

TON Talk

Newsletter of the TON Class Association

Edition 224



December 2023



Commander Bob Hawkins MBE RN

5 August 1960 - 8 October 2023

TCA Chairman 2022-23

TON Class Association



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TCA Membership
£15 per annum
£150 Life Membership

Front Cover :
Cdr Bob Hawkins MBE RN

www.tcaminesweepers.co.uk

Founder: Jack Worth MBE

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Editorial

We were all shocked to learn of the sudden and unexpected death of our Chairman, Commander Bob Hawkins. Our sympathies go out to his wife Trudy and their family.

President John Lippiett has sent her a letter of Condolence (see *page 2*) which admirably summaries our feelings of regard for Bob and our support for those he has left behind. Bob's Funeral was held at Helensburgh Parish Church on 27 October and in parallel, a Memorial Service was held at St Barbara's Church in HMS EXCELLENT. TCA was represented at both services.

APOLOGIES to Tony O'Brien for the mix up in reporting his sad loss of his wife Julie in Crossed the Bar in September's edition.

REUNION 2023 VMT to everyone who attended and to those, including the staff of the Carlton Hotel, Torquay, who worked so hard to make it a success, despite the inevitable sadness of recalling the passing of Bob Hawkins. The Reunion Raffle raised £330 and the Church collection £50 for RNBT.

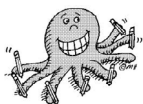
VMT to Lt Cdr George O'Connor, who has bravely volunteered to take over as Editor of TON Talk later this year (see *page 11*).

CENOTAPH BZ to the half a dozen members who represented TCA at the Parade. We got a mention on the BBC. VMT to Dave Walker, BBC and Sara Randle for the photos. (See *page 28*)

White Rose Branch will be holding their next meeting at the Premier Inn, York North West, YO26 6RL on 13th January 2024. Contact Buster Brown at a-brown35@sky.com

Jacks of All Trades Slops Officer Laurie has finally SOLD OUT of all copies of the third reprint of Jacks and a further reprint is not planned, so your copy will begin to accrue some historical value. If any new information about the ships, or corrections, comes to light, it will be updated in the Ship History section of our website.

TCA Memorial at National Arboretum Is anyone prepared to take on the task of maintaining the memorial and bench seat, which we are advised is sadly in urgent need of some TLC. The Committee has authorised funds to replace the seat, if necessary. Tasks would involve liaison with RBL, who own the site, and maybe an annual visit to tidy up. Expenses would be payable. Volunteers should ideally live within convenient travelling distance of the Arboretum, near Lichfield. For more detail contact Secretary Matthew.



Deadline for Spring edition is 20th February 2024

pjd

From Rear Admiral John Lippiett CB CBE DL

10th October 2023

Dear Trudy

I write with heavy heart, as President of the Ton Class Association, to send you and your family the very deepest condolences of all members of this association on hearing of the tragic and untimely death of Bob. Jenny and I are currently at sea in the Atlantic heading for Madeira, hence this letter coming via email, but I am in close touch with the committee and can measure the huge distress amongst our shipmates.

In the relatively short time that we have known Bob, he has been a tower of strength and a genuine inspiration to our association, providing a beacon of ambition and a firm, fair hand in bringing our band of brothers closer together. That he stepped up to become Chairman when Nobby so sadly passed, was typical of his generous, positive attitude. That he was a serving senior officer with heavy duties made his service to us even more impressive. His enthusiasm was infectious and his ability to encourage younger members to join reinvigorated us all. In his relatively short term as our Chairman, Bob made a very great impact and we will be ever grateful to him and will seek to continue his sense of direction.

But we are now all thinking of you and your family at this exceptionally distressing time. I know Bob was hard-pressed by his triple-hatted naval duties, a tough call for anybody, which must have caused him stress despite his relaxed, cheerful outlook. He achieved so very much in his career and was much loved by all those who knew him. But the family will have to work through the awful grief before taking any comfort in recognising his extraordinary achievements in his long and illustrious career.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

John

TCA Who's Who

President

Rear Admiral R John Lippiett CB. CBE. DL

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COMING EVENTS

March 2024	9	Committee Meeting Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth
October 2024	11-14	AGM & Reunion Cedar Court Hotel, Harrogate Booking Form in this edition and March's magazine

Abridged Minutes of the AGM held on 14th October at the Carlton Hotel Torquay

PRESENT were 9 Committee members and 18 Members.

1. VICE CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

This is the 36th year of the Association. Tribute is made to our late Chairman, Commander Bob Hawkins, by Ian Barden who reflected on how much Bob contributed to TCA in such a short time. He said our sympathies are with his wife Trudy and his family. Commander Bob was a tower of strength and a beacon; TCA is grateful to him. A letter of condolence has been sent by our President, a copy of which was emailed to TCA committee members and others.

2. **APOLOGIES** had been received from 9 members

3. 44 MEMBERS had **CROSSED THE BAR** since AGM 2022

4. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** were taken as read and published in December 2022
Ton Talk There were no Matters Arising

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary drew attention to the efficient and calm manner in which Vice Chairman, Ian Barden had taken charge following the sad and sudden death of TCA's Chairman. The Secretary had been busy with emails and telephone calls from members, arranging TCA participation in Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday and doing various other little things with which he did not wish to bore the meeting.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer thanked Bill Pollington for his efficient audit of the accounts, a task which has grown over the past two years as the accounts have been consolidated. Thanks also to Peter Down who volunteered to become a signatory, a simple process made more complex by Barclays Bank who required him to prove that he exists rather more than thought necessary.

TCA is in good financial health. Income from subscriptions is about £10,000, which covers cost of Ton Talk, (half of which is postage,) and the £500 pa for the website.

During the year TCA spent £496.28 more than income owing mainly to £420 being spent to upgrade the website to incorporate On-Line Joining and payment by BACS. All the accounts are now with Barclays Bank, which is currently being difficult with its demands for form filling.

Funds held currently are:-

General Account £ 4,693.87

No 2 Account £33,349.88 (includes holdings for Stores and Reunion)

Also within no. 2 account are Welfare Account £10,093.95 and £5,302.95 Reserve Account.

7. AUDITOR'S REPORT

Bill Pollington stated that he had undertaken an independent examination of the records and bank statements relating to TCA's current and No2 accounts. He was

satisfied that the accounts, as presented for year ending 31st August 2023, are a true and accurate statement of TCA's financial position,

In his last two reports Bill has commented on the outdated Standing Order payments system which have given TCA a benefit of £768.50 and therefore a saving in production of 81 copies of Ton Talk.

8. TON TALK EDITOR'S REPORT

The TCA website and Ton Talk magazine continue to progress satisfactorily, with a good inflow of articles and photographs for the magazine and an increased number of enquiries for information about ships and relatives to the website. Enquiries come both from members and the general public, and some lead to exchanges of views, resulting in more material for Post Bag in the magazine and several enquiries about membership.

We receive excellent and very cost effective services from our suppliers, Gipping Press printers of Ton Talk and SpiDesign who provide technical support and security for our website.

There was a request three days before the FITTLETON memorial service for a ship's crest. This was achieved by Gipping Press in time for the crest to be printed on the Order of Service.

It was disappointing that confirmation of our Patron has not been received but news from his Equerry states that this is still under consideration.

Having four editions of Ton Talk a year has made it easier for the Editor to spread the workload.

Subsequent to the meeting Lt Cdr George O'Connor RNR (HMS President) bravely offered to take over as Editor. Peter will liaise with George over coming months to effect the transition.

There have been enquiries about surviving Tons and a few urging TCA to support the latest BRONINGTON project. The locations of all five are reported in December 2023's edition of Ton Talk. Four of the five are in a derelict condition.

VMT and BZ to Dennis Cook who compiles the mailing list for Ton Talk. Members failing to send him changes make life more difficult.

Reverend Trevor Filtness commented on how families of late members appreciated and enjoyed reading Ton Talk.

9. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Dennis apologised that he was not able to present his report due to ill health. There had been a good influx of 45 new members this year, possibly because of the ease of application online and the different ways of paying. Thanks to Peter Down for sorting that out. Unfortunately 46 members have Crossed the Bar, the highest total since TCA was formed in 1987.

Membership is made up of:-

Full Members	899	
Life Members	151	
Associates	22	
Widows	67	
Honorary Members	5	
MCMVs etc	21	making a total of 1165.

Three members have resigned and we have lost contact with 11. Two ex -members have rejoined. We still have members who have not increased their subscriptions, a situation which will not change.

Anyone sending a membership card for endorsement of payment is requested to send a stamped addressed envelope.

Finally a request to send any change of contact details so that records can be amended and Ton Talk delivered.

10. STORES OFFICER'S REPORT

Laurie Johnson in absentia reported as follows:

Total members using Slop Room	32	
Total Stock items sold	71	
Special orders	8	
Profit from sales		£ 235.62
Balance in TCA Stores Account 31 July		£ 938.50
Receipts from 1 Aug 22 to 31 Jul 23		<u>£ 688.38</u>
	Total	£1626.88
Less expenditure in this period		£ 469.69
Total in TCA Stores Acc. on 31 st July 2023		£1157.79
Value of stock		£2302.19
Petty cash		£ 18.52
Grand Total		£3478.50

11. WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT

The only expenditure had been for a device to assist a member with Parkinson's Disease. The device is now available and will be forwarded to the member.

12. STANDARD BEARERS' REPORTS

Sam Cook carried the standard at the Weymouth Parade, one of two standards leading the naval contingent. The other was the Minewarfare Branch carried by TCA member Jan Harvey.

Sam also carried the standard at founder member Commander Bruce Nicholl's funeral. A sad occasion that enabled him to meet the family.

Can anyone take charge of the crucifix as Sam is not able to bring it every meeting. If meetings can be conducted without it, Sam will take it on charge.

Dave Parrish, the Northern standard bearer, stated there is nothing to report as his services have not been required. He is confident that having a TCA standard and Last Post at members' funerals is much appreciated by their families. An example of this was as an RNA member at another RNA member's funeral. Two standards were paraded, TCA and RNA. His ex-wife and her sister commented on how much the standards and Last Post had lifted their spirits.

13. SEA CADET LIAISON REPORTS

TCA has struggled for a number of years to keep in touch with the three affiliated Sea Cadet Units; Kellington in Stockton on Tees, Highburton in Huddersfield and Dragon in Thurrock. One reason for this is TCA's inability to find members willing to undertake liaison duties. Another reason is the failure of SCC units to acknowledge receipt of funds sent to them from time to time. Peter Down proposed that TCA affiliation should cease, accompanied by a donation to each unit. This donation might cover the request from Kellington for a donation to obtain a 3D model of HMS KELLINGTON. There was comment that these 3D models were unlikely to benefit training and were unsatisfactory in other ways.

It was generally agreed by a large majority that liaison with the Sea Cadet Units should cease, but without any terminal donation. It was also agreed that the request for a donation for a 3D model be declined. The Secretary is to draft appropriate letters.

14. ANNUAL REUNION UPDATE FOR 2024

Jim Virgo produced a highly detailed report on his deliberations in finding suitable venues for 2024. He has engaged an Events Organiser. This means that a larger selection of venues can be scrutinised and much of the administration involved in organising reunions, including accounting for income and expenditure, can be undertaken by the organiser, not TCA. A considerable saving of effort. The result of Jim's conspicuous effort has been the selection of the Cedar Court Hotel, Harrogate, for 2024.

Jim was thanked for his prodigious efforts and the trouble he had taken to provide detailed information about the venue.

UPDATE FOR 2023

Peter Down had undertaken the role of Reunion Secretary and reported that 67 guests would have attended had it not been for the tragic and sudden death of the Chairman. This meant the loss of the Chairman and cancellations from the guest speaker and Chairman's guests. It was deemed in these circumstances that their payments should be returned. Contractually, we had to pay for accommodation in advance but the hotel has subsequently made a refund for meals and drinks not taken by those who cancelled.

Usually reunions are self-funding but the loss of the Chairman and resulting cancellations mean that this year's Reunion has made a loss of £1498.

Subsequent to the meeting, Peter has prepared the following Revised Reconciliation of Reunion Accounts:

Revenue

Income from Bookings	£12,426
Donation for Tots	£ 100
Hotel Refund	<u>£ 207</u>

Total Revenue **£12,733**

Costs

Deposit	£ 575
Accommodation & Meals	£ 11,327
Rum & Reception Drinks	£ 385
Wine & Port	£ 585
2 Bouquets	£ 70
Printing Menus etc	£ 124
Refunds	<u>£ 1,165</u>

Total Costs **£ 14,231**

Excess of Costs over Revenue £1,498

N.B. Balance B/F from Reunion Fund £1154

15. TCA QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

Results of the Survey had been published in September's edition of TON Talk and were reviewed. Some of the suggestions made in the Survey had already been made to the Editor, whose observations are given following these Minutes:

16. WHITE ROSE REPORT

This was requested by Buster Brown who reported that the White Rose Branch met 4 times a year, attended the Remembrance ceremony at Eden Camp Museum, Malton North Yorkshire.

At their last meeting Clive Dennison questioned the expenditure of £500 for the renaming ceremony of MCM1. He said that he was not satisfied with the explanation given by the Secretary.

The Secretary said that it was agreed that TCA should support MCM matters and this had been agreed at the 11th July committee meeting.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Dennis Cook's Presentation of a trophy

The cup is as big as the FA Cup. Bob Hawkins' intention had been for the cup to be presented to the most deserving rating serving in MCM/PUXD. Commanding officers would put forward names for TCA to choose the winner. The cup would be kept permanently in HMS COLLINGWOOD. Questions were asked whether senior RN Officers would allow veterans to make judgements about serving personnel. It was agreed that Captain PUXD be contacted to determine his attitude to the trophy. A photograph of the magnificent cup was put on display. Dennis was thanked for his grand gesture.

b) TCA Bench and Memorial at the National Arboretum.

The existing bench is in need of restoration. A replacement costing £250 - £350 was discussed. Royal British Legion requires its authority to be given for any restorative work to be undertaken in the Arboretum. We need a

volunteer to coordinate this activity but TCA does not have a member resident nearby.

It was suggested that a metal bench, needing little maintenance, be used as a replacement. Alternatively an organisation known as Men's Sheds could be requested to make a new bench.

c) HMS BRONINGTON RESTORATION

Peter Down has been following the fortunes of the ship for a significant number of years since she came out of commission. He has been on board several times and assessed the ship in a semi submerged state, to be beyond economical restoration. His was a horror story and it was difficult to see how feasible Mike McBride's project to restore HMS BRONINGTON could be.

However Mr McBride had achieved interest from HM King Charles, Admiral West, Penny Mordaunt MP, & Portsmouth City Council. The Royal Naval Museum had ventured to say that if restoration could be made and the ship delivered, a dry dock berth could be found near HMS VICTORY. It was suggested that the restoration would be less difficult than the Marie Rose but as the King's ship could be an equal attraction. It would also be a great attraction for TCA members to visit a Ton again.

Support of TCA was requested by Mr McBride and it was proposed that TCA support be given with a £500 donation toward the first step of removing the ship to a slipway in Merseyside. This proposal was supported by a large majority present and opposed by four members.

Mr McBride would be requested to present a business case for the whole project..

18. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

11th to 14th October 2024 at Cedar's Court Hotel, Harrogate

Observations by the Editor on results of the Survey

Feedback is valued and keeps any publication alive. It should be acted upon whenever practicable. A couple of the suggestions made are worthy of comment :

- If members would like to see more dits and photos – just send them to the Editor and, subject to suitability, he will publish them. He cannot magic them out of thin air. Please do not be reticent about spelling and grammar. Part of the Editor's job is to chamfer up contributions to make them fit for publication.
- We would all like to see more younger members and for them to write about their experiences BUT there aren't any ! Just look at the ages of those who responded to the survey.
- The comment that most articles are from officers is just not true. We have a fair spread across all ranks. Our most prolific contributor was a National Service Jack Dusty. Editor invites articles from many people who write to Post Bag and many who make enquiries via the website. Often these result in more material for publication. Assuming he had the time, how would the Editor know which other members to phone to solicit an article ?

Chaplain's Chat

This has been a topsy-turvy year in many respects. Yet again our Association has been challenged, both as an organisation and for many of our members and their families, personally as well. Details are reported in our TON Talks and of course noted and remembered at our AGM and Annual Service.

The wider world has its fair share of turmoil. Consider the continuing war in Ukraine and, very sadly, the latest chapter in the long running enmity in the Middle East. Think of all the other continuing conflicts such as in North and South Sudan, the oppression in Myanmar and Iran. Just to name a few places ! Then overlay this with earthquakes, famine, weather events, climate change and economic depression.

You could be forgiven for becoming not a little downhearted ! I know that I struggle sometimes as I wonder at our inhumanity and what this has in store for the world. But then I think about how our Association has reacted and risen above its challenges, as at our AGM this year with the powerful support of our members and the simple kindnesses of individuals.

Despite the world news there are glimmers of how life could be and this gives me hope. Nothing of course can replace personal loss of friends or family and our hearts go out to those in this situation.

Christmas reflects these glimmers of hope. Christians celebrate that hope through the birth of God's Son, Christ, born into this world as the embodiment of hope. Hope that we will turn aside from destroying each other and God's creation and learn to live with one another in peace, forgiveness and even harmony. That hope is optimistic. Surely hope in the world is worth praying for because it brings life. For me as a Christian, Jesus Christ is the embodiment of hope for the world and Christmas is the time when we celebrate this and the continuance of hope in the world.

**May each and every one
of you and your families
be blessed this
Christmas and be
surrounded with the love
and peace of God.**

**Happy Christmas and a
blessed, optimistic 2024.**

Trevor



Introducing our future Editor for Ton Talk

Lieutenant Commander George O'Connor RNR, who bravely volunteered for the role at the Reunion.



George joined the RN in 1969, serving in HMS WOTTON as a Midshipman, and HM Ships LALESTON and KELLINGTON as Navigating Officer.

In 1980 he joined the RNR at HMS President, London Division, and went to sea in KELLINGTON, ALFRISTON, CUXTON, KEDLESTON as XO, then LEWISTON, WOTTON, HODGESTON and CROFTON in command.

When the River Class MSFs were introduced, he commanded 7 of the 11 RNR MSFs.

George will initially act as Deputy Editor, receiving some mentoring from the current Editor, then gradually take over the Editor's role during 2024.

TON CLASS ASSOCIATION REUNION WEEKEND

Cedar Court Hotel

Knaresborough Road, Harrogate HG1 5AH
Friday 11th - Monday 14th October 2024

3 nights £335 per person

2 nights £255 per person

Prices are based on two adults sharing a twin/double room and include VAT at the current rate.
£25 per night Single Room Supplement applies
Short stay options may be available on request.

The Reunion includes:

3 or 2 nights En-suite accommodation

Full English Breakfast and Choice of Evening Meal

Saturday morning AGM with "Up Spirits" Tot

Saturday evening private dining 5 course dinner with Wine Reception and Port

10% bar Discount on Saturday Night

Sunday Church Service

Complimentary Car Parking

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

NAME

Address

.....

Post Code E-mail

Telephone/Mobile Number:

NAMES OF THOSE ATTENDING :

.....

.....

Rooms required: Double

Double room for single occupancy (£25 supplement applies) Single.....

Please note the following conditions:

1. A non-refundable deposit of £10 per person is required with this booking.
2. Confirmation of booking, Terms and Conditions and invoice will be sent by return.
3. Final payment in full is due by 16th August 2024.
4. Cancellation charges apply.
5. We recommend that you arrange your own Travel and Holiday Insurance

**Please send completed Booking Form with your remittance by cheque payable to NYTD to:
NYTD, 23 Ennerdale Street, Hetton le Hole, Tyne and Wear DH5 0DT**

**Alternatively, call NYTD to make a card payment or pay direct by Bank Transfer to
Nat West Bank, Durham, Sort Code 52-30-44 Account No. 46103228, using reference TCA/surname**

Phone: 0191 380 5344 Email: info@nytd.uk Website: www.nytd.uk

Please advise any special requirements such as diet or walking difficulties. Every effort will be made to accommodate special requirements on a first come, first served, basis but are not guaranteed.

Surviving TONs Sitrep

BRONINGTON remains semi-submerged at her berth in Birkenhead. The project to "save her for the nation" - *for the second time* - continues to raise funds; target believed to be over £100,000 just to raise the hulk and install it on a steel cradle.

Your Editor, together with Malcolm Coulson, her original ship keeper, may be the last naval personnel who stood on board her in Birkenhead in 2012, when we salvaged some of her wire sweeping gear and display material. She was derelict then and we judged her to be beyond economic repair. The upper decks fore and aft were rotted and the interior of the ship was stripped of all fittings in 2007, partly by vandals and partly by a consortium of museums. There was 3 feet of water in the engine room and Aluminium Hydroxide Corrosion was prevalent on her ribs. She will not have improved since then, having received no maintenance since 2002 and been semi-submerged since 2016.

TCA has sent a letter of support and donated £500 for the next phase of the project; to raise the hulk from the water and assess the possibility of salvage. We have also requested a long term credible business plan. TCA's purpose is to support the men who served in TONs. There are other means of commemorating what Bronington may mean, such as supporting some of the excellent models of her that have been made and/or a scholarship with naval objectives, perhaps for the Sea Cadets.

SAN DURBAN is still semi-submerged at her berth and has become embroiled in local political controversy. The city council of Kwa Zulu Natal made a substantial grant, believed to be over 20,000 Rand, towards her recent refit but unfortunately, she flooded up within a few weeks of her return as a museum ship. The council is, perhaps understandably, reluctant to spend more money on her.

Some councillors have described the ship as a "white man's toy" It should be remembered that the SAN TONs were converted to patrol ships and used to interdict "freedom fighters" trying to enter the country from Angola during the apartheid years, so perhaps that comment has long roots ...

Former RAN TEAL (Jackton) is afloat in a dock in Cyprus but in a dilapidated condition.

After leaving the RAN, she had a very chequered history as fishing craft and lately as a research/ training vessel owned by the University of the Near East in Turkish controlled North Cyprus. They have said they plan to convert her into an Art Gallery and Cultural Centre but our man on the ground reports no progress since the dock was completed. Local politics are presumed.

RAN CURLEW (Chediston) is on a mud berth in Hobart, Tasmania, awaiting break up.

SAN WALVIS BAAI (Packington) was converted into a luxury motor yacht in 2012 and re-named MOJO. First based in Monte Carlo but, following a change of ownership, now believed to be in the Caribbean, she retains her TON silhouette and is painted US Navy dark grey. In low visibility she could still be mistaken for a warship.

Mine Warfare and Diving Review

For the third year running the Editors of the half-yearly review of the Mine Warfare and Diving Branches have kindly included TCA in their official publication, which is widely circulated throughout the RN and MoD.

In previous years the Editors have asked permission to reproduce an article from TON Talk but earlier this year we were asked to write a piece outlining the Aim, Objectives and Activities of TCA. We jumped at the opportunity and also included a plug for recruiting new members for TCA from the PUXD community.

The Summer/Autumn edition of the Review focusses on the transition from Conventional Mine Hunting to Autonomous Mine Counter Measures.



HMS Brocklesby and Unmanned Surface Vehicle Hussar with towed side scan sonar just visible in stowed position at her stern.

TCA has generously been allocated a double page spread for our article and illustrations and a further double page at the rear inside cover for a LARGE picture of Tony Standish's imaginative painting "*Minesweeper Sailors Through the Ages*", complete with explanation of the sweepdeck rig of each figure from the Crimean War in 1856 to the present day, including 8A's of our time in 1950's and 60's. We have presented the painting to the Mine Warfare School at HMS Collingwood.

Other features in the Review include the deployments of each MCM crew, operating REMUS in the Gulf, interoperability with allies, details of the autonomous systems, plus their various trials and the pierhead jump of the return passage from the Gulf of PENZANCE for service in Home Waters.

TCA can be very proud that we have been recognised by the PUXD Community.

SUEZ Memory – Dave Bridge, SEFTON

In the early hours we had swept the planned approach channel and thankfully not found any mines, then we entered the Outer Harbour and could see the Russian-supplied Egyptian artillery lined up along the mole, pointing in our direction. Very worrying and we did not learn until much later that French paratroops had already cleared the guns crews away ...

Then we were ordered to sweep the Inner Harbour, where we were within range of small arms fire from the shore. We were pinged a bit and sailors moved very gingerly about the upper deck.

Thankfully we again did not encounter any mines although we did strike a sunken blockship which chipped a screw and resulted in our doing a screw change in a French Landing Ship (Dock); a one-off experience which brought some publicity in naval engineering circles.

My abiding memory of this period however, is the time I spent on anchor watch during the Dogs, still wary of hostile rifle fire.

My oppo and I spied a small rowing boat precariously making its way across the harbour towards us. It was clear that the two blokes in the boat were not used to rowing, as they were all over the place.

Conscious of the risk of saboteurs, we called the Officer of the Day and we all watched the crooked path of the craft across the water.

We discussed whether to prepare to repel boarders when, as they came closer, it became clear that these inexperienced boatmen were British Pongos.

OOD said they could come alongside so we could find out what they wanted.

It turned out that they were Grenadier Guardsmen who had discovered a warehouse full of TEA. They had a couple of chests of the stuff in the boat they had borrowed and wanted to trade them for some milk and sugar !

The Jimmy fixed them up and we pointed out that, stowed in the bottom of their craft was a mast and single lugsail, which would make their return voyage so much easier, as there was an on-shore breeze. We stepped the mast and rigged the sail for them.

Off they went like a couple of OD's on leave, but after zigzagging about the harbour and not getting any nearer to shore, they got out the oars again and pressed on !

FITTLETON COMMEMORATION

On 17th September 2023, the 47th Anniversary of the disaster which resulted in the sinking of the ship and loss of 12 members of her Company, was commemorated by the dedication of a memorial in the Parish Church of All Saints in the village of Fittleton, near Salisbury.

This memorial complements the memorial at the TCA tree in the National Memorial Arboretum and the impressive stained glass window on the drill deck at HMS PRESIDENT, London Division, RNR.

The church had previously had a small memorial with a White Ensign.

The service had been organised by PRESIDENT Old Hands Association with the enthusiastic cooperation of Rev Gale Hunt of Avon River Team, the local Vicar.

Most of FITTLETON's ship's company on that fateful day came from HMS President. A detailed account of the disaster can be found on the TCA website under In Memoriam.

The Bishop of Salisbury, the Right Reverend Stephen Lake, conducted the Service, assisted by Rev Gale and TCA Chaplain Rev Trevor Filtness.

The memorial is in the form of an oval tablet of Portland stone on which are inscribed the names of the sailors who lost their lives.

TCA was represented by our President, Rear Admiral John Lippiett, who laid a wreath, Vice Chairman Ian Barden and survivor, Mick Meras. Unfortunately, Survivors Arnold Jeacock and George Creasy, her Coxswain on the day, were unable to attend but sent their best wishes. Similarly, Sam Cook TCA National Standard Bearer is on light duties and was unable to attend but the standards of RNA branches at Bracknell and Salisbury were paraded. TCA Member Anthony Boddrell carried the Bracknell standard.

The service included an account of the collision by survivor Colin Hurley of President Old Hands and two choral pieces by the Tidworth Military Wives Choir.

Rev Trevor Filtness led the Act of Remembrance, which included the names of all those who tragically lost their lives. The impact of that day on survivors and on the families of those lost was also remembered.

Lt Cdr Sarah Hart RNR, XO of PRESIDENT, attended with a contingent of five ratings.

We Will Remember



Photographs courtesy of Mrs Rosemary Filtness and TCA Facebook page







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

Simon Haill. Captain RN. Waterlooville Hampshire Served on HM Ships IVESTON 73-75, POLLINGTON 77-79, UPTON 82-84 F2548

Dave Ball. A/B RN. Gateshead Tyne & Wear. Served on HM Ships LALESTON, WILTON, STUBBINGTON, BILDESTON F2549

David McDonald. A/B-L/S RN RNR. Fife Scotland Served on HM Ships BRERETON 72-73, WASPERTON 74-76 F2550

Peter Noblett, S/Lt-Lt/Cdr RN. Stirlingshire. Served on HM Ships BRINTON 89, HELMSDALE 90-91, BANGOR 2009-2010, GRIMSBY 2010, BLYTH 2011 F2551

John Hay. LRO (G) RN. Caithness Scotland Served on HM Ships SHOULTON 77 SOBORTON 84-86 F2553

Jon Rogers. S/Lt RN . Great Walsingham Norfolk. Served on HM Ships PLOVER 85. SHERATON 86-88, LEEDS CASTLE 90 F2553

Robert Sangster. MEM 1 RN. Cumberland Cumbria. Served on[HMS GAVINTON 78-81 F2554

Andrew Linfoot. RO (G)1 RNR. Sheffield South Yorkshire. Served on HMS KEDLESTON, BRERETON , HODGESTON, SHAVINGTON 81-83 F2555

Rik K Grover. A/B RN. Plymouth Devon. Served on HM Ships LEWISTON 79-80, UPTON 80-82 F2556

Alan Boxley. LRO (T) RNR. Brierley Hill West Midlands. Served on HM Ships HODGESTON 77, SHAVINGTON 80, LEWISTON 82 F2557

David R Colwell. J/S RNR. East Grinstead West Sussex. Served on HM Ships KELLINGTON 79-82, GLASSERTON 79, SANDPIPER 81 F2558

Michael W Docherty. Lt RN. Whitchurch Shropshire.: Served on HM Ships YARNTON 74, HIGHBURTON 74-76, ALFRISTON 76 F2559

RE JOINED Welcome Back

Peter Ferroni, A/B (UW)2 RN. Worcester Worcestershire.: Served on HM Ships GAVINTON 72-73 BOSSINGTON 73-74 HIGHBURTON 74-75 F1338

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Len Manners to Carlton Hall Residential Home, Lowestoft M1610

Andrew McVittie, to: Girvan South Lanarkshire L1151



Crossed the Bar

Commander Robert Hawkins MBE RN

Kilcreggan, Argyll & Bute F2473

TCA Chairman 2022-23

Served on HM Ships WALKERTON, WOLVERTON, HUBBERSTON, UPTON

Commander Neville Dutton RD* RNR

Shalford, Surrey F1299

*Served on HM Ships POLLINGTON, FITTLETON, KELLINGTON,
VENTURER 1962-68*

Sub Lieutenant David Meikle MBE RN

Cupar, Fife F1310

Served on HMS GLASSERTON 1957-58

Lt Cdr Mike Wignall PhD RN

Not a TCA Member but well known in MCDOA

*Served in BRERETON (1971/73). Commanded LEWISTON (1978) and
BRONINGTON (1979)*

Lieutenant Commander Ben Warlow RN

Not a TCA member but a well known naval historian and author.

*A Supply Officer with a Bridge Watchkeeping Certificate, also a qualified Master
Mariner, Ben served in cruisers and frigates in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and
Far East and in Coastal Forces in the Baltic.*

*He supervised the closure of GANGES and OSPREY and was Logistics Officer on
QE2 during the Falklands Campaign.*

*Over 40 years in uniform, Ben spent his final years of service as a Staff Officer at
Maritime HQ, Northwood.*

Continued

A/B Anthony Goulder RN

Whitchurch, Bristol F1483

Served on HMS LEVERTON, Malta 1960-62

PO MEM John Nash RN.

Gloucestershire. L2047

Served on HM Ships APPLETON 1968-69 WASPERTON 1971-72

R02 Gareth Roberts. RN

Rampton Nottinghamshire. F1745

Served on HM Ships BOSSINGTON 1971-72. SHERATON 1971-72

CHME Edward McWhirter. RN.

Cheltenham F0552

Served on HM Ships WALKERTON 1958-59, WOOLASTON 1959-61

May They Rest in Peace

My Experiences aboard HMAS TEAL 1963 – 1965

Lieutenant Paul Harris RAN

Welcome to this dit from new member Paul Harris in Rockingham, W. Australia

My TON Class experience began when I joined HMAS TEAL in July 1963, she was my third ship and as an Ordinary Seaman (Ord), this was quiet a step up, the other seaman specialists were old and bold Able Seamen (AB). Couldn't believe my eyes when I was shown my bunk in the after mess, in my two previous ships, QUICKMATCH [Type 15 Fast Anti-Submarine Frigate (converted destroyer)] and SYDNEY [Aircraft & Troop Carrier], we had hammocks. I joined the same day as the new Executive Officer, Lieutenant Ron Cocking. Always remember him and we remain very close and particular friends 60 years on, his first task was the visit the victualling store area and remove all the tins of baked beans. He hated them with a vengeance and vowed, he would never have them on our menu. Little did he know, the duty watch snuck ashore and recovered the baked beans from the garbage bin. The next day we sailed from Sydney and began work up exercises in preparation for Operation Gardening. We were heading off to sweep for magnetic mines laid by the US Army Air Corps in Tonole Harbour on Bougainville in 1943*.



The entire 16th Minesweeping Squadron sailed from Sydney and began laying dan cans and streaming the sweep gear. For some reason yet to be explained to me, the southerly buster arrived on schedule and in very quick succession we were in a gale force 9 blow. All ships were ordered to recover our gear and head for shelter. Teal headed north at best possible speed with the gear still streamed until we reached the shelter of Broken Bay when the gear was recovered in relative safety and in good time. On the dash north, I was detailed off to man the sweep deck "in case of emergency", given an axe and left to my own devices. After a couple of hours in waist-high water, I was freezing and still

wondering about the axe. As we were recovering the sweep gear I asked, "what was the axe for"? AB Fred Halsey replied, "to cut the sweep wire when it starts singing". I wasn't game enough to ask, "why does wire sing"? The joys of being an Ord! Fortunately, the old and bolds took me under their wing and were willing to pass along as much of their seaman ship knowledge as I could hoist in. During this time in Teal, I felt as though I had 10 fathers.

I maintained contact with many of the Teal crew throughout the 20 my years of Naval Service. Especially Fred Halsey, Doug Cope and Ron Cocking. Fred and I lived in the same village, and we continued to have many, many, many runs ashore until he crossed the bar in 2013. Fred was a naughty boy but I loved him as a brother. At his funeral, his farewell song was "What will we do with the drunken sailor".

Plus, after the injury and gear damage reports came in from the other ships, I realised Teal was in good hands. Our Captain, Lieut Gus Murray had made a sound and safe decision to run before the storm and recover the gear in the shelter of Broken Bay. This was proved so very true when he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross during the Confrontation. Part of his citation read, "for coolness and good judgment".

After repairs and the replacement of dan cans, we did complete our workup and were soon heading north for Singapore. My first experience of being "up top" and suffice to say I was well looked after by my old and bold, mess mates.

On one occasion they were visiting a brothel in Johore and whilst they were about their business, I was left with the Mamma San who taught me to play Mahjong. With our duties in Singapore completed the squadron sailed, joined company with HMAS Supply and headed for Tonole Harbour. HMAS Supply was to be our logistics base whilst we were sweeping. The entire Operation Gardening was somewhat of a disappointment, with no mines recovered or discovered*, the usual minesweeping precautions were undertaken which were a pain in the arse, but we all returned home with fantastic suntans for the summer.

Shark fishing in Tonole harbour (below)



After the completion of the Operation, the Squadron and SUPPLY were hosted to a "Thank You" reception from the timber company which had negotiated the Operation to ensure the safety of their ships exporting the timber out of Bougainville. They catered for seven ships but didn't realise we only had a ships company of 32, so we had a huge task ahead of us to consume all the refreshments.

However, before the celebrations there was a Ceremonial Memorial service at the Kieta War Cemetery and a game of rugby. Because I had the duty, I volunteered for the guard

and to play rugby. How could a youngster not want to be ashore on this tropical island? the bay was surrounded by palm trees and the local villages dotted about the place. Transport to and from the ship was by outrigger canoes paddled by local princesses. I was run in upon my return to the ship and had to front the XO for not returning to the ship after the game of rugby. Our XO was undoubtedly one of the best and fairest one could serve with and as such my excuse of "I hurt my back playing rugby and laid down to rest after the game and fell asleep, as soon as I woke this morning, I returned aboard as fast as possible". Luckily for me one of our Midshipman, came forward to confirm that I did suffer an injury during the game.

We returned to Sydney via Port Moresby and Cairns carrying out several surveys enroute. Home for Christmas leave then back to working up because the remainder of the Commissioning Crew were posted off and the ships company topped up with new fellows. Several of them were old shipmates from when we joined the RAN way back in 1961 as junior recruits, the RAN equivalent of HMS Ganges. In February most of the squadron was at sea off Jervis Bay when the HMAS Voyager sank after a collision with HMAS Melbourne. We were dispatched into the area and spent many days searching for survivors. A grim task, no survivors but we did recover several life rafts, a grim reminder of the dangers and consequences of our service.

The XO was due to be married on the following Saturday and as the search progressed and the days ticked by, he became very, very anxious. We made it back to Sydney in time for the wedding but not at the Minesweeper base, so a change of venue aboard TEAL was arranged. The XO was so well thought of all the single crew members volunteered to dress & rig the forecastle, prepare and serve food and refreshments to the wedding guests. Great wedding and we managed to attach half the minesweeping store behind his VW. He was not happy when the Dockyard Police stopped his vehicle and made him disconnect the contraband. From then onwards when I was asked, "do you know Ron Cocking" I was able to answer, "Yes, I danced at his wedding".

Back to work and a show the flag cruise, to southern ports of call, where the big ships didn't visit. We had a terrific time and we very well looked after by the locals many of whom were ex-navy chaps. They couldn't believe the luxury accommodation we had in TEAL !

We then returned to Sydney for a well-deserved AMP. In the meantime, the Australian Government had decided to send 4 minesweepers to the Far East and join the Far East Strategic Reserve. HMAS Gull and Curlew were dispatched with Teal and Ibis to on completion the AMPs and work up. Both these ships were to spend 18 months patrolling off the coasts of Borneo and the Malaysian Peninsula, during the Indonesian Confrontation,

****A local Plantation owner told us that ALL the mines dropped by the US Army Air Corps had landed in the jungle and that during the timber cutting over the next few years, there were two accidents when machinery was destroyed when they encountered old WWII mines in the jungle around Tonole harbour.****

More of Life on TEAL to follow – Paul H

Well Met in Oz

Pictured below at left, Bill Avron-Cotton, a longstanding TCA Member, meeting new member Paul Harris at Bill's home in Perth, Western Australia.

Paul lives in Rockingham, a suburb of Perth and served in HMAS TEAL while Bill served in STUBBINGTON and WISTON, so a good exchange of dits to go with the tot ...



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Remembrance Sunday

Cenotaph Parade

VMT to all who took part

Forming up on Horse Guards



March Past

Shame about the dressing ...

There's never a GI about when you need one !

Shavington, Cheshire

Dave Bridge representing TCA



TOT TIME MUSINGS

Doug Andrews, Ware, Herts

Having had my musings about the sad but inevitable day when it became necessary for every ship in Her (Late) Majesty's Navy to replace the brass letters on their rum tub from 'The Queen God Bless Her' to 'The King God Bless Him' - or so I thought at that time - published in 'Ton Talk' Edition No. 214 in February '22, together with a picture of my modest but treasured copper spirit measures, I read with great interest, John Hake of Ellesmere Port's follow-up article, in which described in some detail, the traditional daily process of (merely) issuing a man's tot of rum to him. His experiences matched my own in almost every detail, but with one subtle difference - I was the chap calling out the quantities for each mess, when it was being issued on the upper deck. I was particularly interested with the fact that he mentioned how sacrosanct the inside of the mess's rum fanny was. It was not cleaned out, and the more it looked like the inside of your Mother's teapot, the better, but more on this subject later.

But first, a little of my early background. I had survived the rigours of my Part 1 & Part 2 training, and had settled into daily life in Chatham Barracks, involving one weekend on duty every month, with one Long Weekend and two Short Weekends 'up the line,' until I returned from Seasonal Leave on Monday, 26th of April '54, quietly confident in my own mind that I would again be home again next weekend. How wrong I was! When I appeared in my store to confirm that my 'oppo' could then proceed on leave - remember the shout 'Second Leave's Best?' - he told me that I was on draft, but I didn't believe him. Within minutes, a Tannoy message told me that my presence was required in The Drafting Master-at-Arms' Office in The Drill Shed. The ensuing conversation went something like "What do you want, lad?" "You piped for me, Master." "What's your name - ah yes! you're on draft." Taken aback, I said "I can't be, there must be some mistake." At this point 'my cap was put on straight' when the Master pointed out rather emphatically that "the Navy does NOT make mistakes, lad!" It was therefore something of a culture shock to find myself on the 1900 departure from King's Cross (The Aberdonian) that evening, having scurried round almost every office in the barracks to complete my 'leaving routine.' On joining my ship, the 'buzz' was that some of its manning was being swapped from Portsmouth to Chatham, and I and my travelling companions were just part of the process.

I quickly learned that the job to which I had been allocated was the one that they wanted to get rid of most - that of 'bubbly bo'sun.' I was 'puppy-walked' by the outgoing chap for 10 days or so, then it was all mine. There were perks to be had, as was quickly pointed out, and it helped that I did have some aptitude with figures. I had already sampled the amber liquid - remember, I was 'U.A.' at the time - but I was always sober in the forenoon when any necessary adjustments had to be made to each mess's figures (involving a visit every morning to The Regulating Office), I could 'get my head down' in the afternoon after my heavy lunch, to be followed by a run ashore in the evening 'for a few wets,' and I was of course excused all parades, be they for fortnightly pay, or a visiting Admiral. I quickly worked my way into my job, and although in theory one could expect a job-change every 3 months, I was happy to be on duty every day of the week until I left the ship for my 'demob' on the 8th of February 1955, because (1) I did not want a job change, and (2) nobody else wanted to take it on!

As for the mystique, one early lesson was quickly pointed out, that when breaching a new oak cask of rum, this was an opportunity for some 'wriggle room.' The quantity that each cask can hold is scribed on its end, and remains constant, but you do not know how long ago the cask was filled in the victualling yard, nor how much evaporation has taken place in the interim (what The Remy Martin Estate refers to as 'the angel's share'). When the cask was filled, it was done with a broom-handle inserted, to allow for expansion should it be sent to the tropics. Similarly, when the barrel is breached, a broom handle is again inserted and the amount of rum from the 'ullage' of the previous one which is necessary to fill the cask again is carefully measured, and this 'required to fill' is duly recorded on the Issue Sheet signed every day by the Officer witnessing the day's issue. Should the amount be something like five tots, and the Stores Chief Petty Officer knows that the Officer of the Day was 'partial,' he would say 'Shall we call it seven tots, sir?' – thereby ensuring that two tots were available as necessary!



After the neat rum had been emptied from the barricoe (left) into the tub, double that quantity of water was added, plus an extra calculated amount to allow for 'spillage.' When the mixed issue was about to start, I always made a point of standing a fair distance from the tub in order that the OOD had to make a choice – he could either watch me carefully, or the two tankies, and usually he chose them, thinking perhaps that they would be more likely to 'pull a stroke.' This manoeuvre ensured that if there was a need for an extra tot in a mess in return for a favour, I could call out the 'adjusted'

quantity, confident that it would be covered by the amount of spillage. The tankies always saw to it that every time the one- or two-pint measures were emptied into a mess fanny, they were overflowing, resulting in every mess always receiving a little extra. During my tenure in the job, whilst it may have been necessary on rare occasions to reopen the Spirit Room to draw some more neat rum to correct a shortage, no one ever complained of receiving too much – funny, that !

As the mixed issue proceeded, it proved necessary to angle the tub towards the tankies to avoid scraping the bottom, and when there was very little left, one of them would idly play with the remaining rum by pouring it from one measure to the other. Tiring of this, he would casually put one measure inside the other and stand back, at which point the OOD would ask "Is there anyone left to come?" I would check my list, and - surprise, surprise – confirm "No Sir, they've all been." "Right – ditch it!" whereupon the tanky would place the measures to one side then tip the remaining rum into a fanny and ditch the contents over the side. I obtained the Officer's signature for the day's issue, we exchanged salutes, and he would disappear off to the Wardroom. We three – the two tankies and I – would then enjoy our ill-gotten gains from within the two-pint measure, which could not easily be seen because the one-pint measure covered it up. This ruse worked every time, and was never discovered !

Now to the main subject of this 'dit.' During the issue of neat rum in the Spirit Room every Friday we made a point of wetting the insides of as many of the measures as possible, and very briefly emptied them into the funnel in the top of the barrel. Once this stage was complete, I quickly took all the measures down to my mess and drained them

into our bottle for later, and it was quite surprising just how much neaters we obtained in this way. Having cleared away after lunch, I would start the mammoth task of polishing them all, plus the pouring funnel & spirit pump, etc., and would be assisted by some of my messmates, working into the evening if necessary. This 'labour of love' was necessary, to avoid their being 'picked up' during Saturday morning's Captain's Rounds.

On this particular occasion, the measures were as usual in pristine condition, and the Skipper passed on without comment, presumably pleased with what he saw; but it was one of his 'retinue' – there's always one – who 'adversely criticised' the state of the INSIDE of them. Later, I was told off by my Stores Petty Officer to clean them before next Saturday. I could find no method for doing this, so I put it to him "You want them cleaned, you tell me how to do it." "You could try taking them to the galley and boil them up with a handful of soda crystals in one of their vats, that might do it." After lunch that Sunday I duly did as I was told, then inserted a steam lance into the vat to heat the water. I then returned to the mess and 'got my head down.' As supper time approached, I got the message from the galley that they wanted me to get 'my' measures out of the way – I'd forgotten all about them! In the galley the mixture was seething and bubbling away, and steam was rising. Grabbing a long-handled ladle, I fished out one of the larger measures and got the shock of my life IT WAS BRIGHT SILVER, as were all the others! Mind you, the insides of them all were spotless.....



Apparently, my concoction had carried out a chemical process something like electrolysis, whereby the hands-full of soda crystals plus the boiling water had removed some of the galvanisation from the inside of the vat and deposited it on the outside of all the copper measures. I then disturbed the P.O. for a second time to show him my silver trophy. His immediate reaction was "You'll have to clean it all off!" "I've already tried, but it won't come off. Now what do I do?" There really was no alternative, I and my band of helpers had no choice but to keep applying copious amounts of metal polish, and after a great deal of 'elbow grease' and hard work, we did finally restore them to their original state. I was somewhat anxious having completed the next day's issue of rum, but was pleasantly surprised with just how little reaction there was. One or two men commented that their tot tasted somewhat strange, but this was explained away when one of the tankies said that we had opened a cask of Australian rum ...

One wonders how wise it might be for Doug to acknowledge such malpractice, even over this length of time? Crushers and Stores Officers tend to have long memories ...
*OR did he square them away as well? ... **Editor***

SLOPS

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Post Bag

FROM: Nigel Edgell, Keynsham

A Tribute to Cdr Bob Hawkins MBE

A lovely man, with a warm and friendly personality having immense pride and enthusiasm for the Royal Navy for whom he was the best possible ambassador.

I can only imagine what a great loss he must be to his family, friends and colleagues.

FROM: Martin Stevens, Chairman of the Medway Maritime Trust.

We have been trying to save historic ships for 50 years with varying degrees of success. Initially we worked our vessels to keep them in working order.

On looking through my files I came across a set of photographs taken in 1975 when we towed a minesweeper for scrap with the Empire class steam tug *Cervia*. I researched the name of M 1164 HMS Maddiston and found your website.

Herewith a photograph of her being towed by *Cervia* which can still be seen in Ramsgate harbour.

Our other three vessels are the steam tug TID 164 which is in Chatham Historic Dockyard, John H Amos, the last paddle tug in the UK, and Vigilant, a 1902 Customs Cruiser which led the 1911 Coronation Spithead Review, and is the only survivor of that entire fleet.

FROM: Nigel Edgell, Keynsham, Bristol. World Ship Society

I mentioned in my last message that I was going to attempt a scratch build of the old ice patrol ship, HMS Protector at 1/350 scale.

This is difficult, having no plans, only photos and dimensions I could find on the internet. At best, it's going to be a loose representation of the ship but hopefully pleasing when finished.

If you know anyone who might have any material which could help with this their details would be much appreciated.

Can anyone who sailed in Protector assist Nigel with a photo or even a dit ? ...

Editor

I found a commission book for the 1964-5 deployment online which was helpful.

I've made a start and after about 3 weeks on and off painstaking work I've managed to complete the hull (*see photo below*). I've made a start on the hanger, it needs a least one more coat of light grey and



further detailing and I've started mapping out the positions of the superstructure.

I haven't forgotten my Ton model and have finally decided that it's going to be HMS Bronington. I have sufficient decals to apply the correct pennant no. and will try to find a 1/350 scale officer from my miniature crew figures to represent the King !

FROM: Lt Cdr Colin Mackay RNR, London

I was attached to Tay Division RNR in the early 1960's. Our TON was MONTROSE aka DALSWINTON. I sailed with her on the first Ex.Rockhaul in 1963 and again in 1970.

FROM: Malcolm Dobson, Beccles

I enjoyed watching the Soberton/Ferrington YouTube video mentioned in September's TON Talk and agree that, as you say, it is "nearly plausible" ...

I was pleasantly surprised when the credits rolled, and the name of Ian Mackintosh came into view, as I knew Ian as a Lieutenant Supply Officer when I served on HMS Decoy (Commander J.J. Black) as a Killick Bunting in 1968-70.

What a life that man lived, It mattered not where we arrived, there was always a pretty girl in a flash car waiting on the jetty, usually to whisk him off to some studio or other location for an interview or promote a book (he wrote many, and often copies were in his cabin), or perhaps, as we the crew often surmised - a boudoir.....! He was very sporty, thus he was also Sports Officer, and a photograph on the Decoy website shows him with the ships soccer team sitting alongside Sir Stanley Matthews before a match in Malta. I know

that Stan played 15 minutes and I believe Ian did also.

Ian did not serve for the full commission but he later became a prolific T.V. writer with the series "Warship" and others. Suddenly it all came to an end. He was a passenger in a light aircraft which went missing, I think over Greenland. The circumstances were somewhat mysterious, as the pilot had not filed a flight plan and, despite intensive searches, nothing was ever discovered, and to the best of my knowledge, nothing has ever been heard of Ian since. His brother was once quoted as saying "It would never surprise me if Ian walked through the door tomorrow."

I have also located a source of Minesweeper/Hunter ships crests mounted on a wooden plinth with the individual ships named as per the standard ships crest format for all warships. I have had one done of HMS Shoulton. If anyone is interested, I will pass on the information.

FROM: Ian Mcvitte, via TCA website

Interesting read of the 11MCM during the Falklands Campaign 1982 [on the TCA website].

I remember it well as I was on HMS Ledbury in Rosyth at the time and witnessed the Church Service on the jetty and knew CPO(MW) Clarke, a PO(MW) at the time.

We became part of Corporate in April 1982 and we were tasked with Brecon and RMS St Helena to head South to conduct operations and take over from the Converted Trawlers.

I campaigned for 30 plus years to get the criteria amended for the South Atlantic Medal without rosette for not only our 3 ships but all units after the 12th July 1982 up to the 21st October 1982. I loved my time on Ledbury as I joined her in build and left her in 1983.

FROM: Commander Richard Green RD
**** RNR, Colchester**

More about HMAS CURLEW

I was surprised to learn of the pending break up of CURLEW in Hobart, Tasmania. I was on holiday there in 1990 and visited tourist attraction including the first salmon farm in Australia, which had been established c.1850. before leaving, I called at the café, where I spotted a photo of a TON on the wall, which turned out to be CURLEW.

The owner of the salmon farm had served in the ship and purchased the ship when it was de-commissioned from the RAN, with the idea of converting it to a motor yacht and taking passengers on cruises. Obviously that plan did not come to fruition.

With regard to saving some of the fittings, especially the Deltic engines, I am no Tiffy, but was involved with an engine change in KEDLESTON during the Falklands Campaign. We were on passage to Gib to relieve AMBUSCADE as Guardship when the port engine failed. We were diverted to VERNON and en route, in a flat calm sea, started preparations by loosening the 200 + bolts that secured the engine and funnel casing. The detailed work started as soon as we secured alongside at VERNON, led by their staff, assisted by our own engineers. All pipes and couplings were marked ready for the new engine and the faulty engine was lifted out by crane.

The whole operation, including sea trials was completed in less than three days and we proceeded to Gib, despite a battering from a severe storm as we neared harbour.

I understand that the preservation group are concerned about the modern hazard of asbestos lagging round the pipework in the engine room. No such worries in our day before the invention of Health and Safety ...

FROM: Andrew Stephenson,
Stephenson Marine Engineering,
Plymouth

Whilst working at Babcock in Devonport I rescued a ships crest of HMS WALKERTON that was destined for a skip. Can you put me in touch with anyone that would like it, as it is definitely too good for the skip ?

Email: SME-Ltd@virginmedia.com

Phone: 07787564196

*Would ex-Walkertons please contact
Andrew directly ... **Editor***

FROM : Patricia Mattio

Email: patmattio@live.com

I am trying to trace the captain of HMS POLLINGTON. They were in Manx waters on Fishery Protection duties, but I am not sure of the year. The ship helped track my brother and a friend, just two boys, on his boat which had broken down off the island . The Captain's name his name was David Widgery and I believe that his First Lieutenant is now Sir Timothy Lawrence.

**Any members of POLLINGTON's crew
who may recall the incident and know**

the whereabouts of their C.O, please contact Patricia directly ... Editor

FROM Lieutenant David Frost, High Wycombe

I read John Hake's dit about rum issue in HMS *Mercury* with interest (p23). In the summer of 1970 when I finished my long C course I stayed on in *Mercury* for a few months as an instructor and Yeoman qualifying course officer. I suppose that because I'd been around for a year or so it was assumed when I became OOD that I knew the rum routine. However nobody had bothered to brief me and I was taken aback by the way the issue was made. As it seemed to be accepted as perfectly normal and rum was to be discontinued before my next turn of duty I said nothing.

John should not assume that OODs were easily hoodwinked! Whilst rum could be, and was, accurately measured the same did not apply to the added water. All OODs had their own formula for how much margin should be added and by and large it worked well so long as the tanky was sensible. In one ship when we had a new tanky I had to warn him twice about being over generous with the issue but he knew better. There was a good reason for the tanky's mess to be served last. On this occasion it got about half what it should have done. I'd have given quite a lot to have been a fly on the bulkhead when he got down below!

At the end of the Yeoman qualifying course I failed two of the candidates. One failure was uncommon and two virtually unheard of, so I had to explain myself to the Training Commander. I think he hoped I would change my mind (I didn't) as the downstream effects of two fewer Yeomen than had been expected were not insignificant. The sequel came some

years later when I was Flags to FOST. The Yeoman of the ship we were visiting asked if I remembered him. I had to confess I didn't. He went on to explain that he was one of the two failures and that although pi**ed off at the time he subsequently realised he hadn't been good enough. Such feedback is rare!

On the subject of Mine Destructor Vessels (p27) there is a lot about them, especially *Borde*, in *Out Sweeps* by Paul Lund and Harry Ludlam. Although it was published in 1978 I only came upon it recently. I was particularly interested by the extent to which some classes were used more as escorts than for sweeping.

FROM: Kevin Stranex

I was on board HMS BADMINTON as a Steward when we heard on the SRE that President Kennedy had been shot. I went to the bridge in a force 7/8 with coffee for the officers and gave the news to Lt Cdr Lamb our CO.

We were in reserve at the time, headed for Jersey. Lamb was an authentic hero, having risked his life to save others in a galley fire on HMS Orion, then an accommodation ship in Plymouth

Merry Christmas to all readers of TON Talk and also to HM Ships at sea keeping our country safe ... Editor

Those were the days - Paint Ship



Happiness is Pusser's crabfat and a two inch brush ...

Perhaps a cruiser with that anti-torpedo bulge, but painting wearing caps ?

Maybe the Commander was a hard horse, or usual for 1940's ?

Don't mention Health and Safety !!!

VMT Gen Dit, Stowmarket RNA

Cedar Court Hotel
Knaresborough Road
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
HG1 5AH



Venue for TCA Reunion October 2024

[Booking Form at Page 12](#)

Directions

By road: Make for A1 Junction 47, then follow A59 to Harrogate.

Hotel is on the right, half a mile before town centre.

By rail: From North or South, Change at York. Harrogate Station is half a mile from the Hotel; a short taxi ride.