



Newsletter Volume 4 – No 2. Spring 2012.

Opening Comment: - Hi everyone, no one can be happier with the fact that winter has passed than Barbara and me. Some members have spoken about the possibility of having their copy of the newsletter sent electronically; these could be sent as a Word Doc attachment, meaning a saving on postage! Will those interested, please send me an e-mail and I will put them into a special group address list. **Terry & Barbara.**

Chairman's Corner: - Hello Shipmates: this year everyone will be celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth; a wonderful achievement and historic occasion. I am sure you will all have strong memories of what you were doing and where you were when King George V1 died and Princess Elizabeth began her long reign. Now here are a few prominent dates to ponder on: - **17th January 1912 (100 years)**, just five members of Captain Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated team reached their objective; the South Pole, only to discover that the Norwegian Roald Amundsen had beaten them to it. A little later on the **16th March**, Captain Lawrence Oates, who was suffering very badly, made his famous statement and walked out into the blizzard; his body has never been found! Another centenary happening is that of the Titanic which sailed from Southampton on the **12th April** and foundered on the 15th after hitting that iceberg.

HMS Ceylon celebrates a 70th anniversary with her launching in 1942. This same year in February saw Operation Cerberus, the daring Channel dash by elements of the German Navy; Scharnhorst, Prinz Eugen, and Gneisenau, from Brest to Wilhelmshaven.

It will now not be long before we all meet once again, this time in Coventry where we will celebrate our 22nd reunion; I look forward to meeting up with old friends once more and please do not forget to sign the attendance book!

Best Wishes to you all,

Yours Aye,

John.

Re-Union 2012: - Britannia Hotel, Coventry. Bookings for the reunion at Coventry are coming along nicely, **however** anyone thinking of leaving it until the very last moment might possibly find themselves somewhat disappointed, so do please get your booking in before it is too late. A few seats are yet available for the Saturday coach trip to the National Arboretum, again anyone wishing to come along on this is asked to get their reservations in as soon as possible. Please make out your cheque (£2-50 a head) payable to HMS Ceylon Association and not to me personally! We will be following our usual routine on the Sunday morning:

1000 Church Service - again organised by Frank & Leah Hawkes: **1100** AGM: **1200** Up-Spirits.

At the AGM, perhaps the most important part will be the election of officers; **all** positions are open for election and I would like to emphasize that it is important that nominations for any position are received by me, **preferably before the weekend commences**, in order for me to have things well in order. If you do nominate anyone please ensure that

this person is happy to accept any such nomination. It is always perhaps a little boring to have to go down the track of re-electing those already in office because of a lack of either volunteers or nominations. Jenny and I both look forward to seeing many old friends and shipmates once more. Here's to a very happy event! John & Rosemary Wyeth would like to see sufficient numbers turn up in the afternoon for the quiz they hope to hold; **but** don't let your 'tot' blur your mind!

Yours aye

Tony.

New Member: - Please welcome aboard the following –

1. Brian Marlow, ME 1958/60 commission
2. Frederick Morgan, A/B RP, 1944/45 commission.

Crossed the Bar: - It was with sadness that the association learned of the recent passing of Gladys Pratt, well known and respected widow of the association's founder, 'Sticks'. Details are short of the circumstances, but it is felt that many people will recall with fondness both of them.

Further news on three other members who have passed on follows: -

Jack Bellingham, LSA '50/'52 commission passed away on the 3rd January 2012, aged 91 years. He served in the Royal Navy for 23 years, with most of this service in Corvettes and other small craft. For a while during the war, he was attached to Combined Operations in Scotland and of course he is remembered during the second commission, particularly for calling out the number of tots at "Up-Spirits"! On leaving the navy, he served for about 4 years in various Cruise Liners and it was during this time that he met his second wife Gwyn, a Stewardess on board one of them; they were married for almost 50 very happy years. On leaving their life at sea they went to live in Treorchy. Jack was a very popular man and at his cremation on the 3rd February the chapel was packed to capacity with friends and family; the service including a wonderful Welsh choir. Jack leaves his wife Gwyn and 2 daughters from his first marriage, one of whom lives in England and the other close to Gwyn, who visits her daily. Jack was a regularly attendee of our reunions until ill health stopped their travelling.

Jack's one hugely amusing and famous claim to fame came during the 1951 refit in Singapore, when the ship's company was living in HMS Terror. He 'purloined' the Posties push bike and after carrying it up the diving ladder at Terror's swimming pool, he mounted the bike, and then rode it along the board before gracefully plunging into the pool! ***We often wonder what the outcome of this episode was.***

Edward McKernan, R Marine 1950/'52. Mac unfortunately died in January 2012 at the age of 80 and we are not in possession of his funeral arrangements. He served in Ceylon straight from training at the ship's commissioning in 1950 until that very fateful date, 30th August 1951. During the Choppeki Point Landings on that day, he suffered severe wounding from a mine which he detonated and as a consequence one of his legs had to be amputated above the knee; the fact he survived at all was down to the 'first aid' he received at the time! He was transferred to HM Hospital Ship Maine, before then being sent home to the UK and after a lengthy spell of medical treatment, was discharged from the service. After leaving the Royal Marines, he first gained employment as a salesman, before taking up a role in a civilian capacity with the Hull City Police. He later trained as a school-teacher and teaching until his retirement in 1988. He was a much respected and well-remembered man and leaves two sons. Another of the men seriously wounded in that action is our past chairman; Brien Harrison.

Les Blackie, L/Tel, 1950/52 – it was learned through the Navy News that Les passed away in Oct 2011. For some unknown reason he allowed his membership to lapse, but he will always be a 'shipmate!'

Christopher D I Evans -1943/46. PO Comms. We have been informed by Chris' son Yan, that his father who lived in Taunton, Somerset died on the 3rd February from cancer. Chris attended many of our reunions and is well remembered, especially at those held at the Trecarn Hotel in Babbacombe.

Sickness Reports: - Frank Hawkes finally had his knee operation carried out on the 22nd of January and is now looking forward to Coventry in April

C30 Surfers: - Not much to report about this month again, however the website is still bringing in some new members though, maybe the early spring-like weather has drawn them in! Details of the 2 new members will be shown elsewhere in this article.

A few months ago I obtained a copy of the 58/59 commission book, I have scanned all the pages and had it converted to a PDF file. I hope before long I can get together with my mate who does the website for me to add it in there, so it can be downloaded as PDF; it's too long to put it on as text. In the meantime, if any of you out there would like a copy, please send me an e-mail and I will e-mail it to you, **can't afford to post a hard copy!**

Roll on 'Spring',

Happy surfing -

Ron Boniface.

A nice 'feedback' was received from Ken Jones, regarding the article in the last edition of Ceylon becoming a unit of the Peruvian Navy. He wrote; "thanks for publishing that picture of the old girl under her new name. As a member of the last 'commish' I recall that key personnel of the Peruvian Navy joined us at Singapore for the final leg home. Captain Twiss did not know the meaning of 'ammunition rationing' and I clearly remember one of their officers coming up to us on P2 after an 'AA' shoot and remarking that the rate of fire was the fastest he had ever seen! We then explained that there was a standing contest between the sailors on P1 and S1 and the Marines of P2 and S2. Anyway, we arrived in Pompey on the 20th of December 1959 and most of us went on leave and draft, with the Peruvians then taking over. I heard later that some of our stokers were recalled from leave because the Peruvians had damaged a boiler two days out and had to return to Portsmouth for the relining of said boiler and our stokers did steaming crew for the passage to Lima!

Some years later, in 1975, I was on Kent when we visited Lima and saw 'Coronel Bolognesi' moored in the same way as Belfast is on the Thames, getting the impression that she was a permanent fixture. **Yours Aye, Ken Jones.**

Royal Navy & Marine Customs & Traditions – originally donated by the Reverend Terry Roberts.

From the Norse came the use of a single steering oar or sweep on the right hand or **steer-board** side of their vessels, later becoming called 'starboard' side; everyone followed this design. It was found awkward to put a vessel alongside a dock on the side this oar was shipped, thus ships were put alongside with the starboard side outboard. A plank was put across from the dock to the ship; this plank or board was called the '*ladeboard or loadboard, later the larboard*'. There followed much confusion over the use of the terms larboard and starboard, but eventually came relief! The French with their high ships' sides devised a short cut to handling cargo by cutting a loading door known as 'ports' in the ship's side. To mariners this became known as the 'portside'. To avoid collisions in early times, ships underway or at anchor by night carried at least a single lantern showing a white light, until 1845 when coloured lights were authorised.

Martin Clarke, the stepson of L/Sea Arthur Collins 1943/46 has sent the following excerpt from Arthur's autobiography; a good insight to life in "The Andrew" 70 years ago!

Gathering together in Victory, RNB Portsmouth, it was not long before we formed a draft to the Ceylon, due to be commissioned in Glasgow. We boarded a special train for a journey which lasted 48 hours; four times longer than normal because we had to avoid cities that were being bombed! We soon settled down in 'Ceylon' (**it was nice to be on a brand-new ship with everything up to date**). After a month of 'working up', including engine trials and endless seamanship and gunnery practice, we finally sailed to Devonport to have our catapult removed and the aircraft hangars converted; one into a Cinema, the other into part Chapel, part recreation space). This allowed us to have a few more days leave to say our good-byes before leaving for 'Foreign' for two years! Betty's Brother Vic was in the RAF and had recently been drafter abroad (**India or Ceylon, the family weren't sure**). But it was soon obvious that we were heading for Ceylon and I thought I might well catch up with him! After leaving Devonport, we headed

through the Bay of Biscay and into the Med before making for Port Said. The Suez Canal had been cleared and re-opened since the Germans had been cleared from North Africa; it was a slow 12-hour journey through the canal to the Red Sea. It became really hot, with the tropical weather continuing on our journey to Bombay. I didn't like Bombay one bit, if we went into shops we were badgered to buy something; it was too hot, too smelly and we were amazed to find so many children, begging in the streets! We were there for a few days, taking on stores and fuel and then headed south for Ceylon, eventually arrived in Colombo. I wondered if Vic was on the Island! Once ashore I soon found a Services Advice Bureau, who were very helpful. They informed that he was indeed on the Island at RAF Ratmalana, about ten miles outside Colombo. My chum Tom Smith and I caught a local bus to Ratmalana Air Force base and were shown to his hut. What a surprise for Vic! We were to meet many times during our two years based at Trincomalee on the other side of the island. 'Ceylon' was the first ship in the new "Eastern Fleet", which at the end of the war consisted of some 300 ships. Our duties were to support the 14th Army who were advancing south through Burma and on into Malaysia to drive out the Japanese invaders. This joint operation (Army, Navy & Air Force) was known as South East Asia Command (S.E.A.C.) and was under the command of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. We were to serve as his flagship for about a year. Apart from taking the Admiral to places he wished to visit such as Ramri Island, Calcutta, Madras and other locations, we spent most of our time patrolling the islands; mainly Nicobar & Andaman, making sure that there were no Japanese landings there. Our only real action was when the whole fleet went toward Sumatra to destroy the Island of Sabang, which was occupied. We had one trip to Australia escorting an American troopship. Our ten-day stay in Freemantle was very agreeable, being so close to the city of Perth. In 1944 one of the turbines broke down and we spent three months in Durban (South Africa) while this was replaced and two weeks leave in Johannesburg was very enjoyable! When the war against the Japanese ended in August 1945, we sailed up the Malaysian coast to the Island of Penang, which our contingent of Royal Marines was to occupy until the Army could take over (they had reached Rangoon by this time). The surrender completed in Penang, we sailed south through the Malacca Straights to Singapore (minus our Royal Marines). We were allowed ashore in Singapore, but it wasn't exciting! There were very few things to buy, mainly silk materials or cameras. Cigarettes were the best currency. Once the official Surrender Ceremony was completed, we took on board twenty or so ex- British P of W for transit home. These poor devils were in a sorry state, all skin and bones and had to be fed very small portions at first, gradually increasing until we got home. Our first duty on leaving Singapore was to pick up our Royal Marines from Penang before proceeding to Colombo to say our official thanks for their hospitality and goodbyes! Vic was cheesed off because I was going home and he wasn't, but that sadly was 'one of those things'. We were told to cruise at economical speed, about 16 knots, for the journey home! Our first port-of-call was Aden, re-fuelling before going through the Suez Canal to Port Said where we had a short stay. It was then on to Valletta in Malta, (***this was the first time that I had seen the Island, despite having had escorted numerous convoys there***). After a quick run ashore in Valletta, it was on to Gibraltar for a final re-fuelling. I took the opportunity to go ashore and buy a large stalk of green bananas (probably 2/3 dozen). These would be ripening by the time I got home! The last part of our homeward journey was the most memorable; no sooner had we passed through the Straits and into the Bay of Biscay when we ran into a vicious gale. The worst sea I encountered in six years; the ship was rolling 37°! On duty in the wheelhouse, steering a true course was impossible, but we finally managed to reach Portsmouth!

That's about it shipmates, except to say that owing to the fact that I underwent heart surgery last August and that I recently spent 2 weeks very much "***under the weather***", I feel the time has come to stand down from my duties as newsletter editor and committee member. This will become effective at the April AGM, but in the interest of continuity, I will do the newsletter that would normally go out 'Post Reunion'; sometime in May/June?

Yours aye, Terry.

Written & Produced by Terry Randall ('50/'52)