



ISSUE 30 October 2014

Bring the Curtain Down.

**Please Sir, We Want
Some More.**

We Want A Curtain Call.

MORE!!!!!!

H.M.S. LONDONDERRY 8TH Reunion Portsmouth 2014

Editorial I do hope that those of you who receive this newsletter, will seriously consider what is being asked.

Clive Watts our webmaster has for some time now been advocating that each newsletter should be on our website. Without advance warning, the last Derry News was on our website and in due course, those of you who had given us your E mail were informed. If you are content with this arrangement good, if you want it sent to you as an E mail attachment, then I need your E mail address. If you still want a hard copy because, as I am only too well aware, not everyone is on the Internet. The reasoning behind this, is, of course Royal Mail and their ever increasing postage rates. It is a drain on our finances. Please let me have your preference by the 31st of December 2014.

'Paying Off' Reunion. This being reunion number eight, it was our smallest attendance, which was disappointing, considering the advance notice given of where and when. The gathering was also reduced by a number of MRU's received a few days before. It has to be acknowledged that this was a result of health and family commitments of our shipmates, who were coming. Of those, I know, you were thinking of us and drinking a toast to us, our ship and absent friends. Despite, the lack of numbers, we mustered 17 ships company and with wives, partners and family, we paraded 34 souls. They came from Kent, East & West Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Surrey, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, County Durham, Scotland and Queensland, Australia.

Friday, was Meet & Greet, followed by our get together in the Nelson Lounge after supper. The DVD was playing in the background, Bob Seymour give his now expected 'Ditty' which was well received and contained in this newsletter. Thank you Bob, what next!!! Dave, said a **few** words. This was followed by a few moments of remembrance to those of our company who had 'Crossed the Bar' their names included in the last page of our programme. Many of those, we had met during our reunions and who had been great supporters. I am sure, we all hold many memories of them, not only from the reunions, but also from the commission. This was followed by our usual 'Up Spirits' supplied and organised by Brian Coward. Many of us have been fortunate enough to make all eight reunions, some less, but I would like to say a big thank you to David Salmon Lt Cdr (S) who made his fourth reunion. He has kept the flag flying for the wardroom, although there are not too many left.

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Saturday, was a free day and the Dockyard, Harbour Trips and Gunwharf Quays, no doubt had a few extra visitors. After supper, a contest of skittles took place between the WRENS (Ladies) and the MATELOTS (Men). It is with great sadness that I have to report that the result was a win for the WRENS. Prizes were awarded to the highest WRENS scorer Kay Gray nee Brown with 34 and for the Matelots Peter Greenhalgh 34. After this we retired to the Victory Bar for liquid refreshment. Thanks to Pat Hatch and her daughter Karen for the scoring.

Sunday morning, saw the departure of a few of our shipmates, no doubt with the thought in mind, that this was it, a final farewell!! The rest of Sunday relaxing in your own way, for Cynthia and I, we took an on the spur of the moment trip across to Ryde for a few hours. Back at base and after supper, we retired to The Victory Bar for reflections and memories. Dave broke open a 27 year old bottle of rum, bought in the Duty Free in Gib. In 1987 which had a Londonderry connection, in that a few minutes after purchase, I met up with Maurice Cahill who was the Radio Supervisor on HMS Londonderry, but on this meeting, was a Lt. Cdr. Anyway, the rum was enjoyed. This, as it turned out, was not to be the finally, as the toast was 'here's to the next one'. NEXT WHAT – REUNION -it seems. Perhaps this will be the 'Reunion of Reunions'. As stated on that evening, if we are to hold another, then help would be appreciated. This was accepted and volunteers came forward.

Monday, closed our weekend and the farewells were said, but, with perhaps, not the finality that we had arrived with. Watch this space. Well the website.



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GOODBYE DERRY by Bob SEYMOUR

1

We are here to say goodbye to the Derry
Every anchor, bollard and cleat
Not as sad as the last time we saw her
When she left us to rejoin the fleet.

3

Let's remember all the fun aboard her
Of the islands and burning suns
Of the Captain, the Jimmy and Pilot
Young Wigley, Tim Beban and Guns.

5

Those aboard are too many to mention
On the Focs'l, Quarterdeck and Tops
The greenies, the stokers and supply boys
And God forbid we forget all the ops.

7

Myself I remember the TAS men
Ping bosuns' and weapons alike
Sonar Stoner, Molly Manders & Schmoo
And the postie John Eastes plus bike.

9

So please say goodbye to the Derry
Till we clear lower deck up on high
A proud little ship was the Derry
So all those in favour say Aye.

2

The friends that we made, we remember
Those of you here that have come from afar
And those who just couldn't make it
And those that have now crossed the bar.

4

Dai Rees, C P and both Salmons
Daddy Andrews, Charlie Brown and old Clubs
The Chief Stoker, Bomber Mills, Kev Kemish
Dusty Miller, Jimmy Green and the subs.

6

This reunion will fill us with daydreams
Of days laying about on some beach
Eating banyans and drinking strong liquor
And hoping the gangway we'll reach.

8

We thank David and Cynthia together
For making our reunions so good
We will miss our getting together
For the crack and the beer and the food.

In Memorium.

E.M.2 A. Simmonds 21st October 2014

Lest we forget they who also served.

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Book Review. THE ROYAL NAVY **OFFICER'S** POCKET-BOOK 1944

compiled and Introduced by Brian Lavery published in London by Conway.

A guide for those many of thousands of prospective officers in the latter part of WW2, who passed through HMS King Alfred. 145 pages and crammed with some wonderful illustrations. The first paragraph in the introduction -

When Sir Alec Guinness was asked what was the best performance he had ever given, he did not mention Kind Hearts and Coronets, Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy or even Star Wars. Instead he referred to "That of a very inefficient, undistinguished, junior officer in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve for in May 1943, I was in dubious command of LCI(L) (landing craft infantry (large) 124 with a crew of twenty. We were all very young and inexperienced, my own lack of knowhow and swift rash judgement hampered the Allied Cause like small but irritating gnat bites."

Grumpy Old Man Have you noticed how long the advert breaks are on the Commercial TV Channels! Old programmes, which used to be timed for one hour, are now running for 1 hr 20 mins and did you realize, that the breaks are long enough for you to go out, run a mile in 4 mins and still get back to see the end of the ads.

New Faces L/S Richard (Dick) Spurway O/S Derek Whittaker.

The DVD During the course of Friday evening at the reunion, a DVD was running, which showed 35 mins of clips of our commission. These clips are from 8mm colour film of Barry Mills and were made available in tape a few years ago. I have now added clips from five of our reunions. Portsmouth 1999, Liverpool 2002, Portsmouth 2004, Chatham 2006 and Coventry 2008. Running time is approx 2hrs 30 mins and will cost £8 which includes postage and packing. If you wish to order one, please make cheques payable to D.H. Wickham.

The first part of the DVD has already been produced in tape form and offered for sale, (I sold 30) in 2000, so apologies to those of you who have seen it before.

Reading through the past newsletter, I read, that we showed it twice, on the Friday evening of our very first reunion.

Accounts Prior to the reunion our balance was £200. £150 was spent on the hire of The Nelson Lounge, with bar and staff for Friday evening. This left us with £50. The raffle made £102, bring our balance up to £152. Other expenses incurred during the weekend were settled by other means. We will make a little on the sale of the DVD.

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Weekend Leave. This is a second request for those stories of your travels by coach from Portsmouth to wherever.

Credits. Dick Spurway, Bob Seymour, Dave Wickham, Dave & Pam James.

Thanks. Go to Rick Broniman and Kay and Clive Watts, who were due to attend the reunion, who sent prizes for our raffle.

It's a Small World. No doubt an expression, many of us have used, both past and present. In this case, the meeting up with Derek Whittaker in the Victory Bar of the Royal Maritime Club, especially at the time we were holding our reunion. He recognised the crest on our ties, which is how we found him. Such is the power of advertising in the present. As it happened, this was not the only discovery during the weekend. With our board prominently displayed in the foyer, we discovered someone who had help build our ship, when, as an apprentice, he worked for Sammy White in Cowes. Finally, we discovered, from a WRENS class reunion, one who came from Londonderry, but many years after our visit, so, 'don't panic Mr Mainwaring'.

HMS President or Whitehall W/T. That brownish, ivy covered building, much seen during the coverage of 'The Trooping of the Colour' ceremony on Horse Guards Parade in June. I had 2 drafts to this establishment, which forms the stern of The Admiralty in Whitehall. Of course, I never entered the building by the front door, always the servants' door at the rear. Being drafted to such an establishment, had both advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantages, being in central London, tempting, but very expensive, but with advantages, such as, getting freebies for top class entertainment. The recent deaths of both Frank Thornton, 'Are You Being Served' and 'Last of the Summer Wine' and Angus Lennie of 'Crossroads' 'HMS Paradise' and perhaps better known for being 'IVES' in 'The Great Escape'. I saw both of these actors in the pilot episode of HMS Paradise with the delectable Jill Curzon. Also pantomimes at the Palladium. Another advantage for those of us who crossed Horse Guards Parade on our way to our watch, was we could always ask the 'guards' at Horseguards, to sharpen our pencils for us before we went on watch. Not received with much enthusiasm by our fellows in arms.

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Whilst still on this subject and now being the 21st century and listening to the travel news, I would never get on watch today, as I could in those far off days, when Cynthia and I were living in Haywards Heath, due to continuous work being carried out on the railways and the bus transport being provided.

Further DVD's I have been viewing Barry Mills 8mm colour film, which he put onto tape, back in the late 80's. This is almost a complete record of our commission, which contains both shipboard activities as well as many runs ashore. There are of course many shots of our ships company, in which you may be seen.

The Website Is a good way of keeping in touch, through the Guest Book page, so I do ask you to use it. Clive is always looking for fresh material, as I am for the newsletters. So, don't be shy, let's hear from you.

Reunion of Reunions. If we succeed in organising Reunion No 9, it will almost certainly be held in the Midlands, so that, those of you who wish, can visit the Forces Arboretum and get a brewery visit in as well. For those of you who were with us on the Sunday evening, you will be pleased to know that I have already received help with details of venues. Let me have a little rest first and then I will get on to it next year ready for 2016, with a view to looking at sometime in June. Any developments, will be posted on the website, but go to the Guest Book page first, but not for a while yet. Bob, I know you missed a few of the reunions, but if you want to start work on a ditty, you can refer to the past newsletters.

Promotion & Appointment. Many of you no doubt, will have read or picked up along the line, that Nick Cooke-Priest, the son of our Colin has been promoted to captain and has been appointed to take command of the current Fleet Flagship, HMS Bulwark in January 2015. I suspect that it may have raised a few eyebrows in some wardrooms. Anyway, congratulations to Dad and Son.

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REUNION PICTURE GALLERY



Top left – left to right – Jim Dixon, Penny Seymour, Bootsie, Pam Brown, standing Bob Seymour.



Top right – left to right – Kay Brown, Pam Brown, Pat Hatch, Paulette and Bootsie.

Bottom left – left to right – Brian Coward, Kevin and Tanya Davey, Barb Scott, Dave Taylor and Tex Scott.

Bottom right – left to right – Val and Dave Walker and Karen Hatch.

As this is my very first attempt at E mailing the newsletter, I hope you will forgive me if things do not turn out quite right. I am doing my best. This will also appear on the website, along with further photos of the reunion.

Cynthia and I wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.