



Newsletter – Volume 3 - No 2 – May 2009.

Opening comment: - The consensus seems to be that this year’s reunion was enjoyed, with the problems of last year now history! The AGM activated changes on the committee, mainly dealing with the passing of Bryan Jervis and a new vice-president being elected in his place, the changes are shown below. Please keep this part of the newsletter for future reference, the information contained in it can so often be useful. **Terry.**

PRESIDENT. Lt/Cdr David M Scott RN.

VICE PRESIDENT (New). Brien Harrison.

CHAIRMAN. John Wyeth,

VICE CHAIRMAN. Cliff Pell.

SECRETARY. Tony Mendoza.

TREASURER. Andrea Maynard.

COMMITTEE:
 Terry Randall.
 Ron Boniface.
 Frank Hawkes.
 Brian H Blackburn
 Joan Willerton.

The duties of membership secretary will continue as a joint effort between Joan Willerton and Ron Boniface, who cooperate closely with Secretary Tony. Ron, besides being our webmaster, also deals with supplying newsletter labels and membership lists and is always interested in hearing of any ‘hiccups’! There has been a few of these recently, so if you know of a problem, please let us know.

Chairman’s Corner: - Hello Shipmates: - I do hope you are all keeping well. Sadly during the past year nine of our members have ‘crossed the bar’, including our vice-president Bryan Jervis and Harry Bird, our Argyll friend; they are a sad loss to the association and will be very much missed. The reunion this year was most enjoyable – well I heard no complaints – and I thought the food was better this time, with Eileen the manageress doing her best to make us all feel welcome. Sincere thanks are due to Frank & Leah Hawkes who after a few initial problems managed to organise an excellent Church Service, officiated over by the Reverend Caroline Eglin, BA. RN, who carried the service very well. The AGM went smoothly and satisfactorily and this was followed by the usual “Up Spirits”; you did a grand job there Eddie! The Saturday trip to RNBC at Dartmouth was well worth attending and I

really do believe that the guides this time were better at their job than before. I must admit though that I do not think it right that we should be paying to visit a Naval Establishment! However, having done so I am pleased that we did cough up as it was indeed an interesting and enjoyable tour. This coming June is as usual a busy time for me, as I shall be attending the Korean Ships lunch at Leamington Spa, the Submariner's lunch and the Winchester Branch RNA lunch (*this is now called 'Armed Forces Lunch'*) with a few other meetings thrown in at times; you can see that I will be well occupied.

We organised our usual Sunday Quiz for 1400 during the weekend and it was very pleasing to see such a well attended crowd waiting in anticipation. I understand they all enjoyed themselves, so here's hoping that even more will come along next year? The categories were: - History - Rhyming Slang – Nautical - Sporting Greats - Parts of the Human Body - General Knowledge and 20 Faces to Name. as usual, the first letter of the General Knowledge answers constituted an anagram; this year it was NATTERJACK and proved an easy and swift win for Wally Bartlett and his wife, last year's winners. They solved it in no time at all and won a pack of 'Penguins'; sharp these Royal Marines! The overall winning team was table 2, (*also last year's winners*) and they won a bag of Mini Twix; I hope you enjoyed them Andrea? In second place was table 5, followed by table 3. Table 1 managed to name 18 of the 20 faces quiz, while tables 2 and 4 achieved 10 out of 10 in the 'Name the Language' section. Thank you all who took part.

Best regards to you all -

Yours aye,

John.

From the Secretary: - **Reunion 2010** – This will be held over the weekend

Friday 23rd to Monday 26th April 2010

At the "Best Western Mollington Banastra Hotel"

Parkgate Road, Mollington, Chester. CH1 6NN. Tel – 01244 851471.

The agreed price is £80 per head for two nights and £120 for three. Bookings can be made for - single – double or twin-bedded rooms and reserved by either providing the hotel desk with credit card details – OR – by posting a cheque to the amount of 10% of your weekend total.

I have received an enquiry from someone writing a history on RFA's. He would like to speak to somebody who was onboard "Ceylon" at the time a collision occurred between Ceylon and RFA Arnedale, I not sure if it was the first or second commission - if anyone can help please let me know.

Yours Aye

Tony.

For myself, I recall a collision incident when going alongside a tanker at anchor in the area of Tae-Cheong-Do! This necessitated some noisy repairs being carried out portside forward, during the first & middle watches, which did not help the 'sleep pattern' for the 4On-4Off defence crews, but not a lot else!

Terry.

Reminder from Treasurer: - May I please remind members that subscriptions for this year are now due.

These are only £5, a figure that has remained constant since the formation of the association and are very low compared to most other association's charges! Please make your cheques payable The Ceylon Association and send them to me at 18 First Avenue, Farlington, Portsmouth, Hants. PO6 1JN.

My family really enjoyed the reunion and it was particularly nice that my Dad managed to speak to some of his old pals; now we are looking forward to next year.

Andrea.

Comment from Cliff Pell: - I would like to offer sincere thanks to Tony our secretary for all the hard work he has recently undertaken in respect of our 'Lottery Grant Application'; I feel sure that most of us do not really appreciate just how much effort has gone into this. As is so often the case, something often referred to as a simple matter, has many difficult questions needing to be dealt with.

Well done and 'Good on yer Tony'.

Crossed the Bar: - (1) – A W (Tony) Denham, REA '58/60. On the 27th April on return from the reunion, I received via e-mail the sad news of the passing of this member. Rosie, Tony's wife wrote: -

"It has taken me a while to get around to contacting you, I am sure you will understand. My husband, Tony Denham (Anthony William or Jan) passed away on 21st January this year. He was a member of your association, as well as an active member of the RNA. In July last year he was unwell, which led to a series of blood tests. After a stay in hospital for further tests he was diagnosed with a type of liver cancer. He recovered enough in September/October to be back driving and generally coping with family life. Unfortunately there was no treatment appropriate for this type of cancer, but it did mean that he was able to spend his remaining time at home, with his

family. As a family, we miss him tremendously; we have 3 children aged 19, 17 and 10, as well as 3 older children from his first marriage. Tony settled in Aberporth in West Wales after being stationed at RAE Aberporth which was then part of the MOD. He left the navy in April 1977, and went on to work at the RAE site where he continued working until his retirement in 1997. We met at the United Services Club in 1986, and were married in 1989. It meant a great deal to him that he was able to meet up with old friends and shipmates. ***Rosie Denham.***”

(2) – Vic Hopwood, Balloch in Scotland, LSA – 1952/54 commission. Too late for inclusion in the March newsletter came information via e-mail, referring to a particular shipmate of Bryan Jervis. Vic’s wife wrote: - “Thank you for sending Vic’s usual Ceylon newsletter. It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that Vic passed away on the 8th February after a brave battle with kidney cancer. We all miss him terribly, and we will certainly miss all his stories about his adventures with his Ceylon shipmates. I note your report about Brian Jervis being sick - he was a good mate of Vic’s and I wish him well. Vic would have loved to join in for Richard Pearce’s 80th birthday celebrations. I am sure he will be there in spirit anyway! Vic would have been 79 in May. He joined HMS Ganges in 1946, and his heart was always with his shipmates in Ceylon and Duke of York. ***Yours sincerely, Doreen.***”

(3) – Bryan Jervis, Lt RN - 2nd & 3rd commission PO SA - vice president of the association. After a recent, very painful period, ***suffering a pelvic fracture on top of all his other problems***, Bryan died peacefully at 0430 on Wednesday 8th April in Derriford Hospital. His funeral was held at 1230, Tuesday 21st April at the Bodmin Crematorium and was followed by a reception. Shipmate Ken Jones was in attendance and he said that the last time he had been in that crematorium was two years ago at the time of Audrey’s (Bryan’s wife) funeral. The place was packed with an over-flow of about 30 people milling around outside. Ken reports that the ceremony conducted by one of his Masonic friends, was ‘***out of the ordinary***’!

(4) – Henry Philip Bird – Harry - Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders - ***and a friend of mine from the time he sailed to Korea in Ceylon in number 12 mess***. Harry had been very ill for quite a considerable period of time, suffering with great fortitude until succumbing on the 19th April; he would have been 79 this May. During the regiment’s sojourn in Korea, Harry was twice wounded, the first time on 23rd September 1950 on Hill 282 and again at Chonyon on the 13th March 1951. On return to Hong Kong, the regiment completed its tour of duty in the colony before returning to the UK in late 1952; he and Betty were married not long after this. His funeral was held at the Church of St Michael and All Angels, Alvaston, Derbyshire. It was a grand send-off, with six close ‘regimental’ friends attending, some from as far away as Scotland, who formed a guard of honour. One of these was Ray Vearnals who also was wounded, very ***seriously***, on Hill 282 the same time as Harry. His fellow soldiers were pleased that a piper was arranged for the lament.

(5) -John Heward - A/B. - 52/54 - Middlesborough. - 24th December 2008.

Member Resignation: - Due to ill-health - Harry Jenner – 2nd commission – PO RP2 from Northampton. We received a message from Harry’s wife, requesting us to remove his name from our list. Sadly he is suffering severely from Alzheimer’s and is no longer able to read or participate in social activities so she felt there was no point in continuing. Mrs Jenner sounded quite stressed when she spoke to Joan, saying that she really did not know how much longer she could cope with looking after him. As Harry was in our president’s department in Ceylon, David has been in touch with Mrs Jenner, offering such small amounts of comfort as is possible in the circumstances. ***It really is a terrible thing to see our old friends struck down with this awful affliction.***

Hong Kong Legend Passes On: - Mrs Ng Muk Kah, BEM – known universally as “Jenny of Side-Party Fame” died peacefully in Hong Kong on 18th February this year at the age of 92! This instantly recognisable figure could always be seen around the naval base, who with her band of girls saved hundreds of seamen over most of the past century many long hours of work, keeping ships sides and upper-works pristine. No one from the RN who ever visited this famous port can possibly have missed this wonderful lady. Her BEM was awarded by the Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Murray Mac Le Hose in 1980. However this was not her only accolade, because she also received a commendation in 1959 from the Duke of Edinburgh for her work on the Royal Yacht on the occasion of Britannia’s visit in that year. Further back in 1938 she received a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal from the captain of HMS Devonshire, while many years later earned a bar engraved ‘HMS Leander 1975’.

Her letters of commendation fill two large albums, while her huge collection of photographs was in her own words "too many to place in albums", so they remained in envelopes! Her Service Certificates show that she was born on a sampan in Causeway Bay in 1917, with her mother being known as 'Jenny 1'.

Remuneration for the side-party's labour was not by 'coin', but by their acceptance of all kinds of scrap items, (*many a part-of-ship locker was thus tidied up!*) plus whatever little profit they made from the sale of soft drinks, which I myself will always remember as being most welcome on a hot summers' day in that harbour; especially after a beer too many the night before!

Behind her perpetual gold-toothed grin, Jenny's only complaint was "*I velly chocker. All time work in sampan. No learn to lead or lite.*" What she lacked in education though, more than made up a hundredfold with an immense and impressive experience in ship husbandry, together with her thoroughness, inexhaustible energy, loyalty, integrity, enthusiasm and ever-present cheerfulness.

Project by Testimonial Films: - The association was contacted by Testimonial Films who are keen to make a documentary series charting "**A Century of Fatherhood**". Over the past two decades they have produced such programmes as 'Ford's Dagenham Dream' (BBC2) – 'What Did You Do in the Great War Daddy?' (BBC4) – "The Last Voices of the Great War" (History Channel). I reproduce below their 'draft press release' which explains in full what they hope to achieve. Their must be at least a million stories out there, however probably in our case, the angle would be through the eyes of the children?

Military Dads Wanted for BBC TV Series on Fatherhood.

The BBC is making a new TV series, looking at the way '**fatherhood**' has changed during the course of the last century. We want to talk to veterans of the Armed Forces who were about to become dads when they fought in the Second World War.

Although as a dad in the forces you had a duty to King and Country, it must have been incredibly difficult to leave your sons and daughters, or your pregnant wife behind when you went off to train and fight. How did you cope with that moment, knowing that you might never see your family again? And what was it like seeing them when you came home on leave?

And while you were away, whether at home or abroad, were you able to contact your family? Did the thought that you were fighting for their freedom keep you going, or did you have to try to forget all about them?

For those taken prisoner in the early part of the war, it must have been particularly hard – whether held in Germany or the Far East. Were you able to communicate with your family? And what happened when you were released?

For all dads in the military, homecoming must have been a joyous occasion. What was it like to see your family again? Did your children remember you? Was it hard to settle back into family life? Or were you one of those who faced the agony of receiving a 'Dear John' letter before the war ended?

We'd also love to hear from the children whose dads went off to fight – so if you're in your sixties or seventies now, perhaps that's a memory you have? Whatever your story, please write to Pete Vance or Hazel Fearnley, Testimonial Films, 12 Great George Street, Bristol. BS1 5RS.

e-mail – pete.vance@testimonialfilms.com – or telephone 01179 258589.

That's all folk! Hope it all makes sense - and dare I hope that perhaps we are going to have some summer!

Terry.