



ROYAL NAVAL PATROL SERVICE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 75 Winter 2013

POSTAL ADDRESS and HEADQUARTERS

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Another reunion has been done and dusted and on reflection I think we can pat ourselves on the back for pulling it off without any major hic ups. In this issue we will try and bring you up to date on what has been happening and for the first time we have a colour centre spread. Somebody suggested we have a scantily clad young lady posing provocatively by a mine – I thought about it, but as I want to keep my job I decided against the idea – sorry lads.

Reunion report

As in previous years, members started arriving in Lowestoft up to a week before the reunion weekend and spent time visiting the museum and re-acquainting themselves with the area. The first “official” event was the association’s Annual General Meeting which was held in Trinity Methodist Church. There were no motions put to the meeting but as an item of importance, the future of the Association was discussed in as much as a discussion document had been drawn up by committee member Mike Sims which better reflects the current objectives and aspirations of the Association and also formalising the roles of the ever increasing number of associate members involved in the management of the Association and could form the basis of a revised constitution. This draft will be discussed at a full committee meeting and appropriate advice sought before being presented to the Charity Commission for ratification.

The President, Chairman and Secretary gave their reports and all mentioned that the Museum and Association would continue to function long into the future as we are becoming more important as a research facility. The reports also mentioned parades at the National memorial Arboretum, The Battle of the Atlantic and Queenborough. The Treasurer, Ted Thompson, gave a full and frank report of our financial situation but said that even due to falling numbers of members and the fact that we now have to pay rates to the Council we are still just keeping our heads above water. Ted then told everyone present that he is proposing to stand down as Treasurer at the end of this financial year, so when it comes to the Election of Officers, he suggested that members authorise the Committee to appoint a successor at a later date. The meeting extended a vote of thanks to Ted for his years of sterling work for the Association.

President, Garry Titmus, thanked all the committee for the work they had done during the year. This would be Jim Izzard’s last Reunion as the Padre for the Patrol Service. Garry proposed that the Officers and Committee Members be elected. It was mentioned that the Committee would co-opt a person to take over as Treasurer as per the item above.

The Reunion for 2014 would take place on Friday 3rd October for the AGM and dinner and Saturday 4th October for the Service in Belle Vue Park.

Friday evening saw us gather at the Hatfield Hotel for the annual dinner. In a way it is quite a fitting venue as during the war it was used to billet RNPS officers, my father being one of them. 90 members and guests sat down to a very nice meal with the Mayor of Lowestoft, Cllr June Ford, as Guest of Honour. The annual reunion draw was made (results in this newsletter) and also a general raffle as well as speeches from Cdr. Titmus, Padre Jim Izzard and Cllr Ruth Ford. 1940s music was provided by Harbour Lights and members swapped stories of their time in the Patrol Service.

On the Saturday morning we were blessed with fine weather for our service in Belle Vue Park and the standards led a small group of veterans to the memorial for the annual service of remembrance led by National Padre Jim Izzard with music by Yarmouth Brass. After the service we made our way down to the Sparrow’s Nest gardens for the march past and salute. Cdr Titmus addressed everyone and then made a presentation to Jim Izzard who responded. Hanworth Branch then officially handed their standard over to the President to be laid up in the museum. Sunset was then performed, not as in previous years by a recording on CD, but by local Sea Cadet Ashley Cook on a bugle. The parade was then dismissed, standards bearers for their tot and all ex Sparrows to the bandstand for an official reunion photograph (see centre spread). There then followed the usual mixture of “see you again next year”, “let’s have a wet in the bar” and a vast array of salty tales of daring deeds.

Copies of the reunion group photograph can be purchased at a cost of £1.50 each inc. P&P from Leo Whisstock, 133 Corton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4PR. Please state size required (maximum size A4).

For those with access to the internet, there is a short video of our reunion at http://youtu.be/lx_RYRmC-U8

Wreath laying service

With the help of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (and others) it is now possible to arrange for Poppy Wreaths to be placed on graves in most overseas countries. Badged wreaths are not available under this scheme. Please make requests for laying at least eight weeks in advance. An annual replacement standing order service is also available.

Contact: The Poppy Appeal, Royal British Legion Village, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7NX Tel: 01622 717172

Visitors

Amongst our museum visitors this year we had 2 very interesting groups, one was a group from the Naval Dockyards Society. They showed great interest in our museum and history and both sides were able to learn from an exchange of information. We also had a group of visitors from Lowestoft's twin town of Plaisir in France. Committee member, Mike Sims, had done a power point presentation and booklet in French which the whole group found very interesting and with one of the group acting as interpreter we were able to answer any questions.

Jim Izzard



Jim as Port Missioner

At the reunion, our National Padre, Revd. Jim Izzard, announced that for personal reasons he was reluctantly standing down as Padre, a position he has held for many years. Jim joined the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen in the 1960s and his first posting was to Lowestoft and during his time in the Mission he has been posted to all corners of the UK but in 2004 he was persuaded to come out of retirement and take over the Mission in Lowestoft again but now that entailed looking after the whole east coast from the Humber to the Thames Estuary. But in Jim's own words, his career has been a calling rather than a job "I would much rather sit on an icy dock talking to someone about the real issues in life than standing in a pulpit," said Jim. Jim and his wife Alison, who have five children and nine grandchildren, eventually retired (again) in 2007 to the



Jim as RNPSA Padre

Isle of Wight, where they run a guest house. Tim Jenkins took over the helm at the Fishermen's Mission in Lowestoft from Jim and has been our local padre. I am sure I speak for all of us when I say we wish Jim everything he wishes himself and "thank you Jim for all your good work and terrible jokes". God bless you.

Tom Gamble

Many of you will readily recognise S/M Tom Gamble as one of the regular attendees at our reunions. If memory serves me correctly, I think Tom served on the minesweeper Picton Castle. Tom is a quiet man with a keen sense of humour but what you may not know is that Tom is a very famous artist and last year won one



S/M Tom

of the major prizes in the British watercolour art world, the Turner Watercolour Prize, for his painting *Le Marseille de la Famille Bonnet*. The painting, which has been sold, was in the Royal Watercolour Society's Spring Exhibition at the Bankside Gallery, London. Tom was born in Stockton-on-Tees and is a Freeman of the City of London, a Liveryman and Gold Medallist of the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers, and a Member of the Art Workers Guild. His work is held in many private and public collections including those of Her Majesty the Queen and Lloyds of London.



Tom the artist © copyright Cambridge Newspapers

Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary in Liverpool by S/M Sim Mayou

The 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic was commemorated in Liverpool City early this year on the 24th to 27th May 2013. Many various entertainment events taking place every day, with naval ships in support, visiting from several countries, open all day for public tours on board, long queues kept the crews very busy. Thousands of visitors from all areas and countries swelled the docks water front, helped with glorious sunny weather, complimenting this extra bonus for this fantastic event. The service held at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral on Sunday 26th May to commemorate the Battle of the Atlantic with remembrance and homage paid to all personnel engaged in this long hazardous task, the all ticket service was a fully booked seated cathedral. Princess Anne was the Royal representative very smartly dressed in traditional officer's naval uniform. Some fifty Association Standard Bearers were in attendance. At the end of the cathedral service, most veterans grouped outside with several columns to march past Princess Anne taking the salute, with the band and standards leading the march out onto the Liverpool streets and met with deep crowds and crowds of people along the streets, waving flags, clapping and singing the wartime popular songs, dancing, many extended handshakes, with a thank you. This was a great memorable and proud occasion being there sharing this wonderful reception and hospitality of the people and visitors in Liverpool City.

You will see in colour centre spread how Sim enjoyed himself. Our thanks go to Sim and all other Sparrows that went to Liverpool for this event and our special thanks to S/M Arthur Young of the Midlands Branch, who paraded our National Standard as Leo was unable to attend due to a longstanding prior engagement.

Original memorial dedication



There were some nostalgic scenes for members at the reunion service as Margaret Dann, from Norwich, brought along an original service sheet from the dedication of the association's memorial in Belle Vue Park in October 1953. Mrs Dann was in Lowestoft to remember her father, Bert Harvey, who lost his life while serving in the RNPS as a second hand on HMS Thistle. She was just 1 year old in 1941 when the vessel struck a mine and sunk just off Lowestoft pier.



Margaret Dann with the service sheet and a photo of her father

As a relative of one who is named on the memorial her family were invited to the dedication. Little did we know but Mrs Dann has been back to the memorial every year since 1953 which is 22 years before our Association was founded! So impressed was our Padre that he read out a part of the 60-year-old service to those present.

Judith Richards

This time last year I reported that Judith Richards, widow of S/M Jack Richards, laid a wreath on behalf of the RNPSA at Porthleven in Cornwall. This time Judith has sent me an update on the remembrance service this year at Porthleven as followsIt was very very wet. The Marshall, a retired Army Officer hoped the wreath laying would be in order as his list was disintegrating in the rain. He announced all the Civic dignitaries, representatives of the Services, then the associations including my friend a retired WRAC and then went on to the Scouts, local school and the Town Band. Finally "and anyone else with a wreath". I marched forward as best my stick would allow and said in as loud a voice as I could. " Royal Naval Patrol Service Association who were more accustomed to going out in front to clear the way for others not bringing up the rear!" The Marshall was full of abject apologies but I think I caused some amusement amongst the contingent from RNAS Culdrose.

That's the way Judith, you tell them. Judith also sent a copy of a full page story from the Falmouth newspaper about our member S/M Tom Ellis who lives in Falmouth and was on the Kingston Turquoise and BYMS 2041. The headline of the article was "Proud to serve in Harry Tate's Navy" They obviously know all about us in the South West which seems not to be the case in other areas as the next article will explain.

Norman Leavesley

S/M Norman Leavesley watched, as usual, the TV coverage of the service of remembrance from Whitehall and was dismayed that the Patrol Service, yet again, did not get a mention. Norman is in regular contact with the young ladies who run the Naval Families Federation (NFF) in Portsmouth and voiced his thoughts to them and they have promised to look into it for him at a high level in London. The result is that Norman's concerns were taken to the Navy Media Unit who were very grateful for the feedback and have promised to take it on board when briefing the media on future occasions. Although we now know that the RNPS will be mentioned to the media such as the BBC and ITV, what cannot be controlled is the way the media interpret and use the information, we will just have to wait until the next time when hopefully Norman's efforts will come to fruition.

The Naval Families Federation carry on the work started by Dame Agnes Weston, who in her day, was the leading advocate for the families of naval personnel. The NFF was established in 2003 to give Royal Naval and Royal Marines' families an independent voice. NFF works with the Chain of Command, service providers and the Government in order to make them fully aware of the effect their policies and decisions have on the Naval Service family. The link between Aggie Weston's and NFF remains as the executive management of NFF is provided by Aggie Weston's.

For more information on the work of the NFF go to their website <http://www.nff.org.uk/> or contact them at: Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN Tel: 023 9265 4374

Reunion 2013 – Reunion Draw Results

| | Ticket | Winner | | Ticket | Winner |
|----------|---------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | 03532 | D Harrison, Bromsgrove, Worcs. | 8 | 02907 | D Jones, Mablethorpe, Lincs |
| 2 | 00344 | R Williams, Lowestoft, Suffolk. | 9 | 01042 | Mrs. B J Manton, Stevenage, Herts. |
| 3 | 04745 | A Lupton, Bramley, Leeds. | 10 | 08067 | S E Robert, London SE15. |
| 4 | 08080 | S E Robert, London SE15. | 11 | 13086 | Traci Carr, Abbots Langley, Herts. |
| 5 | 01052 | Mrs. B J Manton, Stevenage, Herts. | 12 | 02043 | D Filer, Haxby, Yorks. |
| 6 | 09827 | C Cobley, Lutterworth, Leics. | 13 | 07372 | P Strong, Swindon, Wilts |
| 7 | 09807 | D E Clayton, Hurstpierpoint, Sussex. | Congratulations to all the winners | | |

Centre spread photo details

RNPSA Reunion 2013

1. RNPSA National Pdre, Jim Izzard, leads the service.
2. S/M Sim Mayou and S/M Tom Gamble in quiet reflection during the reunion service.
3. All the "Sparrows" present at the reunion with the President, Vice President, Padre and Standard Bearer.
4. Cadet Ashley Cook from Lowestoft Sea cadets, TS Europa, plays "Sunset" outside the Museum.
5. President, Cdr Garry Titmus, addresses the gathering after the march past.
6. The official party at the reunion saluting base, Cllr Mike Barnard, S/M John Street, Cllr Mary Rudd, Cdr Garry Titmus, Revd. Jim Izzard and Cdr David Braybrooke.
8. Reunion over for another year, so time for a tot. CPO Len Manners and Standard Bearer Leo Whisstock.

Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary at Liverpool

7. S/M Arthur Young with our National Standard prior to the Battle of the Atlantic ceremony in Liverpool
9. HRH The Princess Royal and First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir George Zambellas salute the standards outside Liverpool Cathedral.
10. The standards dip in the Cathedral. RNPSA National Standard is front row, 4th from right.
11. S/M Sim Mayou dancing in the streets of Liverpool – once a sailor always a sailor!

Photographic credits and copyright

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John Cassie



S/M John at Namsos

S/M John Cassie has sent in this picture of himself by the memorial in Norway to the Trawlers Rutlandshire, Aston Villa, Gaul, St Goran, Arab and other ships laying at the bottom of Namsos Fjord. On the 18th May every year the Norwegian Navy take out veterans to scatter poppies and roses over the resting places of the ships. John writes, "as I am the only RNPS rating in the last three years a bit of company would be nice" So if any veterans or families and friends would like to make the trip they will be made most welcome by a local Norwegian group called British Friends of Namsos War Memorials. For further details please contact John Gritten, 72 Warwick Gardens, London W14 8PP Tel: 02076031396



Aston Villa in her pre war fishing days

U-boat update from last Newsletter

Following a request in N/L 74 for information on the surrender of German U-boats, I have received the following from S/M Bill Whomes in West Glamorgan.

My ship was T127 a Tree Class Trawler named HMS Whitehorn. We had been used for patrolling out of Scapa and also escort work from Aberdeen to the Shetlands. As soon as it was announced that the war in Europe was over we were ordered to sail to Devenport and on the way we were to escort an old Naval tanker (I think they were named after tribes in India) down to Rosyth. As we were leaving the Flow we passed a frigate leading a line of U-boats tailed by another frigate coming into the Flow. What was strange was later as we approached the Firth of Forth we had news that a Canadian ship, Avondale Park, had just been sunk by a U-boat which then gave itself up!

And from another member

S/M George Smith from Glasgow writes (from his article on the BBC Peoples war web site)

Tuesday the eighth of May, 1945, turned out to be a memorable day for me, a 21 year old Royal Naval telegraphist aboard a minesweeper (the Beaumaris Castle) at the top of the Minches in the Atlantic, near the Butt of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides.

Our flotilla was on its second day out from Stornoway, with the ships stretched out on a routine sweep in full lookout for mines, but the ship's crews and officers were trying to come to terms with the fact that the war in Europe had ended, when in the late afternoon "action stations" were sounded aboard our ship. To our shock and surprise a German U-boat rose menacingly to the surface, and slowly at the masthead she hoisted a black flag. The German High Command had ordered all U-boats to surrender unconditionally to the nearest Allied naval ships, and the hoisting of the black flag was the surrender signal.

After the panic had subsided messages were rapidly exchanged with our flotilla leader and the naval base at Loch Ewe, and finally we were instructed to order the German U-boat to follow in our wake into Loch Ewe. Hours later we steamed into this great loch where in the past few years convoys to Russia and the United States had gathered and left with naval escorts.

Formal surrender was undertaken by senior British naval officers who boarded the U-boat and interrogated her captain and officers. Apparently other U-boats were also expected there. Our crew was ultimately allowed to board this U-boat and inspect what had been the hated scourge of all Allied shipping. Ironically we had formally to salute the U-boat's officers before boarding their boat, but grudgingly we all knew this was the crème de la crème of the German navy.

As a postscript to the U-boat's surrender in Loch Ewe, it was established that several weeks before VE Day a U-boat operating in the Irish Sea had laid magnetic mines in the Firth of Clyde. Our flotilla was sent post haste from Loch Ewe to the Clyde where we swept from dawn to dusk from Ardrossan to Stranraer for nearly three months. Many mines were found and destroyed in the area around Ailsa Craig.

Book review by Mike Sims

The book reviewed by Mike is A Passage to Sword Beach by Brendan A. Maher

One of the joys of selling second-hand books is the opportunity to read your stock. When cataloguing I try to summarise the content of all our non-fiction but occasionally you come across one that you dip into and just can't put down. Recently one such was a really excellent memoir of naval experiences of WW2 that appears to me to stand head and shoulders above many others. It is a relatively recent account by an ex Royal Navy Officer which, sadly, does not appear to have been published in this country.

After passing out, the author starts his minesweeping on MMS 84 and HMS Jason moving, in the second half of the war to Coastal Forces on ML 137 covering numerous theatres of operation and all expertly recounted.

Unfortunately there is not sufficient space in this newsletter to do this review and book justice but this gem of a memoir is a valuable record of the aspects of WW2 that it covers and one which, for some unknown reason, does not seem to have been picked up by any publisher for a British edition. It was published by the Naval Institute Press of Annapolis, Maryland in 1996. Well worth the read.

To read the full review visit Mike's web site at -

<http://www.abfar.org.uk/blog/a-passage-to-sword-beach-by-brendan-a-maher/>

REMINDERS

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 07975623651 (**new No.**) and we can arrange, if necessary, to open up for you at a suitable time.

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

Yours Aye, **The Duty Watch**

Shipmates Corner

Shipmates Corner this time is still on the shelf as both space and operating problems have conspired against us. Nick Clark has experienced some problems with his Harry Bates Navy web site from where most of the queries in Shipmates Corner come from. He has now resolved the problem but not, unfortunately, in time for this edition,

Facebook and Twitter

Nick Clark has also asked me to inform members that the Harry Bates Navy web site is now at last on twitter at: www.twitter.com/harrytatesnavy and that he has also created a brand new page on the popular facebook! www.facebook.com/RN.Patrol.Service Any silver surfers out there are most welcome!

