

H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

AUGUST, 2017

Nº 9



OUR SWORDS WE BARE
OUR SPIRITS DARE

CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION IS ROBIN SMITH

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CONTENTS

Andy's Musings	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Navy News	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Letters to The Editor	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Jottings of a Very Ordinary Seaman	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Tankey's Tales	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
A Pierhead Jump	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
The Early Years Part 1	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Bring Back Navy Days	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
October in Gillingham	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Photo Album	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Scran Bag	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Crossed the Bar	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
People Searching for People	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Reunion	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
List of people who receive the magazine	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Membership application	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>
Archive	<u>Click Here to Go There</u>



Superb - Defending Britain Since 1710

ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

A summer greeting Shipmates,
After countless years have moved aside a scruffy bag, about two fist sizes, when searching for some other obscure item in my stuff. I resolved last week to open a bag, dhobi contents and iron, then pin to a board, in an orderly manner. The board is yet to be organised, that doesn't mean I cannot share the result; see enclosed pic.,



I make 48 names - 3 H.M.S.. These names all common on the periphery of the floating navy then!

What a time to be a lower-decker, what a time to be a young officer, with prospects of destroyers available to only 2-2½-rings..

Now, senior 4-ring captains following years of ultra safe ticket punching may get a sniff of a solitary frigate.

The question comes up these days: what are you going to do with all that stuff? Have divested myself of some largish cherished items of late and know circumstances are against one when grandkids are daughters, and grandson who has never had a gram of dirt under a toe nail, never mind a finger nail, his interests so high blown I struggle to keep a scratch on his

surface, a maths grad who took to law!!

Commercial barristers have no interest in the beauty of the lens in copper and brass mast head light, or a binnacle from a distant water trawler - but no, I am not despondent, they teach me stuff that has been a mystery these eighty-sixish years, and my cup runneth over.



I take more care of a glass of full-bodied red.

Now, if I wish to draw a line under that bit of domestic gossip, my straight edge is a beautiful Perspex graduated firing bar from an early asdic set; who will ever know its origin? Perhaps, when dug up from a land fill site in 200 years, by a chap in need of a haircut and shave, he will be certain it is an ancient druidic wand for assisting maidens to get a bun in the oven.

Have put in another pic. (left) of nautical stuff lurking in a corner, rarely exposed to daylight. The gyro repeater I liberated from the



after conning position on the frigate *Rothesay*, last of the 4.5 turreted class when in breakers' yard at Santander (Spain).

The nice column in copper/brass with a pair of port hand lens comes from a reefer *Montego Bay*, registered in Panama, the STBD set I used as trade goods. Can anyone suggest a re-use for that port hand set. Barbers had illuminated poles outside their establishments; what retail emporium could use a nice bright pair of red lights outside their shops?

R.N. - P.R. dept. had their valves wide open this week, sailing from Rosyth the super carrier has justified their bloated budget, all papers report its aircraft complement is 24 jump jets (gross untruth). Not one is available at present, plus the R.A.F. are already lobbying to get that proposed compliment reduced in favour of 'conventional' models, which they need to fulfil their mythical remit.

Reports that all available Russian intelligent assets are on scene for the sailing stretches it a bit: if they want to know where it is, just follow the diesel tanker: real super tankers are nuclear. To catch the south Atlantic 'U' boats in WW2 the tankers were sought, then, a needle in a hay stack affair. Today sophisticated satellites can isolate a turd in countless acres of plastic trash that clog the southern ocean, and tell whether it's Anglo-Saxon or Cossack.

A nice selection of pink plastic helmets adorn bodies on the upper deck - health and safety exec. pollute all areas. I feel cash on the super carrier with no planes would be better spent on sets of pink water wings; in case vessel ever gets in harm's way.

In my last letter I mentioned the splendid American-class assault carrier. The second on that class has just been launched by Ingall's Corp., 13 weeks ahead of schedule! Makes build of Rosyth super carrier - 10 years - look a tiny bit sick.

Also spoke about N.A.T.O, Frau Merkel's statement that she cannot rely on the U.K. or the U.S. as defence allies was a slap in the face. 23 of 28 N.A.T.O members do not meet their 2% of G.D.P. agreement spend for mutual defence. Germany spent 1.18%, that's \$28 billion short of its 2%, and the largest short fall of all the 23 members! A learned scholar worked out, if President Trump presents a bill to N.A.T.O. it would be for \$189 billion for last year alone - enough to fund a 32% rise for the U.S. dept. of defence. It seems as certain as dawn is breaking we will wish we were antied up when Vladimir decides he wants the Baltic states back. Frau Merkel dismissed the U.K. as an irrelevance - a much used phrase these days. Proof is not hard to come by. New Zealand's 100 years anniversary fleet review, - 23 nations sent a vessel. The U.K.? Nil! The U.K. was fundamental in creation of both those navies.

My eldest brother, Dave, ex. *St. George I.O.M. Anson* - British Pacific fleet - one time cox'n of *Pelican*, elicited my opinion on who was at fault in the collision between the U.S.S. *Fitzgerald* and the container ship *ACX Crystal*. Every newspaper carried pics. of the result (see below).



We thought U.S.N. appeared to be at fault, conclusion is based on verse drummed in during training. 'If starboard red appear, it is your duty to keep clear'. Any comments that may clear it up for us?

LOST AT SEA

Seven American sailors died after their 8,315 ton destroyer collided before dawn with a container ship four times its size off the coast of Japan.



The USS Fitzgerald was back at its port in Yokosuka Naval Base south of Tokyo yesterday evening after its collision with a Philippine-flagged container 56 nautical



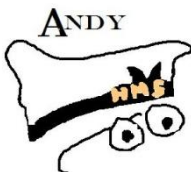
miles south-west of Yokosuka.

The Japanese coast guard received an emergency call from the container ship, the ACX Crystal, at around 2.20 am local time. The injured included the captain, Commander Bryce Benson, who suffered a head injury.



My swing round the buoy has run amok, but I bask in the knowledge of how liberal and forgiving you all are.

Note the heading date, Hurrah for the Red, White and Blue.
Tatty bye, watch the sun burn



NAVY NEWS

QUEEN ELIZABETH GOES TO SEA

It was a grey day in the North Sea - as *HMS Sutherland* has found escorting *HMS Queen Elizabeth* as the carrier puts her foot down and begins to test her engines (nothing too strenuous so far, a pleasant 16kts).



This rather grainy shot was taken from the frigate's bridge; she's just dashed across the Atlantic from Iceland to act as the future flagship's chaperone during the first few days of sea trials. At the moment, both *QE* and *Sutherland* have their AIS tracking switched on.





Brilliant work by Tug Masters



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Shipmate Robin Smith

I well remember the "Man Overboard" incident recounted by *Clive Goddley* in last month's edition of the magazine.

The man in question was an electrical rating and I had been helping him to pack his kit as he was due for *Compassionate Leave* on our return to Chatham.



SCRAN BAG (FREE ADVERTISING)

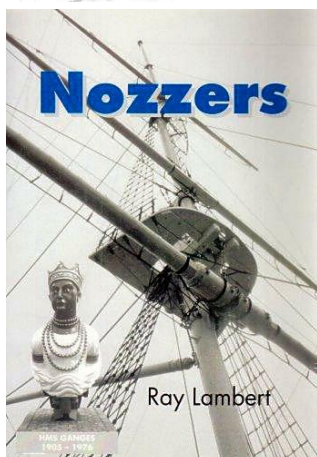
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If you have something to say about this section or advertise an article please email Brian at hmssuperb2u@sfr.fr

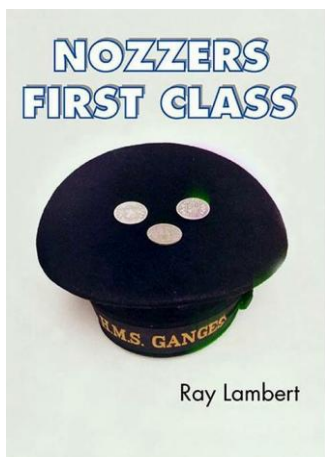
Ray Lambert



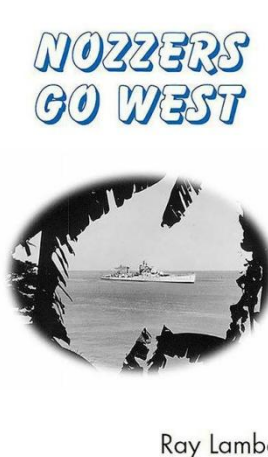
Has some of his books for sale which may remind you of how it was when we had wooden ships and iron men (well almost!)



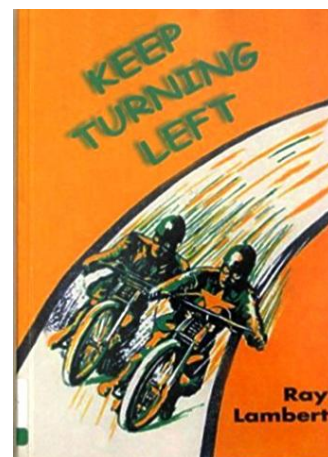
Ray Lambert



Ray Lambert



Ray Lambert



Ray Lambert

Follow the author when he was a handsome young man in Ganges and as he joins HMS Superb at Chatham. Go with him as he begins the "Luxury Cruise" of 1954-55. Join him from Punta Arenas to Vancouver and much in between. Learn of Guantanamo Bay and the Falklands before they became headline news.

Ray also knows his speedway onions - having reported on Canterbury and Crayford speedway clubs in the 1970s - and isn't afraid to ride his hobbyhorses in some style.

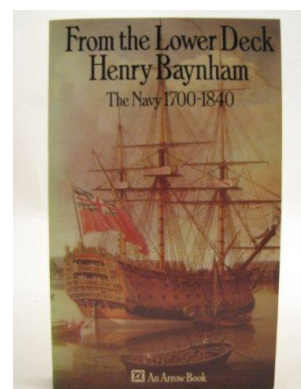
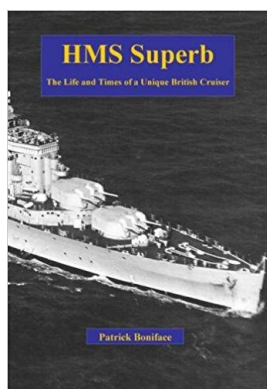
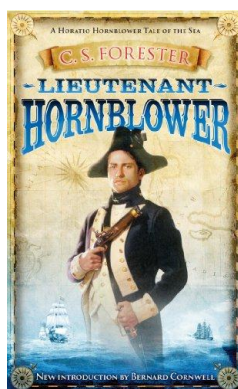
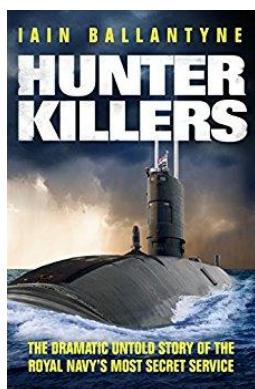
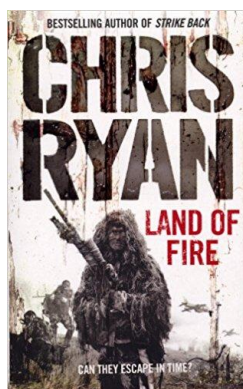
Each book costs £7.95 including UK postage. For more information contact Ray by email

Click [here to contact Ray](#) by email



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YOU WILL FIND MENTION OF HMS SUPERB IN ALL OF THESE BOOKS



LAND OF FIRE - author Chris Ryan - The submarine *HMS Superb* is mentioned from Chapter 12 (page 121 in the paperback version) when it was involved in the fictional landing of an SAS squad on Tierra del Fuego circa 2002. **Fiction.**

HUNTER KILLERS - author Iain Ballantyne - follows the careers of four daring British submarine captains who risked their lives to keep the rest of us safe, their exploits consigned to the shadows until now. Their experiences encompass the span of the Cold War, from voyages in WW2-era submarines under Arctic ice to nuclear-powered espionage missions in Soviet-dominated seas.

There are dangerous encounters with Russian spy ships in UK waters and finally, as the communist facade begins to crack, they hold the line against the Kremlin's oceanic might, playing a leading role in bringing down the Berlin Wall. It is the first time they have spoken out about their covert lives in the submarine service.

This is the dramatic untold story of Britain's most-secret service. Chapter 50 follows *HMS Superb*. **Non Fiction**

LIEUTENANT HORNBLOWER - author C.S. Forrester - In July of 1796 during the Napoleonic Wars when Hornblower's best friend Bush received his commission as lieutenant while serving on *HMS Superb*, and thus took the first significant step in his career as a naval officer. Bush recalls that he relied more on "seamanship and not navigation" to pass the requisite examination. **Fiction.**

HMS SUPERB - author Patrick Boniface - An account of one voyage of the cruiser between 1954 - 55. Presented as a ship's log with historical content. **Non Fiction.**

FROM THE LOWER DECK - author Henry Baynham. An Arrow book ISBN 009 9065401. A picture of life in the Royal Navy between 1780 & 1840 as described by common sailors at the time. Mention of *HMS Superb* 74 is on Page 149 of the paperback version by George Watson. **Non Fiction**



JOTTINGS OF A VERY ORDINARY SEAMAN

By Ray Lambert

By this time we were well into the second class course and so far I hadn't found anything to test me, in fact it was a bit of a doddle and my main thoughts were on the eighteen months I was safe in barracks while the course lasted.

But things have a nasty habit of turning round and biting you when one gets too complacent and, eventually we found ourselves in the workshop - a completely different animal! A fish out of water; I was well out of my comfort zone. How parts of the big guns worked and why, was common sense and someone explained it to us anyway. The electrical system and the hydraulics was also straight forward but the workshop was something else.

It required the aptitude of a mechanic or engineer, neither of which I had any interest in whatsoever. Why I had insisted upon a QA's course in the first place God knows; he must have because I didn't.

Then, one day out of the blue, someone sought me out to tell me I had to go before the Training Officer to be rated AB. Next morning I duly presented myself in front of this arrogant buffoon in the Barrack Guard office. 'Why do you think I should grant your request for promotion' he almost sneered. It wasn't my request, I didn't know anything about it until the day before, so I told him what I was thinking (not much then) and replied 'Well it's the date for me to be made up sir.' At that, he exploded and screamed (why do they always do that) 'What kind of answer is that? Stand over. Come back next week with something more intelligent!'



*"I've had a wonderful day . . .
never felt nastier!"*

I told the boys in the workshop what had happened and they filled me up with loads of sensible replies, even the instructors chipped in. The following week I was back and the whole episode went....'To be rated Able Seaman sir'..... 'Granted'. 'Granted. About turn march away!'

One more episode should see the end of this rubbish, then we can move onto something of interest.



Tankey's Tales

By Brian Keeler

Having spent four and a half years in the Hornchurch Unit No: 184 (T.S. Hurricane) of the Sea Cadet Corps, I had spent quite a few trips to our local Navy Day at Chatham, plus various spells aboard warships, or stone frigates, whilst learning various subjects and helping to train Boy Cadets when they were started.



HMS Victoria, Portsmouth

When March the 29th 1954 arrived, I presented myself as requested for National Service at Victoria Barracks at Portsmouth for initial training and kitting out. This barracks had been built in Napoleonic times for the army, who then moved out and the navy it took over, in a life expired condition, to train National Servicemen.

My time in the Sea Cadets had prepared me for the initial training, which a mixture of Petty

Officers and Chiefs had a short time to knock us into shape for our two years. The barracks was

notable for having beds and lockers which were badly knocked about, and bathrooms with plumbing problems, usually causing flooding to occur when you tried to use them.

During the time we spent there, friendships were made and I found that my oppo. Ken Taylor, plus Mike Hufton and Johnny Lewis, managed a few runs ashore, but there was a name which came to be heard on many occasions. The Tannoy would very often crackle and an announcement: "Ordinary Seaman Cashman report to the Regulating Office", which could vary with the Divisional Office, Stores or any other mysterious area of the barracks.



Practising slinging hammocks

It seemed as if this guy either had bad hearing or chose not to respond, as repeat messages would ring out "Ordinary Seaman Cashman report at the double" to whichever area requested his pleasure.

Strangely, we never came across this character who seemed to be sought by many persons there in command, but when we transferred on 8th April to Portland, to join the two old fleet carriers,

H.M.S. Indefatigable and *H.M.S. Implacable*, which were now the Training Squadron, who should appear in our mess deck, but one Ordinary Seaman Cashman.

At last we were to meet and greet the most sought after person in Victoria Barracks and as we were to shortly find out, his name became a legend on the good ship *Implacable*.

We discovered he was about ten years older than us (we were all around 18) as he had been



trying to avoid National Service, as he quite a good job with a newspaper in Reading and had almost managed to accomplish his dream, when he was picked up at the latest age for entry. He was incredibly well informed, no doubt due to his job as a senior reporter on the newspaper, and we discovered he was a devout Catholic.

When he finally dropped out of his hammock, he would drop to his knees on the deck and say prayers for some time, a routine which he also carried out at night before clambering into it. We were to discover that, once again, his name would be heard being required to report somewhere, which inevitably would become more urgent

and sometimes discovered why he had not been fell in with the rest of us.

One of the favourite pastimes on board, used to be an early morning sweep of the Flight Deck, which I think was often futile, as any breeze would have carried out the task. As had been the case at barracks, was repeated on *Implacable* as the Tannoy howled for Cashman, who would very often saunter up to the Chief or Petty Officer in charge to report why he had not been in attendance earlier.

Very often his excuse would be that he was praying, which he felt was more important than sweeping the Flight Deck! This was received by various incredulous personages, who could not quite understand why this very polite person had such an excuse. He would very often argue his case with such clever wording that everyone was to get the idea that national Service was something he felt unimportant. He held down a very important job on his newspaper and felt that his ability in an office type environment would be much better suited to him rather than sweeping up and various other menial tasks, carried out by other trainee Seamen!

Very often the Chiefs and P.Os were dumbfounded by his arguments and, a short time after, he was transferred to the Supplies and Secretariat Division where he exchanged his Square Rig uniform for a Fore and Aft variety.



We then discovered he had another particular talent, as he was able to play most brass instruments and he received yet another uniform, as a Royal Marine, who were keen to

have him in Ship's band.

Gradually he seemed to disappear from our area of operations, unless we saw him going about the ship in one of his other uniforms, depending on which role he was playing. I must admit that after we left *Implacable*, we lost contact with him.

The other character was Mike Hufton, who found the various requirements quite difficult as we discovered that he had received a private school education and had led quite a sheltered life with his parents. His father had a business in Solihull, which manufactured real Needle and Pins (not those sung about by the Searchers in 1964).

It was useful how my time in the Sea Cadets had meant that I found out how you dhobi your gear, iron the same, buff your boots, tie a cap tally etc., which information was much sought after by the other recruits, especially Mike.

When we had our first kit inspection at the barracks most of us had to hunt down cardboard, cut to the size of the Seamanship Manual, and this meant Stores there were very often out of stock, due to the demand, so local supermarkets often supplied the need.

It had been noticed that Mike did not seem to be making the efforts to obtain cardboard and we warned him of the possible consequences if he didn't have his kit laid out on the day. However, before the day he received a big parcel and everyone was eager to know what was in it, which seemed to cause Mike some embarrassment, as when he opened it we saw a large quantity of machine cut cardboard, all the size of the Seamanship Manual. I must say that, after sorting out his requirements, he passed on the remainder to others who still needed it.

On 09.06.1954 the Training Squad hoisted anchors and moved off to drop anchor again off Torquay. Food on board the *Implacable* was pretty disgusting and, if you fancied it, the portions were rather small and when young Michael went ashore he came back struggling with a large suitcase which, of course, caused his nosey messmates to ask what was inside.

Blushing with embarrassment he opened it up to show vast quantities of cake, sausage rolls etc., which he kindly shared with his messmates until it was all gone. We anchored off Greenock on 11th June and young Michael went off ashore with the empty suitcase and was seen getting into a chauffeur driven Rolls Royce, which drove off. When he returned on board another suitcase came with him, revealing further food supplies which his Mum and Dad had brought in the Roller!

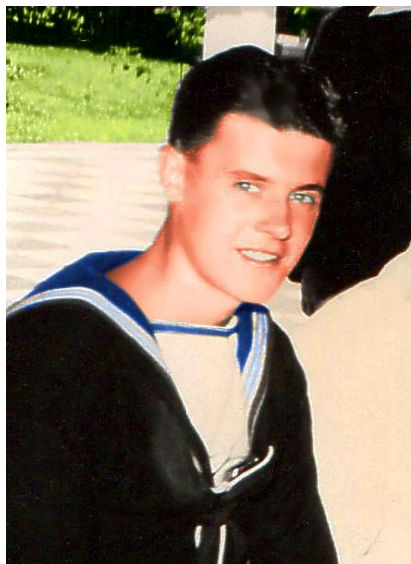
After leaving Greenock on the 15th, the two carriers moved up through the Western Isles and anchored at Loch Ewe, where we to participate in the Training Squadron Regatta on the 17th to 18th, when *Indefatigable* won by 107.5 points to 104.5 of the *Implacable*. It was a shame that no one in high authority had thought fit to advise the few residents on the local hamlet,



Aultbea, of the imminent arrival of the two mighty carriers, carrying 12,000 crew and trainees.

This consisted of a small general store, a pub and a few cottages at that time, and by the time we left, the pub and store had been emptied, but, luckily for us the messmates of Mike, the Roller had turned up, as usual, with Mum and Dad, who kept up their "Supply Train".

The two carriers left of the 21st and passed through the Pentland Firth and whilst we out of sight of land, carried out manoeuvres, which included the *Indefatigable* leaving for Aarhus in Denmark, whilst we headed southward to Rotterdam where we arrived on the 24th and left on the 30th.



Brian Keeler

Mum and Dad Hufton did not arrive at Rotterdam (much to our surprise), but we found many of the local population eager to take a Matelot under their wing and ply him with food and drink, which was most acceptable! We left Rotterdam then headed northward carrying out evolutions on the way to Rosyth on 2nd July, where, besides meeting up with *Indefatigable* once more, we were pleased to find the Hufton Supply Roller as well.

We stayed here for a week before returning to Portland on the 11th and, discovered we were to transfer to our home depots the following day. We said our farewells to our messmates and thanked Mike for sharing the contents of his case so readily.

Ken Taylor and I were to become Chatham Gentlemen and, after our leave, headed for dry dock off 1 Basin to join the *Superb*, which was to provide lots of hard work before we left for the America and West Indies, which is another story.

Written in October. 2011

Brian Keeler's photographs kindly donated by Rita Keeler

Ken Taylor's photograph kindly donated by Paul Taylor



A PIER HEAD JUMP

By Phil Grimson

I can't remember exactly when we visited Londonderry but I recall crossing the border to Buncrana for a few jars of Porter and we had a great time.

During our stay some idiot switched off the lights in the Fleet canteen one night in the middle of a big boozy session, and for about five minutes it rained bottles and glasses (I still have eyebrow that turns up over a scar sustained during that little fracas!).

I joined Superb on a pier head jump in June '53 at the Fleet Review (Spithead) for the Queen's coronation. She had arrived from Bermuda for the occasion and then I returned with her for the second half of the cruise: West Indies, East Coast of the States, Boston, Bar Harbor, New York, Newport U.S.N. navy base, then up to Canada, Quebec, Halifax, Nova Scotia, St. John's and, then, back to Bermuda and home.

In 1954 we did a massive re-fit which drove all of us mad with dockyard maties clambering all over the mess deck tables - a couple of cruises on exercises then, in October, left for Bermuda.



This time we did a couple of cruises around the West Indies again, ferried troops to British Guyana, and President Tubman (Liberia's head honcho) from Haiti to (I think Jamaica, can't really remember) and a complete tour round South America: Peru, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil and the Caribbean Islands, Jamaica, Trinidad etc. and then back to Bermuda.

After a month we did the West Coast of the States. Some ride that! San Francisco, Long Beach (for damaged screw), Los Angeles (I met a young film extra there who took me round 2 of the studios at Hollywood), Santa Barbara, San Diego, Portland, Seattle then up to Canada to Vancouver and Esquimalt, the R.N. navy base.

On our way back south we stopped at Acapulco, and the ship held a draw to go to Mexico City. (The accommodation was in the army barracks based in the Bull Ring changing rooms, and the showers -cold- came straight down from the mountains - at seven thousand feet, that was cold!).



I went adrift there and had to go to the British Embassy who thought I was a hoot and plied me with gin and tonics before putting me on a bus back to Acapulco. I got seven days

stoppage of leave which meant I missed Santos (the arsehole of Panama) so I got off lightly and kept my rate and stripe. I think the old man, Commodore Connell Fuller, was a decent bloke and had obviously done a few dodgy things in his career when a young officer, because I swear he had a twinkle in his eye when I explained, in my defence, that I had been overwhelmed with hospitality of the Mexican people and had not wished to appear ungrateful and offend them by slipping away in the midst of the revelries.

If the R.M. lieutenant, with whom I had clashed once or twice before, had not been the officer on watch I, probably, would have been bollocked and allowed below without being charged.

I know we all used to gripe now and then about service life, and that goes for all the services, but let's face it, in what other walk of life could any of us experience what we did during our time in the Andrew, and virtually free!



This photograph (in black & white) was taken by the Chilean Navy's photographer and given to me by Hannibal de la Fuentes the chief honcho of the Chilean Navy Base. I was the first to 'break the ice' when we arrived because although we had a couple of officers with us nobody seemed to know what to do and everybody was standing around like lemons. *Photograph kindly donated by Philip Grimson*

Afterwards he showed me all over the base and we shared a few grogs together. Although neither of us could speak each other's language except for a few words of Spanish I had picked up from my brother-in-law we got on pretty well together. Hannibal is the officer in the white suit on the extreme right, next to me.



The other matelot two seats away is Philip Farr who saw this posted on my FB site a few years ago and contacted me. Also see Brian Keeler's photos by clicking on this [LINK](#)



BRING BACK NAVY DAYS

The tradition of Navy Days dates back to the 1920s when the Royal Dockyards were open to the public for "Navy Week". Under various names and formats these events were held every year (except during WWII) until the RN finally gave up on Navy Days with the *Meet your Navy* event at Portsmouth in 2010.

Memorable occasions



Besides a wide variety of ships open to visitors, Navy Days in the 1970s until the 2000s typically included flying displays, river and basin displays, parachute jumps, the Royal Marine band, static displays and stalls and much more. There was something for all the family. It is difficult to see any downside to staging these events. The public, particularly in the naval towns got to see and understand what the navy does and had a great day out. The local tourism benefited from an increase of visitors. Above all it was a powerful public relations exercise for the Navy while a large share of the monies raised went to supporting the work of naval charities.

The Navy maybe small but it can be done

The SDSR of 2010 was a body blow to the RN and its is understandable that a service down to a bare minimum of ships and personnel felt that Navy Days was a commitment that could be dispensed with. The RN remains very much under that same pressure but in 2016 there has been a significant change to the operating patterns of the last few years. Much of the RN surface fleet is alongside or in UK waters this summer. This is to allow ship's companies a good leave period in an effort to retain personnel and build bridges after too many broken promises in the past. There is also a Russian threat that demands ships be kept closer to home and there is the regular autumn Cougar deployment to prepare for. However with most of

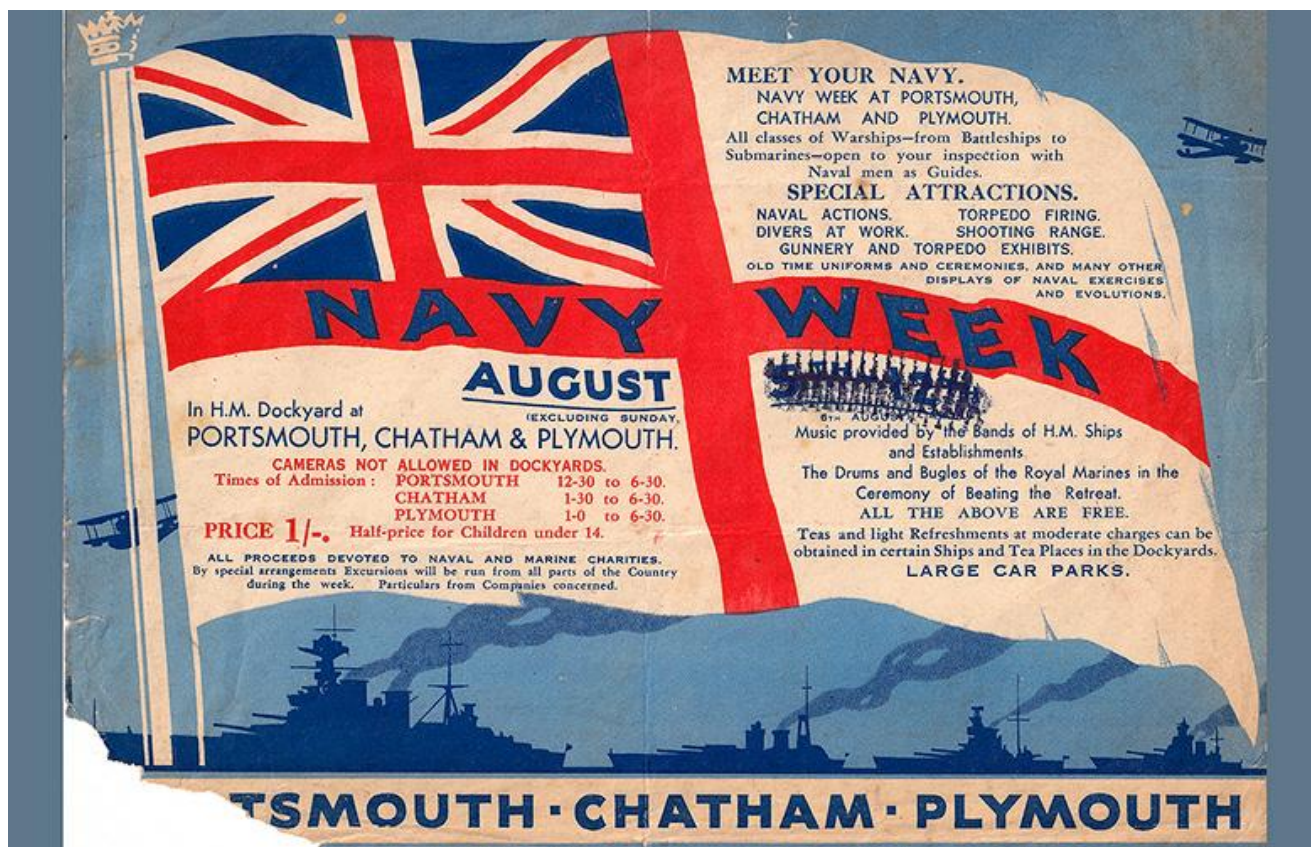


the surface fleet in our naval bases for August, and presumably for the next few summers to come, it is harder to argue there are no ships available for display for just two or three days.

Navy Days duty was never particularly popular amongst sailors but it only requires quite small numbers to man the ship when open to visitors. With sensible management it would have only minor impact on summer leave and duty rosters. There is still an obvious shortage of RN ships available when compared to the past, however it is quite possible to 'pad out' what is on display by inviting vessels from foreign navies and other maritime organisations. In the past many foreign warships have participated, historic ships, vessels from the Army, Trinity House, the British Antarctic Survey, the Sea Cadets, and others have all been part of the show.

Security concerns have sometimes been cited as a reason not to hold Navy Days. In the 1980s there was a sharp rise in IRA attacks on mainland Britain but the RN did not flinch. Security was increased, strict bag searches were introduced and below decks access to ships was reduced. Naval bases are inherently secure and can monitor and control who enters with much more ease than many of the other venues currently used for armed forces events.

The much smaller Dutch navy manages to stage thriving Den Helder Navy Days events most years. It is also interesting to note that despite having fought a war sustaining considerable losses and damage, as well as supporting continuing commitments in the South Atlantic, the RN still managed to stage Plymouth Navy Days in August 1982.



1933
Poster.

Portsmouth, Chatham and Plymouth dockyards open to the public for Navy Week.

The battle for hearts and minds

While cancelling Navy Days may have made sense at the time, it has been to the detriment of the RN in the long-term. Navy Days had a big impact on the public perception of the service and is also just one of the many unhelpful ingredients of a growing *sea blindness* in the UK. One



does not tend to forget the warships you have actually stood on and the sailors you met on board, people then follow the activities of the ship with a more personal interest.

At a time when the RN needs political and public support to ensure it is funded properly, abandoning the biggest opportunity for the public to have access to its navy is counter-productive. The recruitment aspects are also significant. A single Navy Days is unlikely to have a big impact, but over several years many children are denied seeing the navy first hand and are less likely to consider the RN as a career.

Individual ships are open to visitors in ports round the UK quite frequently and they often over-subscribed but this is no substitute for the thousands that would attend Navy Days. The best effort in the last few years has been a a sideshow at the Bournemouth Air Festival. Up to 4 ships are anchored off the beach and a few lucky members of the public can visit by pre-booked boat trips. The *RNAS Yeovilton* and *Culdrose* Air Days are excellent events to that promote naval aviation but fundamentally the navy is about ships.

While the RN is increasingly out of sight and out of mind, the RAF is in attendance at around 45 airshows every summer. 26 of them are can be considered major airshows with the RAF hosting several and providing aircraft including the Red Arrows & Typhoons, plus ground displays. Of course with hundreds of aircraft that can fly all over the country for flypasts and air displays the RAF has the advantage in maintaining a high public profile. It is therefore even more important the RN does not shoot itself in the foot by not opening up a naval base once a year. Ironically while naval enthusiasts have virtually nothing to attend, aviation enthusiasts are up in arms because, out of more than 40 airshows on offer, a handful have been cancelled (due to tighter regulations and higher costs resulting from the Shoreham Air Show disaster in 2015).

Looking ahead

By the time the two aircraft carriers are complete, every person in Britain will have contributed an average of £110 through their taxes to the cost. Perhaps it is only fair a few taxpayers get the opportunity to really appreciate them close up. With the arrival of *HMS Queen Elizabeth* there is an obvious centrepiece for a Portsmouth Navy Days 2017 that would be a huge public attraction. The largest vessel ever built for the RN has the capacity to cope with crowds and to some extent mitigate for the inevitably small number of other RN vessels on show.

There would be significant work to be done behind the scenes but with a little imagination the RN, renowned for its organisational and presentational ability can make this happen. It could be done without a big impact on operational priorities while having a huge benefit to the profile, understanding and support for the service. Let's bring back this much loved institution, alternating between Devonport and Portsmouth every year.

*This article was first published on the **Save The Royal Navy** website in August 2016*



The Early Years 1945 to 1948 PART 1

(by Lofty)



1945

HMS Superb was completed on 16th November, 1945 and was commissioned the following month. She sailed to Chatham in December and completed a full compliment there and on 29th December, 1945 and, with Captain William Geoffrey Robson DSO DSC in command, we took on the role of Flagship of the 2nd cruiser Squadron.

1946

Our first cruise was earmarked for "working up", the process intended to bring new ships up to maximum efficiency. During the war there had been little available time for such necessities, and *Superb* being among the first new post-war commissioned ships, few on board had ever experienced such exercises as were practised during this phase.

It included many that were of seemingly little practical use although no doubt ideal for training purposes. Many and varied seamanship exercises were carried out such as weighing anchor manually, undergoing seemingly unending mock sea-warfare attacks and of course painting the ship.

At the start of the morning watch (0400) on 16th January, 1946 we sailed for Portland to carry out Pitometer log trials over the West Looe measured mile then, entering Plymouth Sound later the same day, we anchored for the night.

Over the next couple of days we put the ship through its paces and the trials were completed, at 11.30 on 18th when we sailed for Gibraltar with the *Cheviot* and *Childers*. All three ships arrived at Gibraltar in the early afternoon of 21st January and the next day we set a course for Malta with the two destroyers.

We came to Malta from the southwest on the forenoon of Friday, 25th January and were to learn that a mass mock air attack had been laid on and were proud to discover that our ship's company defended the ship well during this simulated attack. We entered Marsaxlokk anchorage only to find an ex enemy cruiser, the *Giuseppe Garibaldi* in one of the best



berths in Grand Harbour. A determined Captain Robson arranged for an exchange of berths the next day

Captain Robson called on Vice Admiral Sir Frederick Dalrymple-Hamilton, KCB, His Excellency the Governor General Lieutenant General Sir Edmund C.A. Schreiber, KCB, the General Officer Commanding Troops and the Chief of Staff to the C-in-C Mediterranean Station, Rear Admiral H.A. Parker, CB, CBE Sir Frederick and Lady Dalrymple-Hamilton were entertained to lunch on board.

It was originally intended to go to sea for roughly three days a week during the working-up period and to use the remaining days for harbour training drills. Due to the inclement weather practice was cancelled in the first weeks and we were forced to remain in harbour for the week starting 11th February to clear up defects; four full days' practice programme was carried out in the second week. On two separate occasions during the working-up period the ship took part in a comprehensive night and day exercise with *HMS Ocean*.


On 9th February a guard of 25 ranks, plus the band, was provided at the request of Captain (D) Malta for the turnover of *HMS Tanatside* to the Royal Hellenic Navy ¹.

At the start of the last dog watch on Friday, 1st March we sailed out of Grand Harbour on passage for Greenock. For the first 24 hours good weather prevailed allowing for the continuation of painting the ship and general maintenance. During the early hours of the 2nd

March a short, sharp storm was encountered and the strong winds persisted until the arrival in Gibraltar just after 9 a.m., one and a half hours behind schedule.

There we were given an anchor berth in order to re-fuel but as no oiler had appeared, at 1153, orders were received to shift berth alongside the Signal Tower inside the harbour which was completed towards the end of the forenoon watch and oiling was commenced immediately. After



 three days at Gibraltar, and some brief shore leave, the ship left port at 1800 homeward bound for the U.K.

¹ *Tanatside* took part in Operation Tunnel anti shipping forays and was present at Omaha Beach, where she approached the beach to assist in the destruction of German defences. In December 1945 *Tanatside* was reduced to care and maintenance at Malta. In 1946 she was transferred to the Greek Navy and renamed *Adrias*, after a sister-ship, the former *HMS Border*, which was seriously damaged by mines in October 1943 and which was not repaired. She was removed from the effective list in 1963 and scrapped in 1964

Buzz's were flying around about the reason for our return and early on 5th March the C-in-C's Home Fleet message stated that we would be required for something special on 8th April and that men due to be released before 10th June were to be relieved and as much leave as practicable was to be granted.

In addition to a core minority of regular long servicemen, the *Superb's* lower deck personnel was made up of "Hostilities Only" ratings, those who had joined for wartime service, and hoped and expected to be discharged quickly once peace arrived. If so they were disappointed. Each was assigned a number prioritising the order of discharge, based for the most part on age and the year when they actually joined the navy.

The necessary steps were taken to apply for reliefs and the Captain proposed that one third of the ship's company should be sent on leave, upon arrival, for 12 days thus not being on board for the passage to Belfast with HRH Princess Elizabeth. The passage to Greenock was made at 16 knots in good weather throughout arriving at 1400 on 8th March, 1946.

The period from 8th March to 18th March was spent in preparing the ship for passage to Belfast with Princess Elizabeth and her staff; allowances were made for the possibility of one night having to be spent on board in the event of bad weather. Repairs were carried out to the Quarterdeck Semtex² and carpets were fitted in the after cabins.

HMS Fame and *HMS Hotspur* were escorts and had arrived at Greenock by 16th March and opportunity was taken to practise berthing *Fame* alongside and adjusting the brow as necessary



to transfer the Princess to *Fame* off the *Pile Light* at Belfast. This transfer was necessary because the arrival at Belfast was timed for 1630 on 18th March, which was one hour before low water equinoctial springs.

The resident Naval Officer Belfast and the harbour authorities were anxious to take the ship straight up the harbour at that time but, as the chart revealed less than 2 feet of



water under the ship's bottom, the Captain disagreed.

² Semtex was a trowelled-on latex-based non-slip composite material. It was poured in a thin layer over the deck and left to dry. Thus it covered the deck well, like a thick of paint.

So, on Saint Patrick's Day, Sunday, 17th March all three ships embarked Belfast pilots and the next day we were dressed overall in time for the prompt arrival at 0950 at Princes Pier of the Royal Train.

The weather had been cold and cloudy with occasional flurries of sleet and snow overnight but the morning was calmer when Princess Elizabeth came on board at 1000 and our standard was broken at the main, this being the first occasion on which it had been worn by one of Her Majesty's ships.

The Princess then inspected the Guard of Honour. Also with her were Admiral Sir William J. Whitworth, KCB, DSO, Commander in Chief Rosyth and his Flag Lieutenant, Captain Sir Harold Campbell, KCVO, DSO, ADC and the Princesses Lady in Waiting The Lady Mary Strachey plus representatives of the press.

Once the inspection was complete the Princess went below where the Captain's Suite had been prepared for her.

The Princess went forward by the inside route on to the Compass Platform, because the decks were still wet, and then gave her permission for the ship to sail. Two chairs were available and the two ladies took these for the passage down to the *Cumbraes*. Salutes were received from all warships and merchant ships as we passed.



After lunch the Princess returned to the bridge at 1500 whilst we were off the coast of Ireland. Thirty-five minutes later the destroyer *Hotspur* detached and at 1545 we anchored off *Pile Light* as arranged. *HMS Fame* then berthed alongside at 1600. The first to leave the cruiser were the press who photographed and reported the Royal Party's transfer at. As she left the ship we manned ship and heartily cheered the Princess.

On 18th March, 1946 at 2000, the tide being right, we sailed and berthed in the harbour at Number 3 Berth in Dufferin Dock,.

Next time Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth launches HMS Eagle and HMS Superb is involved in the famous Corfu Incident.



HAVE YOU A STORY TO TELL ?

We'd love to print your story so why not put pen to paper

It doesn't need to be a novel -
just some of your memories
which will eventually be lost
forever unless told now

Several members
have sent in their own
& they are available to read
on our website

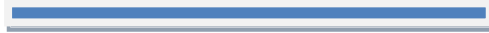


PHOTO ALBUM



The photo above shows Brian (Bryn) Keeler seated extreme left at the same function as Phil Grimson. See Phil's photo by clicking on this [LINK](#)





Andy Brierley remembering his diving days - nice dress Jo !

Have you a photo of the Superb?

We are endeavouring to collect as many photos or newspaper cuttings which relate to members of the crew (that does include YOU) or an image of the ship itself

The reason behind this is to help complete the history of one of the longest serving (by name) British Royal Navy ships

Contact Brian Saunders, if you can help, by email



CROSSED THE BAR

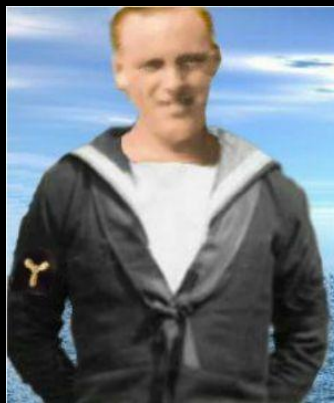


Details of ex shipmates (but not necessarily members of the Association) who have crossed the bar can be found on the appropriate page our website.

To go there please click [HERE](#).

Crossed the Bar (Recently Notified)

Archibald (Archie) McAllister Stoker Petty Officer served on board 1956-57 Cruise. Died July, 2006



PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE

If you can assist with any of these appeals please contact Brian Saunders in the first instance. No details will be passed on to third parties without express permission. These appeals will be left in the magazine for a few

Any news of **Tony Facer** believed to have been a Seaman on the 1957 cruise is requested by John Henrick (an army pal) Tony apparently came from the London area. We have a Stoker - B. Facer shown on our records for that period. Do you know his whereabouts?

The niece of ex Stoker Petty Officer **Archibald (Archie) McAllister** would like to have any information on her uncle who served on the 1956-57 cruise - See *Crossed the Bar*

From previous issues

Derek Baldry (Killick Sparker) would like to contact Ginger Dunne from 1956

Stoker Clive Godley would like to get in touch with old shipmates - I have his telephone number and email address so if you'd like it get back to me. (BS)

Larry Boudier who was in the Chatham field gun's crew in 1955 would like to know if anyone e knows of others in that crew

Eleanor Ingalls Fochesato from New Jersey, USA would like to contact John Stevens, from the 1953 cruise to Maine, USA.

Bob Butcher known to many as "Butch" & who served on Superb between Nov 1950 to July 1951 wonders if Curly Watson is still around. He would like to make contact.

Laura Kardo researching her grandfather, Charles Harris, who served around 1951 & 1952. would like to know more about him.

Jeff , the son of Jim Stewart who was on board as a Telegraphist between 1947 & 1951, would be happy to receive any information re his dad. Jim was also on HMS Vidal in 1955



OCTOBER IN GILLINGHAM

This year our Annual reunion will start off with a short meeting, before the evening meal, of those members wives & friends present on **Friday 6th October**. At some stage during this meeting a short (12 minute) film will be shown of the cruiser Superb in San Francisco, Seattle and return to Chatham in 1955. The film hasn't been publically viewed before so although quite brief members might find it of interest.

This year we will be having live music in the shape of a lady soloist who should keep us entertained. Debbie, the owner, of the King Charles Hotel in Gillingham welcomes us once again for our October reunion and this is a little prompt for you to consider a night or two away.

For example the cost of a **double** room for Friday & Saturday nights would include the following

Friday night - 3 course meal

Saturday morning - Full English Breakfast (or several other choices including vegetarian)

Saturday night - 4 course Reunion Dinner

Sunday morning - - Full English Breakfast as Saturday morning

The price for 2 nights is £130 per person

If you can only make it for the Saturday night then the same **double** room would include the 4 course Reunion Dinner and breakfast on Sunday morning for £65 per person

Those of you who live really close might consider just coming for the Reunion Dinner on Saturday night and the cost for that is £27 per person.

Single rooms are also available - have a look at the Reservation Form for more information

If you'd like to discuss any other arrangements with the hotel please speak to Debbie



Double Bedroom



Function Room 2016



THERE IS A LIFT TO ALL FLOORS

**PLEASE DON'T LEAVE IT TO THE LAST
MINUTE TO BOOK**



REUNION REMINDER

A Note for Your Diary
The next Reunion
will be at
The King Charles Hotel,
Gillingham, Kent
Friday, Saturday + Sunday
6th to 8th October
Be There or Be Square !

The main event i.e. The
Dinner is held on the
Saturday but it's also
important to attend the
AGM (which is informal &
of short duration !) on the
Friday evening if you can
make it

The Hotel goes out of its way to make us comfortable - the cost of the 2
nights includes Dinner, Bed & Breakfast on the Friday and Saturday &
Breakfast on Sunday morning. There's plenty of good humour and loads of
raffle prizes. Why not give it a whirl?



PERSONS WHO RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE

Andy **Brierley** (1954) - Derek **Baldry** (1956) - Alf **Brown** (1954) - Bob **Butcher** (1951) - Ron **Clay** (1956-57) - Bill **Cook** (1956) - Jim **Copus** (1954) - Ted **Davy** (1945 Canada) - John **Eccleston** (1956) - Mark **Field** (Son of Charlie **Field** 1946) - Eleanor **Fochesato** (USA) - Clive **Godley** (1954) - Maureen Taylor (Daughter of Ron **Gray** 1946) - Phil **Grimson** (1953 & 1954) - Tony **Hacket** (1953) - Terry Hall (son of Bert **Hall** 1946) - Alan **Harmer** (1955 - 56) - Joe **Heaton** (1956) - Brian **Hill** (1954) - Emile [Coder] **Keane** (1954 - 55) - Rita Keeler (Wife of Brian **Keeler** 1954) - Charlie **Kingston** (1956) - Sharon Goodall (Daughter of Fred **Kinsey** Co-Founder 1950-52) - Ray **Lambert** (1955) - Don **Lawrence** (1954) - Peter **MacDonald** (1949-51) - Arthur **Maxted** (1951) - George **Messmer** (USN 1954 - USA) - Malcolm **Milham** (1953) - Wendy **Norman** (Wife of David Norman 1956) - Margaret Norgan (Wife of Jim **Norgan** 1946) - Frank **Nunn** (1956) - Dave **Perrin** (1954) - Debbie Richardson (Daughter of Bill **Potticary** (1952) - Brian **Saunders** (1954 - 55 France) - Will Sherwood (Son of Bill **Sherwood** 1954) - Rob **Smith** (1956) - Jeff Stewart (Son of Jim **Stewart** 1947 Australia) - Pete **Tasker** (1954) - Paul Taylor (Son of Ken **Taylor** 1954) - Brian **Turner** (Associate) - John **Voak** - John **Ward** (1953) - Jon **Willshir** (1953 Thailand)

[Click here to contact Brian Saunders](#) by email

To send an email from this page

If you are using "GOOGLE CHROME" please right click with your mouse on the link above and select "open link in new tab" otherwise just left click on the link



MEMBERSHIP

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION ?

THE ANNUAL FEE IS £10 & YOU WILL RECEIVE 4 NEWSLETTERS PER YEAR &
ELIGABLE TO ATTEND REUNIONS

TELEPHONE ROBIN SMITH AT 01634 362 379

OR EMAIL HIM AT robinsmith173@yahoo.co.uk

An **Application Form** can be downloaded [HERE](#)



Our Chairman



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Past Copies of the Magazine can be accessed on-line by clicking on the appropriate month

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[February, 2017](#)

[March, 2017](#)

[April, 2017](#)

[May, 2017](#)

[June, 2017](#)

[July, 2017](#)

THE END

