

TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association

Edition 219



December 2022



Limbang Logo

Silhouette of a landing craft coming out of a tropical dawn through the green of the jungle and blue of the South China Sea.

See page 16

TON Class Association

Contents



	Message from the King	1
P4	Editorial	2
	Chairman's Corner	3
	Who's Who & Coming Events.....	4
	AGM Minutes	5
	Claverhouse Centenary	10
	Spike Wheeler Appreciation	12
	Committee Vacancies	14
	Reunion Report	15
P10	Limbang Remembered	16
	Cenotaph Parade	18
	Chaplain's Chat	19
	Membership Update	20
	MCMV News	22
	White Rose	23
	TONs Photos	24
	VIDAL Caption	25
	Mine Warfare Review	26
P16	Capt Filtness Talk	28
	Slops & Welfare	30
	Post Bag	31



TCA Membership
£15 per annum
£150 Life Membership

Front Cover :
Limbang Logo

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Founder: Jack Worth MBE





BUCKINGHAM PALACE

On the occasion of my Accession as Sovereign, I should like to send to every one of you in the Royal Navy, in all ranks, my heartfelt gratitude for the brave, loyal and exemplary way in which you carried out your duties during the reign of my beloved mother.

The role of the Armed Forces demands qualities of courage, commitment and self-sacrifice of the highest order. The Queen took the greatest possible pride in the way in which, in so many different parts of the world, and frequently in the most difficult and testing circumstances, members of the Royal Navy, and all the other Naval Forces, demonstrated just those qualities in a manner which unfailingly reflected the very highest professional standards, and the very best traditions of our Armed Forces, built over many centuries.

I share wholeheartedly The Queen's pride and confidence in you all, and I know that, like her, I shall always be able to rely in the years to come on that same dedication which served our country so well during her own lifetime.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Charles R.', with a long, horizontal flourish underneath.

Editorial

His Majesty King Charles III sent the message on page 1 to all members of the Royal Navy on 5th October. Similar messages were sent to the Army and RAF.

Crossing the Bar After a somewhat purple patch, with six funerals during the last month or so, hopefully the loss of members has slowed. Just to remind families, if it is their wish, TCA will do its best to be represented at the funerals of members and to provide an appropriate send off for former shipmates.

We have evolved a little "ceremonial" that includes providing a White Ensign as a Coffin Drape, TCA Standard to be paraded and piping the side as our colleague enters the Church/Chapel to embark on his final voyage; All at no cost to the family.

However this can take a few days to arrange and the availability of a Standard Bearer is subject to their other commitments, so it would be appreciated if families could give us about ten days' notice of funeral arrangements.

Vice Chairman Peter Down and Doreen represented TCA at Spike Wheeler's funeral on 3rd October.

Sincere Apologies for the typo in the article about Memorials in August's edition of TON Talk describing Phil Clarke's project to install a memorial to those lost aboard FITTLETON. There were, of course, 12 victims, not 11 as stated. The Fittleton Memorial Fund currently stands at £8000. Phil would be grateful for additional contributions. When it reaches £9000 they will be confident to put the work in hand.

Fishery Protection We have been contacted via our website by Dr Jonathan Wise, an academic who is writing a book about the history of the RN and Fishery Protection. He is looking for some "first hand 'everyday' experiences" i.e. human interest stories to enliven the text.

We have sent him the relevant chapter from our book *Wooden Walls* and a couple of dits that have appeared in TON Talk. If you would like to assist the good doctor by contributing your favourite dit about life in Fishery Protection, please send it to him at jonathanwise@msn.com or send it via our Editor if you prefer. **Please Note – the Deadline is Christmas, as he has to complete his draft by New Year !**

Happy Christmas to all readers of TON Talk



Deadline for February's edition is 20th January

pjd

Chairman's Corner

On the back of a successful AGM and Reunion in October my theme for this Corner is one of positivity for the future of our splendid Association. This was reaffirmed by our turnout at the RBL's Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph, where owing to the passing of dear Mike Cox, the usual Oi/c, I had the privilege to be 'platoon commander' out front, ably steered by right and left hand markers, Graham Gatehouse and Sam Cook, respectively – full participants listed in this Edition but special mention for ex-FITTLETON, Arnold Jeacock, who put in a Herculean effort in the march – BZ Arnie!

The AGM went well, despite the Chairman forgetting to have a head break in the middle, which is probably why we finished on time ! Joking aside, matters of import were discussed amongst a good cross section of the Association, although down on numbers compared to previous years, and if I can concentrate on just one area – membership base – it was unanimously agreed to continue support of the existing change to the Constitution whereby sailors of any rank, rate or specialisation who served in the Hunt, River and Sandown class MCMVs can join as Associate members.

On this theme of positivity, we should, by our collected efforts, continue to seek out and encourage those former TON sailors who have yet to join and take positive steps to recruit our successors in the follow-on MCMV classes after the TONs. In this way we ensure our longevity. We are by no means a weak Association – at c.1,200 that compares very well to a total in the RNA of c.11,000 – but we must not rest on our laurels.

After the AGM, Mem. Sec Dennis Cook made the offer of a splendid silver cup won by his grandfather, to donate to the RN – the wishes of Dennis' mother. To this end the Committee is working with Capt PUXD [*Patrol Ships, Underwater Exploitation and Diving – Captain MCM, as was*] to establish a "TON Class Association Trophy" for a 'Sailor of the Year' – a Junior Rate of *any* specialisation who serves on operations in the MW, Patrol or Diving communities. If established this will be distinct from the RN's 'MCM specific' awards and our own 'TCA Member of the Year' award. Watch this space.

This leaves me now just to wish each and everyone of you and your loved ones the best of Christmas cheer. See you in the New Year; be safe.

Bob Hawkins MBE

TCA Who's Who

President

Rear Admiral R John Lippiett CB. CBE. DL

Chairman

Commander Bob Hawkins MBE RN

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COMING EVENTS

February 2023	Wed 8 19.30	ZOOM Conference for Committee <i>Date and time to be confirmed in January</i>
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 Booking Form in February's edition of TON Talk

ABRIDGED MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

29th October 2022, CROWN PLAZA HOTEL NOTTINGHAM

PRESENT

Chairman Bob Hawkins, Vice Chairman Peter Down, Vice President Chris Green, Secretary Matthew Salisbury, Treasurer David Woolgar, Auditor Bill Pollington, Membership Secretary Dennis Cook, Chaplain Trevor Filtness and 18 members

1. CHAIRMAN's WELCOME

In his first annual general meeting as Chairman, Commander Bob Hawkins welcomed everyone, stating that he was proud to be Chairman of such a superb Association. He had the privilege of being guest speaker last year and he paid tribute to our late Vice Chairman Nobby Hall. The Chairman said that although he had never been appointed to serve in a TON, he had undertaken training and work ups in HUBBERSTON, UPTON, WALKERTON, WOLVERTON and IVESTON. as an MCD specialist. Anne Soanes had sent her best wishes.

2. CROSSED THE BAR

Dennis Cook read out 35 names of members and wives who had Crossed the Bar since our last AGM.

3. APOLOGIES for ABSENCE

Received from President Rear Admiral John LIPPIETT and seven members.

4. MINUTES OF AGM 2021

Published in TON Talk 213, December 2021 and accepted as accurate.

5 MATTERS ARISING – None notified

6. CHAIRMAN's ANNUAL REPORT.

The Chairman said that he wished to propose re-phrasing of the current wording of our Constitution to emphasise that we have ONE Aim and four objectives.

Proposed: Charlie Farnes, Seconded by Chris Green and carried unanimously.

He was also concerned that we should appoint some younger energetic members to bring down the average age of the Committee.

With 1156 members, TCA is vibrant, but there is a raft of younger sailors out there who served in TONs who could be encouraged to join.

The Chairman was also keen to encourage those who have served in Hunts, Sandowns and Rivers to join. *It was noted that these people are already allowed to join as Associate members and this is clear on our website.*

Chairman said that he would be attending the RN Mine Warfare conference. *[N.B. TCA has contributed an article to the Conference Annual Review]*. He would promote this invitation to the audience. Sandowns and Hunts will be the last purpose-built MCMVs. Modular MCM systems operated from a mother ship or shore station are already being introduced by the RN and other navies. Members of the Mine Threat Exploitation Groups [MW Rates] who operate these systems could join and give continuity to TCA.

7 SECRETARY's REPORT

Special tribute must be given to Peter Down whose advice, experience, and help have made the secretary's job much more straight forward and easier.

Work has been principally with the collection of applications for this Reunion. It has been reasonably straight forward most of the time and it is good to be able to put faces to names today. Another area involving some effort was acting as a link with the Royal British Legion and those wishing to attend the Cenotaph Parade on Remembrance Sunday, Ten TCA members have volunteered to march [*Tickets were received subsequent the AGM*] .

Acting on a request from a Cardiff member, enquiries have been made with the Holiday Inn in the centre of Cardiff about the possibility of a Reunion there in 2024. [*details passed to Reunion Team for consideration*]

The other enterprise that has been taking up time is collating of material for a "History of HMS CAMBRIA" to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the South Wales Division RNR. CAMBRIA has been a seagoing division from 1947 to 1994. From 1953 to 1977 it operated with TON Class ships. The history also covers the RNR involvement in fitting out the trawlers taken up from trade for Operation Corporate (Falklands). The editor gives an account of the manning of HMS HODGESTON in 1976 and their part in the search for survivors of the FITTLETON tragedy.

HMS CAMBRIA houses one of the smallest RNR divisions, but one that has made a considerable contribution to MCM development, particularly with EDATS. The book is with the printer and it is hoped that it will be advertised on our website in time for Christmas.

8 TREASURER's REPORT

David Woolgar reported that the Association is in good financial health. The main expenditure is incurred in printing and distributing TON Talk, half of which is postage. £500 per annum is spent on the website. Expenditure this year has exceeded income by £337.08, but subscription income has covered the cost of TON Talk and the website.

Stores, Welfare and Reserve accounts held by Nationwide have been closed and the balances transferred to the Barclays No.2 account as sub-funds. The Reunion account held by Peter Harrison in Lloyds has also been transferred to Barclays No.2 Account.

Because of the considerable reserves accumulated, he is checking whether the Association may be liable to Corporation Tax. If this is the case some distribution of funds to causes supported by TCA may be appropriate .

Account Balances:-

General Account	£4,564.66
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No.2 Account	£26,616.72
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Including transfers of £10,093 from Welfare and £5,302 from the Reserve Accounts.

GENERAL ACCOUNT

Income

Subscriptions	10,097.04
Life subscriptions	150.00
Donations	200.00
Advertising sales	40.00
Stores proceeds	276.00

Total **10,763.04**

Expenditure

Ton Talk	9,003.30
Website maintenance	503.38
Administration expenses	260.26
Honoraria	1,200.00
Royal Maritime Club	60.00
Grant	72.86

11,100.12

Surplus of Expenditure over Income £ 337.08

BARCLAYS NO.2 ACCOUNT

Income

Reunion raffle	200.00
Reunion 22	8,999.00
Donations	200.00
Stores Account	982.36
Welfare Account Txfr	10,093.95
Reserve Account Txfr	5,302.40

Total **25,867.71**

Expenditure

Grants	800.00
Memorials	100.00
Reunion 23	250.00
Stores Account	43.86

1193.86

Surplus of Income over Expenditure £ 25,517.71

9 AUDITOR's REPORT

An independent examination of the records and bank statements was undertaken and the accounts as presented by the Treasurer for year ending 31st August 2022 are an accurate statement of the financial state of the TCA.

There has been a marginal decrease in the numbers of old standing orders not updated from 109 to 101. We are losing £907.50 in revenue from Subscriptions These members no longer receive TON Talk, but only one has complained !

TCA assets and historic documents, including regalia, maps, photos, drawings. from Portsmouth Heritage Trust fill 6 pages of inventory. Many items are obsolete and some of little or no value. These items will be offered to members before disposal..

10. EDITOR's REPORT

The website continues to attract favourable comment. Many enquiries are from the general public, seeking information about relatives who have served in the RN.

With our Technical Support team we are testing an extension to allow on-line line joining and also to enable payments to be made by BACS Transfer. Their monthly maintenance package of £40 +VAT provides extensive back up and anti virus and anti-hacker support, plus 60 minutes of technical support, although we seldom call upon this.

Ian Barden has volunteered to assist with communication duties, perhaps taking on management of the website and a Facebook page. It was agreed that Ian, who has worked in airport security and has IT experience, should join the Committee.

The costs of production and distribution of TON Talk are closely monitored. The cost this year was £9,003, c.£1.50 per copy. This represents 89% of the £10,097 income from subscriptions. It now costs more to post TON Talk than to print it.

180 members receive TON Talk electronically, but a show of hands at the meeting demonstrated that the printed version is extremely popular. Copies are read far beyond the membership, OPVs.

11. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

It has been a turbulent year with 35 members dying, six resigned and 9 with whom we have lost contact. Some members are still paying £10 instead of £15.00 and a couple still paying £7.50. All subscriptions if paid by cheque should be accompanied by a stamp addressed envelope if membership cards are required to be endorsed. Please give details of any changes of contact details.

Paying Members

Full Members 883, Life Members 154, Associate Members 20: Total 1057

Non-paying members

Widows 72, Honorary Members 5, MCMV's & Associations 22: Total 99

Grand Total 1156

12. STANDARD BEARERS' REPORTS

Sam Cook paraded the standard at the dedication of the Vernon Monument and also at Weymouth. He attended Mike Cox's funeral.

Dave Parrish paraded the Northern Standard at the funerals of Alan Clayton and Bill Platt and on Remembrance Sunday

13. STORES OFFICER'S REPORT

Balance at 1st August in Nationwide A/c £1177.61

Receipts for year Aug 2021 to July 2022	£494.39
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Interest for Aug 21 to Jul 2022	£ 0.91
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Total	£1672.91
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Less Expenditure on new stock	£734.41
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Balance at 31 July 2022	£938.50
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Value of Stock held	£2638.91
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Petty Cash	£10.67
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Grand total of TCA Stores A/C	£3588.08
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Profit of £192.07 will be transferred to TCA General Fund

14. SEA CADET LIAISON REPORTS

In the absence of any liaison officers, Peter Down reported that there are difficulties maintaining contact with the affiliated units. SCC officers concentrate on training the youngsters, so admin was conducted by Unit Committees, with variable skills. Annual reports have been requested from each of the units.

TCA member Lt Cdr John Richardson RNR has volunteered to liaise with TS Kellington (Stockton on Tees), but volunteers are needed for TS Highburton (Huddersfield and Dragon (Thurrock.). MoD scholarships are now available to assist cadets to gain experience on the Sail Training vessels but all units need funds for the upkeep of buildings and equipment.

15. REUNION SECRETARY

52 people were attending this weekend. The number had fluctuated owing to last minute cancellations.

Thanks are due to the secretary who kept record of applications and Jim Virgo who became Rum

Boatswain. He thanked all present for attending.

Next year the reunion will be held in the Carlton Hotel Torquay. It is proposed from 2024 that the traditional format of AGM, formal dinner and service be followed. To cut down costs and avoid declining numbers in future years, a variation on this could be considered.

The possibility of holding the AGM in the afternoon and allowing people to choose their own accommodation might be considered. However, a straw poll showed that the majority present wished the existing formula to be retained.

The employment of an event company to manage the reunion was more expensive than self-help. There is need for more assistance with the reunion. The chairman said that national and area events needs to be rejuvenated.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The situation of BRONINGTON was discussed. TCA's position that the ship is beyond economical repair was maintained. However we wish those seeking to recover and renovate the hulk or very best wishes.

17. PRESIDENT's OBSERVATIONS

President Rear Admiral John Lippiett had sent a message regretting that sea time with his commitment as an Ocean-Going Lecturer prevented him attending the Reunion but he sent his best wishes to us. He thanked members of the Committee for their hard work and was saddened to see the large number of deceased members. He had written to HM the King expressing condolences on behalf of TCA and had also written a private letter to King Charles, requesting him to continue as TCA's Patron.

The AGM terminated at 12.33 with Up Spirits. *Below. Chairman opens the AGM*

L – R: Peter Down, Bob Hawkins, Matthew Salisbury, David Woolgar



Centenary of HMS CLAVERHOUSE

Reported by Lieutenant Andrew Kerr MBE, RNR

A Commemoration of the Centenary of the naming of HMS Claverhouse will be held on Friday 16th December 2022 in what used to be HMS Claverhouse (the former Granton Hotel) in Granton Square, Edinburgh. The Reception will be addressed by the Duke of Montrose, whose family have been associated with the Division since the outset. (photos in February's edition of TON Talk).

A souvenir illustrated booklet has been produced and can be read on the TCA website under Latest News for January 2023.



West Old Dock, Leith in the 1950's.

HMS Killiecrankie (DERRITON), HMS Claverhouse and Merchant Navy Training Ship
Dolphin.

Painting by Fred Jay Girling, Courtesy Christopher Hall

Naval Reserve activity in the Edinburgh and Leith area started in 1913 when a small outlying unit of the Clyde Division Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve was formed in Leith. This grew steadily until, by the time of mobilisation in 1914, it comprised about eight officers and 100 ratings, most of whom were posted to the Royal Naval Division and served with distinction, as infantry in Flanders, Antwerp and Gallipoli.

In 1921 the RNVR started afresh in Edinburgh and in 1922 the Monitor M23 became the drill ship in West Old Dock, commissioned on 16th December 1922 as HMS Claverhouse. Training facilities increased and the unit grew, until by mobilisation in 1939, there were about 33 officers and 400 ratings. During WW2 *Claverhouse* was initially used as the HQ for the Naval Officer in Charge, Leith and Granton, then later as HQ for the Merchant Navy Defence Organisation. Significant organisational changes came about when the Division was reformed in 1946 and in 1949 the unit received Motor Minesweeper 1089, immediately re-named HMS Killiecrankie, which increased opportunities for sea training and began our long association with minesweeping.

The HQ in Granton Square was opened in 1951 and the old monitor was scrapped in 1959. In 1952 a unit of four officers and ten ratings of the Women's Royal Naval Reserve was formed and in 1954 the Coastal Minesweeper Derriton, M1128, replaced the venerable Motor Minesweeper and took on the name Killiecrankie. She paid off in 1962 and was replaced as Killiecrankie by HMS Bickington.

In 1958 the RNVR was amalgamated with the RNR, although our emphasis on training for minesweeping duties continued. In that year a small detachment of Royal Marine Forces Volunteer Reserve was started at Claverhouse, but after about ten years was relocated to their HQ in Glasgow.

RNR sweepers were organised as the 10th Minesweeping Squadron in 1962 and participated in VERMEXs, plus deployments to the West Indies, ROCKHAUL (Gibraltar), MAINHAUL (North Africa) and Canada.

In April 1974 Bickington went into refit and the minehunter HMS Kirkliston took on the role of Killiecrankie, and we rose to the challenge of learning the new skills of minehunting, including Reservists qualifying as Clearance Divers. However 1974 also saw the Mitchell report which, together with a Defence Review, substantially re-shaped the RNR. Claverhouse now formed part of the North East Group with Tyne, Forth and Tay, with reductions in personnel in some branches.

Killiecrankie returned from refit in 1975 and was immediately deployed to Operation Grenada; patrols off Northern Ireland. The introduction of hull sharing in 1976 with HMS Upton and later HMS Kedleston, M1153. Sea training tended to alternate between a NATO Exercise or Op. Grenada patrol, followed by a visit to a European port. In 1986 Kedleston was replaced by the River-class Fleet minesweeper HMS Spey, M2013 and we learned to operate EDATS, the Extra Deep Armed Team Sweep.

However the so-called "Peace Dividend" of the early 1990's, coupled with the notorious "Options for Change" resulted in the Fleet Sweepers being sold off in 1994 and the decommissioning of HMS Claverhouse on 26th March 1994. This left a lot of RNR personnel rather at a loose end, with no specific role or regular commitment, until the Gulf Wars produced the Above Water Force Protection Branch and other specialists supported operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in Ops Telic and Herrick.

Today RNR officers and ratings serve ashore and afloat on active service in Full Time Reserve Service billets throughout the RN, as well as in mobilised posts in the UK and abroad.

Spike Wheeler – An Appreciation

Chief Petty Officer Diver Class 1 Anthony Wheeler was one of those larger than life characters, whose presence enlivens any gathering of sailors. Spike was a long time member of TCA and regularly attended our Reunions. He was also a prolific author, who kept a diary throughout his service.

Excerpts from his diary have been published in TON Talk, recounting his adventures diving on Suez Canal Clearance in 1956, where he stayed behind, working with civilian contractors, after the Fleet had returned to Malta, assisting with the world's deepest dive to 1092 feet using a Galazzi Observation Chamber from RECLAIM off Norway in 1959 and in the tragic search and recovery of a Scimitar aircraft off Nab Tower later that year; a sad conclusion to the first operational deck landing of this aircraft, in which the pilot lost his life, while the media took photographs.

Spike was a Barnardo's Boy who was adopted and went to GANGES at the tender age of 15. He not only survived but enjoyed the tough regime which stood him in good stead when as a Boy Seaman 2nd Class, he joined the battleship DUKE of YORK in 1948 for her Autumn Cruise to the West Indies. TCA published this memoir as monograph, which is still available. Spike's description of his adventures aboard a floating barracks with 2000 other sailors is truly a work of social as well as naval history. He describes his experience as sea boat's crew dropped in mid-Atlantic, the boys manning the 5.25 inch guns of the secondary armament for a shoot and simulated attacks by aircraft and submarines. Coming from the privations of post-war Britain, they were overwhelmed by the riches on offer in the American PX, brown skinned girls who welcomed British sailors, plus pineapples, coconuts and local rum !

Spike had commissions as an A/B in the cruisers MAURITIUS and KENYA before qualifying as a Standard Diver (copper helmet, canvas suit, and lead boots, with armoured air hose and telephone). As a Leading Diver in BULWARK, he participated in the clearance of the Suez Canal. Subsequently, as a Petty Officer, he was Captain of the of the Well Deck in RECLAIM, where he was involved in deep diving and salvage operations, as well as EOD.

Spike "endured" the conversion from Copperhead to rubber suit and mixture gas of Clearance Diving and had appointments instructing and minehunting in SHOULTON in 1963-64. As CPO in charge of a team of 22 divers in TRIUMPH in the Far East, they earned commendations for recovering bodies and salvage of an American C-130 that had run off the end of Kai Tak airport in Hong Kong. Then came his favourite ship, HUBBERSTON, as CPO Coxswain 1965-66. She was the first minehunter to be deployed to the Far East and Spike enjoyed the demonstrations of that art given to allied navies in Japan, the Philippines (also the USN), Thailand and Malaysia, where they found a sunken wartime Japanese locomotive in Changi Strait - how many of us had unknowingly passed over it ???

Then followed a posting to OSPREY, where Spike was Chief of the Trials Team, experimenting with sonar dome exchanges and underwater vehicles as well as EOD. Postings to TAMAR and VERNON followed and Spike retired in 1975, having spent four years with the Recruitment Centres in Birmingham and Bristol. **Spike will be greatly missed.**

Snap shots from Spike's Career



TS Indefatigable 1946 & GANGES 1948



Copperhead Trinco 1951 & BULWARK 1954-56



Observation Chamber RECLAIM 1959
& Kai Tak 1964



Committee Vacancies

Following discussion at the AGM, Ian Barden has bravely volunteered to become our **Communications Officer**, responsible for convening regular Zoom conferences for the Committee, plus monitoring a TCA Facebook page and, perhaps eventually take over from the Editor in managing our website.

The Communications Officer will liaise with Secretary, Editor and Chairman on formulating and managing distribution of any Press Releases we may make. At present this job falls between several people.

We are seeking **another couple of volunteers** to join the Committee which manages the affairs of TCA. We do not have specific job vacancies in mind, but would rather find roles best suited to the skills of those who may volunteer.

For example, we could do with someone to understudy Laurie Johnson with a view to taking over **Slops** in due course.

We could also reconsider reverting to having one person as **Reunion Secretary**. This year the responsibilities have been shared between Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

Joan Stott and Jim Virgo have kindly allowed themselves to be pressed into volunteering to assist the Reunion Secretary with choice of venue and format for the Reunion. The Reunion Secretary will liaise with hotels to agree the contract, circulate Booking Forms to members (via TON Talk), collect payments and transfer the money to the Treasurer, then finalise the account on completion of the Reunion.

Please advise Vice Chairman Peter Down of any areas that may be of interest. He would be happy to answer questions and provide further details.

Reunion Report, Crowne Plaza, Nottingham, 29 October

A good time was had by all; one or two hiccups about lack of drawer space in some rooms, but attentive and courteous staff looked after all our needs, despite bar prices being at London level. Tourist and retail opportunities were thoroughly visited.

52 members, wives and partners attended and the Spirit of the TONs was evident. We are all in good heart.

We welcomed Mrs Trudy Hawkins, wife of our Chairman (pictured below on the left) and our Guest Speaker Captain David Filtress and his charming wife Rebecca, an RNR officer.



Captain David lifted the veil on some of his work at Chief of Staff to the Joint Forces Headquarters, describing the threats currently facing Britain and some of the contingencies in place. Sombre stuff, giving cause for some serious thought but reassuring to counter the hysterical headlines in some media. *See the précis at page 28.*

On a lighter note, he described a recent visit to the West Indies to assess requirements for UK assistance to restore order and rebuild communities in the event of hurricane damage. The job entailed inspecting docks, possible landing beaches and airstrips to bring troops and aid supplies ashore. On Barbados he was rather surprised at his host's insistence that he should be based at their Coast Guard HQ, until he found that the Senior Officer of the Coast Guard had been at Dartmouth with him and the HQ was directly opposite Mount Gay distillery – nice to know that our essential supplies will be first to be rescued !

Generous members raised £250 in the Raffle - to be rounded up as donations to our affiliated Sea Cadets, £85 Church collection for the RN Benevolent Trust and £154 as a gratuity for the restaurant and kitchen staff who had looked after us.

Limbang 60th Anniversary

12th December this year will be the 60th Anniversary of the action at Limbang in Sarawak, North Borneo in 1962. A dozen sailors from FISKERTON and CHAWTON crewed requisitioned craft that transported Lima Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines, upriver from Brunei to liberate eleven hostages taken by TNKU rebels (Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utama – *North Borneo Liberation Army*) at the start of the Brunei revolt, which subsequently morphed into Confrontation with Indonesia during 1963-66.

All the hostages were released alive, albeit frightened and some roughed up, but five Royal Marines were killed in the action. 19 rebels were killed and over 30 taken prisoner. Unknown to the relieving force, over 200 armed rebels had gathered in Limbang.



Painting by Terence Cuneo, courtesy of the Officers Mess 42 Commando

The raiding party left Brunei at about 21.00 and made their way upriver through the jungle in pitch darkness, laying up before approaching their objective at dawn. In command of the leading craft was David Willis, First Lieutenant of CHAWTON, with Captain Jeremy Moore RM i/c the operation and the bulk of the commandos. In command of the second craft with a reserve section of marines, plus two 1912-issue Vickers medium machine guns, was Peter Down, First Lieutenant of FISKERTON.

An interpreter called on the rebels to surrender but the craft were met with fire from Armalite automatic rifles and Bren guns looted from the Police Station, which killed two and wounded several marines as they landed. Fire was returned with SLR rifles and the two machine guns. With bayonets fixed, the commandos engaged in house to house clearance before the hostages were located in the hospital. Three Marines were killed in an ambush there.

By mid-morning order had been restored and the newly-released District Officer sought to re-assure the townsfolk that they were now safe, as the Marines would remain as a garrison, but an unexpected low-level fly past by a couple of RAF Hunter jets took everyone by surprise !



FISKERTON (inboard) and CHAWTON alongside Brunei jetty on the day after the action. Astern are the two ramp loading craft used for the assault. River leading to the sea at top of photo to the left of Kampong Ayer, a village on stilts over the water, which was later subjected to a house to house search by police and the military looking for rebels.

Bottom left; CERA Ginger Walpole's clinic for outboard engines, with more requisitioned craft approaching. Dhobied overalls on the garden fence courtesy of Stoker Standish. Photo pjd.

Further troops and supplies arrived later in the morning in more requisitioned craft led by Sub Lieutenant Chris Jowett and Midshipman David Mayo. The freed hostages and RM casualties were then taken back to Brunei.

The significance of the action was recognised by the award of a Bar to the Military Cross to Captain Jeremy Moore RM (who would subsequently command land forces in the Falklands Campaign) and MBE to Lt Cdr Jeremy Black C.O. of HMS Fiskerton (who would later command HMS Invincible in the Falklands). Military Medals were awarded to Corporals Bob Rawlinson and Bill Lester. Lieutenant David Willis RN was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and POME Pat Kirwan the Distinguished Service Medal. All ranks had the satisfaction of knowing that they had participated in an action that could have come from the pages of Captains Hornblower or Bolitho. *TCA members who participated in the action include Laurie Johnson and David Willis of CHAWTON and Michael Martin and Peter Down of FISKERTON.*

CENOTAPH PARADE



BZ and VMT to the eleven members who represented TCA and showed our Homage to the Fallen at the Cenotaph Parade.

Chairman Bob Hawkins MBE (4th from left), Ian Barden, Ian Campbell, Sam Cook, Graham Gatehouse, John Harvey, Arnold Jeacock, Malcolm Kemp, Harry Sharpe, David Stott, Thomas (David) Walker

Photo courtesy Trudy Hawkins

Once again, the TV cameras managed not to pick out the TCA contingent ...

Chaplain's Chat

Since becoming TCA Chaplain in 2019 I think every year has had its drama and world changing events. 2022 has turned out to be even more dramatic. Much of this has revolved around sadnesses and world events which are continuing to affect us and will do so for at least next year. I won't list them; you can do that as well as me.

At the personal level many of our members are also suffering personal loss and increasingly face medical issues caused by anno domini. Thus, altogether, life seems more challenging than a year ago. It is perhaps difficult to be optimistic.

However, I recall my father's view on life. He had been a boy during the depression in the 1920-30s, fought throughout WW2 and then joined the Palestine Police Force until he was blown up in the Police Station in Haifa in 1948. He then returned to a country fit for heroes – he ended up having to wash dishes in a hotel just to eat! But he always said that somehow we just had to face life, get on with it and do the best we could. I wonder how many of us hold that view these days! Easily said of course. Perhaps we can do very little about national and international situations but can we do something in our personal, local 'worlds'?

This is going to be a very difficult winter and Christmas for many people. Yes we can give to food banks and similar excellent organisations but can we also offer friendship and warmth to someone who needs that reassurance and who might be 'next door'? To offer this is real love, in the Christian and moral sense, and brings hope to those who receive it.

Rev'd Hugh Hughes said in 1883: *It was the Christians' business to turn the world upside down because it was the wrong way up; might was up and right was down.....gold was up and grace was down..... selfishness was up and love was down. They (the early Christians) were engaged in Divine revolutionary work !*

Christmas is about love and hope. Christians celebrate the coming of God's Son into the world to bring change to the selfishness of the world. Love brings hope and hope can achieve wonders in us and the world. Small kindnesses can work miracles and 'revolve' the world. This is perhaps worth a thought at Christmas.



**I wish everyone a Happy Christmas and
a blessed 2023**

Trevor

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

David Gregory. S/Lt - Lt RN Todmorden West Yorkshire.
Served on HM Ships SHERATON 1965-66 DARTINGTON 1967-68 F2504

Colin Mc Carraher. RO(G) - S/Lt RNR Bath Somerset.
Served on HM Ships CROFTON, ALFRISTON, LALESTON 1977-84. F2507

Frank Grinnall. MEM1 RN. Portugal. Served on HMS SOBERTON 1974-76. F2508

Keith Lindsay. S/Lt RNR. Melrose, Scottish Borders.
Served on HM Ships KEDLESTON, UPTON 1977-79. F2509

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Alan Summer. To:- Fareham Hampshire. F1363

Arthur Burwin. To:- Thakeham West Sussex. F0897

Bruce Nicolls OBE To:- Marden Kent. L0017

Leslie B Law. To :- Chippenham Wiltshire. F1119

CHANGED E-Mail ADDRESS

Barry Harris:- To:- navy1909@proton.me F1602

Richard Barrett. To:- ciklos4@hotmail.com L0681

LOST CONTACT.

Anyone knowing current address please advise Membership Secretary

William Wilson. Last Known Address:- Oxford. F1300



Crossed the Bar

POME Harry Martin RN Redhill, Surrey, F0668

Served on HM Ships DALSWINTON 1955-56, SOBERTON 1959-61

OEM1 Ray Ashford RNR Crawley, F0701

Served on HM Ships DUFTON 1969, Woolaston 1969-74

Sub Lieutenant Antony Walker RNR Anthemidos, Cyprus, L1570

Died of Covid in South Africa in June 2021

Served in London Division RNR on HM Ships DUFTON, THAMES, ISIS 1963-70

Lieutenant Commander David Burstall RN Petersfield, F0881

Served on HMS SOBERTON 1961-62

LEM Sidney A Reynolds RN Southampton. F2054

Served on HMS LEVERTON 1955-57

CMEA (P) Keith Fuller RNR. Laswade Scotland. F0737

Served on HM Ships KILLIECRANKIE, KEDLESTON 1963-77

EM 1 James Turner RN Aylesford Kent F2057

*Served on HM Ships APPLETON 1958-59, LEWISTON, 1959-61,
HUBBERSTON 1964-66*

Surgeon Cdr Robert G Hanson RN Waterloooville, Hants. F2204

*Served in 6 MCMS 1964-66 HM Ships CHAWTON, HOUGHTON, MARYTON,
WOOLASTON, WILKIESTON, PUNCHESTON, DARTINGTON, SHERATON*

May They Rest In Peace

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 (2/5) plus the Sandown class MCMV BANGOR (1/2) all supported by RFA LYME BAY. In October, BANGOR and CARDIGAN BAY participated in exercises with the US, Saudi and Bahraini navies including use of intelligence-gathering 'saildrone' USVs (Unmanned Surface Vessels). CHIDDINGFOLD and BANGOR will be based in Doha and patrol the waters around Qatar during the 2022 World Cup looking for mines, IEDs and suspicious vessels. CARDIGAN BAY will act as command ship.

HUNT Class

During her deployment with SNMCMG1 (Standing NATO MCM Group 1), HURWORTH (2/3) participated in a month-long trial involving more than 11 warships, 120 autonomous vehicles and 1,500 military and civilian personnel from 15 NATO countries who took over the waters near the Troia Peninsula, Portugal. She then participated in Exercise JOINT WARRIOR. HURWORTH finished her deployment with SNMCMG1 on 19 Oct following a visit to London where she berthed alongside HMS PRESIDENT and hosted members of her squadron's affiliated Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors. MCM2 Crew 6 has since replaced Crew 3 prior to a busy period of regeneration ahead of operational deployment next year. BROCKLESBY (2/2) was seen operating from Portsmouth in October. CATTISTOCK (2/7) was spotted 'under wraps' as she completes a refit in Portsmouth Naval Base. The decommissioned ATHERSTONE arrived at Harland & Wolf in Appledore on 12 Oct to begin her refurbishment for non-military uses.

SANDOWN Class

MCM1 Crew 8 has taken over PENZANCE with Lt Cdr Rob Couzens in Command. MCM1 Crew 5 has taken over PEMBROKE and has been training in Scottish waters.

MASTT (Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team)

On 3 Nov, MASTT was presented with the Outstanding MW Team of the Year Award at the inaugural Mine Warfare Annual Dinner & Awards Ceremony in Southsea. The award was presented by former MCD officer David Hunkin OBE, Sales Director of Thales UK which sponsored the evening. AB(MW) Georgia Shepherdson of MASTT was presented with the Outstanding Junior Rate of the Year Award by Cdr Daniel 'Doc' Morris (Cdr MCM).

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

White Rose Branch visits Chesterfield

Clive Dennison

Twelve White Rose members and wives; Alan and Sue Hewitt, Allan and Sue Brown, Clive and Sue Dennison, Terry and Jane Foreman, Trevor and Elaine Dixon, Pincher and Judi Martin enjoyed a social visit to Chesterfield over the weekend 30th September - 3rd October. Special thanks to Alan and Sue Hewitt for research and making the arrangements.



Friday saw us arriving in the midst of torrential rain, not helped by Chesterfield being the centre of a "sat nav black hole" with a crazy one way system. Drinks soon followed after arrival. On Friday evening ten of us had a very good meal at the Premier Inn, helped by very obliging staff. Followed by a good session and natter all round between the guys and gals.

On Saturday morning the ladies enjoyed retail therapy while the lads toured the town, primarily the two Wetherspoons. On Saturday evening twelve of us went to the Market Pub in the Market Square, we all had superb meals with excellent service. The five kitchen staff worked wonders in a space that would make the galley on a TON look palatial! We retired to the Premier Inn for the rest of the evening saw them run out of Rum.

Sunday was a quieter day; some toured the town and had a quiet drink, but four of us went out for a short, 20-minute, drive to visit Bakewell in the nearby Peak District National Park. After touring the usual cafes and bookshops we were caught up in two takes of a Bollywood film shoot of a fast stunt car chase through the normally busy but sedate towns streets.



Monday was breakfast and goodbyes. All had a great weekend, there will surely be more visits to plan in the near future. A big thanks to everybody who turned out and made the Chesterfield weekend such a success



We try to include at least one article and one photo about TONS in each edition, but this issue is somewhat crowded by other news, so here are TWO photos of TONS to compensate: IVESTON above and HUBBERSTON below.

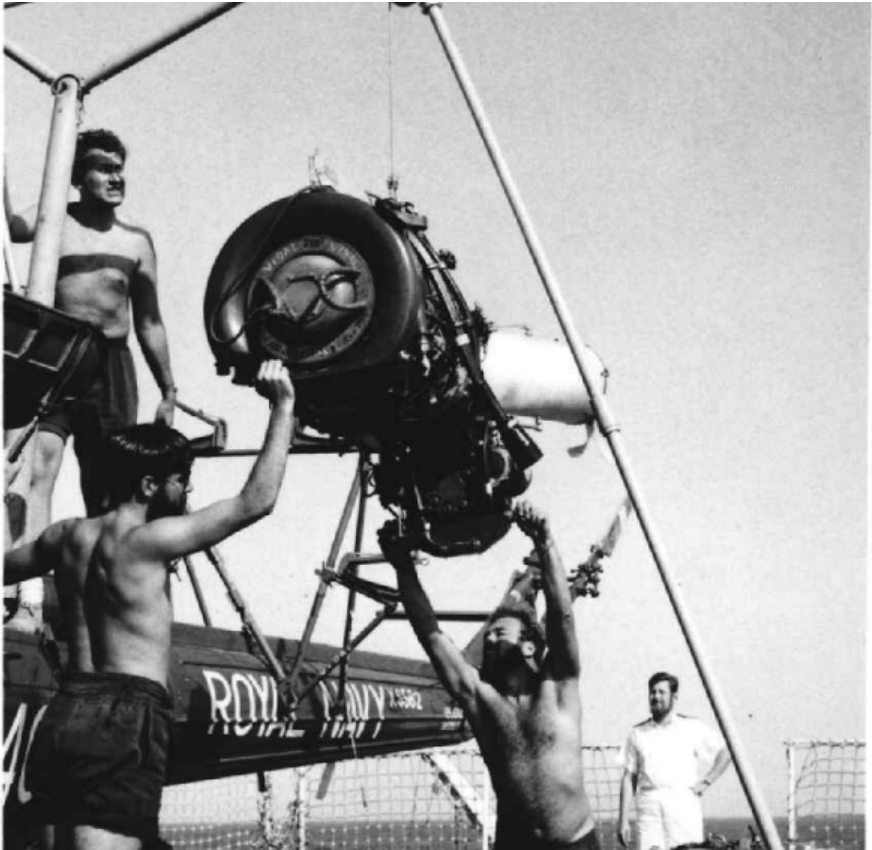


Caption Competition

Photo courtesy of Terry Woodward, Chairman of the Survey Ships Association, taken aboard HMS VIDAL in the 1970's.

Wafoos discovering that the flight deck can be used for purposes other than sunbathing ...

Best caption wins a tot at our next Reunion



Is the pilot wondering whether the tecchies have got the engine the right way round ?

TON Class Association

We are very proud to have been invited, for the third year running, to contribute an article to the Annual Review of the Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Specialisation.

*Here is what we said this year on your behalf ... **Editor***

TCA represents the Old and Bold in the MCM Community. We have over 1200 members of all ranks and specialisations, ranging from Admirals to National Service Stokers, spread across 24 countries round the world. They are mainly ex-Royal Navy and RNR, but we also have members from other navies that operated TONs. We are proud to include in our numbers two Four-Ring Captains from the navies of Argentina and Germany, as well as friends from Norway, the USA and EGUERMIN. About 1 in 8 of our members served in the Naval Reserves.

Exchanges of news and views among members are lively and stimulating.

Please visit our website www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk to learn more about our Association and the exploits of our little wooden ships that were Britain's main counter to the sea mine during 1950's to 1990's. We also pioneered the transition in technology from minesweeping to minehunting.

Everyone with relevant MCM knowledge and experience, especially those still serving, is welcome to join TCA and participate in our activities. If you are a good organiser, we could use your skills on our Committee to help take our Association forward. Our current Chairman is, and our late recent Vice Chairman was, a serving officer.

Most of our Committee business is now conducted by e-mail and Zoom. In addition to regional events, we hold an Annual Reunion Weekend in October for our AGM, which we enjoy with our wives and other guests.

We publish a magazine, *TON Talk*, bi-monthly and try to keep abreast of developments in MCM technology. We are learning about robotic devices and are heartened to note that the Orpoesa float has returned to service, together with influence sweeping and that automated wire sweeping is on the cards.

We recently presented a painting of "Minesweeper Sailors Through the Ages" to the Minewarfare school at HMS Collingwood and hope to arrange a visit there soon.

[see photograph of TCA Chairman Commander Bob Hawkins MBE RN, a serving MCD specialist, presenting the painting to Warrant Officer 1 Steven Moss, OIC MW School. The painting will be displayed in the new Rest Room in the school.]

TON Talk is sent to all operational MCMVs and also to the OPVs in recognition of their Fishery Protection role; once a TON speciality. We welcome feedback from those vessels, especially newsletters, which we upload to our website.

Ship visits, so we can meet the modern matelot, are prized but often difficult to schedule because of operational priorities.

TCA was represented at the recent dedication of the VERNON Monument by our President and Chairman, who also had a hand in resourcing the RN contribution to the funeral of our late beloved Queen Elizabeth. In 1994, the then Prince of Wales kindly consented to become Patron of TCA, in recognition of his time in command of HMS Bronington. We are waiting, with baited breath, to discover whether this Patronage may be continued in his new Role.

Our aim is to maintain the Spirit of the TONs; very much a small ships navy. "Great professionalism with jaunty informality," as our Patron described his experience of serving in a TON. We aim to live up to that description with social life and comradeship, including welfare provision, where appropriate.

We have published three books and four monographs which tell the story of the rationale for the TONs, our deployments and details of life on board. We also explain to the public, via the books and website, the importance of sea-borne trade to the livelihood of our nation. Over 90% of our imports and exports travel by sea and hence the vital importance of the Royal Navy in keeping sea lanes open for navigation.

Come and join us, not only for the social contact, but to help keep our Association up to date and vibrant. You can download an Application Form from our website.



Global Security Context for the Royal Navy Today

A precis of the address to our AGM by Captain David Filtess MA, RN

The Royal Navy's context is dominated by what we the UK said we were going to do about global security, defined by the HMG Integrated Review; the behaviours of threats, potential adversaries, and our partners; and the technology that is inevitably being exploited against us. How we do our business is of course predominantly shaped by our fantastic people.

I think it's worth reflecting on the invasion of Ukraine as another inflection point in European history. We sit today in the early stages of the most complex military campaign since the Korean War, with ripple effects that echo around the world – particularly in food, and fuel security for millions of people across Lebanon, Syria, the Levant and North Africa. But importantly, the campaign then reactions of Western powers is shaping the behaviours and activities of opponents and allies around the world.

This is important, because what feels new – even if it isn't, is the extent to which we, all of us, are at best influenced, at worst attacked, every day over the cyber domain and internet, in our homes, in everything we read and hear in media and social media. A state-on-state conflict – like the one playing out across Europe today, is an iceberg: small amounts of physical fighting above the waterline, a mass of cyber and information warfare below it: economics, the flow of data, the decisions and choices we make for our country, international conventions and law, public perceptions are all engineered by states at a speed of their choosing today, leveraged against states and their people for power.

To quote Google's Global Infrastructure department, "People think data is in the cloud, but it isn't - it's in the ocean". It's not just our physical imports and exports that travel through vulnerable waters. The sea carries the modern internet we depend on today. 97% of international data is carried on a network of


underwater cables. Your banking, your shopping, your social media- your daily life is dependent on data carried in 1.2M miles of cables. If they were compromised, only 3% of what they carry could be substituted by satellites. And let's not forget the threat posed to this critical national infrastructure – deliberately or otherwise by states as well as everyday activity at sea.

The context I describe tells us that we can't stand still. The nature of the Royal Navy's task globally has not changed, even if the character of its activities has. Our context gives us much to think about. And the Navy is growing for the first time in 70 years. Between 2015 and 2025 our tonnage will increase by nearly 30% and our recruiting is up 20%.

Increasingly, defence is thinking about how to re-orientate itself towards data and decision advantage, which basically means 'How do we be more google?' How do we deter or compete against adversaries before our physical capabilities have even left home? That means bold thinking on some blank pieces of paper: what do we need to be? Fewer fit adventurers in our ranks and more cyber and space specialists of the type most comfortable at home in their mum's spare bedroom? How do you make the armed forces attractive to them – remove ranks, be more open minded about what we mean by 'standards' such as physical appearance? Pay by hard skills rather than time done and 'leadership'? What is the role of autonomy in our aircraft, ships, submarines and land capabilities? Defence is thinking hard about this right now.

I want to bring this back to all of you. The spirit of the TON Class and her people is alive and well today across our patrol vessel community and the wider Navy. People like you, doing what you used to do all over the world, having great adventures and making memories and friends that will last a lifetime. And that team spirit and if necessary fighting ethos, is as alive and well in the fleet today as it was when you – and frankly I – were last there ! Ladies and Gentlemen of the TON Class Association, I salute you.

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			
<i>State size, colour and logo required</i> <i>Logo 1 = Mine and Keys, Logo 2 = Mine and TON silhouette Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery</i>			
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 Clearance sale 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	Order from	
TCA Polar Fleece Jacket	£ 38.30	www.halsgrove.com	

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: Kapitän zur See Hans
Andresen MBE, German Navy
Reserve**

On the occasion of the incoming Reunion 2022 I am sending my best wishes and regards to friends and members of the Ton Class Association.

Even with less members being present it will be as social and pleasant as ever. I still regret being not able to attend due to medical reasons.

I received a very nice letter from our President Admiral Lippiett.

**FROM: Commodore Ian Berry RNR,
Bridport**

I see that the model of APPLETON [TON Talk218] shows her with an open bridge as were all the earlier CMS. But very soon after her first commission she was fitted with a prototype enclosed bridge. This differed from the subsequent enclosed bridges fitted to most in service CMS, in that her bridge windows were all vertical.

All of us who then had only bridge awnings to give some overhead protection in bad weather hoped that we might be the next ship to be converted ! No luck !!

I wonder whether records show which ships were the first and when so fitted with the final design ?

**FROM: George Dance, Bridgend,
Mid-Glamorgan**

With reference to "History of the National Standard of the Ton Class Association" by Sam Cook in the October 2022 edition of the Ton Talk he states that of the original members only three are left, Bruce Nichols, Chris Green and himself. This is not the case.

I was one of the first to join and attended the first ever meeting in the wardroom at HMS Nelson where I was appointed representative for South Wales. I attended most of the committee meetings until work commitments limited my time available and I took a back seat.

I am still a member but due to advancing years I no longer attend any meetings but keep a keen interest in the association via the internet and Ton Talk

Abject Apologies George !

*I am delighted to hear from you and
happy to be corrected for such a
heinous mistake !*

*The low profile that you have
maintained in recent years has certainly
been effective, but I hope to hear from
you more often.*

*I am currently examining possibilities for
a Zoom/Video link to enable members
at home to participate in future
AGMs. ... **Editor***

FROM: Adrian Maton

I have a souvenir 'handkerchief' type souvenir from HMS CROFTON. It is fringed, unused and in original packing. Would anyone in TCA like this as memorabilia? No cost of course and I can easily post it as it is small. Please contact me on:

adrian.maton@blueyonder.co.uk

FROM: Bill Avron-Cotton, Perth, Oz

Last month we had our Trafalgar Day Dinner. Our Speaker this year was Cdr. Chris Watson RAN, who gave a first class talk on Admiral Nelson. I spoke to him and we both got on like a house on fire.

It turned out he was an ex. HMS. Walkerton crew member when it was in 100 MSS.

I wondered if any members remember him ? He lives here in Perth Western Australia.

WELFARE NOTES

RNBT – Financial Assistance

We understand that the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust has recently received substantial additional funding of approximately £3million to enable it to extend its wide-ranging services of Financial Assistance to both serving personnel and veterans in the RN & RM Community.

Every year RNBT makes grants to just under 3,000 applicants, from under £100 up to several thousand pounds, totalling more than £1.5 million. The circumstances must involve 'necessity

or distress' (in the words of our Royal Charter), and the range is almost endless. Examples include:

- Over £336,000 for specialist medical equipment and mobility aids including EPVs, Stair-lifts and Riser Recliner Chairs
- Assistance for Bankruptcy Fees
- £139,000 for rent arrears and rent in advance
- £88,000 for furniture and furnishings
- £181,000 for Funeral expenses
- £81,000 for Training and Education for employment, leading to over 50% of applicants becoming re-employed
- £15,000 to ease fuel poverty
- Help towards Care Home Top-up Fees and Domiciliary Care Costs

Contact RNBT via www.rnbt.org.uk or Phone 02392 690 112

RBL Everyday Needs Grant

The Royal British Legion has announced a new top up support of up to £200 per month for veterans to help them pay energy bills.

Apply via your local RBL Branch

From: Lt Cdr A P G Coleman
Chief of Staff, MCM2 Squadron, Portsmouth



To: Cdr R Hawkins MBE
Chairman TON Class Association

8th Nov 2022

I write to you and the members of the Ton Class Association to thank you for the recent delivery of the October edition of Ton Talk (Ed 218). As always it has found a home upon my desk, next to my Navy: Day by Day (Operation Torch: Summary currently displayed on date of writing this letter).

I found your words regarding our Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, both moving and reflective of the wider Services general sense of loss. It is also a credit to your own Service within the Royal Navy that you can write from such a personal perspective.

Thumbing through the pages I noted with interest the number of interactions and stories which related directly to His Majesty the King and his Service within HMS BRONINGTON – all of which have highlighted, in a timely manner, to the Junior Sailors within MCM2 Squadron the very tangible links our unique and treasured community has with the Crown which we all dutifully Serve.

I would like to pass on the condolences and support of MCM2 Squadron to the family and friends of those members who have recently crossed the bar and hope that each find some comfort in the support shown to them by the members of the TCA.

As always, it was a delight to have the time to catch up with you personally in a professional manner and I thank you for your presentation at the recent Royal Navy Annual Mine Warfare Conference. I have forwarded your message and invite of associate membership and have encouraged sailors across the rank range within the Squadron to support the TCA wherever possible.

In the form of a short update MCM2 has had a busy '22. Refits to both HM Ships LEDBURY and CATTISTOCK have continued in the BAE facility in HMNB PORTSMOUTH. This has seen the legacy Sweep capability fully removed from LEDB in favor of a modern modular autonomous support system. HMS MIDDLETON/CHIDDINGFOLD continue to deliver on operations in the Middle East and have this month commenced support to the FIFA World Cup in Qatar. UK Operations and Force Generation has continued apace with Crews operating HURWORTH and BROCKLESBY in support of homeland security in an increasingly uncertain world. When MCM2 Crew 8 return to Sea in CATT in '23 we will see the first HUNT MCMVs at sea with Females Ratings from a range of branches embarked as Ships Company for the first time in 40 Years. A real success for a modern and dynamic Mine Warfare Force.

I shall close out this letter of thanks with the standing offer of support from MCM2 to the TCA. Shipmates one and all.



Cartoons by Tony Standish TON Talk 117 2005 (above) & TON Talk 141 2009

