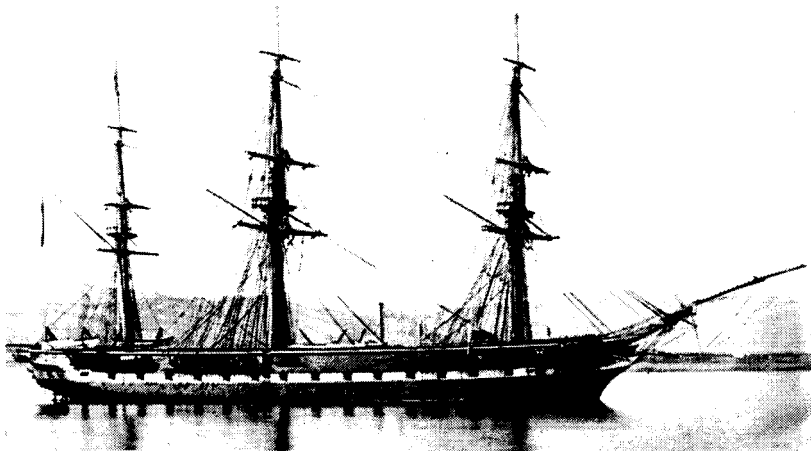


*HMS Phoebe
Association
Newsletter
August 2005*



HMS Phoebe Launched 1779,
Trafalgar 1805
out of service 1840.
Became slop ship at Plymouth 1841
Converted to steam - single screw 1860

Secretary's Report

Here we are well into the summer once again with a few things that need airing. First is the Trafalgar Night Dinner in Bournemouth organised by TS Phoebe, this event will take place on Saturday the 15th October at the Belvedere Hotel, Bournemouth. At the moment there are 12 shipmates who will be attending. Anyone wishing to book in for the venue please get in touch with the organiser S/m Ernie Clews, his phone number and address is in the back half of your Members List under Affiliated Members.

The next venue is the Memorial Parade at Bournemouth Memorial followed shortly after by our own service at our Memorial Stone. This will take place on Sunday 13th November at 10am. Free parking in the Town Hall Underground car park. We hope the proceedings will be the same as last year, with the Mayor laying a wreath, more information will be in the next newsletter.

The Treasurer would like to remind you that subscriptions are due. There has not been any change, subscriptions are still £5 for Full Membership and £2.50 for Associated Membership.

The Committee would like to thank all those who have so generously donated to the funds this year, the welfare fund is now in the position to make small grants or interest free loans within the association.

The third venue, although a long way off, is the **2006 Reunion**.

This will be our tenth reunion, and in the minds of some who attended the first get-together in September 1996, a remarkable achievement. I believe it was around 22 newsletters that Secretary, Vic Chanter first produced, and sent out in 1996; now we send out 172.

I was asked if our next reunion could be held in Liverpool.

As soon as we were settled at home after the last reunion I set to on the Internet looking for hotels in Liverpool and surrounding areas. I also brought in S/m Joe Sutton and Mary Sutton to help. They live in Birkenhead but were willing to visit hotels across the river. Joe knew what type of hotel we were looking for and what we required. But I am afraid that Joe and Mary came up with the same results that I was getting from the Internet. Hotels in Liverpool and surrounding towns were too expensive. There was only one hotel we could find where the cost of a 3 night weekend was below £200 per person, but on top of that was a £10 per day car park, and £100 per night for a room with bar exclusive to us, also only one nights entertainment was laid on. It was £250 for a disco. The hotel also catered for non-residents to attend the hotel's bars and discos and was also used as

a B&B by Social Security.

Liverpool has become a tourist attraction and the hotels have cashed in, most are just B&B now at £50 - £60 pp, with dinner costing another £20 pp. I tried Birmingham, Coventry, Stratford, and Warwick but could not get a reasonable price (or they were fully booked for weddings etc.).

I then went across country to Scarborough and the Rivelyn Hotel. We had a good reunion there last year and many shipmates had asked if we could go again as we had also been invited back at any time by the management. I spoke with the same manageress, Helen. At first she could not give me a price, then she asked what did we pay last time, we had to go back through the newsletters to find out. It was £83pp for 3 nights and £56pp for 2 nights HB, when we told her what we had paid she said we could have the hotel at the same price, this was not to be sneezed at, and I accepted the deal subject to the committee's approval, I spent a couple of days getting in touch with the committee and was given the OK to confirm the reservation. I should think it would be impossible to get a better deal; it also included 3 nights entertainment.

I am sorry for those who wanted it to be Liverpool, but we did try our best. Coaches will be hired while at Scarborough, on Saturday to go to York, and Sunday maybe a trip round Heartbeat country, we may have time to stop at a pub for lunch?? I will see what the coach operator suggests.

Veteran's Lapel Badge

I thought I would check on who could apply for the Veterans Lapel Badge, and from the answer below it appears that for the time being only veterans of WWI & WWII can apply. At some later date it will apply to all ex service-men and women.??????

Dear Mr Pavely

The intention of the Minister for Veterans, Don Touhig is that the Veteran's lapel badge should in due course be made available to UK Armed Forces' veterans of all generations and conflicts. However, he believes it makes sense to fulfil the demand from the First and Second World War veterans first before we further extend the eligibility criteria.

The previous Minister, Ivor Caplin, also announced in the House of Commons on 20th January 05 that from 1st February this year, the eligibility to receive a badge was to be extended to all Service leavers, subject to certain conditions. This is to reinforce the high esteem in which the country holds, and the thanks we owe to, those

who fought 60 years ago, along with today's Armed Forces personnel, who do such a first class job, as was exemplified by the remarkable young man who was awarded the Victoria Cross in the latest Operational Honours List for his outstanding acts of gallantry in Iraq.

For Service leavers, and only for Service leavers who leave the services after 1st Feb 2005, the qualifying criteria governing eligibility to receive the Veteran's badge are: At least 5 years' reckonable service. Not discharged from the Services for administrative or disciplinary reasons.

For those who are discharged for medical reasons the length of service is waived.

Please rest assured that there is no intention to apply length of service as a criterion to try to exclude any group of veterans from being eligible to receive a Veteran's lapel badge. We will extend the eligibility criteria at a later date, which has yet to be decided and we will do so on a chronological basis, taking in those who served between the two World Wars along with those who served in the 1940s but after the end of the Second World War.

I do hope this explains the position.

Yours sincerely G Taylor Veterans Services Team

It may all have changed now so I am enclosing an application form for everyone to apply. Be prepared to wait a few weeks for a reply.

Note from Webmaster: A downloaded application form is available from the 'About Us' page of the web site.

Apply to:- Mr R M Godfrey Veterans Policy Unit, Zone 1 7th Floor,
MOD. Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB

"WHY?"

Why '3 White Stripes on a Sailors Collar?'

The three white tapes were said to commemorate Nelson's three great battles – The Nile, Copenhagen and Trafalgar. However there is no truth in this — the Admiralty were at one time considering the merits of two stripes as against three

Why 'Starboard?'

The seagoing ships of maritime Northern Europe all featured this side-hung rudder, always on the right hand side of the ship. This rudder (in Anglo-Saxon the steorbord) was further developed in medieval times into the more familiar apparatus fixed to the sternpost, but starboard remains in the language to describe anything to the right of a ship's centreline when viewed from aft.

Why 'Port?'

It was only from the mid-19th century that, according to Admiral Smyth's 'The Sailor's Word Book', published in 1867, "the left side of the ship is called port, by Admiralty Order, in preference to larboard, as less mistakable in sound for starboard."

Why 'Brass Monkey Weather?'

The popular explanation is that warships in the 18th century stored their shot on brass racks called monkeys. In the cold weather the brass contracted causing the shot to fall onto the deck hence the expression.

Why 'Tell it to the Marines'

In 1806 Captain Brilliant, of HMS Desdemona, when a tale started to grow too tall for his taste, was given to saying, 'You may tell that to the Marines, but I'll be damned if the Sailors will believe it!'

Thursday 7th July

It was great news we had yesterday evening that the Olympics are coming to London. But that has now been forgotten for, as I write this, the TV is reporting on the bombing of some London targets, Lil has just told me that there are 33 fatalities so far, we expect many more with so many critical and seriously injured. Now perhaps something will be done about all the dangerous fanatics we are allowing to stay here.

We have had a very good sale of Fleece Jackets, so far we have sold 24 Jackets, it is a pity the postage added to the cost but we still think they would cost more in a shop. Due to the increase in postage the last lot we ordered has cost more, but we adjusted what we were charging to compensate for it. If any more jackets are required please let me know, we can order any size, the medium size are more likely to fit the ladies. *(Sorry to say the price was increased by £2 + VAT on July 1st)*

When we were at the Drumhead ceremony last week there were stalls to buy from, one stall was the Federation of Ships Associations, which our association is a member of, they were selling gold wire blazer badges of ships crests at £6.50 each. They had the Phoebe crest, but it only had the ships motto under it. They also make smaller gold wire crests, ideal for beret's and jumpers, both cruiser & frigate crests are available, I will try and get a couple of each before this newsletter goes out and picture them in it? (Now on order but will take several weeks due to a queue)

Maureen Addison informs me that; "S/m Roy has been to hospital and is to have treatment for Bladder cancer, at the moment Roy is quite well and we hope he stays that way all through his treatment.

S/m George White will be attending hospital for further treatment, but hopes to be, fit and well enough, for the next reunion.

HMS Glow-worm. By Stoker Bert Harris

My Brother Edwin and I were both young stokers on HMS Glowworm. I was twenty. Edwin was two years older. We had joined up together, trained together, and now we were both on the same mess-deck. We were part of Glowworm's new commission and, now the ship's trials were completed, we were at sea rolling and pitching across the North Sea one of the escorts for HMS Renown. Edwin told me to be careful when I went on watch, and hang on tight to the life lines, the sea was pitching over us. On the 6th April the alarm was sounded, a torpedo rating had been washed overboard. A signal was sent to Renown who told us to turn back and search for him. It was hopeless in such weather but the skipper turned the ship and the search was made, but he was not found. We steamed round all day hoping to join up with the Renown but never found her.

The following morning, April 7th, our luck seemed to be right out when another man was reported to have been washed overboard. but he was found hanging onto a rope hanging over the side, he was however badly injured and did not survive. That was a very bad omen. On two consecutive mornings something nasty had happened, we were all asking what the third morning would bring.

We were still on our own, at least it seemed to be that way until the morning of the 8th April 1940. I was off watch and asleep in my hammock when the loud ringing of the alarm bell woke me up, every one scrambled up, and we rushed to our action stations. My station was in the after magazine supplying shells to the after guns, not a very nice place to be in. As I made my way along the upper-deck I saw what I thought was another destroyer in the distance and wondered who she could be, after a short while we soon found out! Our Captain, Lt Cdr Roope, sent a signal asking her what her nationality was as she was not showing a ensign, the next moment she answered with a salvo from her guns, after exchanging round for round with her she turned and steamed away, with us in pursuit. After a while we were told that we were chasing her into a squadron of our own ships who we could see in the distance, but we soon found out how wrong; we were being lead into a squadron of German warships headed by the cruiser Admiral Von Hipper; but instead of turning and heading away the Captain took on the cruiser and her 4 destroyer escorts.

We were kept at it hard supplying the guns with shells, it seemed like hell had broken loose up top. The Hipper opened up with her big guns and begun knocking us about, she seemed to be hitting us hard as we chased around in the heavy sea trying to get into position. All our guns were firing, but our torpedoes, which were fired at the

Hipper, missed their target, although they went very close to her. Our Captain was a good seaman and certainly knew how to handle his ship. By now we were badly damaged but he kept manoeuvring the ship about making it easier for our guns to fire on the target, but we could not go on much longer, we had a very bad list to starboard, most of the guns were now out of action. I was still in the magazine when the ship gave a sudden spurt forward, throwing us off our feet, then there was a big crunching bang, the ship shuddered and the lights went out and the ship seemed to settle a bit further to starboard, then came the order to abandon ship, we had just made our last big play, the Captain had done all he could right to the last moment, his decision made he rammed the Glowworm into the Hipper's side causing a great deal of damage to the cruiser. By this time I, and others, had made our way to the upper-deck, as I passed my brothers action station I called to him, but there was no answer. I went to look for him. I got to the hatchway and looked down. it was pitch black, sea water was swirling half way up the ladder. I kept calling for him but got no answer, the ship lurched further over, I had to go. I reached the upper-deck and was shocked to see the mess it was in. the Germans had shot us to pieces, and were still doing so, our after gun was somehow still firing, the guns crew were very brave, but it soon stopped when the ship turned almost on its side. I crawled on my hands and knees to reach a life belt locker before it went under. I passed some to other shipmates then strapped one on myself. Rising up I got my first look at the Hipper, she seemed to be such a huge ship with her swastika painted on her foredeck. Men were jumping into the sea now. I hesitated about joining them. I was in two minds whether to stay where I was or jump into the cold North Sea, one thing struck me as funny; a stoker jumped over and was washed back aboard again, he stood up and said he was going to stay put - it was too cold in the sea. As the ship heeled over we crawled up to the keel, then I slid into the sea and swam away as quickly and as far as I could. I did not want to be sucked down with the ship.

It was icy cold. I saw the ship slowly sink beneath the waves and then I must have passed out, when I came to I was laying on a table top aboard one of the German ships, with a crowd of German sailors staring at me, they offered me cigarettes and hot drinks, then I was brought dry clothing, one German told me that we were going to Willhelmshaven. I would go from there to a POW camp in Germany. I did a day later and stayed there for the rest of the war. I was one of the lucky ones - only 27 shipmates survived the battle and the ship sinking.

(the last couple of paragraphs were not quite decipherable so they have been edited by me with the hope that the gist of what was

readable and what I have added make sense).

I expect a lot of you watched the VE VJ-Day celebration on TV last Sunday; it was very enjoyable and well presented. There was however one thing in the Queen's speech that I picked up on. I always thought the war in the Far East ended on 15 August, five days after the atom bomb was dropped, (which happens to be my birthday) but the Queen, in her speech, said it was September'??

The following WWII experience was written by an 89 year old ex Wren, it was copied from Peoples War.

I was a Wren for five years during the war. I enrolled as a transport driver at 18 years of age after working in the Halifax Building Society in Halifax. My brother was in the Fleet Air Arm and I was desperate to serve in the Navy. I was accepted into the WRNS as a motor driver and was asked to report to London. I already had a driving license but I was still put through a four-week course at the BSM Driving School learning to drive all sorts of vehicles around London.

As a qualified driver, I was sent to Scotland to ferry Naval officers around in Largs, and in Ardentinnny. I shall always remember my arrival in Glasgow en route for Ardentinnny. The train was late and I missed the ferry crossing. I'd had nothing to eat or drink during the journey to Scotland; someone had knocked my Thermos flask out of my hand on the way to the station in Huddersfield.

On arrival in Glasgow I asked a policeman where I could stay for the night, he suggested the YWCA and accompanied me there, but there were no rooms left, they were being occupied by other female service personnel. I did not know what to do and just hung around the foyer hoping to be fit in a corner somewhere. Eventually the woman on reception said I could sit on a chair in the hall until the morning ferry at 6am.

While I was in Ardentinnny Lord Mountbatten and entourage came to inspect the Naval Personnel. Following the inspection I was instructed to drive him over to Arrochar, a naval torpedo establishment. En route, in pouring rain, and on a narrow track, I came face to face with an elderly postman wobbling along on his bicycle. I felt I had to give him a wide berth, in so doing the wheels on one side of the car sunk slowly into the gully and we were stuck there. Lord Mountbatten, Admiral of the Fleet, was not best pleased. He never tolerated fools gladly. I was directed to get another car and driver, I must say I ran as fast as my legs would carry me in the rain, back to the base to do as instructed. On another occasion there was a serious accident during an exercise on Loch Long, several ratings were injured, some very seriously. The injured were taken to an improvised medical Nissen hut to await the arrival of ambulances,

and the WRNS personnel were asked to assist in any way they could, I remember one rating had both eyes injured as well as a broken leg, he subsequently received treatment at St Dunstons having been permanently blinded in the accident.

After a year I was asked to report to the Royal Naval College in Greenwich where I became a Wren officer cadet and started a four-week course for a commission. It included everything from square bashing to social etiquette. One of the tests was to stand up before a group of strangers and speak for five minutes on a given topic. As we entered the room we were given a slip of paper on it was the subject we had to speak about, I was very lucky mine was the Fleet Air Arm in which my brother was Sub Lt, I had no difficulty in speaking about that for five minutes. On another test we had to entertain male and female cadets to show what social skills we had. I had been to elocution classes earlier in my life so I had a fund of anecdotes to pass on. I must have passed all the tests because the next thing that happened I was asked to go and be measured for an officer's uniform. I remember the tailor saying to me after I had taken my skirt off to be measured: Good God, woman, what are you wearing?! In fact I was wearing the official issue of WRNS undergarments, which included a pair of Voluminous navy blue knickers in silk stockinette, that could be stretched from ones knees to under the armpits. After I commissioned I was posted as Third officer to Wetherby. This was a Stokers training base. Later after more service in Ardentenny, Largs, Greenock and Dover I was asked to go to India as a Quarters Officer on Lord Mountbatten's staff. However, my mother was ill at the time so I produced a doctor's certificate asking for exemption. Incidentally not all the WRNS personnel arrived at their destination, one of their ships was torpedoed en route to India.

My final memory of the war is several months after the war had ended and I had left the Navy, I recollect receiving a bill from the Admiralty for £15. This was the cost of a clock, which had been removed from one of the four houses in Dover that had housed WRNS for which I had been responsible. I think it got removed during the celebratory high spirits at the announcement of the end of hostilities. One account I never settled

As there are a several ex wrens among our wives and associated members, I thought a short tale would show they are not forgotten

Bereavement - It is with regret and sadness I report Shipmate William (Bill) Garrett crossed the bar on Sunday 17th July. Bill has suffered with emphysema for quite sometime, but had a sudden heart attack during the early hours of Sunday morning and passed away about 0415. Sympathy and condolences was sent to Sylvia

and family, a donation was made to the hospital that Bill attended.

The funeral took place at Eltham's Falcon Wood Crematorium, on Tuesday 26th July at 1430. On behalf of Association members, Lilian and I joined Bill's family and friends at the ceremony, and after at the family home where we were made very welcome.

Sylvia expressed her wish to remain an Associated Member of the Association.

Member Ken Bartlett (RAF Fighter Direction Officer aboard Phoebe 1945)

Recently I was searching for something and came across this old photo and thought it may give rise to a chuckle or two, who knows, someone may remember "Lennie the Leap"? I can assure you he landed safely and 'dryshod'. I wonder though "Why the wellies"? As I remember it the shoreline was an earth bank with grass-like vegetation, and the two or three airmen that went ashore did so in RAF issue shoes that had been issued to wear on the decks instead of our hob-nailed boots, and many the argument we had with WO's and RAF Police for our wearing them.



From notes made at the time I can tell you that the photo was taken on Wednesday 9th May 1945. HMS Phoebe had sailed up the Rangoon River and anchored 7—8 miles south of the city. On the west bank a typical Burmese Pagoda and small village could be seen about a mile across the paddy fields (could they be the reason for the wellies)? The day earlier had been VE-Day and here we were stuck out in the middle of an oriental river. Perhaps as an act of compassion someone decided that shore leave for all possible

watches might be some measure of compensation. The following day the ship moved up river passing still burning oil tanks, a reminder of the Jap's scorched earth policy. We anchored close to the city, but no shore leave was given. The next day Phoebe sailed with a destroyer escort to intercept a Jap Nachi 7" class cruiser and her 5 destroyer escort. We RAF men were hurriedly disembarked onto a launch and taken to the Ulster Queen which took over as Fighter Direction Ship.

HMS Phoebe never sighted the enemy, the Jap cruiser and 4 of the destroyers were sunk by the 26th Destroyer Flotilla.

Forthcoming Events:-

August Bank Holiday Weekend. S/m Jim Hutchinson will be showing his model ships in the Big Hall at the Kent Show.

The showground is situated on the A249 Maidstone to Sittingbourne Rd, Nr. Detling Kent. If you are attending call in and see Jim he would like to meet you and have a chat.

Jim will also be attending what may well be the last reunion of Operation Pedestal, in Malta on Sept 26th. If you are in Malta at that time he would be pleased to meet up with you, give him a call his number is in the Members List.

Another item for this Autumn is `Trafalgar 200 Woods'.

This is a number of areas where trees will be planted to form a wood to Commemorate the ships that took part in the battle, each wood will be named after a ship at Trafalgar, HMS Phoebe was one of them, and a wood is being planted in her name at Millets Farm, Abingdon, just a few miles from my home. On Tuesday afternoon I am to meet with a member of the Carter family that owns the land to see what arrangements are being made. I am hoping the planting will take place sometime after, or before November 12th. I will put all the details in the next newsletter and hope some of you can join Lil and myself in the planting.

Commiserations to Mary Bagness who, unfortunately, fell down some steps while on holiday in Jersey and damaged her instep, she was in plaster for a while, and is now just about hobbling around.

We wish Mary a quick and complete recovery.

B&B is now available at my daughter's cottage situated on the A30 at Crows an Wra. (marked on most road maps). Just 3 miles from Lands End, all rooms are en-suite. £20 pp. Off road parking.

"Balankan Cottage". Crows an Wra, St Buryan, Cornwall. TR 19 6HU. Tel:- (Mrs Lynn Cox) 01736 810168.

E-Mail Coxlynsue@aol.com