



# ROYAL NAVAL PATROL SERVICE ASSOCIATION

**NEWSLETTER No. 87      Winter 2019**

**POSTAL ADDRESS and HEADQUARTERS**

Royal Naval Patrol Service Association  
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Christmas greetings to you all from us at "The Nest". It does not seem possible that we are almost at the end of another year, a year which has seen some highs and lows as far as the Association and museum is concerned.

## Reunion 2019

Our Annual General Meeting on the Friday went off very well but was very low on numbers. Nothing earth shattering came out of the meeting, which is always good.

This year we were blessed with great weather for our service and parade on the Saturday which saw a loyal gathering of RNPS veterans, their families and families of former RNPS men. Our Padre, Peter Paine, led the service and our President, Cdr Garry Titmus and Vice President, Cdr David Braybroke, were joined by the Mayor of Lowestoft Cllr Alice Taylor. A contingent of ex service association standards were present as well as our affiliated Sea Cadet Corps from Lowestoft, TS Europa. After the service and when everyone had made their way down to the Sparrows Nest we had our march past and formed up for words of wisdom and encouragement from our President before observing the ceremony of "Sunset", it was then Tot time for the Standard Bearers plus the usual gathering of "rum rats" who seem to find the rum tub and look longingly at the Rum Bosun, who being the kind person that he is, gives them a tot. A very nice buffet was enjoyed in the on-site restaurant and everyone made plans to meet up again the following year. Having congratulated ourselves for organising such fantastic weather, the next day was a total opposite with wind and torrential rain.

## Reunion 2020

The 2020 reunion will follow the same tried and tested format of previous years and will be Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October for the AGM and Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> for the service, parade and buffet.

## Charlie Harris

Unfortunately I have to inform you that our Vice Chairman, Charlie Harris, crossed the bar on July 3<sup>rd</sup> this year aged 98. Anyone who met him will agree that he was one of life's characters and a pleasure to know. Before the war, Charlie was a fisherman out of Lowestoft and when the war started and the North Sea was closed for fishing he moved with his vessel round the coast eventually ending up at Fleetwood. As the war progressed he was eventually called up for Naval service and entered the Royal Naval Patrol Service. He made his way up to eventually finishing as CPO. While serving on Arctic convoys, his ship, HMS Shera, which was an ex Norwegian Whaler, was en route to Murmansk to be loaned to the Russians when in bad weather in the Barents Sea she capsized due to heavy build up of ice on her superstructure and sank. Only 3 crew survived, Charlie being one of them. He spent 20 minutes in the freezing sea before being rescued by a boat from another trawler. On the way back to the trawler he was given a pullover to warm him up but he wrapped



*Charlie and Alfie Boe on TV*

it around his bare feet as by this time they had frozen to the bottom of the boat but by doing so it saved his feet. After the war Charlie went back to fishing out of Lowestoft and when he left fishing opened up a Fish & Chip shop at Carlton Colville. Some years later his wife passed away and he became a stalwart at our museum, coming down every time we were open, his duties were collecting and opening the post and logging it, dealing with incoming monies before passing them to the Treasurer and taking and booking in subscriptions and new members. His knowledge of the Navy and



**CHARLIE'S  
GALLEY**

the RNPS was phenomenal and he was always called upon to speak to visitors and to help us with our research but what he was most famous for was for making the tea! in fact he was still coming down to the Nest 3 mornings a week right up to 4 weeks before he died and because of this we have named our galley in his honour and his picture hangs over the kettle. He had a great sense of humour and he used to give as good as he got when the banter started in the office. He was always being interviewed by the press and the media and probably his 2 most famous encounters with the TV were appearing on the Antiques Road Trip with Philip Serrell and a programme with Alfie Boe about his Grandfather during the war. All the ladies liked Charlie and used to give him a kiss which he loved, but since then we have tried sitting in his seat but do not seem to get the same response!!



*Charlie and Philip Serrell on TV*

### Légion d'honneur

It seems you Patrol Service lads have been doing pretty well with receiving the prestigious French decoration of the Légion d'honneur, I have heard of more of you since the last newsletter.

American and British veterans who served in either World War I on French soil, or during the 1944 campaigns to liberate France, may be eligible for appointment as Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, provided they were still living when the honour was approved. To apply see - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/d-day-70-application-form-for-award-of-the-legion-dhonneur>

### Queenborough



This year's HMS Wildfire parade was on Sunday 8th September at Queenborough on the Isle of Sheppey. The weather was very nice but the turn out of both standards, veterans and public was a bit down from previous years. Civic and ex-service wreaths were laid and the service was conducted by an ex RN Padre. After the service, the march past, led by a Sea Cadet band, passed the saluting base outside the Town Hall before being fallen out by the Rose pub which very conveniently was where the reception

was being held. In the garden of the Rose was a large marquee with a fantastic buffet and also a stage with live 40s style entertainment. The landlord of the Rose is an ex Matelot so a good time was had by all.



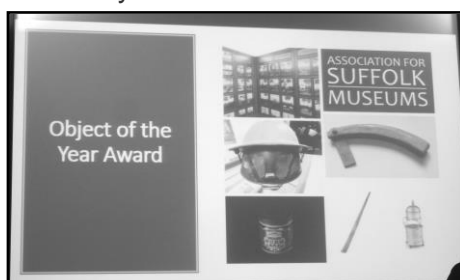
### Awards

This year our museum entered the Association for Suffolk Museums competition for Museum of the year award. We entered the category for "Object of the year" where museums were invited to select an item from their collection which was both rare and unusual. The item we entered was a WW2 Cruise Helmet and we managed to come in 3<sup>rd</sup> place

To give little more of the history of the Cruise Mk.III visor. It was designed by Sir Richard Cruise a RAMC ophthalmologist who wanted to prevent blinding eye injuries caused by small fragments and debris. To this end he had developed two chain-mail visors during the Great War, the first of which was actually adopted by the War Office, but rejected by the troops (who found them unwearable). When the Second World War broke out he had an even better visor made of duraluminium. Unlike the Great War versions it was detachable, or could be folded up inside the helmet. Again he was able to convince the powers that be that it was a must-have piece of kit. In early 1940, an initial order for 5,000 was placed to equip the BEF in France and apparently some for the Royal Navy. The contract was placed with Briggs Motor Bodies at a cost of 7 shillings - the cost of a complete steel helmet - each. Many were lost after Dunkirk and the helmets proved not to be popular due to restricted vision especially if water got on the visor and were discarded by many, hence they are a very scarce helmet.



*Our Cruise Helmet*



*The items that made the final*



*The finalists*

### HMS Juniper

A Plea for help from Tony Brett.

I have recently moved house and now that the settling in process is beginning to show results I have picked up on a research project I started over 2 years ago. The project is to better define the life and death of the Trawler HMS Juniper and her ships Company. Juniper was Commissioned in March 1940, sunk by the German Heavy cruiser Hipper in early June 1940.

Juniper was escorting a convoy from Tromso back to Scapa Flow when she was met by the Gneisanau, Scharnhorst, Hipper and 4 or 5 destroyers, Juniper took up the fight, the outcome was inevitable. Various accounts give different durations for the battle, one as long as 90 minutes, these accounts also refer to there being 4 survivors. Our memorial lists those missing presumed killed. The list, including the ships officers, shows only 23 names. If you add in the 4 reputed survivors you get a count of 27. Was Juniper seriously undermanned? The defined complement for the ship was 34. Baden Singleton who served on a similar sized Trawler (HMS Romeo) confirmed this and provided me with a list of the Romeo's ships Company.

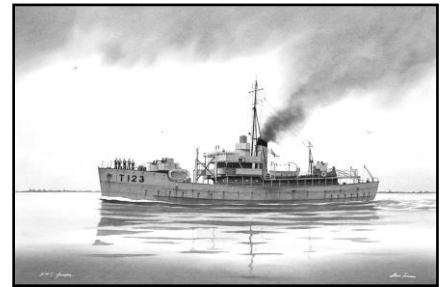
Reports read include one covering the survivors being taken to a Margen, German name for a POW Camp for merchant seamen. In total there were 24 survivors from the tanker Oil Pioneer (also sunk by the Hipper) with them. Given the normal standard of dress on RNPS trawlers at sea it may well be that the 4 reputed survivors were assumed to be Merchant seamen too. Presuming that at least some of the survivors returned to the UK after the war there may well be relatives out there who may be able to help.

So if you have any information no matter how slight or have contacts in Germany who might help please contact me.

My email address is [tony66.f60@ntlworld.com](mailto:tony66.f60@ntlworld.com).

Thanking you in anticipation.

Best Regards, Tony Brett



*Painting of HMS Juniper*

NOTE:- HMS Juniper was a Tree Class Trawler, pennant No. T123

### Ocracoke

You will have seen in numerous copies of our newsletter reports of the commemorations that take place at the British graves at Hatteras and at Ocracoke in North Carolina USA, mainly those from HMS Bedfordshire, a trawler that was sunk by a U boat off the coast with the loss of the crew and only a few bodies were washed ashore and now rest in the British graves which are attended by the local community and the US Coast Guard. Unfortunately not long after this year's services Hurricane Dorian swept through the area devastating most of the area. Specific information regarding the British graves has been almost impossible to find and we have only seen general news reports covering the area in which it mentions that some graves have been totally destroyed but these are believed to be civilian ones. The reports also seem to indicate that a lot of inhabitants are moving away from the area permanently. As and when we get more detailed information on the situation we will let you know via the newsletter.

### Subscriptions – PLEASE NOTE

Subscriptions become due on the **1<sup>st</sup> January each year** for all classes of membership.

From our records we see that some of you who are receiving this newsletter have not paid any subscriptions for a number of years, this is both served members and members (formerly Associate members) Could you please check your membership books to see what the last date is that has been entered.

The current subscription rate is **£8 for Served Members** (formerly known as Members) and **£10 for Members** (formerly known as Associate Members) and could you also please make sure you send in your membership book and SAE with your subscription so that your renewal can be accurately recorded and accounted for. .

### Association Facebook page

If you search on Facebook under Royal Naval Patrol Service, you will see about 3 different sites, you need to look at the one that has the picture of our badge as seen here. This is now the most active and almost official Facebook site for the RN Patrol Service. A lot of people have posted on it and have since found out a lot about their relatives that were in the RNPS. The site web address is as follows <https://www.facebook.com/groups/133715066730668/>

The administrators of the site are Association members.



# 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion - 2019



*The Standards on parade*



*Great Yarmouth Brass Band*



*Last Post*



*Padre, Revd Peter Paine*



*Salute and march past*



*Cdr Garry Titmus and Mayor of Lowestoft  
Cllr Alice Taylor*



*We will remember them.*

### Archiving at the museum by Bonnie Whisstock

Following our June Committee Meeting, I was chatting to Alf Muffett, our Curator, in his office. Alf and I had quite a long discussion about his work and what it entailed. On looking around his office, there seemed to be quite a large amount of items either brought in by visitors and members or sent to the Curator by post that still needed to be dealt with. Up to a couple of years ago, Alf had an assistant, Charlotte, who helped him with the archiving and logging items onto the computer data base which were given specific numbers on the spreadsheet as well as their location in the museum. However, Charlotte took up a full time position as a Curator at a national museum in York. This left Alf doing everything himself. I asked him if he needed any help in getting all this material archived. He told me that he would like help as items are still coming in and with other museum work the back log was not getting any smaller. Alf showed me the spreadsheet on the computer and how items are listed. In the weeks that followed, Alf and I went through the cabinets that are in his office labelling and entering their location on the computer spreadsheet. I couldn't believe how much there was to get through. Just by helping Alf for a short time, has enabled me to learn even more about the Patrol Service. There were a couple of very nice paintings which have since been framed and are now on display in the museum along with other framed pictures that have been donated to the museum. As we were also going through photos, we found three photos taken by The Portsmouth News, of His Majesty The King inspecting trawler crews at Portsmouth. There were no dates on the photos but sifting through more papers, we found a letter that was sent to the Museum together with a newspaper article that appeared in The Portsmouth and Southsea Evening News, of one of the photos. The paper was dated 6<sup>th</sup> December 1940. In the letter, it stated that an air raid took place at the Naval Base on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1940 at about 2000 hrs shortly after His Majesty left Portsmouth. It was great to be able to put a date on the photos. Leo showed the photographs to the Portsmouth Branch at one of their meetings and the Branch Secretary's wife recognised her father in one of the photographs! June Brown and James Burd have also been working very hard in getting photographs ready for display. New display units are soon to be put in the bottom museum. These will create space for more photographs, pictures and artefacts and enable the public to learn more about the Patrol Service. There is still a lot of work to be done but there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Every item on display albeit photographs, medals, pictures, etc all tell a story and what a story. The following poem written by D Sutherland and two others serving on HMS Dee in 1940 was found amongst several papers and is now framed and on display.

#### Remember Us

From morning to evening we sweep the deep seas  
Without the Minesweepers where could Britain be  
We sweep the deep ocean, in good happy mood  
So that our loved ones at home may have food  
No honours we ask for, no V.C.s or fame  
For the life of a sweeper is always the same  
Born to the sea so we're not afraid  
Of the mines that the merciless Jerrys have laid  
Crammed in our trawlers yet we never brood  
Foes to the Nelson, Rodney or Hood  
Yet small though our ships we're doing our share  
To clear our trade routes and sweep the seas bare  
One cause do we fight for; one King, one flag  
So remember our motto boys it's all in the bag  
Each mine that is swept from the bed of the sea  
Is done with the courage of our squad, you'll agree  
And now as the lines about sweepers are right  
Each sweeper is playing a part in our might  
So we'll just carry on, till victory comes at last  
Keeping our flag at the top of the mast.

We were contacted recently by an ex Royal Navy Submarine Commander who is now the Director of the Wigan Borough Armed Forces HQ, a veterans organisation, who had been shown 2 items by Wigan Borough Council who were having a clear out and they were a large metal plaque from the Admiralty presented to Ince in Makerfield (an area in Wigan Borough) on their adoption of HMS AGATE December 1941 and a wooden backed plaque presented to HMS AGATE on their adoption by Ince in Makerfield in December 1941 as part of "Warship Week". The sad part to this is that before the 2 items could be presented to the Borough and the ship, the ship was sunk with the loss of all her crew and so these items have languished in the cellars of Wigan Borough Council ever since. Thankfully they have been saved and are now on display in our museum.

## Some pictures from the Curator's team



*The 2 HMS Agate plaques*



*Part of the Stannard room at the museum*



*Where it all happens!*



*A small part of the photo display*



*The medal cabinet*



*The new picture display*

### Was this the smallest unit in the RN Patrol Service?

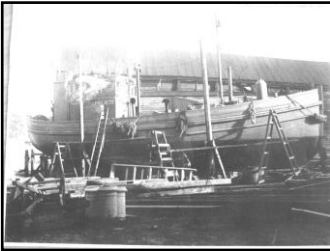
This all starts when the team were cataloguing some items in our collection and came across a wooden ship's crest, albeit slightly the wrong shape. The name on it was Acle, a search of all our reference books could not come up with a ship or base with that name. Acle is a small place in Norfolk not far from Great Yarmouth so we spread the net a bit wider and I contacted the Acle Archive Group who got it straight away. There was a small unit called the "Broads Flotilla" that operated out of Easticks Yacht Station and consisted of 3 small motor boats. Their head quarters became known as the Acle Sub Base and it can be surmised that having craftsmen in the yacht station that one of them carved the plaque "unofficially" to give the unit a bit of identity. The trident on the plaque could represent the 3 boats and it could also represent the local tradition of eel catching as the design is very similar to an eel fork. We have managed to find some photographs of the boats in action. The unit comprised of 1 officer, Lt Dudley Ward RNVR, 3 naval ratings as coxswains of the boats and 9 soldiers - 1 NCO and 2 other ranks in each boat with machine guns. They used to patrol the Norfolk Broads looking for anything suspicious as you can see in these photographs.



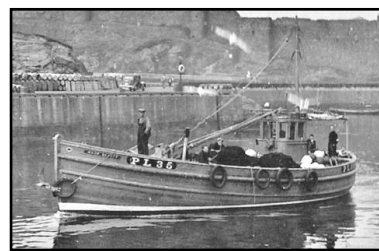


### Preserved RNPS vessels

We are regularly asked if there are any preserved RN Patrol Service vessels still around. There are really 2 answers to this question, the first is "NO", if you are talking about vessels still in WW2 guise (unless you know differently!), the other answer is "YES" if you are talking about those that have been saved but have changed their appearance. Recently a couple visited the museum to see what we had as they own a vessel that was used by the RNPS during the war, it was the MFV "Progress" that is now known as Progress of Whitby. They have restored her very well but she is not in RN colours or in the configuration she was during her time with the RNPS. We now come to a strange part in the story. While the couple were on their visit to the museum, a chap walked in and started to look around. The couple with Progress finished their visit and left the museum and so I went to see the chap that had come in and he told me he had come down from Scotland to see us as he was restoring a MFV that had been used by the RNPS, a vessel called Manx Beauty. I shot out to see if I could find the other couple but they had already left the park. What are the chances of the owners of 2 restored RNPS vessels coming to the museum on the same day and at almost the same time.



*Progress in WW2 and as she is now*



*Manx Beauty as built and as she is in 2019*



There are quite a few Coastal Forces vessels still around such as MTBs, MLs and MGBs etc and some are preserved working and in their WW2 colours and configuration. There were some MMSs and BYMS saved after the war and some became trip boats and others luxury yachts, such as the BYMS owned by John Wayne called Wild Goose and the one owned by the Ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau, Calypso.



*John Wayne's Wild Goose*

*Jacques Cousteau's Calypso*



### Wreaths

If anyone would like one of our coloured association wreath centres to go on a wreath we can supply them already laminated to fit in a standard Royal British Legion "Type C" wreath. These are different from the plain, hand drawn, black & white one supplied by the Royal British Legion Poppy Factory. For more details contact Leo on 01502 584555 or 07975623651.

### 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.

Please make requests for laying at least eight weeks in advance.

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

### 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 and/or names where possible.

### Web site

Don't forget to keep checking the web site connected to our Association which is: [www.rnpsa.co.uk](http://www.rnpsa.co.uk) 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 you can email them to me at [hq@rnpsa.co.uk](mailto:hq@rnpsa.co.uk)

### Obituary for Winter 2019

S/M A D Drydale	Wetherby	Yorkshire	S/M H F Patson	Manningtree	Essex
S/M C Harris	Lowestoft	Suffolk	S/M W R Spencer	Aylesham	Norfolk
S/M J Hill	Brierley Hill	West Midlands	S/M P Strong	Exeter	Devon
S/M T H McCullagh	Darlington	Durham			

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

### Welfare

Our National Welfare Officer is there to try and help you, she cannot perform miracles but will do her best to address any concerns which are kept confidential. Bonnie's contact details are - Mrs Bonnie Whisstock, 133 Corton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4PR. Tel. 01502 584555 or [bonniewishstock@outlook.com](mailto:bonniewishstock@outlook.com)

Blind Veterans UK, formerly St Dunstons, are the national charity providing free, lifelong support for ex-Service personnel with sight loss and their families. This service is available to anyone who has served in the Armed Forces, not just WW2. A friend who lives locally in Suffolk was put in touch with them and he was amazed how much help and advice they were able to give him. Their contact details are – Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD

Tel; 0800 389 7979, email; [information@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:information@blindveterans.org.uk) or web site [www.noonealone.org.uk](http://www.noonealone.org.uk)

The next item that may be of interest is from **Veterans UK** and concerns claiming for illness, injury or disease. This covers serving and ex-service personnel (including reservists) injured or disabled during service in HM Armed Forces. It also extends to cover Home Guard, Nursing and auxiliary services, Civil Defence (CDV), civilians disabled due to enemy action in the 39-45 war, merchant seaman and members of the naval auxiliary services or coastguard. There are regional offices but their head office is at – Veterans UK, Tomlinson House, Norcross, Thornton-Cleveleys FY5 3WP Tel; 0808 1914 2 18

email; [veterans-uk@mod.uk](mailto:veterans-uk@mod.uk) or website <http://www.gov.uk/veterans-uk>

It must be remembered that there are a lot of different agencies out there that can help with problems of all sorts. There is no need to suffer alone, if Bonnie is unable to help directly from our association she can tap into the network of charities that cover the service and ex-service community – there is no shame in asking for help.

Yours Aye, **The Duty Watch**

Cut ✂ or copy -----

### Slops items for sale from HQ (Winter 2019)

Item / Title	£	Qty	£	Item / Title	£	Qty	£
Lg. Blazer Badge, Gold wire	12.00			<b>Publications</b>			
Lg. Blazer Badge, Woven	6.50			RNPS Memorial Post Card	0.10		
Small Beret / Blazer Badge, Gold wire	9.00			Sparrows Nest Post Card	0.20		
Small Jumper / Beret Badge, Woven	4.00			Christmas cards - original	0.50		
Association Crested Tie	12.00			Christmas cards – clean sweep	0.50		
Museum pen	1.00			HMS Europa Booklet	2.00		
Museum pen	2.00			Dawn Always Breaks (book) Reduced	1.00		
Lapel Badge, Blue enamel	5.00			Churchill's Pirates Pt.2 (book) reduced	1.00		
White Ensign Lapel Badge	3.50			Red Diamonds (book)	3.00		
RNPS Poppy badge	8.00			Blue Mariners CD	4.00		
White Ensign Car Sticker	0.50			The Story of the RNPS, 2 CD set	6.00		
RNPSA Car sticker, coloured	2.50						
RNPSA Bookmark	1.50						
RNPSA Jubilee Mug	3.00						
RNPSA Colouring Poster	0.30						
				<b>Total</b>	<b>£</b>		
				P & P Small items	1.25		
				P & P Large / Heavy items	2.50		
				<b>Total Submitted</b>	<b>£</b>		

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Royal Naval Patrol Service Association, Naval Museum, Sparrows Nest, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 1XG**