

HMS Phoebe

Association

Newsletter

December 2010



Good day to everybody, Christmas draws near, will it be a snow laden one or a wet one? Whatever it is we hope you all have a good time with your family gathered round you. (The toys are for the kids)! We are not going away this year most probably spending Christmas day with our daughter, and Boxing Day with our son. I suppose we are lucky to have half of our family living in Didcot, we get to see them quite often, more so when they are wanting something!

We went to the HMS Sheffield Association reunion on the Isle of Wight last month, I am the editor of their newsletter also on their committee. It was a good reunion in quite a nice, although queerly laid out hotel. The newly appointed social secretary got the Isle of Whight Tours Company to arrange it all, and a damn good job they made of it too, this company arrange lots of RN Ships association reunions, you name where you want to go, and what you want done and they organise everything.

The point is that Lil and I are getting a bit old for that job now, no one has come forward to volunteer to take it on, so we are seriously thinking of submitting the I of W Tours idea to the committee. While at the reunion we arranged to meet the company representative, even getting committee member Bob Hobbs who lives on the I of W to join us, we had a good and interesting meeting and learnt quite a bit, we even asked about a reunion in Bristol, however that was a no, no.. It would be too expensive, but the rep suggested Weston Super Mare, and a coach trip to Bristol, we thought that maybe worth looking into?

As for our reunion in May, I have to remind you that in January we have to furnish the hotel with all the names of members who have so far booked in, I have a worksheet of rooms that I have to allocate to those of you who have booked so far, that is what I will be sending to the hotel. Can I ask that if you are thinking of attending the Bournemouth reunion in May could you please let us know ASAP. If you have mislaid your booking form, don't worry, phone us (01235 211501), tell us your details and we can fill a form in for you and send you a copy. Bookings can still be taken after January right up to the end of April but we have to send these bookings straight through to the hotel as we receive them; because the hotel will, after January, be letting out the rooms we have not reserved. Payments small, large, or in full can be made right up to the May 7th.

The Treasurer will pay the full hotel bill from money paid in. .

The cover photo, taken in 1941 is of some Phoebe ratings being paid their fortnightly pittance, I expect it was in dollars as this was taken in New York when the ship was there for repairs. The photo and a accompanying note was for sale on E-Bay in the USA. Shipmate David Williams emailed me the photo, we would, if possible, like to put some names to the ratings. Please let me or David know if you are one of them, or know their names.



I wonder how many of you read the Daily Mail, I get one occasionally Delivered free by a neighbour who works nights for the D/Mail. In Monday's, Nov 15th Mail was an article regarding a new life saving heart tablet, its daily cost is £2 a tablet, although this seems a lot for one tablet when you realise that I, and thousands of other sufferers are taking several heart tablets a day, twice a day for some tablets, then if this tablet does what is said it does then it is very cheap and would make a huge saving.

The name of the tablet is *Eplerenone*. Researchers say their findings have 'huge public health implications' and could potentially cut millions from the NHS bill of £1.7 billion for heart treatment. It works by reducing the effects of the potentially harmful hormones cortisol and aldosterone, which are produced excessively in those with heart disease.

I shall be asking my Doctor about the tablet on my next visit, perhaps if its prescribed I can cut down on my daily intake of nineteen tablets?



On Sunday 14th November, shipmates wives and families attended the Remembrance Sunday Parade in Bournemouth. Lil and I went down on the Saturday and stayed overnight with our Padre Ray Merrick.

Sunday morning we met up with S/m Bob & Pat Hobbs, their Daughter Emma, Kal, and baby. S/m Stuart Bundy & Yvonne in the Town Hall car park and went down to the Town memorial, it was raining slightly off and on. However when we found places at the memorial it was out with the umbrellas, it never stopped raining from then on. The parading services were drenched. The worse thing about this parade was the dress of the young girls and boys groups, they wore just shirts or a pullovers which were soaked through, we could see they were all shivering, no doubt some are now down with a cold, even in previous years when it has been icy cold and windy they have worn the same dress. It seemed to get worse when we attended our own memorial service, we were nearly washed out, the standard bearers looked like they were finding it difficult to hold up their soaking wet standards, they had become so heavy, ours being made of very

thick silk is heavy when its dry, I think Bob Hobbs was struggling with it now. The Deputy Mayor was in attendance along with our true friend Emily who once again deemed it an honour to lay the Associations wreath. After the wreathes were laid and service ended, the gathering, which was quite large considering the heavy rain quickly moved off. “Of course! as usual, on our way back to the car park it stopped raining”.

We offer our grateful thanks to all that attended our short service, to see so many gathered in the rain was very commendable, especially ship-mates and their families who every year travel from further afield, it would be nice to see shipmates living close to Bournemouth attend.

One person in the crowd was a ex Phoebe rating newly moved to Bournemouth, I gave him my card and invited him to join the Association, he may well do when he is more settled.

TS Phoebe:

Some information regarding the building of the new TS HQ was forthcoming on Sunday at the parade. The land in Kings Park designated for the building has now been allocated and will on December 1st be signed over to, (I think), the TS Phoebe Committee. The building will be a prefabricated type that is thought to take approx 4 months to build, although before any construction will take place the building that is on the plot at the moment will have to come down and the plot cleared. As I understand it the removal of the present building will be done by the TS Phoebe staff and cadets. I have not seen what that building looks like, but one person did say it will take some time to carry out the work and does not expect the new building to be ready for occupation until the summer, although another person said it would be nice to have the opening ceremony in May when we have our reunion, of course it all revolves around the weather situation and the quality of labour. I wondered what a prefabricated building would be like, at first I related to those mobile offices etc, but if I remember correctly. Aldi, Lidl, Macdonalds, KFC etc are all prefabricated buildings. So I wonder what will evolve, be nice to have a copy of the plan for the newsletter.

While we were at the Memorial Parade we invited Alderman Emily to be our reunion guest at dinner. To allay your worries, this gesture does not mean we are having a formal dinner on the Saturday night, far from it, it will be what we do normally. It will not be the first time Emily has been our guest, if you remember she was most informal the last time. Back in 2003.

The following item was an email message I had from a shipmate, it could happen to anyone at any shop etc that offers cash-back when you pay by credit/debit cards. I know many, especially the ladies check to see that all the items they bought are listed, but! how many of you actually check the last item, what the total deductions were. The cashier has to sign for all cash backs at Tesco, so probably the following would be a bit awkward to get away with, but! It could still be done. The email:-

“I bought a bunch of stuff, over £150, & I glanced at my receipt as the cashier was handing me the bags. I saw a cash-back of £40. I told her I didn't request a cash back & to delete it. She said I'd have to take the £40 because she couldn't delete it. I told Her to call a supervisor. Supervisor came & said I'd have to take it. I said NO! Taking the £40 would be a cash advance against my Credit card & I wasn't paying interest on a cash advance!!!! If they couldn't delete it then they would have to delete the whole order. So the supervisor had the cashier delete the whole order & re-scan everything! The second time I looked at the electronic pad before I signed & a cash-back of £20 popped up. At that point I told the cashier & she deleted it. The total came out right. The cashier agreed that the Electronic Pad must be defective.

Obviously the cashier knew the electronic pad was defective because she NEVER offered me the £40 at the beginning. Can you imagine how many people went through before me & at the end of her shift how much money she pocketed?

Just to alert everyone. My partner went to Milford , Sainsburys last week. She had her items rung up by the cashier. The cashier hurried her along and didn't give her a receipt. She asked the cashier for a receipt and the cashier was annoyed and gave it to her. She didn't look at her receipt until later that night. The receipt showed that she asked for £20 cash back. She did not ask for cash back, but to prove it now would be very difficult indeed”.

When I think of it I have had a couple of small outgoing amounts on my bank statements I could not recall, and I hardly ever check my card receipts so I could have been caught, I'll check them in future. Roy.

POW Singapore

My grandfather has been a civil engineer and in order to increase the family income applied to Gardinees in Hong-Kong for an appointment. It was a wonderful family life for years but at the start of the Second World War, they found that when Hong-Kong fell to the Japanese invasion they were rounded up and all the family ended up in separate prisoner of war camps, and did not know if any of the others had survived until the end. During that time my father was under very harsh conditions and in order to survive they asked the guards if one of the prisoners could go outside the grounds and collect some of the tomatoes from a plant that they had spotted growing where the sewage water flowed. Fortunately they were granted permission and came back with the fruit. Some had to be kept back so that they could grow some for their meagre prison diet. He said it literally helped them to survive. After the war their was a Russian artist who had a series of pen and ink sketches which he formatted into a book, and the front was a picture of the island of Hong-Kong with an impressed convex line of barbed wire running across the face. The pictures themselves showed the scant conditions of prison life and how the prisoners eventually adopted the native dress “thong” type as clothes turned to rags. A prison hospital was organised and operations were carried out under very primitive condition and anything of real use was scrounged from the cooks. They tried to live an orderly life to give themselves purpose and meaning. Although my Grandmother had great religious faith, when someone once remarked that perhaps it was that faith which had pulled her through the camp, she replied that it was more like sheer dedication and hard work to create something of order out of the chaos, despair and degradation that could so easily have evolved.

The family of 4 children and their parents all survived and after the war went to the far corners of the globe. My uncle had been in Singapore and had seen his family out of the last ship to Australia. He himself had stayed behind because he was in charge of a cold storage plant and never thought that the peninsula would fall to the Japs. He was rounded up and sent to a POW camp. Survival was grim and he hardly ever talked about his experiences. We were never allowed to leave anything on the plate as he once reminded us that he once had to have a sheet of newspaper over his eyes so he couldn't see what he was eating. He also mentioned that any belts the prisoners had were taken away so they couldn't hang themselves in the night. A lasting impression was that when the war was over he bought a small holding and wanted to grow things for the family so they would never be hungry. Neither would he ever buy anything foreign, but it had to be British.

The only way to deal with this slur was to laugh, and so a song was composed to the tune of 'Lili Marlene',
The 8th Army version went like this:

We are the D-Day Dodgers, out in Italy,
Always on the Vino, always on a spree,
8th Army skivers and their tanks,
We go to war, in ties and slacks,
We are the D-Day Dodgers, in sunny Italy.
We fought into Agira, a holiday with pay,
Jerry brought his bands out to cheer us on our way,
Showed us the sights and gave us tea,
We all sang songs, the beer was free,
We are the D-Day Dodgers, in sunny Italy.
The Moro and Ortona were taken in our stride,
We didn't really fight there, we went there for the ride,
Sleeping 'til noon and playing games,
We live in Rome with lots of dames,
We are the D-Day Dodgers, in sunny Italy.
On our way to Florence, we had a lovely time,
We drove a bus from Rimini, through the Gothic Line,
Then to Bologna we did go,
We all went swimming in the Po,
We are the D-Day Dodgers, in sunny Italy.
We hear the boys in France are going home on leave,
After six months service, such a shame they're not relieved.
We were told to carry on a few more years,
Because our wives don't shed no tears,
We are the D-Day Dodgers, in sunny Italy.
We are the D-Day Dodgers, way out in Italy.
We're always tight, we cannot fight.
What bloody use are we?