

THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

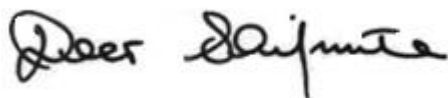
UNITY
PATRIOTISM

INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER
PATRON OF THE ASSOCIATION: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
A Registered Charity - No. 1065290
TORBAY BRANCH Patron :- Admiral Sir David Williams, G.C.B.

LOYALTY
COMRADESHIP

"Do You Hear There"

8 December 1998



I always thought "writers block" was something scribes used to lean his legers on, or maybe an occasional affliction peculiar to Chief Stokers or Buffers when it came to signing "make & mend chits", however as it's newsletter time I've realised what it is, a fascinating blank screen and a piece of paper with some meaningless scribbles on it. Meaningless scribbles? That of course is the answer, if I can expand these meaningless scribbles over a couple of pages, convince Chairman George it's a newsletter, that's it, I can have a make & mend!

It really doesn't seem that long ago since the last edition, "tempus fugit" indeed, as "Gentlemen Stokers" would say one unto the other during the long watches of the night, (and other things of course), and so it is I can fill a bit of space with a review of the year, what another year? Well yes, and just look at what we did! Our adventures with Dad's Army and visits to Toll House's and the liberation of Denmark, (by mistake) and a swim in the bay have already been documented, to add to that our own shipmates have entertained us with Bill Shaw giving us a brief talk on South Africa and "Just Nuisance" and Steve Skingle's professional presentation on the Sea Cadets. A moving presentation on Remembrance and the war cemeteries in France made a very interesting evening in October.

To start the Autumn season however we had "Wines of the World", what a night that was, a sort of "upmarket tot time" such as used to be enjoyed by "Gentlemen Stokers" who would sit in philosophical discussion whilst sipping the "Finest Caribbean" from crystal goblets!

Occasionally they would invite a "Rough Upper Deck Chap" or maybe a "Tame Royal" into the hallowed halls of the stokers mess to sit and ponder with them the quality of the grog, and thus it was, "Wines of the World" was like a step back in history, it was a good night anyway!

Autumn also brings us the annual Trafalgar commemoration and again this year we had a Dinner & Dance worthy of the title Trafalgar Night with the current Commanding Officer of HMS TORBAY as our guest. I again, was "ashore on duty" and was glad to receive a "successful evening" signal, well it was a phone call really!

I am grateful for assistance from all shipmates who assisted in the preparation for the evening particularly from "Ted the Cash" & "Peter the Pres", it is appreciated. I should at this point express appreciation also to the Trecarn Manager, Bryan Pitman and his team for their excellent support, not just at Trafalgar but throughout the year.

Our Trafalgar service this year was probably one of the best we've had for some time, a good turnout of shipmates, standards and an ex RN padre, all we needed!

The branch was well represented at the annual Festival of Remembrance, held for the last time in the Festival Theatre, hopefully wherever it is held in future there will be room to dip the standards without causing untold injury to the front rows of the audience! (Perhaps the organisers will think about the arrangements!)

Remembrance Sunday parade was also particularly good this year with BRNC's Royal Marine Band in attendance, the parade never lost the step once, well we didn't anyway! (Wouldn't dare not with Chairman George in the front rank!) Well from Slapton, Exercise

Tiger Service, to Collaton St Mary, the BLESMA Service, (incidentally the last BLESMA service of all to be held in Torbay, the standard now laid up), it's been a busy year for parades, at which it's good to say the branch has been well represented particularly in the latter part of the year.

Talking about representation, the Standard Bearer's post is coming vacant, it's a "blue card job", guaranteed a seat at the front in church, lots of bright work and leather to polish and your hands are never cold because your allowed gloves! The AGM is the time to volunteer, step forward two paces, smartly and that's another thing your allowed to dismiss from parades before everybody else, (even before Chairman George and President Peter), and you don't have to sing! Told you it was a "blue card job!"

Members of the branch have this year assisted other veterans groups holding reunions in the Trecarn, S/M Peter Haywood has led services for Area 3 and the 6th Destroyers supported by the Sea Cadet band under the baton of S/M Steve Skingle and there are more such events on the watch bill!

This being December the Annual General Meeting is almost upon us, and Ted on that night will be happy to receive your subs, just thought I'd mention it!

I will have next years programme ready for the AGM, I had intended to have it ready with this epistle, however like the middle time flies and I'm still working on it, I have got some good speakers though and maybe a night with a little "Wine & Wisdom"- watch this space!

Hopefully next year we will have a "charabanc run ashore" to somewhere that will of course depend on the level of support, I have already had one suggestion for a river trip which I will look at and I would be grateful for your suggestions. There is the possibility of seats with Honiton Branch on two trips next year, just let me know if you are interested.

At long last this effort is almost finished, (who said about time, some Rough Upper Deck Chap" no doubt), I seem to have stumbled over rather than got around the "scribes block" however I hope this effort is not entirely worthless and you find something of interest.

Finally I've found a couple of headlines from somewhere, thus, "Cold Wave Linked To Temperatures" & "Enraged Cow Injures Farmer With Axe", it would appear there is more than one type of "Writers Block"!

Just to finish this effort I add a little sea story, there are some among us who may remember the Seaboat in question! Finally on behalf of "President Peter", "Chairman George" and all the Committee may I wish all Shipmates here, particularly our new members we've welcomed this year, neighbouring branches and worldwide a Very Happy Christmas and Peaceful & Prosperous New Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gus Gye', with a stylized flourish at the end.

óAway Seaboats Crewô

Does anyone remember the Seaboat on Raleigh's parade ground, the one that had to be lowered and recovered every morning before Divisions?

At the appointed hour out would march the Chief GI, crashing to a halt, (as only such entities can do), a blast on the whistle and "Away Seaboats Craw - Carry On", only it was "Haawhey Seebouts Krooo, kerry hen"!

Two classes, one "Gentlemen Stokers" one "Rough Upper Deck Chaps" would double away to carry out the dreaded evolution. To yells and screams of "Marry the Falls", "Walk Back", "Steady", "Handsomely", "Grab the Gripes & Ghastr my Flabbar", ghastr my flabber? Well whatever, something like that, the mighty clinker coracle would be launched into a static water tank and then recovered, aill before Divisions, what fun! (Especially on respirator test day!)

I doubted the value of aill this when the first time I went off with a Seaboat from Wizard when I, an innocent stoker winding up the engine was nearly catapulted into the raging oggin. On that occasion The "Rough Upper Deck Chaps" obviously hadn't got into the way of "walking back steadily with the handsome fails" but they certainly made me "grab my gripes and ghastr my flabber"!

"An Innocent Stoker"
Torbay Branch



An old WWI Postcard

FLASH-FLASH-FLASH

As I've been writing this I've heard Shipmate Bill Shaw and Jean are about to slip and proceed for a new life in South Africa, Bill has insisted on paying his subs for next year so he will be a long distance member of Torbay, like the Tiller Flat Watchkeepers on a carrier! We wish them bon voyage and our best wishes for a happy and successful move to South Africa, Bill has told me he will keep in touch.

Remember the AGM 28th January 1999 at 1930

"See You There"