

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"

December 2001

Wind scoopös, remember them? Of course you do, metal cylinders like giant size Pussers coffee tins open at both ends with a cup effect on one end that were pushed out through the mess deck scuttles for ventilation.

So there we have the mighty greyhound of the seas driving through the "oggin " while down in the messdecks sat round the tot table "Gentlemen Stokers ", "Rough Upper Deck Chaps", "Super Sloshies" and "Assorted Others" keeping cool in the breeze from aforesaid windscoop's, what an uplifting scene! Ah! but suddenly, "Hard a Port/Starboard", "Stop", Full Astern/Ahead", "Away Seaboats Crew" and other sudden manoeuvres which not only creates havoc round the tot table, (none spilled mind), but results in gallons of cool "oggin" pouring down the wind scoop's! Oh! hearken what is that pipe?

"The ship is about to carry out high speed manoeuvres, in wind scoops close all scuttles"!

Do you remember those happy days?

Well, if not we can remember what we did as a branch this year and we certainly didn't have anything as traumatic happen at our tot table gatherings, Bryan hasn't got any wind scoop's anyway!

Tot table gatherings though is probably a way of describing our meetings these days, it seems a long time ago since the last AGM, (almost a year), but the decisions made then to change the format of branch meetings to something a little less formal has proved to be a success, I certainly think so.

With routine matters such as Minutes and other information being published prior to the meeting there is time to discuss other matters and more importantly just "swing the lamp".

Talking about "swinging the lamp" Peter Brown entertained us with a tale or two of his experiences as a young, (he was once!), man in the South China Sea and an excellent presentation it was, as indeed, the various presentations by guest speakers have been this year.

Our Social Secretary, Margaret Dennet, appointed at the last AGM, has trawled far and wide to bring us a very varied and interesting selection of speakers.

One of our own members, David Barr, provided an interesting insight into the workings of an organisation close to us all, SSAFA. I know I was grateful for some resettlement advice from SSAFA when leaving the service and I'm sure we all appreciated David's presentation.

Dartmoor has also featured strongly with at least two speakers providing fascinating tales of the area and people.

Horses on the beat, or at least the activities of Mounted Police another interesting subject and most recently Fire Prevention and Safety in the Home by an Officer of Devon Fire & Rescue Service have featured at our meetings.

A visit, during "day work hours", to the Coast Guard unit at Brixham was found to be an interesting experience enjoyed by those able to attend, so on behalf of the branch , thanks Margaret, the "Social Sec's" billet is not really a "blue card" and your efforts are appreciated.

Talking of appreciation letös not forget everyone who contributes to the raffle every month, it is an important fund raiser and thanks are due to all who take part, donating prizes, selling tickets and running the raffle or just buying tickets just for the fun of it! Whatever, it's an important part of branch meetings and it makes the Treasurer really happy!

The Honorary Treasurer also deserves a word of appreciation, he who keeps the books in balance and without whom the branch could not exist, Peter Haywood has done a sterling job, as only a "Jack Dusty" would of course! As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, (June), Peter did say he would only take the post for a year and that year will be up at the AGM in January, so we are looking for a Branch Treasurer, could it be you?

Peter has a very considerable workload and he really cannot continue as Honorary Treasurer without whom the branch could end up at "Liferaft Stations", please think about it!

Talking of fund raising we held a very successful "Wine & Wisdom " night in June. This has become an annual event which everyone seems to enjoy and is a good fund raiser.

Particular thanks are due to our "Branch Pres & Branch Chair" Peter Brown & John Soanes respectively for setting and presenting the questions, I notice they get all the correct answers?

It is a good event and it's always good to see other groups join us for the evening though they do seem to have a habit of winning most!

The "Press Gang Night" in May was a new venture and on the whole successful whether we do it again that's up to the Committee initially and then the branch, do we want to run these events? Let the Committee know, let the Branch know!

We have as always provided a presence on various parades through the year, a little thin on the ground sometimes but we've been there.

Simon Thacker has been most admirable as our Standard Bearer, it is not an easy task and we are grateful for his effort. Remembrance Sunday was a case in point when we as always were astern of the Royal British Legion contingent in which there was an elderly lady complete with stick who steered a very erratic course with varying speeds on the march back. So there it was Simon trying to maintain a steady course and speed, with "Giles Grandmother" bobbing around just under the bows, ah well! In retrospect credit is due the lady for taking part, however it would have made a Chief GI cry! (not a pretty sight!)

The Sea Cadets are also due some credit for the Remembrance Day parade, they provided a marching band and did a good job it was certainly a change to march to a steady beat instead of a "Sally's Selection"!

The Trafalgar dinner this year was held in the Trecarn in the company of many from other areas as organised by Plymouth Branch. Peter Brown proposed the Immortal Memory and it was an excellent evening. It was unfortunate my efforts to obtain a Guest of Honour came to no avail, quite a saga that was, however plans for the future are in hand!

It is intended the Branch will run a dinner next year as in the past for 2003 a major event involving RNA Nationwide, the dates have been booked and early arrangements are in hand.

So listen out for the "pipes" it may seem a long way ahead but is surprising just how quickly it all happens!

Well that just about covers recent events, bearing in mind these scratching's are intended for those of our membership unable to attend meetings for whatever reason, I apologise for the somewhat disjointed presentation and if I've forgotten anything, (like we hosted the Area AGM in January!), put it down to panic! Of course you can put down your thoughts as well, contributions for content are welcome, any thoughts, "dit's", "swing the lamp on paper", it's your branch, your "newsletter"!

Finally, thanks are due to all our Committee and Branch Members for the support they give to the Branch and the RNA in general.

To all our members "Sick on Shore", get well soon, to those who are far away our thoughts are with you and may the sun ever shine on your upper deck, and the "oggin" never pour through your wind scoops!

On behalf of "President Peter & Chairman John" and all the Committee may I wish all members here, not forgetting Bryan Pitman and his team here in the Trecarn , neighbouring branches and worldwide a Very Happy Christmas and Peaceful and Prosperous 2002

PS - Remember as the festive season approaches and parties appear on the horizon, "They who flitteth with the oats must also flappeth with the gulls"! Just a thought!

Yours Aye
John

Charlie Nobles RN "

Some years ago a young Killick Stoker joined a ship in Gibraltar, he had been waiting in Gib for a few days on this ship, the EASTBOURNE and when it entered harbour on a Saturday morning he joined it. Somewhat reluctantly, I might add, "quietly" waiting in ROOKE had been very pleasant!

The weekend passed quickly, Monday morning dawned and there was our young Killick on the mess thinking, over breakfast, I'll go and find the Chief Stoker after we've sailed and I suppose I'll be on the watchbill.....

Suddenly just like a genie out of a bottle the Chief Stoker appears, "Hookie" he yells "Get the Duty Watch and get Charlie Noble's off the Foöcöle"! "The Jimmy is going mad over Charlie Noble's being up there and we're sailing in ten minutes"!

Young Hookie startled beyond belief, thinking, whatever next, I should have stayed in Rooke, musters everybody he can see on the mess and heads for the foöcöle. He is a worried Hookie, who is this monster stoker Charlie Nobles who it appears is terrorising the foöcöle?

Hookie has also had a lifelong allergy to pain and it seems this Charlie Nobles might dispense such a commodity, ummm sick on shore in Rooke, maybe!

The team reach the foöcöle and there indeed is an apoplectic Jimmy, (aren't they all), a grinning foöcöle crew and Charlie Nobles ò two large diesel generator exhaust pipes sticking vertically up from the deck. (Giant Windscoops!).

Quickly the Stokers Team move in, spanners flash in the sun, an occasional expletive is heard, (Rough Upper Deck Chap trying to blame Gentlemen Stokers), and soon the pipes are lifted away clouds of black exhaust billow out, lots of expletives, Jimmy incandescent, Hookie thinking he should've stayed in UK!

Down below in the generator room the watchkeeper hadn't operated the exhaust divert, result, a very black moment on the foöcöle!

Quickly the blanks were slapped on to the offending apertures the Charlie Nobles were laid gently to one side to be secured later and the Gentlemen Stokers retired gracefully, (as they do), from the scene!

As for "Young Hookie" he aged a little, wondered if a Blackwood operating from Rosyth wouldn't be a better option, and for months, (well a week or two), twitched every time the Chief Stoker appeared on the mess!

As for "Charlie Nobles", laid out on the focsle , totally exhausted !!!

An Innocent Stoker

Torbay