

# SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



## ► THE NAVAL FAMILY COMMEMORATES AND CELEBRATES

More than 400 members of the Naval Family, including serving personnel and veterans, marched past the Cenotaph on Whitehall on Sunday 10 September at the Royal Naval Association's Biennial Parade. The event also included the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Royal Navy and the Royal Naval Association.

Personnel from HMS Collingwood and HMS Sultan marched past as well as representatives from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and 12 Naval

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**RNA Vice President  
S/M Claire Robson**

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**(Above) Across the generations – grandfather, grandson and great-grandson**

Associations, including the Association of Wrens, Association of Royal Yachtsmen, Submariners Association and the Merchant Navy Association.

We were also joined by members of the Belgian Naval Association and HMS President, the London Naval Reservist unit.

The Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Martin Connell CBE, took the salute, the Royal Naval Volunteer Band Association provided music and the Chaplain of the Fleet, the Venerable Andrew Hillier KHC, conducted the service.

The Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Martin Connell CBE, said: "I am honoured to take the salute at today's parade here at the Cenotaph. The RNA is committed to supporting, implementing and promoting the ethos and values of the Royal Navy."

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**(Right) RNA National President S/M Duncan Potts reads the lesson**







"I was delighted to sign a Memorandum of Understanding today which recognises the special relationship between the Association and the Royal Navy that significantly supports many serving and former serving sailors and their families."

S/M Bill Oliphant, CEO of the Royal Naval Association, said: "The parade is an important opportunity for the Royal Naval family; serving, veterans and families from across the country and across the RN disciplines to pay their respects both to each other and those who made the ultimate sacrifice."

"The RNA has over 18,000 members who are located across the world. Once you join the Navy you join a life-long community of like-minded and supportive Shipmates. 'Once Navy Always Navy'."

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**(Above right) Members of the RNA with Association Vice President S/M Mark Slawson and Sarah Atherton, MP for Wrexham**

**(Right) Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell with the Royal Marines Band**







**RNA National President S/M Duncan Potts signs the Memorandum of Understanding with Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell – see the full text of the MOU on page 10**











**Sailors from HMS Collingwood (above) and Sultan (left, with Commanding Officer Capt Jo Deakin)**

The RNA is the biggest collective group of Royal Naval veterans, serving personnel and their families, with over 18,000 members and over 240 branches in the UK and overseas.

We provide those with a link to the Royal Navy access to a life-long community of like-minded and supportive individuals. Our community provides companionship, resilience, comradeship and unity to anyone and everyone with a Naval story, supporting them through life's highs and lows.

**Images by Shipmate Nigel Huxtable**

## ► THE NAAFI IS BACK!

The NAAFI is back – and it could be coming to a high street near you!

Shipmates will be familiar with the NAAFI, supporting British Armed Forces communities around the world since 1920; now it is opening its doors beyond the Forces, and they can't wait to welcome you.

Having operated outside the UK for a few years, they are re-establishing the name and spread the word about the work they do. Serving up their famous NAAFI tea as well as

sandwiches, wraps, cakes and more, you will find several locations already open, with more planned for this year.

All will be welcome in their new cafes so why not pop in, find out what they're about and know that with every cuppa purchased, you too are giving back to the Forces.

Amongst the stores currently open are those in Whiteley, Hampshire (see <https://naafi.co.uk/the-bridge-deck/>), Winchester (see <https://naafi.co.uk/winchester/>) and Gibraltar (see <https://naafi.co.uk/gibraltar/>).

## ➤ CONTACTS



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### Snail Mail – Postal Address

RNA Central Office,  
Building 1/087,  
Scott Road,  
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Portsmouth  
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# ➤ FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

## Ahoy Shipmates

Welcome to September's Semaphore Circular on the new publication day of Friday. It struck me that it might be better to publish our Semaphore Circulars and the Semaphore Shorts on a Friday as members may have a bit more time over the weekend to read them. So, for our regular readers, the schedule in future will be:

- 1st Friday of the month – **Semaphore Circular**
- 2nd Friday of the month – **communiqué to Branch Secretaries and Chairs only**
- 3rd and remaining Fridays – **Semaphore Short**

We held this one back this month to capture some photos from the tremendously successful Naval Associations Biennial Parade in London last Sunday, with handsome numbers involved right across the Naval family, led by the splendid Combined RN Volunteer Band and serving sailors from HMS Collingwood and HMS Sultan, and RNR London Division, HMS President.

As well as the RNA, all the major associations were represented including the Association of Wrens, Submariners Association, the FAA Association, the RFA Association, the Merchant Navy Association and the Association of Royal Navy Officers – and let's not forget a host of smaller Associations who played their part too. Indeed, the family extended beyond the UK with the representation on parade from both the Irish and Belgian Naval Associations.

Thank you to the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Martin Connell



(Above) RNA National President S/M Duncan Potts and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell sign the MOU



Standard bearers on parade in Whitehall

CBE, who took the salute, and all who participated – and thank you especially to my team in Central Office for making sure that everything ran smoothly on the day. Earlier, 2SL had signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the RN and the RNA to allow for closer co-operation. You can read the full text of the MOU on page 10.

It was great to speak with some of the young sailors in training. As you would expect, when detailed off for a Sunday morning ceremonial activity, there might have been an element of Jack and Jenny whinging, but the ones I spoke to afterwards were mature enough to realise that it had been a privilege for them to do this at the Cenotaph and they would look back on it fondly. Indeed, their enthusiasm was infectious, and as one veteran said to me later: "The Navy is in good hands."

With the parade on the Sunday morning, the National Council – the Association's Board of Trustees – took the opportunity to meet at the Union Jack Club on Saturday afternoon. On completion of the meeting, S/M Keith Crawford (pictured below with his wife Yvonne and ratings from HMS Collingwood), at the tender age of nearly 85 and with increasing mobility issues, stood down from his 20 years as National Council Member for No 9 Area. Keith, thank you for your service



as an Association Trustee, and for your wisdom and experience at Council meetings. We'll certainly miss you.

## D-Day 80 – Normandy Cycle

Looking ahead to next June, which will mark the 80th anniversary of the biggest amphibious operation ever undertaken, I plan to take a group of cyclists to France with a view to visiting some of the main sites on the Normandy battlefield, culminating in attending the service at the British Normandy Memorial in Ver-sur-Mer overlooking Gold Beach on 6 June. This is not just a MAMILs (Middle Aged Men In Lycra) exped but a totally inclusive event for those who want to learn more about that period of the war and pay their respects to those who made it happen. Using our own bikes (electric bikes and wheelchair bikes welcome), we'll start and finish in Pompey over the week 3-7 June, and we'll plan routes that will suit the ability of those who take part. We'll spend three days/two nights in Normandy and it will be self-funded but I hope to be able to raise some sponsorship. If anyone is interested, please let me know ([admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com)).

Finally, please come and take part in the 2023 World Uckers Championships in the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, on 14 October – register with Dave MacAskill ([engagement@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:engagement@royalnavalassoc.com))

And don't forget, the RNA weekly lottery is live! By playing the RNA lottery, you will not only have the chance to win some wonderful cash prizes, but you will also be backing everything we do, particularly in the welfare space. Since COVID, we've done so much more in the welfare/wellbeing space with our veterans and having a lottery will allow us to do even more. It's only £1 per line, per week. Every Friday, six numbers are selected at random, and if the player matches three or more in the correct sequence, they will win one of the cash prizes on offer (up to £25,000)! Once players have registered online, they will be given a six-digit sequence, which will be entered into the draw. Sign up here: [www.RNALottery.co.uk](http://www.RNALottery.co.uk)  
Thank you and good luck!

Best wishes,

*Bill*



**ROYAL NAVAL  
ASSOCIATION**

**A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN  
THE ROYAL NAVY  
&  
THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION**

The Royal Naval Association (RNA) is the largest of all Naval Associations and leads the Conference of Naval Associations (CONA) as elected leader and executive. In recognition of the special relationship first agreed in 1987 the Royal Navy (RN) and the RNA have signed this MoU, outlining how we will work together to continue to support our serving and former serving personnel together with their families.

*The Royal Naval Association commits to:*

- Supporting, implementing and promoting the ethos and values of the Royal Navy
- Providing advice and guidance to the RN command and Navy Board on veteran issues
- Support the RN in the development and implementation of its "Leave Well" initiative
- At invitation, provide volunteer mentoring support to Phase 1 trainees at HMS RALEIGH and at BRNC, providing prizes to encourage a sense of belonging, duty and loyalty in the trainees
- Briefing New Entrants on the RN Charity Sector and the benefits of RNA membership to them
- Provide Phase 2 Trainees and Junior Officers at HMS COLLINGWOOD, HMS SULTAN and DCLPA with Navy Culture and Values Sessions at Portsmouth Naval Base
- Enhance support to the RN Family and People Support (RN FPS) organisation through the nationwide network of RNA Branches to the wider Naval Family, including Deployment Support
- Representing the RN at national, regional and local events when the RN is unable to do so, or when invited
- Providing the opportunity for Ships, Submarines, Commandos, Squadrons and other establishments to send a voting delegate to the annual RNA Conference
- Representing the United Kingdom on the International Maritime Confederation at the invitation of the RN

*To support our serving and former serving personnel together with their families the RN will support the RNA by:*

- Promote membership of the RNA, as the only fully inclusive naval association
- As chair of CONA, to enable the RNA to conduct advocacy on behalf of former serving personnel and their families with other charities, organisations and Government agencies
- Providing serving personnel to serve on the National Council of the RNA
- Sponsoring the RNA's occupation of premises in HM Naval Base Portsmouth
- Permitting access to RN establishments, to provide mentoring support to trainees, and to promote the RNA
- Promoting increased cooperation and partnership with the RNA and other naval associations, including leadership of CONA
- Providing ongoing dialogue with RN Comms/Engagement team, allowing sufficient access to unclassified information for the RNA membership to harness and inform their soft power utility

**This MoU is signed on behalf of the Royal Navy and The Royal Naval Association by**

.....  
**Vice Admiral Martin Connell CBE  
Second Sea Lord**

.....  
**Vice Admiral Duncan Potts CB  
National President Royal Naval Association**





## ➤ MAKING THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

As HMS Prince of Wales sailed down the River Forth and back to her duties, members of **West Lothian** branch looked back fondly at the fantastic day they had on board in May.

Here is an account of the visit from branch Secretary David Meehan:

On the morning of 13 May, in glorious sunshine, we boarded our minibus and headed for Rosyth Dockyard. While going over the Queensferry Crossing bridge we could see our destination in the distance – and even from that far away she appeared huge.

On arriving at the dockyard gates, we met up with shipmates from the Association of Wrens and Edinburgh branch of the RNA.

PO(HM) Joseph Williams handed out passes, then introduced his team who would be escorting us around the ship. It was a bit of a walk to the carrier, and then there she was - HMS Prince of Wales.

To the cries of “No photographs!” we passed through the gate to board her, still in dry dock. Once again we were struck by the scale - she was massive!

After climbing a lot of steps we arrived on the hangar deck and our jaws dropped. This vast space was so big you could put two Type23 frigates side by side in it. Incredible!

Once we were split into groups, we started the tour - and what a tour! The personnel who were showing us

around really knew their stuff and made the tour interesting and funny. We learned about the fire doors which split the hangar into smaller compartments. There are several lifts in the hangar, including aircraft lifts which can lift two F35 fighters at a time. We then climbed more stairs, this time to ‘FlyCo’ where the air command direct and control the aircraft on deck.

Then it was on to the flight deck – and the word ‘impressive’ does not do it justice. When we got to the top of the ski jump, let’s just say a few people felt a bit wobbly, we were so high up.

Perhaps you are picking up on a theme here – for your information, from bow to stern the ship is 284m (931.7 feet) long and 70m (229.6 feet) wide, equivalent to three football pitches.

From the flight deck we headed for the bridge which was like no bridge we had ever seen, or served on for that matter - there are flat screens everywhere, and lots and lots of room.

Then it was off to the mess decks.



Messes? Hmm... cabins actually, each holding six bunks and a TV. So much bigger than we ever enjoyed!

We were all invited into the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates bar/mess which, by the way, was bigger than the dining hall in a Type 42 destroyer. It had three massive televisions and, would you believe, a dance floor as well! I kid you not.

**continues on page 12 →**



## ➤ MEMORIES OF OP HERRICK

Kings Centre for Military Health Research (KMCHR), part of Kings College London, and Imperial War Museums (IWM) are behind a new project exploring how Operation Herrick in Afghanistan is remembered by those who served - and they are currently recruiting male Armed Forces personnel to talk about their experiences.

Between 2010 and 2014, the War Story project at IWM worked with the MOD and others to document UK involvement in Afghanistan, Op Herrick. 47 oral history interviews were recorded with those deployed within weeks of their return. They are now recruiting participants to be interviewed in a similar way.

Oral history captures personal recollections through planned recorded interviews, taking an hour or two of your time. The interview will involve a chat about memories and thoughts on the conflict, and also use two images you may have if you are happy to discuss them.

Organisers are seeking male Forces personnel and veterans who served on Op Herrick - particularly Herricks 11 to 16, which included deployments between October 2009 and April 2013.

If you are interested, email [chloe.storer@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:chloe.storer@kcl.ac.uk) or [cstorer@iwm.org.uk](mailto:cstorer@iwm.org.uk) for more information or to organise an informal chat.

## ➤ MEMORIAL SERVICE TO BE HELD FOR VICTIMS OF LISBON MARU SINKING

A memorial service will be held at midday on 2 October at the Lisbon Maru Memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) to mark the 81st anniversary of the sinking.

It is hoped that as many people as possible will attend, especially relatives of the prisoners of war who were on the ship as well as members of the services, regiments, corps and other units whose members were on board. Everyone is welcome to attend and there is no need to apply.

Lisbon Maru was a Japanese cargo liner converted for use in World War 2 as a troopship. On 1 October 1942 the ship was carrying almost 800 Japanese troops and more than 1,800 British prisoners of war, captured during the fall of Hong Kong the previous December, when it was torpedoed by an American submarine in the South China Sea. The Allies had not been forewarned of the presence of POWs on board.

The POWs were held in appalling conditions in the holds, and as it slowly sank Japanese troops and crew were evacuated but the British were left behind. Some managed to escape (and were fired on as they tried to escape or swim away) but many, deliberately trapped below deck, drowned.

Around 800 POWs died, and of the 200 or so who struggled to nearby islands, all but three were rounded up by the Japanese and sent on to Shanghai on the open deck of a gunboat - some died of exposure en route.

The NMA website offers advice on these and other means of travel, at <https://thenma.org.uk/visit-us/plan-your-visit/getting-here> and there are plans of the site, showing the exact location of the memorial, which is in the Far East Section, near the COFEPOW building, just off Captain Sir Tom Moore Way.

There will be limited seating. Please keep the front rows free for those taking part in the service and service association representatives laying wreaths. The remainder are for those who have difficulty in standing. Relatives and friends will be invited to lay wreaths at the end of the service.

## ➤ PRINCE OF WALES VISIT

After everyone had a drink West Lothian branch chairman Shipmate Brian Kelly presented PO(HM) Joseph Williams (Bungy) with the branch crest for the WO & SR's mess, which was greatly received.

PO Williams said that it was a privilege for his team and the ship's company to show this wonderful ship to us as the RNA does so much good work for veterans and serving sailors alike. They also had a great time listening to our dits and memories.

We then said goodbye to our hosts and after being escorted out of the dockyard we walked up the hill, (which was a feat in itself as we are not getting any younger) to HMS Caledonia, where the senior rates mess had kept the canteen open for us to get some scran and a drink, which was very much appreciated. Our visit came to an end with the bus home and a great day out was had by all.

West Lothian branch extends its thanks to RNA Central Office for the grant to help with transport costs, the Scottish area secretary and all involved for their help in organising this once-in-a-lifetime trip for us and our families.

A very special thanks to our hosts aboard HMS Prince of Wales: PO(HM) Joseph Williams, PO(HM) Roger Randall, PO(HM) Paul Denney, AB(HM) Nathan Murray, AB(HM) Robyn Stokell.





# ➤ MINISTERS URGE VETERANS TO SELF-DECLARE STATUS TO GPs

Government ministers have joined forces to encourage veterans and Service leavers to self-declare to GPs in order to access specialist healthcare initiatives run by NHS England and Service charities.

Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer and Health Secretary Steve Barclay say that ex-Forces personnel should identify their status as veterans with their doctors, as NHS England offers dedicated mental and physical healthcare pathways for veterans - Op Courage and Op Restore.

The ministers met the Op Restore team at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, London. The service supports veterans in England who have served in, or are leaving, the UK Armed Forces and have continuing physical health injuries and related medical problems attributed to their time in the Services.

They met with veteran patients, who spoke of how multi-disciplinary teams who understand their military backgrounds have helped to restore their physical health and wellbeing.

Formerly known as the Veterans Trauma Network (VTN), the service was renamed to improve awareness amongst veterans and to sit as part of a suite of dedicated healthcare pathways run by NHS England, including Op Courage: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service.

From this autumn, Op Restore will support veterans to access the Veteran Mobility Fund, which will deliver high-quality support to veterans with physical disabilities through grants to enable them to access mobility equipment that meets their needs and improves their quality of life.

Mr Barclay said: "Veterans have given so much to this country, and when they need support as a result of their dedicated service it's only right that the NHS is there for them.

"Op Restore is a brilliant programme that helps with veterans' physical health and wellbeing. Their joint approach includes military clinicians, meaning they receive help from medical professionals with a deeper

understanding of their individual needs."

Mr Mercer said: "If you have been injured, mentally or physically, by your time in service, please contact your GP and identify yourself as a veteran so you can access the specialist treatment that's right for you."

The holistic support is provided to veterans through working together with military and civilian medical professionals along with Armed Forces charities and NHS teams. Together, the network understands military life and the longer-term care and support that may be required for veterans, Service leavers, reservists, families and carers. Available across England, and informed by veterans, the service is hosted by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

Op Restore veteran support workers are linked with local and national charities and organisations so can support access to housing, employment, benefits, for example, as well as local veterans' breakfast clubs and volunteering opportunities which support the veterans' wellbeing.

## ➤ RESEARCH INTO DEMENTIA CARE

**The University of Manchester is conducting a study to understand the care and support needs of veterans living with dementia.**

**The project is currently recruiting military veterans living with dementia and their care partners or family members.**

**Organisers are seeking to encourage veterans living with dementia to contact them and participate in a short**

**interview, the purpose of which will be to inform appropriate service support for veterans who are still living in their own homes**

**If you would like to hear more about this research project and get involved, or know someone who might be interested in participating, please email Ana Churchman (researcher) at [anamaria.churchman@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:anamaria.churchman@manchester.ac.uk) or telephone her on 07721 654 897.**

## ➤ STUDY INTO IMPACT OF HEARING DAMAGE

The University of Chester's Westminster Centre for Veterans' Research is carrying out a study funded by the RBL to determine the impact of hearing impairment on veterans.

Members of the Armed Forces are likely to be exposed to noise ranging from small arms fire to blasts from explosive devices. As a result, hearing damage is one of the less visible but most common injuries sustained as an outcome of military service, yet there has been

limited research in the UK.

Previous research found working-age veterans were more than three times more likely than the wider population to report hearing difficulty.

The Centre is asking veterans with hearing impairments acquired whilst in service to participate in the survey.

For more information visit <https://chester.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/rbl-hearing-survey>



## ➤ CRICKETING LEGENDS

Following hard on the heels of the serving men's Inter-Service tournament, for the third year running the Legends (Over 45s) of Service cricket gathered at Wormsley cricket ground to contest the Invitational Hundred Festival.

In the first match a strong RAF team defeated an experienced Army side. Quickly finding their feet in the second match the RN restricted the Army to 97-2 before making light work of a rain-reduced chase, reaching 49-1 from 27 deliveries, built around a swashbuckling 17-ball 36 from Mark Toogood.

With the rain having cleared, the RN posted 119-6 against the airmen, with Toogood's 40 from 37 balls backed by John Batley's unbeaten 29. With their title on the line, the sailors had the bowling of RN Cricket Association President Vice Admiral Andrew Burns and Chairman Capt Andrew Ainsley (2-23) to thank for steadying the ship in the middle of the innings.

It all came down to the final five deliveries, and strike bowler Dave Garbutt restricted the RAF to just three runs to see the defending champions retain their crown by a single run.

The Royal Navy Cricket Club offers social cricket to all serving and ex-serving members of the Naval family and are recruiting new members to play, administer, and officiate. If you are interested contact RNCC Secretary Mark Smith - [markmiff1962@gmail.com](mailto:markmiff1962@gmail.com)

## ➤ SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Shipmates might be interested to become involved with the popular and successful RNA Specialist Interest Groups.

Whether you are already a part of a group or are yet to join one we highly recommend you get involved and see what it's all about.

For more information on each group please contact the designated leaders, listed in no particular order:

Camping and Caravanning – Ron Shilton: [rna.camping.caravan.motorhome.club@gmail.com](mailto:rna.camping.caravan.motorhome.club@gmail.com)

Classic Cars – Mike Burnham: [hon.secretary@rnarayleigh.org](mailto:hon.secretary@rnarayleigh.org)

Cricket – Mark Smith : [Markmiff1962@gmail.com](mailto:Markmiff1962@gmail.com)

Cycling – Craig Fulton: [craig@govguide.co.uk](mailto:craig@govguide.co.uk)

Decorative Ropework – Bob Jones: [oldsalt69@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:oldsalt69@hotmail.co.uk)

Divers – Bill Lawless: [billylawless40@yahoo.com](mailto:billylawless40@yahoo.com)

Fishing – Gus Honeywood/Selwyn Davies/John Stephenson: [rna.fishing.sig@gmail.com](mailto:rna.fishing.sig@gmail.com)

Golf – Colin Dinsdale: [rna.golfers@gmail.com](mailto:rna.golfers@gmail.com)

\*Riders Branch – Mark Gayton: [secrnariders@gmail.com](mailto:secrnariders@gmail.com)

Model Makers – Gary Daisley: [RNA.Modelmakers@gmail.com](mailto:RNA.Modelmakers@gmail.com)

If you are interested in forming a Special Interest Group please contact [admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com)

*\*Please note – the Riders are a Branch, not a Special Interest Group, but we have included their contact details for members' convenience.*



## ➤ CONFESSIONS OF A CARD READER VIRGIN

In late 2021, as the country was just starting to emerge from the pandemic, **St Neots** branch resumed collecting at outdoor events. It was clear to branch treasurer Mike Milne that spending habits had changed, as more and more transactions were made by card and many people no longer carried cash. The branch realised that to avoid a significant reduction in fundraising income they had to embrace this technology. Here is Mike's own take on the subject – and remember that other systems are available!

"We investigated the market and settled on SumUp. We bought their simplest model - £17 at the time. It worked fine and we were able to take card payments, but there was a major problem. To operate, it had to be paired with a mobile phone and mine was the obvious one. This meant that I either had to be on the stall all the time or leave my phone with someone else, neither of which I was prepared to do. We bought the next SumUp model - £50 at the time. The big difference is that this model has its own SIM card to connect to WiFi or a mobile network and so doesn't need a mobile phone, so it's completely stand-alone. Provided it has a good mobile signal, it'll connect to SumUp's system, and we've always managed to get connected in the various locations.

SumUp currently have three models:

**SumUp Air** (£39), their basic model that needs a mobile phone to operate, so we would not recommend this for most branches.



We felt it was worth spending extra on the next model.

**SumUp Solo** (£79), similar to the one that our branch is currently using, but smaller with a different keypad. It's completely stand-alone, and what I would recommend for most branches.

**SumUp Solo and Printer** (£139). their top model, but we would not recommend this model as it's a lot more expensive, and from our experience you won't need the printer for receipts, as very few people ask for them.

When you receive a reader you have to set up an account with SumUp and enter your branch bank account details so that they can transfer the payments to that account by BACS. There are a few hoops to jump through to comply with strict anti-money laundering checks, but anyone who's reasonably competent on the internet should be able to manage it without too many problems. You can test it using your own card, with the minimum amount of £1.

The SumUp model that St Neots has is very easy to use. Most of our shipmates use it without any

problems, even (to our great surprise) the stokers! We now have a good cadre of fully-qualified card reader operators amongst our duty watchkeepers.

Apart from the initial cost of the device, the only charges are that SumUp deducts 1.69 per cent from each transaction. This works out at 2p on a £1 transaction, 8p on £5 and 17p on £10. Download the SumUp app on a smartphone and the sales page shows each transaction as it occurs, with a running total of the transactions during the day, but it doesn't show deductions.

A few days later you get a Payout Report from SumUp, which is quite clear and shows what you've taken and their fee for each transaction – a recent St Neots branch report showed that for £266 total they deducted £4.38 and paid out £261.62.

There are other companies who provide card readers, such as Square, but I've no experience of using them, so can't comment. We're very happy with the service we get from SumUp. Payments are prompt, communication is good and any problems were quickly resolved.

To give an idea of what you're likely to be missing out on, at a recent two-day collection at a local supermarket, we collected £831 in cash and £262 on the card reader - almost 24 per cent of our total takings were by cards. That's something no branch can afford to ignore!

## ➤ NEW ROLE FOR PAUL



**Dublin** branch shipmates are extremely proud and honoured that branch chairman and National Council Member for Area 12, S/M Paul Stephenson, has been elected National Chairman of the Royal British Legion's Republic of Ireland District.

Paul (centre) has been a key member of the RBL management team for the past three years, serving as District Vice Chairman, and he stepped up in August to take over from Brain Duffy (left), who served for six years.

Shipmates say Paul works hard for both the RNA and RBL and it is a fitting tribute that he has been elected to this most senior role.

## ➤ UPDATE ON CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE 'THE KING'S SHIP' - HMS BRONINGTON

The HMS Bronington Preservation Trust charity is still going strong, and Trustee Director Mike McBride thought it was a good time to update RNA members about the charity's progress with regards saving the vessel.

Ton-class minesweeper HMS Bronington was built on the River Hull on Humberside and launched in 1953, the year of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. The charity's mission is to begin the process of restoring the vessel as a museum ship this year, the year of King Charles III's coronation – a significant factor because Bronington has been dubbed 'the King's Ship' as he commanded it for ten months in 1976.

The Trust has been in discussion with the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN), and believe the outlook is 'favourable' that if they can find the funds to restore HMS Bronington she will be destined for a post-restoration home at Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard - a couple of berths in the prime location of No 1 Basin and adjacent to HMS Warrior have been identified that would fit the bill.

With a viable home for HMS Bronington looking plausible, the Trust is now focusing attention on rescue funding and engaging with professional heritage funding consultants.

The Trust had a productive meeting with the Director and Investment Manager of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), and will be applying for rescue funding of around £1m shortly. In the case of tank landing ship LCT 7074, rescue funding from the NHMF led to restoration funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (HLF), and that vessel now sits in pride of place on the seafront in Southsea, outside the D-Day Museum. The Trust hopes to follow a similar trajectory with Bronington.

The project to save Bronington appears to resonate with the public and crowdfunding has now accumulated over £16,000 towards an initial target of £50,000, attracting some very positive comments. It is not enough money to save the vessel, but proves to the NHMF/HLF, NMRN and others that this maritime heritage project is popular with the public. Regional, national and international media reporting has been outstanding, and the RN website has been charting the progress of 'project Bronington'.

As expected, saving Bronington is proving to be a tough nut to crack and money is scarce, so any additional help from RNA shipmates or fundraising suggestions would be very much appreciated. The Trust has already had generous donations from Liverpool and Utttoxeter branches, and would be delighted if other branches followed suit...

After around 30 years of service, including four with RNVR Humber Division as HMS Humber, Bronington was opened in 1992 as a museum ship at Salford Docks, and ten years later moved to Vittoria Dock in Birkenhead alongside frigate HMS Plymouth and Landfall, aka LCT 7074.

When the trust that owned her closed in 2006 she became the property of the docks and harbour company and was laid up, but without funding she deteriorated and in March 2016 was found to have sunk at her mooring.

Members can donate through the Gofundme link - <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-restore-hms-bronington> and the Trust states that should the project fail, all monies, less necessary expenses, will be further donated to Service charities.



**HMS Bronington at her berth on Merseyside in 2013, three years before she sank**





## ➤ SAFE HAVEN FOR SAILORS NOW OPEN TO ALL

The Royal Maritime Hotel, just a few steps from Portsmouth Historic Dockyard in Queen Street, has a rich and storied history, tracing its origins back to Victorian times.

It began as the Sailors' Home Club in 1850, sitting in close proximity to the bustling Hard and the main entrance to the thriving dockyard. Founded to offer a safe haven and respite for sailors in-between ships, it was a response to the problematic conditions that sailors of the time faced.

Many would be taken advantage of by unscrupulous innkeepers and "merciless land-sharks", so the Sailors' Home Club was created as a philanthropic initiative to counteract this exploitation, ensuring sailors had a reputable place to stay between deployments.

At one point there were 383 regular lodgers with up to 1,080 lodging in a single week, such was the demand.

In 1851 it was granted Royal Patronage from Queen Victoria and Prince Albert - a significant endorsement of the institution's mission to provide for sailors, which

firmly established the Club's prestige and importance in the maritime community of Portsmouth.

Queen Elizabeth II was also a patron, as is King Charles III today.

Over the decades, the Club's role expanded to offer support to sailors and all those affiliated with maritime service. During the World Wars, the facility was crucial in supporting the Royal Navy, with thousands of Service personnel passing through its doors, seeking shelter, rest and camaraderie amidst the turmoil of war.

As a significant naval port, Portsmouth was a target for German bombers during World War 2, and the Club was bombed during the Blitz. On the night of 10 January 1941, during one of the Luftwaffe's raids on Portsmouth, the building was hit, causing significant damage, and further damage was inflicted two months later.

The city faced multiple raids, resulting in the loss of many lives and extensive damage to facilities and infrastructure. The Royal Sailors Home Club's commitment to serving sailors and maritime personnel meant it quickly

resumed operations, supporting the Naval community throughout the war.

Recognising its evolving role, the Sailors' Home Club was rebranded as the Royal Maritime Club in the mid-20th century and, more recently, as the Royal Maritime Hotel. Still, its core mission - to serve those connected to the sea - remained unchanged. Over the years, the Club continued to move with the times while preserving its historical charm and relevance.

It now offers a contemporary hotel and restaurant open to the public where surpluses from commercial activities are ploughed into charitable works in the maritime and veterans' communities.

Today, the Royal Maritime Hotel stands not only as a testimony to Portsmouth's rich maritime heritage but also as a symbol of dedication to the wellbeing of the maritime community. Whether you're a retired Royal Navy sailor, a maritime enthusiast, or a visitor seeking a taste of Portsmouth's history, the Hotel welcomes all with its blend of traditional hospitality and modern amenities.



## ➤ MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

For Shipmates who are unaware, there is an ongoing a series of 'Fireside Chats' on subjects of Naval and wider maritime interest. The presentations are held on Monday evenings commencing at 1830 using 'Zoom'. All are welcome.

**Meeting ID – 288 830 5105** Password – **Shipmate** (case sensitive) Or, click on the link [here](#)

Our image, from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 358), shows a stoker checking the boilers on board destroyer HMS Javelin in August 1940.

*\* Lecture subjects may change at short notice.*

*\*\* Shipmates please note that the 'Fireside Chat' commences at 1830*

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 18 September	Mark 'Dicky' Barton	The history of the Engineer Branch
Mon 25 September	Paul Godfrey	Operation Source – X-Craft vs Tirpitz
Mon 2 October	Malcolm Farrow	Britain Beyond the Seas
Mon 9 October (provisional)	Craig Jones/ Caroline Paige	Fighting with Pride – government compensation roll-out
Mon 16 October	Susie Martin	History of the Aircraft Handlers Branch
Mon 23 October	Angus Konstam	'The Convoy'





## ➤ DIARY FOR YOUR DATES...

The 2024 RNA Diary is now available to purchase from Central Office for £6 each which includes postage. We only have 250 diaries available for sale this year so order early to avoid disappointment.

To order please ring 023 9272 3747 or email [admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com)

## ➤ SLOPS STILL AVAILABLE FROM CENTRAL OFFICE

Shipmates are reminded that items such as blazer badges, pin badges, ties, beret badges etc are still available for purchase from Central Office.

If you would like to obtain such items, please contact Central Office on the main office number (023 9272 3747).

Also please note that the allocation of tickets for the Cenotaph Veterans Parade in Whitehall in November has now closed.

## ➤ SHOUT OUT FOR THE MENTORS

RNA members in the West Country have been mentoring initial entry recruits at HMS Raleigh for years, helping thousands of new recruits through their ten-week initial training - the crucial period which sees them transformed from civilians into military personnel.

The mentoring team of volunteers, run by Shipmate Terry Whitty, does not seek praise. They do it because they believe in the ethos that drives the Royal Naval Association – once Navy, always Navy – and as such they are prepared to put themselves out to offer a hand-up to the next generations of sailors.

But every so often they get the chance to bask in a little bit of glory, maybe a word of thanks from a grateful parent, or – as in this case – a few heartfelt words on a Facebook support group.

“Thank you to all the amazing Mentors, particularly Terry, Lee and Stuart. When I joined this group 10 weeks ago, I didn’t comprehend how much it would help me through this process. Leaving my 16-year-old at the train station was an emotional wrench, but the multiple posts enabled me to see his development (but more importantly his little face) and that really was invaluable. A lifeline was created, linking us parents and families to our recruit.

“I mastered the art of trailing through each and every photo to find him, and have printed every one of them, and collated them in an album for his 17th birthday next week – a treasured memory of his time at Raleigh with his fellow recruits, now his friends.

“This Facebook page really is an absolutely amazing link for us, and I didn’t really get it when I joined. I didn’t know how much this would help us through the process, so the most sincere thanks to the most selfless mentors, for your time (away from your own families) to link us with ours.”



## ➤ FOCUS ON... MILITARY-CIVILIAN CO-OPERATION

In the month that features Merchant Navy Day, it is worth reflecting on the relationship between the military and civilians – an unbroken history of mutual support and co-operation that is as old as the Navy itself.

Indeed, the earliest versions of the English (and Scottish, for that matter) Navy were heavily supplemented by merchant ships, mercenaries and vessels of allies, bolstering a small standing force of royal purpose-built ships of war. Merchant ships were vital to transport troops and stores on campaigns, and sea battles tended to be more like land battles afloat, with men in hand-to-hand combat rather than firing cannon at each other from purpose-built warships.

That regime, permitting the rapid creation of (mainly defensive) fleets, existed for some 400 years before William the Conqueror allowed it to lapse in the 11th century, leaving the shores of England open to raids from Scandinavia and Ireland, but by the 13th Century more planning was going into naval operations, and more success followed – the Battle of Sluys in 1340, for example, fought in the North Sea, saw some 160 ships of Edward II's fleet (mostly hired merchant vessels) capture more than 180 French vessels in close combat.

The Fishery Protections Squadron (now the Overseas Patrol Squadron) is the oldest standing naval squadron in the Royal Navy, tracing its roots to 1379, and was created to protect a vital civilian industry, and paid for by levies on fishing boats. At that time, North Sea herring fishermen of both England and Scotland were at great risk from enemy states – more

than 1,000 fishermen were killed in a single action by Flemish warships in one incident.


The squadron's strength and reach expanded greatly over the centuries, and at one point included a certain Horatio Nelson amongst its members, commanding frigate HMS Albermarle in 1781 on the North American Atlantic coast.

More recently the squadron played a high-profile role in the various Cod Wars, shielding trawlers from aggressive Icelandic fishing vessels and Coastguard ships (see 2 September in Swinging the Lamp), and today its primary role is still the policing of fishing grounds under an arrangement with civilian bodies – DEFRA and the Marine Management Organisation.

In return, there are countless occasions when the Navy has weighed on MACA (Military Aid to Civil Authorities) roles to help civilian organisations and populations, including, in recent times, flood relief (Op Pitchpole 2013), overseas evacuations, Covid pandemic support and covering for fire service strikes (Op Fresco 2002), to name but a few.

Another date in Swinging the Lamp – 1 September – notes the first successful test firing of the Whitehead torpedo, another example of the civilian-military nexus which persists to this day. Many successful Naval ships, weapons, aircraft and systems were created 'on spec' by civilian organisations and sold to, or adapted for, the military (though usually with an eye to a pressing – and potentially profitable – need).

continues on page 21 →



Icelandic gunboat Tyr ploughs past frigate HMS Scylla off Iceland during the Cod Wars of the early 1970s. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM CT 226)



Type 21 frigate HMS Arrow. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM MH 27580)



The first Royal Navy submarines, for example, were civilian-designed Holland boats, named after the Irish engineer John Philip Holland, who developed his ideas in the United States in the 1870s. Wireless radio technology was based on work by Italian inventor and engineer Guglielmo Marconi in the 1890s and was eagerly supported by the Royal Navy.

The legendary Fleet Air Arm warhorse the Fairey Swordfish and the Hawker-Siddeley Sea Harrier both began life as self-funded private ventures, the Kestrel in the case of the Harrier.

The Type 21 frigate, designed by Vosper Thornycroft in the late 1960s with a view to export markets, and built by Vospers and Yarrow on the Clyde, set a precedent for Royal Navy warships to be designed and built by commercial yards rather than originating in MOD naval architects' plans and dockyards.

Into the 21st Century, the civilian-military partnership continues to yield new ideas and kit; the annual NATO Joint Warrior exercises off Scotland incorporated elements in which civilian contractors have been able to demonstrate how their innovations – such as remotely-controlled vessels which operate as teams and sensors linked to artificial intelligence – could transform the Navy of the future.

It is in times of conflict that the civilian-military partnership comes into its own, and examples abound from every war. Trinity House is just one such example, laying hundreds of buoys across the Channel in the weeks prior to D-Day, marking safe lanes for the invasion fleet and putting lightships off the coast of France after 6 June.

And, of course, arguably the greatest feats of co-operation between the Royal Navy and civilians were seen during the World Wars, epitomised by the Battle of the Atlantic and Arctic Campaigns of 1939-45, when the Merchant Navy kept the UK and allied nations connected and supplied in the face of attacks by U-boats, aircraft and surface raiders, protected as best they could by British and Allied warships large and small.

Military and civilian sailors, including Reservists, could be found on both warships and merchantmen, and there can be no doubting the bravery displayed by both cohorts – just think of the mixed RN-civilian crew on board tanker Ohio during Operation Pedestal, when the 'floating bomb' was torpedoed, set alight, bombed and struck by a crashing aircraft before being dragged into Grand Harbour in Malta, a virtual wreck but a saviour in the eyes of the islanders.

Thousands of men sailing under the Red Ensign suffered the same fate as their doomed Royal Navy comrades. That sacrifice in both wars, and the efforts of those since 1945, is commemorated during September on the anniversary of the day war was declared in 1939.

3 September was also the start of the Battle of the Atlantic, as it was on that day that the first British civilian casualty of war, the liner SS Athenia was torpedoed and sunk to the north of Ireland with the loss of 117 passengers and crew (including Canadians and Americans).

Britain's strength at sea is built on the foundations created by the mutual support and respect between those who opt to serve under the White Ensign and their civilian counterparts.



## ➤ BRANCH NEWS

### Isle of Wight Branch:

A small group of shipmates from the Isle of Wight branch recently embarked on a trip to Fort Nelson on Portsdown Hill to visit the Standing With Giants and Falklands 40 exhibitions.

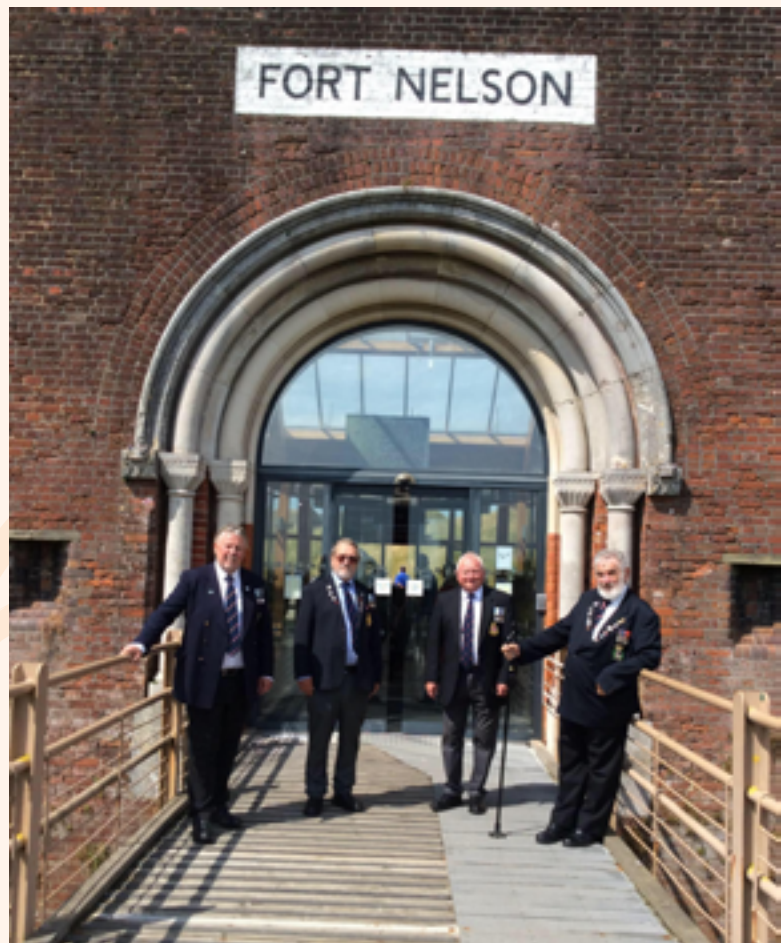
The visitors enjoyed the use of the RNA minibus to convey the group from The Hard in Portsmouth to the Fort and back, including a quick visit to the RN Veterans Motorcycle Club HQ at Fort Widley.

Visiting members included Ron Boynton (Chairman), Shaun Greenwood, Dave Creese, Peter Reffold, Faye Crawley (Treasurer) and Sandra Greenwood, who took their time to appreciate the various locations in and around this very moving tribute to the fallen of the Falklands Conflict.

Shipmates Shaun Greenwood and Dave Creese served onboard HMS Glamorgan in 1982 and Shipmate Ron Boynton was part of the team aboard Stena Seaspread. While walking around the exhibition, several groups of people stopped them for a chat, and at one point two members of HMS Cardiff's 1982 ship's company, including the Chief Stoker at the time, engaged the visitors in conversation.

A 'real live emergency' occurred during the visit when two of the less-mobile members of the group decided to take the lift between the two levels in the galleries, and managed to 'confuse' the lift control system, which resulted in the lower lift door being unable to open and the lift unable to move!

Wondering where Dave and Peter were, S/M Shaun Greenwood backtracked from the Falklands 40 exhibition to try to find them. Getting all the way back to the lift he was confronted with a crowd of visitors frantically trying to figure out a way to open the lift door, with Dave and Peter looking bemused inside!



Fort Nelson staff were alerted to the predicament and managed to tell Dave and Peter, by means of sign language and shouting, how to reboot the control panel and open the door – an incident which caused some amusement amongst their shipmates.

A major wash-up of events was called for by the Chairman, and was held in the Ship Anson pub in Portsea. All in all, a great day out, with very contrasting emotions.



### Chard Branch:

A good turnout by shipmates ensured Chard branch was able to give a good send-off to two members who were leaving the area for pastures new.

The Hunter's Lodge at Axminster was the venue for the dining-out of Ken and Rosemary Parker, with 14 fellow branch members there for the occasion.

Ken and Rosemary joined the branch when they moved to Chard in 2019, and have been active and supportive members – they will be missed.

Ken provided the branch a link to Naval history as his father, William George Parker BEM, was a legend of the Senior Service – he was the longest serving Able Seaman in the RN, having joined as a Boy Sailor in World War 1 and was also a World War 2 veteran, clocking up 43 years, amassing nine medals and two clasps as well as being Mentioned in Dispatches.

Ken recalls that he never met his father until he was seven years old as George loved life onboard his various ships so much that if he was granted shore leave he would often set off for home after arranging with his shipmates to send a GPO telegraph to say he was being recalled to his ship.

As leaving gifts the branch presented them with a ship's crest of HMS St Kitts, a ship that Ken's father served in for some time, and to Rosemary a Chard RNA pennant and photograph of members, and one of the times they were invited to attend lunch onboard frigate HMS Somerset, the branch's affiliated ship, with the then Commanding Officer, Cdr Tim Berry.



## CALLING ALL EX-WRENS AND RN WOMEN

You are all invited to a fun weekend at  
Whitcliff Bay Isle of Wight.

3<sup>rd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> November

A weekend full of activities, archery, axe  
throwing, quizzes, bingo and even parade  
training. There's even an indoor pool with  
chute.

Fund raising on Friday, Fancy dress  
Saturday St Trinians theme and a Church  
service Sunday. Disco till midnight every  
night

For full details and price list email  
[dauntless22@mail.com](mailto:dauntless22@mail.com)

Adult family and friends welcome

## ► RNBT CONFERENCE

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) is staging 'Supported for Life – the RNBT Conference' on Wednesday 18 October 2023 at the China Fleet Country Club, Saltash.

The RNBT is the largest of the RN benevolent charities and provides financial support to those who are serving or have served as RN ratings or RM other ranks and their dependants. They also run two care and nursing homes and a small almshouse.

As well as a cross-section of serving personnel, RNBT supporters and representatives of other charities attend the conference. Guests arrive from 1030 onwards for tea and coffee and the conference itself starts at 1115 and lasts for just over an hour. The presentation is a relaxed occasion and those who have attended the event, previously held at HMS Collingwood, have enjoyed themselves and found it of real interest.

If you would like to know more, or are interested in attending, please email [corinneday@rnbt.org.uk](mailto:corinneday@rnbt.org.uk) by 29 September.



**Christchurch and District Branch:**

Shipmates at Christchurch branch enjoyed a great four days at the Bournemouth Air Festival. Always there from the start, promoting the RNA, branch members bought their own gazebo and tablecloths by fundraising, and they work hard, fundraising and recruiting new members.

RNA hats are always a great crowd-puller with children and adults alike wearing them, and great conversation starters at the stand. Members engaged with many ex-Royal Navy and former Merchant Navy shipmates, dishing out beer mats with a QR code that takes people directly to the RNA website.

They also have a link to the government website with information on obtaining Service records – a frequently-asked question, particularly by families attempting to trace the wartime service of relatives.

Members were also privileged to receive VIP visits from senior Royal Navy officers, and by local MP Tobias Ellwood, who was accompanied by the Lithuanian Ambassador to the UK.

Our images show the Red Arrows flying over Bournemouth East Cliff, showing the RNA flag above the branch gazebo, as captured by branch standard bearer Ian Prescott; shipmates at the gazebo; and the Red Ensign which the branch flew to mark Merchant Navy Day.







#### **Wansbeck Branch:**

Three members of Wansbeck branch attended the Red Ensign Day ceremony at the coastal village of Lynemouth in Northumberland on 3 September, held to honour the merchant seaman who gave their lives during the last two world wars and since, and those who still keep the country supplied.

Presiding over the event was Cllr Liz Dunn, who read the epitaph message, and refreshments were provided afterwards at the nearby community centre.

Shipmates believe the service is important to remind people of the mariners who transport food and supplies around the world – of particular importance to an island nation such as our own. The flag was raised this year by Dave Armstrong, who is an ex-Fusilier from Ashington.

Wansbeck branch was formed on 5 July 1982, and on 8 July this year 22 members (out of a possible 26) enjoyed an excellent 41st anniversary dinner at the Anglers Arms in Choppington, Northumberland, expertly and efficiently served up by pub staff.

A raffle of 15 prizes made £76 for the branch – all told, a good night was had by those who were there.

Wansbeck branch includes former Army and RAF personnel as well as ex-Royal Navy folk, most of whom are now retired or unable to work because of medical problems, though there are also those who are still serving or still working in civilian jobs.

The branch proposed three toasts on the evening - the King, Absent Friends, and the RNA Branch and All Veterans.





### Rayleigh Branch:

Some eight years ago a member of Rayleigh branch - an RAF Associate - invited a few shipmates to attend an RAF memorial service at a 'Living Memorial' site. This site was a ten-acre area contained within Whitehouse Farm at Rettendon, Essex, located on the southbound side of Main Road.

Three shipmates attended the service and were amazed at what had been created by Fran and Peter Theobald, the owners of Whitehouse Farm. After the service they asked Fran and Peter if they had a memorial for the Royal Navy or Royal Naval Association, they said "no" – but said they could create one.

At the next branch meeting the three shipmates approached Alan Booth and Jim Hammond and told them about the place. Within a week Jim and Alan had been to Whitehouse Farm and started planning and negotiating for our own memorial site on a further ten-acre tranche of land that the Theobalds had released for further memorials to the Armed Forces.

The initial memorial area had been completed and dedicated on 8 July 2015, and two years later some benches were added and landscaping completed with a dedication of the benches on 8 August 2017.

In the interim Alan had crossed the bar, Jim had become Chairman and he frequently spoke about developing and expanding the site. Sadly in 2021 Jim too crossed the bar. A consequence of Jim's passing was that in resolving his affairs both the branch and his family received an amount of money. The family and the branch got together and, at the family's suggestion, it was agreed that the memorial site would be expanded and developed in a way that Jim intended.

Members spoke to Fran and Peter and asked if expansion was possible and how would it be achieved. A cabin was

found, selected and planning permission obtained after some delay and frustration. Once permission was granted, in autumn 2022, the cabin was obtained, a lake dug, and the wood prepared and protected. The groundwork was undertaken by Fran and Peter's team, and the preparation of the wood was completed over winter, almost completely by Jim's daughter Jacque

Come spring this year, the cabin was assembled, again principally by Jacque and her partner Mike.

The cabin is now virtually ready, and Rayleigh shipmates are planning an Open Day on 7 October 2023, to which all and any RNA members are invited and welcome.

The branch are planning to have a selection of soft drinks and an urn full of hot water for tea or coffee. It will be make-do-and-mend, but it will be there. They are also planning a rededication of the site and the cabin for 27 June 2024, which will be the 38th anniversary of the formation of the branch.

The images show the start of the build process and a more recent view of the site.







**Bude Branch:**

Once again, Bude branch members assembled with numerous 'gizzits' on offer on the White Ensign covering the table at Morrisons supermarket. The prime objective was recruitment to the branch, but old habits kick in and a conveniently-placed donations bucket was available for voluntary contributions - that doesn't surprise you, does it?

With a varied selection of items available, several youngsters departed proudly wearing a sticker of either the RNA or RMA, hopefully inspired to sign up in future...

A tip to all branches thinking along the same lines - engage with the youngster with a big smile, append a sticker to the T-shirt, youngster happy and parent will usually donate! The positive upshot was a very welcome recruitment of three new members to the branch - and hopefully several more this month when Bude stages its Bude at War events and the RNA and RMA have stands for all three days.

**St Austell Branch:**

St Austell Branch hosted a well-attended Quiz Night at the end of August at the Royal British Legion building in Duke Street – and it was Liskeard branch who kept up a winning streak by taking the honours.

Attended by Bodmin branch, as well as Liskeard and the hosts, there were 34 competitors in the fray, making it a fiercely-contested quiz covering all aspects of general knowledge (and including a 'Biscuit' Quiz!) After a contest lasting two hours it was finally announced that Liskeard had won – building on their success at the recent croquet match.

Chocolates and biscuits were the prizes of the day and, following that, pasties were eagerly taken and seen off with a tot or two for all including runners-up and all other competitors. There were plenty of prizes in the raffle too, ensuring that almost everyone went home with something.



£401 was raised for branch funds from the end-of-evening raffle – and it that same fund that allowed the branch to heavily subsidise the occasion.

Pictured are members of all three branches getting eyes down for the quiz



**Huntingdon and District Branch:**

Members of Huntingdon and District branch held a Sea Sunday Service in front of the War Memorial in Huntingdon's Market Square on 9 July.

As well as the Mayor and Mayoress, Cllr Phil Pearce and Mrs Debbie Pearce, and the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress, Cllr Karl Brockett and Mrs Julie Brockett, the attendees also included staff and cadets representing TS Cromwell of the Sea Cadet Corps, and members of the Huntingdon Male Voices.

Thanks go to Revd Clifford Owen for leading the service, and to the members of Huntingdon branch for marking this annual event, and of course to the Mayoral team, Huntingdon Sea Cadets, Huntingdon Male Voices, and to everyone else who came to support or watch this short service.

The image shows members of the branch and some of those who attended the service.

### Chatham Branch:

Chatham shipmates are preparing for a very special ceremony to be held later this month, when the Freedom of Medway will be formally bestowed on the branch.

Medway Council granted their highest civic distinction to the RNA branch, and to the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, at a meeting last summer, saying that the honorary freedom of the borough was awarded in recognition of the contribution their members made to the Falklands Conflict in 1982.

Councillors noted at the time that the 75-strong branch had three members who served during the South Atlantic conflict, two in aircraft carrier HMS Invincible and one in frigate HMS Penelope.

The ceremony, when scrolls will be presented, will take place in the Historic Dockyard on Sunday 24 September, and other branches from Area 2 are planning to support Chatham on the day.

Meanwhile, branch members have been hard at work with the more routine tasks with which shipmates are familiar.

As with numerous other branches, Chatham members often engage with the public via supermarkets such as Tesco, to recruit and fundraise.

Members generally find that the response is very positive, and that

many people have links to the Royal Navy and all things nautical.

At the time of writing, branch members had a busy schedule ahead, including attendance at the Chatham Carnival, a visit to Chatham Town Football Club, where they lay a wreath, and the Christmas Fair in the shopping centre, as well as fundraising and recruiting at Tesco in December.

And, of course, as not all people they meet are local, there is always a gentle reminder that there could well be an RNA branch local to where they live!

The picture (below) shows Chatham shipmates (from left) G Hine, S Plummer and R Collins at a Tesco store.



### Wallasey Branch:

Wallasey branch have sponsored a ladies' darts team which shipmates say is a credit to the branch and a great way of reaching out to support the local community.

The team came together at the beginning of the Winter League last year - a group of friends who decided to start up a team with the RNA, who had their ups and downs during the season but always made progress. Some of them had never played in a team before; the support each receives from their teammates is impeccable.

Team members are: **Toni Lou**, a new starter last season, who has progressed massively and currently holds the longest-standing win streak; **Nicole**, another new starter, but who hasn't lost a game yet – and the team's own Carol Vorderman with her maths skills; **Jean**, who has played for years, hits amazing scores consistently, and is the

most caring thoughtful player they have; **Toni Jane**, who has also played for years, is always up for a laugh and always arrives with a smile and a hug; **Kerry**, another experienced player, a brilliant scorer, who is guaranteed to make everyone laugh; **Liz**, a new starter, always the first to volunteer for marking the board; **Jenna**, a consistent player with plenty of darts experience behind her; **Paige**, the youngest player - at only 14, she has gone from a shy and nervous player to being a strong team player; **Kat**, who over two years has developed into a steady thrower; and finally the captain with a heart of gold, **Tina**, with her brilliant finishes, she has a heart of gold. She was thrown in at the deep end but has done an amazing job and takes advice from teammates without question.

You may have noticed that Shipmate Barry Davies, secretary of Wallasey branch, managed to sneak in on the photo (left)...





### **Eastbourne Branch:**

On this year's Merchant Navy Day members of Eastbourne branch honoured and remembered their Merchant Navy shipmates – some members have served in both the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy.

One such shipmate, Stuart Ramsden, spent 22 years in the Royal Navy, his last ship being Type 23 HMS Westminster, which he joined as the first Charge Chief MEA (CCMEA), just after it had completed post-build sea trials in July 1994. He left the Royal Navy in 1997 and, by a happy accident, joined the oil industry as an engineer on managed ships.

"I worked on all sorts of tankers, Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), product tankers (carrying refined fuels) and finally on Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) tankers," said Stuart.

"One highlight was as Chief Engineer delivering into service one of a number of LNG tankers known as Q-Max tankers which were, and are, the biggest in the world, from the Korean builder's yard - vessels which on a number of occasions deliver LNG to the UK.

"Working in the Merchant Navy gave me a varied and interesting job. In the Royal Navy I was mainly involved in marine engineering, but in the Merchant Navy, especially as a Chief Engineer, my job was much more varied - I was involved in the engineering, cargo operations and radar and radio/comms equipment maintenance and repair. I was also responsible for ordering the spares and stores, fueling the vessel and arranging for external specialist contractors when needed.

"I travelled all over the world to many different ports, such as Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Durban and ports in New Zealand, Australia and the Gulf States.

"In 2000 my wife decided to try a trip at sea with me as you can in the Merchant Navy, and continued to accompany me for the next 15 years or so. I worked with seafarers from many different countries and cultures, which is always enriching, and consequently have many good friends across the world.

"In September 2015 I came ashore into the company headquarters and became an Engineer Superintendent, managing the types of vessels that I had recently sailed on.

"Two highlights; in 2017 through 2018 I led the team that delivered five new LNG tankers into service for our company, again from Korean dockyards. Then just recently I led the teams that managed the refits of these same five vessels in the Singapore Refit Yards."

Stuart explained why it is so important to recognise the Merchant Navy: "I think most people who know their history are well aware of the sacrifice that merchant seaman made during the convoys of the Second World War.

"I don't think many know that there are tens if not hundreds of thousands of merchant mariners at sea on any one day. People do not realise that virtually everything that they eat or buy - dry goods, cars, fuel - are transported by sea, and merchant seafarers go unrecognised until things go wrong.

"It still remains a hard and hazardous job, as in the Royal Navy; it involves months at a time away from families, and this was exacerbated during the pandemic, when many personnel who were at sea at the time suddenly found they could not get relieved, with flights shut down and many ports not allowing personnel in or out."

**Pictured, from top, are Mr and Mrs Ramsden on board a LNG tanker, Stuart as Refit Superintendent for a tanker in Singapore, and Stuart and his mother on the flight deck of HMS Westminster in Portsmouth**



**Portsea and Portsmouth Branch:**

Portsea and Portsmouth branch had an impressive 50 shipmates present for the August branch meeting, with 33 of them staying for more banter and lunch at the Royal Maritime Hotel.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the presentation of a cheque for £400 to Shipmate Kevin Watkins, raised by branch members for Kevin and his crew's charity Action Medical Research for children.

This was in recognition for his team Raring to Row's effort in completing the 3,000-mile Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge this year. Kevin and his two colleagues took just 44 days to complete this awesome endeavour – not forgetting the three years of training...

Rumour Control tells our Portsea correspondent that Kevin is eyeing up the Pacific!

Branch members also welcomed staff and residents from their chosen charity, Admiral Jellicoe House, to the annual branch BBQ held at the Rose in June pub.

Pictured (below) with staff and residents are Chairman Mike Noonan, President Vice Admiral John McAnally and Secretary Ted Hawkins

A raffle raised £90 for the Rose in June's own chosen charity, tackling Motor Neurone Disease. Also pictured is Mike Noonan handing over the cash to pub landlord and BBQ chef extraordinaire Paul Taylor (pictured left).



**Dublin Branch:**

Shipmates from Dublin branch once again held their Summer BBQ at the Royal Irish Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire, although sadly the weather wasn't on their side. Every cloud has a silver lining - luckily the Club's 'wet bar' was able to accommodate all 73 attendees... Once again shipmates were delighted to welcome British Ambassador Paul Johnston, and his wife Nicola, along with British Defence Attaché Col Sean Grant and his wife Caroline.

**Rosyth and West Fife Branch:**

One of the branch's main fund-raising events for the year is the bottle stall at the Inverkeithing Highland Games. Thanks to the generosity of members, there was a plentiful supply of merchandise to attract donors.

Eight of the membership gathered at the Hillend Tavern to organise and ticket over 100 items of merchandise and gizzets for the stall, to organise items to auction and raffle at their annual BBQ to be held this month, and to fold hundreds of draw tickets for the raffle. Davie Sowden and Dave Evans then finished the job by attaching tickets to bottles on night before the Games. The Chairman's van was then packed with the gazebo and prizes ready for Saturday.

Despite a poor weashter forecast, conditions at the

beginning of the Games were pleasant, and the branch had a prime pitch next to what appeared to be Scotland's biggest burger van. Business at the stall was steady throughout the day, and shipmates noted quite a large number of overseas visitors including Swiss, Germans, Dutch and Canadians.

The weather deteriorated later in the day, but shipmates were delighted with the final total of £483.50 raised, a remarkable amount for such an event.

Sadly, another annual fundraising event, Hillend Village Fair, fell foul of the weather; 24 hours prior to the event shipmates were alerted to a weather system which forecast torrential rain and thunderstorms commencing around 0800 and continuing throughout the day. In light of this it was reluctantly decided to cancel the event. The weather forecast was fairly accurate for a change!



## Shipmate John Nash

Shipmate John Nash sadly crossed the bar on 26 July 2023 at the age of 85 after a long battle with cancer.

John was a longstanding member of **Stroud** branch, having been chairman and vice chairman for many years, and he was very proud to wear his uniform and attend Area meetings, even apologising for being unable to wear suitable footwear due to his illness.

John joined the Royal Navy in June 1957 and served his full 22 years, leaving as a POMEM and received six medals (including the Pingat Jasa Malaysia, which he received years later).

He was the only MEM/Stoker shipmates knew who actually shovelled coal in his early career as a stoker!

He served in many ships including Battle-class destroyers HMS St Kitts and HMS Camperdown, HMS Apollo, Bar-class boom defence vessel HMS Barnstone, Loch-class frigate HMS Loch Alvie, Blackwood-class frigate HMS Malcolm (pictured below), Ton-class minesweepers HMS Appleton and HMS Wasperton, HMS Mermaid, Hecla-class survey vessel HMS Hecate, depot ship HMS Maidstone, Ham-class inshore minesweeper HMS Flintham and amphibious assault ship HMS Fearless.

During his time he was involved in the Indonesian and Northern Ireland conflicts. He also served at several shore establishments including HMS Sultan, HMS Terror in Singapore and HMS Fisgard.

After leaving the Royal Navy John gave 35 years of service to the Stroud Sea Cadets at TS Severn, encouraging many young people to become proficient in boat handling, rope skills and the like in preparation of our future Navy, in which many did enlist.

John was an active member of Stroud branch and enjoyed their jollies to Portsmouth and Torquay, supporting members at their reunions and being the first to volunteer when they held functions including Trafalgar and Pickle Nights.

He was always happiest when he was in his overalls, and was a typical chippy, spending many hours in his workshop producing ship's crests, a crucifix, cannon and anything else he could think of. Many of his crests were given to branches he visited and can be found as far afield as Australia and South Africa. BBC Repair Shop - eat your heart out! John would repair anything for anyone and thoroughly enjoyed doing it.

He never lost his love of the sea, and for many years had his own seagoing motor boat and would spend many a happy time at boat festivals and regattas, on the canals and rivers, all accompanied by a tot or ten and various friends and shipmates.

Shipmate John was a stalwart of the branch and will be sorely missed, not only as a shipmate, but as a mentor to the young and a good friend to all.

Fair Winds and Safe Passage, we know you will find safe anchorage.

**Blackwood-class frigate HMS Malcolm, from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM FL 15051)**



## Shipmate Peter Mackintosh

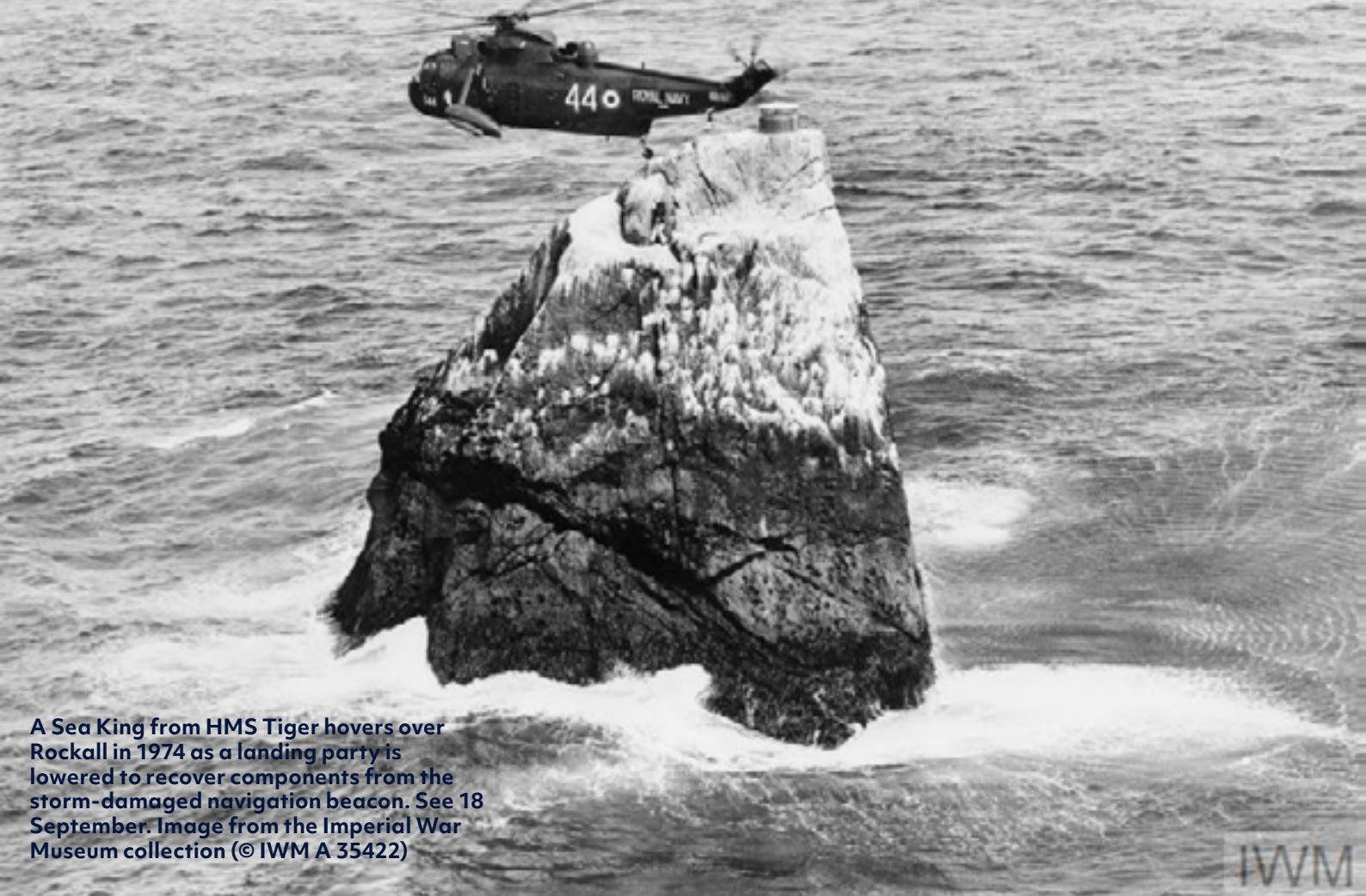
It is with heavy hearts that Rosyth and West Fife Branch announces the passing of another long-standing and steadfast shipmate, Peter McIntosh, on 8 August.

It was only in last month's Circular that we reported that Peter's wife, Shipmate and former Wren Catherine, had crossed the bar on 28 June, and that shipmates supported

Peter at Catherine's funeral at Dunfermline Crematorium.

Our report noted that branch members had been pleased to see Peter, albeit under such sad circumstances, as he was said to have not been in the best of health himself.

Peter's funeral and cremation was held on 21 August at Dunfermline Crematorium.



A Sea King from HMS Tiger hovers over Rockall in 1974 as a landing party is lowered to recover components from the storm-damaged navigation beacon. See 18 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 35422)

## ► SEPTEMBER SWINGING THE LAMP

### 1 September 1870

The first successful test firing of the Whitehead torpedo by the Royal Navy, decades before the vessels with which they became synonymous – submarines – became operational. The weapon was the first self-propelled underwater explosive munition, driven by an on-board motor, and set the pattern for generations of 'tinfish'. The name 'torpedo' is taken from the torpedo fish, a type of ray that stuns its prey with an electrical jolt, and in turn the fish takes its name from the Latin 'torpere', to be stiffened or paralyzed (the usual fate of anyone who touches the fish). The Whitehead torpedo was developed as a private venture in the mid-19th Century by British engineer Robert Whitehead, who was manager of a factory in Trieste, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

### 2 September 1958

The first clash of the First Cod War. Shortly after Iceland introduced a new 12-mile fishing limit, Grimsby trawler Northern Foam was fishing in

a fog bank in the Spearmint II protected zone, outside the former four-mile limit but inshore of the new (non-recognised) limit. She was approached by two Icelandic gunboats, one of which – Thor – sent over a boarding party. One of the trawler's crew managed to send a message to frigate HMS Eastbourne, which was on protection duties. Sailors from the frigate counter-boarded and arrested the Icelandic party. With the RN providing support for the British fishing fleet, this was the only direct confrontation between the RN and the Icelandic Coastguard during the First Cod War.

### 3 September 1939

Britain declared war on Germany at 1100, two days after Germany invaded Poland; France did likewise the same day. Winston Churchill was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, prompting the Admiralty Board to send the signal to the fleet: 'Winston is back'.

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#### **4 September 1981**

RMS Faithful, the last dockyard paddle tug, paid off at Devonport. Though a highly-maneuvrable vessel, Faithful and her sisters were relatively expensive to maintain, so they were replaced by conventional screw tugs. There were hopes she might be preserved, but nothing came of them and she was sunk two years later as a target off Gibraltar.

#### **5 September 1914**

The launch of HMS Ark Royal, started as a collier at Blyth and bought by the Admiralty just after her keel was laid, allowing a total redesign so that she could carry seaplanes. She took part in World War 1, including the Gallipoli Campaign when her aircraft carried out reconnaissance and observation missions. Renamed Pegasus in December 1934, the 7,100-ton vessel became a catapult ship in 1941 and was sold in October 1946. Her new owners planned to convert her to a merchant ship, but ran out of money, and she was sold for scrap in 1950. She was the only aircraft carrier designed to carry sail – she had a mizzen to help keep her head into the wind.

#### **6 September 1919**

Charlie B - Lord Charles Beresford - died at the age of 73 in Scotland. Beresford was a much-liked, caring and innovative Naval officer who rose to the rank of Admiral, but a personal dispute with Jackie Fisher prevented him ever reaching the exalted heights of First Sea Lord. He was an MP on multiple occasions (representing seats in Ireland, London, York and Portsmouth), using his position to lobby in Parliament for the Navy; he was a prominent advocate for the benefits of physical training amongst the British population, and also represented the Associated Chambers of Commerce on a lengthy visit to China.

#### **7 September 1830**

A single ship action in which sloop-of-war HMS Primrose (18 guns) captured the 20-gun Spanish slave ship Veloz Passagera off West Africa. The short, bloody action, which ended when the British boarded the slaver, saw 43 of the Spanish crew of 150 killed and 20 more wounded, while five of the 556 slaves on board died in the battle. Three Royal Navy sailors were killed, and a dozen wounded. This was a rare encounter between relatively powerful ships during the RN's anti-slavery operations off Africa, and the most significant in terms of the strength of the ships and the number of casualties.

#### **8 September 1797**

36-gun frigate HMS Dryad sank 12-gun French

privateer Cornelia 150 miles south-west of Cape Clear Island, off the coast of southern Ireland. The privateer was set on fire, but because of the sea state only 17 of her crew of 90 could be rescued.

#### **9 September 1943**

Operation Avalanche – the Salerno amphibious landings in southern Italy designed to capture Naples and isolate Axis forces to the south – was launched. Italy had by then signed a secret armistice with the Allies which would see them switch allegiance, but the Allied troops going ashore on the West coast of Italy met fierce resistance from battle-hardened German defenders, and progress was slow. Beating off fierce counter-attacks, Allied troops finally captured Naples on 1 October and shortly after the whole of southern Italy was in Allied hands. The landings prepared the way for the slow, gruelling march north, through well-prepared German defensive lines, which lasted until mid-1944.

#### **10 September 1856**

HMS Resolute, abandoned in the search for the lost Franklin Arctic expedition of 1845, was discovered by an American whaler. Resolute, a converted merchant ship formerly named Ptarmigan, had been bought by the Admiralty in 1850 and refitted for Arctic service specifically to search for Franklin, whose expedition had set out to discover the North West Passage. Resolute, part of a flotilla hunting Franklin or signs of his progress, became trapped in ice in the summer of 1853 and was abandoned by her crew the following May. The abandoned ship drifted 1,200 miles eastwards, and in 1856 was discovered by the Connecticut whaling ship George Henry. The British barque was bought by the US Congress for \$40,000, refitted, and sailed to the UK in a gesture of courtesy, and she continued to serve in home waters under the White Ensign until 1879. A desk made from her timbers has been used by all but a handful of US presidents in the White House, many using it as their official desk in the Oval Office.

#### **11 September 1919**

HMS Hermes, the first ship in the world to be ordered, designed and built as an aircraft carrier, was launched at the Armstrong Whitworth yard on the Tyne. Her build was protracted, as lessons learned from experiments on earlier ships converted as carriers were taken into consideration. The delays meant she was not the first purpose-built carrier to be commissioned – that was the Japanese ship Hoshō in 1922 – but after her commissioning in

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1924 she served briefly in the Atlantic before service with the Mediterranean Fleet and on the China Station. Hermes was sunk by Japanese dive bombers off Sri Lanka on 9 April 1942 with the loss of more than 300 of her ship's company.

#### **12 September 1920**

On a calm autumn day, the 9,000-ton steel and concrete Nab Tower was nudged into place in the eastern approaches to the Solent by two tugs and sunk to form a permanent replacement for the old Nab light vessel. The tower, which sits on the sea bed two or three degrees from the vertical, was originally designed and built as part of a planned anti-submarine barrage for the Dover Strait in World War 1, but after the Armistice the 28-metre tall structure – the only one of eight to be completed – was instead repurposed and towed to shallows over the Nab Rocks off the easternmost point of the Isle of Wight.

#### **13 September 1985**

HMS Orpheus made the last submarine visit to Manchester, in part prompted by a close affiliation with the locally-based UK arm of the Exide company, which was a major supplier of submarine and torpedo batteries to the Royal Navy.

#### **14 September 1805**

Horatio Nelson, having arrived at the George Hotel in Old Portsmouth early that morning after an overnight journey from Merton in South London, had breakfast, visited the dockyard, met government officials then walked to the beach – his last steps on dry land. He was followed by a huge, adoring crowd, who continued to cheer as he clambered into his barge and was rowed out to his flagship HMS Victory. The ship sailed the following day, and within weeks Nelson was killed at Trafalgar.

#### **15 September 1995**

HMS Thunderer, the Royal Naval Engineering College at Manadon, Plymouth, paid off, and training was transferred to the University of Southampton.

#### **16 September 1939**

Cruiser minelayer HMS Adventure was withdrawn on completion of the first phase of minelaying of the Channel mine barrage, stretching from the Goodwin Sands to Dunkirk. Adventure was deemed too difficult to manoeuvre in the confines of Dover Harbour, so later phases of the operation were completed by three other ships in November.

#### **17 September 1914**

The hulk of former iron screwship HMS Invincible, on tow from Plymouth to Scotland, foundered in heavy seas off Portland when machinery broke adrift. More than 20 of her passage crew of 64 were lost.

#### **18 September 1955**

The desolate granite Atlantic islet of Rockall, more than 200 miles west of the Outer Hebrides, was claimed for the United Kingdom by a landing party from survey ship HMS Vidal. Part of the reasoning for the move was to prevent foreign powers setting up an observation post while the UK conducted nuclear missile tests.

#### **19 September 1901**

HMS Cobra, one of the first two turbine-driven destroyers in the Royal Navy, was lost in a storm off Cromer in East Anglia. The crew of the Outer Dowsing light vessel saw Cobra approach in heavy seas, then stop in a cloud of steam before breaking in two – it is thought she may have struck floating timber which holed her and caused her hull to collapse. Just a dozen men were saved; 44 Royal Naval personnel and 23 contractor staff, mainly from turbine manufacturers Parsons Marine, died in the wreck. The ship, a private venture by Armstrong Whitworth, had been launched in June 1899 and bought by the Admiralty in May the following year.

#### **20 September 1976**

Ton-class minesweeper HMS Fittleton collided with frigate HMS Mermaid during a mail transfer off the Netherlands, capsizing in less than a minute. Although 32 survivors were picked up by other ships, 12 people – 11 Royal Naval Reserves and one regular Royal Navy – died in the accident. The ship, formerly HMS Curzon, was raised from the sea bed the following day, and she was scrapped the following year.

#### **21 September 1941**

A Grumman Martlet aircraft of 802 NAS (HMS Audacity) shot down a Focke-Wulf aircraft attacking Convoy OG 74 – believed to be the first success by an auxiliary aircraft carrier. The Martlet – later known by its American name, the Wildcat – was an effective carrier-borne single-seat fighter which succeeded the Fairey Fulmar and was operated by the Fleet Air Arm before it was available, in other variants, to American forces. HMS Audacity led a hectic but short service life. She was built as the German freighter Hannover and captured in the

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Caribbean in March 1940. Although damaged when her German crew attempted to scuttle her, she was refitted and went through various guises (named Sinbad then Empire Audacity) before she was partly rebuilt as HMS Audacity, an 11,000-ton escort carrier designed to help plug the dangerous gap in mid-Atlantic air defences. She proved her worth, escorting four convoys, her Martlets shooting down seven Condors and helping destroy a U-boat before she was torpedoed and sunk on 21 December 1941 500 miles west of Finisterre.

#### **22 September 1989**

An IRA timebomb exploded shortly after 8.20am at the 'Coffee Boat' recreation area at the Royal Marines School of Music at the RM Depot in Deal, Kent, causing the building and an adjacent accommodation block to collapse and killing 11 members of the Royal Marines Band Service, as well as seriously injuring 20 others, many of them teenagers. The bomb caused extensive damage to the barrack and local houses. Although the Provisional IRA claimed responsibility for the atrocity, no one has ever been identified or convicted in relation to the bombing.

#### **23 September 1943**

X-craft – midget submarines – carried out an attack on German heavy warships in Kaafjord and Langfjord in Norway. Six such craft – towed to the Norwegian coast by conventional submarines – were involved, though one (X9) was

lost with her passage crew before the attack and a second (X8) was damaged and scuttled when her explosive charges leaked and had to be jettisoned. One of the remaining four (X10) abandoned her attack through mechanical problems, one (X5) was believed sunk by gunfire from battleship Tirpitz, but the final two (X6 and X7) dropped their charges beneath the German ship, causing sufficient damage to put it out of action for more than six months. Both X-craft were captured and the crews taken prisoner.

#### **24 September 1982**

Survey ship HMS Hydra returned to Portsmouth Harbour from the South Atlantic – the last of the ships of the original Operation Corporate task force sent to reclaim the Falklands after the Argentine invasion earlier that year. Hydra had served as an 'ambulance ship' during the conflict, transferring injured Service personnel from hospital ship Uganda to Montevideo in Uruguay, then staying on in the South Atlantic after the fighting to act as the islands' hospital ship until repairs were completed to the Stanley airfield.

#### **25 September 1953**

Retired Naval officer Lt Cdr Mike Lithgow set a world air speed record of 737.3mph in a Supermarine Swift prototype over the Libyan desert near Tripoli. Lithgow, who had flown Fairey Swordfish torpedo bombers during the war – and was one of the pilots who attacked Bismarck in May 1941 – went on to a career as a test pilot, and died during stall testing when the

**Continued on page 36 →**

**The first official photograph of cruiser HMS Tiger, at sea in February 1959. See 28 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 34145)**



prototype BAC One-Eleven airliner crashed in Wiltshire in October 1963. Lithgow is pictured right (facing camera) in this image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 32170) in front of an experimental Supermarine 508 twin jet (a forerunner of the Scimitar) in 1952.

### **26 September 1748**

Cuthbert Collingwood, Nelson's second-in-command at Trafalgar, was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Collingwood's HMS Royal Sovereign led one of the two lines that broke the Franco-Spanish line of battle, firing the first shots of the battle and crippling the Spanish flagship Santa Amalia. Collingwood assumed command of the British fleet after the death of Nelson, ensuring victory was secured. Apart from being a first-rate sailor and officer, the 1st Baron Collingwood was highly-regarded for his tact, diplomacy and political judgement. He was much-loved by his men as a kind, generous and thoughtful leader, and was also a close friend of Nelson – the bodies of the two heroes of Trafalgar lie close by in tombs in St Paul's Cathedral in London.

### **27 September 1941**

The Royal Navy's Navigation School, housed at the Old Naval Academy in Portsmouth Dockyard since New Year 1906, completed its move to Southwick House on Portsdown Hill, where it was commissioned as HMS Dryad. The Old Naval Academy had suffered serious damage during air raids in March 1941.

### **28 September 1986**

HMS Tiger, the Royal Navy's last cruiser, arrived at Desguaces Varela in Spain to be broken up. Ordered as a conventional cruiser during World War 2, along with sister ships Lion and Blake, she was completed after the war and in 1968 was converted to a 'helicopter and command cruiser'. She remained in service until 1978 when she was put in reserve, and was scrapped in Spain in October 1986.



### **29 September 1939**

Former White Star Line flagship RMS Majestic, which since April 1937 had served as cadet training ship HMS Caledonia, burned to the waterline at Rosyth. Though the ship was lost, fortunately all cadets and instructors had moved ashore to more secure accommodation earlier in the month. Majestic was originally built and launched as the SS Bismarck of the Hamburg-America Line in 1914 – the largest liner in the world until the mid-1930s – but was taken over by the British under the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War 1. She was raised in 1942-3, yielding thousands of tons of high-quality steel for the war effort.

### **30 September 1971**

HMS Simbang – RNAS Sembawang in Singapore – paid off. The airfield was used by pilots of aircraft embarked in aircraft carriers based in Singapore or with the Eastern Fleet, and saw Naval aircraft from numerous squadrons pass through between the Japanese surrender in 1945 (when the airfield was known as HMS Nabrock) and 1971.

**Salvage work under way on the hull of training hulk HMS Caledonia on the Forth. See 29 September. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (© IWM A 9775)**





# ➤ LONGCAST

2023	
16 Sep	Area 4 Quarterly Meeting – Frome Branch
29 Sep	Open Day – Central Office
14 Oct	World Uckers Championships (Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth)
21 Oct	Trafalgar Day
28 Oct	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting – Harwich
11 Nov	Armistice Day
12 Nov	Remembrance Sunday
18 Nov	Area 3 Quarterly Meeting (Committee 16 Nov)
08 Dec	National Council meeting (via Zoom)
25-31 Dec	RNA Central Office closed
2024	
01 Jan	RNA Central Office closed
20 Jan	Area 4 AGM – Dorchester Branch to host
May (DTBD)	National Standard Bearers Competition
Jun 14-16	RNA National Conference, Cardiff

Please check the RN Shipmates.co.uk website for a list of further reunions: [www.rnshipmates.co.uk](http://www.rnshipmates.co.uk)



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[www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk)



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Sea Urchin's Gin <a href="#">Navy Strength Gin</a> <a href="#">Arctic Convoy Vodka</a>	10% to RNA from the sale of each bottle  Don't forget to tick the box for RNA.  P&P is free for orders over £40, otherwise it is £4.50.
<a href="#">China Fleet Country Club</a>	Click on the link for lots of different offers for Serving and ex-Serving Royal Navy and Royal Marines

Watch this space for RNA offers on event tickets and lots more to come!