALIE - and the reason? In about 1969 I attended an excellent party in the old RFA Ammunition ship of that name while at the explosive anchorage in HK - during the party (for some reason) we were taken into the hold where we stumbled about on top of 500lb bombs.

Overall I thought that was a good enough reason to get the old name back !

*New meaning for the phrase “Bomb Happy”! ... **Editor***

FROM: Jonathan Wrigley, Preston:

Discovered on House of Names Website: Of all the Anglo-Saxon names to come from Britain, Brearley is one of the most ancient.

The name is a result of the original family having lived in Brierley, a township in the parish of Felkirk, West Riding, Yorkshire. Brierley-Hill is a a district chapelry, in the parish of King's Swinford, Union of Stourbridge, North Division of the Hundred of Seisdon in Staffordshire

*Erudite and helpful lot in TCA ... **Editor***

From Commander David Frost RN, High Wycombe

I was interested in the Crossing the Bar notice about CRS Barber MBE, RNR and the fact she had served in Comcen Whitehall during the Falklands war.

The role of the RNR during the Falklands is not well known. I was SCO(R) on the staff of CinCNavHome at the time. It was the main leave period and a Leading Writer and I were holding the fort in Reserves Division. We were inundated with phone calls from reservists keen to do their bit. Unfortunately the legislation at the time did not permit selective mobilisation of the reserves. On the other hand there was nothing to stop me sending reservists to strategic

places for ‘training’ and I spent a happy few days authorising this. Comcen Whitehall was first off the mark with a shopping list of named reservists, mostly WRNR, it would like to have for ‘training’ and other major Comcens were not far behind. Commodore List 1 and I spent a morning identifying List 1 officers, mainly RoRo specialists, for the STUFT cell at Northwood. Some were diverted from an NCS course in *Vernon*, others from leave between voyages.

MCM10 phoned in with a bid for eight senior rates from the South Wales and Bristol divisions to go to Rosyth. At the time the sole repository of naval expertise in using trawlers as minesweepers lay in HMS *Cambria* and HMS *Flying Fox* so their ‘training’ consisted of training RN crews for the trawlers that had been taken up from trade for the duration. The RNR did its bit but it wasn't very well publicised.

The late and much respected Stuart Johnson, former TCA Treasurer, at the 2016 Reunion. Photo courtesy Rob Hoole



HMS BORAGE Commemoration



Stowmarket Branch of the Royal Naval Association organised a social event on 18th February, to mark the 80th Anniversary of the adoption of the Flower Class corvette HMS BORAGE by the communities of Stowmarket and Gipping Rural District during Warship Week in 1942.

Storm Eunice resulted in some cancellations on the night but over 50 guests attended including Commodore Robert Bellfield, Naval Commander of the Eastern Region [Thames to Humber], the Mayors of Stowmarket and Needham Market, where the former Gipping Rural District had its offices, and representatives of the Flower Class Association and RNA branches across the county.

Warship Week was a national initiative during one of the most perilous times in World War II, whereby communities donated money to fund construction of additional warships to defend the nation. Donations did not match the actual costs of constructing a warship but they were a means of raising valuable funds, usually via National Savings, and gave people, even in the very smallest communities, a sense that they were personally involved and making a contribution to the War Effort.

Big cities adopted major vessels such as aircraft carriers, battleships and cruisers, some of which were named after them. Smaller communities adopted destroyers, submarines, minesweepers and motor torpedo boats. Twenty communities in Suffolk participated in this initiative.

Audience for the BORAGE Commemoration was largely veterans of all the Armed Forces, Army, Navy and Air Force. A souvenir booklet had been prepared, describing HMS BORAGE and the achievements of Flower Class Corvettes, together with an explanation of the Warship Week initiative. Over £2000 was raised for the RN & RM Charity.