

*HMCS Phoebe*

*Association*

*Newsletter*

*February*

2014



Shipmate

Derek West

1930 - 2013

RIP

Well we are at last over the festive season, but Easter will soon be with us. So now I am looking forward to Shrove Tuesday. (Pancakes galore}). At the moment it is four days to Christmas day, I am wondering what my family will surprise me with this year. I asked Lil what she wanted for Christmas, she thought hard for several minutes then said she could not think of anything, as she had all she wanted; which was exactly what I said when she had asked me. I expect we all think that way as we get older. We have eleven Grandkids and twelve Greatgrandkids, a lot to cater for, but Lil finds it easier to give them vouchers, they can buy what they like then. I thought DVLA would give me a free tax disc for Christmas, but looking at the reminder I see its still £121 for six months. I suppose it could be worse. We thought we had won £20,000 on the lottery raffle, we even worked out what we would spend it on until we saw that we needed two numbers, and not just one. I did win on the Street Code Lottery a while ago, the £5 came in handy.

Do you? Like us, do most of your shopping at Tesco, and fill up with fuel at a Tesco station. Lil and I joined forces we have a joint members card, so if either of us uses the card the points add up a bit quicker, and that leads to Tesco vouchers being higher in value. We bought a new sofa from Tesco Direct, it had been reduced by £200, by using our vouchers, which Tesco doubled the price of, the sofa cost another £100 less. Next in line was a Samsung 43" Plasma TV. Was £669, reduced to £400 but with more vouchers we got it for £211, its a lovely TV, terrific pictures, and glorious colour.

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Down here in the Thames valley area we get little of the harsh winds and the torrential rain that you in the North often get, we do get strong winds at times, but not too often. The last time I remember a really bad wind hitting Didcot was years ago when we lived on a caravan site behind a big milk depot. It was a mini tornado. The spiraling wind actually came through the caravan site gate and through a line of Poplar trees, the trees began to gyrate as it passed along the line, it was such a awesome yet funny sight to see, then it came right onto the site, no caravans actually took off, but some roofs became a bit less water tight. Then the tornado entered the Dairy behind the site and masses of plastic milk crates, stacked high in the yard; were dragged into the air and went whirling round and round. It was a sight to see.

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We have got Beanie hats for sale with the ships crest embroidered on them. There are three with the Frigate crest and five with the Cruiser crest, they cost a little bit more than the last lot (4 Years ago they were £6 plus Postage)? These are £7.50 each. Inc P&P. As there are not a great number of hats could you phone first to make sure the one you want is available. 01235 211501.

**THIS IS THE LAST CALL TO BOOK IN FOR THE 2014 REUNION. APRIL 23rd IS THE CUT OFF DATE**

**OBITUARY'S** But first I have an apology to make. I made the gravest mistake of not reporting the passing of an old shipmate of mine, and of all you guys from the last 48/51 commission of the cruiser. It is very sad to tell of a shipmates passing, but even more so when one personally knew that shipmate. I am referring to S/m John (Pony) Moore. L/Sig. We often drank our Kai together at sea on watch on the bridge, we seemed to get the same night watch each time. One morning Pony was woken by his wife, but he did not feel very well, his wife told him to stay in bed and she would fetch him a cup of tea, a few minutes later, when she returned, she found Pony had passed away, he had had a heart attack. It was just a short time before his 90th birthday. I am sure all shipmates join me in offering our sincere sympathy and condolence to Johns wife and family, I am truly sorry it is a belated offering. Best wishes to all the family. John has found a safe and secure anchorage. Roy

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Does anyone recall a Chief Buffer of the Frigate named Stokes. I had a short phone message a few days ago from his wife; telling me that he had crossed the bar on December 6th, and asking if I would inform shipmates who knew him of this fact. This was all that I was told, but if any of you had his phone No or address, could you phone or write our sympathy and condolences to his wife and family. Roy.

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December 19th: This was the day that ten Association members attended the funeral of Shipmate Derek West at the Thanet Crematorium, Margate, Kent. Derek diagnosed with Lung Cancer and Two Brain Tumours died suddenly in Pilgrims Hospice Margate. The service was set for 11.20, at 11.00 the car parks were full and the long road leading from the gates to the chapel was completely lined with cars, I had to park alongside the gate meaning Lil and I had a very long walk up to the Chapel, and the hearse passed us before we got there, we had just enough time to join all the other ex service men lined up. The number of mourners was at least a hundred. There were sixteen Standards paraded, including ours, carried proudly by Don a friend of Derek, who Lil and I have met many times before. Unfortunately our bearer S/m Bob Hobbs had developed a bad cold and could not attend. Derek had been parading our Standard in the S East and at Dunkirk so the Standard was there already in Kent. It now rests with me. The service was conducted by a Lady Vicar, she spoke softly and although we were only feet away we did not hear what she said. The four main Standards, Ours, RBL, Ganges Ass'n and the RNA were paraded either side of the dais, the other fourteen standards were lined up two abreast down the centre aisle. Our RM shipmate John Barrett, a personal friend of Derek, spoke a few words nice and loud for all to hear. After the service everyone was invited back to the RBL Club in Minster, a favourite watering hole of Derek's. Lil and I was taken in hand by Don who could not do enough for us, bringing us cups of coffee and plates of food and staying with us all the time we were there. Derek had been given a grand send off, memorabilia of Derek, his medals etc will be placed in the clubs remembrance show case. Out thanks to our Association members S/m Roy Talbot Gwen & Son. S/m Bill & Jean Harrison. S/m George & Valerie Payne. S/m Geoff Fowler & S/m John Barrett, for their attendance on Derek.

Since having to restore my computer to Factory Settings I seem to have lost most of my Phoebe shipmates and associates proper email addresses, I have sent emails to everyone, but most have been returned, so if you did not receive a email from me in December or later, I apologise. Can I ask **everyone** who has a email address to send me an email so that I can get a list made up with addresses that my emails **will be delivered to**. Some are getting through, but most are not, please send a email to:

< **roy.pavely@virginmedia.com** > as soon as possible please.

*(Please note my email address has been changed to the above address).*

Those who wish to have the newsletter sent by email, would you please say so in your reply, thank you all. Roy.

This could well be the last page of this newsletter. I have run out of news, to add another four pages would mean copying off the inter-net. Its the 15th Jan today, another 16 days before we send this out, so a little time yet for something to crop up.

18th: Received a letter from Shipmate Bob Phillpott today. Very sad to know that his wife Jean is suffering very much having broken her spine in four places, she is almost confined to a recliner chair, she cannot even get into bed. This must be terrible for her and very painful. S/m Bob is also suffering, he has been diagnosed with a kidney cancer, at the moment he is not having treatment for it, he said, apparently the tumour had been there for years but never knew it! I am sure all shipmates will join me in wishing Bob and Jean a swift recovery to a future clean bill of health. Roy & Lil.

Associate Paul Davies has for some months been building a diorama of F42 & C43 The model ships are to scale and are very detailed indeed. Not being conversant with the Frigate I am not sure if it is the earlier type or the refitted later one. This one has a helicopter and a huge radar dish. The Cruiser has all its guns, Oerlikons, Bofors, & 5.25s. Because of the minute detailing they took Paul a lot longer than he anticipated. He still had his work job to do, and also looked after his mother who was none too well. The model is housed in a polystyrene crystal clear show case, I shall be bringing it to the reunion for all to see and for a decision at the AGM regarding its placement.

It does not feel right to have just 4 A5 pages for a newsletter so if I can find something on line I will include it to make it 8 pages. Roy.

While cruising near the coastline off Punta Arenas, Chile, the British sailing ship Johnson sighted what appeared to be a boat with sails floating in the wind. When British signals elicited no response, the craft was approached. The crew noticed that the ship's masts and sails were covered with some kind of green moss, and that the vessel seemed abandoned by its crew.

Upon boarding it, the skeleton of a man was discovered beneath the helm. The deck was decayed to such an extent, that it gave under the footsteps. Three more skeletons were found near a panel, ten were found in the crew's quarters, and six on the bridge. Upon the ravaged prow of the vessel, the words, Marlborough Glasgow, could still be discerned. The Marlborough left Littleton, N.Z. in January 1890 with a cargo of wool and frozen mutton, and a crew of 23 men under Captain Hird. In April 1890 an unsuccessful search for the vessel was made. Nothing was ever found of them until 1913.

The "Dundee Star", a Scottish bark, ( a ship with 3 or more masts) was abandoned by its crew in a gale off Midway Island, and drifted completely around the world in 4 years and finally piled up in 1891 on Midway Island. This was the very spot from which she started her phantom voyage.

Many of our Navy's colourful expressions originated as practical means of communicating vital information. One such expression is "show a leg". In the British Navy of King George III and earlier, many sailors' wives accompanied them on long voyages. This practice caused a multitude of problems, but some ingenious bosun solved one problem that tended to make reveille, (wake up time for civilians), a hazardous event: that of distinguishing which bunks held males and which held females. To avoid dragging the wrong "mates" out of the rack, the bosun asked all to "show a leg". If the leg shown was adorned with silk, the owner was allowed to continue sleeping. If the leg was hairy and tattooed, the owner was forced to "turn-to". In today's Navy it would be classed as abusive or sexist

In the days of sail, dead mariners were believed to be reincarnated in the bodies of petrels and seagulls. If one of these birds appeared over a ship in midocean, it was a sign of storms to come. The huge albatross of the southern seas held the most awe. To see one meant that a storm was a certainty. To kill one brought an eternity of bad luck. In 1959 a cargo ship named Calpean Star had to carry an albatross on its way from the Antarctic to a zoo in Germany. When the ship docked at Liverpool with engine trouble, the crew walked off, claiming that the albatross was responsible for the misfortunes on the voyage. Only after the albatross died in its cage a day later was the Captain able to find another crew to take the ship out of port.

Long ago the least-valued member of the crew was sometimes sacrificed in the event of bad weather. This crewmember was often the poor cook. On the opposite end of this line of thinking, it was believed that a storm could be calmed by a woman exposing her breasts. This is why ship's figureheads are often of naked women.

***Secretary & Treasurer To All Shipmates and Associates:***

*What we have to say now we have never looked forward to saying, but Lilian is 82 this year and I am 83, we have been your treasurer and secretary for 13 years and 12 years respectively. It is something we had never done before, never even contemplating it. At first we had to rely on Vic Chanter for instructions, I was already doing the newsletter, although it was just one or two pages, but when I got into the swing of it I we had as many as 16 pages monthly, and Lil, who is good at figures, soon had the accounts sorted to how she wanted them doing. Over the years Lil has done a good job, we were never without funds, and subs were kept to a minimum for as long as possible, she even set up a welfare fund and then the reunion savings club, which proved to be, for some of us, a blessing? In my capacity as secretary the newsletters have somewhat deminished. We managed to get a healthy sum from the lottery in 2003, and again in 2011, hopefully some one will successfully apply again in five years time! Last year, with the consent of the committee; we passed the organising of the reunions to our daughter Sharon, most of you know her for being a bit positive? we are sure she will be a success at organising hotels etc.*

*A few years ago Neil Avery organised our Phoebe web site, when he left to live in Cyprus I took on the job of web master, I did not have a clue of what had to be done, however I got stuck in and although I had trouble with the 1&1.com web site provider ? once I had changed to one.com, I found it much easier to organise the pages, I was pleased to see we had over 7000 hits and even had a couple of members join via the web site. Now we come to the crux of this note. Both Lil and I have disabilities, Lil a bit worse than me, neither of us are totally incapable, but we are feeling our age and think it is time for us to call it a day and retire. We have worked hard at making both offices an easy to work and rewarding task, the person or persons who take over will not find anything too difficult, there is nothing to buy or get for the association to carry on, its all here, laser colour printer, photo copier, cds, usb memory stick. Members Addresses, email and snail mail, you name it, I think we will have it?? Even a book folding and stapling machine.*

*We have no intention of saying 'right that's it' and standing down at this coming AGM, we have decided to go on to the 2015 AGM, by then we hope someone will have come forward and accepted the positions and learnt enough to take over. Treasurers main task is the subscriptions and the reunion payments, and of course settling bills, all big payments that are not part and parcel of the association have to be cleared with the committee, a phone call is sufficient to obtain a majority verdict. There is hardly any paperwork for the secretary to answer to. Most things can be done via the computer, email and phone. The newsletter is subject to whatever one wants to include in it.*

*The newsletter is placed on the web site via the computer, all instructions of how to work the web site are printed, and the web provider has a free chat page, you type a question and a answer comes back within a minute. Please think it over.*

*Secretary must be a full member; Treasurer can be either.*

*We much regret our decision; but it had to happen sometime.*

*We thank you all - Roy & Lil.*

*IN a earlier page I told you how we got a Sofa and a big Plasma TV at very low prices, well our luck must be in this year, about time too. I received a letter and certificate from a company I have been buying from on a regular basis since 1988, I have not spent a great deal of money with them, but because of the time I have been a member I am classed as a VIP Gold rated customer, and I have been awarded a Giant All singing and dancing top of the range Samsung TV; worth over £1000? I can expect it to be delivered in February, I'll get an email soon asking for the date & time I would like it to be delivered. I think we will pick out which is the best TV to keep and flog the other one.*

A man buys a pet parrot and brings him home. But the parrot starts insulting him and gets really nasty, so the man picks up the parrot and tosses him into the freezer to teach him a lesson. He hears the bird squawking for a few minutes, but all of a sudden the parrot is quiet. The man opens the freezer door, the parrot walks out, looks up at him and says, "I apologize for offending you, and I humbly ask your forgiveness."

The man, pleased with the outcome says, "Well, thank you. I forgive you." The parrot then says, "If you don't mind my asking, what did the chicken do?"

#### A Sailors Lament

There's mismusters, slop chits, tot time and pay.  
 There's rising and shining and hitting the hay.  
 There's thickers and strongers and neaters as well.  
 There's DQ's and chokey and the tiller flat cell.  
 There's aft and there's for'ard, abeam and abaft.  
 To civvies this cackle seems awfully daft  
 But to us in the Andrew it doesn't seem strange  
 Like the draft chits the Jossman can always arrange  
 We're always being seen off and getting green rubs  
 And chasing up rubbers and looking for subs  
 And going ashore like a great herd of cattle  
 And getting filled in and put in the rattle  
 There's runs out to Honkers for Jack its just fine  
 There's times when we say "O roll on my nine"  
 And when nine comes and we're out on the dole  
 In old civvy street, where we don't know a soul  
 We think of the good times and wish we were back  
 In bells, silk and lanyard... A real tiddy Jack!

**The Amber Room** This was a chamber in U.S.S.R.'s Catherine Palace, near St. Petersburg. The walls were covered in panelling made of amber backed in gold. Stolen by the Nazis during the war, and last seen in a art exhibition in Germany in 1945. After that, they disappeared. A few of the panels have since been found, but most have never been found.

A team claims to have found pieces of the Amber Room. They say they've confirmed that the gold lies somewhere beneath the surface of the East German mountainside, probably about 60 feet down. They estimate a find of about 2 tons of gold, and believe this discovery includes the Amber Room. They base this belief on the idea that if there's that much gold down there, it must include the gold from the Amber Room,. But the dig has so far been unsuccessful and the hunters can't seem to find the cavern. As of late February 2008, they have retained the services of a geophysicist to help them figure out exactly where to dig.

Even with the help of a geophysicist, the team doesn't expect to get into the chamber any time soon. They believe the stash might be booby-trapped, and they want explosives engineers to check out the situation before they dig any further. In the midst of all this treasure hunting, the question arises: If they find Nazi gold, do they get to keep it? When wartime loot is recovered, to whom do the spoils go? Countries have been returning stolen gold (or its monetary equivalent) to the individuals and nations from whom it was taken. This effort was meager at first, but it picked up toward the end of the twentieth century when the world took a renewed interest in restitution. Forty-two countries showed up at the London Conference on Nazi Gold in 1997 to form a joint effort to uncover stolen gold and return it to its rightful owners. Ten countries still lay claim to more than \$60 million ( $\$1.68 = \pounds 1$ ) in lost gold (about 5.5 metric tons.. Gold at to-days price approx 1 oz =  $\pounds 40$  ). At the conference, many of those countries agreed to relinquish their claims on some of this gold and contribute it instead to various humanitarian groups, especially those benefiting Holocaust survivors, from whom the Nazi regime appropriated bank accounts, gold and everything else of value. It's fairly clear, at least, where the Amber Room gold will end up if it's ever found?

The Geneva Conventions outlaws the wartime looting or destruction of cultural artifacts and requires that anything of cultural significance be returned after the war.

So it's likely the Amber Room would be returned to Russia. What gold cannot be returned should be used by bona fide help agencies in poor countries for the sole use of helping the people, and not handed to the governments.

With the onslaught of the Russian Revolution, the existence of a royal family was intolerable to the Bolsheviks. In 1918, they massacred Czar Nicholas II, his wife, son and four daughters, to ensure no legitimate heir could later resurface and rally the public for support. Soon, rumours floated around that certain members of the royal family had escaped and survived. As expected, claimants came out of the woodwork. "Anna Anderson" was the most famous. In 1920, Anderson was admitted to a hospital after attempting suicide and confessed that she was Princess Anastasia, the youngest daughter of the royal family. She stood out from other claimants because she held a certain resemblance to and surprising knowledge of the Russian family and life at court. A few relatives and acquaintances who'd known Anastasia believed Anderson, most didn't. By 1927, a former roommate of Anderson claimed her name was Franziska Schanzkowska, not Anna, and certainly not Anastasia. This didn't stop Anderson from indulging in celebrity and attempting to cash in on a royal inheritance. She ultimately lost her case in the legal proceedings that dragged on for decades, but she stuck to her story until her death in 1984. Years later, upon the discovery of what proved to be the remains of the royal family, DNA tests confirmed her to be a fake. In 2009, experts were able to finally confirm that all the remains had been found and that no family member escaped the execution in 1918.