

H M S Phoebe

Association

June 2012

Newsletter



***The New Rig-out for "UP SPIRITS"
(Anyone got a spare Phoebe cap tally)?***

Hello everyone, here we are again after another really good reunion, whether there were any complaints I do not know, but none were made known to me. The hotel was perfect again, although there had been a change in managership and Tim had taken over. However whatever I asked to be done, got done, just a little hic-cup in the dining room seating arrangements but everyone got seated ok.

72 had booked in for the reunion and we had just three guests to dinner on Saturday, just an informal occasion no speeches etc. After each dinner we were entertained by a different person each night and they were all rather good at playing tunes from the 60s&70s. We even had a sing-a-long? Friday night as usual was spent swinging the lamp, it was good to meet up with the regulars again and to meet new faces. One lady in a wheelchair even managed a dance! with the help of several hands??

Unfortunately we had a couple of late cancellations, Shipmate Ian & Janet Gough could not come, Janet was not up to it, and also John & Nancy Fuller had to pull out two days before the start, Nancy had had an accident and hurt her back and stomach, we wish both ladies a quick recovery and hope to see them next year.

In my last newsletter I told you that the lottery grant "Awards for All" I had applied for was turned down, well that was not the end of it? Two or three weeks later I got a phone call asking if we still wanted the grant, jumping in with both feet I said Yes!, and was told that the application was being put forward for a re-assessment, this was all happening around the middle of April. Then a large envelope from the Lottery with more forms to fill in because some things were wrong on the earlier app'.

Also we only had one signatory for signing cheque's and we needed two, a hurried consultation with Shipmate Bob Hobbs got that sorted, we just had to get the forms to him and returned which took four days, we duly sent them off only to have them returned I had to correct a wrong date and also a box was not checked properly. We had been given the cut off date of May 2nd, everything had to be completed by then and it was Friday April 27th now. The forms were sent post haste and recorded delivery. Feeling very apprehensive we waited for the outcome. On May 2nd a letter to say we had been successful and a cheque for £9745.00 would be paid into the account by May 4th, and it was.

£10,000 is the maximum grant one can have. When I first applied I had to state what the grant would be used for, I put Reunion, Queens Diamond Jubilee and the coach trip to Portsmouth also a couple of other minor things, the main one being £9000 towards the reunion, little did we realise that Portsmouth would cost so much we had to incorporate it into the Jubilee celebration. When Monday morning came round and hotel bills were settled we said our goodbyes to everyone and wended our way home in the rain. The weekend had been great, one of the best we had had, even the weather was kind to us, sunny every day, and to cap it all everyone who attended will have most of their hotel payments either returned or saved.

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Memorial: I have at last been given a price for the stone to be refurbished and a new larger plaque installed, but the cost is out of the question, the plaque alone would have cost over £1700, labour was £700. Total estimated £2800 inc VAT. There was no way we would pay this much. Shipmate Ernie Clews

Has a retired stone mason friend who he reckons will refurbish the stone in situ, the plaque just needs a good clean and the wording needs a touch up with black paint. The two small crests are beyond recall, and perhaps as they seem to be stuck on? it may be possible to remove them, the plaque is stainless steel. I am in the process of getting a small 4" x 3" stainless steel plate with the cruiser crest engraved on it, I will try for a quote on one just engraved and one stove enamelled. It will be nowhere near what we were quoted previously.

The new TS HQ was visited by shipmates where we had tea coffee and cakes, (well I did)? Although not yet completed what has been done looks very nice and so different to when Lil and I visited it a few months ago, now it is painted and some pictures and things hung, it tends to make it look bigger, the drill hall is massive. I understand the lift for disabled visitors will soon be put in, just a bit more money required. Anyone feel like coughing up a few thousand would be appreciated?

We had the usual two Raffles and a reduced price sale of slops, which brought in over £720.

Well done everyone

Next Year the reunion will be held at the Nelson Hotel Gt Yarmouth there are 50 assorted rooms, I have yet to find out how many double, twin or single there are. The first week end in May is the date, this includes the bank holiday, so don't stay just two nights, stay for three? The cost for three nights is £139 pp and as usual it is half board with three nights entertainment, I will find out what the cost is for two nights, it will be on the booking form that I hope to send out in August.



Lil sent a Diamond Jubilee congratulatory card to the Queen on behalf of the Association.

It was a card specially made by Lil using her stitchcraft skills.

The top picture is of the inside centre pages.

The one on the left is the cover picture.

If we get a reply I will copy it into the August newsletter

*This is not the only Diamond celebration of 2012.
George & Josie White. Lil and myself
celebrate 60 years of marriage in August & October respectively.*

Modern-day treasure hunters say they've found a sunken ship off the coast of Cape Cod,, holding one of the biggest fortunes ever discovered in the ocean depths.

"There's 71 tons of platinum, some gold ingots and also some uncut industrial diamonds, on the SS Port Nicholson," said Capt. Gary Esper. He's one member of the team hoping to bring the goods to the surface. "I like to call us explorers rather than treasure hunters because treasure hunters have a bad name these days so we just went out there looking for the ship," said Esper. It was no easy task for Sub Sea Research, co-owned by Greg Brooks, based out of Portland, Maine.

"It was extremely difficult. We spend almost three months looking for it," said Brooks. "A few days before I almost pulled the plug." The discovery was made in 2008, but the crew kept quiet while resources and initial legal rights were secured.

The S.S. Port Nicholson was torpedoed by a German U-boat in 1942 during World War II. According to Esper, research shows the vessel drifted before finally sinking, plunging 700 feet into the depths of Georges Bank, a popular fishing channel littered with shipwrecks and known for strong currents and turbulent weather.

The British merchant vessel's cargo, a payment of precious metals from Russia to the United States, is estimated to be worth \$3 billion, but bringing the find to the surface won't be easy.

"Difficult. Very difficult. The pressure is immense down there. It is diveable, but it's a very scary dive," said Esper. Instead, the team will use a remotely operated vehicle, a submersible robot with a claw, to grab its find and bring it up into the light. The search has already cost millions of dollars. Wealthy investors are hoping for a big payday, but there is no guarantee.

Maritime law is complicated. Britain has yet to decide whether or not to file a claim on the cargo, waiting for the salvage operation to begin, and with so much money at stake legal experts expect a battle likely involving multiple parties. "When you talk about as many zeroes as there are in a billion-dollar claim, that is going to invite all sorts of people to come in out of the woodwork," said David Farrell, a Cape Cod-based lawyer who specializes in maritime law. "There is a concept of 'finder's keepers' in maritime law, but that really applies to ships of antiquity and wrecks that are in the Mediterranean maybe going back to Venetian days where it's impossible to trace ownership. But here with a wreck that's only 70 years old, certainly there's going to be owners and underwriters and state government, federal government, and foreign governments that are going to be very involved in getting a piece of those zeros." The finders in this case want to be the keepers. Ultimately, who owns what could be the richest treasure find in history will likely be decided by a federal judge.

Last Sunday, May 27th Shipmate Jim and Violet Hutchison celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary, yes 70 years! Unfortunately Violet has spent the last few years in a residential home, but they still had their party, and the staff produced a magnificent cake for them. Jim is well into his nineties now, but that does not stop him from doing things we younger ones would think twice about doing. For instance Jim still gives interviews on his naval career as a diver, his latest will be aboard HMS Belfast on Sunday where he has been invited to speak to the BBC team filming the Queens trip down the Thames, I expect some of you will be watching it on TV. Also Jim was asked to write about his time aboard in 1942, it was for the Post Office First Day Issues, a collectors item, which will be about HMS Phoebe, he also had to sign a lot of the envelopes which will be on sale soon at about £29 each. Lil has ordered two, one for herself and one for the Association Album. Jim actually got paid for each signature he signed and has very graciously had the cheque made payable to our funds. Thank you Jim it was very thoughtful of you and most welcome.

Does anyone recall a shipmate named George Till, he was an A/B aboard from 1941 to 1946 and was one of the 'tankies'. Sometime while aboard he was awarded the DSM and also Mentioned in Dispatches twice. George is now deceased, his son would like to know why he got the awards, George would not tell his family about his service or how he merited the awards, it would be nice to know, not only for his family but for us too, it would look good with our memorabilia. Phone me: 01235 211501.

If anyone wants an up to date members list would you please get in touch with me or Lil. I am not about to print off loads of them, but will print them to order, there is I am afraid a small charge, the cost of printing and postage nowadays makes free things something in the past, however its only 50p and that can be included in with your annual subscription, its the easier that way.

S/m Bob Phillpott left the reunion early on Sunday as he had to report to the hospital on the Monday morning. Bob has been having a lot of trouble with his legs and was hoping something could be done to alleviate the pain, but after the consultation it was decided that nothing more could be done and he would "have to live with it"? Very sorry to hear that Bob, we feel for you and hope that it does not get any worse. That goes for anyone who has been under the weather lately, we hope you all get better and start living again.