



ROYAL NAVAL PATROL SERVICE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 71 Winter 2011

POSTAL ADDRESS and HEADQUARTERS

Royal Naval Patrol Service Association
Naval Museum, Sparrows Nest,
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Greetings to all Shipmates

Editor's log

Date 30/11/2011 Time 20.45hrs Position 52° 29' 50.33" N, 1° 45' 05.14" E. The Buffer has organised a festive season victualing run – any offers to swap duty with me?

Reunion 2011

This year's reunion went off as well as could have been expected given the various factors that affect such events. The weather was certainly on our side and those that turned up took advantage of the milder than normal temperatures. Attendance was understandably down but it was gratifying to see so many family members supporting the "Sparrows". Our Guest of Honour this year was again Capt. Mark Durkin RN who is Capt. Mine Warfare, Patrol Vessels, Diving and Fishery Protection. Since being our Guest of Honour last year Capt. Durkin has been a great ambassador of the Association and has gone out of his way to help both the Association and individuals alike and so when it came to seeking a Guest of Honour this year we approached Capt. Durkin again who readily accepted the invitation.

The AGM which was held on the Friday passed off well and a few salient points are noted here :-

The meeting started at 13.30 and after the preliminaries such as the silent tribute and the minutes of the previous AGM etc. the President, Cdr. Garry Titmus addressed the meeting during which he mentioned the absence of the "3 Johns" all of whom were Hors de Combat. National Secretary John Dunn was at home after a very difficult year health wise, Vice President Jon Scoles who was in hospital having major knee surgery and Midlands Branch Secretary John Hodge who was in hospital having suffered a major stroke just after this year's service at the National Memorial Arboretum. Both he and the meeting in general expressed their best wishes to them and others unable to be present.

National Chairman, John Street, gave a résumé of the Association's situation and the inevitable low numbers and asked for a show of hands to indicate the interest in carrying on with the reunions. The response was a resounding "yes".

Treasurer, Ted Thompson, gave his financial report and fielded a couple of minor questions. The good news was that subscriptions would remain at £8 for full members and £10 for associate members.

Museum Curator, Alf Muffett, gave an update on the mammoth task of getting the museum registered, but the good news was that we had been assigned a museums advisor who was offering guidance.

Welfare Officer, Bonnie Whisstock, was unable to attend due to work commitments but sent her report to the meeting indicating, anonymously, the type of assistance that she has been able to get for some of our members and the numerous charities that are out there to be tapped into. Garry Titmus added to this in his role as a SSAFA case worker.

When it came to the election of Officers, the meeting was informed that John Dunn had, due to his health, offered to stand down if a new Secretary could be found. The meeting were informed that the Committee had approached the Asst. National Secretary, Leo Whisstock, who had indicated his willingness to stand. Following Leo's election to the post it was said that John Dunn would remain as a committee member and the remainder of the Officers were re-elected en bloc.

The National Standard was recovered and the meeting closed at 14.15.

The annual dinner was held on the Friday evening and as you will have read in the last newsletter was changed to the Hotel Hatfield. The venue was slightly smaller than previous but we managed to seat the same number of people but there was no room for a dance floor but we were still able to listen to the music of K-Syl-R. The meal was very good and everybody seemed to adapt to the new venue well. After the meal the raffle and reunion draw

were held and the evening finished in the usual way with a flag waving finale. After the meal and the speeches, Capt. Durkin, who is in charge of the day to day running of the entire Royal Navy's minesweeping fleet, spent all the time going round the room talking to ex-Patrol Service men and comparing notes and was fascinated by their stories and anecdotes and indeed his friendliness and enthusiasm was very much appreciated and commented on by the lads.

Saturday morning was, as usual, the parade and service at our memorial in Belle Vue Park. Led by the band of 469 (Lowestoft) Squadron, Air Training Corps. The standards and a marching contingent made their way from the park gate to the memorial where the VIPs and the congregation were waiting. Our National Padre, Jim Izzard led the service assisted by our Lowestoft Padre Tim Jenkins.

The parade and service in pictures
 "A picture is worth a thousand words"



After the service there was no march as in previous years instead everyone made their own way down to the Sparrow's Nest Gardens where the band, Standards and those who wished to march formed up for a short "march past". This year we used the steps outside the cafe for the saluting base after which Capt. Durkin and Cdr. Titmus

made their way to the area by the flag pole where Cdr. Titmus gave his customary address to “his ship’s company” before Parade Cdr., Lt. Cdr. Ted Thompson asked permission to carry out sunset. With the formalities over it was time to reflect on another year and to catch up with old ship mates while the Standard Bearers swung the lamp with a well earned “tot” plus “sippers” and “queens”. There were only 4 standards on parade but about 15 drew their tot – still who’s counting!

From the Office

So, we have come to the end of an era. John Dunn has been the National Secretary for 29yrs and also for part of that time he was also the National Standard Bearer. John is one of life’s characters as anyone who has met him will testify. I may have followed him as National Standard Bearer and just recently as National Secretary but there is no way I can follow his act, all I can do is to publicly thank him for all his hard work and efforts on behalf of the Association and the members and hope that in some small way I can continue to serve the Association in a way that will help it to continue. Over the years John and I have had some long and in depth conversations about the Navy as my father was in the RNPS but also we used to spend hours talking about our common interest in railways and I sincerely hope we can continue these talks for years to come.

At our first committee meeting after the AGM we discussed in length John’s service and how we could mark this in some way. One thing we kept coming back to was John’s main asset and that is his memory. It baffles us how he can immediately link a man’s name to a ship and then walk out into the museum and find a photograph of it. With this in mind we eventually came up with the idea of giving him the title of RNPS Historical Advisor.

Just after we had come up with this idea John went and threw a spanner in the works by collapsing at home with a massive heart attack. He was taken to hospital where the prognosis was not good at all, in fact his family were summoned that day – but John being John he was not going to have any of that and defied them all by making what can only be described as a miraculous recovery so much so that he is now back at home!!

John. The Officers, committee and indeed the Association as a whole owes you a great debt of gratitude. Keep swinging the lamp shipmate.

New memorials

While flicking through a magazine at the Museum just before the AGM I came across an article about a new RNPS memorial. The magazine is called Flagship and is published by Seafarers UK. For some unknown reason no one at the Nest had spotted it or had heard of the new memorial. The memorial is in the Anstruther Fisheries Museum. The unveiling was performed by RNPS veteran Coull Deas MBE with the Rev Gordon Craig and Capt. Nick Davies, Seafarers UK Regional Representative.

I mentioned this at the AGM and like me, nobody had heard anything about it, but even more surprising was the news of yet another new memorial.



The Rev Gordon Craig, Mr Coull Deas MBE, formerly of the RNPS, and Capt Nick Davies at the unveiling of the RNPS memorial plaque.



The other “new” memorial is in St. Peter and St. Paul’s church in Buckingham and was commissioned by Joyce Smith in memory of her late husband who was in the RNPS. The plaque was made and sign written by professional signwriter and Associate Member Dennis Jones whose father was also in the RNPS.

The plaque is made of English Oak and is sign written in Gold Leaf.

So if you are in either of these two areas pop in and see them and if you know of any similar memorials then let us know.

Jock Cheek

Regular attendees of our reunions will remember Jock Cheek who used to play music afterwards in the Sparrow’s Nest Gardens. Unfortunately Jock crossed the bar earlier in the year having spent some time in a care home. I tried visiting him a couple of times but he no longer knew me and could not remember the house he had lived in for the last 30 years or the RNPSA. We only found out about his passing when we saw the notice in the local paper by which time his funeral had taken place – a sad end to a popular man.

RNPS mascots – from an old Newspaper article

“Brothers Bob and Leonard Butcher were “adopted” as mascots by men of the Royal Naval Patrol Service at their Lowestoft base. The boys used to march every Sunday with the sailors to morning service at Christchurch.

One week there was an early morning raid, when the march was passing Rant Score, and Bob remembers the sailors pushing him and his brother against the wall and leaning over them to protect them from any fire from the German aircraft.

The generous sailors always ensured that Bob and Leonard were invited along to parties they held for local children on the Denes Oval.

Bob was among the “barrow boys” who used to meet the sailors when they arrived at Lowestoft station and help take their luggage to the Sparrow’s Nest base. Their father was in the Navy during the war and had sailor suits made for the boys in Dover. Their hats were bought from a local store in Lowestoft.”



Mascots of the Royal Naval Patrol Service at Lowestoft - brothers Bob and Leonard Butcher.

If anyone remembers these two boys then I would be very interested to hear from you as I see Leonard regularly at the local RNA meetings and at football. Leonard later went on to join the Royal Navy himself and as a result of his love of football played for the Navy. His son, Terry, developed his father’s passion for the game and went on to great things as the memorable Terry Butcher, England Captain and now Manager of Inverness Caledonian Football Club.

Leonard still lives in Lowestoft and is a life long Lowestoft Town FC supporter who takes great delight in blaming me when Lowestoft lose at home as I sit near him

From the Treasurer – Ted Thompson – subscriptions

The membership rate for this year is still £8 for Full Members and £10 for Associate Members and our Treasurer will be overjoyed to receive renewals. This next part is VERY IMPORTANT. Since the changes to the postal system, we have had to collect some member’s subscriptions and books from the Post Office and pay an **extra £1.06** because they were too thick for the 5mm slot and therefore the ordinary postage did not cover it. We cannot sustain these extra costs. When sending in your subs, please remove the plastic cover and open up the insert and lay it flat, then enclose your stamped addressed envelope (6½” x 4½”) laid flat. Send to HQ in a (7½” x 5”) envelope, or if you speak French, (190mm x 127mm).

There are a number of members both Full and Associate who have not paid subscriptions for the last three or more years. The committee has decided to take those members off the membership list who are not up to date by the 28th February 2012 – if you are in doubt then please contact us and we will advise you of your membership status.

From the Chairman – John Street

Not wishing to be a harbinger of doom and gloom we must face up to the inevitable there being a serious decline in membership in recent years, our youngest full member is in late 80’s with many in their 90’s, we are becoming more reliant upon Associate Members. We have struggled to keep subs at an affordable level but the decline has had a serious impact on finances which is needed to continue.

The reunion has to be autonomous, usually covered by the annual draw and raffle at the dinner, we have suffered losses in previous years hiring coaches during the week to venues, cutting down on entertainment and the coaches is a saving, but what are your views regarding reunion week – i.e. AGM, dinner dance and service – two days involved. Let us know your views – continue the same format, or other suggestions.

Apart from members crossing the bar, Anno Domini does take effect and several members being infirm, or otherwise do not feel up to making the annual pilgrimage, however we must have the patronage to continue with the reunion. The museum will continue into posterity thanks to the invaluable aid of our wonderful band of Associate members and volunteers at Headquarters.

Personally, having found my feet again, physically I feel ready for another dozen years! Seriously though, please do let us have your thoughts and views in this regard in order that necessary decisions/ actions can be taken as soon as possible. All communications for the RNPSA to be addressed to The Secretary, RNPSA, Naval Museum, Sparrow’s Nest, Whapload Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 1XG.

My thanks to all committee members and staff for their valiant efforts over the past year.

Merry Christmas and a very good and happy new year to all.

John Street

RNPS Memorial, National Memorial Arboretum

This August we again held a service at our new memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas. The weather was very good almost to the point of being too hot as one of our members can testify, this gave our Welfare Officer, Bonnie Whisstock, an unexpected, “hands on” welfare job. After the service we enjoyed a meal in the Rose Room and were entertained by a speech from our Midlands Branch Patron, Doug Ellis, former Chairman of Aston Villa Football Club. Our memorial at the Arboretum continues to attract favourable comments and was used as a back drop on a recent edition of the Antiques Roadshow.

The down side to the day's events was that soon afterwards John Hodge, Secretary of the Midlands Branch and the main organiser of the event at the Arboretum suffered a bad stroke and was in hospital for a long time. Our thoughts are with you John for a speedy recovery.

Queenborough

September saw us again in Queenborough for the annual HMS Wildfire III parade and service. Again the weather was good but boy oh boy did the wind blow. It certainly tested those of us who were carrying standards but a "tot" soon revived us and then it was off to the bun fight in the social club and the entertainment. Yet again this is another place where they really respect and look after the Patrol Service.

Armed Forces Day

In June we again attended the Armed Forces Day celebrations in Lowestoft on Royal Green. This has grown into the biggest event in this part of the country and attracts over 1000 visitors on the day. Our stand was stewarded by Chairman, John Street and Vice Chairman, Charlie Harris assisted by Welfare Officer Bonnie Whisstock who was flitting between the Patrol Service Stand and the HMS Penelope Stand (proving that women can multi-task). We were very fortunate that due to the efforts of our Guest of Honour, Capt. Durkin, we were able to have 5 serving Royal Navy men with us who were very warmly welcomed by the public and the ex-RN stands. They spent a lot of time finding out about the RNPS and also took part in the Drum Head service. If there is an Armed Forces Day event near you please give it your support.

The motto of this National event is -

"Honouring Britain's Armed Forces Past, Present and Future"



*John Street and Charlie Harris
prepare to meet their public at AFD*

RNPS / Silver badge files come to light – Part 2 by Mike Sims, RNPSA web site

In May this year I promised Leo Whisstock a second instalment on my research into the Silver Badge later on this year. My apologies but time has caught up with me and it's not yet ready but the following 2 items will be of interest to you.

1. One thing I CAN tell you is that the usual story about why the design of the badge was changed, from a pin-type to a four-eye-type, is wrong. Yes, the badge was probably more easily lost, stolen or given away as a sweetheart brooch when it was the pin-type but the later four-eye-type was not introduced to reduce the loss in this way.

The records show that the grade of steel to make the pins was in such short supply, and that what was available was needed for more war-like purposes elsewhere, that a request was made for the design of the badge to be changed so that it no longer needed a pin to attach it.

This was achieved by adding the four eyes, the mould was adapted and all further badges were produced to this new design so that the badge could be attached by sewing to the uniform left forearm cuff and a source of high quality steel was no longer needed.

2. Correcting the Memorial

Looking after the RNPS website brings me into contact with many people researching their family trees and in a few cases they have told me of errors in the Memorial records.

The Memorial section of the site is a direct reproduction from scans of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Register, issued as a bound volume when the Memorial was dedicated and held in the Association office at The Nest. I use it as the definitive record and I feel that I have no right to make any changes to it. If I am in doubt about a spelling for instance, where the scan has not been particularly clear, I can now check that record against the online record that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission publish on their website. I don't however feel that I can make material changes reported by relatives unless I first have them confirmed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

One of the problems with records that were initiated and maintained during wartime is that errors or omissions may easily have crept into them. If when researching you discover that there are some details about a relative that are wrong or some facts about a relative's record that are missing when you compare the data with other records, then do get in touch with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. They will need you to be able to prove what you say but they seem to be willing to correct records once an error or omission has been established.

Once their online record has been amended then let me know. I will check to make sure that it has taken place and then I will happily amend the record shown for the RNPS Memorial on our own website. It's not that I don't believe you but there can be only one definitive record and that has to be the one maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

REMINDERS

Branch and member information

This is a well rehearsed request but nevertheless one that seems to fall by the wayside in a lot of cases. Can you please inform the Secretary at "The Nest" of any changes to your address etc. Each time we do a mailing run we get a lot returned by the Post Office marked "Not at this address". Can we again also remind all Branch Secretaries to keep HQ up to date on their membership records in all classes of membership such as Life, Associate and Widows.

Welfare

Our National Welfare Officer is there to try and help you, she cannot perform miracles but will do her best to address any problems. Bonnie's contact details are - Mrs Bonnie Whisstock, 133 Corton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4PR. Tel. 01502 584555 or via e-mail at bonnie@theharbour.fsbusiness.co.uk

Curator

If you are sending anything to the Museum can you please make sure you state if it is on loan or a gift as it helps with the cataloguing and any future claims to ownership and with photographs please give descriptions. Our pool of volunteers are gradually making headway with restoring, copying and documenting all the photographs which will hopefully make locating them in the museum much easier.

Museum visits

For information, the Museum and office are open Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings until about 11.30 (ish). What we do recommend is that if you are travelling some distance that you telephone a few days beforehand to either the office on 01502 586250 or my home on 01502 584555 or 07966879106 and we can arrange, if necessary, to open up for you at a suitable time. When you do arrive at the top room of the Museum please turn to your right and wave!! as you will be on CCTV.

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA)

The Veterans Agency is a very useful contact on all aspects of veterans affairs and don't forget that a veteran is anyone who has served in the armed forces, up to the present day, for at least 24 hours and not been dishonourably discharged. Their contact details are as follows:-

Freephone 0800 169 22 77 (UK only) BT Mobile, Orange, Virgin or 3 mobile, Customers will not be charged for the call by their provider. +44 1253 866043 (Overseas). 0800 169 34 58 Textphone facility (UK only)

Telephone lines are open: 8.15am to 5.15pm Monday to Thursday; and 8.15am to 4.30pm Friday.

By post:- Service Personnel and Veterans Agency

FREEPOST NAT18006

Norcross

Thornton Cleveleys

FY5 3ZA (1st Class) or FY5 3ZZ (2nd Class)

Website www.veterans-uk.info

Web sites

Don't forget, if you have access to a computer, to keep checking the 2 web sites connected to our Association which are: www.rnps.lowestoft.org.uk run by Mike Sims and www.harry-tates.org.uk run by Nick Clark. Both offer a wealth of information. There are also plenty of other sites where you can search for old oppos or look for things to do with the war and the Royal Navy. Nick is looking for anyone who can supply a story for his "Veterans Stories" section. Take a look at some of the photos, how did they get their hats to stay on "flat aback"?

Keep the odds and ends coming, they all make interesting reading. If you have any items for inclusion in the next Newsletter or comments on this one, please send them to me at , Leo Whisstock, 133 Corton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4PR. Tel. 01502 584555 or via e-mail at rnpsa@theharbour.fsbusiness.co.uk

To reiterate the sentiments of our Chairman, we, here at "The Nest", wish every one of you out there the best Christmas and New Year possible and hope that we can remain in contact for many years to come.

Yours Aye, **The Duty Watch**

Shipmates Corner

If you do not have access to e-mail or you have information on any of the following enquiries that do not have contact details, then you can pass the information to me (Leo) at the address above **or** to Nick Clark, 174 Manton Crescent, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 2GA Tel: 07841 107641 or by E-mail at nickclark1961@googlemail.com or info@rnpatrolservice.org.uk

We are very thin on the ground this time on requests for information – perhaps you know it all by now! During the course of the year we got a lot of queries which we are able to assist with directly either from the Museum collection or from individual sources but the ones we tend to print in the newsletter are ones we are stumped by that is why we hand them over to you.

HM Drifter Receptive – based at ‘HMS Wildfire III’ Queenborough

Sunk in Thames Estuary 3 July 1941

Is there anyone who has memories of my father’s minesweeper **HM Drifter Receptive**, based at HMS Wildfire III, Queenborough, between 1940 & 41?

My father, **Lt. Raymond Remington**, was lost when *Receptive* struck an enemy mine in the Swale in July 1941, alongside:

- Stoker* James A Chisholm LT/KX 125340
- Stoker* Fred L Cork LT/KX 109889
- Seaman* William Hawson LT/JX 224432
- Engineer* William Shaw LT/KX 110027
- O/Seaman* Edgar Garnett R/JX 268565
- Act 2nd Hand* Daniel McPherson LT/X19728 A (RNRPS)
- Assistant Cook* Richard Wittridge 221665
- Survivors:
- O/Sig* Edgar Dickson D/JX 185188
- Seaman* David Furen LT/JX 200753
- Seaman* Reinhard Robinson LT/JX 55447
- Seaman* William Staines D/JX 167051

Unfortunately, I have very little information about *Receptive* beyond that held in modern records, and would appreciate the chance to speak with anyone with memories, or with a similar connection to the ship.

Contact - tesssmart@hotmail.com or 01432 357 208.

We have received a request for information on any names to go with this crew photograph on **HMS Arkwright**. The son of **Richard Roberts** is trying to piece together bit more of his father’s war service. If you think you can help in any small way then please contact us at the Museum.



Draw results

Reunion 2011 – Reunion Draw Results

	Ticket	Winner		Ticket	Winner
1	10937	M Close, Horncastle, Lincs	8	18917	D Holland, Llanelli, Dyfed
2	08443	Mrs S Keller, Lowestoft, Suffolk	9	18004	R Goodger, Wigston, Leicestershire
3	10321	G Cooksley, Thundersley, Essex	10	12930	A Robinson – donated to RNPSA funds
4	17903	L Goodrich, Dagenham, Essex	11	08849	C & G Smith, Milngavie, Glasgow
5	06569	K Taylor, Caerphilly, Glamorgan	12	04924	R Rivers, Attleborough, Norfolk
6	02018	J Jordan, Harold Hill, Essex	13	05833	T Simcock, Havant, Hampshire
7	02281	G Kinsbury, Beccles, Suffolk	Congratulations to all the winners		

And finally..... The Crew salute you



Obituary for Winter 2011

S/M R Blackman	Hythe	Kent	S/M R Hunt	Chertsey	Surrey
S/M K Bragg	Bolton	Lancashire	S/M S Ives	Lowestoft	Suffolk
S/M E H Burns	Bexhill on Sea	East Sussex	S/M B R Lamb	Penymynydd	Flintshire
S/M R Chapman	Leicester	Leicestershire	S/M D Maffey	Hoddesdon	Hertfordshire
S/M J Cheek	Lowestoft	Suffolk	S/M R A McCarron	Liverpool	Merseyside
S/M W Coleman	Lowestoft	Suffolk	S/M A Smith	Royton	Lancashire
S/M S Crosby	Ryhope	Sunderland	S/M G Yates	Brightmet	Bolton
Mrs M Daines	Exning	Suffolk	S/M E W Wagg	Kings Lynn	Norfolk
S/M E Fisher	Rhos on Sea	Colwyn Bay	S/M C Watts	Rochdale	Lancashire
S/M W Gibson	British Columbia	Canada	S/M J A Wilcock	Newton le Willows	Merseyside

At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them



Tributes laid at the 2011 reunion

Cut ✂ -----

Slops Items for Sale from HQ (Winter 2011)							
Item / Title	£	Qty	£	Item / Title	£	Qty	£
Europa Plaque	27.00			Fridge Magnet	1.00		
Lg. Blazer Badge, Gold wire	9.00			RNPS Memorial Post Card	0.10		
Lg. Blazer Badge, Woven	6.50			Sparrows Nest Post Card	0.20		
Small Blazer Badge, Gold wire	6.50			RNPSA Colouring Poster	0.30		
Jumper / Cap Badges, Woven	4.00			RNPSA Multi Tool Key Ring	2.75		
Tie Tack, Chrome crested	6.00			RNPSA Epaulettes (pair)	6.00		
New Association Crested Tie	11.00			Trafalgar Board Game	10.00		
V.J. Ties	2.00						
Lapel Badge, Blue enamel	7.00			Publications			
White Ensign Badge	3.50			Christmas cards - original	0.50		
White Ensign Car Sticker	0.50			Christmas cards – clean sweep	0.50		
RNPSA Ladies head square	7.50			HMS Europa Booklet	2.00		
RNPSA Bookmark	0.75			Dawn Always Breaks	5.00		
RNPSA Coin purse	1.00			Churchill's Pirates Pt.1	5.25		
RNPSA Pocket address book	1.00			Churchill's Pirates Pt.2	4.50		
RNPSA Stamped pen	0.20			Blue Mariners CD	4.00		
RNPSA Museum pen	1.50			The Story of the RNPS, 2 CD set	5.00		
RNPSA Mug	4.00			Total			
RNPSA Coaster	1.50			P & P Small items	1.00		
RNPSA Key rings	1.00			P & P Large / Heavy items	2.00		
Amount Submitted					£		
Name _____				Membership No. _____			
Address _____							
_____				Post Code _____		Tel. No. _____	
Please send payment and completed order form to:-							
Royal Naval Patrol Service Association, Naval Museum, Sparrows Nest, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 1XG							