



Ahoy Shipmate RNA Torbay Newsletter

Volume 2

Issue 1

January 2012

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A Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments. They were ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall, and quoted, "Thou shall not take the covers off the neighbour's wife."



Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen

Well Shipmates many thanks to all you that pull out all stops and sent me a whole bunch of material for this and future editions.

At the eleventh hour two shipmates expressed an interest in a little December 'Meet & Greet', alas it was too late to organise anything.

Since our last meeting I have clocked up a few miles, first driving up to Scotland to celebrate Christmas with my two sons, a thousand miles round trip; and not the best of Christmas I have ever had. Arrived to find both my sons unwell, youngest with a heavy cold and quite severe ear infection, my eldest just being diagnosed with coeliac disease (pronounced see-liac) In short Gluten intolerant. This compounded with his already Lactose Intolerant disorder and being a Type 2 diabetic, he will be on a very special diet for rest of his life.

Notwithstanding the illness, Christmas Lunch was a disaster. We had booked a table at a rather (normally) upper class and excellent hotel. They were offering a five course lunch for £49.95 per person. There was a choice of three starters, a set soup, choice of three main courses and five choices of dessert following by cheese & biscuits and coffee/tea + mints.

The starter and soup was excellent, but main course saw enough food on all four plates which would have hardly provided a meal for one. (We had booked a gluten free meal which they had forgotten to prepare). Some us had the beef and others turkey, the slices being measured with a micrometre! We each had two sprouts, two slices of carrot, three small chunks of turnip and one roasted potato. When we caused a stink they brought a small bowl of extra potatoes, but lost their way back to the table with the extra veg. I caused such a stink that they knocked £50.00 of the bill, which I accepted but warned duty manager it was not they last they would hear about the issue.

My second trip was to Southampton where I sadly attended the funeral of my youngest cousin aged just 60, who had died of lung cancer and she was a non-smoker!

Chairman's Corner

By Shipmate John Soanes



Hi! Shipmates,

First of all a very Happy New Year to all, hope everyone continues to enjoy Norrie's newsletters, I think they are well worth the effort, a newsletter keeps us in touch with what's happening and reminds us of events coming up.

I have no desire to start waxing lyrical about the defence policy of our coalition government, but I can't help feeling that common sense appears to be lacking at the moment.

I was reading in the press a few weeks ago where The Chief of Defence Staff General Sir David Richards pointed out that defence cuts have left the Armed Forces unable to carry out all the tasks that the Government demands of them. As far as the Royal Navy is concerned he expressed anxiety about the number of frigates and destroyers in operation. He spoke a lot of common sense when he commented about deploying complex and expensive warships on operations to defeat small pirate vessels was, in his words, "Ridiculous". You get to this ridiculous situation where in Operation Atalanta off the Somali coast, we have £1 billion destroyers trying to sort out pirates in a little dhow with RPGs costing \$50, with an outboard motor (costing \$100!)

The editor of Warship World also makes the point that many of the tasks undertaken by the RN could be classed as constabulary duties and a ship with long endurance a helicopter and a modest armament would be a far better asset to deploy against piracy and counter drugs operations than an expensive destroyer or frigate.

The United Kingdom is not only duty bound to protect the UK borders but is also responsible for the security of our fourteen overseas territories. All this in addition to the many conflicts and disputes that our government seem to get our country involved in. I am not suggesting that we should not be doing our bit on the world stage, but in my humble opinion we should

have a government that recognises that without sufficient ships, future tasks may prove extremely difficult to manage. Very capable ships such as Type 45s can only be in one place at one time. There seems to be a real need for a building programme which should include a number of small or medium sized patrol type vessels which should not cost the earth capable of many of the predictable policing type tasks coming our way in the future. There are shipyards in this country that have been producing such vessels for foreign navies for years, and would probably welcome the work.

John Soanes.



Piracy of SS "Tungchow", from 29th January, to 1st February, 1935.

By Shipmate Peter Brown

My sister Amy and I were born and bred in Shanghai in the 1920's and after beginning our education in the Kindergarten of the Cathedral School in Shanghai, my sister started up in North China at the China Inland Mission Schools in Chefoo (now Yantai) in 1932, followed by me in 1933. We would only return to Shanghai in December each year for the Christmas holidays and that happened as usual in December, 1934. We were to return to Chefoo with the Shanghai Party late in January, 1935 on board one of Butterfield and Swire's ships and in this instance we sailed from the French Bund on board the "Tungchow" during the afternoon of 29th January. The attached photographs taken from the North China Daily News of 2nd February, 1935, show the Girls and Boys of the Shanghai Party waving goodbye to their families as we set sail on that memorable day.

A few hours after sailing and while we were still in the mouth of the

Yangtse River, the SS "Tungchow", with 78 CIM school children and Staff on board was pirated! The Chinese pirates, 14 in all, who had booked as passengers on the lower deck, managed to climb up over the guard rails on to our upper deck and had taken on the Russian anti-pirate guards with their automatic weapons. They outnumbered the guards and when they had killed the sergeant, the remaining four guards surrendered.

From that time we were confined to our cabins and not allowed out on deck, while the pirates ordered the British Captain to turn south instead of sailing north. They also attempted to disguise the ship by painting two white stripes around the plain black funnel and renamed the ship "Toa Maru", making her look like one of the Japanese OSK (Osaka Shusen Kaisha) Line. Unbeknown to any of us at that time, they were heading south to a well-known pirate den in Honghai Bay, just north of Hong Kong. When the "Tungchow" failed to wireless in to the port of Tsingtao, en route north and then failed to arrive in Weihaiwei on the morning of the 1st February, the Senior Naval Officer, Shanghai, advised the C-in-C of the China Squadron in Hong Kong that the "Tungchow" was missing. All Royal Navy ships that were available were ordered to sea to look for us and within six hours the "Tungchow" was found in Honghai Bay by aircraft from the carrier HMS Hermes, just as the pirates had left the ship and were heading for a beach in a junk and one of the ship's lifeboats. We were allowed to go up on the boat deck and I well remember seeing the aircraft arrive overhead, but they were told not to fire at the two craft as they each had a hostage aboard. They were left unhurt by the lifeboat on the beach and were returned to the ship. We then sailed for Hong Kong and were met by the destroyer HMS Dainty and escorted into port.

You may wonder why on earth did the pirates attack a ship which was carrying a large number of school children returning to their schools in Chefoo? The answer lies in the fact that originally some gold bullion was to have been carried on board the "Tungchow" of the B&S Line up to Tiensin, the port of Beijing, but at the last moment this precious cargo was transferred secretly to a ship of the other British Shipping Line, Jardine Matheson, but the pirates had not caught up with this transfer! By way of some compensation for their loss, they confiscated any jewellery, watches and cash from our school party and also looted any valuables they could find from the ship before their departure.

After refuelling and taking on more provisions, we returned north to Shanghai, where we were given another week's holiday, having been re-united with our families. Then we sailed again in another B&S ship for Chefoo, where we arrived safely back at school and if I remember rightly, were heralded as heroes and were something like the envy of the rest of the schools!

Peter

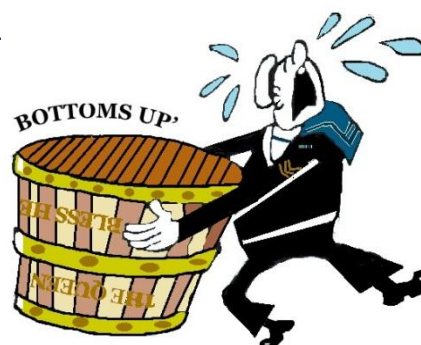
Social Scene

TBD At AGM

Battle of Trafalgar.

Saturday

October 19th 2013



North China daily news

SHANGHAI, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY
2, 1935

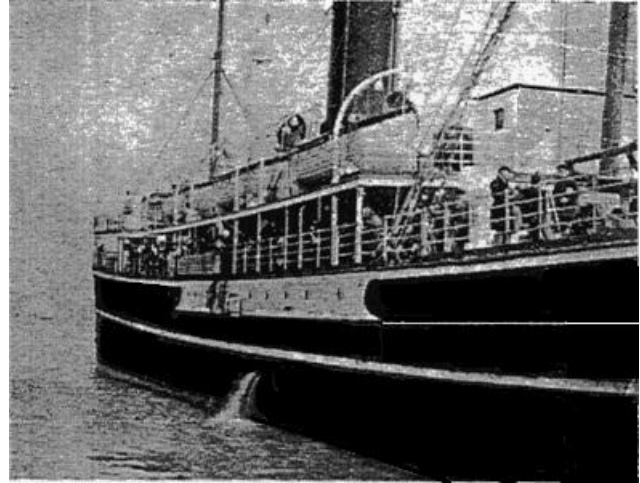
TO-DAY'S ENTERTAINMENT"
Auditorium: Hai-Alai, a p.m.
Canidrome: Greyhound Racing. 3.30
Cathay Hotel: Entertainment,
Casino Fans: Floor Show
Del Monte: Cabaret,
Park Hotel: Entertainment.
Capitol: The Count of Monte Cristo 1710

AS THE SS. TUNGCHOW LEFT SHANGHAI



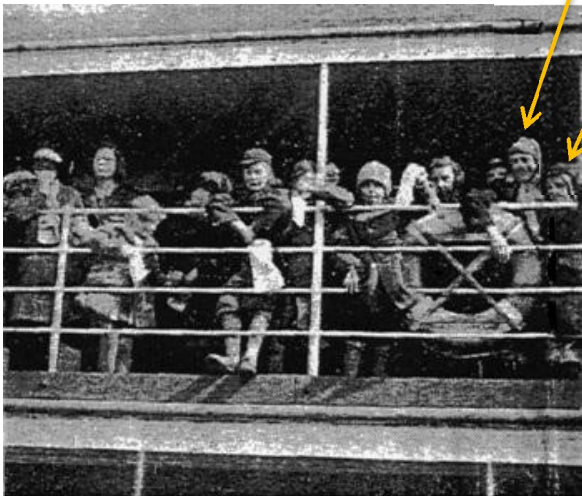
Children waving goodbye from the rails

Eddy Brown



Leaving the French Bund

Peter V.



The photographs were taken on Tuesday morning as the SS. Tungchow left the French Bund with over seventy children bound for the Schools in Chefoo after their holidays. Just outside the Yangtze mouth the ship was pirated, a guard killed, and an engineer wounded. The ship was taken to Honghai Bay in the south where she was found yesterday by British warships. None of the children was injured.

In a dark and hazy room, peering into a crystal ball, the Mystic delivered grave news:

"There's no easy way to tell you this, so I'll just be blunt. Prepare yourself to be a widow. Your husband will die a violent and horrible death this year."

Visibly shaken, Laura stared at the woman's lined face, then at the single flickering candle, then down at her hands.

She took a few deep breaths to compose herself and to stop her mind from racing. She simply had to know.

She met the Fortune Teller's gaze, steadied her voice and asked, "Will I be acquitted?"

For some reason, wives tend to like this joke.....

THE PALMER BOYS

A POIGNANT TALE OF THREE BROTHERS WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE DURING WORLD WAR TWO.

Submitted by S/M John Soanes

Mrs Jessie Palmer of Laindon, Essex had five sons, her eldest boy was Charles. On the 15th April 1921 Charles Palmer joined the Royal Naval Training Establishment at Shotley, Suffolk, known as *HMS Ganges*.

On completion of initial training he spent the next year serving in *HMS Monarch* and *HMS Conqueror*. In December 1922 Charles Palmer was posted to stand by for service in the Danae Class Cruiser *HMS Diomedé* which was being fitted out at Portsmouth. For the next three years he served in *Diomedé* in the 5th Light Cruiser Squadron of the China Fleet, followed by a drafting to *HMS Cairo* which was part of the 8th Cruiser Squadron on the American and West Indies Station. In 1928 *HMS Cairo* became Flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet before finally returning for a refit in 1930. After a period in *HMS Vernon*, Charles was to join *HMS Cornwall* for another three year commission in the Far East. On return to the UK he served for three years in home waters in the destroyers *Saladin* and *Vega* and enjoyed some well-earned shore time in Pompey Barracks.

On the 7th June 1939 Charles Palmer joined *HMS Royal Oak* and, as we all know this battleship was torpedoed and sunk by Gunther Prien Commander of *U.47* whilst at anchor in Scapa Flow on 14th October 1939 with the loss of over 800 lives. On 15th October 1939, Jessie Palmer received the following telegram "Deeply regret to report death of your son Charles J. Palmer Able Seaman J/101960 on War Service. Rear Admiral, RN Barracks Portsmouth".

In June 1924 Albert Palmer, second son of Jessie, joined *HMS Ganges* where he trained a Boy Telegraphist. Whilst at *Ganges* he won a Championship Medal for winning the cross country race for the Signals Division in 1925.

Albert served in many ships prior to World War Two including *HMS Canterbury*, a veteran of the 1916 Battle of Jutland, *HMS Ark Royal* (a converted Collier ship), *HMS Calypso* and *HMS York*. In late 1936 he started a three year service in the destroyers *HMS Firedrake*, *HMS Brilliant* and *HMS Bulldog* and then on 27th August 1939, just two weeks before war was declared, Albert was drafted to *HMS Kelly* as a Leading Telegraphist. On the 12th September 1939 *Kelly* on the orders of Winston Churchill and commanded by Lord Louis Mountbatten *Kelly* was ordered to Cherbourg to bring the Duke and Duchess of Windsor back to Portsmouth. Over the next few months *Kelly* took part in several incidents including the rescue of crew from the torpedoed *HMS Courageous* and the evacuation of troops in Norway.

On the 9th May 1940, having arrived off the island of Sylt near the border of Germany and occupied Denmark, *Kelly* was torpedoed and 27 members of the crew were lost. Albert was working in the radio room and was killed instantly. Jessie received her second telegram: "Deeply regret to report your son Albert W. Palmer Leading Telegraphist C/J110638 is missing presumed killed on War Service, letter follows. Commodore RN Barracks, Chatham"

Edward Palmer was the youngest son of Jessie Palmer's family. He joined *HMS Ganges* on 22nd January 1926 and after his training was drafted to an old coal burning battleship *HMS Emperor Of India*. He went on to serve in *HMS Nelson*, and the destroyers *Wakefield*, *Westminster*, *Caterham* and *Wild Swan*.

He followed this with a short spell in *HMS Campion* (Light Cruiser), *HMS Curacao* and then in July 1934 the battleship *HMS Revenge*.

In 1936 Edward was drafted to *HMS Skate* for a brief period before serving in *HMS Forester* and *HMS Penelope*, following which he joined *HMS Cormorant* at Gibraltar on 6th June 1941. On the 11th October that year he wrote home *“just ticking over and not getting too monotonous, although I am looking for a change”*. Two days later he joined *HMS Fleur De Leys* which sailed from Gibraltar on the 13th October 1941 to escort an inbound convoy. Twenty four hours later *HMS Fleur De Leys* was torpedoed by an enemy submarine. Jessie Palmer was to receive her third telegram: *“Regret to report that your son Edward S. Palmer P/JX 125840 is missing presumed killed on War Service. Commodore Naval Barracks, Portsmouth”*.

Note

This is a very much shortened version of an article I wrote following research I made in about 1994 into the Palmer Brothers Royal Naval careers. This was at the request of a friend of mine who had no idea of his uncles RN careers.

Versions of this research have appeared in the HMS GANGES magazine and in a book by Tom Robson entitled BOY SEAMAN RN.

John Soanes.

A Sunday school teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."



Oldest Running Car and Driver

This man owned & drove the same car for 82 years. Can you imagine having the same car for 82 years?

How long have you owned a car?

Mr. Allen Swift (Springfield , MA.) received this 1928 Rolls-Royce Piccadilly-P1 Roadster from his father, brand new - as a graduation gift in 1928 (lucky lad!).

He drove it up until his death (2010) at the age of 102. He was the oldest living owner of a car that was purchased new. Just thought you'd like to see it.

It was donated to a Springfield museum after his death.

It has 1,070,000 miles on it, still runs like a Swiss watch, dead silent at any speed and is in perfect cosmetic condition. (82 years). That's approximately 13,048 miles per year (1087 per month)

Vice-Presidents Patter

By Shipmate Mike Seaward

No report submitted



Vice-Chairman's Chat

By Shipmate Shaun Runham

No report submitted



Secretary's (Sob) Story

By Shipmate Carl Goodwin

No report submitted

THE DIFFERENCE IF YOU MARRY A SCOTTISH GIRL

Three friends married women from different parts of the world....

The first man married a Greek girl. He told her that she was to do the dishes and house cleaning. It took a couple of days, but on the third day he came home to see a clean house and dishes washed and put away

The second man married a Thai girl. He gave his wife orders that she was to do all the cleaning, dishes and the cooking. The first day he didn't see any results but the next day he saw it was better. By the third day he saw his house was clean, the dishes were done, and there was a huge dinner on the table.

The third man married a girl from Scotland. He ordered her to keep the house cleaned, dishes washed, lawn mowed, laundry washed, and hot meals on the table for every meal. The first day he didn't see anything, the second day he didn't see anything either but by the third day, some of the swelling had gone down and he could see a little out of his left eye and his arm was healed enough that he could fix himself a sandwich and load the dishwasher. He still has some difficulty when he goes to toilet though!



Hurricane Appeal

A major hurricane (Hurricane Shazza) and earthquake measuring 5.8 on the Richter Scale hit Essex in the early hours of Wednesday with its epicentre in Basildon. Victims were seen wandering around aimlessly, muttering "Faaackinell".

The hurricane decimated the area causing almost £30 worth of damage. Several priceless collections of mementos from Majorca and the Costa del Sol were damaged beyond repair. Three areas of historic burnt out cars were disturbed.

Many locals were woken well before their Giros arrived.

Essex FM reported that hundreds of residents were confused and bewildered and were still trying to come to terms with the fact that something interesting had happened in Basildon. One resident - Tracy Sharon Smith, a 15-year-old mother of 5 said, "It was such a shock, my little Chardonnay-Mercedes came running into my bedroom crying. My youngest two, Tyler-Morgan and Victoria-Storm slept through it all. I was still shaking when I was skinning up and watching Jeremy Kyle the next morning."

Apparently looting, muggings and car crime were unaffected and carried on as normal.

The British Red Cross has so far managed to ship 4,000 crates of Special Brew to the area to help the stricken locals. Rescue workers are still searching through the rubble and have found large quantities of personal belongings, including benefit books, jewellery from Ratners and Bone China from the Pound shop.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

This appeal is to raise money for food and clothing parcels for those unfortunate enough to be caught up in this disaster. Clothing is most sought after - items most needed include: Fila or Burberry baseball caps Kappa tracksuit tops (his and hers) Shell suits (female) White stilettos White sport socks Rockport boots Any other items usually sold in Primark.

Food parcels may be harder to come by but are needed all the same. Required foodstuffs include:

- Microwave meals
- Tins of baked beans
- KFC
- Ice cream
- Cans of Special Brew.

22p buys a biro for filling in the compensation forms

£2 buys chips, crisps and blue fizzy drinks for a family of nine

£5 buys fags and a lighter to calm the nerves of those affected.

BREAKING NEWS

Rescue workers found a girl in the rubble smothered in raspberry Alco pop and were worried she had been badly cut... "Where are you bleeding from?" they asked, "Romford" said the girl, "woss that gotta do wiv you?"

Please don't forward this to anyone living in Essex - oh, sod it, they won't be able to read it, anyway.



*I was drinking in Boobs when a girl caught my eye,
she had a ring through her nose and a tatt on her
thigh.*

*I asked her, her name and she said "I'm called
Gwen"*

*She smelt like a horse and she danced like a wren.
She said come on Jack are you game for a laugh
so we jumped in a fast black and went back to her
gaff.*

*Now the house was in Swilly and on the front door
was a crest from each ship that had been there
before.*

*I said to her "Gwen that's impressive to see"
As it looked like she'd been on more ships than me.*

*It smelt like the mess after a good run ashore
there were lanyards and cap Tallies all over the
floor.*

*She walked to the window and sat on the ledge
I put my hand down her knicks and felt meat & two
veg.*

*I tried to get out but she got hold of my leg.
It was then I knew Gwen was an ex killick Reg.*

*I ran out of the door and into the street
with my kecks round my ankles and nowt on me feet.
Thank god I'd escaped and gave praise to the Lord
got big eats and a taxi and went back onboard.
So if you're ever in Plymouth and bump into my
Gwen*

just remember she's really a Reggy called Ben.



Women Waiting For The Perfect Man

MEET OUR NEW PATRON

Captain Wreford-Brown DSO



Joined RN in 1963 and the submarine service in 1968, subsequently qualifying as a Navigation specialist and Principal Warfare Officer. Served in two diesel submarines, a

Polaris SSBN and two fleet SSNs all of which were involved in covert cold war operations. Commanded **HMS Opossum**, a diesel submarine that undertook a patrol in the Baltic and participated in the 1977 Fleet Review and undertook a staff appointment within the Flotilla.

As a Commander attended the National Defence College, commanded the SSNs **HMS Conqueror**, undertaking a ninety day war patrol during Operation Corporate, and **HMS Valiant**, undertaking patrols in the North and South Atlantic, and a staff appointment in the MOD Directorate of Naval Plans.

As a Captain, the first Commanding Officer of the frigate **HMS Cornwall**, member of the Royal College of Defence Studies, Assistant Director of Defence Programmes and commanded the second Submarine Squadron at Devonport. Left the RN in 1995.

From 1995 to 2010 worked at Paignton Zoo becoming the Director of Finance and Human Resources of the charity South West Environmental Parks operating Paignton and Newquay Zoos and Living Coasts, three major tourist attractions in the West Country.

Interests include his grandchildren, hunting and Dartmoor.



AB Just Nuisance - Part III

Edited by Shipmate Norrie Millen

.... And now for some rest of the story.

No Angel

All things considered, *Just Nuisance* was more than just a dog. He did much to boost the morale of all those involved in fighting the War from the South Atlantic Station and he was renowned for the love and care he showed for his sailor mates. However, *Just Nuisance* was no angel, as his "Conduct Sheet" shows. He was guilty of several misdeeds, such as travelling on the train without his free pass, sleeping on a bed in the Petty Officer's dormitory, going AWOL, losing his collar and resisting eviction from pubs at closing time. His most serious offence was fighting with the mascots of other Royal Navy vessels. He caused the death of the mascots on both the *HMS Shropshire* and the *HMS Redoubt*.

His Conduct Sheet, now in the Simon's Town Museum, shows three recorded offences:

- *Traveling on the railways without a pass. Punishment Awarded: Confined to the banks of Froggy Pond, Lily Pool, with all lamp posts removed.*
- *Did sleep in an improper place, namely in a bed in the Petty Officers' dormitory. Punishment Awarded: Deprived of bones for seven days.*
- *Did resist ejection from the Sailors' & Soldiers' Home. No punishment awarded.*

End of an Era

Just Nuisance was discharged from the Royal Navy at *HMS Afrikander* where he had been "stationed" since 1940, on Monday, 1st January 1944. Great Danes never live to a great age and a motor accident had left him suffering with thrombosis which was slowly paralysing him. On the recommendation of a veterinary surgeon, the Royal Navy decided to put him to sleep. So, on 1st April 1944, the day of his 7th birthday,

Just Nuisance was taken by lorry for his last ride to the Simon's Town Naval Hospital, seemingly knowing what awaited him, where the Naval Surgeon then put him to

sleep. On Saturday, 2nd April 1944 at 11:30 am, his body was wrapped in a canvas bag, covered with a white Royal Naval Ensign and he was finally laid to rest with full military honours at Klaver Camp on top of Red Hill (the current site of the South African Navy Signal School) - a solemn ceremony that included a firing party of Royal Marines and a lone Bugler. A simple granite gravestone marked his grave

Since then, the life and story of Just Nuisance has become so much a part of Simon's Town - a statue on Jubilee Square reminds us of him and his grave on Red Hill is a regular stopping point for visitors.



Cooks to the Galley



Baked Cheese Potatoes

A nice simple supper dish requiring little preparation.

Ingredients

To serve 2

4 large potatoes
4 oz. strong cheddar cheese grated (or to taste)
3 oz. butter
Salt & pepper

Method:

Wash potatoes thoroughly and then bake in hot oven until flesh very tender.

Remove from oven, cut potatoes in half lengthways. Scoop out all flesh and place in a bowl.

Return skins to oven to dry out and crisp.

Mash flesh thoroughly adding butter and cheese and season to taste

Return flesh to skins forking mixture down. Return to oven to crisp up tops and allow cheese and butter to melt.

Serve immediately.



The demise of RNA Southern Ontario

By Shipmate Norrie Millen

Gone are the heady days when my mother Branch has over 130 full members and 22 Associate's, 50% + who turned out for parades, socials and other events. Bearing in mind though, our Branch's Geographical area was bigger than the United Kingdom, members scattered all over the Province of Ontario, and many would think nothing of driving 150 – 200 kilometres to attend monthly meetings. We had other members in Alberta, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New York and Washington State.

Overtime the Branch has slowly dwindled; many members (majority WWII) "Crossing the Bar" and sadly Branch was unable to recruit any younger members, despite aggressive recruiting and advertising our presence at HMCS York, having a large booth at the British Shows, our RNA "Up Spirits" Show, attending and supporting both Canadian and US Parades, in which we did pick up odd member.

Times are changing; young service personnel of today for the most part are really not interested in joining the Legions, Navy Clubs or Royal Naval Associations, one only has to see the dwindling numbers leading to many RNA Branches folding and laying up their Standards.

It was with much sadness that I learned that RNA Southern Ontario were ceasing in December to operate as a formal branch, reducing its status to a social group who are planning just to meet for lunches and other social events.

The dedicated few (including myself) put a lot of work building what must have been one of the most successful Overseas Branches of the RNA, now it is to be no more.

The picture above shows the executive (note the uniformity) and most members dressed accordingly, a real 'Pusser' Branch.

RIP