

TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association

Edition 218

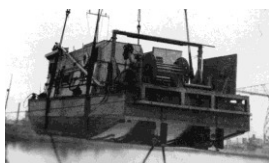


October 2022



The King, God Bless Him

TON Class Association



Contents

P 5	Editorial	1
	Chairman's Corner	2
	Appreciation of Queen Elizabeth ..	3
	Who's Who & Coming Events	4
	Conquering KAO.....	5
	National Standard	10
	Last Sweeping Op.....	12
	Michael Cox – Obituary	14
P 10	MV Freedom	15
	More Donoyou Dits	19
	Membership Update	20
	MCMV News	22
	HMS SQUIRREL	23
	Update on TEAL.....	24
	Information Privacy.....	25
	ZZ Lighters	26
P 15	Slops	30
	Post Bag	31

TCA Membership
£15 per annum
£150 Life Membership

Front Cover :
The King, God Bless Him
Memories of the Rum Tub

P 26

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Founder: Jack Worth MBE

Editorial

The death of Queen Elizabeth and accession of King Charles III is the most significant news at this time. We all feel a sad loss. TCA has sent condolences to the King and Royal Family. The media have covered the life, qualities and achievements of our late beloved Queen Elizabeth II in detail. See also Chairman's Corner, President's Appreciation and Postbag in this edition and Latest News on the TCA website.

A Sad Autumn with funerals for Wendy Cook, Dulcie Green, Sue Hollins, Doug Barlow, Michael Cox, Bill Platt, Spike Wheeler and Alan Clayton. VMT to Lesley and Brian Killick and Wendy and Bill Pollington who, with Doreen and Peter Down, attended the Service of Remembrance for Dulcie and to Rob Hoole and Chairman Bob for attending Doug Barlow's funeral, as well as to Dave Parrish for parading the standard for Wendy Cook. Vice Chairman Peter with wife Doreen, Standard Bearer Sam Cook and Bill Pollington attended Mike Cox's funeral and others watched the podcast. Dave Parrish will parade the standard at Alan Clayton's funeral, supported by the White Rose Branch. He and Peter will also attend Bill Platt's funeral. The TCA family has strong bonds.

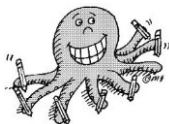
Genotaph Parade VMT for the ten volunteers who will provide our contingent this year, maintaining a twenty-year continuous appearance. Also BZ to Secretary Matthew for coping with the "improvements" to RBL's on-line booking system.

Confrontation 1962-66 December will see the 60th Anniversary of the Action at Limbang during the Brunei Rebellion, which was the opening phase of Confrontation. We plan to make a special feature in December's TON Talk on this significant period in the history of the TONs, so please sharpen your pencils and let the Editor have your personal dits from Confrontation. The Royal Marines, who did the really hard work at Limbang, have already sent their contribution and your Editor has uploaded dits by Tony Standish, Stuart Johnson, Dave Morris and himself to the Further Information section of our website. ***There is space for your memories of Confrontation.***

BZ to Danny Cuff, Customer Services Director at Gipping Press, our printer, who has won a longstanding dispute with Royal Mail about the UK postage charged for our magazine and that of several other of their customers. This will mean a reduction of over £100 in our costs. No retrospective reduction – but what can you expect from a state monopoly ...

REUNION REMINDER Nottingham is a vibrant city, with lots of bars and restaurants. 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. *Please bring a bottle for the raffle but no other prizes !*

Please note that the hotel has no walk-in showers or ground floor bedrooms but there is a lift to all floors from the car park. All public rooms are on the first floor. We will use the Hampton-Windsor Suite for AGM, Reunion Dinner and Church Service.



Deadline for December's edition is 10th November

pjd

Chairman's Corner

As I write my Corner it is on the eve of the State Funeral of our dear Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth II. May God rest the late Queen's soul.

If you'll allow me an indulgence, QEII was my Commander-in-Chief for the first 44 years, 9 months, and 4 days of my service thus far; to say that I was distraught when she passed away would be an understatement. However, over ensuing days, my grief has given way to relief that our wonderful Monarch who had given life and soul to our great nation was finally at rest...and reunited with Prince Philip, her Strength and Stay.

I've had a very busy several days as the desk officer for Operation LONDON BRIDGE within the MOC, supporting the Fleet Operations Officer in the execution of Death and Proclamation Gun Salutes, Fleet Ceremonial and the provision of sailors and marines in front line units to augment the overall Naval effort in the State Funeral. I know the State Ceremonial Training Officer, WO Darren 'Eddie' Wearing MBE, and wished him and the sailors on the State Gun Carriage best wishes from the TON Class Association.

Prince Charles graciously agreed to become Patron of the TCA in 1994 and has often expressed interest in, and affection for, our Association. Kindly, has he invited members to receptions at his homes on occasion. With his added responsibilities as King, it is likely that he will have to shed some of his many patronages. We sincerely hope that he may continue his link with the TCA. I have written to His Majesty conveying the sincere condolences of all members of our Association, while reaffirming that we would be honoured if he would continue as our Royal Patron.

In other news, the current MCMV force continues to downsize, allowing the funding of offboard, automated MCM systems, the latest two to decommission being His Majesty's Ships GRIMSBY and SHOREHAM.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the AGM and Reunion.

God save the King !

Bob Hawkins MBE

An Appreciation of HM Queen Elizabeth II

Rear Admiral John Lippiett, President TCA

I wonder if others of you found that the celebrations earlier this year for the Platinum Jubilee boosted your pride in Britain? Mine had been somewhat flagging given the political turmoil in our country, but the national rejoicing that was so very apparent in support of Queen Elizabeth II in her 70th year on the throne, restored my belief that we remain a great country. While we all realised that her age was making her less mobile, her death - announced just 48 hours ago as I write this appreciation – caught us by surprise and caused seismic shock waves around the country and around the world. The papers, TV and radio channels are running near continuous eulogies, describing the many most wonderful qualities that combined to make her, in my view, the greatest monarch our country has seen. To me, it was her steadfastness, wisdom, utter decency and charm that combined to make her our exemplary Head of State, unparalleled in the world.

I was privileged to meet her on a number of occasions, the first time as the only midshipman attending a dinner on board the Western Fleet flagship HMS Eagle in 1969. On completion, the royal family attended a sods' opera in the hangar, with none of its ribaldry censored out. The Queen's sense of humour certainly showed through! Another brilliant dinner was when she attended a dinner party for the Fleet Flag and Commanding Officers on board the flagship for her Silver Jubilee review in 1977, which I attended as CO of HMS Shavington. While mentioning dinners afloat, the last I attended with her was in 1992 for the 40th Anniversary of her Accession when I was Captain F9 and HMS Norfolk. I have the three dinner plates from those dinners proudly hanging in our dining room. On each occasion, Her Majesty moved around all the attendees to talk with knowledge and humour.

It was very special to get my MBE from Her Majesty as a Lieutenant, and later it was huge fun to be guests at the parties she threw for two royal weddings. As the Duke of Lancaster, Her Majesty launched HMS Lancaster; I was present for that, and later attended the commissioning as Captain F9, where I was able to discuss with the Queen the splendid innovative features of this new class. My final meeting was when I was FOST when she visited the Plymouth Naval Base. Each meeting was memorable for that most wonderful, warm smile and the interesting exchanges. Her charm invariably shone through her undoubted aura.

All of us have had her as our monarch for the vast majority of our lives, and we have benefited from her love and interest in her Navy. We celebrate her life and her countless achievements with gratitude and affection. May she rest in peace.

I know that King Charles III shares her qualities and will now continue her great example. We have been privileged to have him as our Patron.

God Save the King.

TCA Who's Who

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COMING EVENTS

October 2022	Sat 29	TCA AGM & Reunion Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nottingham
March 2023	Sat 11 11.00	TCA Committee Meeting Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth All members welcome.
October 2023	Sat 14	TCA AGM & Reunion Carlton Hotel, Torquay

Conquering Kao – Kingdom of Tonga's Highest Mountain

Commander David Ince RAN

My mate ex RN LS(D) Ginge Fullen came to stay with me in 2015 when I was living in Tonga, it wasn't to sit beneath a palm tree and drink cocktails. He had adventure in mind, namely to climb Tonga's highest mountain, the (fortunately) inactive volcano of Kao, which tops out at 1,030 metres (re-charted at 1,069m after our climb). See *below*

That may not seem much of a climb but, for starters, the place wasn't easy to get to, being a long way by plane and boat from where I lived in Nuku'alofa on the main island of Tongatapu. Secondly it is covered in dense rain forest and all manner of impenetrable flora. Basically completely wild and overgrown with slopes 35-45 degrees all the way to the summit. Thirdly it was infested with feral pigs who wouldn't take kindly to our presence. In short, whilst avoiding the grumpy fauna, we had to hack and bludgeon our way to the top and back down again with mindless determination, blood, sweat and a perhaps a few tears !



Ginge is a man who holds several world records in the field of mountaineering. When he later told me the climb was brutal and one of the hardest of the 194 mountains in the world he had climbed to date (although he's eclipsed that since then), then I know I wasn't being a wimp. It was probably the hardest thing I have done that I didn't actually have to do!

As the RAN's Maritime Surveillance Advisor to Tonga, it wasn't hard for us to hitch a ride on their Pacific Class Patrol Boat VOEA Neiafu (read HMS Neiafu). The adventure proper though started with a landing on sharp rocks in heavy surf from the Patrol Boat's RIB; we immediately got drenched boots but began hacking our way into the lower rain forest, where within five minutes Ginge machetes a wasp nest. We are swarmed and stung more times than I can count. An ignominious start. It takes us one and a half hours to hack ourselves through the first 200m. The timeline was not looking good for our wildly ambitious three-hour climb up and back. My Tongan Navy mates had previously told me that there was a path to the top and we had based our climb on that. Little did I know at the time that the path they were talking about had been hacked by a platoon of soldiers 20 years previously escorting the then Crown Prince to the highest point in his future Kingdom. An English country garden would be a jungle in two decades, let alone this place!

Hitting the rain forest proper we started the 35 and 45 degree ascent, each carrying 40lb packs. I quickly realised that 13 months of rowing machining and occasional running on Tonga's flat roads was not the ideal training for this caper. Fortunately we were evenly matched despite Ginge's impressive mountain climbing pedigree. He lived in Fort

William, Scotland you see; the tropics was not his thing. What I considered a cool temperature on the island was quite the opposite to him.



David with VOA (HMS) Neiafu far below

Anyway, nearly three hours later we are still doggedly cutting our way up hill in the jungle. It was nearly dark by now so we camped for the night. The following morning, after a bowl of porridge we hit the slopes at 0530, climbing using head torches. We still had this ambitious notion that we could crack Kao and be back down by 1000.

Getting to the upper tree line our path was blocked by ferns again. It looked as though the stuff would thwart our efforts. We had already sapped our strength on a 200 metre section of the relatively flat lower slopes. The prospect of pushing through the stuff for another 2km and 800m of vertical climb was a non-starter given that we had to be back for our flight home by 1415. However, hacking and barging through we hit shorter fern growth, knee high as opposed to the chest / shoulder high mat of the lower slopes. We decided to go for it. I had earlier told the CO of Neiafu that we would be back at the drop off point no later than 1000. Ha ha ha It was a good thing that they spotted us as we came out of the trees and did their own calculation.

So, making a base camp we decide to leave the majority of our gear behind, including the machetes, and just take our water. Ginge took a GPS marker of the position and we girded our loins for the distant cloud-enshrouded peak. The going was certainly easier now and within 30 minutes we had already made double the height of the previous day, now at 700m. The summit gradually crept closer. We were going to make it in the time. As we stomped up the last 10m our folly was revealed. The mountain was playing with us; it was a false summit. The real one was half a km away fading in and out of the cloud and taunting us. Bollocks! We still had to find 230m. At this stage we decided that we'd forget about the flight and conquer this beast regardless. We forged onwards and upwards. The cloud closed in below as well as above us and the patrol boat was no longer visible.

However, we still made good progress and by 0930 we were 75m from the top. This is when our fern nemesis returned. Kao was trying desperately to stop us standing on her crown. With no machetes, body weight was the go to flatten and forge through.



We prevailed and reached the elusive highest point of Tonga at 1015 on 28 Feb 2015.

Left - Triumphant but looking knackered ...

It had been climbed before, of course, but the most recent climb had been by the now King of Tonga himself in 1994, after a gentle stroll to the summit up a convenient path he found.

Briefly celebrating our victory, we steeled ourselves for the long descent to the beach. Believe me, the novelty of going down hill quickly wore off. This was briefly assuaged when we couldn't relocate one of the rucksacks we'd left further down. Thinking we had passed it, the prospect of climbing back up for the thing filled me with dread. Luckily we were well short of the spurious GPS marker and found the pack further down the slope.

Did I mention the ground was soaking wet? Well it was, so there was plenty of slipping and falling as we had gained and now lost our altitude. Then at a crucial point Ginge and I disagreed which spur of the mountain to head down. He said right, I said left. This was important as the correct spur would lead us back to base camp. We went left. It was a bad choice. This spur eventually took us 250m away from the camp. When we realised 'my' error it was too late. Now a deep gully lay between us and the camp. Pfffft. We had no choice but to go down and up. It was one of our lowest ebbs, especially when dropping in to the deep murky green chasm I looked up to see an almost sheer cliff of fffffffferns! There was nothing for it; my mistake and I had to lead us on the path out. It was horrendous and barely achieved. By the time we emerged we were both absolutely exhausted.

By this stage water was running low too and Ginge began to suffer excruciating cramps due to dehydration. This was part of the not being acclimatised to the tropics issue. I managed to massage them out of his quads a few times, but after a while my hands began cramping too, so he had to suffer it. But we were back on track and reunited with our gear. To be honest I was almost ready to leave it at this point, the thought of putting the hefty thing back on aching shoulders was not a happy one. By now we were back below the cloud line and the ship was visible. We elected to head on a compass bearing straight to her, stuff finding our previous route. We knew of course that the f'ing ferns would be the first obstacle before hitting the rain forest, but going down hill through them was relatively easier, though still ball-bagging.

It was short stretch though and we were soon back in the trees. The next time we would see the ship we'd be seeing it from the beach. A happy prospect. The home run then, with frequent stops so Ginge could ease his cramps. We lost altitude slowly but surely and then.....you guessed it. We met a wall of ferns. It was almost too much to bear. We were both in rag order by now and it was starting to seem doubtful we would get off Kao

anytime that day. Every step was now a major effort, I was staggering like a drunk man from exhaustion, Ginge in a really bad way from dehydration. I was out of water by this stage, but Ginge needed his more so I didn't mention it. This was getting Bear Grylls-esque! Kao was dead set in not letting us leave, the ferns got thicker and I could see no end to them.

Then through a gap in the trees we saw the patrol boat. We both agreed that letting off our emergency flare would be a good move at this point. Neither of us knew that they had seen us previously, but as it happened the flare was very timely. VOA Neiafu was just weighing anchor to move away and search for us on the otherwise of the island. They spotted the flare and launched the RIB towards us. We continued down to meet them. The down had now become very steep and, to save a lot of effort (I was at point again), I lay sideways and rolled downhill through the wretched fern wall. It was very effective and the battering I got for my troubles was worth it. We cleared the last batch of the horrendous plants but I nearly rolled over the 10-foot drop that marked their ending. Ginge soon joined me and we peered down the drop to the very steep sloping ground below. There was nothing for it; we had to go this way, we were too weak to go back and find a safer route to the beach.

By this stage, so tantalisingly close, we could hear the roar of the breakers on the rocks. We also could hear the Tongan Navy lads shouting out to us from the RHIB and we let them know we were on our way. There was no way we were going to attempt the climb down with our rucksacks so, after re-packing some of the more delicate equipment (sat phone, camera and EPIRB), we simply tossed them off the mini cliff and watched as our packs tumbled on their way out of sight down through the trees. Hopefully their fall would be checked at some point. I gingerly lowered myself down to the ground and saw the sea! It was only 50m or so away, but an alarming 60 degree slope was between us and the beach.

Arse-sliding was now the go; the wet ground made for a good slide but for the occasional root and rock. Luckily there were handy sapling grab holds to slow the slide to a vaguely controllable speed as opposed to a suicidal rush. I stopped 25m or so down to wait for Ginge. He announced his arrival with the large rock he had dislodged striking me on my left shoulder blade. Ouch! Sorry mate. All good! I then continued the wild helter-skelter plummet. It was nearly my last slip and slide too. My feet shot out over a sheer drop of 40 feet on to the rocks below just as I grabbed at a conveniently placed tree branch. It held! Kao was not that disgruntled with me then! I warned Ginge and he stopped at a safe distance.

Taking a bit of time to recover from a near fall that would have broken a few bones at the minimum, we looked over the edge and could see there was no way down. Over to Ginge to use his mountain climbing prowess to find us a route. Fortune favoured us and Ginge soon located another death slide that took us to the rocky beach. With no further mishap we recovered our battered rucksacks, (Ginge's was hung up on the cliff face), and limped across the rocks to our rescuers.

At this stage we saw the heavy breakers we had previously heard surging on to the rocks. This was not going to be an easy extraction. But first things first, we needed

water, rest and some wit-gathering. The RIB went back to the patrol boat and picked up some water. On its return, one of the Tongan sailors leapt into the surf without hesitation and brought it to us. When I say it was the best tasting water I have ever had in my life you know it was appreciated. We eyed the waves warily as we drank and knew that getting to the boat would be easier said than done. A plan was soon hatched.

Once more repacking our rucksacks, we moved the electronic gear into Ginge's waterproof bag and our brave Tongan sailor mate waded out in to the surf and deposited the bags in the boat. The boat's coxswain had the devil's job to keep the stern of the RHIB facing the waves so he could pull himself back out of trouble. He did a brilliant job in conditions that few Australian navy boat coxswains would attempt. 'We'll send a helicopter' would have been the conclusion to the inevitable long-winded risk assessment. Then it was our turn. It happened fast; the boat came in the closest yet to the shore, huge waves crashing around it. We thought it would broach and flounder on to the rocks, but the Tongan coxswain kept his cool. Ginge was in, I was in.

Then disaster struck; it was to be Kao's final smite. Not surprisingly in the conditions, the propeller hit a rock with the result that the engine stalled. My wits fully restored, I immediately saw that the coxswain was trying to restart the engine with the gear engaged; it wasn't going to happen. We were in the guano....again. I dived across to him and flicked the gear lever to neutral. Behind us, a huge wave was about to break over the boat. He pulled the cord once, nothing; then again and the engine roared into life. Astern gear engaged. The boat was soon backing out of the maelstrom into safe waters. We had finally escaped Kao!

It was now 1300 and there was not a chance in hell we would make our flight. No matter, we were too tired to care. The CO then told us that their patrol was over anyway and they were heading back to main island and my home, a mere six-hour transit.

That would do nicely and a celebration beer was waiting.



Divers always look happier in water ...

History of the National Standard of the TON Class Association

Sam Cook

30 years ago on 25th October 1992, the TCA National Standard was dedicated at the AGM held in Babbacombe.



The photo shows Jack Worth and myself, with the standard at the Dedication. Jack was a founder member of the Association, with eleven more of us. Alas Jack is no longer with us, and another eight have passed away, leaving just three of us: Bruce Nicholls, Chris Green and myself.

The standard was made in 1991 by Porter Brothers of Liverpool of a crossgrain material 4' 6" x 3' , double-sided, navy blue background , with a 18" x 9" white ensign in the upper hoist canton, with two gold scrolls containing the words "Ton Class Association . The fly section has the TCA crest and all read correctly on both sides,

Bruce Nicholls, our resident vexillologist (Flag Man), advised on the design.

I have had the honour to carry the standard for the last 30 years and we have travelled to a lot of places: including Earls Court when the Royal Tournament was up and running and then to Birmingham when it moved there

In July 2000 I paraded our standard at the Royal Military Tattoo on Horse Guards in London every evening for a week. We were the only standard to attend every evening.

The standard has visited Malta three times; Highlight of those visits was in 2012, a torchlight parade through Valletta to the main square on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the presentation of the George Cross to Malta. We accompanied the Maltese Armed Forces on this parade and the atmosphere was exceptional and welcoming.

I have led the Naval contingent of the Weymouth parade every year, with two other national standards.

In 1994 I paraded our standard at 12 locations round the country for D-Day Anniversary Commemorations, including the big one in Portsmouth, where we met Her Majesty the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh, King Haakon of Norway, President Clinton, President Lech Walenksa of Poland and President Mitterrand of France. Following this I received a Certificate of Commendation from Vice Admiral Sir John Cox KCB, then TCA President

The standard has been paraded on other significant occasions, as well as Remembrance Day Services and funerals of TCA members.

A photo was taken of the standard and myself on that day and, blown up life size, was placed in the window of the offices of the Southampton Echo, it was weird, as you walked past the window it looked as if my eyes were following you ...

Due to Covid, parades in the last two years have been rather sparse but I have paraded it this year at Weymouth in June and in July the Dedication of the Vernon monument. I hope that we may be able, once again, to take it to Malta.

The Standard is embellished with a silver pennant, denoting our 25th Anniversary and also the multi colour pennant from attending the dedication RN memorial at the National Arboretum

I have been awarded a standard bearer's bar for the 25 the parades we have attended over the years, which I wear on my blazer.

*In 1999 TCA commissioned a second standard from Porter Brothers to the same design and specification. Termed the "Northern TCA Standard", this second standard has been used for funerals and other occasions, such as the 40th Anniversary of Limbang held at the Imperial War Museum, North, in Manchester and Eden Camp Remembrance Commemorations, when it would not have been practicable for Sam to travel so far. Initially Dave Goulden (RIP) was Standard Bearer for the Northern Standard; a role now taken on by Dave Parrish. ... **Editor***

The Last Minesweeping Operation

By Rob Hoole

From TCA Archives, First published 100 editions ago, Edition 118, February 2006

The 12th October 2005 was typically grey, wet and blustery for the time of year. However, I count myself extremely lucky in to join a group from TCA and go to sea in the Minehunter LEDBURY to witness the last minesweeping operation by a ship of the Royal Navy.

We were met at Unicorn Gate of HM Naval Base, Portsmouth at 0700 by her Coxswain, PO Diver Andy Lonsdale, who drove us to the ship's berth. Once aboard, we were greeted with welcome cups of coffee and bacon butties in the Wardroom. To say the air was thick with dits throughout the day would be an understatement. Doug Barlow, among others, helped to see to that ! One of our party, Ron Walsh, aged 85, had joined the RN in 1936 and enjoyed every minute. His book "Company of Heroes" describes his eventful naval career and is thoroughly recommended.

The aim of the day was to stream and recover the Combined Influence Sweep off the Isle of Wight; the ship had streamed Oropesa mechanical wire sweeps the previous day. Somehow the prevailing weather conditions seemed entirely appropriate for this normally unremarkable evolution.

LEDBURY carried about 45 extra personnel for this historic day, including the Squadron Padre, plus instructional staff and trainee MW officers from the Maritime Warfare School, HMS COLLINGWOOD. The ship's XO, Lieutenant JonPrice, remained ashore but we were well looked after by the C.O, Lieutenant Commander Rob Wilson, Ops Officer Lieutenant Ben Vickery, Boatswain PO (MW) Taff Price, Buffer LOM Beera and the ship's NILE Rating, OM Cole.

We slipped at 0800 and proceeded out of harbour and conducted OOW manoeuvres with sister ship MIDDLETON and BANGOR, both of whom were carrying trainees for the day. Hoisting three black balls at the masthead, we deployed the otter for the Magnetic Sweep Mk14 off the port quarter. LEDBURY then began to stream the Towed Acoustic Generator and the rest of the Minesweeping System Acoustic Mk 1, watched intently by TCA members from the bandstand. Some may remember the TAG as the experimental "Osborn" noise-maker of trials conducted by the old Third MCM Squadron of TONs based at Portland during the 1960's, but it has evolved into the most sophisticated acoustic minesweeping device in the world. Soon there was a satisfying string of float marker beacons stretching into the gloom off the starboard quarter.

In worsening weather, work then began on streaming the loop and finally, with the ribbon tails of the loop secured to the deck clenches, the entire sweep was fully streamed to the satisfaction of all concerned.

While the sweepdeck crew had a breather, before starting to recover the gear, our group retired to the Wardroom to dry out and swap a few stories with the C.O. On return to harbour, we raised a glass with the ship's officers and senior rates and exchanged mementoes, with yet more stories before heading home.

Thank you to Lieutenant Commander Rob Wilson and to everyone we met in LEDBURY for such a memorable and enjoyable day and for allowing us to witness the very last minesweeping operation conducted by the Royal Navy.

*[Note: This article was written before the recent introduction of unmanned automated MCM vessels was conceived ... **Editor**].*



Sweep Streamed for the last time – Bravo Zulu

How did Sam Cook, former Buffer of LEWISTON, get in on the act ?

Photo courtesy: Rob Hoole

Lt Cdr Michael Cox RD*, RNR, FICHEM E - An Appreciation

Members will be saddened to learn that Michael Cox has Crossed the Bar after a long illness. TCA was represented at Mike's funeral at Amersham on 8th September by Vice Chairman Peter Down, with his wife Doreen and Bill Pollington. Sam Cook paraded the TCA National Standard and we gave Mike the send off, with White Ensign and Piping the Side etc that has become traditional for TCA funerals.

Michael grew up in West Kirby on the Wirral and was educated at Birkenhead School, where he joined the RN Section of the Combined Cadet Force, becoming a Cadet Petty Officer.

On attending University in Edinburgh to study Chemical Engineering, he joined the RNR at Claverhouse. He had several graduate engineering assignments with large companies in Britain, while continuing with the RNR, serving afloat in KILLIECRANKIE and KIRKLISTON as often as project work allowed.

In 1988 Mike joined the pharmaceutical company Glaxo in West London and was sent to Jakarta to build a Glaxo factory there. He subsequently worked for AMEC Engineering, then International Flavours and Fragrances and finally Taylor Woodrow, where he was Head of Engineering. Later, as a freelance consultant, Mike undertook assignments in UK, Singapore, South Carolina, Puerto Rico and France.

One highlight of his naval career was attending the same MCM Commanding Officers' Designate Course as our President, then Lt Lippiett, about to command SHAVINGTON and our Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, about to take command of BRONINGTON.



It is understood that Lts Cox and Stoy were the first RNR Officers to attend this demanding course.

In 1982 Mike took command of KEDLESTON for exercises in the North Sea, visiting Scheveningen on completion.

In 1984 he commanded BRERETON and deployed with her to the Mediterranean and Gibraltar.

His final sea command was again with KEDLESTON in 1985

Mike has been a stalwart supporter of TCA, regularly attending Reunions and Committee meetings and serving as London Area Representative. He has led our contingent at the Cenotaph Parade for many years.

One of nature's gentlemen, Mike will be greatly missed. Our condolences are extended to Marcia and their family.

MV FREEDOM

Dirk Aldous QPM. Chairman & Skipper

From her home in Weymouth, the M.V. **FREEDOM** serves those living with disability and takes a very broad definition of disability as passengers have a diverse range of needs. Carers, both professional and family, are welcome as well, and often they are able to enjoy the respite that the trips can offer, whilst those in their care gain confidence, knowledge, friendships, a sense of well being, self worth and fun !



Providing access to the sea for people living with Disability

Encourage – Enjoy – Empower

www.mvfreedom.co.uk

Despite the COVID difficulties of the 2021 season the charity has received over 2600 bookings during this operational year April to date. An ever increasing total as the years progress. Evidence not only of the growing popularity of our new boat and the trips provided but of the real value in terms of the mental and physical well-being of our less able and often vulnerable passengers who can be aged from 5 years upwards. Our new vessel is able to comfortably accommodate 6 wheelchair users with an overall maximum of 12 passengers set by Maritime and Coastguard Agency regulations.

Individual passengers are welcome to book a place, although many groups come from care homes, special needs groups, social clubs and other support groups such as military veterans.

The charity has the voluntary services of four MCA/RYA qualified skippers and 20 trained volunteers and members of the charity who act as crew. Safety, is paramount during operations, and life jackets are worn by all on board through-out. The vessel is equipped with liferafts, four VHF radios, P.A. system, front and rear cameras, EPIRB for crew, and radar/chart plotter, plus lifting davit, throwing lines, first aid kits, defibrillator etc to enable a response to any emergency whether on board MV.Freedom or another vessel at sea.

Skippers and crew are all certificated First Aiders. We also have a remote control steering system that those confined to wheelchairs can operate from their seated position.

Our twice daily journeys are generally along the Jurassic Coast of Weymouth Bay to Ringstead Bay, Durdle Door, Lulworth Cove, or Portland Bill in calm weather, or to Portland Harbour with its interesting involvement in 2nd World War events and much more. We always try to leave time to drop anchor and enjoy a bite to eat.

One of the real highlights of the voyages over the past few years has been the regular appearance on our weekday trips, of dolphins. They just love to join the boats and play around and show off their acrobatic expertise to the delight of our passengers and crews alike. Last year there was a mother and “big” baby in the bay that almost invariably came to our boat whenever it was out there. Everyone is looking forward to doing the same again this year.



The major highlight of the past year was for the charity to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service after 37 years operations. The award was made by the Lord Lieutenant, Angus Campbell on the 22nd September 2021.



TCA Member Mick Hilder far left as the Lord Lieutenant pours the Champagne.

The Lord Lieutenant also named our new Blyth 10 metre twin-engined 160hp JCB engined, motor catamaran which we collected from the builders in Canvey Island and delivered to Weymouth on the 15th April, 2021.

These were momentous days in the Charity's history and huge recognition for all the hard work of our volunteers over many years, as well as the tremendous support that we receive from the Weymouth Communities and from supporters and passengers who travel from much further afield to enjoy a sea going experience. e.g. Bath, Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch, Lyme Regis and Bridport.



Whilst we have no paid staff within the charity, the annual running costs of the boat are currently about £15,000, to cover mooring, insurance, maintenance, and fuel etc

Passengers are invited to make a minimum donation of £5 a head per trip, and fundraising events remain a constant activity for our volunteers throughout the year.



We provide a unique service, with a boat that I believe is now the finest motor boat for this purpose on the South Coast and maybe nationally. I would like to end by thanking you for printing our story. Any assistance that you may feel able to provide would be hugely appreciated.



MORE DITS FROM MICK DONOYOU

Blue Is the Colour

In 1970 London Division RNR relinquished the use of HMS DUFTON and acquired HMS WOOLASTON which was in better condition and came with a pair of ornamental Dolphins which were bolted on to the front of the wheelhouse.

The London Division "sweepers" were based in Southampton along with the Wessex Division ships.

One weekend we joined our ship for a deployment to find that the "Shipkeeper" had re-painted the interior of the wheelhouse. Instead of the usual drab off white it had now become a very fetching pastel blue. It was thought the Shipkeeper had some excess paint left over from a shoreside job.

The re-painted wheelhouse was considered to be vast improvement, it was very relaxing and it was almost a pleasure to go on watch.

Word of our "pastel " blue wheelhouse became widespread and we even got visits from sailors from other ships who came just to view our blue wheelhouse.

Hook Line Party

One Drill Night on HMS PRESIDENT the pipe was made over the tannoy "Hands to Divisions, Close all Bars"

My oppo Ron and I (both AB's at the time) had just been served another Pint each and so we ignored the pipe and carried on drinking.

A few minutes later the Assistant Officer of the Day entered the bar and demanded to know why we were still there, drinking, and not at Divisions. Without batting an eyelid Ron told the Subbie we were the "Hook Line Standby Party". The Subbie replied "Very Good, Carry On".

Once he had left, I asked Ron what was the Hook Line Standby Party to which he replied "I just made it up but I knew that the Subbie would not have heard of it and would not want to display his ignorance by asking".

With that we carried on drinking our pints without further interruption.

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

Philip Fluke A/B RN. Shipley, West Yorkshire
E-Mail:- harmonium.service@btinternet.com.
Served on HMS SHERATON 1968-70 F2506

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Malcolm North To:- Barmouth Gwynedd. L0826

Rodney Hogan To:- Ipswich Suffolk F2178

Frank Morris To:- Wincanton Somerset F2219

LOST CONTACT.

Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary

David Green Last Known Address:- Maidstone Kent F1592

RESIGNED – May fair winds attend you

Robert Buchanan. Isle-of-Man. Served on HM Ships FITTLETON 1976,
CROFTON 1979-80] F2408



Crossed the Bar

May They Rest In Peace

L/S Bill Platt UW1 RN Bloxwich F10109

Served in HM Ships MARYTON 1962-3, CAUNTON 1964-65, WOLVERTON 1965, SHOULTON 1965-66, IVESTON 1969-70

L/Tel Alan Clayton RN Ripon F0560

Served in HM Ships KILDARTON, RNR Sussex Division, FLYING FOX

CPO Diver 1 Anthony (Spike) Wheeler RN Buckingham F1244

Served on HM Ships SHOULTON 1935-64, HUBBERSTON 1965-66

CWEM (0) William F Bygraves RN Gosport, F0079

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

ME1 Ian Wills RN Beedon Berkshire. F1469

Served on HM Ships GLASSERON 1966-68, GAVINTON 1968-69

Lt Cdr David Forsey MBE RN Newbury Berkshire. F0643

Served on HM Ships HOUGHTON, MAXTON, WOLVERTON, BEACHHAMPTON

Cdr Alan J Padwick RN Devizes Wiltshire. F0282

Served on HM Ships STUBBINGTON 1961, SHAVINGTON 1961, BEACHAMPTON 1965-66. NURTON 1967-68. LALESTON 1971-72

CPO Clifford Cowdry RN Plymouth. F1369

Served on HM Ships BILDESTON 1956-57, DALESWINTON 1957-58

A/B Richard Thomas RN Axminster F0511

Served on HM Ships BRINTON 1955-56. UPTON 1956-57

Lt Cdr Michael Cox RD* RNR Maidenhead. F0539

Served on HM Ships KILLIECRANKIE 1968-75, KIEKLISTON 1974, KEDLESTON 1976-85, BRERETON 1984

Lt Cdr Douglas Barlow RN. Emsworth. F0276

Served on HM Ships HOUGHTON 1963-64, CLAREBESTON, / MONKTON 1964-66. REPTON / WISTON 1976-78

MEA P1 Michael Dudley. RN Worthing. F0842

Served on HMS SOBERTON 1964-6

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 (2/5) plus the Sandown class MCMV BANGOR (1/6) all supported by RFA LYME BAY. Crews rotate every four months. PENZANCE (1/1) has left the group to return to the UK leaving only three RN MCMVs deployed in the Gulf.

Every member of CHIDDINGFOLD's crew rowed, ran, swam or cycled 37km to raise money for the Rainbow Centre Charity after which ex-Crew 1 MEO WO1 Paterson went to the Rainbow Centre in Fareham to present a CHIDDINGFOLD badge. On 26 July, BANGOR celebrated 22 years since her commissioning and has since been assisting the US Navy trial autonomous MCM systems. On 25 August, MIDDLETON entered Shuwaikh Port in Kuwait to begin an operational visit.

HUNT Class

HURWORTH (2/3) has been deployed with SNMCMG1 (Standing NATO MCM Group 1) since 11 August disposing of historical underwater ordnance in western European waters. On 19 August, she commemorated the 80th anniversary of Operation JUBILEE, the infamous raid on Dieppe and saluted the fallen at Bilbao on 5 September.

QUORN was seen departing Portsmouth on 11 August for passage to Harland & Wolf at Appledore where she entered the shed on 17 August to begin her \$65 million regeneration for service in the Lithuanian Navy. The Lithuanians already operate SKALVIS (ex-COTTESMORE) and KURSIS (ex-DULVERTON). BROCKLESBY (2/2) was seen leaving Portsmouth on 17 August and observed performing circles in the Clyde on 30 August and was in Loch Long on 1 September. CATTISTOCK (2/7) was observed leaving No. 14 Dock at Portsmouth on 13 September to complete her refit in No. 3 Basin

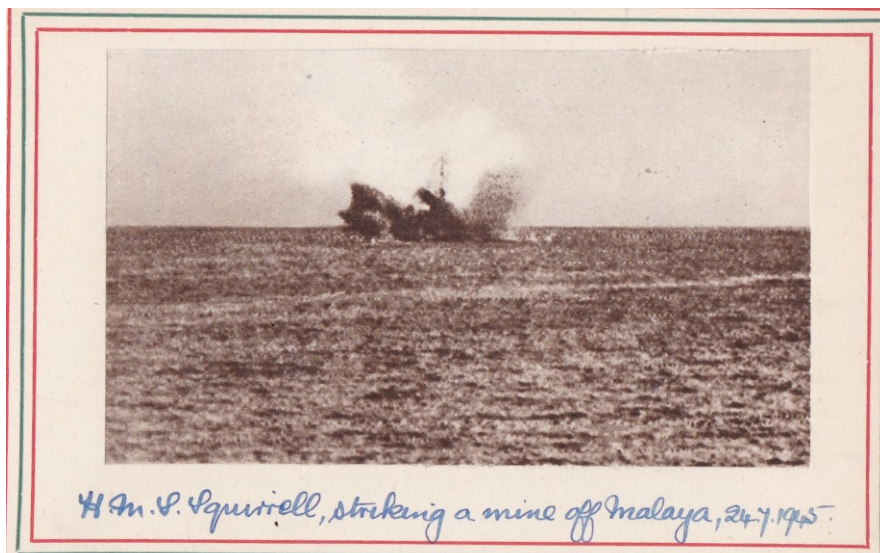
SANDOWN Class

Sailors from the Ukrainian Navy are being trained on board SHOREHAM (1/5) (now renamed 'Черкаси' aka CHERKASY) to operate Sandown-class minehunters as they prepare to receive two of the vessels, the other (ex-RAMSEY or ex-BLYTH) to be renamed CHERNIHIV.

PEMBROKE (1/2) underwent OST (Operational Sea Training) off Scotland in July and underwent maintenance in dry dock in August before resuming her operational training in September. PENZANCE has been making her way slowly back to the UK after a two-year deployment on Operation KIPION MCM with stops at Crete, Malta (where she helped commemorate the 80th anniversary of Operation PEDESTAL) and Gibraltar. At some stage during her passage, MCM1 Crew 1 was relieved by Crew 4.

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

From the Archives – HMS SQUIRREL 1944-45



16 August 1944 ALGERINE Class Minesweeper, commissioned at Harland and Wolff, Belfast for service in 6th Minesweeping Flotilla

September 1944 Deployed as HQ ship for BYMS minesweepers clearing mines preventing use of ports in Belgium and Holland

July 1945 Arrived at Trincomalee and joined 7th Minesweeping Flotilla. to support Operation LIVERY, the allied landings in Malaya

19th July Sailed from Trincomalee with Flotilla as part of Force 63 for Op LIVERY. Cover was provided by Battleship NELSON, Cruiser SUSSEX, Escort Aircraft Carriers EMPRESS and AMEER, screened by Destroyers ROTHERHAM, RACEHORSE, RAIDER and PALADIN. The ships fought off a Japanese kamikaze attack on AMEER .

24 July Deployed with HM Minesweepers PLUCKY, PINCHER, VESTAL and RIFLEMAN, with HM Indian Minesweepers PUNJAB and DECCAN as Dan Layers for mine clearance operations off Phuket Island, Burma /Thailand.

During the fourth lap, PLUCKY detonated a mine in her sweep but SQUIRREL, astern, was unable to turn into swept water. She then struck another mine and sustained major damage to her forward structure, killing seven of her ship's company.

The ship took on heavy list and after two and a half hours, was abandoned; her ships' company being taken off by HMIS PUNJAB. SQUIRREL was then sunk by "friendly" gunfire by Force 63 (photo above).

TEAL moved to her Final Berth

Richard Barratt, Girne, Cyprus

On 9th September, I attended the final movement of Teal into her purpose-built dock. All went very well in excellent weather; from leaving her berth to her final resting place took about 90 minutes. The dock will next be sealed by the large 5 tonne concrete blocks on the left of the photo below. TEAL is the last TON still afloat and we look forward to learning about her new career as a Museum and Arts Centre.



Privacy of Information

TCA Editor

An enquiry recently received via the TCA website concerning the TCA Membership List has provided this opportunity for a reminder about TCA's policy for Security of Information and Protection of Privacy.

Information about our 1200+ members is confidential and, in accordance with our policy of conforming with the General Data Processing Regulations (GDPR), now embodied in British law, we do not release information about individuals without their express permission - *see the advisory notice on the Membership Update page in TON Talk*.

If you wish to obtain details of a member, e.g. to regain contact with a former shipmate, then you can request his details from the Membership Secretary and he will obtain permission to disclose them to you from the shipmate concerned.

This may sound somewhat pedantic, but that is the effect of GDPR.

Our website is openly accessible to members of the public, on purpose, to encourage enquiries, so we cannot display details of members on it.

Alternatively, members can purchase from the Membership Secretary, for a small fee, an electronic copy of our Membership List, which is continually updated as members join and leave/Cross the Bar.

Regrettably in the past, and thankfully long ago, some members were misguided enough to use the membership list as a mailing list to promote various goods and services that they sold. We do not approve of such mis-use and do our best to discourage it. This practice, which had become widespread among many commercial organisations, is among the reasons that GDPR was enacted.

We hope that members can be confident that when they disclose personal details to the Association, we will safeguard that information with diligence and not betray their trust.

TCA Policy on Security and Privacy of Information is accessible via the link at the foot of the Home Page on our website.

Regrettably we do not hold crew lists for individual ships or RNR Divisions - that would be an enormous data base and collecting such information would be a Herculean task, so we are not able to assist with finding the current whereabouts of all members of a ship's company with which one has served.

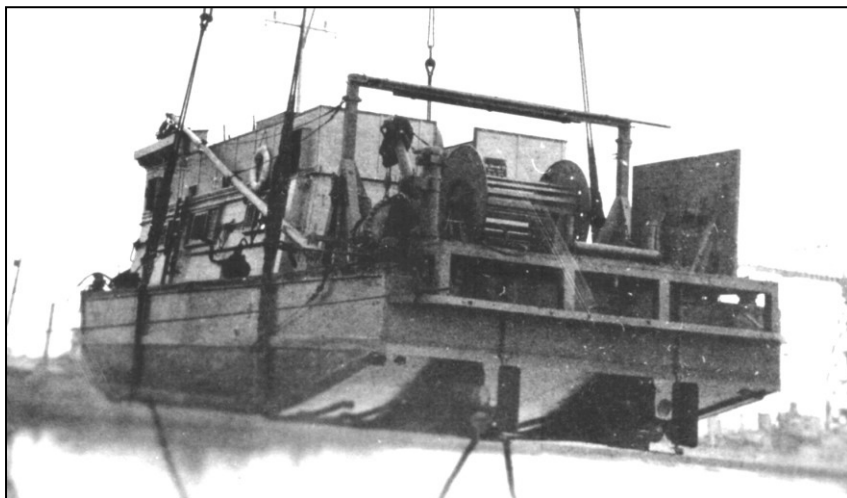
My short time as Wireman aboard ZZ3 (24 July – 7 Nov. 1945) by E Oldfield, Wireman MS, CMX 119223

This article is reproduced from the Summer Newsletter of the Royal Naval Patrol Service Association by kind permission of Shipmate Leo Whissock of Beccles RNA, who is also Secretary of the RNPS Association.

Having written to the Admiralty requesting any information or photographs of the ZZ craft, I received the following reply from the Naval Historical Branch of the MOD:

'ZZ craft were developed as shallow-water minesweepers from a type of landing craft known as 'Z' lighters. 30 vessels numbered 1 – 30 were built in Alexandria and the Levant during 1944 to form the 251st and 252nd minesweeping flotillas (Force 60). ZZ3, ZZ6 and ZZ14 were shipped to the UK and transferred to the Netherlands Navy in 1946 for service on the Schelde. ZZ12 capsized in the Firth of Forth on 5 May 1946 and the remainder were disposed of either in Trieste or Port Said during 1946.'

Unfortunately, after exploring many different avenues, the only photograph I have is the one included. As a last resort I wrote to the Netherlands Navy Department who checked their records and sent me a copy of the only photograph they have for which I am extremely grateful as at least it proves that these boats were not a figment of my imagination after all these years! The photograph is not as detailed as I would have liked but it does show the shape of the hull and also the twin rudders and the sweep drum in the stern of the boat.



A unique photograph, which clearly shows the twin rudders, loop reel and, to its left, the edge of the Acoustic Hammer, plus the derrick for streaming it – allsame as a TON.

... Editor

From 1 June – 23 July 1945 I was kicking my heels at Sparrow's Nest, the RNPS HQ in Lowestoft, billeted in the brewery and waiting for another ship. At last, on a visit to the drafting office, I saw my name on the list. Inside I was told to report the next day with my gear as I was to join the ZZ3 at Leith Docks in Scotland. When I asked, the Chief replied 'Don't ask me what it is, but it's a magnetic minesweeper'.

When I arrived at Leith on 14 July, I was taken by lorry with my kit to a joiners' yard at Grangemouth. In a large pond used for seasoning timber was a very strange looking vessel tied up alongside two houses and a Police Station. It was small with square corners fore and aft.

I was welcomed aboard by the Skipper RNVR, who was about 24 years old, the Coxswain, a Petty Officer engineer, a diesel stoker, a bunting tosser and about 4 other seamen.

The following day I had a good look around and found that this sweeper carried an 'LL' sweep on a drum at the stern, an acoustic hammer to be towed on the port side and an oscillator disc towed over the starboard side – not bad gear for such a small boat. It was powered by 2 Gardner diesels driving twin screws giving, if I remember correctly, 5-10 knots not helped by the flat-shaped bows. The boat was as non-magnetic as it could be mostly made of wood with brass, where possible, instead of steel. The engine room was surrounded by a 'degaussing' cable.

I found out from the crew that the boat had arrived in the Clyde on the deck of a merchant ship. Most of the crew had been present and had seen it being lifted and lowered into the dock. After a few days kitting out and commissioning her they were ordered to proceed to the Firth of Forth via a small canal running from Glasgow to Edinburgh. I can only imagine what the villagers along the route must have thought seeing this strange craft, flying the White Ensign, as it navigated the locks. The crew were instructed not to discuss what it was if anyone asked. Eventually, even more peculiar to the crew, they diverted from the canal to a timber pond.

We could get from the pond via the canal into the Firth and so we used to go out in the morning and practice sweeping and getting familiar with all the equipment. It was an easy sweeper to operate from my point of view. Things were of a smaller scale than what I had been used to on trawlers. The batteries, an important part of my work, were situated quite conveniently in a cabinet below the steps leading up to the bridge. The sweep was not too long which made it easy to wind on to the drum. As far as I remember I had a small cupboard containing my sweeping controls and various meters.

The bridge was open to the elements. The Skipper was up there, with a seaman at the compass and wheel. Behind the wheel was a console containing the 2 throttles and more meters. The engineer sat at this console and on each side of him was a long brass handle coming through the deck from the engine room below. To navigate was quite simple – push forward for ahead – back for reverse – mid position for neutral. The use of these 2 plus the 2 throttles made this craft very manoeuvrable.

The Admiralty photographer came aboard one day and took shots of us all using the equipment and later on we received a copy of the manual for operating a ZZ

minesweeper. After a few weeks the Skipper got his orders to proceed under tow to Sheerness from where we would be sent over to Holland to clear the canals of any mines the Germans might have laid. Dockyard workers came aboard and fitted a tow rope all the way round the hull as the bollards on the boat were only strong enough to tie up with. The 2 ends of the rope finished at an eye for fastening the tow rope. The Skipper was given an army-type walkie talkie as we had no radio on board, only visual signalling equipment.

We sailed out into the Firth to be met by a fleet-sweeper. What he must have thought we were I don't know, but to us he looked huge. He floated down the tow and the Coxswain fastened on and we were on our way. There was nothing for us to do now except while the time away playing cards, sleeping, reading etc. One seaman did the cooking in a tiny galley and did quite well too.

However, typical of the Admiralty, from July to October we had enjoyed reasonable weather in the Firth only having to abandon sweeping practice a few times but now, in autumn and with freshening winds we were on our way down the North Sea! When we were about half way down, almost opposite Scarborough, a storm blew up. The fleet sweeper would think nothing of it, but to us it was terrible. Square at the bows, with no keel and completely flat bottomed, we were tossed about like a cork and came near to capsizing once or twice. Over the radio the Skipper was told 'Chop the tow and proceed into dock at Scarborough'. As an illustration of how rough it was for us, just before the instruction to chop the tow was received it was 'Up spirits' on the mess deck – the issue of our daily ration of neat rum brought down, as usual, in an enamel jug. Believe it or not a few of the lads refused their 'tot' and offered it to the more sturdy others. Anyone who knows what that means will realise that they were not feeling too good. Feeling really sorry for them we non-sufferers quickly obliged before they changed their minds !!

The Coxswain appeared on the lower deck with an axe and detailed 2 of us to help him. We scrambled forward and he lay down while we held onto one leg each as he leaned over and chopped the tow on each side. With both diesels started we were on our own. The fleet sweeper left us and went round to tie up in Grimsby. Out came our charts and we attempted to steer our way into Scarborough. However, each time we tried we were driven onto the sea wall as these boats were not designed for seas like this.

The engineer offered the Skipper his help as he used to sail herring boats before the war when they used to follow the shoals all the way down the East coast calling in to ports on the way. With the Coxswain on the wheel and the Skipper on the engine controls we steered well south of the harbour mouth and eventually the boat drifted into the dock and we tied up at the jetty. There were quite a few scary moments but good seamanship eventually got us through

After tying up we hurriedly parcelled up duty free cigarettes and dashed off to the Post Office before the customs officials came aboard. When we got back the Skipper had the customs officer down in his small cabin having a whisky to two.

The Skipper's orders were that each morning, at an agreed time, Bunts had to go to the end of the jetty and watch for the fleet sweeper appearing. After so long, if nothing appeared, he returned to the ship and we were safe for another day.

On one particular Sunday one of the crew (a barrack room lawyer type from Lowestoft – a 'Pud') said it was 'a stand easy so we wouldn't be told to do too much today. The Coxswain must have heard him and went to see the Skipper. I can just imagine them saying 'We'll teach them what we can and can't make them do'. Suddenly down the mess deck came the order for all except the cook to report to the quay side in full No 1s. When we came on deck the Skipper made us fall in, and with crowds of locals looking on he proceeded to carry out a full inspection. Worse was to come; he then proceeded to march us in single file to the church at the top of the hill overlooking the harbour. We sat through the service, listened to the vicar giving us a real welcome, and saying how pleased he was that the Skipper had chosen his church for our Sunday church parade. Afterwards we formed up again and made a smart march back to the ship! The Coxswain told us all when we got back he had only planned for about an hour's cleaning for us and then we would have stood easy for the rest of the day. By the time we'd finished with our 'Johnny Know-All' he wished he'd kept his big mouth shut!

In the meantime, the old tow rope had been removed and a new one fitted ready for the rest of our journey. After about a week the weather broke and the wind died down. During the next visit to the jetty Bunts saw the sweeper flashing him with a message for us to leave harbour and prepare to fasten on again. So out we went under our own power (a bit different to coming in) and collected the tow with no difficulty. The journey to Sheerness was without incident and we were finally towed into the jetty at Queenborough.

We thought we would be towed over to Holland but the Admiralty changed its mind and so we paid the ship off and handed it over to the Royal Netherlands Navy. All the time I was aboard we never saw another ZZ craft or heard of another – strange !!

A remarkable craft, with approximately the same MCM capability of the larger Micky Mouse Influence Sweepers of WW2 and even the Inshore Sweepers of our time, - except for their seaworthiness.

Use of such a craft to clear harbours, river estuaries and canals seems a great and relatively inexpensive idea. The US Navy developed a similar idea of a Minesweeping Sled towed by a helicopter as part of their pledge to clear the mines they had laid in Haiphong Harbour and the Mekong River, during the Vietnam War.

*This rig was described in TON Talk 201, December 2019, and is still in use in current operations in the Gulf, although it has been announced that it is to be phased out as intelligent Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (aka miniature automated self-propelled submarines) are introduced into service. ... **Editor***

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	TON Profile badge Silver or Gold	£ 8.00
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
TCA Tie, Blue	£ 9.90	TCA Notepad plus Pen	£ 5.00
TCA Tie, Maroon	£ 11.60	TCA Pen	£ 3.00
Blackfoot Tie	£ 13.00	TCA Car sticker – Logo 1	£ 1.25
Special Order items		TCA Christmas Cards <i>Them as is keen Order early</i> Two Designs; “Snowman” & “7 MCMS Leaving Malta” £5.00 for 10 cards, with envelopes	
State size, colour and logo required <i>Logo 1 = Mine and Keys, Logo 2 = Mine and TON silhouette</i> Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery			
TCA V-neck sweater. Navy or Maroon	£ 32.45		
Blazer Badge, Embroidered + ships name	£ 34.20	BOOKS	
TCA Polo Shirt in Navy with ships name	£ 18.44	Jacks of All Trades Special Offer	£ 10.00
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: Commander Ron Swart,
USN, Retired.**

Please accept our most sincere condolences upon the passing of your Queen.

She was indeed, the best example of steadfast leadership and honorable service to us all ... to the entire world.

On behalf of the Association of Minemen, United States Navy, we wish you all in the TON Class Association, God speed and our best wishes in the coming days.

With sincere respect,

Ron

FROM: Ben Kendrick, Georgia USA

I just wanted to send you a message and let you know how deeply saddened we are for your recent loss of Queen Elizabeth.

Many Americans are in mourning for her and have a great feeling of sorrow for your entire country.

It seems that she was very well loved and respected by everyone I encounter over here. I just wanted to let you know your friends in the US are thinking about you all over there.

Ben is the metal detectorist who told us about the mystery buckle with a naval connection he recently discovered.

I have also received a very moving phone call from TCA member Kapitän zur See Hans Andressen MBE in Germany. He has written a formal letter of Condolence to our President.

***Friends and Allies indeed !
... Editor***

Follow up to the note from former Captain Christopher Brown REME in August's edition about his excursion aboard KILMORY and run ashore on the Isle of Man, while serving with 15 Field Workshop in Northern Ireland :

During my time in the Army, I took every opportunity to be afloat, first with the destroyer CAVENDISH in 1963, then aboard an LST sailing from

Mombasa to Aden (14 days with breakdowns) in 1964.

Next I trained as a waterproofing expert at Fording Trials Branch, Instow in 1972 and could keep the water out of anything.

My last job in retirement, working for Director Royal Armoured Corps (DRAC), was to check that the new Bay class RFAs were suitable to carry Challenger 2 Tanks and their crews

Our contact in REME advises that 15 Field Workshop became 19 Combat Service Support Battalion based in NI and on termination of Op Banner, became 5 Battalion REME, now at Lynham ... Editor

**FROM: Mariano Rodriguez Varela,
Puerto Madryn, Argentina**

I am a naval modeler who wants to build a Ton-class minesweeper like the ones this country had at the time. Where can I get the plans?

It was easy for us to find a photo of ARA CHACO in TCA archives. but we are not sure what modifications may have been carried out to the six TONS transferred to Argentina for their particular requirements. The photo rather suggests that they may have been converted to Minehunter configuration, however we sent the plans and dimensions for PENSTON in Minesweeper configuration and a diagram of BRONINGTON as a Minehunter, so he could make adjustments.

We also put him in touch with TCA Member Captain Juan Frias, former C.O. of ARA CHACO

Mariano replied " Many thanks for the plans and greetings. First I am going to re-draw the plans in CAD. This will take me a while, then I'll build the model, which will be static, not for Radio Control. But before starting that work I have to finish the model of our Frigate LIBERTAD".

We replied with the articles about the Sail Training Ship LIBERTAD that Captain Frias had earlier published in TON Talk, with photos and details of her figurehead.

*We look forward to seeing photos of both models in due course ... **Editor***

FROM: Malcolm Austin

I was a founder member of the Southampton University Royal Naval Unit and our CO, Chris Walker is now 90 years old.

We are presenting him with some items at the end of October. I would like to make a scale model of our Ley class minesweeper (HMS ISIS ex CRADLEY) and wondered if you could direct me to some dimensioned plans or sketches.

Regrettably searches through the Inventory of Assets held by Bill Pollington show that we do not have, nor ever appeared to have held, dimensioned plans for LEY vessels, as we have for TONS,



We passed to Malcolm the above photo of ISIS / CRADLEY plus the technical data and external dimensions of the class from our website.

*We also suggested that a coloured gicl  print of the ship by Jacks Taxi might be a suitable alternative gift ... **Editor***

Model of HMS APPLETON

Andrew Salmon

Views of the completed model now installed in the Village Hall in Appleton, Oxfordshire. The flaghoist is invented.





OUR Sailor King