

# SEMAPHORE CIRCULAR



## ► CARRIER WELCOMES LIGHTNING JETS

F-35B Lightning stealth fighters from 809 Naval Air Squadron, supported by their sister Squadron 617, known as 'the Dambusters', have joined HMS Prince of Wales in the North Sea for a month of training – the first time in nearly 15 years a Royal Navy fast jet squadron has operated from the flight deck of a Royal Navy aircraft carrier. The deployment is a key stepping stone for the squadron and the

ship as both gear up to take part in an eight-month global deployment next year. The 'strike' element of the UK Carrier Strike Group embarked on Prince of Wales in advance of Exercise Strike Warrior, which will see the two squadrons with eight of their Lightning fighters for the first time. The squadrons have been undergoing a couple of weeks of intensive training as pilots earn

their carrier qualification and personnel integrate with the ship's company and grow accustomed to the routine at sea. Thereafter training moves up through the gears as the carrier is joined by escorts and support ships to form a Carrier Strike Group for a fortnight-long exercise. Joining the Carrier Strike Group will be destroyer HMS Dauntless, frigates HMS Portland and

Continued on page 3

# ➤ CONTENTS

Fighter jets join HMS Prince of Wales on exercise	1
Contacts	4
Chairman's Chat	5
From the General Secretary	6
Naval Memorial rededicated to mark centenary	7
Shipmates learn 'lifesaving skills'	9
Ceremony helps right wrongs	10
Trinity Insurance sales support charities	11
Formation Dinner for Seaman Specialists Association	13
Special Interest Group contacts	16
Fireside Chats	16
Ways you can support your RNA	18
Gingerbread Sailor baking kit prizes to be won	18
Branch News	20
Obituaries	27
October Swinging the Lamp	30
Longcast	50
Offers	50

**Semaphore Shorts and Semaphore Circular:** The monthly Semaphore Circular appears on the first Friday of each month, notes for branch officers on the second Friday and Semaphore Shorts on the remaining Fridays of each month. On occasions the publication date might be delayed for operational reasons – if so we will endeavour to tell you in advance by email and/or through our social media channels.

**The next Semaphore Circular will be published on Friday 1 November, notes for Branch officers will be published on 11 October, and Semaphore Shorts on 18 and 25 October.**



Iron Duke, and tanker RFA Tidespring. 815 NAS Wildcat helicopters will join Dauntless, Portland and Prince of Wales. The fifth-generation jets made the short flight from their base at RAF Marham, in Norfolk, to the carrier where, over the coming weeks, some personnel will learn the art of operating from an aircraft carrier, while others will regenerate skills which have faded. It is a big moment for 809, a vital building block to working up with the carrier strike group in preparation for Operation Highmast next year.

**Images ©UK Ministry of Defence Crown Copyright, 2024**



## ➤ CONTACTS



<b>Central Office Contacts</b>	
For all contacts and general enquiries 023 9272 3747	<b>admin@rnassoc.org</b>
CEO/General Secretary	<b>ceo@rnassoc.org</b>
COS (Chief of Staff)	<b>cos@rnassoc.org</b>
Executive Assistant to the CEO	<b>ceo-ea@rnassoc.org</b>
Governance Support Officer	<b>gso@rnassoc.org</b>
Engagement	<b>engagement@rnassoc.org</b>
Plans Manager	<b>dcos@rnassoc.org</b>
Editorial Manager	<b>sce@rnassoc.org</b>
Semaphore Circular and Short	<b>comms@rnassoc.org</b>
Membership Manager	<b>ams@rnassoc.org</b>
Finance	<b>dams@rnassoc.org</b>
Head of Communications	<b>hoc@rnassoc.org</b>
RNA Communications Lead	<b>cml@rnassoc.org</b>
<b>National Advisors</b>	
National Branch Retention and Recruiting Advisor	<b>rna.brra@outlook.com</b>
National Welfare Advisor	<b>geoff@royalnavalassoc.com</b>
National Rules and Bye-Laws Advisor	<b>governancechair@royalnavalassoc.com</b>
National Ceremonial Advisor	<b>nca@royalnavalassoc.com</b>

### Find Semaphore Circular online at

<https://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/document-categories/semaphore-circular>

or

RNA Website / Membership / Downloads / Semaphore Circular

### Snail Mail – Postal Address

RNA Central Office,  
Lanyard House,  
Scott Road,  
HM Naval Base,  
Portsmouth  
Hants PO1 3LT

# ► CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

## Dear Shipmates,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce myself as the new National Chairman.

I am truly honoured and grateful to have been voted in by the National Council (NC) as the new National Chairman and I am eagerly looking forward to working with the National Council and Shipmates to advance and promote our Association.

My congratulations to S/M Peter 'Chivs' Chivers (National Council Member 5 Area) on his selection as National Vice Chairman – a busy job!

Goodness knows when the Ship's Office will be open for cheque cashing now...

Chivs will continue to Chair the FAC (Finance and Administration Committee) for the foreseeable future, and I will continue to Chair the AMC (Association Management Committee).

Lastly in the National Council vein, I would like to express my personal thanks to Shipmate Peter Godwin for all his hard work over many years as National Council Member 8 Area, and latterly as National Chairman. BZ Peter, thank you and good luck for the future.

Talking of futures, our RNA is bright and in good shape. (FOST – Good).

### ■ Membership at 21,000+

We need to ensure that non-attached Shipmates (HQ Roll/ Lanyard Branch) are involved in RNA events, particularly during next year's 75th Anniversary, which will present an excellent opportunity to involve them.

### ■ 2025 - 75th Anniversary Events

Here's a few events to wet your whistle ....

We have been designated as the **Charity of Choice at the Navy v Army Rugby** (Don't forget the RNA has its own bar...)

There is the **National Conference** in Portsmouth in June

We have the **'Fisherman's Friends' and RNA Choir** at Portsmouth Guildhall on 22 October next year – there will be loads more info to follow on all social media channels

■ Having approved the new Governance structure at the National Conference in Cardiff in the summer, work is now well underway to amend the Royal Charter so it can be approved by the Privy Council.

■ Work is also in progress to reform the annual National Conference, with the Conference Review Committee meeting recently and putting forward proposals to the December meeting of the National Council.

This should result in a Motion being placed before next year's, Conference in Portsmouth.

More on that to come after the National Council has had its say!

The Review Committee would like to thank all those Shipmates who completed the Conference survey at Cardiff – all 90 of you!

■ In the Welfare and Wellbeing area the Welfare and Wellbeing Implementation Group has formed with the task of providing advice and guidance to all Shipmates interested in the subject and to ensure that the RNA is compliant with current policy/governance.

One example is that we still need to have safeguarding and DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks in place to cover our Shipmates



■ Finally on the future... Central Office are working as hard as ever on our behalf and to that end the work of obtaining grants is never-ending and extremely time-consuming, so it would be extremely useful if Clubs/Branches and individual Shipmates could provide as much 'day-to-day' data as possible for use in the grant applications.

So, if you have a Branch Newsletter, please ensure a copy is forwarded to Central Office, or let us know if any of your Shipmates are doing 'Stuff' in the community. It would be really appreciated by the team... and me.

Regrettably, I must finish on a sad note.

Our former General Secretary, the lovely Paddy McClurg, crossed the bar recently, and I send my heartfelt condolences to everyone at Netley Branch, and especially to his family.

Fair Winds and Calm Seas, Shipmate.

Best wishes

*Andy*

**Andy Christie at the Portsmouth Naval Memorial service on Southsea Common this morning, and (below) a very young LSA Andrew Christie on HMS Falmouth, at South Railway Jetty, circa 1978**



# ► FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

## Ahoy Shipmates!

Lots of news this month, most of it good but some sad too.

Let's deal with the sad up front so that we can move onto happier topics. It is with profound regret that I have to inform you that my predecessor's predecessor as General Secretary, **S/M Paddy McClurg**, crossed the bar suddenly last week. Those of you who knew Paddy will, I'm sure, remember Paddy as one of the good guys. Paddy was my first Appointer – or is that Disappointer?! When I was a junior officer he sent me to Faslane and, when I protested that I had joined the Navy to see the world, he replied: "But, my boy, you have the language skills!" We'll all miss you Paddy. Please see Paddy's obituary later in this publication which our former National President, S/M John McAnally, has kindly penned.

Moving on to happier notes, I am delighted to see that the Royal British Legion have appointed **Vice Admiral Paul Bennett (pictured right)** as their new President. Heartiest congrats Sir, and, if I may say, a great choice. I look forward to working with you. Admiral Paul will be straight into it with November Ceremonies only a month away. Best wishes.

I must also congratulate those who are attending the centenary service at the **Portsmouth Naval Memorial** on Southsea Common today, and this Sunday also sees the dedication of the **HMS Royal Oak memorial** on The Hard, Portsmouth. You will recall that Royal Oak was sunk in Scapa Flow in 1939 and, although there is a monument at Scapa to the men who lost their lives that night, the battleship was base ported in Portsmouth and the real hurt was felt more locally hence – eventually, 85 years after the event – a permanent marker will be unveiled this weekend. BZ to the HMS Royal Oak Association!

Leading on from monuments to physical tributes, in pursuance of their project, the **HMS Bronington Preservation Trust** have recently submitted a feasibility study grant application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. As our Patron, King Charles, was one of Bronington's former Commanding Officers, I was proud to submit a letter of support to the NLHF on behalf of the RNA. I am sure that many of us have had the joy of serving in a Ton-class at some stage so it would be good to see one preserved somewhere, and it may as well be the one which our King commanded. Fingers firmly crossed for you.

I am delighted to introduce our partner, **Trinity Insurance Services Ltd**, a veteran-run business that has launched a new travel insurance product exclusively for members of its affiliated Armed Forces associations, which seems a steal to me. The new Combined Services 40+ Travel Cover aims to meet your annual travel insurance needs with Worldwide or European-only multi-trip cover that requires no medical screening. Designed as an exclusive membership scheme that runs each year from 1 October to 30 September, it is more efficient and cost effective than traditional individual insurance policies and so premiums can be kept as low as possible. Please check it out. Also in this publication is an update on Trinity's other offers to RNA members, some of which enable purchasers to nominate



associations or charities for a voluntary donation from Trinity and/or its partners. If you do sign up for any of these, don't forget to select RNA from the available options!

I see we are now nearly at the 500 ticket mark for RNA representation at the **Army v Navy** rugby match at Twickenham on 3 May 2025 so it looks like it's going to be a great reunion to start our 75th anniversary year. Tickets are still available – see details later in this publication. See you there!

Now a couple of thank yous. Firstly, you may have noticed that our new **RNA website** is up and running ([link here](#)) and well done to our **Comms Lead, Sarah Bewley**, but after many years as our webmaster it gives **Chris Hore** from the Delabole Branch the opportunity to stand down. Chris, thank you so much for all your support over the years during our relationship with the previous web designers Mindworks. Your technical expertise has been a precious resource to us, and we in Central Office are extremely grateful for your backing and advice.

Secondly, I'd like to take a moment to thank the **mentors at HMS Raleigh** who have contributed to the Facebook page which has been a lifeline to many parents, friends and family of trainees during their initial training. Sadly, data protection issues have meant that the site has had to be closed. Nevertheless, the mentors at Raleigh continue to deliver a great product to the trainees.

Finally, heartiest congrats, to our former National Chairman Keith Ridley, who picked up his MBE gong from the Princess Royal at Windsor Castle recently. It is reported that she remembered Keith from her visit to Central Office in May, however, Andy Christie suggested that she probably remembers the occasion as she's still receiving counselling!

Up Spirits!

*Bill*



## ➤ NAVAL MEMORIAL IS REDEDICATED

The Royal Naval Association is honoured to have attended the rededication of the Portsmouth Naval Memorial on Southsea Common today (4 October), marking 100 years since it was first dedicated to the British and Commonwealth sailors who lost their lives in World War 1.

The Memorial, the last to be dedicated of three almost identical monuments, the others being at Plymouth and Chatham, was rededicated to those same men, and also to all the other men and women who lost their lives in World War 2 and more recent conflicts.

A Royal Navy Guard of Honour marched through Southsea as part of the rededication service. The procession was led by serving members of the Royal Navy, who were joined by veterans, including RNA Standard Bearers and other RNA veterans.

Also attending was the RNA's recently-appointed National Chairman, Andy Christie, and Association Membership Secretary Sara Field, from Central Office. A torch was also lit for all the sailors who did not come home.

**Pictures by S/M Nigel Huxtable**

**Continued on page 8**





## ➤ RBL'S NEW PRESIDENT IS STRAIGHT DOWN TO BUSINESS

The Royal British Legion has announced the appointment of Vice Admiral (Rtd) Paul Bennett CB OBE as their new National President. Vice Admiral Bennett takes up the role this month, ahead of the busy Remembrance period. His first duties will be to represent the Royal British Legion at key ceremonial events in November, including the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall, and the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. Vice Admiral Bennett joined the Royal Navy in 1985. Following an extensive career at sea, including several roles ashore, he was recognised with an OBE for his work in Navy Command for Above Water Capability and Maritime Security. His final role before retiring from service in 2021 was as Chief of Staff for Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia, after which he assumed a role as a NATO Senior Mentor. Vice Admiral Bennett's appointment follows the passing of Sir Clive Johnstone KBE CB, who held the role from May 2023 until May 2024.



## ➤ SHIPMATES LEARN LIFESAVING SKILLS AT WELFARE WORKSHOP

RNA veterans benefited from a talk on suicide prevention from one of the UK's leading charities in the field, Grassroots Suicide Prevention (GSP), at the inaugural Area 7 Welfare Meeting at HMS Cambria, in the build-up to World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September. GSP's Training Manager Jo Johnson, who is also an Area 7 RNA Associate Member, a veteran and volunteer with local hubs, gave guidance on how to have lifesaving conversations if you are concerned about someone. The importance of spotting signs, knowing what to say/do, asking directly about suicide and encouraging people to seek help, was emphasised. Jo also introduced members to the free,

confidential StayAlive ([www.stayalive.app](http://www.stayalive.app)), which is a comprehensive guide for those at risk of suicide and people worried about someone else.

Andrew Clark, Chairman of the RNA Welfare and Wellbeing Implementation Group, who attended the presentation, said: "A lovely talk, I feel more confident to reach out and find support. Also, the StayAlive app gives great advice and self-help tools for wellness and wellbeing, and points to look for, to help support others." Jo Johnson said: "I am passionate about suicide prevention, in particular in the Armed Forces community, where many people may 'slip below the radar' as they are reluctant to say they are struggling, or to seek help.

"Our mission as a charity is to empower people to have these lifesaving conversations, as we firmly believe suicide is preventable in the majority of cases. "In giving these talks to the veterans community, I am truly hoping it encourages those life-long bonds that were created in-service to continue in 'civvy street', with a conversation that could save a life."

If you would like to know more, please contact Jo Johnson, details here: [joanna@prevent-suicide.org.uk](mailto:joanna@prevent-suicide.org.uk)

## ➤ LAST REQUEST FOR BILLY

**Your help is needed. Sadly, William Burgess, known as Billy, passed away at Magnolia House at the age of 92 years. Formerly from Liverpool, he settled in Overton and had served in the Royal Navy and as a Merchant Seaman. He did not marry and had no children, and it is believed his**

**siblings have all passed away. Billy's friends have sought to reach out to see if any veterans would be able to attend his funeral as a last mark of respect for a gracious gentleman. The funeral has been arranged for Tuesday 8 October at 3.00pm at Pentrebychan Crematorium, on the outskirts of Wrexham.**



**Victory Building at Portsmouth Naval Base in 2020, illuminated with rainbow colours to mark 20 years since lifting of LGBT military ban.**

## ➤ CEREMONY HELPS RIGHT THE WRONGS

The first Etherton Ribbons, to acknowledge the mistreatment of those affected by the ban on LGBT personnel serving in the Armed Forces, have been presented to veterans by the Ministry of Defence. During a symbolic ceremony in London, the Secretary of State for Defence John Healey MP and Minister for Veterans and People Alastair Carns OBE MC MP presented ribbons to three veterans. This is part of the new government's commitment to right the wrongs of the past and deliver the recommendations of Lord Etherton's review into the historic treatment of LGBT veterans.

Emma Riley, who served as a Royal Naval radio operator, Stephen Close, who served in the Army and former RAF firefighter Carl Austin-Behan OBE DL were the first three veterans to receive the Etherton Ribbon.

The ribbon acknowledges those affected by the ban on LGBT personnel serving in the UK Armed Forces between 1967 and 2000.

The special design – which can be worn as a pin – was created by LGBT veterans and others affected by the ban, current serving LGBT personnel and representatives of relevant charities. It represents the commitment and sacrifices made in service by LGBT veterans, the suffering caused by the historic policy and the strength shown by those who stood against it.

Defence Secretary John Healey MP said: "I am proud to present Carl, Stephen and Emma with the very first Etherton Ribbon. It symbolises the unique contribution that our LGBT veterans have made to national security, and acknowledges the treatment they suffered.

"The historic treatment of LGBT veterans was utterly

unacceptable and has no place in today's Armed Forces. I want to be the first of this government's Ministers to say a deep and profound sorry. We are determined to right those wrongs and renew the nation's contract with those who serve and have served."

Minister for Veterans and People Alistair Carns OBE MC MP said: "The Etherton Review was an important step in acknowledging the wrongs of the past.

"The presentation of the Etherton Ribbon demonstrates the government's commitment to delivering on all the recommendations, including restorative measures, providing LGBT veterans recognition they deserve.

"We are committed to ensuring all our veterans who helped keep Britain secure at home and strong abroad receive the respect and support they need."

The LGBT Veterans Independent Review, chaired by Lord Etherton and commissioned by the Ministry of Defence and the Office for Veterans Affairs, examined the experiences of personnel between 1967-2000 who were impacted by the ban on homosexuality in the Armed Forces.

The review was published in July 2023.

The government has completed 32 of the 49 recommendations, and work continues at pace to fulfil the recommendations that remain, including financial redress.

Following the ceremony, the Defence ministers spoke with veterans and current LGBT personnel about their experiences and life in today's Armed Forces.

Information on support and next steps: <https://tinyurl.com/44uxma7t>



## SKYDIVING MAYOR IS BACKING RNA

Salford Ceremonial Mayor Cllr Tanya Burch and Executive Officer of HMS Eaglet in Liverpool, Lt Cdr Mark Driscoll (both pictured above) did a skydive last month to raise funds for the Royal Naval Association. The RNA is currently the Mayor's chosen charity, and we are very grateful for all her fundraising efforts – and especially impressed that she decided to jump out of an aeroplane for us! Many thanks also to Lt Cdr Driscoll - strong work!

## SLOPS STILL UP FOR GRABS

**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).**

## ➤ MILITARY COMMUNITIES STUDIED

Alongside the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) and RAF Benevolent Fund, Greenwich Hospital has commissioned research organisation RAND Europe to undertake a systematic survey into the RN and RAF communities.

This 13-15 month study will yield vital information on these communities, and will then project out to 2040. It will cover both the serving and former serving RN and RAF communities, thus enabling comparison between the two in order to establish commonalities and differences.

The research will enable effective and future financial and service delivery planning for RAFBF/RAFA and the Naval charities, and will also deliver valuable information that will assist MOD personnel and families policy.

An Advisory Board with representation

from across the Naval sector – including the RNA – has been set up, and RAND has completed desk research and most stakeholder interviews.

Proposed research into serving personnel and partners is intended to be conducted through surveys and research interviews this autumn:

Researchers are keen to hear from the Royal Navy community, and particularly keen to hear from Royal Navy veterans – and partners are a vital element in the study.

The link to the survey page is: <https://tinyurl.com/yxxunbk4> where you will find details of the project and its objectives, and the chance to contribute to it, using the relevant button depending on whether you are serving, a veteran or a partner of either.

## ➤ TRINITY INSURANCE SALES COULD TRIGGER CHARITY DONATIONS

Buying insurance policies from the RNA's partner organisation Trinity Insurance could also help the Association, as Trinity and their underwriters will make a donation to your chosen association or charity on certain policies.

Trinity Buildings & Contents Insurance is one example. The product is suitable for veterans and for those serving personnel who own their own property.

As the product includes military kit/memorabilia and licence to occupy, it is ideal for those on the Over 37 Package who are living in the mess during the week. More details are available through the link on our website [here](#).

Trinity's Life Insurance from Lifesearch also includes the option to donate to your chosen association or charity (and we certainly hope you will choose the RNA!).

Lifesearch source the best Life Insurance, Income Protection and Critical Illness Cover solutions for veterans and have agreed to make a voluntary donation of £50 per sale to the charity or association nominated by each purchaser.

Again, more details are



available via the link from the 'Offers' page of the RNA website [here](#).

Trinity are also in partnership with Leafyard, which offers groundbreaking solutions for mental wellbeing.

Several Service associations have already teamed up with Leafyard, which has developed a mental fitness app that can enhance the wellbeing of serving personnel, veterans and their families across the UK.

In a recent breakthrough clinical trial, 75.7 per cent of military personnel reported improved wellbeing after using Leafyard. The trial, run by Defence, involved 742 Service personnel and 163 families and was independently evaluated by King's College London over 12 weeks. Their report highlighted significant advancements across every measured parameter and was described as "life-changing" by some of those who took part.



## KEN (97) ATTENDS OPEN DAY

The RNA was delighted to welcome member S/M Ken Tinkler (pictured above with RNA General Secretary Capt Bill Oliphant) to their Central Office Open Day in Portsmouth recently.

Ken, who is 97 and a former radar operator, served with the Royal Navy and was in Tokyo at the time of the Japanese surrender in September 1945.

"Checking the harbour for depth charges was one of the most frightening moments of my life," Ken recalled.

## GUIDE TO PENSIONS AVAILABLE

Rules and regulations around pensions can be complicated, and this is certainly the case with deferred and preserved pensions for those who have served in the Armed Forces.

**A guide has been produced to provide information helping you understand whether you are eligible for an Armed Forces pension, when and how you go about claiming it. That guide is now available to view and download from the RNA website at [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/document-categories/central-office-documents](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/document-categories/central-office-documents)**

HMS Royal Oak. Image from the Imperial War Museum collection (IWM (Q 65782))



## ➤ MEMORIAL TO BE UNVEILED TO BATTLESHIP ROYAL OAK

The HMS Royal Oak 85th Anniversary Memorial Service will be held at The Hard, Portsmouth, this Sunday (6 October). The service commemorates the sinking of the battleship with the loss of 834 souls at Scapa Flow on 14 October 1939.



**Our smart RNA-branded diary is still available to buy for just £6.50, including postage.**

**The diary, stamped on the front to mark the Association's 75th anniversary, also contains a wealth of useful, member-focussed information, including useful numbers, important dates in the Royal Navy calendar, and contact details for Central Office staff and Area officials. If you would like a copy then place your order on [admin@rnassoc.org](mailto:admin@rnassoc.org) or call Central Office on 023 9272 3747.**

The event, which will commence at 11.00am, has attracted wide interest, and is expected to be attended by senior Royal Naval Flag officers, an RN Guard, Band, Sea Cadets, various religious denominations, TV and local media, and Portsmouth City Council (PCC), who will provide support with the overall organisation of the site. The Council has erected a 2.3 metre tall obelisk to commemorate the occasion. The RNA and other veterans and maritime organisations are requested to support the event with the display of your standards. A memorial to the men and boys lost in the sinking already exists at Scapa Flow, but as the battleship's home base was Portsmouth it was felt appropriate that the city should also remember those who lost their lives when a U-boat managed to avoid detection and entered the supposedly safe anchorage in the Orkneys which was the refuge of many of the Royal Navy's capital ships, cruisers and destroyers.



## ➤ THRIVING TOGETHER 2024 ENDS WITH WALKING WEEKEND

A walking weekend in the Lake District next month brings the RNA's 2024 Thriving Together programme to an end. The weekend, from Friday 29 November to Sunday 1 December, will be based in Ambleside and will include dinner, bed and breakfast and either a guided walk or a wet weather activity.

Accommodation is private rooms. To qualify for this break you need to be serving or veteran Royal Navy or Royal Marines, a Reservist, or a spouse or child (over 18), and an RNA member (including new members).

Priority will be given to those recently back from deployment, spouses with a deployed partner, people feeling lonely or isolated, or anyone looking for support for any reason.

The cost will be £25 per person, thanks to a subsidy from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

Participants will arrive on the Friday evening or Saturday morning (depending on what suits them best), with the walk or activity beginning at 0900 on the Saturday morning. Station collection is available by arrangement. The programme finishes at 1000 on Sunday morning.

You will need to bring waterproofs, hiking gear – and prepare for fun-filled, laughter-oriented days of connection. The weekend is designed for shipmates who need a break, and would benefit from a supportive environment of like-minded individuals.

Thriving Together is an RNA initiative that aims to build resilience through peer support and signposting – you don't have to be broken, just in need of a break.

For more details, or to make a booking, please email [cml@rnassoc.org](mailto:cml@rnassoc.org)

## ➤ SKILLS MASTERCLASS

RNA Comms Lead Sarah Bewley (on right of picture) was at Rolls Royce in Bristol to take a Marketing Masterclass hosted by Irene Batley, who co-ordinates the RR veteran's network. The course was run by Amy Rawcliffe of Click Marketing and was funded and provided by military charity X-Forces. Their courses are designed to assist serving, ex-serving and their spouses with workplace skills to help them with career development, business launch, mentorship and lots more. X-Forces Enterprise.



## ➤ SEAMAN SPECIALIST ASSOCIATION HOLDS FORMATION DINNER ON BOARD HMS VICTORY

RNA Engagement Lead Dave MacAskill was lucky enough to be invited to the Formation Dinner of the Royal Navy Seaman Specialist Association (RNSSA), whose President is Cdre Rob Bellfield CBE ADC RN. The RNA encouraged and assisted the RNSSA to form, and is delighted that it is going from strength to strength. While some Associations may be struggling, the Royal Naval Association is always willing to offer assistance to partner associations in any way it can, from administration and web support to delivering the Associations' platform for advocacy in the RN, military

charity and government sectors, CONA - the Conference Of Naval Associations.

The RNSSA dinner was held on board HMS Victory in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and was a celebration for the newly-formed Royal Naval Seaman Specialist Association.

Those who attended are pictured above, with Dave MacAskill on the far left, and Cdre Bellfield standing beside him

You can join the RNSSA here: <https://tinyurl.com/yv5rkuub>

## ➤ FORMER CHAIRMAN KEITH PICKS UP HIS MBE

Former National Chairman Keith Ridley attended Windsor Castle on 25 September to receive an MBE from The Princess Royal. Keith was accompanied by his wife Maureen, his son Ian and daughter Anne. Keith received his award for Services to Veterans. He joined the St. Neots & District branch of the RNA in 1976, and for the past 49 years has remained a member of the branch. He has worked tirelessly for the RNA, having served as Branch Secretary, Chairman and President, becoming National Council

Member for 6 Area in 2012. In 2016 he was elected National Chairman, serving seven years before retiring from the post in September last year. Following a medical discharge from the RN, Keith made a career spanning 39 years in social housing, mainly at senior level. His service to veterans included being Chairman of a RBL sheltered housing development, Treasurer and Secretary of his local RBL branch, responsible for the past 12 years for organising the town's Remembrance Day Parade and Service.

He is founder member of his town's Armed Forces Day Committee, becoming Chairman for nine years and organising the biggest Armed Forces Gala Days in Cambridgeshire. His wife Maureen was once heard to say "when I married Keith, I did not realise I was marrying the RNA..." Keith said: "I have enjoyed every minute of my membership, and never looked for reward. This came as a total surprise. I am proud to receive this award on behalf of the RNA and the membership".



**3rd May Twickenham Stadium**



# **Army v Navy Rugby**



**Reserve your RNA  
subsidised tickets now**

**Only £43 per person**

**including access to our exclusive  
RNA Bar**



**Our seats are in the Cat1 section M33/34 - an excellent  
position on the centre line.**

**The bar is next-door - no long trek or queues for drinks.**

**The RNA is delighted to announce it is the  
Army v Navy Chosen Charity in 2025!**

**The RNA's Branch Support Fund can help out with transport  
costs (tickets must be purchased via the RNA)**

**[engagement@rnassoc.org](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.org) for more details**

# ➤ TRINITY LAUNCHES NEW TRAVEL INSURANCE SCHEME FOR MILITARY VETERANS OVER 40

Trinity is introducing a new enhanced travel insurance product that offers major benefits to Royal Naval Association members.

Their new 40+ Travel Cover replaces their 50+ scheme and went live this week, on 1 October.

With variable pricing depending on age and worldwide or European cover options, Trinity claims this is a market-leading product that is an excellent benefit for members of the Association.

Exclusively available to members of associations

affiliated to Trinity – as is the case with the Royal Naval Association – it is an annual scheme that runs from 1 October to 30 September each year. For full features and pricing please see the summary at the end of this Circular – click [here](#).

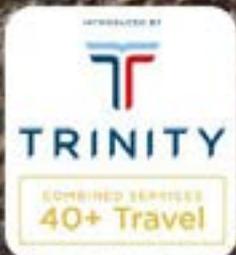
The scheme can be accessed via the existing link from the members' area of the RNA website [here](#).

You can also get a quote by using the link below:

[https://51bwhwzvnuu.typeform.com/to/UU6CIVe3#association\\_members\\_area=xxxxx](https://51bwhwzvnuu.typeform.com/to/UU6CIVe3#association_members_area=xxxxx)

## Ex-Military

# Tired of your health affecting the **cost** of your travels?



Sign up to our 40+ travel insurance scheme to enjoy worldwide cover with no medical declaration required.

\*TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. ALL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHEME AVAILABLE AT: [WWW.COMBINEDSERVICESTRAVELCOVER.ORG.UK](http://WWW.COMBINEDSERVICESTRAVELCOVER.ORG.UK)

## ➤ TAKE A CHANCE ON THE RNA LOTTERY

Just a reminder that you could win up to £25,000 in the Royal Naval Association Weekly Lottery, which gives supporters the chance to win some wonderful cash prizes as well as backing our rank-blind network of serving, veterans and family members of the Royal Navy.

Once players have registered online they will be entered into the draw every Friday they are in credit (£1 per line, per week).

Captain Bill Oliphant, Chief Executive of the RNA, said: "Our lottery is an exciting way of fundraising for and with at least 50 per cent from each £1 donated supporting the work we do, we will be able to help those in our community who need it most.

"The RNA is free to join but relies on donations to help continue the good work. Since Covid, we've done so much more in the welfare/wellbeing space with our veterans, and having an RNA Lottery allows us to do even more.

"Please do sign up and play our lottery, and if you're not a member – join us!"

Visit [www.RNALottery.co.uk](http://www.RNALottery.co.uk) to sign up.

## ➤ NEW DATE FOR TRAINING

Standard Bearer training/refresher for Scottish Area branches in advance of Remembrance will now take place on Tuesday 29 October from 1900-2100, at HMS Scotia.

Names and car details will be required for those looking to participate, for access to the base, by no later than 20 October, to Karen Elliot on [kelliott250666@gmail.com](mailto:kelliott250666@gmail.com)

## ➤ MONDAY NIGHT FIRESIDE CHATS

The subject of next Monday's Fireside Chat (7 October) will be the Naval Children's Charity, and the speaker will be the charity's Chief Executive, Clare Scherer, who started working for the NCC in 2008. RNA Welfare Officers are urged to attend, and it will prove interesting to those who have children or work within the Naval sector and would like to be more informed about how to help colleagues with children.

■ For shipmates who are unaware, there is an ongoing 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](#)

\* Lecture subjects may change at short notice.

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

## ➤ 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: [rnamcc@outlook.com](mailto:rnamcc@outlook.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](http://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)

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 [cml@rnassoc.org](mailto:cml@rnassoc.org)

Date	Presenter	Subject
Mon 7 Oct	Clare Scherer	Naval Children's Charity
Mon 14 Oct	Ron Shilton	RNA Camping and Caravanning SIG
Mon 21 Oct	Tony Noon	National Museum of the Royal Navy – HMS Victory preservation update
Mon 28 Oct	Adrian Hamilton (tbc)	HMS Monmouth and the Battle of Coronel, 1 Nov 1914
Mon 4 Nov	Liz Lloyd (tbc)	The Royal Society of St George
Mon 11 Nov	Tbc	Type 31 frigates
Mon 18 Nov	Brenda Shackleton	The Rescue Ships, Part 2
Mon 25 Nov	Lawrie Phillips	Royal Navy Day by Day
Mon 2 Dec	Tbc	Royal Naval Benevolent Trust
Mon	Anthony Moth	The Noble 8 December, Battle of the Falkland Islands 1914

## ➤ HELP FOR YOU – AND YOU CAN HELP TOO

Attention Branch Welfare Officers!

The RNA still has a few spaces available on our Central Office Mental Health First Aid course.

The course is over two days, is delivered and accredited by MIND and gives you a recognised qualification.

See the details [here](#)

It will be staged on 23-24 October at the Keppel's Head Hotel on The Hard in Portsmouth.

Central Office will cover the cost of the course.

If you need any further information please email [cml@rnassoc.org](mailto:cml@rnassoc.org)

Still on mental health issues, Manchester Metropolitan University is undertaking a study through the Decent Work and Productivity research Centre which is looking

into Imposter Phenomenon (IP) and its effects on military veterans.

IP, also known as Imposter Syndrome, is a widely-reported but hugely misunderstood mental health condition that affects the majority of the population and is suspected to affect veterans in transition to civilian life, perhaps more than other groups, stopping veterans from integrating back into society and limiting their success in their new employment.

If you are a veteran, and you could spare a few minutes, please click on the link below to complete the online survey, and help us understand more about how to improve services and support for those in transition:

<https://tinyurl.com/455hjnd>

# SAVE *the* DATE

**ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025**

**#RNA75**

**PORTSMOUTH**

**20-22 JUNE 2025**

**EMAIL [ENGAGEMENT@RNASSOC.ORG](mailto:ENGAGEMENT@RNASSOC.ORG) FOR MORE DETAILS**

# ➤ YOUR RNA IS SUPPORTING YOU EVERY WAY WE CAN – HERE IS HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US

We are now over 21,000 strong! Through our Thriving Together Programme, our HMS Raleigh Veteran Mentors Programme, our 1,000 Good Deeds Programme, our Accessibility Programme (online events, RNA minibus and the like) and more we are helping more shipmates than ever before. Now that membership is free (thank you to the RNRMC, whose funding made this possible!) how can you help us to carry on supporting our shipmates when they need it? Here are just a few ideas for starters:

**Play the RNA Lottery** – if you spend just £5 per month on our lottery you might win anything from £5 to £25,000! But not only do you get the opportunity to bag a tidy little sum – the RNA raises money too. It really is win-win!

**Send in your photos** – we love that many of you are members of the RNA Community Facebook site, but did

you know that no one outside the organisation can see the good work you are doing because this is a private page?

After posting on this community, please do send your stories also to [comms@rnassoc.org](mailto:comms@rnassoc.org) so that we can tell the rest of the world what wonderful work you are doing – or what great fun we have together.

**Use the RNA shop to buy some Christmas presents** – we currently have stocking fillers, Christmas cards and more. While we do not make a lot of money from our shop (we try to pass on the savings we get to our members), we do make a little – which is used to fund the previously mentioned programmes.

You can access the shop **here**

If you can do any of the above, you can be assured that you are helping your Association to continue to grow, to thrive – and you will be supporting your shipmates too.

## ➤ GINGERBREAD SAILORS ARE HERE – AND YOU CAN WIN A BAKING KIT

Gingerbread sailors are not just for Christmas – but we do have a Christmas decoration for sale, as it happens.

The decoration is for sale as part of a range of items which we have put together as an initial fundraiser.

These include Christmas cards, a pin badge, a colouring page, a sticker and a cookie cutter (see **next page**).

And coming soon will be our very own gingerbread biscuit which can be used to fundraise at coffee mornings and the like, bringing in valuable funds for the Association.

You can buy these items exclusively from [www.rnagizzet.co.uk](http://www.rnagizzet.co.uk)

Remember, whether you are a veteran, a serving person or a family member – or even just have the next interests of the wider Royal Navy family at heart – we are all connected by one common thread – our involvement at one time with the Royal Navy, past and present. The Gingerbread Sailor and related merchandise will help us year-round to raise funds for the RNA that can then be used to benefit you and your shipmates

as members.

And to coincide with the launch of our Gingerbread Sailor line, **we are giving away five baking kits absolutely free** so that you can make and bake your very own RNA Gingerbread Sailors.

Each kit contains our unique cookie cutters, both large and small, a branded mixing bowl, rolling pin and wooden spoon, a limited edition RNA apron, and ingredients.

To be in with a chance of getting one of these kits all you have to do is be one of the first five people to email [engagement@rnassoc.org](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.org) and tell us in a paragraph why you want one of these kits. You must also promise to send photographs of your final creations back to us.

Only one kit per household.





**LIMITED NUMBER**

After producing a larger poppy pin in 2023 it was requested to make a RNA featured pin **£6.50**

including postage

Approximate size 28mm

The Gingerbread Sailor wearing a RNA cap tally is a simple way to show the world you are part of the largest ships company - SAILORS first before introducing others to the Royal Naval Association

Male or female, young or old, the Gingerbread sailor presents a fun way to engage people to talk about the Royal Navy, your journey and the membership.

Limited numbers of everything as we try something 'different'.

**This IS first come first served.**

Items available via [www.rnagizzet.co.uk](http://www.rnagizzet.co.uk) or by emailing [engagement@rnassoc.org](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.org)



**LIMITED NUMBER**

The first pin featuring the RNA ships company Gingerbread pin

**£6.50** including postage

Approximate size 28mm



**LIMITED NUMBER**

Gingerbread poppy related pin holding an anchor.

including postage. **£7.50**

Approximate size 35mm



**LIMITED NUMBER**

Giant Gingerbread Sailor hanging decoration, presented in its own velvet presentation box. Features gold foil gingerbread outline on front and RNA text Once Navy Always Navy inside.

including postage. **£14.00**



A6 cards x 5 without text.148mm x 105mm

5 cards including postage. **£4.60**



A6 cards x 5 WITH text.148mm x 105mm

5 cards including postage. **£4.60**



A5 cards x 5 without text.210mm x 148.5mm

5 cards including postage. **£6.40**



A6 cards x 5 WITH text.148mm x 105mm

5 cards including postage. **£6.40**

\*NB A proportion has been allocated to postage whether used or not - ONE price applies to all.

# ➤ BRANCH NEWS



## REIGATE Branch

For six years Reigate Branch has held a ceremony of remembrance at the graveside of Cdr John Kerans DSO, the Commanding Officer of HMS Amethyst, of 'Yangtze Incident' fame. They remember the events of the spring and summer of 1949, when HMS Amethyst was trapped by hostile Chinese Communist forces on the Yangtze River, and finally escaped to rejoin the Fleet. This year saw the 75th anniversary of the event, and there were three generations of Cdr Kerans' family present – daughters Charmian and Melanie; granddaughter Leonie; and great-granddaughters Eliza and Stephanie. Also present were the Chair

of Tandridge District Council, Cllr Sue Farr, and the Mayor of Reigate & Banstead, Cllr Eddie Humphreys. The Service contingent was made up of members of Reigate Branch, the Oxted branch of the Royal British Legion, and the Reigate Sea Cadet unit, TS Ark Royal. All three Service contingents paraded their standards and a minute's silence was observed. The ceremony also remembers HM Ships London, Black Swan and Consort, which took part in the original action and which lost members of their ship's companies. On completion of the graveside service there was a reception in the Oxted RBL Club, where the three generations of Cdr Kerans' family were photographed under his portrait.



## CHEPSTOW Branch

A service was held on 13 September at St Mary's Church, Chepstow, for the laying up of the Standard of Chepstow and District branch. The Royal Naval Association was formed in 1950, but before that year a number of Naval clubs and associations had sprung up from the spontaneous wish of Naval people to carry on the special comradeship that is a feature of life in the Royal Navy.

The Royal Naval Association was effectively formed out of the Royal Naval Old Comrades Association, which encompassed a number of Naval associations, with the intent of creating a 'one for all' organisation. The inaugural meeting of the RNOCA was held at Ye Olde Ship restaurant in Whitehall on 3 January 1935, and was attended by the grand total of 14 former Naval personnel.

In forming the Royal Naval Association as the principal Naval association recognised by the Admiralty Board, the aim was to attract all existing Naval associations to join it so that there would be a single association maintaining and representing the high standard and reputation of the Royal Navy.

It was also designed to provide comradeship and assistance in need for all Naval people throughout the United Kingdom and, indeed, anywhere in the world where people who had served in the Royal Navy



came together. Resilience is built in through peer support and a sense of community, and so they work closely with a number of organisations to ensure the best support for shipmates. For example, the RNA Thriving Together programme supports shipmates' mental and physical health through activities and get-togethers. Each event is led by an RNA mental health first-aider who can offer signposting and support. The Chepstow and District branch was commissioned on 9 October 1967 and has provided companionship for those with a Naval background over many years. However, in common with so many clubs and associations, membership

has continued to fall with younger persons reluctant to volunteer or commit to such a group. Members gradually pass away until the viability of a local branch is no more – and this has now happened in Chepstow.

So, while all of the current members will remain members of the RNA, the branch will cease. After all – Once Navy, Always Navy.

Each branch has a Standard – a ceremonial flag that is paraded at important events such as Remembrance Day or ANZAC Day. Therefore, as the branch closes, their Standard needed to be laid up. That has now happened at the service and ceremony at St Mary's Church. The Standard will remain on display.



**Organisers of this year's RNA Annual Conference in Cardiff were rightly praised during proceedings in South Wales in the summer – and now they have it in writing too. Pictured above are Shipmates Mary Shipton and Graham Warner receiving certificates of appreciation their efforts from Area 7 Chairman Gordon Williams (centre).**

## AQUITAINE Branch

Aquitaine Branch in south-west France was pleased to see RNA General Secretary Capt Bill Oliphant, who is one of their branch members and was on holiday in the area, join them for their August Lunch that was held in Bergerac. These informal lunches have been held on the second Wednesday of each month at various restaurants in the region since 1999, when the branch was formed. It is an opportunity to meet fellow RNA members and occasional guests for a convivial meal, with – of course – good local French wine. Any RNA members or Naval retirees who happen to be in the area would be welcome to join them. Details of each month's location with contact details can be found on their website [www.RNA-Aquitaine.com](http://www.RNA-Aquitaine.com). They also welcome any ex-Service personnel who have moved to live in the area and who would like to join the branch. Again, contact details are on our website.





### RNA RIDERS Branch

The RNA Riders Branch can justifiably boast that they are the unique branch of the Association.

Why? Because they have no home port, no ship, nor shore establishment to hang up their helmets, cuts, or decorated leathers – and they certainly do not ride pedal bikes!

Their No 1s are quality leather jackets proudly displaying not only the RNA Crest, but also those of the ships, submarines and Naval Air Squadrons they so proudly served on.

Who are their members? Both serving and former served officers, senior rates, junior rates, even stokers and – dare they say – WAFUs! As with their wider RNA family, they have no rank or rate, just one big Naval family with a love for motorcycles.

They align themselves with the RNA Areas and are open to invitations to attend branch meetings, support your functions and Veterans Breakfast Clubs.

They may be forgiven for appearing to look like the 'Ton Up Brigade' or, dare they say it, 'Hells Angels', but them they are not. They are simply dedicated motorcyclists of the Naval fraternity.

They enjoy taking part in Rides

Out whereby a group of them will meet up and take a safe steady ride visiting places of interest. They provide outrider escorts at funerals, providing respect for those who Crossed the Bar.

Recently, on 6 September, members of the Branch, along with the Royal British Legion Riders, attended the funeral of Roy Cecil Easton, an RAF veteran. Sadly, Roy had no immediate family, so the Forces family put the word out to attend and give him a proper send-off. All together with 11 RNA, RAFA and RBL Standards, along with local veterans' breakfast club members, more than 75 former Brothers-in-Arms were able to give him the send-off he fully deserved.

The Branch has a membership of 192 including some 34-plus members attached to their mother Branches. Branch meetings are held over Zoom. If you are a motorcyclist yourself, and interested to join others with a common interest, then please get in touch with the RNA Riders.

To all you riders out there, Ride Safely and Stay Safe.

For more information contact Mark Gayton, Honorary Secretary of the RNA Riders Branch, on [secrnariders@gmail.com](mailto:secrnariders@gmail.com)



### SWANSEA Branch

Shipmates at Swansea branch are pictured enjoying curry night. And not only was it a good get-together for branch members – the evening also raised more than £200 for branch funds.

### SOUTHEND Branch

There are still a few places left on the Southend Branch Trafalgar Night Dinner, to be held at the Chalkwell Park Rooms on 26 October.

Tickets are £28 each and include three courses, table wine, port and entertainment. Bookings should be made through S/M Mick Horner at [rnasos.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:rnasos.treasurer@gmail.com) – but you will have to be quick, as bookings and payments are due this week!

The deadline is also here for branches who wish to compete in the 2024 No 5 Area Uckers Championships, which will be held at Southend RNA Club in East Street on Saturday 23 November between 1000 and 1600 (ish).

More details and booking confirmations to [RNAsos.comms@gmail.com](mailto:RNAsos.comms@gmail.com).

And while on the subject of uckers, Southend branch will take on Rayleigh branch in an inter-branch competition on 7 December at the RNA Club. First dice around 1030 with a scheduled finish time of 1630, and scrum will be available. Barracking, apparently, will be encouraged...

Southend branch are holding a Pickle Night on 2 November at their club. Shipmates promise an 'sea shanties and skits', and all are welcome.

Finally, two more dates from the Southend social calendar – on 4 December the branch meeting will include a talk by Essex Police, while on 18 December the meeting will include the Christmas carol service.





**TYNE Branch**

S/M Lou Armstrong, of Tyne Branch, was one of a group of ten veterans and civilians who last month travelled by ferry from North Tyneside to Ijmuden and Arnhem to lay a wreath at the war cemetery on behalf of the RNA marking the 80th anniversary of Operation Market Garden.

They also paid their respects to Air Mechanic Leonard Hooker, of HMS Daedalus, who died on 19 September 1944 when he was shot down. Leonard is believed to be the only Royal Navy sailor who died at Arnhem.

Market Garden sought to bring the war in western Europe to an end in 1944 by opening a route into Germany's industrial heartland of the Rhine and Ruhr valleys by capturing key river crossings, the last at Arnhem in the Netherlands.



**PORTLAND Branch**

On a warm sunny morning on 7 September, S/Ms Ben Cartwright, Dave Thompson, Karen Miller and Dusty Miller met Cdr Go Kajiyama (Captain of JDS Shimakaze), Maj Yasuke Hiro (Deputy

Defence Attache), Lt Fumie Nakane (Supply Officer), MCPO Eitaro Fufata and CPO Phot Hiroki Hashizki for a graveside ceremony in honour of PO Asayoshi Harada, who died on 15 February 1919 of Spanish influenza while his ship

IJNS Idjumo was in Portland Harbour. He was interred in Portland Naval Cemetery with full military honours. Wreaths were laid by JDS Shimakaze ('Firebird') and Portland RNA.

Photographs c/o CPO Phot Hiroki Hashizki for and the Japanese Embassy. PO Harada's ship was part of the 2nd Special Task Fleet deployed to the Mediterranean as part of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance fighting the German and Ottoman Navies.

The Japanese helped the British take on enemy U-boats and warships in

the Mediterranean and the Middle East. After the war, the Japanese Navy received seven German submarines as reparations and Idjumo was part of the fleet sent to Britain to take delivery.



## WANSBECK Branch

There was a very good turn out by members of Wansbeck branch at the Battle of Britain memorial service this year to remember those who lost their lives in the RAF and others in 1940. The service was at St George's Church in Jesmond, Newcastle, with 13 standards on parade and more than 30 Cadets and a variety of veterans from different regiments.

The CO from RAF Boulmer inspected the standard bearers and the Lord Mayor inspected and spoke to cadets and other veterans who were there. More than 100 people were in the church, before the parade outside. Also in the church was a 16-piece colliery band to provide the music for the hymns, and a bugler to play the Last Post and Reveille.

The Wansbeck Branch Secretary attended on behalf of the branch – his father was in the RAF during the war in North Africa.

The whole event was organised by RAFA Newcastle and Gateshead Branch.

On 24 August the branch lost one of its members, Sheila Davies, a former Wren, aged 82 (pictured bottom right).

Sheila's funeral, which was well attended was at St Bartholomews Church at Newbiggin by Sea, where

she lived, followed by the committal at Blyth Crematorium, and a wake at Newbiggin veterans' meeting place, the Elizabethan Hall.

Sheila herself had been involved in re-starting the veterans up again when she first moved to Newbiggin from down South a few years ago.

The branch contributed an anchor wreath as requested by Sheila herself when she knew she was going to cross the bar, and the Seaman's Prayer was read out in church at her funeral.

There were 15 veterans for a guard of honour and the RNA standard at the church.

Sheila had two sons and three daughters, and a number of grandchildren, some of whom were at the funeral.

On 30 August some branch members attended a ladies' night, and regimental dinner to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, now the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. Some members of Wansbeck branch are Associate members.

On 1 September the Secretary visited two other branch members who are both in care homes, one at Newbiggin and the other at Bedlington, as well as meeting some of the Newbiggin veterans at the Elizabethan Hall.

On 3 September (Red Ensign Day) two



of shipmates attended the flag-raising ceremony and service at Lynemouth, held every year in honour of Merchant Seamen who lost their lives during the World Wars and since.

On 8 September branch members attended the annual trek to Eden Camp near Malton in North Yorkshire – a really good day with lots to see at the camp, which was originally built by Italian and German prisoners of war. After some free time wandering around the camp a march through the camp and memorial service was held on the parade ground, with an excellent military band from East Yorkshire; 51 standards led the parade and there were over 100 veterans on the march.

On 11 September the Secretary visited a 101 year old war veteran at his home in Cramlington in Northumberland, a former Royal Northumberland Fusilier who was at the Battle of Monte Cassino in Italy among other places. He is also a 10th Dan Judo instructor and still teaching.



**PLYMOUTH Branch**  
Back in the summer a request was passed down the line to the Plymouth Branch Secretary, Sue Yeoman, seeking a suitable volunteer veteran for a painting by Mick Hand in connection with his 'Ink Art' project. Well, the appeal was successful, and the result can now be seen. The volunteer who stepped forward is

an ex-Chief Stoker, S/M Steve Tinney, a member of the Plymouth branch. The portrait was commissioned and is finished and awaiting display at Mick's art exhibition in the Royal William Yard in Plymouth this month. It has been arranged for a member of the WRNS, 91-year-old Pat, to also have her portrait painted, but that has been delayed due to a recent fall.



# DEAL STRUCK OVER INDIAN OCEAN BASE

The UK and Mauritius have reached an historic agreement to secure the strategically important UK-US military base on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, which plays a crucial role in regional stability and international security.

For the first time in more than 50 years, the status of the base will be undisputed and legally secure, following a political agreement.

The agreement underpins the UK's steadfast duty to keep the country safe, with the operation of the military base unchanged, in an increasingly volatile world.

The previous government started negotiations on the future of British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)/ Chagos Archipelago, but years after the negotiations began issues have remained unresolved.

The agreement is strongly supported



by international partners including the United States, which has joint operation of the military base. Without the agreement, the long-term, secure operation of the base would be under threat, with contested sovereignty and legal challenges, including through various international courts and tribunals.

The agreement sees Mauritius assume sovereignty over BIOT, with the UK authorised to exercise the sovereign rights of Mauritius on Diego Garcia. The political agreement is subject to a treaty and supporting legal instruments being finalised. Both sides have committed to complete this as quickly as possible.



IT PAYS TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PENSION

## Veterans Unclaimed Armed Forces Pensions



At least **14,800** unclaimed Armed Forces pension benefits\*

**A CALL TO ACTION!**



Historically, around **2,000** preserved Armed Forces pensions go unclaimed each year



Anyone serving after **April 1975** now aged **60** or over could have an Armed Forces pension if they served for **2 years** or more



The pension is **NOT** paid automatically – Veterans must apply to Veterans UK using AFPS Form 8 or can call **0800 085 3600** for further information



**FIND OUT MORE**

\*Source: MoD APFS Annual Report July 2024

Dated 24/07/2024

## ► WE'RE RUNNING, WE'RE COOKING!

On 20 October Team RNA will be joining the Great South Run in Portsmouth. Josh Weeks, a personal trainer, is Team Leader, providing everyone else with motivation and top fitness tips. Dave MacAskill, RNA Engagement Lead, is also running, and has been training on park runs for the past few months. We are hoping to feature Josh on a Fireside Chat soon – he is a fascinating young man who is making a great life for himself post-RN. He is dedicated to helping veterans transition out of Service in a positive way, using fitness and lifestyle to support mental

health and wellbeing. BZ Josh!  
■ There will be a Cookery Course for members on 19 October in Portsmouth. From beginners to seasoned chefs, we will be making lunch for each other, eating together and then making our RNA Gingerbread Sailors for you to take home. The course will run from 1000 to 1600 and there will loads of RNA goodies to take home. This is a Thriving Together event, sponsored by RNRMC, so no cost to you at all.  
To enquire or book email [engagement@rnassoc.org](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.org)

Several members of St Neots and District Branch have just returned from visiting the Normandy Beaches, having taken with them a 100-year-old D-Day veteran and branch member S/M Richard (Dick) Wood. Dick served in HMS Jervis during the landings, when the ship gave covering fire for Canadian landings at Juno Beach. It was an emotional visit for Dick as it was his first visit since June 1944. A full report will appear in the next edition of this Circular.

# Uckers Ya Uckers!

*Doubles and Singles  
Registration 0900-0930  
First dice 1015*



**The Royal Naval Association's  
Uckers World Championships  
Saturday 12 October 2024**

**Royal Maritime Hotel Portsmouth**

You don't need to have qualified - you can still compete

**Full English**

**Breakfast £9.50**

Refreshments available all day  
plus a light lunch

Further info:

[engagement@rnassoc.org](mailto:engagement@rnassoc.org)  
07596530499

**Prizes for:**

Best Dressed  
Snake Eyes  
First All-Out

**Also:**

Raffle  
Guess The Value  
Naval Blackout

**UCKERS YA UCKERS™**  
Personalised Uckers Boards



Order Online: [www.uckers-ya-uckers.co.uk/personal-design-order/1150](http://www.uckers-ya-uckers.co.uk/personal-design-order/1150)  
Click on the 'Contact Us' Tab

# OBITUARIES

## Cdr James McClurg RN – Shipmate Paddy: An appreciation by Vice Admiral John McAnally

Former General Secretary, Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee and President of Netley Branch Paddy McClurg crossed the bar on 23 September. Starting as a Junior Writer and Ganges Boy from humble Northern Ireland beginnings Paddy had a wonderful career rising in the Royal Navy to the rank of Commander and afterwards as a highly skilled Management Consultant before joining Central Office.

Paddy and I, first met when I assumed command of HMS Torquay in Charleston, South Carolina in 1984. The picture (right) shows Paddy then. I was initially somewhat disconcerted when I observed my Supply Officer making casual payments (advances of pay) to his fellow officers late at night in the Wardroom from a roll of banknotes in his hip pocket. Maybe that should not have changed to incredulous admiration when I came to realise that his cash books were meticulously and immaculately kept and balanced to the penny.

Paddy's resourcefulness and indispensability were very soon demonstrated. Although then deployed as part of a reformed Dartmouth Training Squadron, Torquay was normally the Navigation and Marine Engineer Application Course training ship. The night before we sailed from Charleston two of our MEACs hired a car, got drunk and managed to crash it into a police car. When news of this reached the ship around midnight, the First Lieutenant reported to me that it would probably be all right as he had despatched Paddy. And indeed somehow after Paddy's intervention the errant Sub Lieutenants were released into their CO's custody.

We then sailed for Bermuda where at a party given by the Resident Senior Naval Officer someone took my jacket home in place of their own. It was soon restored but the only problem was that my Naval Identity Card was in my jacket. Paddy insisted that I pay the normal fine into the Ship's Welfare Fund. "The offence is being not in possession", he said, "not in finding it". Paddy was always ready to speak truth as he saw it to power, and it was always worth paying close attention. Torquay had a very close and warm relationship with the Borough of



Torbay, and in the last year of the ship's life we paid a farewell visit. It took six days, and Paddy was our liaison officer. I seem to remember attending 49 separate engagements and speaking at most of them uttering well-crafted sentiments provided for me by Paddy.

After nearly 30 years' service and over a million miles steamed Torquay paid off in March 1985. We were joined by our Flotilla Admiral for our last entry into Portsmouth. That was preceded by firing a final broadside from our 4.5in guns, and the Admiral sportingly descended by winch wire from a helicopter in driving rain and a Force 8. I took him to my cabin for restorative coffee and to remove his goon suit. He startled me by saying: "John, in his very secret personnel files accessible only to him, the Naval Secretary has exactly the same notation against both you and me".

I wondered what on earth might be coming next.

"Able to understand Paddy McClurg," he said. I did not know whether to be disappointed or relieved. And certainly I never had any difficulty in understanding Paddy's dulcet Ulster tones.

At the subsequent paying-off ceremony, expertly organised by Paddy, all 25 of the ship's Commanding Officers attended, together with the Commander-in-Chief. Some 700 people were treated on board to a superb lunch on completion. I still can't imagine how so many could be accommodated in a relatively small ship. But it happened, and I certainly cannot conceive of any other Supply Officer achieving it.

Paddy also organised an annual Torquay Ball which was yet another catering and social triumph.

Continued on page 28

Following retirement from the Active List, Paddy became an expert Management Consultant for the MoD and, indeed, in this capacity carried out a review of the Royal College of Defence Studies while I was Commandant.

In 2005, after his second retirement, I asked him to conduct a similar review into the Royal Naval Association HQ. National Council then asked him to help implement his report, taking up a post of Executive Assistant which he did initially pro bono and then for a salary far less than he was worth. When the postholder resigned he succeeded as General Secretary from 2006-2010. His commitment was exceptional, working very long hours and masterminding two particularly important initiatives – the move of the RNA HQ/Central Office from Chelsea to Portsmouth Naval Base and the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the RN and the RNA.

Both were highly successful and of great benefit to serving personnel and veterans as the RNA became much better connected to the serving Navy. After five hard years in HQ and at the age of 70 most would take a back seat, but not Paddy, whose voluntary contribution since 2010 continued to be outstanding.

As President of our Netley Branch he was a ball of fire, organising social events, trips to the National Memorial Arboretum, and the annual Netley village Armed Forces Day Parade. He had a real feeling for veterans welfare, providing personal support and advice to all who needed it. This very markedly improved the social isolation of elderly veterans – one of the RNA's most beneficial activities. In 2012 Paddy returned to our national stage, rescuing the RNA when the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee resigned, threatening great difficulty since no suitable replacement was

available and the role is vital to the annual AGM and Conference. He stepped into the breach, worked hard to understand the labyrinthine rules of the RNA, and ran a most successful Conference. Of equal great value was his hands-on work in the revision and updating of the RNA Royal Charter and Rules. He provided cogent and accurate advice and spent many days at the computer to produce clear guidance for members that was of the right quality for the Privy Council. Paddy now joins Kate, his beloved wife of more than 50 years who pre-deceased him. He is survived by his sons Robert, a serving Commander RN and John, a Captain in the Royal Engineers, and their families. What a marvellous life he led, so full of achievement and service to others! As his Netley Branch Shipmates will testify he was great fun to be with. I am proud to have known him and to have been one of his friends.



**Paddy McClurg (centre) is thanked for his efforts at the RNA Annual Conference in Ouistreham, France**

## S/M Noel Green

S/M Noel Green has crossed the bar following a short period of ill health.

He reached the age of 95 in April this year being fit and independent, and his family put a lot of this down to the life skills he learnt as a boy sailor in the Royal Navy.

He had spent the last nine years without his beloved wife Kath who he'd met when she was a Wren. Both Noel and Kath had been active members of the RNA with their local branch being Uttoxeter.

RIP Noel Green true to the words "once navy always Navy"

Noel was born in Chester but was brought up in his father's hometown of Ashton-under-Lyne. On leaving school he started work at the engineering firm of Daniel Adamson (the man who built the Manchester ship canal) before joining the Royal Navy as a boy at the age of 15.

In 1946, at the end of his training, he took passage on the aircraft carrier HMS Formidable and sailed to join the cruiser HMS Leander in the Mediterranean fleet.

He returned home in 1949 and, after having some leave, he was drafted to the aircraft carrier HMS Indefatigable. He had not been on board very long before he was given a new job. Attached to the ship was a modified fishing trawler whose job was to go ahead of the Indefatigable to its next port of call and act as a ferry for the crew between ship and shore. The trawler was manned by civilians but to comply with international law had to carry a qualified radio operator. Noel got the job.

Two years later he joined a troopship at Glasgow filled with soldiers and sailors bound for Korea, being drafted to HMS Ladybird. Following the ceasefire two years later, the journey home was something of an adventure! The York aeroplane they boarded to make the journey developed an engine fault shortly after take-off from Singapore. Consequently, lengthy checks were carried out at the various airports along the way back. Its life ended when the brakes failed at Malta and it crashed into a field at the end of the runway. No one was hurt on that occasion, but unfortunately the crew were killed on their next flight. After a period of leave Noel joined HMS Mercury, the Royal Navy's signal school outside Portsmouth, where he met Kath, who was in the WRNS and working there. They were married in December 1955.

Noel was serving in HMS Cumberland, which had returned to Plymouth for a short refit. He came off night duty on the Friday morning, caught the train and kept awake until York, where he changed trains for Scarborough and then promptly fell asleep. He was still asleep when the train arrived and subsequently emptied. Kath's dad nearly had a fit when Noel didn't appear as all the wedding arrangements had been made, luckily, he was found and the wedding took place. The honeymoon was one night in York before they caught the train back to Plymouth ready for Noel to be back on duty first thing Monday morning. He was soon back at sea again and in the Mediterranean for the Suez adventure!

His next posting was to Portsmouth and the frigate HMS Loch Fada before



spending two years in the Persian Gulf, while Kath found work in Portsmouth.

In 1959 he left the Navy and joined the War Office wireless service and they moved to nearby Loughborough, where sons Jonathan and David were born. There were still more moves ahead before he finally settled in Cheadle - Kath reckoned there had been 13 in all.

1985 saw Noel drafted as officer-in-charge of the composite signals organisation station at Woodhead Hall, known locally as the Air Ministry.

Over the following years Noel took an active part in the community both in Tean and Cheadle, being an active member of the RNA, and was involved with a wide range of activities.

There are two characteristics which define Noel's life: his deep Christian faith and the love of his family. Kath died in 2015. He is survived by his two sons, three grandchildren and a great granddaughter. He often said without the support and understanding of his family in the early days would not have attained the success he did.



**With much sadness, we also mark the crossing of the bar of Shipmate Leonard Gunner, D-Day veteran and the bravest seasick young sailor. At the age of 19 he was a signaller on Gold Beach on D-Day, sending back firing instructions to Allied warships bombarding German defences as he was too seasick to work onboard. Leonard's D-Day story is recorded on our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gGZQy\\_WwIk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gGZQy_WwIk). Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.**

Submarine HMS A6 exercising around the Vernon Torpedo School. See 1 October. Image from the IWM collection (© The rights holder (Q 74787))



## ➤ OCTOBER SWINGING THE LAMP

**'Swinging the Lamp' events are drawn, by permission, from the definitive Naval history reference book *The Royal Navy Day by Day*, written by Honorary Shipmate Lawrie Phillips and published by The History Press ([www.thehistorypress.co.uk](http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk)). The book is issued to all HM Ships and Establishments and is 'probably one of the most well-thumbed and valued books that Captains of HM Ships possess'. It is currently available online for around £45 (search ISBN number 978-0750982665)**

### 1 October 1923

The torpedo and mine warfare establishment HMS Vernon moved ashore into the Gunwharf site in Portsmouth on 1 October 1923. Vernon originally took its name from a 50-gun fourth rate of 1832 which was rescued from the ignominy of being a floating coal jetty at Chatham in 1872 and moved became the tender to the Royal Navy's gunnery school, HMS Excellent, supporting torpedo and mine training. Two years later she was joined by the new Pembroke-built experimental torpedo boat HMS Vesuvius, which was used to conduct equipment trials until the school went ashore in 1923. In April 1876 the floating establishment was bolstered by the arrival of retired steam frigate HMS Ariadne and the barge Florence Nightingale; the small flotilla was hived off from Excellent and commissioned as HMS Vernon as the home of the RN Torpedo Branch at the same time. Ten years later Vernon was deemed to be too cramped to continue her role as school ship, so that task was taken up by HMS Donegal, a magnificent 1858 screw-driven 101-gun ship of the line that had been hulked and added to HMS Vernon – the ship HMS Vernon was renamed HMS Actaeon and became a floating workshop while Ariadne continued in the role of accommodation ship. The School was moved to Portchester Creek

in April 1895, after which things really begin to get complicated. Ariadne was relieved of her accommodation duties in 1895, being replaced by the even more magnificent HMS Marlborough of 1855, a 131-gun behemoth that began life as a traditional ship of the line but was completed with an engine. Marlborough became Vernon II and was physically attached to Actaeon (ex-Vernon) and Vernon (ex-Donegal) by walkways. The latter two ships were given the joint name Vernon I. In 1904 HMS Warrior (the same ship that now sits proudly in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard) joined the party as Vernon III, acting as a telegraphy school, workshop and power plant. Also in 1904 Actaeon (ex-Vernon) was renamed Vernon IV while Ariadne was moved to Chatham to set up a new torpedo school and renamed Actaeon a year later. During World War 1 Vernon was busy training seamen in the art of torpedo and mine warfare as well as developing weapons and tactics. On 1 October 1923 Vernon became a stone frigate, specialising in torpedo and mine warfare as well as ship's electrical gear. In World War 2 Vernon took on the vital additional role of mine countermeasures and disposal, with staff using captured mines to develop their processes, though the work of examining and dismantling enemy mines remained highly-dangerous – five sailors died and many more were injured in an explosion in a work shed, prompting the work to be carried out in a remote quarry. The Blitz on Portsmouth also caused many casualties – more than 100 died when one building was bombed, and over the next few months the majority of Vernon's work was shifted to Roedean School in Brighton – 'Vernon (R)' – with minor elements spread along the southern counties. On 1 October 1944 Vernon took on diver training from the Gunnery Branch, with Brixham hosting the new Vernon (D) diving school for its first year before it returned to the mother unit. Further

Continued on page 31

post-war mergers and reorganisation saw Vernon drop electrical training but pick up Portland's Anti-Submarine Branch, leading to the creation of the Torpedo and Anti-Submarine (TAS) Branch (also responsible for diver training) which remained at Vernon until a move to HMS Dryad at Southwick in the mid-1970s. Vernon continued to train divers and housed the original 'Dunker' aircraft escape training facility in a repurposed mining trials tank – underwater escape training moved to Yeovilton in phases between 1981 and 1985. In March 1986 Vernon became 'Vernon Site', part of HMS Nelson, and a year later the name changed again to HMS Nelson (Gunwharf), continuing to train sailors and also hosting the Commandant General Royal Marines for a period. Over the subsequent eight years elements of Vernon were moved away, the final ones being mine warfare to the School of Maritime Operations in late 1995 and diver training to Horsea Island in early 1996, at which point Vernon was finished, closing for good on 1 April 1996. There are still plenty of reminders of the old establishment at the Gunwharf Quays development which now occupies the site.

### **2 October 1942**

Light cruiser HMS Curacoa was sliced in half by

ocean liner-turned-troopship RMS Queen Mary and sank with heavy loss on 2 October 1942. The 4,250-ton World War 1-vintage cruiser, built at Pembroke Dockyard, saw little action of note in the Great War, having been commissioned just nine months before the Armistice, but that changed in 1919 when on anti-Bolshevik deployment supporting the White Russians in the Baltic in mid-1919, when she struck a mine 70 miles east of Reval (now Tallinn), killing one man. She limped into Reval to be patched up then set out for Sheerness, completing the final 500 miles or so without her rudder which dropped off in the North Sea. During the 1920s she served with the Atlantic and Mediterranean Fleets, often acting as a flagship, while much of the 1930s were taken up with training duties. She was converted to an anti-aircraft cruiser at Chatham between the summer of 1939 and January 1940 but suffered bomb damage in April that year when she was bombed by German aircraft during the Norwegian Campaign, which resulted in the death of eight of her ship's company. After she was repaired she spent two years on fairly routine convoy duties around the coast of the British Isles, and it was during an escort tasking that she met her end. She met up with the Queen Mary north of Ireland, at a time when the ocean liner, carrying 10,000 American infantrymen, was steaming fast

**Continued on page 32**

RMS Queen Mary in her grey wartime livery in September 1944. See 2 October. Image from the IWM collection (© IWM (A 25913))



in 'Zig-Zag Pattern Number 8' to avoid submarine attacks. The cruiser, steaming in a straight line, was somewhat slower than the liner but remained close to provide air cover. The collision happened as a result of the two commanding officers having different interpretations of the right of way; the liner expected the cruiser to keep out of her way, but on one leg of the zig-zag Queen Mary ploughed into Curacoa, cutting her in half. The stern sank immediately, followed a few minutes later by the forward section. The liner followed orders to continue on her way because of the threat of U-boats, but she signalled her escort destroyers, which later returned to search for survivors; 101 men were plucked from the sea, but 337 went down with their ship. The incident was not formally declared until after the end of the war to avoid security issues as well as damaging morale, and post-war legal action, on appeal, finally allocated two-thirds of the blame to the Naval officers and one-third to the owners of Queen Mary, the Cunard White Star Line.

### 3 October 1906

There are many famous ships, but few ships have had as colossal an impact on sea power as HMS Dreadnought, which began her trials programme on 3 October 1906. The vessel represented such a huge leap forward in naval technology that she sparked a naval arms race – all major navies began building their own 'dreadnoughts', and her name became a generic label for all such steam-turbine driven, all big gun, large fast battleships. Her arrival also signalled the end for the previous generation, which were henceforth dismissed as 'pre-dreadnoughts'. Championed by First Sea Lord

Admiral Sir John Fisher (known to all as 'Jacky'), Dreadnought was a beast of a ship – displacing 21,000 tons, armed with ten 12in guns in five twin turrets, and a ship's company of more than 800, she was the fastest battleship in the world when launched on 10 February 1906. Even her build programme was a minor miracle – Fisher wanted her built in a year, so material was stockpiled and elements fabricated in advance, and thousands of workers employed at Portsmouth Dockyard, considered the fastest construction yard in the world at that time, allowing her to be completed in exactly one year. Her boilers were fired up on 1 October 1906, and two days later she was at sea off Devonport on two days of trials – the speed of the process was essential as the Admiralty had decided no further dreadnoughts would be built until the principles behind the design were proven. Less than a week later she averaged more than 20 knots on full-power trials, and after final fitting out at Portsmouth she was commissioned on 11 December 1906. A shakedown cruise at the end of that year to the Mediterranean and Caribbean proved the ship had indeed met the expectations of her designers, with no major defects coming to light. She was usually acting as a flagship in the years before World War 1, but her record was oddly low-key – her only kill was the submarine U-29, which she rammed in the Pentland Firth on 18 March 1915, making her the only battleship to purposely sink an enemy submarine (in the process gaining a measure of revenge by killing German war hero Otto Weddigen, who had sunk three British armoured cruisers – HM Ships Aboukir, Cressy and Hogue – in just an hour the previous September). Dreadnought was in refit at the time of the Battle

Continued on page 33

HMS Dreadnought pictured in 1914.  
See 3 October. Image from the IWM  
collection (© IWM (Q 21184))



HMS Keppel pictured in February 1972. See 5 October. Image from the IWM collection (© IWM (HU 129869))



of Jutland, and spent the rest of the war largely on defensive duties based at Sheerness. Dreadnought was sold for scrap in May 1921 and broken up at the start of the following year.

#### 4 October 1918

HMS Snapdragon sank UB-68 in the Mediterranean on 4 October 1918 – a submarine commanded by Donitz, who went on to become Grand Admiral in World War 2, and whose experiences of submarine warfare in the Great War helped form the concept of wolf-pack attacks in the Battle of the Atlantic. Snapdragon was an Arabis-class minesweeping sloop, one of the wider Flower class designed and built for countermeasures purposes during World War 1, though they also proved useful as patrol ships, escorts and transports. Built by Ropner and Sons on the Tees, and launched just before Christmas in 1915, Snapdragon was on escort duties in the Mediterranean between Sicily and North Africa when German submarine UB-68 surfaced nearby with technical problems. Reports differ over the exact nature of the encounter – some say the boat was scuttled by her crew, others that she was sunk by gunfire from Snapdragon and trawler HMT Cradosin. Between one and four Germans died, and Donitz – who was captured along with 32 shipmates – said that he ordered the submarine to be scuttled after she was hit three times by British shells. It is also reported that the Commanding Officer of Snapdragon was later reprimanded for locking Donitz in one of the ship's heads. Snapdragon survived the war and continued to serve, mainly towing targets, until 1934.

#### 5 October 1956

Frigate HMS Keppel, departing Devonport for Portland, collided with the Torpoint Ferry shortly after 0830 on 5 October 1956. Keppel was a 1,500-

ton Blackwood-class (or Type 14) anti-submarine frigate, launched by Yarrow in Scotstoun in August 1954 and commissioned almost two years later. She had not long been in commission when she collided with the ferry while she was serving with the Second Training Squadron. The ferry was said to have been stationary while one-third of the way into its crossing from Torpoint, waiting for a ship to move upstream, when Keppel went astern downstream and struck the ferry. There were no injuries, though the ferry's anchor was dislodged and fouled the ferry chains, immobilising the ferry for a time. Keppel sustained some damage above the waterline, and anchored in the Sound while an assessment was made; she then returned to her berth for further examination. The 500-ton ferry, which was carrying between 50 and 100 passengers as well as cars, suffered minor damage and eventually returned to Torpoint for examination. Keppel went on to serve on fishery protection duties before being reduced to reserve status in early 1973, though a boiler explosion in sister ship HMS Hardy in 1975 meant she was reactivated to serve as a training platform for a further year. She was scrapped in Kent in 1979.

#### 6 October 1946

Light cruiser HMS Nigeria paid her first visit to the country after which she was named on 6 October 1946. The Fiji-class ship, built by Vickers Armstrong, Walker on Tyneside, was commissioned in September 1940, and served the first part of the war in the North Sea and off Scandinavia; in June 1941 she was part of a group of ships that captured Enigma code books and part of an Enigma machine from German weather ship Lauenburg in the Arctic Ocean, which occurred shortly after destroyer HMS Bulldog captured an entire Enigma machine from submarine U-110 and gave British codebreakers

Continued on page 34

an additional helping hand. Later that year she became flagship of Force K and took part in operations in Norway, damaging her bows in what is believed to have been a mine strike. After repairs she served in the Mediterranean, including a role as part of Force X as an escort for the Pedestal convoy to Malta in August 1942; Nigeria was damaged once more, this time by a torpedo attack by Italian submarine Axum which killed more than 50 men, but she managed to limp back to Gibraltar then on to the Charleston in the United States for further repairs. Some nine months later she returned to action off South Africa, then spent the final 18 months of the war as part of the Eastern Fleet, including raids on Sumatra. She continued to serve with the Royal Navy after the war, making her first visit to Lagos in the colony from which she took her name in the autumn of 1946. According to the Naval Review, CINC South Atlantic Vice Admiral Sir Clement Moody was presented with a gift of a "small but exceedingly vicious crocodile" during an official dinner which the Admiral was not keen to accept (neither was his Flagg, who was given charge of it...) Six years later the cruiser was sold to the Indian Navy which renamed her INS Mysore, using her extensively as a flagship. There was a further brush with the Royal Navy in 1959 when the 8,700-ton Mysore collided with destroyer HMS Hogue, badly damaging the smaller ship's bows and effectively writing off the British warship. The cruiser remained in service with the Indians until the summer of 1985, and was scrapped the following year.

### 7 October 1930

Destroyers HMS Tempest and Tribune were in Boulogne to play their part in the repatriation of bodies following the loss of Airship R101 pay tribute to the crew of Airship R101, lost at Beauvais in France on her maiden overseas flight. R101 was one of two massive experimental airships built under the British government's Imperial Airship Scheme, which was intended to encourage the development of airships to cover long-distance routes around the British Empire. R101 was the 'government' airship, designed by an Air Ministry team (and encouraged to 'push the envelope', so to speak, in order to test ideas to the fullest extent), while R100 was designed and built by a Vickers subsidiary, led by Barnes Wallis (of bouncing bomb fame, amongst other

achievements) assisted by Nevil Shute Norway, later to gain further fame as author Nevil Shute Norway. Working to government specifications for an airship capable of lifting more than 60 tons of people or cargo, able to accommodate 100 passengers, have an endurance of nearly 60 hours and a top speed of 70mph. The Air Ministry produced the gigantic R101, almost 240 metres long (after extension) and the largest hydrogen-filled rigid airship until Germany produced the Hindenburg in 1936. The craft's gasbags were first filled over two months in the summer of 1929 after which trim and flight trials could begin – but these were a disappointment, as R101 had left lifting power than calculated, and was tail-heavy. Poor weather delayed the official public unveiling of R101 until 12 October 1929, when it was walked out of its shed at Cardington, Bedfordshire, by a ground crew of 400, and the airship proved a huge attraction, with an estimated million-plus people travelling to see the monster by the end of November that year. Her first flight was on 14 October, lasting almost six hours and taking her over Central London. Further flights saw her tour Norfolk and make a trip to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight on her first night flight. Gales on 11 November required some repairs to frame and gasbags, but the moored airship coped reasonably well with the buffeting she received. Over the next few months engineers and designers pored over some of the defects and shortfalls, including removing more than three tons of weight (achieved in part by removing some two-berth cabins from the spacious passenger accommodation within the outer skin of the airship, replacing glass windows in the observation deck with plastic, and adding gasbags) and addressing serious faults in the linen skin of the airship. The deterioration was made clear in June 1930 when a 140ft tear appeared in the skin in a fresh wind while she was moored; further repairs were made, but flights over the summer revealed more problems, including torn gasbags caused by chafing over the rigid structures (prompting an offer of help from Dr Hugo Eckener, the leader of the German airship programme, which was politely refused by the British). Despite serious reservations expressed by a senior Air Inspectorate Department official, further modifications (including padding to protect the airbags) were made and plans made for her first overseas voyage, to India to coincide with an Imperial Conference in

**Continued on page 35**

**Cruiser HMS Nigeria. See 6 October. Image from the IWM collection (© IWM (FL 12687))**





London in early October 1930. R101 left Cardington on the evening of 4 October in reasonable weather, but this deteriorated as she headed over London and on to the coast near Hastings, experiencing problems with one of her diesel engines en route. In strong, gusty wind R101 crossed the French coast shortly before midnight and continued south until she reached Beauvais, some 50 miles to the north of Paris. At just after 0200 the airship nose-dived twice, the second causing it to hit the ground at about 13mph, causing the gasbags to immediately ignite. 46 of the 54 passengers and crew on board died in the fire, with two more dying of their injuries later. On 7 October the bodies were taken through Beauvais with military honours and loaded onto a train to Boulogne. There, destroyers Tempest and Tribune took the bodies on board and carried them across the Channel to Dover, where a further special train carried them to London, accompanied by an honour guard from the RAF. The bodies later laid in state in Westminster Hall before being buried in separate coffins in a mass grave at Cardington – identification of the bodies proved beyond the technology of the day. The cause of the fire was never established – several theories were put forward, including a spark from electrical equipment or fire in one of the starter petrol engines; whatever, the fire burned fiercely, further fuelled by diesel that soaked into the ground, and the flame were still evident when officials visited the site the following day. The accident ended British interest in dirigibles for the time being, and the (more successful) R100 was scrapped. It was proved to be one of the worst airship disasters, exceeding the death toll of the Hindenburg in New Jersey in 1937 (37 victims), though 52 had died in the French military Zeppelin airship Dixmude when it exploded mid-air off Sicily in 1923, and 73 were to die in the 'flying aircraft carrier' USS Akron when it crashed in a violent thunderstorm off New Jersey in 1933.

### 8 October 1806

A rocket attack was carried out on Boulogne on 8 October 1806 – the first rocket bombardment by the Royal Navy. Britain's military had discovered the effectiveness of rockets in a series of painful encounters with Haidar Ali, the Sultan of Mysore, and his son Tippoo, in India between 1760 and 1799. Rocketry was already well-established in the Far and Middle East, and even in part of Europe including Venice, by this time, but the rockets of Tippoo were small (less than 5lb) and limited to around 1,000 yards. British MP William Congreve

took a close interest in the potential for such devices, and gradually developed more potent rockets, doubling their range to 2,000 yards and gaining the approval of Prime Minister William Pitt. However, a planned test deployment from ten Naval launches set for 21 November 1805 was thwarted by a fierce storm which swamped half of the rocket fleet, while allowed Congreve more time to perfect the weapon. And perfect it he did, providing a new 32lb rocket for a second attempt at Boulogne to be carried out on 8 October 1806. The 3ft 6in projectile, four inches in diameter, had a 15ft stabilising stick, and was simple to launch – although special devices were fitted to Naval vessels, a simple tube, carried by infantry or cavalry, or an earth bank with grooves dug in the direction of the enemy would suffice. Congreve determined that such rockets would be ideal to both terrify an enemy garrison or unit, and to set things on fire, and when fitted with a rudimentary exploding 'warhead' it could penetrate even thick earthworks. Fitted as a broadside along with conventional cannon, even a modest sloop or frigate could spit out a barrage that a second-rate would be proud of. So, on 8 October 1806, 18 rocket launches gathered off Boulogne and around 200 projectiles were fired in half-an-hour. The success of the attack could be gauged by the fact no return fire was discerned, and the French town was ablaze within ten minutes and it continued to burn until the following evening. A second attack, this time on Copenhagen, was carried out in November 1807 using launches and a rocket-equipped sloop; some 2,500 improved rockets were fired, terrifying the Danes and burning much of their city. Congreve rockets, including later 42lb versions, became the standard weapon of rocketry units for decades and pointed the way to modern missile technology.

### 9 October 1939

Light cruiser HMS Belfast captured the German ship SS Cap Norte north-west of the Faroes on 9 October 1939. The cargo liner had been launched in Hamburg for the Hamburg Sudamerikanische DG line by Vulkan Werke in May 1922, making her maiden voyage from Hamburg to the River Plate ports in September that year. Displacing 13,600 tons, Cap Norte could carry almost 1,900 passengers in three classes, and was a somewhat luxurious ship, with a cinema, a gymnasium and a swimming pool. She was chartered by Norddeutscher Lloyd in 1932 and renamed Sierra Salvada, but reverted to her original owners and

Continued on page 36

name two years later. At the start of the war she was in South America, and transformed into a blockade runner, repainted and sailing under a false name and neutral flag (in this case SS Ancona and Swedish). However, she was spotted by Belfast as she was making her way back to Germany from Brazil, having called in at Lisbon to disembark passengers. In rough seas, a 17-strong British boarding party went to take a closer look and discovered her true identity, upon which she was seized and escorted into Kirkwall in the Orkneys. Her first task was to act as a temporary blockship in November 1939 following the sinking of battleship HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow by U-47, but the following June she was handed over to the Ministry of War Transport and sailed to Newcastle, where she was converted to a troopship and renamed Empire Trooper. Now managed by the British India Steam Navigation Company, the ship was struck by a shell from German heavy cruiser Admiral Hipper on Christmas Day 1940 off the Azores, killing two men. Much of her war service involved troop movements in the Indian Ocean, after which she was refitted at least twice and ran out of Southampton to the Far East with a mix of passengers and troops. She made her last trooping voyage from Hong Kong to Southampton in March-April 1955 after which she was laid up for several weeks until she was sold to Thomas Ward for scrap. She did not go quietly to the breakers' – she broke adrift on 17 May 1955 during her final tow north off the South Goodwin lightship, then went aground for a month off Inverkeithing in Scotland. Her final act of defiance saw her catch fire at the breakers' yard in September 1955 when much valuable wooden decking, panels and fittings were lost.

### 10 October 1918

Wren Josephine Carr, one of more than 500 people lost on board steam packet RMS Leinster when she was torpedoed off Dublin on 10 October 1918 en route to Holyhead. Josephine was the first Wren to die on active service, and the only Wren to die as a result of enemy action in World War 1. Leinster was a 3,100-ton Royal Mail steamer, built at Lairds, Birkenhead, in 1896-7 and operated by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co on the Kingstown (Dublin) to Holyhead service. She left Kingstown – now known as Dún Laoghaire – at shortly after 0900 on 10 October 1918 carrying 771 passengers (according to the ship's log), including around 500 military personnel. Just before 1000 passengers spotted a torpedo approaching through the heavy swell as the ship was 11 miles offshore, some four miles east of the Kish Light. The torpedo passed the ship, closed to the bows – but a second struck the ship's flank near the mailroom. Her master immediately turned the ship in an attempt to return to Kingstown, but a third torpedo also struck her, causing a devastating explosion. Lifeboats and life rafts were launched, allowing more than 200 passengers to escape – they were picked up by a trio of pre-war destroyers, HM Ships Lively, Mallard and Seal – but researchers from the National Maritime Museum of Ireland who studied official



**Wren Josephine Carr. See 10 October. Image from the IWM collection: IWM (WWC N3-1)**

records estimate that at least 564 people died in the sinking. One of the victims was Josephine Carr, from Cork, who had joined the Women's Royal Naval Service less than a month before. Josephine, a shorthand typist, was last seen in the ship's Reading Room, shortly before the first torpedo strike, but her body was never recovered; her two companions, who joined up just over a week before the fateful voyage, were picked up by lifeboats and eventually made it to their drafts, but both were discharged as medically unfit the following January. The crew of the submarine that carried out the attack, UB-123, did not have long to contemplate their terrible victory – nine days later, while returning to Germany through the North Sea minefield, she struck what is thought to have been one of the mines laid to reinforce the minefield and was lost with all hands.

### 11 October 1780

Frigates HMS Andromeda, HMS Laurel and HMS Blanche were just three of dozens of ships lost during the 'Great Hurricane' of 1780 – the deadliest such storm to crash through the Caribbean and North America in recorded history. This particular hurricane is thought to have been born unnoticed somewhere in mid-Atlantic, and was first detected when it approached Barbados on 9 October 1780,

**Continued on page 37**

breaking on the island a midday the following day. Wind gusts reached their peak in the early hours of 11 October, estimated as being as high as 200mph, by which time some 4,500 people had died in Barbados and almost every building had been flattened. It moved slowly north-northwest, killing a further 8,500 people on the islands of Saint Lucia, Martinique, Dominica and Guadeloupe, before barrelling through the remainder of the Leeward and Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Hispaniola in the following four days. Royal Navy and French Navy warships were particularly active in the region at the time, and the British in particular were badly hit. HMS *Blanche*, 36 guns, captured the year before from the French, foundered on 11 October and was lost with all hands, while the slightly smaller HMS *Andromeda* and sister ship HMS *Laurel*, both 28 guns, sank off Martinique on the same day, again with all hands, as did 20-gun post ship HMS *Deale Castle* (20 guns), lost off Puerto Rico, and sloop HMS *Endeavour* (14 guns), off Jamaica. In St Lucia one warship was bodily lifted onto the waterside hospital in the island's capital, Port Castries. The French lost just one ship, the 32-gun frigate *Junon*, but almost 10,000 French military personnel and civilians died in the storm, which veered along the east coast of North America, skirting Bermuda and Newfoundland, before petering out back in the Atlantic. It is estimated that up to 22,000 people ashore and at sea died as a result of the storm, which was the third to strike the region in just three weeks. At first it was thought the three storms were just one, but British Victorian meteorologist Sir William Reid, an expert on tropical storms, later determined that there were three separate storms. The first, in late September 1780, hit Jamaica, and was followed a week later by a second storm that proved almost as costly for the Royal Navy as the third – ships-of-the-line HMS *Thunderer* (3rd rate, 74 guns) and HMS *Stirling Castle* (3rd rate, 64 guns) both foundered and were lost with all hands, while many ships were dismasted. These three storms alone made 1780 the deadliest Atlantic hurricane season on record.

### **12 October 1702**

Admiral Sir George Rooke (HMS *Somerset*) and Dutch Vice Admiral Gerard Callenburgh (Hollandia) destroyed a French fleet at Vigo on 12 October 1702 (using the Julian calendar, as England did in 1702; under the Gregorian calendar that we now use, this date would be 23 October). The action, in the early part of the War of the Spanish Succession, saw the Allied fleet take or sink 17 warships and 17 treasure ships, and followed close on the heels of a failed attempt to capture the port of Cadiz, which would have given the Allies a strategic base for operations in the Western Mediterranean, helped to open up the Straits of Gibraltar, and given the Allies a launch pad for attacks on Spanish treasure convoys heading back from the Americas. As Rooke was making his way back home from the Cadiz defeat in early October 1702 one of his captains (Thomas Hardy of HMS *Pembroke*) discovered that a Spanish treasure fleet from Veracruz, in what is now Mexico, has just entered Vigo Bay, and that the

ships were likely laden with silver and other valuable goods. The fleet was defended by French warships – the French were exerting a strong influence on Spanish affairs through the accession of the French King Philip V in 1700, which had created an uneasy relationship between the two countries. The lure of the valuables and the prospect of a morale-boosting victory persuaded Rooke's Dutch allies that an attack was worthwhile, and so it proved – to a certain extent. The Franco-Spanish fleet was protected by a makeshift boom with two batteries, equipped with around 30 guns, protecting it, but Anglo-Dutch forces (grenadiers, infantry and one ship-of-the-line) quickly silenced the batteries early on 12 October 1702 and 80-gun third rate HMS *Torbay* smashed through the boom. At that moment the wind dropped and *Torbay* drifted alone towards the French warships, which responded by setting a fireship alongside her. As flames started to catch *Torbay* the fireship blew up, damping down the flames and allowing the British sailors to control the fire (though more than 50 died in the process). The wind sprang up again, allowing a detachment of 15 Royal Navy and 10 Dutch ships, along with fireships, to enter the confines of the harbour and engage the enemy. Caught cold, the French and Spanish put up little resistance, and attempted to burn their own ships; the Allied force worked through the night to save what they could, and by morning six French ships of the line were in their hands and the rest were burnt, and just five of the Spanish fleet of three galleons and 13 merchantmen were survived as prizes. Sadly for the Allies most of the silver had already been unloaded and taken away to safety, providing a major financial boost for King Philip, and much of the cargoes lost (including pepper, snuff and hides) was owned by private traders, some of them Dutch and English, rather than the Spanish crown. But the victory certainly boosted morale, and also helped persuade the Portuguese king, Peter II, to abandon an earlier treaty and throw his lot in with the Allies, opening Atlantic trading opportunities for English merchants that laid the foundations for the country's rising wealth throughout the 18th century.

### **13 October 1796**

HMS *Terpsichore* captured the Spanish *Mahonesa* between Cartagena and Cape de Gata on 13 October 1796, despite having a sickly crew and the need to break off the action to repair damage. *Terpsichore* was a 32-gun fifth rate frigate launched near Colchester in 1785, though she did not enter service until 1793. She served initially in the Caribbean and east coast of North America, from where she helped another frigate, HMS *Daedalus*, break out of a blockade by American warships in Chesapeake Bay in May 1795, as well as covering the withdrawal of British forces from Guadeloupe the same year. After a brief spell in home waters, the ship was sent to lead the defensive flotilla at Gibraltar, and it was during this period that the British frigate spotted an unknown ship off Malaga in Spain on 13 October 1796. Although the British ship was affected by sickness amongst her crew, her Commanding Officer, Capt Richard Bowen,

**Continued on page 38**

decided to give chase. The other ship made ready for battle, and a test shot from *Terpsichore* received a broadside in reply. After a scrap lasting an hour and 40 minutes, in which four British sailors were wounded, the other ship surrendered, and was found to be the Spanish 36-gun frigate *Mahonesa*, which was subsequently taken into service with the Royal Navy as *HMS Mahonesa*. Bowen continued to make a name for himself and his ship, taking a French 36-gun frigate in November after a 40-hour action chase in rough weather off Cadiz (though the prize was lost almost immediately when the tow line parted and the French crew rose up and overpowered the British prize crew) then taking on the world's largest warship. Bowen heard of Jervis's victory at the Battle of Cape St Vincent on 14 February 1797 and set out from Gibraltar in company with a handful of other British frigates when they came across the Spanish 136-gun four-deck first rate *Santisima Trinidad*. Although the Spanish giant was flying British colours above her own, indicating a Royal Navy prize crew were in charge, poor weather prevented closer examination to see if she was bluffing and *Terpsichore* continued with the other ships. On returning to Gibraltar Bowen again encountered the Spanish flagship and this time opened fire on her to gauge her response – that response was a return of fire, and as *Terpsichore* was outgunned almost four to one Bowen broke off the engagement, although the initial attack had killed nine men and left many more badly wounded. Further ship captures followed, but Bowen was killed leading a landing party during an attack on Tenerife in July 1797. *Terpsichore* continued to play an active role in Naval affairs, capturing several more ships between Gibraltar and India and taking part in a four-day chase of 40-gun French frigate *Semillante* following an hour-long skirmish that ended with

the Frenchman breaking away and running as they were out of powder – it eventually outran her British foe by throwing boats, supplies and water overboard to lighten her load. *Terpsichore* was part of the escort for a convoy of 15 East Indiamen bound for England in March 1809 that was struck by a fierce storm off Mauritius; four of the merchant ships became separated from the main body of the convoy and were never seen again, presumably having foundered in the gales. On her return to England *Terpsichore* was refitted as a receiving ship and spent the next 27 years in reserve or as a hulk, in Chatham and Portsmouth, before she was broken up in Kent in 1830.

#### 14 October 1939

Veteran battleship *HMS Royal Oak* was sunk at her anchorage in the supposedly safe surroundings of the Home Fleet base at Scapa Flow in the Orkneys on 14 October 1939 – a major blow to British morale, despite the fact the ship was outdated and not deemed suitable for front-line duties at the time. *Royal Oak* was launched in November 1914 at Devonport Dockyard as one of a class of five *Revenge*-class battleships, displacing 31,600 tons and mounting main armament of eight 15in guns in twin turrets and 14 6in single guns at her launch. She played a minor role in the Battle of Jutland in 1916. After the war she was refitted and transferred from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean Fleet, and in 1928 was at the centre of a vicious spat between three senior Naval officers which began as a minor disagreement over a band at a ship's wardroom dance and spiralled into court martials and the forced retirement of two of them (a rear-admiral and a commander) and the curtailment of the career of the third man, a captain. Press reports at the time incorrectly spoke of a *Royal Oak* mutiny, but the matter was both damaging and

Continued on page 39

**Battleship *HMS Royal Oak* between the wars. See 14 October. Image from the IWM collection: IWM (Q 65784)**



embarrassing for the Admiralty. The battleship was twice subjected to attacks while she patrolled the Mediterranean off the coast of Spain during the Spanish Civil War; the first (bombing by Republican aircraft) did no damage, the second (she was struck by an anti-aircraft shell fired from onshore) injured five people, including her Commanding Officer. Having returned to the Home Fleet in 1838, she was preparing for a deployment to the Mediterranean as tensions across Europe rose, and instead of heading south the battleship was sent to Scapa Flow in the Orkneys. In October 1939 she took part in the hunt for German battlecruiser Gneisenau, but was clearly showing her age as her top speed had fallen over the years from 22 knots to around 19, meaning she could not keep up with the rest of the fleet. When she returned to Scapa Flow she had been damaged by storms; reconnaissance missions by German aircraft seemed to indicate a possible air attack, but while most of the major Royal Navy ships were sent to various safer ports, Royal Oak was retained in the hope her guns might prove a useful addition to the anchorage's air defences. Scapa Flow was an obvious target for the Germans – not only was it the base of the Royal Navy's Home Fleet, but it was also the location of the scuttling of the Germans' World War 1 High Seas Fleet, for which revenge would be sweet. Kapitanleutnant Gunther Prien was the man chosen to press home the attack in his submarine, U-47. Late on 13 October 1939, helped by information from those reconnaissance flights and with some difficulty, Prien eased his boat into the main anchorage and was immediately dismayed to see a virtually empty harbour. He failed to spot new cruiser HMS Belfast in the distance, but instead spotted Royal Oak and fired three torpedoes at just before 0100 on 14 October, only one of which hit the ship at the bow. With little damage to be seen, it was assumed to have been a minor explosion onboard the battleship, and many sailors went back to their duties or tried to get back to sleep. U-47 fired a stern shot, but that missed as well, so Prien reloaded and fired another salvo of three torpedoes around 0115. All three found their target, destroying masts and igniting cordite, and in less than 15 minutes the ship rolled over and sank, with 835 sailors – many of them boys – going down with her or dying of injuries shortly after. Nearly 400 sailors were rescued by the tender Daisy 2, which had been alongside Royal Oak, though the battleship's pinnace, having picked up survivors from the water, became overloaded

**Destroyer HMS Viscount with damaged bows after ramming a U-boat in the Atlantic. See 15 October. Image from the IWM collection © IWM (A 13383)**

and capsized, throwing men back into the cold, oily water. When it became clear it had been a submarine attack the search was on for U-47, but she was long gone, back to a heroes' welcome in Wilhelmshaven on 17 October, from where the crew were flown to Berlin in Hitler's private aircraft to be awarded their Iron Crosses. There were repercussions – a new ring of defences blocking smaller channels was ordered to be built around the anchorage (known as the 'Churchill Barriers'), and the practice of sending boy seaman to sea in ships likely to face action was scaled right back. Although the loss of the ship caused widespread grief, the Admiralty recognised that it was not a major blow to the power of the Royal Navy. As for U-47 and Prien, their fame could not shield them from the harsh realities of war; the boat and her commander were lost on 7 March 1941 while attacking Convoy OB 293, possibly as a result of depth charges from destroyer HMS Wolverine.

### **15 October 1942**

World War 1-vintage destroyer HMS Viscount proved she still had teeth when she sank U-661 on 15 October 1942 south-east of Cape Farewell, Greenland, while escorting a convoy. Viscount was built at the Woolston yard of Thornycroft in Southampton and launched onto the River Itchen on 29 December 1917, seeing some service with the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow in the last months of the

**Continued on page 40**



war. The V and W-class ship was very fast for her class, on one occasion catching a U-boat on the surface and surprising it with her speed, sinking it with depth charges as it crash dived beneath her. Between the wars she served in the Atlantic, Baltic and Mediterranean before returning to home waters. In the early stages of World War 2 she was on patrol and escort duties in the Channel and South West Approaches, and later served in the Norwegian campaign before an intense period of convoy escort work, some of it after she was converted to a long-range escort in the summer of 1941. Having rescued dozens of survivors from convoy ships sunk by U-boats, Viscount gained a measure of revenge on 15 October 1942 when she first detected and attacked U-607, then rammed U-661 before firing at her and dropping depth charges; the German submarine, which was on its first war patrol, was sunk with the loss of her crew of 44. Viscount was severely damaged in the attack and had to limp back to the UK for repairs, which were completed by February the following year. Having not learned her lesson, as soon as she was back in business Viscount rammed and depth-charged another submarine, U-201, while on convoy escort duties in the North Atlantic; the U-boat, which had sunk 24 ships in a career of just under two years, took her crew of 49 with her,

while Viscount was back under repairs again until April. The remainder of her war was taken up with convoy escort work and aggressive anti-submarine patrols, but as newer and more capable ships were brought into service, older vessels like Viscount were withdrawn to provide the necessary manpower – in Viscount's case she was taken from the front line in February 1945 and decommissioned the following month. The old destroyer was sold for scrap that same month, and broken up in the early summer of 1947 on the Tyne.

#### **16 October 1967**

Anglo-Irish Admiral Sir Reginald Aylmer Ranfurly Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax died in Dorset on 16 October 1967. Known as Drax for the sake of brevity, he was regarded as a brilliant naval analyst, and was War Staff Officer to Admiral Beatty. Drax was born on 28 August 1880 into a wealthy family in London as Reginald Aylmer Ranfurly Plunkett and was the younger son of the 17th Baron of Dunsany. He joined the Royal Navy at 14, spending two years training at HMS Britannia, at that time a hulk in Dartmouth. Drax picked up his additional surnames in 1916 on the death of his mother, at the same time inheriting a large part of her estates in Dorset, Wiltshire, Surrey, Kent, Yorkshire and the Caribbean.

**Captain the Hon Reginald Aylmer Ranfurley Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax receives the Distinguished Service Order from King George V on board battleship HMS Queen Elizabeth on 22 July 1918. Image from the IWM collection ©: IWM (Q 19859)**

**Continued on page 41**



In 1909, while still a lieutenant, his book on 'Modern Naval Tactics' was published by the Admiralty, and although it may have ruffled some feathers amongst the more conservative senior officers, Churchill took note, and Drax was one of the first 15 officers to attend the new staff officer course, which paved the way for his appointment as War Staff Officer to Rear Admiral David Beatty in the 1st Battlecruiser Squadron. He served at the Battles of Heligoland Bight, Dogger Bank and Jutland in battlecruiser HMS Lion, and in 1918 was awarded the DSO for his command of cruiser HMS Blanche. In 1919 Drax was appointed first Director of the new RN Staff College Greenwich in 1919. He was second-in-command of battle squadrons in both the Mediterranean and Atlantic Fleets between the wars, and was a great proponent of aggressive tactics in battle, stating that of the three aspects to a naval engagement (tactics, geometry or movement of ships and morale or spirit of the crew), the last element was the most important. Other commands followed, including the America and West Indies Squadron and CinC Plymouth. Drax retired in 1938 but was called out of retirement as war loomed to lay plans to defend Singapore – Drax proposed a typically aggressive response to any Japanese hostility but recognised that there was unlikely to be a 'knock-out blow' without ploughing in major units or receiving help from the United States. He also proposed that in order to keep the pressure up in the Far East, Italy would have to be knocked out of the equation if they sought to take advantage of Britain being at war with Germany and Japan. In 1939 he was part of the delegation that went to Moscow to discuss a possible alliance with the USSR, and in December that year was appointed CinC The Nore, protecting East Coast convoys. He also headed the Board of Inquiry into the sinking of HMS Royal Oak at Scapa Flow. By now into his 60s, Drax retired from active service in 1941 and joined the Home Guard, but he did return to the sea between 1943 and 1945 as a convoy commodore, and it is reported that he never lost a ship. Drax died on Poole, Dorset, on 16 October 1967 at the age of 87.

#### **17 October 1941**

Destroyer USS Kearny was torpedoed while escorting Convoy SC 48 on 17 October 1941, weeks before the United States officially entered World War 2. The Gleaves-class ship, of 1,630 tons, was launched in New Jersey, in March 1940, and commissioned six months later. Her first tasks were neutrality patrols in the West Indies and on the Atlantic seaboard, but she went on to escort transatlantic convoys on the western part of the ocean. On 17 October 1941 Kearny was in Iceland when a British convoy with Canadian escorts was set upon by a wolfpack of German U-boats nearby. Kearny and three other American ships were activated to help, and on reaching the area Kearny dropped numerous depth charges throughout the evening and into the following day. At one point U-568 hit the American ship with a torpedo which killed 11 sailors and temporarily knocking one engine offline. The destroyer managed to get back

to Reykjavik for temporary repairs before steaming to Boston, Massachusetts for a more permanent repair. This joint action against the U-boats was specifically cited in Hitler's declaration of war on the United States later that year. From then on it was all action for Kearny; she escorted transatlantic convoys, provided fire support at the Torch landings in North Africa in September 1942 and the Anzio assault in Italy in early 1944. In August that year she was part of Operation Dragoon, the invasion of southern France, and continued to escort convoys in the Mediterranean and criss-cross the Atlantic until August 1945, when she went through the Panama Canal to the Pacific just as the war was ending. She was decommissioned in March 1946 at Charleston, South Carolina, and after more than two decades in reserve she was scrapped in the early 1970s.

#### **18 October 1914**

Submarine HMS E3 was sunk by U-27 on 18 October 1914 – the first Royal Navy submarine sunk in action, and the first submarine to be sunk by another submarine. The E-class submarine, displacing 800 tons when submerged, was launched by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness on 29 October 1912 and commissioned just a couple of months before World War 1. She was part of the 8th Submarine Flotilla at Harwich when war broke out, and on 16 October 1914 she set out to patrol off the North Sea island of Borkum, and two days later spied a flotilla of German destroyers, though she could not get in position to fire torpedoes. As they were blocking her route, E3 headed into a bay to avoid them, but her lookouts were so intent on watching the destroyers that they failed to see another submarine – U-27 – was already in the bay. U-27 spotted the British submarine and dived, working its way round for two hours until it was able to take a single shot from around 300 yards. The torpedo struck home and E3 sank immediately. Although some of the British crew were seen in the water, U-27 withdrew for a period in case E3 was working with a second submarine; after half an hour, when no threat had materialised. U-27 returned to search for debris and survivors, but not a single member of E3's crew of 31 remained. The wreck of E3 was discovered on 14 October 1994 when a fishing net snagged on part of the stern, which had been blown off in the torpedo strike. U-27, which went on to sink two further Royal Navy vessels and nine merchantmen, six of them British, was herself sunk by gunfire from Q-ship HMS Baralong in the Western Approaches on 19 August 1915. This incident caused much controversy, as survivors from U-27 were shot by crew members of Baralong as they attempted to swim to safety and climb aboard a merchant ship, SS Nicosian, that the U-boat had been attacking. The Q-ship's commander later claimed the shootings were necessary as it was believed the German sailors were aiming to sink the merchantman.

#### **19 October 1918**

Coastal paddle minesweeper HMS Plumpton was mined off Ostend on 19 October 1918, ending her Naval career. The 820-ton Racecourse (or

**Continued on page 42**

Destroyer HMS Hotspur in Gladstone Dock, Liverpool, in April 1945. See 20 October. Image from the IWM collection © IWM (A 28511)



Ascot)-class ship was launched at the Archibald McMillan yard in Dumbarton on 20 March 1916, and although the design was developed after successful conversion of civilian paddle-wheel pleasure steamers earlier in the war the class, which had a shallow draught, was rendered ineffective in rough conditions. At first part of the Grand Fleet, Plumpton was switched to the Dover Patrol in the summer of 1917. She struck a mine off Ostend in Belgium on 19 October 1918, with ten of her ship's company dying in the explosion and another man dying of his wounds four days later. The ship was beached to prevent her loss, but she proved to be beyond salvation and after the war was broken up for scrap where she lay.

#### **20 October 1940**

Three destroyers from Force H – Hotspur, Gallant and Griffin – attacked Italian submarine Lafole east of Gibraltar on 20 October 1940, resulting in a long and persistent hunt. Lafole was commissioned a year before World War 2 began, and when Italy declared war she was sent to patrol off the North African coast against possible British attacks. On 20 October the submarine was patrolling off Morocco when she spotted G-class destroyers HM Ships Gallant and Griffin on what appeared to be a slow submarine search. The Italian commanding officer thought the destroyers were not aware of his board, but he had in fact sailed straight into a trap – his position had been revealed when a sister submarine, Durbo, had been sunk two days previously and documents recovered from the doomed boat included Lafole's co-ordinates. As Lafole approached the two G-class ships, HMS Hotspur was closing fast from behind, and as soon as Lafole fired a salvo of three torpedoes the three Royal Navy warships – part of a flotilla of six sent out to hunt down Lafole – counterattacked with depth charges. The attack damaged Lafole's shafts and electrical systems and flooded

compartments, causing the boat to porpoise, but her crew managed to keep her away from harm for seven more hours until around 1830 when she broke the surface and was immediately rammed at high speed by Hotspur. The submarine sank with 38 of her crew, while nine survived. Hotspur's bows were badly damaged, and she was forced to return to Gibraltar for temporary repairs which lasted a month, giving her ship's company the rare pleasures of an extended run ashore, before full repairs were carried out in Malta which lasted three months. Hotspur, a 1,900-ton H-class destroyer completed by Scotts at Greenock in the last days of 1936, had already been in the thick of the action before she sank Lafole. She patrolled the Mediterranean during the Spanish Civil War, and on the outbreak of war a planned refit was cancelled as the destroyer was sent to hunt commerce raiders off West Africa and had a spell in the Caribbean. During the First Battle of Narvik in April 1940 she had been hit several times and, temporarily out of control, had collided with HMS Hunter as the two ships took on five German destroyers. When Hunter sank, Hotspur faced the five alone until sister ships HMS Havock and Hostile came to rescue, covering her as she limped to the Lofoten Islands to be patched up and return to Chatham for full repairs. After the Lafole sinking Hotspur continued to escort capital warships in the Mediterranean; in 1941 she was one of battleship HMS Barham's escorts when the capital ship sank, and Hotspur helped rescue more than 450 survivors. Later that year she and sister destroyer HMS Hasty sank submarine U-79 off Egypt. After a spell shuttling between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, Hotspur was converted to an escort destroyer, and switched to escorting Atlantic convoys and Irish Sea shipping. She continued to serve after the war until she was earmarked for scrapping in later 1947, however, a year later she was sold to the Dominican Republic and continued to serve at sea under the

**Continued on page 43**

name Trujillo. She returned to UK waters for the Coronation Review of June 1953 and, after a further name change to Duarte in 1962, served a further ten years before being scrapped in 1972 after 36 years of service.

#### **21 October 1844**

Queen Victoria paid her second visit to HMS Victory on 21 October 1844. It is reported that the Queen had not planned to visit, but while making her way from Osborne House on the Isle of Wight to Windsor she noticed the laurel wreath at the masthead of Nelson's former flagship and was reminded that it was the 39th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, prompting her to pay a call to the unprepared ship's company. She is also said to have picked up some of the laurel leaves on deck as a souvenir. Victoria had previously visited the ship on 18 July 1833, on which occasion she had met veterans of Trafalgar. Both visits had reawakened public interest in the ship, with visitor numbers spiking on both occasions (up to 22,000 per annum after 1844) which all contributed to a growing sense that the ship should be preserved for posterity. The 1833 visit came just two years after the Admiralty had ordered Victory to be broken up for her timbers to be reused, but the public outcry forced their hand and the old ship – by that stage she was already 66 years old – was left at her mooring in Portsmouth Harbour. Victory was under threat again in 1854 when she sprang a leak and actually sank, but all on board were rescued and she was raised; a further massive leak in 1887 almost repeated the sinking but this time sailors were able to keep her afloat, after which the Admiralty stumped up a small annual sum to maintain her, though it was not enough to prevent her hull from continuing to rot. Another danger was passed in 1903 when she was accidentally rammed

by ironclad HMS Neptune, and although she did not sink the Admiralty again proposed she be scrapped – this time it was the King, Edward VII, who saved her. With the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 1905 interest in the ship was again on the rise, and five years later the Society for Nautical Research was formed to attempt to preserve her. A public campaign to save Victory was started in 1921 – not a moment too soon as her condition became so dire by the start of 1922 that she had to be moved into No 2 Dock in Portsmouth Dockyard to prevent her sinking once more. Surveys showed she was too fragile to be moved again, so the dock became her permanent home. She was afloat just once more, in April 1925, to allow the cradle supporting her to be adjusted and to bring her waterline level with the top of the dock. Her keel was broken and a mast damaged by a German bomb in 1941 (though German claims of destruction of the ship were firmly denied), and since then the ship has been constantly under repair, replacing rotten timbers and bringing her back, as far as is possible, to her configuration at Trafalgar. She is currently undergoing a 'big repair' in which her masts and rigging have been removed for conservation, which also allows hull planking to be replaced, following on from the installation of a new high-tech cradle that will better support the hull.

#### **22 October 1941**

Fleet tanker RFA Darkdale was torpedoed and sunk while at anchor off Jamestown, Saint Helena, by U-68 on 22 October 1941 – the first ship sunk by U-boat south of the Equator in World War 2. The Dale-class ship was launched at the Blythswood yard in Scotstoun on the Clyde in July 1940 as Empire Oil and renamed Darkdale on transfer to the RFA on completion four months later. Her first

**Continued on page 44**

**HMS Victory in Portsmouth Harbour in 1909. See 21 October. Image from the IWM collection (IWM (Q 40455))**



involvement in the war saw her sail to Curacao to load gasoline, then sailed to Greenock via Trinidad, Bermuda and Belfast. On 21 June 1941 she joined an Atlantic convoy before sailing independently to Curacao then crossing back to St Helena, arriving on 4 August. When she arrived she had 3,000 tons of fuel oil, 850 tons of aviation spirit, 500 tons of diesel oil and some lubricating oil in her tanks. The 8,150-ton ship was tasked to act as oiler for warships in the South Atlantic, and rendezvoused with a number of ships including aircraft carrier HMS Eagle (which was slightly damaged by the tanker because of a heavy swell), battleship HMS Repulse, cruisers HMS Orion, and HMS Dorsetshire, and destroyers HMS Jupiter and HMS Eridge. Early on 22 October 1941 the oiler was at anchor in James Bay when submarine U-68, on her second war patrol, fired a salvo of four torpedoes which struck the auxiliary all along her flank at 0015, splitting her and sending her to the bottom some 50 metres or more deep. All that was left was a large patch of burning oil which illuminated the coast and caused the U-boat to flee, fearing it would be spotted. Seven of her crew, including her master, were ashore at the time and two sailors were blown clear, but 41 men died when she sank. Over the years oil continued to seep from the wreck, posing an environmental hazard, so in 2015 almost 2,000 cubic metres of oil was removed from her tanks, and Royal Navy divers removed almost 40 high explosive shells from her 4.7in and 12pdr guns and dumped them in deep water two miles offshore. Operating out of Lorient on the Atlantic coast of Brittany U-68 completed nine war patrols, sinking 32 merchantmen totalling almost 200,000 tons, as well as minesweeping trawler HMT Orfsay. On 10 June 1942 she sank the freighter Surrey in the Caribbean; the British merchant ship was carrying 5,000 tons of dynamite which detonate as she sank, and the resultant shockwave almost sank U-68, lifting her out of the water and stopping her engines. She met her end during her tenth patrol, on 10 April 1944, when aircraft from the American escort carrier USS Guadalcanal sank her with rockets and depth charges north of Madeira. Only one of her crew of 57 survived – a lookout who leapt overboard when the boat crashed-dived in an attempt to evade her attackers.

### **23 October 1903**

HMS Neptune, the last rigged turret ship when launched in Millwall in 1874, made her mark as she left Portsmouth Harbour on 23 October 1903 en route to the breakers' yard, ramming a number of ships. Neptune was built at the Dudgeon yard in London's Isle of Dogs for the Brazilian Navy as the large ocean-going monitor Independencia (9,500 tons) but when tensions between Great Britain and Russia escalated the Admiralty bought a number of ships under construction for other nations, including Independencia – though it was not their wisest move. Almost £90,000 was spent to bring her up to the required standard, which took almost three years, and when she joined the Fleet in March 1883 she was something of a problem child. She was a

poor seakeeper, a wet ship that rolled excessively and with just one screw was difficult to manoeuvre, burned through prodigious amounts of coal and yet was underpowered. She was barque-rigged, but her twin funnels were so close to the mainmast that the rigging and sails quickly deteriorated. Her poor performance was matched by her poor behaviour, which was evident right from the start – she was due to be launched on 16 July 1874 but would not move, and in a second attempt on 30 July she slid around a third of the way down the slip then stuck, causing extensive damage to the plates on her hull. She had to be lightened to complete the process then towed straight to a nearby yard for fitting out and repairs, the cost of which bankrupted her original builders. She ran aground on the Thames at Greenwich during sea trials at Christmas 1877, and slightly damaged when a freighter ran into her at Greenhithe the following February. She saw service with the Channel Fleet and in the Mediterranean, but went into reserve in 1893 and was sold for scrap ten years later. On 23 October 1903 Neptune was towed from Portsmouth Harbour by two tugs, but in strong winds parted the towing cables and she was blown back into the harbour, narrowly missing gunboat HMS Racer but striking training brig Sunflower alongside her before colliding with HMS Victory and punching a hole in the old ship's orlop deck. She came to rest hard up against the bow ram of ironclad battleship HMS Hero. When Neptune was finally tamed she was towed to Germany where she was broken up.

### **24 October 1877**

HMS Lightning, the Royal Navy's first torpedo boat, was commissioned on 24 October 1877. Displacing 19 tons, the vessel was built by then John Thornycroft yard at Chiswick in London and launched in 1876. She was the first seagoing vessel to carry self-propelled Whitehead torpedoes, which were initially launched from a drop collar system, a cage-like structure that could be moved outboard and angled to aim at a target. In 1879 this was replaced by a single swivelling torpedo tube in the bows, with two reloads carried in on deck. The boat made quite an impression of Queen Victoria in the Naval Review at Spithead in August 1878 as it scurried around at 20 knots, alongside a second torpedo boat named Vesuvius. Lightning, which was later renamed Torpedo Boat No 1, was permanently based at torpedo school HMS Vernon in Portsmouth and used for training and development of torpedo types and systems. She was broken up in 1896. Thornycroft's built a reputation for innovative torpedo boats in the early years of the Chiswick yard – they had already built a steel torpedo boat for the Norwegians (Rap, in 1873) and similar craft for other navies, so with Lightning/TB1 also proving a success the yard became the go-to builder for these cutting edge warships.

### **25 October 1979**

Diving trials ship HMS Reclaim paid off after 30 years of continuous service on 25 October 1979.

**Continued on page 45**



**HMS Reclaim entering Portsmouth Harbour flying her paying off pennant in October 1979. See 25 October. Image from the IWM collection © IWM Crown Copyright (HU 129959)**

Originally planned as an ocean salvage vessel, Reclaim was built at William Simons and Co, Renfrew, and launched on 12 March 1948. She was fitted with underwater television cameras and a range of high-tech sensors, including echosounders and sonar. Commissioned in 1949, the 1,340-ton ship worked out of Portsmouth as the diving tender for HMS Vernon, and as well as proving her worth in recovery tasks, she also put her name in the record books, starting in 1948 when PO Wilfred Bollard dived from the ship to set a world deep dive record of 163m. In June 1951 Reclaim found the wreck of submarine HMS Affray, which had been missing since the middle of April, making good use of her new TV equipment; one of the divers working on that operation was 'Buster' Crabb, who later disappeared in mysterious circumstances in Portsmouth Harbour while investigating an innovative propulsion system in the hull of Soviet cruiser Orzhonikidze. Another world deep-diving record was set from Reclaim on 12 October 1956 when Lt George Wookey reached 180m in Sorfjorden, Norway. Twelve years later, in March 1968, Reclaim was at the centre of a salvage operation after an Aer Lingus Vickers Viscount airliner flying from Cork to London Heathrow crashed into the Irish Sea killing all 61 people on board. She was present at both the 1953 Coronation and 1977 Silver Jubilee reviews, and also had a role in the BBC's Doctor Who TV series 'The Sea Devils' in 1971. The ship was scrapped in Belgium in the summer of 1982.

### **26 October 1940**

Canadian Pacific liner Empress of Britain, 42,348 tons, was bombed and set on fire by German aircraft 70 miles north-west of Donegal on 26 October 1940. The liner, completed by John Brown in Clydebank in April 1931, was the largest, fastest and most luxurious ship linking Canada and Europe, and left Southampton for Quebec on her maiden voyage on 27 May 1931. Designed to carry almost 1,200 passengers, it was hoped the liner would poach trade from the Southampton to New York route, and she had a secondary role as a luxury cruise ship in the winter, carrying 700 first class passengers across the world's

oceans, when ice blocked her passage to Quebec. Despite the hullabaloo, Empress of Britain was one of the least profitable liners on the Atlantic crossing through her nine seasons, which ended in Quebec on 8 September 1939, two days before Canada declared war on Germany. The ship was immediately painted grey in preparation for a war role which materialised on 25 November that year when she was requisitioned as a troop transport. She made four transatlantic voyages taking Canadian troops to the UK, then sailed to New Zealand and returned as part of a stellar convoy of seven luxury ocean liners, including the Queen Mary. She also made a trooping run to South Africa through the Suez Canal in August 1940. Her final voyage began to unravel in the morning of 26 October 1940 when a German Focke-Wulf Condor bomber/reconnaissance aircraft spotted her and hit her with two bombs as well as strafing her decks. Although the bombs started fierce fires forcing the abandonment of the liner, she did not sink, contrary to German news outlets; the 620 or so souls on board were subsequently picked up by destroyers HMS Echo and ORP Burza and armed trawler HMS Cape Ancona, leaving a skeleton crew on board. The following morning it was clear that the ship was sound enough to salvage, and a party from destroyer HMS Broke attached tow lines which were picked up by two ocean-going tugs. Heading for safety at a snail's pace, the little flotilla – the liner was escorted by Broke and HMS Sardonyx, with air cover from Short Sunderland flying boats – was found by submarine U-32, which attacked in the early hours of 28 October. Only one of her first two torpedoes struck home, but it caused a huge explosion. A third strike further holed the Empress of Britain, which started to list heavily. At just after 0200, after the tugs slipped their tow lines, the liner sank – the largest merchant vessel lost at sea through air attack. Around 50 people died in the prolonged attack on the ship. Rumoured to have been carrying gold bullion, there were several salvage attempts after the war. One application to UK authorities in 1985 was met with the response that all the gold had been recovered, and this seems to have been confirmed when a salvage team examined the wreck, lying upside down in 150m of

**Continued on page 46**

water, in 1995 – the ship was basically a metal shell, but the bullion room was still intact; inside they found no gold, but just a single skeleton...

### **27 October 1728**

Explorer and cartographer Captain James Cook born in Marton-in-Cleveland, North Yorkshire, on 27 October 1728 (on the then-current Julian calendar). At the age of 16 Cook moved 20 miles east to Staithes on the North Sea coast to work in a grocer's/haberdashery shop, but after 18 months, fed up with the life of a shop boy, he moved on to Whitby where he was taken on as an apprentice in a small fleet of coastal colliers, spending the next few years shuttling in and out of ports between Newcastle and London. After three years, having completed his apprenticeship, Cook moved up to merchant ships plying the Baltic trade. He had already started to climb the ladder of promotion when, in June 1755, he switched to the Royal Navy, believing it offered him better career prospects. Back down at able seaman level, Cook served a couple of years in 58-gun fourth rate HMS Eagle, gaining his first promotion and at one point briefly commanding a small cutter. In 1757, having passed his master's exam, he joined 20-gun sixth rate frigate HMS Solebay as master. He was master of fourth rate HMS Pembroke (60 guns) in North America during the Seven Years' War, taking part in the capture of the fortress of Louisbourg (1758) and the siege of Quebec the following year, when his cartographic and survey skills were first recognised – his survey and charts of the mouth of the St Lawrence River allowed General James Wolfe to make his daring and successful attack in 1759 in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. From 1763-7, while serving in schooner HMS Grenville, Cook surveyed and charted the dangerous coastline of Newfoundland – his maps were still in use some 200 years later – and also conducted important astronomical observations. His work came to the attention of the Admiralty and he was commissioned to command a voyage of exploration and discovery into the Pacific Ocean from 1768-71, one element of which was to observe the transit of Venus across the sun in 1769 which, when combined with observations from elsewhere, would help establish the distance between the sun and Earth. Promoted to lieutenant, the 40-year old Cook led his expedition from Plymouth on 26 August 1768 aboard the small but relatively new bark HMS Endeavour, a converted North Sea collier. As well as 73 sailors and 1 Royal Marine, Cook's party included the eminent botanist Joseph Banks and a clutch of scientists (two of them from Sweden and Finland) and artists. Cook's route took his ship to Rio de Janeiro and on round Cape Horn, reaching Tahiti in plenty of time for the transit of Venus; the day of the transit was perfect for observations, but the equipment was simply too rudimentary for the task and the readings were disappointingly imprecise. Having explored local islands, Cook then followed Admiralty orders in heading south to search for the supposed 'sixth continent', but finding nothing at 40 degrees south he turned west towards New Zealand, being only the second group of

Europeans to set foot on the islands after Abel Tasman (1642). Early encounters with Maoris resulted in the deaths of several locals, but with the mediation of the Tahitian mariner Tupaia, who had agreed to travel with Cook, relationships between the two parties became more cordial. In early 1770 Cook completed a circumnavigation of both North and South Islands (narrowly missing a French expedition which was also exploring the region), proving neither was part of the fabled Southern Continent and making very accurate maps along the way – there were only two major errors, when two islands off the South Island were believed to be peninsulas. On 31 March 1770 he decided to head for home via the east coast of New Holland (or Australia, as we know it), with half an eye on colonisation by Britain. A party from Endeavour landed at Botany Bay on 29 April (facing minor but determined opposition from a couple of spear-carrying indigenous people), and stayed a week gathering specimens, water and wood, but the indigenous people stayed well clear. Cook then headed north past an anchorage he named Port Jackson (now known as Sydney Harbour) and past the Great Barrier Reef (where Endeavour grounded, causing a seven-week delay while repairs were carried out on a nearby beach), and when he left the region he claimed the Eastern coastline for Britain. Having not lost a single man to illness thus far, Cook's return voyage via the Dutch East Indies exposed the crew to malaria and other tropical diseases, with many – including Tupaia – dying. Cook continued round the Cape of Good Hope and on to England via St Helena, anchoring off the Kent coast on 12 July 1771 and causing some surprise as he had been written off a lost at sea or captured/killed by the French. Soon promoted commander, Cook was commissioned once again to lead an expedition specifically to search for 'Terra Australis', and set off in HMS Resolution, with HMS Adventure in company (both converted colliers), from Plymouth on 13 July 1772. Sailing south via Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands, Cook rounded the Cape of Good Hope in November and headed south, surviving a severe cold snap and reaching the Antarctic Circle on 17 January 1773, though they had to return northwards immediately as ice closed in. The two ships became separated in fog and headed separately for a rendezvous in New Zealand, both surveying and charting coasts extensively en route. After more joint explorations, the ships again were separated by a storm, and missed the rendezvous by four days. Adventure, commanded by Tobias Furneaux, sailed home via Cape Horn, reaching England on 14 July 1774, while Cook made two more forays into the Antarctic Circle, the second being foiled by solid sea ice, before sweeping across the South Pacific. Returning to New Zealand, Cook then ranged across the Southern Ocean, discovering South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands before sailing north to Spithead via Cape Town and Saint Helena. Not only had Cook disproved the Terra Australis theory, but also helped further the cause of navigation by testing one of the earliest marine chronometers – so accurate was the device that the charts Cook

**Continued on page 47**

produced were still valid in the mid-20th Century. By now something of a celebrity, Cook was promoted captain and offered honorary retirement from the Royal Navy – a position he accepted on condition he would be allowed to lead any further expeditions that might arise. And, of course, the opportunity did arise, with Cook leaving Plymouth in HMS Resolution on 12 July 1775 in company with HMS Discovery, ostensibly to return a Polynesian islander to his home though the real purpose was to seek the Northwest Passage. Once the islander, Omai, was dropped off (via New Zealand), Cook's party headed on to the Hawaiian archipelago (they were the first Europeans to visit the area, and Cook named the Sandwich Islands after the First Lord of the Admiralty) and the west coast of America, where they charted the shores up beyond the Bering Strait and across to Siberia. Hampered by winter ice, the ships returned to Hawaii for the winter. Initially relations with the Hawaiians was cordial, but Cook, possibly frustrated at the progress of the expedition and troubled by stomach problems, had become irascible, and the theft of a boat escalated to an angry confrontation on the beach during which Cook was clubbed and then stabbed to death on 14 February 1779. Four marines also died. However, Cook was held in such regard by the Hawaiians that his body was given the same treatment as would have been given to chiefs and elders – it was disembowelled and baked to remove the flesh, then the bones cleaned and kept as icons, though some of his remains were returned to his shipmates for burial at sea. Leadership of the expedition passed to Charles Clerke, the commanding officer of HMS Adventure, but he failed to make it home as well; already ill with tuberculosis, Clerke led a final foray to the Bering Strait but died on the return voyage south on 22 July 1779. The two ships sailed past Japan and into Macau in China before following the East Indies trade route to Cape Town and home through the

Atlantic, arriving off Sheerness on 4 October 1780. Cook's contribution to the sum of human knowledge was immense and his status as a great navigator and explorer was established long before his death – during the American War of Independence, Founding Father Benjamin Franklin urged the captains of all American warships, should they make contact with Cook, to avoid obstructing or delaying him and to treat him and his party "with all civility and kindness... as common friends to mankind."

### **28 October 1937**

Halcyon-class minesweeper HMS Seagull, the first all-welded ship in the Royal Navy, was launched at Devonport on 28 October 1937. Built entirely without rivets, the ship represented a leap forward in ship construction and demonstrated the order of cost and time savings possible by such a method – a sister ship was built using traditional processes on an adjacent slip at Devonport Dockyard to provide a comparison. Commissioned in May 1938, Seagull acted as a local escort for more than 20 Arctic convoys during World War 2, as well as carrying out her primary duty of mine clearance. She was also involved in sweeping approach channels for the Normandy Landings in June 1944. After the war she was converted to a survey ship in Rotterdam and Chatham, operating around the coast of Britain between 1945 and 1950 after which she was paid off into reserve. She served as an RNVR drill ship in Leith in 1955, and was scrapped in Plymouth the following summer.

### **29 October 1618**

Explorer, statesman and leading Elizabethan Sir Walter Raleigh was executed in London on 29 October 1618. Raleigh was born into a landowning family in South Devon but little is known of his early years – even his date of birth is uncertain, with 1553 being a good guess. His family was staunchly

**Continued on page 48**

**Halcyon-class minesweeper HMS Seagull. See 28 October. Image from the IWM collection © IWM (FL 18854)**



Protestant, and on at least once occasion his father had barely escaped with his life when forced to hide from Catholics, leading to Raleigh's hatred of Roman Catholicism. As a teenager he travelled to France to fight in religious wars with the Protestant Huguenots, and at the age of 18 (or 20) he became a scholar at Oriel College, Oxford, though he left after two years without completing his degree and instead went on to study at Middle Temple, one of the Inns of Court in London. It is believed Raleigh again went to France in the early 1570s, and in 1577 and 1579 he sailed with his half-brother Sir Humphrey Gilbert in attempts to find the fabled Northwest Passage – they didn't find it, but managed to take some Spanish ships along the way. In 1579-80 Raleigh helped suppress the Desmond Rebellions in Ireland, and in 1585 by way of thanks he received an estate of 40,000 acres in Cork from Queen Elizabeth, which became his home for the following 17 years. Although Raleigh is credited with introducing potatoes to England and Ireland, it is thought more likely the spud that we know today was the result of trade between Ireland and Spain before Raleigh appeared on the scene. In March 1584 the Queen granted Raleigh, by now a court favourite, a Royal Charter allowing him to explore, colonise and rule any territory or land not ruled by a Christian ruler nor inhabited by Christian people, in return for 20 per cent of any gold or silver found there – and he had seven years to complete the task. A thinly veiled attempt to share in the fabled riches of the New World, and a chance to intercept Spanish treasure fleets, Raleigh sent an expedition out later that year, which returned with news of an area which was named Virginia after the Virgin Queen. Raleigh sent a military mission to America in 1585, the year he was knighted, to set up a fort which would not only provide a settlement (fulfilling the terms of the Charter) but would also raid Spanish ships. However, the colony at Roanoke ran out of food and clashed with indigenous people, so packed up and left the following year. When voyage leader Sir Richard Grenville returned to the site shortly after he left a small group of men with supplies, but the groups was never seen again. History repeated itself shortly after when Raleigh again sent an expedition to Roanoke Island in 1587, this time of a more diverse nature, including complete families. Colony leader John White returned to England for more supplies shortly after they arrived at Roanoke, promising to be back in a year. In the end it was three years before he returned (delayed by the threat of the Spanish Armada, then through his crew insisting on sailing via Cuba in the hope of tapping in to the unbelievable wealth they had been assured was there for the taking. When White reached Roanoke, the settlers had disappeared, leaving a cryptic message carved into a tree ('Croatoan', thought to refer to another island, which White could not reach because of a hurricane). No trace of them was found, leading to the description of Roanoke as 'the Lost Colony'. Raleigh himself never set foot in North America. Raleigh fell out of favour with the Queen in 1591 when he secretly

married one of her ladies-in-waiting, for which he spent time in the Tower of London, being released in 1593 and becoming an MP. He then spent several years at his estate in Dorset, waiting for opportunities to work his way back into the Queen's favour. In 1594 he read a Spanish account of a 'great golden city' in South America (part of the fable of El Dorado) and Raleigh rushed off on an expedition to modern-day Guyana and Venezuela, returning to England to publish a much-embellished account of the voyage as there is no evidence that he found any traces of gold or goldmines. The following years saw him represent two further counties as an MP, help thwart the third Spanish Armada, take part in the capture of Cadiz and become Governor of the Channel Islands, rebuilding their outdated defences. He had by now worked his way back into the Queen's good books, but she died on 24 March 1603, signalling the end of Raleigh's rise in society. Just four months after the Virgin Queen's death Raleigh was arrested for supposedly being one of the plotters against the new King, James I, and was imprisoned in the Tower for treason. Although convicted, likely on fabricated evidence (supposedly a confession by a close friend), James spared Raleigh's life, but he spent the next 13 years locked up in the Tower of London. Pardoned in 1617, Raleigh was given permission to have another crack at finding El Dorado in Venezuela, but that was to lead to his downfall. During the expedition a group under the command of his old seaman friend Lawrence Kemys attacked a Spanish outpost, against Raleigh's orders and in violation of an essential condition of his pardon, that there must be no hostility against Spain or her interests. To make matters worse, Raleigh's son, also Walter, was killed in the attack. When Raleigh refused to forgive Kemys the latter committed suicide, but the heat was now on Raleigh. On his return to England the Spanish ambassador to King James's court demanded that the death sentence be reinstated, and, on the brink of a political disaster, James had no choice. Raleigh was beheaded in the Old Palace Yard of the Palace of Westminster on 29 October 1618 at the age of around 65. His head was embalmed and (kindly?) presented to his wife, while the rest of his body was eventually buried at St Margaret's Church, Westminster; when his wife died almost 30 years later his head was reunited with his body.

### **30 October 1940**

Destroyer HMS *Sturdy* wrecked in a gale in the Inner Hebrides, west Scotland, on 30 October 1940 during Convoy SC 8. The 1,240-ton S-class ship was launched onto the Clyde by Scotts of Greenock on 26 June 1919 but spent most of her first ten years in reserve as the need for warships fell away after the Armistice. In 1934 she was reconfigured with a small crane to lift ditched aircraft from the sea (all her armament was removed to increase her speed), working alongside aircraft carrier HMS *Courageous*, then refitted as a minelayer in 1936, though she never undertook this role in war. When World War 2 broke out she was tasked with escorting Atlantic

**Continued on page 49**

convoys, one of which was HX 79 from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Liverpool in October 1940, which took a terrible beating from Hitler's U-boats in the Western Approaches, losing 12 ships out of 48 in six hours. Sturdy did not survive long after the convoy reached the Mersey.

On 27 October 1940 the destroyer left Londonderry to rendezvous with convoy OL 9, which she helped to escort into the open Atlantic. Leaving the outbound convoy that evening, Sturdy was ordered to meet the inbound convoy SC 8 the following morning, but the weather deteriorated overnight, meaning Sturdy and destroyer HMS Shikari could not spot the convoy. They spent all day searching without success, and as the weather continued to get worse through the evening, the two ships lost sight of each other. On 29 October, in foul weather and with fuel running low, the Commanding Officer of Sturdy decided to head back to Londonderry, but in a full gale with 30ft waves and with no sight of the sun to gain a fix, the ship was pretty much lost. Allowing for considerable drift and a wide margin of error, the CO – Lt Cdr Cooper – set a course for the coast where he could reassess the situation. Spotting a white line on the sea around 0420 on October 30, Cooper realised it was a line of waves breaking on a shore around 100 metres away, at which point Sturdy hit the rocks. She immediately heeled over ten degrees, while huge waves rolled her back and forth, doing more damage to the hull. Cooper feared the ship would break up rapidly, so sent out a raft with two men to secure a line ashore. The raft capsized shortly after, but the two sailors managed to scramble ashore and set out for help. Next to leave the doomed ship was her whaler with 13 men aboard, but that too rapidly capsized; only eight of them made it to safety. Two further sailors risked the chaotic surf to take a line ashore and managed to reach the rocks but were swept off; both survived their ordeal. At that point the shore party appeared and a local mariner got a message to Cooper, telling him they were safer to stay in the ship as the tide was on the turn. After a frightening two hours, the water had receded enough for the remaining members of the crew to go ashore using the line

secured by the two swimmers. Locals provided dry clothing and hot food and drink for the shipwrecked men, most of whom went to Oban the following day in the Flower-class corvette HMS Rhododendron, leaving a party of around 20, including the CO, to assess the state of the ship and see if salvage was a possibility. It was not, and much of the wreckage remained in situ until the 1960s onwards, although the ship's boiler is reportedly still lying in shallow water just offshore.

### **31 October 1762**

HM Ships Panther and Argo captured the valuable Spanish galleon Santisima Trinidad off Kapul Island, Philippines on 31 October 1762. Panther was a 60-gun fourth rate launched at Chatham on 22 June 1758 which had sailed to the Far East to take part in the expedition against Manila, part of the Seven Years' War that saw British ships attack the Spanish colony of the Philippines. She was accompanied by the 28-gun sixth rate Argo when they encountered the merchant ship Santisima Trinidad on 31 October 1762, engaging the Spanish galleon in an action that lasted two hours. The Spanish ship, one of the largest built in the Philippines for trade between Manila and Mexico and mounting 60 guns, had set out from the Americas for Manila in early September not knowing that the city had been taken by the British. In any case, she was intercepted by Panther and Argo before she got to the port. Panther opened fire, although the opening shots did little damage and caused few casualties, but the crew of the galleon were dismayed at the thought of facing the British warships, and surrendered. On board was cargo worth an estimated \$1.5 million, while the ship herself was valued at twice that. She was sailed to Portsmouth, where the sale of cargo and ship netted the two British captains £30,000 (a huge sum at that time). The ultimate fate of the galleon is unknown, and the treasure ship is often confused with the slightly later Spanish man o'war Nuestra Señora de la Santísima Trinidad. Panther ended her life as a prison hulk in Plymouth and was broken up in 1813, while Argo was broken up in Portsmouth in late 1776.

**S-class destroyer HMS Sturdy in 1919.  
See 31 October. Image from the IWM  
collection © The rights holder (Q 74007)**



## 2024 -25

<b>12 Oct</b>	World Uckers Championships, Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth
<b>25-27 Oct</b>	Scottish Area 4th Quarter Meeting and Trafalgar Night celebration
<b>Autumn (tbc)</b>	D-Day Memorials Cycle Event in Normandy
<b>10 Nov</b>	Remembrance Ceremony at the Cenotaph, London
<b>16 Nov</b>	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting, hosted by Stowmarket branch
<b>18 Jan 2025</b>	4 Area AGM, Dorchester
<b>8 Feb 2025</b>	Area 5 Quarterly Meeting and AGM hosted by Cromer branch
<b>28 Mar 2025</b>	CONA meeting, Portsmouth
<b>3 May 2025</b>	Army v Navy rugby match, Twickenham
<b>15-18 May 2025</b>	Londonderry Battle of the Atlantic 80th Anniversary Commemoration
<b>17 May 2025</b>	4 Area meeting, St Austell
<b>20-22 June 2025</b>	RNA75 Annual Conference 2025, Portsmouth
<b>22 Oct 2025</b>	Fisherman's Friends Concert, Portsmouth

Please check the **RNA website** and the RN **Shipmates.co.uk** website for a list of further events



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



## A SPECIAL OFFER

A 10% discount on food, selected drinks and hotel rooms for members of the Royal Naval Association

The Royal Maritime Hotel is a stone's throw from Gunwharf Quays, the Spinnaker Tower and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, HMS Victory, The Mary Rose Museum and HMS Warrior. Facilities include Horatio's restaurant, the Victory bar, a small swimming pool, sauna, spa pool and skittles!

Run by a charity to benefit veterans and serving military personnel




Visit [royalmaritimehotel.co.uk](http://royalmaritimehotel.co.uk) for more information and to book

info@royalmaritimehotel.co.uk 02392 982 182 Queen Street, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 3HS

## MORE OFFERS

<b>Ship Anson pub, 10 The Hard, Portsea</b>	10% off food and drink
<b>Portsmouth Historic Dockyard</b>	£20 for a day ticket 30% off annual Ultimate Explorer tickets
<b>Royal Maritime Hotel 182 Queen Street</b>	A 10% discount on food, selected drinks and hotel rooms
<b>Sea Urchin's Gin</b>	10% to RNA from the sale of each bottle
<b>Navy Strength Gin</b>	Don't forget to tick the box for RNA.
<b>Arctic Convoy Vodka</b>	P&P is free for orders over £40, otherwise it is £4.50.
<b>China Fleet Country Club</b>	Click on the link for offers for Serving and ex-Serving RN and RM
<b>Trinity Insurance</b>	For offers see <a href="https://tinyurl.com/ssy8vt5s">https://tinyurl.com/ssy8vt5s</a>



THE ROYAL MARITIME HOTEL

# Shop till you Drop!!

Get Christmas Shopping out of the  
Way

Rooms only £75.00 BB in December

Quote Promo Code: SHOPTILL



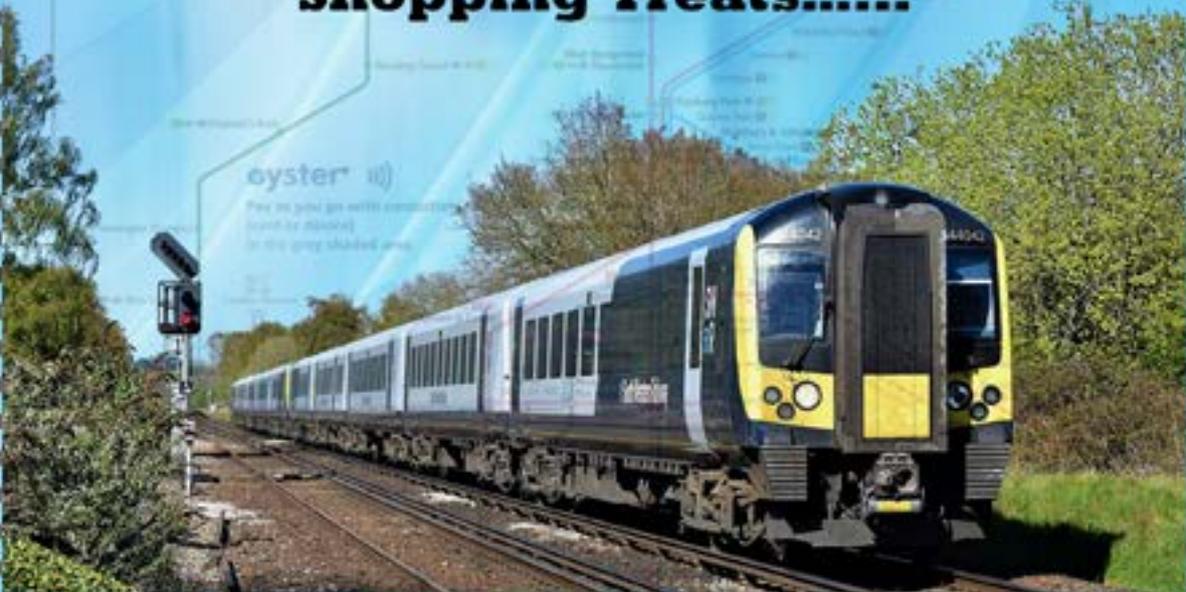
**20% off  
Spinnaker  
Tower**

Queen Street, Portsmouth,  
Hampshire, PO1 3HS | 023 9298 2182  
[www.royalmaritimehotel.co.uk](http://www.royalmaritimehotel.co.uk)



# Join us on the Fareham Flyer for half-term London Adventures

**Free Museums ...Famous Attractions...  
Sport....Theatres...River cruises....  
Relatives....Bus tours...  
Shopping Treats.....**

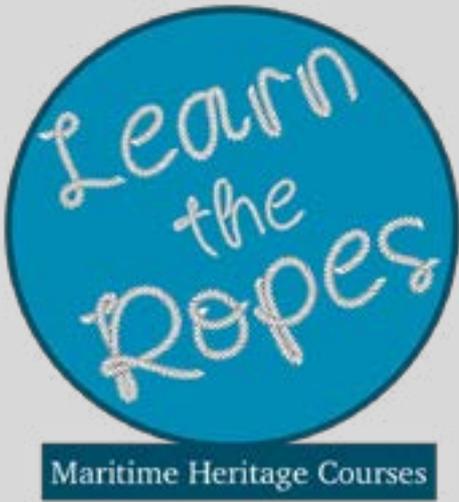


**'Fareham Flyer' a chartered train  
Fareham-London non-stop  
08:30-10:06 return 17:30-19:06  
Saturday 26th October  
FAREHAM-LONDON Waterloo  
Return trip £25pp**

Organised by Maritime Heritage Tours Ltd at Gosport Bus Station PO12 1EP

**"Tickets are on sale at local POST OFFICES in Gosport and Fareham  
and from Wickham to Hill Head to Portchester**

**Phone 07977 534949 If in any difficulty locating tickets.**



**Website:**

[williams-sailing.co.uk/learn-the-ropes/](http://williams-sailing.co.uk/learn-the-ropes/)  
Or if visiting the Williams website- look for "Courses" in the top menu

**Judith Brown-** Learn the Ropes  
Community Engagement Enabler  
Blyth Tall Ship  
Email: [judith@williams-sailing.co.uk](mailto:judith@williams-sailing.co.uk)  
Phone: 07903 756808

**Cole Kelly-** Learn the Ropes Administrator  
Blyth Tall Ship  
Email: [adventure@williams-sailing.co.uk](mailto:adventure@williams-sailing.co.uk)  
Phone: 07709 101306

**Feeling isolated?**

**Want to make some new friends?**

**Join us for a cuppa and learn some new skills!**

Blyth Tall Ship is thrilled to be delivering a series of maritime heritage courses to improve the mental health and wellbeing in the communities of Blyth Valley and the North East. Learn the Ropes is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The courses are FREE and open to all. Head to our website for further details and registration. Courses are 6 weeks long. All training is provided in a friendly and welcoming environment. The courses are free but you are also welcome to make a contribution if you wish.

- Heritage Knitting for Beginners
- Shanty Singing
- Navigating the Archives
- Introduction to Woodworking
- Knots, Splices, and Ropework



## Combined Services Travel Cover

As a member of an association affiliated to Trinity and if you are 40 and over, you qualify for exclusive access to a new travel insurance scheme introduced by Trinity Insurance Services Ltd.



### Over 40's Annual Travel Scheme

Exclusively for associations affiliated with Trinity Insurance Services Ltd

Worldwide and Europe-only options  
No declaration of medical conditions

### How to Apply

Online via a link from your association website.

By Telephone: 02392 419 856

(Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, closed Bank Holidays)

### About Combined Services 40+ Travel Cover

Exclusively available to Service associations/organisations affiliated with Trinity Insurance Services Ltd.

An annual scheme that requires no medical screening.

### Eligibility

The scheme is open to UK resident members of associations or organisations affiliated with Trinity Insurance Services Ltd aged between 40 and 79 (on joining) and their families.

Once a member of the scheme, no upper age limit will apply provided cover is not allowed to lapse and membership of the qualifying association is maintained.

### What's Included?

- ✓ Full Worldwide or Europe-only cover options
- ✓ No medical screening
- ✓ No limit to the number of journeys
- ✓ Any single trip can last up to 65 days (45 days for North America and Caribbean)
- ✓ Winter Sports cover up to 17 days
- ✓ Can opt to include partners, spouse and children (up to 21 years)
- ✓ Pre-existing medical conditions are covered if members are able to comply with the health warranty



## Combined Services 40+ Travel Cover - terms with effect from 1st October 2024

Age	Individual		Couple		Family	
	Europe	Worldwide	Europe	Worldwide	Europe	Worldwide
40-49 years	£159.99	£199.99	£279.99	£349.99	£359.99	£449.99
50-59 years	£239.99	£299.99	£359.99	£449.99	£439.99	£549.99
60-69 years	£319.99	£399.99	£439.99	£549.99	£519.99	£649.99
70-79 years	£359.99	£449.99	£479.99	£599.99	£559.99	£699.99

### Combined Services 40+ Travel Cover pricing:

- A pro rata price scale will be applied for new applicants based on when the customer buys into the scheme. For example, someone who joins the scheme with 6 months remaining will pay 50% of the price. The full 12-month premium will be applied on auto-renewal to all existing insured persons.
- A customer can upgrade from European to Worldwide cover by paying the difference between the European and Worldwide premiums.
- Pricing for Couples and Families is based on the eldest member.
- An excess of £75 is included on all cover.