

THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

TORBAY BRANCH

Branch Patron: Admiral Sir David Williams, G.C.B.

"Do You Hear There"

June 2001

There has been, in this newsletter from time to time mention of the wondrous activities of "Gentlemen Stokers" and the not so wondrous, possibly rather more dubious activities of lesser mortals such as "Rough Upper Deck Chaps" but what about the "Assorted Others", for instance, those un-sung heroes the "Super Sloshies", the chefs?

Think of it, a "war canoe" in heavy weather, apart from the watchkeepers, the ships company are "totted and turned in", but not Chef!

Oh no, there he is getting the next meal ready, slipping and sliding around the galley risking life and limb among the bubbling cauldrons and incandescent ovens fighting the dreaded "Mal de Mer" not knowing whether to "supplement" the soup or the custard!

Then after the meal does anyone say, "Cheers Chef, good effort", no of course not, Chef is much more likely to be harangued over the lumpy custard!

Yes its tough being a "Super Sloshie", as it is being a "Branch Scribe" sweating to get a non-lumpy newsletter out, well it's only six months adrift!

I did actually start putting this together some six months ago, bearing in mind it is intended to keep those of our members sick on shore or otherwise unable to attend meetings "on station" and in touch I'd hope it's better late than never!

We have in the past months experienced piracy in the South China Sea, wandered around Dartmoor, learned something of the workings of SSAFA, and ridden with the Mounted Police and all without moving from the comfort of the Trecarn, isn't science wonderful!

We have had very interesting speakers and following changes to routine more time is available to "swing the lamp" on branch nights and that's good news.

The "Wine & Wisdom" quiz night which has been a successful event in June became, for St Andrews Night in November, "Scotch & Sense" and again another successful evening, whether we will run a similar event this November is not yet known.

The "Social Watch bill" is now in the capable hands of Margaret Denning who is proving to be an excellent Social Secretary, not an easy role, having taken on the duties at the AGM.

Other watch bill changes saw Peter Haywood take over the essential role of Branch Treasurer relieving Harold Dutton who remains as our "Mr. Vice", Vice-President that is! Thanks Harold for your efforts as Treasurer you took on the task at a very busy time with the VC Memorial Fund to run alongside the Branch Funds, however despite an overheating abacus you did a great job.

I should at this point mention Peter did make clear he was only prepared to run as Treasurer for one year only, he does, after all, being on the "working watch bill" still have a very heavy workload.

So Shipmates think about it, could you, would you be prepared to take on the task of Branch Treasurer? The branch needs you!

Divisions? Yes as always we've managed to provide a presence albeit more like half a duty watch than both watches still we've been there!

Tinkling glass, the result of "light duties" in the foyer of the Princess Theatre and almost a waltz with the "Armoured Farmers" the result of the Devon & Dorset's mooring their standard on to ours during Remembrance Parade, unknown to the Standard Bearers the wind caught the cords and then on marching off...well!

Talking of parades I am very pleased to tell you the duties of Standard Bearer have been taken on by one of our new members Simon Thacker and an excellent job he made of it on the D-Day Remembrance.

Thanks Simon it is an extremely important task and your willingness and effort is very much appreciated, just remember on parade, watch out for the "Armoured Farmers! and the Princess's chandeliers!

We have been fortunate in being able to welcome new members in the past months and particularly younger members recently left the service also a fellow "Gentleman Stoker" from Bulwark days the good old "Rusty B". It is great to see new members after all the future of the branch depends on a continued and increasing membership, but more importantly a continued friendship such as is only ever experienced in the RN.

On the theme of recruitment, we held an open evening in May which was a good chance to "swing the lamp" and the Chairman to show pictures of all his ships.... really John!

It was a good evening and we now have two more members, welcome to all and as soon as the Treasurer lets me have your details I'll make sure you are on the "Birthday Tots" list!

Talk of tots reminds me, just as "Gib" looms out of the mist in the early morning, so the "Trafalgar Season" approaches. You may remember last year our "Bootie Friends" organized a lunch and we had a small informal, (I understand very informal), dinner.

This year we are joining with the "Nation" in the Bi-annual event organized by the Plymouth Branch and held here in the Trecarn. I am hoping to have the Commanding Officer of HMS TORBAY, (Commander Mark Cooper) as our guest, at the time of writing arrangements are still in hand.

It is possible it may be difficult for the CO TORBAY to attend due to operational commitments, time will tell. The evening will however undoubtedly be a memorable one and there is at such an event opportunity to meet with members from all over the country, we are after all members of a national/worldwide organization and great credit is due Arthur and Sue Gutteridge for organizing the event. For myself, that time of year is when I can usually "slip & proceed" for a few days so am unlikely to be at the dinner, however I can at least say I had my Royal Arthur report signed by Nelson & Hardy, a Lieutenant Commander & Commander respectively at the time 1 Stop swinging the lamp!

On the subject of the RNA being a worldwide organization, President Peter and Pat recently enjoyed the hospitality of Geelong Branch whilst on holiday in Australia, and the branch now has a Geelong Crest for the bulkhead.

You may remember we have had a correspondence link with the Geelong Secretary, Barbara Williams, for a year or two now and Peter & Pat visited whilst on a "run ashore" in the area as part of a circumnavigation of the globe earlier this year i

With special events in mind No 4 Area (South West) will be dedicating a new Standard at HMS RALEIGH on Sunday 9th September, we are invited to attend, details will be posted on Wine & Wisdom Night.

Staying on special events Torbay Sea Cadet Unit will always be pleased to see RNA members visit them on drill nights our very own Steve Skingle is CO and along with Ted Heathfield will be happy to welcome you along.

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 (lots of it just now), ever shine on your upper deck.

Finally the "Branch Scribe" would welcome your contributions to this attempt at a newsletter, you must have a "dit" to help fill the pages, I hope to get another one out probably about the time of the Christmas Lunch.

Ah lunch, another effort by our friend the chef, next time you have a good meal, spare old chef a thought, and don't ever have soup or custard in heavy weather!

Finally a tip from the galley. Your home is at risk if you keep semtex in the microwave!
Just a thought!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gus Cye". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial 'G' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

"Walter of Raleigh"

Walter was a most miserable bad tempered chap unless he had his share of Blue Liners, quite reasonable I suppose, people do tend to become a bit grim without their daily intake of nicotine, and after all he bore the name of a famous adventurer credited with introducing tobacco to the Queen of England.

Waiter lived behind Revenge Galley & Dining Hall from where he spent most of the day glaring at trainees queuing for meals, but was always grateful for a Blue Liner or two, which he ate, well goats don't normally smoke!

Yes, Walter was the establishment mascot or so we were told although we never actually saw him on parade until...well he'd done his time and was due for ceremonial retirement.

The great day arrived, Ceremonial Divisions, in those days always on a Tuesday, full "Captains Guard" and on this occasion press & television.

Finally came the moment, a hot sunny day the Changing of the guard, (we did in those days, weekly Part II classes), all inspections done, it was time.

The parade brought to attention, the Chief GI orders, "Bri-hing hoan the Go-hoat" the band strikes up, Walter resplendent in Goat No 1's is escorted on to the parade, brought to the front of the dais.

Gu-aard Gee-eneral salute pre-sent Ha-rms", bang, rattle, crash, the band bursts in to life!

Woosh, splash, splash, Walter overcome by the occasion and weak of bladder created an instant free flood in front of the assembly!

He always was awkward, legend has it he didn't have a Blue Liner or two before Divisions and that was his revenge, or perhaps eating Blue Liner's for many years affected him, they do say cigarettes harm your health!

Whatever it was certainly an object lesson in the wisdom of "going" before Divisions!

An Innocent Stoker

Torbay