

TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association

Edition 216



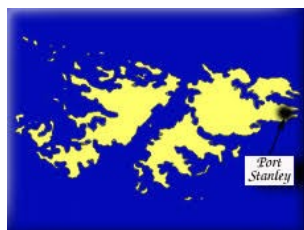
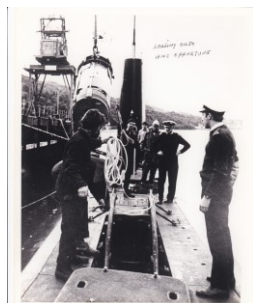
June 2022



***God Save the Queen
and Congratulations on her
Platinum Jubilee***

TON Class Association

Patron HRH The Prince of Wales



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TCA Membership
£15 per annum
£150 Life Membership

Front Cover:
The Queen, God Bless Her

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Founder: Jack Worth MBE

Editorial

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

TCA congratulates her Majesty on achieving her Platinum Jubilee. We whole-heartedly join in celebrating the 70 years of her reign.

Her Majesty has provided an outstanding example of Service to the Nation and conducted herself with dignity at all times, despite the tribulations of recent years.

We could not wish for a better model of statesmanship and focus for our Country and Commonwealth. We declare our affection and respect for our most Gracious Lady.

Sea Cadets Liaison Vice Chairman is inviting a small number of volunteers (ideally 3-4), preferably with knowledge of the Sea Cadets, to join him in a Working Party to consider better ways by which TCA might liaise with our three Affiliated Sea Cadet Units. Most of the work is likely to be done by exchanges of e-mail. The views of the units will be canvassed but geography and cost may prevent visits.

Volunteers please notify your interest to **peter.avoca@gmail.com**

Latest newsletter from MCM1 Crew 5, currently aboard SHOREHAM, operational in Home Waters, has been uploaded to our website under MCMV Newsletters on the Further Information page.

The ship is due to be decommissioned later this year and, with apologies for the short notice, the Commanding Officer has kindly invited TCA to be among those to be invited for her final visit to Shoreham by Sea, on 14 May. Lt Cdr Noel Atkins RD, RNR and CCY RNR Dave Walker have kindly agreed to represent TCA at this event.

Reunion, Nottingham 28-30th October. Secretary Matthew and Vice Chair Peter have visited the Crowne Plaza to confirm that all is well with arrangements. Bookings have been received for 49 guests. We could do with a few more to make the party go with a swing. Booking form is in April's edition or by e-mail from the Editor.

A volunteer who can pipe **Hands to Dinner** would be welcomed to relieve Peter of a job, as he will have other duties on that evening. Names to Editor, please.

VERNON MONUMENT 11 applications for tickets have been forwarded to the Vernon Committee. Many members have said that they have already visited the monument and appreciated the memories that it evoked.



Deadline for August's edition is 20th July

pjd

Chairman's Corner

Greetings fellow members; April and May have been busy for the Committee.

VMT to Vice Chairman Peter and Secretary Matthew for visiting the hotel in Nottingham where we will hold our Reunion in October; partly a reconnaissance, but also to achieve significant adjustments to accommodate our reduced numbers.

At the time of writing, we have 49 guests booked for the Reunion. Our revised deal with the hotel would allow us to have up to 60, so a few more party-goers would be welcome; please scan your diaries and see if you can get away to join us.

BZ to Treasurer David for rationalising and modernising our banking arrangements after consulting with the Committee. This involved some exacting negotiations with our banks. The restrictions placed by the Building Society on Slops and Welfare funds have been overcome by transferring these monies, plus the Reunion Fund, into ring-fenced sub-accounts within our No 2 General Account.

The two Building Society and Lloyds accounts involved may now be closed, leaving the Treasurer just the two accounts with Barclays to manage. We have agreed to move to on-line banking which means that our Treasurer can easily track transactions any day of the month and is able to access up-to-the-minute information on our financial position.

Also, we'll soon be able to offer payments by electronic transfer. These changes bring management of all TCA financial affairs under the direct control of the Treasurer with Slops and Reunion Funds now to be covered by our Annual Audit.

In due course there will have to be some adjustment to our Rules to accommodate these changes, but they should achieve improvements in the efficiency of our processes and also increase the service we provide to members and suppliers.

David will report in detail to the AGM.

I was pleased to note that TCA will be represented at the farewell tour of British ports by HMS SHOREHAM, a vessel I have trained and sailed with on several occasions. VMT to Noel Atkins and Dave Walker.

I look forward to seeing as many as possible at our Reunion.

Bob Hawkins MBE

TCA Who's Who

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Rear Admiral R John Lippiett CB. CBE. DL

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Commander 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

TCA REUNION 28-31 October, Crowne Plaza, Nottingham

Secretary Matthew and Vice Chairman Peter recently visited the hotel to finalise details for our Reunion.

We are significantly down on numbers this year, with currently under 50 confirmed bookings. Reasons for the drop may be attributed to the increasing age and declining health of members, plus the overhang from Covid and recent increases in petrol and rail costs.

We recognise that we must cut our cloth accordingly and the hotel has been very helpful in assisting us to re-cast the format of our Reunion Weekend to accommodate the reduced numbers and revenue. We are now aiming for an attendance of 60.

We will use the same suite for the AGM, Dinner and Church Service. Disco and dancing are not available but we are exploring having live music (a duo) for easy listening after dinner.

Crowne Plaza is a modern and very comfortable hotel, situated in the City Centre. Staff are very helpful and facilities include bar with snacks, restaurant and Urban Escape Fitness Centre with spa, pool and gym, available to guests. All public rooms and Conference Rooms are on the open plan first floor, with lift access to all bedrooms on the floors above. I am confident that we will have a very enjoyable time.

Nottingham is a vibrant city with lots to see and do, including pubs and restaurants to suit a wide variety of tastes within walking distance of the hotel. Tourist attractions include the Lace Market, now filled with trendy wine bars but traditional local lace can still be bought at the nearby Victoria Shopping Centre. High on the attractions is The Trip to Jerusalem, reputedly the oldest pub in England, cut into the rock beneath Nottingham Castle and dating from the twelfth century. However, whether crusaders really did stop off for a swift half on their way to the Holy Land, is debatable.

As may be expected, bar prices in the hotel are at London level, but should you not fancy exploring the attractions of the city, the hotel restaurant serves excellent tasty meals, with main courses from about £15.

SatNav is recommended if you are driving, as the one-way system and tramway network can be a challenge. A large multi-storey car park is attached to the hotel, round the corner from the main entrance, with lift access to Reception. **Post code for the car park in Hanley Street is NG1 5FW.** Parking will be free of charge for TCA guests attending the Reunion. Nottingham Rail station is a short taxi ride (c.£7) from the hotel.

If you have not already booked to attend the Reunion, please do so ASAP.

Booking Form was in April's edition of TON Talk and can be downloaded from our website. It is also available by e-mail from the Editor.

RNR and the Falklands Campaign

Commander Richard Green RD * RNR, Colchester**

On Friday 16th April 1982, I was due to take command of HMS Kedleston for a weekend training period. When I got to Claverhouse I was told that the ship had been ordered to sail at once to for Gibraltar to relieve the guardship there, HMS Ambuscade, (*whose First Lieutenant was John Lippiett ... Editor*), so she could go to the Falklands.

With the staff officer, I carried out the handover of KEDLESTON and around 2200 on the Friday we sailed for Plymouth, where we were to re-fuel and await further orders. We were making good progress but, when off the coast, south of Portland, the port engine had to be closed down because a saltwater leak into the lubrication oil of the engine. We carried on to Plymouth where, after an inspection of the engine, it was decided to replace it, but this would have to be done at HMS Vernon. We returned to VERNON, where they changed the engine in record time, working non-stop, in less than three days and we returned to Plymouth to join up with CFTON and ALFRISTON.

Before sailing for Gibraltar, I had a meeting with the C.O. of *Atlantic Conveyor*, which had been allocated as our "safety ship" for the passage across the Bay of Biscay. However the weather forecast was fine for the Bay, so it was agreed that *Atlantic Conveyor* need not worry about us and she was well out of sight, long before we reached Cape Finisterre.

All went well until we turned South East towards the Straits of Gibraltar. We still had about 100 miles to go when we started to run into rough weather from the east, which soon developed into a Force Ten Hurricane with about 70 miles still to run. Speed was reduced and progress into the head wind and sea was very slow. It was getting dark and raining hard when we finally reached our destination late on the evening of 25th April. It had taken us nearly two days to complete the last part of the run to Gibraltar.

My relief C.O. had arrived earlier in Gibraltar, and when we had not turned up on the Sunday, he went up to the MSO to enquire if they had any notice of our arrival time. No was the reply, but as he turned to leave, he spotted a signal from KEDLESTON in the Duty Officer's tray which had been sent at 2000 on the Saturday, giving our ETA and details of our very slow progress in the high winds. He pointed out the signal to the Duty Officer, whose reaction was "Oh my God. They should not be out there in weather like this" and immediately dispatched ABUSCADE to escort us in.

This was the roughest weather I have ever experienced in the RNR and I cannot speak too highly of all the ship's company who stuck to their tasks during the very unpleasant pounding the ship was getting.

To enter Gibraltar we had to turn across the sea. The ship was well secured for the turn and the only thing I recall losing were the N.O's binoculars which he had temporarily put on the chart table. They bounced out of the bridge through the port door during a particularly big roll.

Despite all the problems, we had achieved our task to relieve HMS Ambuscade, who left for the Falklands soon after our arrival.

Work Up for 11 MCMS

We recently received an e-mail from Peter Wright a former WO (MW) who had visited our website and read the account of *Minesweeping in the Falklands*; the personal memoir of Lt Cdr Martyn Holloway, Senior Officer of 11 MCMS.

Peter commented that the memoir made no mention of the role of RN personnel in the two-day work up of the squadron of STUFT vessels.

He writes; "At the time I was a FCPO (MW) at VERNON. While on leave that April I received a phone call instructing me to be in Rosyth the following day. The reason was that between 1979 to the end of 1981 I was on the staff of Captain MCM, responsible for maintaining the list of Fishing Vessels to be taken from trade in a National Emergency Work up for 11MCMS.

Together with my predecessor FCPO(TASI) Roy Castle, we had a very good practical working knowledge of EDATS. Having spent many hours on exercise in the Clyde, North East Scotland and trials with "Boffins" from AUWE.

We joined the Trawlers the next day for the change from Fishing to MCMV.

During the following days we introduced the RN crews to the EDATS Gear and worked them up in the Firth of Forth."

Lt Cdr Holloway was happy to clarify; I know Peter Wright well, having worked with him in VERNON in the early '70s and later I borrowed him and 'Bill' Haley, both then Chiefs, for 10 weeks 'hard' labour introducing the Mine Disposal Weapon to the USN while I was on exchange at the USN Mine Warfare Command, Charleston.

The CAMBRIA team were deservedly noted for their efforts off-loading fishing gear, loading the EDATS gear and in briefing the sweep deck crews, in fact most of them wanted to stow away and come too, but RNR personnel were not directly involved in the Work Up phase.

Captain MCM's team did their best to pass on their experience conducting drills in an atmosphere of helping the crews to develop routines with the unfamiliar ships and ways of doing things rather than critiquing performance with their 'inspection' hats on.

When it came my turn in CORDELLA to work up with JUNELLA, I was particularly grateful to have the benefit of the counsel of Fleet Chief Petty Officer (Mine Warfare) Ed Smith. A man of great experience, who had worked with the RNR ships VENTURER and St DAVID as a member of the 10th Squadron Staff in developing the EDATS sweep. His reassurance and gentle guidance was invaluable.

Of course we would have weeks on passage to get to know our ships but right then, any help on offer was more than welcome.



BOOK REVIEW

Harrier 809

*"Britain's Legendary Jump Jet and
Untold Stories of the Falklands War"*

Rowland White

First Published in 2020 by Bantam Press.

Now available from Penguin Random House. Corgi Edition 2021

ISBN 9780552176354

This is not a new book but, given the current commemorations of the Falklands Campaign, it is appropriate to re-visit the many memoirs and analyses published about that episode in our history and the pivotal role of all elements of the Royal Navy in it.

The main theme of the book is how 809 Squadron was hurriedly re-formed in anticipation of providing replacements for any aircraft lost from the small air groups embarked on HERMES and INVINCIBLE but, having taken passage in *Atlantic Conveyor*, found its aircraft and pilots in action much sooner than anticipated.

The story of the Falklands, from the hectic rush to get the Task Force ready to sail within three days early in April 1982, through the passage south, planning and re-planning as options changed in accordance with intelligence received, through initial conflicts with Argentine aircraft, loss of scarce ships to the eventual landings and hand to hand encounters, has been told from many perspectives by those involved.

Rowland White, who is a distinguished author and commentator on contemporary military matters, has compiled a fascinating book which illustrates the timeline of the conflict with anecdotes, from both sides, that bring out the human stories, many not previously published, and make this book difficult to put down.

These anecdotes explore the thinking of politicians and Senior Officers in the Headquarters of all arms involved, together with stories of success and failures of equipment on which lives depended. They also include a lot of behind the scenes diplomatic activity, including some skulduggery to prevent Argentina obtaining re-supply of Exocet missiles. Technology features highly in these stories, again some not previously released. The book concludes with a commentary on post-conflict enhancements to the Sea Harrier and further careers of the major players, plus a comprehensive bibliography.

Harrier 809 is available from E-Bay at £5-15 or in many libraries.

POLYOX TRIALS

Lt Cdr Neil Edden RNR, Chichester

As part of my work with the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust, I have collected together all the TONs-related drawings and Bill Pollington will shortly be visiting to identify those of particular interest. Among them was a roll of drawings labelled simply "Polyox Trials". What the heck was that? Studying the drawings provided some of the answers.

In 1968 the Admiralty Experimental Works at Haslar initiated drawings for a trial to see if injecting long chain molecules namely Polyethylene Oxide into the boundary layer of the water flowing down the ship's side would reduce drag and thus fuel consumption. This was probably prompted by yet another hike in the price of oil.

HMS Highburton was chosen for the trial and proceeded to mount a large tank on the fo'c'stle some 8' x 7' x 12' high, just forward of the bridge where sea water and polyox were mixed. Presumably the gun was removed, as the full tank weighed six tons. The mix was pumped into a vertical slot in the planking at the forepeak on both sides of the ship, behind a fairing to ensure an even film of the mix was ejected into the boundary layer. Sea water was pumped up into the tank from a suction at the sonar trunk to replace the mixture used and hence maintain stability.

A total of 12 sampling points were fitted: in the magazine, sonar space, generator room and minesweeping store, all on the starboard side connected to a paper trace plotter in the Ops Room. The polyox concentration was some 30 parts per million. Different speeds, sea conditions and fuel consumption were monitored and the results were published. The National Archives at Kew has a copy. Maybe different concentrations were used, as well ?

A 30% improvement was reputedly obtained, BUT the cost was 1500 times the saving, as polyox is expensive !

Will the latest price of oil prompt another trial bearing in mind that Polyox is derived from fossil fuels ?

Can anyone remember taking part ?

CERA Stuart Marshall Johnson – Vice President TCA

It is with great sadness that we have to advise that Stuart Johnson Crossed the Bar on 14 March 2022 after a long struggle with cancer. The condolences of all members of TCA have been sent to Denise and their daughters Nicola, Alison and Claire and their families.

Stuart (also known to many as John) was born in July 1938 and joined HMS Fisgard as an Artificer Apprentice in September 1953. He subsequently served HM Ships Concord, Crane, Gambia, Houghton, Aberford (delivery to Kenya Navy), Vidal, Antrim and Dundas.

In 1969/71 Stuart was based at HMS Osprey at Portland on the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training as a Sea Rider for Damage Control Training. Stuart became very friendly with, and impressed by, the crews of the German Navy ships destroyer Z4 [Zerstörer/destroyer] and the frigate *EMDEN*, which he accompanied back to Germany.

Stuart had been Chairman of the HMS CRANE Association and was TCA Treasurer 2000-2021. He had previously served as TCA Auditor. His prudent stewardship of our finances is largely responsible for the healthy balances we enjoy today. Stuart was widely respected for keeping calm if problems arose.

His funeral was held at FRADLEY Crematorium, Lichfield on Tuesday 12th April. Dave Parrish paraded the Northern Standard and TCA was represented by Vice Chairman Peter Down and Doreen, Charlie Farnes and Bill Pollington. CRANE Association was represented by Peter and Malcolm Tagg, who had been an apprentice with Stuart at Fisguard and also served in CRANE. TCA will be making donations to RNLI and Cancer Research, as requested.

Stuart was a true friend, respected by all who knew him. He will be greatly missed.

Pictured Left to Right : Stuart, Peter Down and Joe Smith representing HMS CRANE at the Commemoration for the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic held at Liverpool Cathedral in May 2013.

Our heroes were all too young to have fought in that battle but CRANE did, sinking two U-Boats.



Captain David Filtness MA, RN - Reunion Guest of Honour

Captain Filtness is the son of TCA Chaplain, Rev Trevor Filtness, who served as Lieutenant Commander, including time in HMS LEWISTON.

After initial training at BRNC Dartmouth in 1999 and HMS KENT, David Filtness was selected for the Submarine Service and joined HMS TIRELESS in early 2002 for a deployment to the US Eastern Seaboard and North Atlantic, during which time he earned his Dolphins. Navigator's Course in 2003 was followed by a rewarding 18-month assignment to the staff of Commander (Operations) in the Northwood Headquarters as the Admiral's Flag Lieutenant.



He subsequently served in HMS SCEPTRE, and HMS TURBULENT on operations across the North Atlantic, Mediterranean Sea, Middle East and Far East. These early years at sea were broken by an assignment as Flag Lieutenant to the Navy's Commander (Operations) in 2003 - 2004. He served as Operations Officer in the SSBN HMS VENGEANCE for CASD patrols, and then HMS TORBAY in the Middle East in 2008 - 2009.

Following the Submarine Command Course in 2010, he returned to the SSBN community as XO of HMS VICTORIOUS, before taking on a staff assignment as the Submarine Warfare Officers' Career Manager. Selected for promotion to Commander in 2014, he commanded HMS TRIUMPH on North Atlantic Operations from 2014 – 2017.

After attending the Advanced Command and Staff Course, David took on the role of Special Capabilities lead in the Security Policy and Operations (SPO) department of the Ministry of Defence and the UK Special Technical Operations Chief from Oct 2018, and then was briefly assigned to the Navy's Plans Alliance in the Navy Command Headquarters. Promoted to Captain in May 2021, he began to develop ways by which HQ might improve liaison with SPO and single service components to re-orientate military operational plans and campaigns to align with the Defence Integrated Operating Concept.

David took over the post of Chief of Staff in the UK Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) in Dec 21. The HQ is held at very high readiness to deliver non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) and humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations (HADR) globally, as well as fulfilling the role of a very high readiness 1-star deployable HQ for other operations as required.

David has a BSc (Hons) in Geology from the University of Durham and an MA in Defence Studies from Kings College London. He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Survey, a Freeman of the City of London, and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Upholders. He is married to Rebecca and has two children (Henry, 6, and Anna, 3) and lives in Devon.

More Dits from Mick Donoyou

"WE HAVE WAYS"

During a visit to a German port it was decided to open the ship to visitors, with access being allowed to upper deck, bridge and wheelhouse areas only.

One elderly Gentleman visitor requested to be allowed to visit the Engine Room, explaining that he had been a Chief Engineer in the Old German Navy – *presumably WW2 Kriegsmarine*.

The CO agreed that the Gentleman be discreetly taken down to the Engine Room accompanied by the Duty Stoker. Once there the visitor said so what goes on down here to which the Duty Stoker replied (in a mock German accent) "Ve haf Vays of making ze boat go"

The Visitor roared with laughter and said "Well done" to the Stoker. He later thanked both the Stoker and the CO and said he had thoroughly enjoyed his visit.

"Alles Gut, Endes Gut" (All's well that ends well).

"IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW, BUT WHO"

At the start of one deployment I was summoned to the upper deck ,via the tannoy, by the 1st Lt and on arrival I found him in conversation with the 1st Lt of the sweeper moored alongside.

The Jimmy said "Ah there you are Buffer" and went on to say that as we would be exercising almost exclusively with the ship next door he thought it would be a good idea for me to be introduced to their Jimmy.

At the mention of my name, the other Jimmy turned around saying "Mick how are you?" We then had a brief but animated conversation while my own 1st Lt stood awkwardly to one side saying "Oh do you two already know each other?"

I explained that we had served together as AB's which did not impress my own Jimmy, who was further put out when it became obvious that I was also on equally friendly terms with the C.O of the other Sweeper.

HMS OPPORTUNE loads USN Exercise Mines

Commander Ron Swart USN Rtd

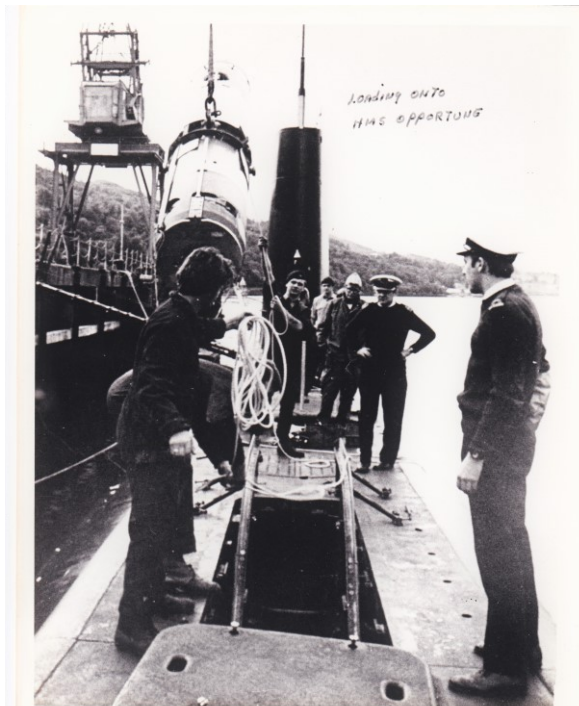
Commander Ron is a frequent correspondent with TON Talk, sending us the newsletter of the Association of Minemen, which can be read on our website under Further Information, in exchange for TON Talk.

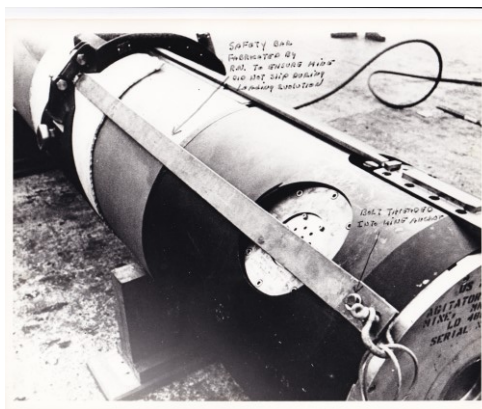
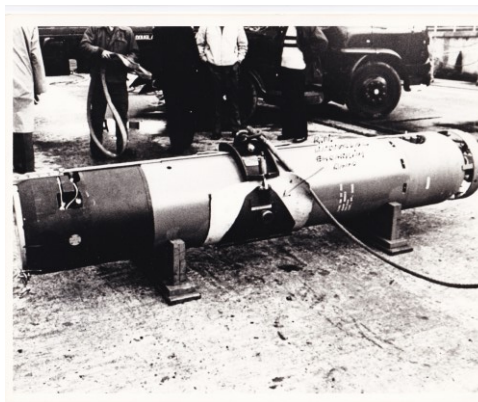
The Minemen Branch of the USN assembles and prepare mines for laying, so they are to be found in armaments depots and at sea in aircraft carriers (the USN uses air-laid mines extensively). They are also taking responsibility for Unmanned Underwater Vehicles used for MCM purposes, so we may also meet them in mine hunting roles

Commander Ron advises that he has been going through his extensive archives and recently ran across these photos of a USN Mk 57 submarine-laid practice mine being loaded into HMS Opportune. The practice mine was prepared by the USN mine depot at Glen Douglas.

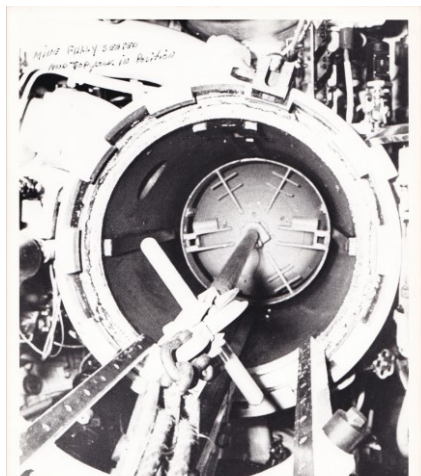
He does not have a date of this event, but those mines went out of service in the late 1980's.

Perhaps former submariners among TCA members may recall the details ?





Safety strap right: An RN Mod to avoid mine snagging on the loading rails



Down the Hatch and Snug in a Torpedo Tube

RNPS & the Long Arm of Coincidence

Colin Litster of Leeds, not a TCA member, contacted us via the website to enquire: *"Would it be OK to publish your photo of HMS Aveley in my photo collection on my Flickr site ? . My father was an Admiralty draughtsman and worked on the design of AVELEY and other minesweepers in the 1950's".*

We said "Yes, requesting a mention of TCA" and Colin replied : ...

"I have recently discovered some of my Dad's workbooks, which include some of the technical work he did on inshore and ocean-going minesweepers. I've put some photos online. Copy and paste this link to Google ; **Colin Litster's albums | Flickr**

The-collection of photos is based around those taken by my grandfather during his life at sea. But if you click on the album **"Dodo, Kirin & the Litsters"** you'll see the minesweeper related photos".

These photographs are a fascinating and historic collection, mainly of life at sea in the 1920's – 1940's.

*See "**World Cruise 1923**" to note how the seriously rich spent their time in their private yachts. RESTLESS sailed from Scotland to Japan and back via the Pacific and Mediterranean.*

Colin's Grandfather, Lt Cdr Alexander Cumming Litster DSC RNR served in the Royal Naval Patrol Service in World War 2.

*As C.O. of the Armed Trawler ANGLE (FY201) he participated in the ill-fated raid on Namsos, Norway in 1941 in which Lt Richard Stannard won the VC (see **TON Talk 209, April 2021**) and Lt Litster was awarded the DSC.*



Photo courtesy RNPS Museum. ARAB (nearest camera) and ANGLE at Namsos.

*See **Photos for WW2** on the link for more detail. This photograph was probably taken by an attacking German aircraft !*

*Lt Cdr Litster later commanded the Rescue Tug MINONA **Editor***

CENOTAPH PARADE

It is now time for those wishing to attend the Cenotaph Parade to register their interest with Secretary Matthew Salisbury [matthew@cavamh.org.uk].



The Royal British Legion, who manage this event, will shortly be requesting the names and details of those wishing to participate in the parade.

We have requested an allocation of 20 tickets and usually have to provide names etc during August.

If you have attended the parade as part of the TCA contingent in the past three years, we already have your details on file.

If not, please let Matthew know your Full Name, Current Address, Date and Town of Birth, Official Number, Former Rank/Rating, Years when served (e.g, 1959 -71) and whether you hold any medals (Not which medals - just Yes or No).

The reason for requesting these details is that the RBL process seeks to allocate tickets only to those who have served in the Armed Forces and any carers.

Tickets will be sent to those marching by RBL (not TCA), together with Joining Instructions, including times, and usually details of the free taxi service from London main line rail stations to Horse Guards.

No mis-musters after the August deadline, so please contact Matthew NOW !

FALKLANDS 40th ANNIVERSARY

The undeclared war, usually termed “Falklands Campaign”, took place between 2nd April and 14th June 1982 – a hectic period of just ten weeks which exposed shortfalls in diplomatic and military planning on both sides and resulted in the deaths of 255 British service personnel, 3 civilian Falklands islanders and 649 Argentine military personnel, with 777 British and 1168 Argentine wounded. Most of the Argentine dead were buried in a military cemetery near to Darwin on East Falklands.



The episode also brought forth some heroic actions by troops and united the majority of the British public in displays of patriotism. The achievement of mobilising a task force to sail to retake the islands in just three days was a tribute to all civilian and military units involved, who worked round the clock to achieve a near miraculous result.

Ceremonies to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands Campaign will be held around the country between 17 and 19 June, with the principal Naval Commemoration being held in Portsmouth on 17 June. Local events will be held at many War Memorials throughout the country – perhaps the more poignant as local veterans recall comrades who fell or suffered in other ways.

The Argentine Navy did deploy mines; at least 25 were found in two minefields in the approaches to Port Stanley. TON Class minesweepers were judged not to be suitable to deploy to the rigours of the South Atlantic winter but TONs sailors were very much involved.



The five trawlers Taken Up From Trade [STUFT] to form the ad-hoc 11TH Mine Counter Measures Squadron: CORDELLA, NORTHELLA, JUNELLA, FARNELLA from J. Marr of Hull and PICT from British United Trawlers, were manned by crews taken from 4 MCMS (Fishery Protection Squadron) and two ships of 1 MCMS then in refit, allowing all the other running TONs to remain operational.

TCA members were involved even more widely than the 140 sailors who formed the crews of 11 MCMS under Senior Officer Lt Cdr Martyn Holloway, a TCA member.

Captain MCM who oversaw the creation and preparation of the Squadron was Captain Jeremy Stewart, Founder member and first Chairman of TCA and (then) Captain J.J. Black, Commanding Officer of HMS Invincible was a member and TCA President John Lippiett was First Lieutenant of HMS Ambuscade. Commodore Hastie and many of the men of Bristol and South Wales RNR Divisions who went to Rosyth, ostensibly on a training assignment, to install EDATS gear on the STUFT trawlers. Many Reservists also responded to the call for volunteers to work in Communications Centres for the duration of hostilities. Some members served in other ships in the Task Force and all wear the South Atlantic medal with pride.

Nor should the extraordinary efforts of civilian dockyard workers be overlooked: from the De-gaussing teams at Rosyth who wiped the STUFT trawlers in record time to those in the Rigging Shop who manufactured suitable slings to enable the EDATS wires to be streamed as Oropesa sweeps, in addition to their designed deep team sweep configuration. This last manoeuvre being made possible by hastily compiled tables at AUWE to give appropriate lengths of kite wire needed.

The slings were delivered by Crab Air parachutes to the ships in mid-Atlantic as they sailed south, enabling them to chalk up 117 hours of minesweeping practice with unfamiliar gear before they entered the war zone.

The story of 11 MCMS has been detailed in the memoir produced by Lt Cdr Martyn Holloway which was serialised in TON Talk editions 160, 161 and 162, of February - June 2013, supplemented by the memoir of then Lt Cdr Bernie Bruen of Fleet Clearance Diving Team 3 in TON Talk edition 164, October 2013.



EndEx – the final team sweep to declare the minefield clear for shipping

These unique records of the MCM aspects of the Falklands Campaign can be found on the TCA website under Further Information / Falklands Campaign, OR you can buy the 24-page monograph in PDF electronic format by sending £6.50 to the Editor.

Sitrep from TS Dragon, Thurrock Sea Cadets

Petty Officer (SCC) Danny Hodgson, Commanding Officer

Thank you so much TCA for your kind donation. It will help greatly towards some kayaks we are trying to purchase to improve and broaden the experience the cadets can get at Thurrock Sea Cadet Unit.

A lot has been happening over at Thurrock; In February we went to Carver Army barracks for our District Drill and Piping Competition. We entered two teams: Unarmed Drill and Juniors Team Piping. The team for Unarmed Drill was led by Able Cadet Zachary and Juniors was led by Able Junior Robert.

They both had stiff Competition but came away with Gold - *see photos below*

We then went off to London Area Drill and Piping Competition and both teams came away with Gold again !

Now our Unarmed Drill Team is off to represent us at the National Drill and Piping Competition - fingers crossed they may come away being national winners ...

As a treat for the Juniors, they had the experience of watching the London theatre show *Wicked*. I asked how it was and the reply I got was "the best thing they've ever seen".

We have also had four cadets on offshore yachting for a week. The weather was amazing and they got a soaking from the power vessel for all the hard work they put in – *see below*



We have also had cadets at our own boating station gaining valuable qualifications and experience in rowing, sailing and powerboating.

We have recently been at Grays Remembrance Ceremony for 40th Anniversary of the Falklands conflict and had the honour of parading our unit standard, as the Royal British Legion standard was not available.

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 7) and CHIDDINGFOLD (2/1) plus the Sandown class MCMVs BANGOR (1/8) and PENZANCE (1/1), all supported by RFA LYME BAY. On 27 April, MIDDLETON's XO, Lt Cdr James Leeds, on exchange from the Royal Australian Navy, joined fellow RAN and RNZN personnel deployed to CMF Bahrain to commemorate ANZAC Day 2022. The dawn service was given extra poignancy by the presence of Turkish Naval personnel who also serve with CMF Bahrain. The commemoration concluded with traditional ANZAC biscuits. On 28 April, Lt Cdr Tim Castrinoyannakis superseded Lt Cdr Tom Gell as CO of MCM1 Crew 1 in PENZANCE. On 30 April, MIDDLETON hosted the VIP party for the 'Continuous 15' event marking 15 years of Royal Navy MCM operations in the Middle East. Also in April, BANGOR led a UK/US operation to clear the Central Gulf of legacy drill mine shapes. CHIDDINGFOLD personnel undertook a variety of AT (Adventurous Training).

HUNT Class

BROCKLESBY (2/2) has been on patrol off Scotland. She visited Swansea in March. In early April, HURWORTH (2/5) made a short logistics stop in Campbeltown during Exercise MCM WARRIOR. She was then spotted leaving Faslane on 12 April after her divers honed their emergency drills in the base swimming pool, complete with wave machine.

SANDOWN Class

In early April, PEMBROKE (1/4) and SHOREHAM (1/5), together with HMS BITER and FS L'AIGLE of the French Marine Nationale, participated in Exercise MCM WARRIOR in Scottish waters. On 21 April, SHOREHAM dressed ship at Faslane to mark the Queen's 96th birthday. On the same day, GRIMSBY (1/2) returned to her base at Faslane having completed her attachment to SNMCMG1 (Standing NATO MCM Group 1) with a final visit to Bodo in Norway. On 5 May, ship's company members from PEMBROKE undertook the Three Peaks Challenge and climbed Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in under 24 hours to raise money for the RN Benevolent Trust.

Mine Threat Exploitation Group

MASTT Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team is now part of the newly-formed MTXG. It has been trialling its new SAAB minehunting ROV off Plymouth, which has named SAABastian.

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

Alan P Green. S/Lt RN. Barton-le-Clay, Bedfordshire.
E-mail: peter.green@eurocontrol.int F2497

Alistair J Cartwright. Lt RNR. Shrewbury, Shropshire.
E-mail: chinese.carts2006@hotmail.com F2498

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Robert Macpherson. To:- Rosyth Fife. E-mail:- r.macpherson50@gmail.com
F0517

George Lines. To:- Hamble Hampshire L1624

Basil Chapman. To:- Antony Torpoint Cornwall. F1243

Tim Sherwen. To:- Tring Hertfordshire. F2150

CHANGED E-Mail ADDRESS

Colin Brett. To:- colinbrett@btinternet.com F0003

LOST CONTACT.

Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary

Donald H Landless. Last Known Address Gosport Hampshire H0149



Crossed the Bar

ME 1 Brian Treliving RN

Northampton F 1260

Served on HMS CONISTON 1956-57

Stoker Fredrick Norwell RN

HM Ships WASPERTON 1957. WALKERTON 1960

FCCY Fredrick J Wilesmith. RN

Ashley Heath Dorset. F1489

Served on HM Ships STUBBINGTON 1958-60. WALKERTON 1962-64

CWEM(O) William F Bygrave. RN.

Gosport Hampshire. F0079

Served on HM Ships KEMERTON 1962-63, SOLENT 1973-74

May They Rest In Peace

Only Having a Laugh ...



Top this for a Speeding Ticket

Found by Laurie Johnson and first printed in TON Talk 146, October 2020

Two Traffic Patrol officers from North Berwick, east of Edinburgh, were involved in an unusual incident when checking for speeding on the A1.

One of the officers, using a hand-held radar device to check the speed of vehicles approaching over the crest of a hill was surprised when the device registered a speed of over 300 mph. It then stopped working and the officers could not re-start it.

The radar had in fact locked on to a distant NATO Tornado fighter jet over the North Sea, which was engaged in a low-flying exercise.

Back at Police Headquarters the Chief Constable fired off a stiff complaint to the RAF Liaison Office.

Back came the laconic reply "Thank you for your message, which enables us to complete the file on this incident. You may be interested to know that the tactical computer in the Tornado aircraft had automatically locked on to your "hostile radar equipment" and sent a jamming signal back to it. Furthermore the Sidewinder Air to Ground missiles aboard this fully armed aircraft had also locked on to the target indicated.

Fortunately the Dutch pilot flying the Tornado responded to the missile alert intelligently and was able to override the automatic system before the missile was launched"

Anyone who has attended one of those Speed Awareness Courses will appreciate the irony ...

Exercise CUTLASS EXPRESS

From UK Defence Journal March 2022 © George Allinson

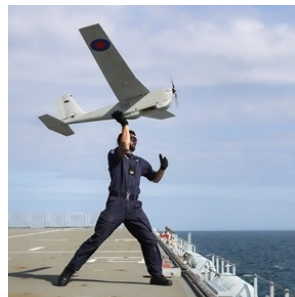
More than 60 countries, 50 ships, 80 uncrewed systems – airborne, seaborne and underwater – from ten nations – and 9,000 personnel took part in the combined International Maritime Exercise CUTLASS EXPRESS in the Gulf region.

The Royal Navy said that stealth speed boats and drones launched by Royal Navy vessels offered a glimpse of the future of naval operations in the Gulf. “The goal was to enhance partnerships, and ensure seamless interaction and cooperation between participants of many languages, with different systems and different ways of working. Leading Combined Task Force North – operating in the Gulf – was the bulk of the RN’s presence in the region: minehunter command ship RFA Lyme Bay, with her ‘flock’ – HM Ships Bangor, Chiddingfold and Penzance – plus frigate HMS Montrose and vessels from other navies, including Japan, the USA and Gulf nations.

RFA LYME BAY proved key not just as a hub for the minehunters, but also some of the autonomous/crewless systems being put through their paces.

The RN brought Puma drones, courtesy of 700X Naval Air Squadron, plus L3Harris MAST-13 robot boat, while the Americans rolled out the Devil Ray, the MARTAC T-38, capable of speeds in excess of 80 knots, can pull turns at six times the force of gravity (6G) and either gather intelligence or serve as a launchpad for other unmanned systems.

MAST-13 has been re-named, Madfox ; a sleek, high-speed and long-range craft, [seen below left, returning to *RFA Lyme Bay*] which was handed over to the Royal Navy 12 months ago to experiment with autonomous surveillance/intelligence gathering, as well as force protection for a ship or task group. The high-speed vessel operates autonomously, beyond line-of-sight, to carry out reconnaissance, interdiction and patrol tasks.



Completing the surveillance/intelligence picture is the UAV Puma [above right], which gives ‘eyes in the sky’ and over the horizon for ships which previously did not carry an aircraft. PUMA needs only a crew of three, as opposed to ten technicians, plus aircrew, for a Wildcat or Lynx.

TO RIO WITH ROCKHAMPTON STAR
Lt Cdr Phil Carroll RNR



I caught the train from Pompey Harbour to Newhaven to join *Rockhampton Star* (aka *Rocky*) on 4 November 1981. This was my fourth 'trip' since joining BSSM in September 1980. Built by Cammell Laird, *Rocky* was a reefer, carrying chilled and frozen produce. Superstructure and engine-room were amidships, separating her five refrigerated holds (three forward, two aft). Lifting gear comprised a mast with two derrick booms per hold, enabling single derrick or union purchase operations. *Rocky* had a classic cruiser stern. The bridge was cluttered with antiquated-looking equipment, helm, engine telegraph, and beautiful cabinetry for chart-table, chart drawers, and bookshelves. The view forward was partially obstructed by masts, derricks and rigging. Tucked behind the bridge was the radio shack. Aft the bridge was the outsize Blue Star funnel.

Built 1958 as a Refrigerated Cargo Ship; Gross tonnage 10619, Net tonnage 6407
Length 154m x Beam 21m x Draught 9m. Speed 17½kts

Rocky lacked air-conditioned accommodation, but cabins had large ports and wooden shutters. Heads and showers were on the internal side of the alleyway. Crew accommodation was on the weather-deck, officers occupied the deck above with a narrow teak promenade deck on each side.

The Singapore-Chinese crew were all in their fifties (Pantry Boy was ancient), signed-on for consecutive years, pay sent home to family. Their English was basic. I ordered scrambled eggs at breakfast, Steward Bang smacked the plate down in front of me and exclaimed 'SKAMBO!' They were friendly, courteous, polite, and hard-working.

I paid my respects to the Old Man, Captain Daniel, previously my Captain on *California Star*. I was excited about the trip, having got as far as Belem, Brazil on *Benedict*, but *Rocky* was headed further south to Rio and the River Plate.

Nick was a senior Chief Mate. Mark (2nd Mate) was in the first intake of Officer Trainees (O/T), neat, smart, conscientious, from Brighton. 3rd Mate Mike was a stocky young Guernseyman with a shock of blonde unruly hair. 'Doddy', the other O/T was a year junior to me. On the South American coast, Mike and I teamed up for night cargo watches, Mark and 'Doddy' formed the day watch.

The Engineer Officers comprised Chief, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Junior, plus two each of Electrical Officers (Leckies) and Refrigeration Engineers (Fridgies). Lastly, the Purser and Radio Officer (Sparky).

Alongside at Newhaven, *Rocky* settled on mud banks at low water. Her port list meant wash-basins and showers didn't drain properly until she re-floated to an even keel during flood tide.

Lightly loaded with powdered milk, whisky and glass products, *Rockhampton Star* sailed on 5 November, dropped the Pilot, and set a south-westerly course down the English Channel. 'Doddy' and I day-worked with the ABs. Although the Mate tasked us with stripping, cleaning, greasing and reassembling hatch and watertight door 'dogs'. A painstaking job but with engineers' rags and a wire-brush, the 'dogs' were pristine and freshly greased when we refitted them.

Rockhampton Star steamed across Biscay. Sea and weather were kind. A southerly course yielded landfall off Brazil. Rio de Janeiro's skyline hovered into view on 18 November. We continued into Guanabara Bay, Rio to port, Ipanema Beach ahead, then Copacabana Beach to port. Christ the Redeemer perched on Corcovado surveyed Rio, throbbing below. Further along was Sugarloaf Mountain.

We berthed for three days, loading coffee and fruit. The former in large bags secured to pallets and stowed in the lower holds, the latter boxed and loaded into the tween deck refrigerated lockers. The port didn't work 24 hours per day, so we split our shifts evenly from 0700 to about 1900 daily. Stevedores in flip-flops clambered aboard.

The Chinese ABs opened the McGregor hatches. Attached to the securing point on the hatch, a wire rope from a derrick winch pulled the hatch-cover along the coaming rails to its vertical stowage position at aft end of the hatch. *Rockhampton Star's* hatches were small, typical of a reefer, to limit the loss of cold air from the chilled hold and reduce ingress of warm, humid ambient air. Each hold comprised upper and lower tween decks and vast lower hold. The tween decks had less headroom with small refrigerated compartments in the wings. Thus, a variety of 'fridge' cargoes could be carried as each required a specific temperature. The hatch square was also refrigerated, so its deck was insulated. The tween deck hatch-covers were of 'beam and plug' design. Wooden beams sheathed in protective steel slotted into short grooves on the longitudinal edges of the hatch square. The plugs were small thick squares of cork insulation, bevelled and edged with steel. They snugly sat between the bevelled sides of the beams to seal the hatch square. Each plug was numbered to ensure it was returned to its specific position using ship's derricks. We closely monitored the stevedores, usually slapdash in their fitting of the plugs.

We rigged stanchions and looped safety ropes through their tops to make the edge of the exposed hatch square as safe as practicable. These were stowed in the mast-houses. We manhandled everything down the hatch ladders. There were no lights in the holds. At dusk, we rigged portable lights ('clusters') around the hatch coaming, secured so their light shone down into pitch dark tween decks and holds. Each cluster had a short sisal rope spliced onto it affixing to a suitable bit of coaming. In the tween decks, we secured clusters on the stanchions to shine light directly into the lower hold. A lamp in a cluster would 'pop' and require replacement. Clusters were critical and required frequent re-siting when working cargo. It was time-consuming and exhausting to rig this stuff in tropical heat and humidity and remain abreast of cargo operations. Cargo watch was intense, high-speed activity interspersed with pedestrian periods.

Mike and I visited Sugarloaf Mountain. The cable-car carried us to its 400m summit, fantastic panoramic views of Rio and its environs. Another afternoon, we took a taxi to Copacabana, via downtown Rio and the bay's edge to Copacabana's north-east end. A golden arc stretched away to the south, filled with glistening tanned Brazilians: beach volleyball, in the sea, sunbathing. Sandals in hand, feet warmed by the sand, we strolled past many beautiful women in tiny bikinis. We scuppered cold Antarctica beer in a bar at the south end and continued round the headland to Ipanema and thence to *Rocky*.

Night-time proved typical merchant navy. By taxi, the junior engineers and I went 'up the road'. VW Beetles were ubiquitous throughout Brazil, built under-licence years after production ceased in Europe.

We arrived at the 'skids', dodgy, down-at-heel areas full of bars and 'knocking shops'. Trade was roaring. Long daily opening hours fulfilled a seaman's need for booze, fun, laughter, 'cabaret' shows, and easy girls. We went to the Scandinavia Bar (aka 'Scandi Bar') and Florida Bar, scuppered large bottles of Antarctica beer. Some enjoyed Cuba Libre, a highball cocktail of Coca-Cola, Bacardi, and lime juice on ice. Cash-only waitress service ensured that empty bottles were quickly replaced on every table. Cabarets comprised strippers rotating through their limited repertoire, punters transfixed on their naked bodies. Tanned, luscious, firm-bodied, immaculately coiffed young whores roamed amongst increasingly inebriated seamen. Occasionally, a punter was drawn into their web of charm, and accompanied 'his girl' to the 'bag-off hotel' nearby. Sometimes, booze ignited a fight. It usually petered out and everyone was friends again.

One or two of the Chinese crew saved some of their wages to spend the entire port visit in a 'bag-off hotel' with a girl. The ladies had a code of honour. If a punter strayed to another girl, his 'girl' became aggressive and often violent. The 'owner girl' launched a verbal assault. Being called a 'butterfly' by a Brazilian whore was the worst insult a seaman in the 'skids' could suffer! Volume and fury increased as she slapped the punter. Having 'vented', she retreated. The punter was embarrassed and untouchable.

Conversation on these nights in the 'skids' was always fruity. Tales of derring-do in 'skids' and 'on the coast' worldwide. In the old days in Ozzie and Kiwi, cargo ships 'coasted' for several weeks. The working day ended at 1600. Every evening 'up the road'. Merchantmen attracted particular 'party-girls' ('molls'), invited on board for the almost nightly parties. 'Romantic' pairings developed. Oftentimes, a 'moll' remained on board for the duration that the ship was coasting, secreted in her paramour's cabin. One

infamous Blue Star Engineer ('Billy Bag-Off') was notorious for taking a 'smoko-poko' every morning and afternoon tea-break in port and at sea !

We sailed from Rio early on 21 November for the short steam to Santos, Pele's hometown football club and São Paulo's port. As weather and sea-state were good, the ABs opened hatches and lifted derricks before entering port.

Mike and I took night-shift. Sometimes loading of frozen or chilled cargoes halted at odd times overnight until deliveries resumed in the morning. The stevedores' night-shift took an hour's break wherein we enjoyed a mug of tea and limited success raiding the pantry for tasty leftovers. When working cargo, we were constantly busy, flitting from one hatch-coaming to another, peering over to observe the action. We scampered down and up ladders in the holds to fix stanchions and safety ropes and inspected loading and securing in refrigerated lockers. Our bodies continually adjusted to the chill down below and the humid tropical heat on deck. Sweat constantly poured and dried in our boilersuits. It was a relief when our shift ended and Mark and 'Doddy' took over. We loaded oranges, sugar and coffee

Mike and I enjoyed a swift breakfast and slept until lunchtime. In the afternoons, a short walk to the cross-river ferry terminal. On the opposite side, we took a taxi to Guaraja, with its long sandy beaches. We sat in a bar overlooking Praia das Pitangueiras and, beyond, the vast Atlantic expanse. Life was good: Antarctica beer, steak and chips, golden beach, beautiful bikini-clad Brazilian girls.

A day-and-a-half's steam to Rio Grande do Sul. *Rockhampton Star* passed between the mile-long breakwaters and berthed in the port 10km up-river on the western side. The town itself was small and comprised of industrial estates.

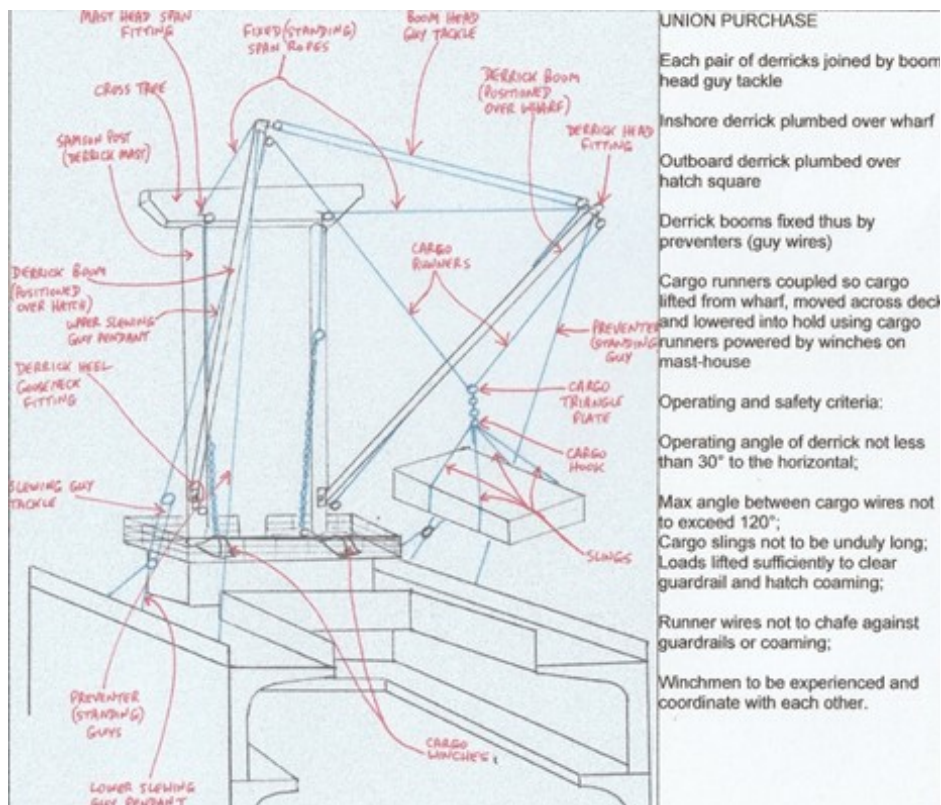
For five days, we loaded chilled concentrated orange juice and leather products. The former was a very valuable cargo in 40-gallon drums on pallets, lowered into the huge lower holds. Blue Star anecdotes: a drum dropped during loading, split open on deck, its contents so concentrated it stripped the paint off the deck; stevedores 'sampled' the orange juice and ended up in hospital. Dangerous stuff, orange juice ! The leather products were a miscellany. Another Blue Star yarn: having loaded footwear, the crew wore brown leather loafers for the voyage home. No dockside cranes at Rio Grande meant our own derricks were used, rigged in union purchase [see *diagram, below*]

It was another half-day's steam to the mouth of the River Plate. On 30 November, *Rocky* berthed in Montevideo. The port was located almost adjacent to the city centre.

I went 'up the road' one day. The streets and squares were lined with trees. Plaza Constitucion was a lovely green, peaceful space. Eastwards, a tree-lined boulevard led to Plaza Independencia. This vast square, bounded by government buildings and the President's residence, was dominated by the mausoleum of Uruguay's hero of national independence, Jose Artigas. I strolled south, past Teatro Solis, reached the corniche and the pleasant park of Plaza Republica Argentina, then along Rambla Gran Bretaña, Rambla Francia to the docks

Montevideo seemed a pleasant old-fashioned place.

During our three days we loaded beef products: corned beef, from Fray Bentos further up the River Uruguay, boxed frozen beef (for UK) and chilled horse on the bone (for Europe).



A short steam across the Plate to Buenos Aires on 3 December to load tinned processed meat products, frozen beef carcasses, boxed frozen beef, and chilled horse meat.

Sometimes, polo ponies were loaded in BA, temporary stables built on the poop-deck. Gauchos embarked to tend them for the transatlantic voyage. The gauchos usually invited the crew to a polo match barbecue, where the cowboys showed off their equestrian skills. Unloading in Newhaven, the gauchos gave the polo ponies an injection which made them a bit frisky after being cooped up in the temporary stables.

The port was a short stroll from the city centre. Armed with my 'Ficha Individual' Identification Card, I walked around the streets. BA was less shabby but wealthier than Montevideo. The main boulevards were wider, architecture more impressive and substantial. Plaza de Mayo was a large oval 100m long by 50m wide. Anchoring the eastern end, Casa Rosada, the President's Residence, was impressive. Armed sentries patrolled its frontage. Tension was mounting about the Falklands. The Junta huffed and puffed. I didn't risk a photograph for fear of arrest.

The ship's agent organised a crew trip to a ranch in the countryside. A great day included lunch of bife de lomo (tenderloin/filet mignon): huge, succulent, tender, juicy and delicious, with patatas fritas (chips), salad, and beer.

Rockhampton Star departed BA on 10 December and set course northbound to Santos and Rio where we loaded more of the same cargo as on our southbound stops. Mike and I revisited the beaches at Guaraja. Long days, little sleep, but we were young and who cares?

The correct temperature must be maintained in refrigerated holds to prevent perishable cargoes from 'going off'. *Rocky's* indirect brine cooling system worked like a domestic freezer, temperature adjusted by thermostat. The 'fridge flat' housed the refrigeration compressors. The 'brine room' contained evaporators, brine pumps, pipework and valves, well-insulated, cool: an ideal officers' beer-store.

Fruit cargoes were 'alive' when exported and gave off CO₂ which caused 'brown-heart'. Monitoring and maintaining the system kept the Fridge Engineers constantly engaged. For quality control during loading, the on-watch Mate intermittently selected cases of fruit to check temperature and 'brown-heart'. These opened cases were 'spoilt' so there was plenty of fresh fruit for the voyage home !

It was an uneventful transatlantic voyage of 6500 nautical miles to Rotterdam. 'Doddy' and I holystoned the teak decks. Christmas Day was quiet, except for some beers with Engineer day-workers. The crew organised a Chinese dinner on New Year's Eve. A terrific spread of Chinese food from the crew's galley (separate from the officers' galley). An uproarious evening, plenty of 'yam seng'.

A *Rocky* neared the English Channel we enjoyed 'Channel Night' and berthed in Rotterdam. On 7 January 1982, I went to the Captain's cabin. He signed and date-stamped my Discharge Book. I bid farewell to the lads and the Chinese ABs, clambered down *Rockhampton Star's* gangway, and clattered into a taxi. I flew from Schiphol to Gatwick, caught the train to Pompey, crossed to Gosport by ferry, thence to my parents' home.

I have enjoyed a great trip on a classic Chinese-crewed British reefer to South America and wondered what my next voyage would bring

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><i>State size, colour and logo required</i></p> <p><i>Logo 1 = Mine and Keys, Logo 2 = Mine and TON silhouette</i></p> <p><i>Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery</i></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	<i>Order from</i>	
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: Denise Johnson

My family and I would like to thank all Members of the TON Class Association who sent messages of sympathy on hearing the news of Stuart's unexpected death. We found it very comforting knowing everyone thought so highly of him, both as Treasurer and friend.

Special thanks to Dave Parrish for parading the Standard and to those who attended his funeral.

Our daughters, Nicola, Alison and Claire were so pleased to meet the friends Stuart and I made through the Association. Happy times.

Denise has kindly sent a donation to TCA, as a bequest from Stuart.
... **Editor**

FROM: Lt Mike Williams RNR, Alaska

Thanks for all the hard work you do with the magazine and Association to keep us entertained.

The grog item in December's edition was of special interest.

I have been to Road Town in Tortola many times, where I visit Pussers Bar whenever possible and for as long as my wife allows me.

Here is a souvenir from one of my trips.



I acquired a taste for rum when I was a rather young Cadet in the Merchant Navy. We were involved in a major incident that could have destroyed the ship and I, together with other cadets, worked for over forty hours non-stop to help save the ship.

When normality had been restored the Chief mate filled up our coffee cups with neat rum and told us to "get it down".

After a quick shower I slept for 24 hours, no doubt helped by the rum.

FROM: Sym Taylor, Petersfield

Thank you for another splendid TON Talk. I was saddened to hear of the demise of George Robertson in the latest edition. I was the NO in KEDLESTON in 1970/1 when we were in the Fish Squadron, George was the very excellent Chief ERA and as well as being highly professional and capable

he had a marvellous sense of humour .
Just one dit.....

.....We were at anchor off Newcastle, County Down, on a glorious Sunday afternoon after a busy overnight NI Patrol and George who was also a keen sailor asked if he could take away the ship's small pram dinghy for a sail in the bay. This was swiftly arranged and he had a great afternoon with one or two others, however when he tried to return to the ship our mischievous Midshipman thought that it would be a good idea to rig a fire hose and point it George as he got closer to the Kingpost where an improvised sling had been rigged. This went on for some time until George eventually returned on board soaking wet. He disappeared for a shower and a quarter of an hour or so later, he knocked on the Wardroom door and politely and quietly asked the First Lieutenant if he might take the said Midshipman and throw him over the side. XO quickly agreed, George then came into the Wardroom picked up the Mid, put him over his shoulder, took him to the garden gate and threw him over. He was kind enough to tell the Mid to take his watch off! The entire ship's company had clearly been alerted and huge hoots of laughter followed. The Midshipman will remain anonymous but he was a great sport and joined George in the SR mess for glass afterwards - he eventually retired after a successful career as a well-respected Commander (S).

**FROM: James Morris,
not a TCA member**

I recued this badge of SANTON from a scrap metal merchant who intended to melt it down for the brass content.

It was possibly a gangway ornament and is memorable for a ship that had the unique distinction of serving in three navies; RN, loaned to New Zealand during Confrontation and finally sold to Argentina in 1967, where she was re-named CHABUT and is believed to have served until about 2003.



Size approx. 14 x 9 inches, it weighs nearly 11 kg and has been valued at £300 for the commercial market, though I would prefer to go to a TCA member so would be happy to let it go for £150 including delivery.

Anyone interested please contact James at
peter.morris789@btinternet.com

Probably end of the line for SAS DURBAN



A recent photo from TCA member Tony Simmonds, re-visiting South Africa on holiday.

A spokesperson from the Museum of Kwa Zulu Museum explained that last year the local authority had made a grant of several tens of thousands of Rand for a refit for the ship and one other in their collection. Regrettably DURBAN took on water shortly after she returned to public display and has since sunk at her berth. The local authority has other priorities for its funds and is not minded to provide further assistance. It seems probable that the ship will soon be broken up.

That leaves the former HMAS TEAL as the only TON still afloat. When last heard, the owners of TEAL, the University of North Cyprus, had plans to bring her into a new wet dock and convert her into a floating Cultural Centre and Art Gallery. Richard Barratt, TCA's man on Cyprus, is in contact with the project and sends us periodic updates on progress.

Following service in the RAN, TEAL has a second career as a prawn fishing vessel and a third as a diving holiday vessel in Australia, the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, followed by a fourth career with the University as a training vessel for Cyprus Merchant Navy officers and Oceanographic Research Vessel. She has been much modified but the lower hull is still recognisable as a TON.

Honour for HMS RICHMOND Commanding Officer



The Company of Mercers, Grocers and Haberdashers of Richmond, North Yorkshire, is akin to the Guilds of the City of London, although it is now principally engaged in charitable activities in the area known locally as "Richmondshire".

For several years the Company has extended Honorary Membership to the current Commanding Officer of Type 23 Frigate HMS RICHMOND. The honour was formally accorded to the new C.O. Commander Chris L'Aime at a recent dinner held by the Company. Exigences of the service prevented Cdr L'Aime from attending but Lieutenant Tegan Morley, the ship's Intelligence Officer, deputised for him.

She related a recent pier head jump experienced by the ship which will be familiar to all former matelots. Expecting to sail in March for Exercise COLD RESPONSE 22 off Iceland, the ship received new orders to head straight to the Baltic Sea and join the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). Working with warships and aircraft from Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Denmark, RICHMOND's presence reassured our allies that we are capable of operating within that region at any time.

Making this short notice programme change even more complicated, Richmond needed to conduct a short period of sea training with the Flag Officer Sea Training team embarked. Over a period of 4 days the crew faced simulated fires, floods, casualties and enemy action, culminating in a major damage control exercise designed to test emergency responses to the limit.

After transiting under the Great Belt Bridge, RICHMOND entered the Baltic Sea and met with JEF and NATO partner nations. As well as patrolling the Baltic region, the warships and aircraft conducted a series of joint exercises to demonstrate and hone their seamless interoperability. Danish F-16s and Swedish Gripen fighter jets rehearsed air defence tactics with the vessels, while one of the UK's new RAF Poseidon P8A submarine hunter aircraft practiced working with the ships to spot enemy vessels.

With temperatures in the Baltic Sea below zero, even before adding in wind chill, the ship had the opportunity to prepare for the even colder weather to come in COLD RESPONSE 22. The whole Ship's Company were issued "Extreme Cold Weather" clothing, supplemented with a variety of non-Service issue hats, mittens and warm jackets. This preparation came in handy as the ship left Baltic Sea headed north towards the Arctic Circle.

VMT to HMS Richmond HERALD for details