

HMS Phoebe Association

Newsletter

April 2007

*They came from near; and from afar;
They may have followed that ancient star.
Seaman, Stokers, Tiffs and Bunts,
Stores and Scribes, they all were once.
They've even got some Jennies too;
They'd all be dressed in Navy Blue
But now they have another job;
And have at long last left the Mob.
Civilian life is not a bore,
They still enjoy their runs ashore.
They always try to do their best,
And help their brethren in distress.
They do it with a willing heart;
Loyalty and friendship will never part.
From 1st Sea Lord to lowest rates,
They're proudly known as Phoebe's Shipmates.*

edited for the newsletter. Author not known??

Things are getting back to normal now after my January scare, sorry that some things went astray like the Sunday Paddle Steamer trip, Yes! I am afraid this is not on the reunion venue now. I tried for some time to get the trip re-confirmed, but the day we wanted it has been re-allocated to another organisation, although this other organisation has agreed we can join them I have not accepted, the reason being that the trip I was looking at was for two hours, whereas this trip is a cruise to Sheerness and back, it would mean five/six hours on the boat, which would probably mean buying a meal or snacks on board, plus the bar, adding that to the ticket price of £20, I thought was a bit too much to ask you to pay, and if the weather is anything other than sunny and clear there would not be much to see. I hope I have done the right thing? If anyone still wishes to go, let me know, and I will do what I can. Steamer leaves dockyard Sunday at 1100.

I will try to find out what other local attractions are open on a Sunday, I know there is sometimes a market held opposite the hotel.

However, there is one definite place we can go Sunday lunch time that's the 'The Veterans Club, Marlborough Road, Gillingham. its only about 10/15 minutes walk from the hotel, (out of hotel onto the top road, cross over walk left, turn up first street on right, club is up on the left). It is an ex-services club, I will contact them and arrange for all Phoebe members to get entry, I have been there and found it very friendly, and cheap!!! Not sure if proof of identity would be needed, if so I will get some printed, (might be an idea for everyone to have a membership card).

I had a email from a Ms Wendy Glenton, who I think is the daughter of S/m Jimmy Lamprill, the email just says. 'James Lamprill died last year'. No other information as to when or how. All I could do was to reply to the sender with our condolence and sympathy.

Getting news like this of a shipmates passing is very sad. If I receive notice in time I always try to be at the funeral, or if its too far away I ask another shipmate living local to represent all of us.

Further to my own predicament. I had another cardiac scan, in Oxford this time, but a more thorough one this time, then a talk with the consultant. I will be called in for a angiogram scan and possibly key-hole surgery at the same time in 5/6 weeks, that takes it to the 4th April, so by the time you get this newsletter I hope it is all over and I feel fit again, or getting that way! (Appointments now received for pre-med on 13th March and angio/surgery 20th March) Roy.

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Padre Ray Merrick, who had a hip replacement, is doing very well, he is happy to be fully active again. Knowing Ray's commitment in helping others, this means he is chasing about all over Bournemouth.

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Mike Fox, our affiliated member and committee man is not at all well, he is unable to work now and at times unable to attend TS Phoebe Sea Cadet meetings, Mike is their committee Chairman. We wish you a speedy recovery and return to your normal self Mike.

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I had a letter from Taff & Lillian Beckerton who are now fully ensconced in Melbourne, Ozziefosterland. It starts:

Letter From Australia: We made it but unfortunately Lillian had to go back for two weeks, it was to do with residency etc, and we could not assume we would be automatically re-admitted just because our family lives here, therefore we could only have return tickets. However, we have 'burned our boats' now and everything is OK (fingers crossed)!?

We are in a place called Somers, named after Lord Somers, a 19th century Englishman who opened up this area on the Mornington Peninsular, south of Melbourne.

We are situated at the rear of HMAS Cerberus the RAN's main training establishment. This is where I taught N.B.C.D to recruits in the seventies, (For the cutlass & cannon sailors, or older guys, Nuclear. Biological & Chemical.. Defence).

The establishment was named after HMS Cerberus a Monitor that was given to Australia in 1917 by Britain. You can still see her today as part of the breakwater off Beaumaris Beach a Melbourne suburb. The temp here is 38c (114 F), February is the hottest month here. Some of our family live not far away, others live in Sydney and Ballarat, about 60 miles north. Our new & full address will be in the new members list, if any of you are visiting in our area, you would be most welcome to call in at anytime.

Best wishes to all of you, take care. Taffy & Lillian.

I'm sure everyone joins me in wishing Taffy & Lillian the very best of luck in their venture, and hope Taffy will benefit health-wise.

This is weird, but interesting!

fi yuo cna raed tihs, yuo hvae a sgtrane mnid too

Cna yuo raed tihs? Olny 55 plepoe out of 100 can.

i cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pelae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt! *Its easier to read this than to write it. RWP*

Most shipmates have cars to do journeys in, but others use trains and fares are expensive. You can make it a little bit cheaper by buying a rail card, but only if you use it often, an early reservation earns a discount as does booking on-line. In the News of the World, March 4th, was an article about buying two tickets to cover a journey it often works out cheaper than buying one ticket. For instance:- A Standard Return from London to Newcastle is £224. But, a Standard Open Return from London to Peterborough, and a Saver Return from Peterborough to Newcastle is £144.98. You Save £79.02. At that saving it must be worth a try.

The only snag that I could see in obtaining a combination fare ticket is having to do it by phone, or on the inter-net, you cannot do it at the station due to the time it takes to sort out

National Express have a varied fare tariff, too many variations to mention here, but if you are not worried about running time or changeovers perhaps this could be the way to travel, its cheaper than a train ticket, but very much slower slower.

A short tale to fill up space:

After a months foreign service leave I was not looking forward to returning to RNB Chatham. It was 1959 and I had less than two years to do before being de-mobbed. I had completed the joining routine before going on leave, so at 0800 I was lined up with all the other 'barrack stanchions' at the Barrack Master's office waiting to be detailed off for some sort of job.

The Barrack Master, a Lt Cdr, came from his office to inspect us, much to my dismay I found it was the 'B' Turret captain from my last ship, and he hated me, always managing to find something to charge me with.

He stared hard at me when he saw me, but passed on. When our names were called out we were given jobs to do. When my name was called, I was told to report to the Barrack Master in his office. What now? What godforsaken job had he dreamed up for me? But he was quite friendly, even shaking my hand, then asking me if I would like a 'rabbit run' to Singapore, not having ever been there I jumped at the chance, it turned out to be a tow job from Malta aboard HMS Hickleton, a coastal minesweeper. I flew out to Malta and joined up with the other seven members of the tow crew. For the two weeks it took to prepare for the trip we were victualled aboard LCT Lofoten, our one officer was a two ringer, Lt Worthington. On the day of departure the tug HMT Brigand took up the tow and off we set. We had limited electrical power, only one small portable generator to supply emergency lighting, power for steering, and the cold room, but before we got to Port Said the generator had broken down, and could not be repaired. Our fresh water was now supplied by the tug in barricoes, floated back to us on a line when we were under-way, all food was now tinned stuff. Cooking was done on Primus stoves in the galley.

For a day we anchored in the Bitter Lakes, enabling us to go on board the tug, shower, and eat a good meal. When we got under way again we found we had a huge rat aboard, it must have come aboard when we were alongside the tug at Port Said. We informed the tug captain then set about catching it. We were well into the Red Sea when we managed to corner it in the galley flat, and kill it. The tug captain told us to keep the rat until the evening when he would bring us alongside. Picture if you can two ships tied together drifting in the Red Sea, holding a full naval burial

service for a mangy ‘gippo’ rat, followed by a right boozy wake. It was during this period that our Lt went berserk with an axe and chased a rating round the upper-deck, smashing fittings with the axe, and trashing a cabin. The tug captain ordered our cox’n to lock the Lt up. We managed to get him locked in his cabin, but he smashed the louvre’s out of door and crawled out, we locked him in again and boarded up the door, we fed him by pushing bowls through a gap under the broken door. He completely wrecked his cabin, empty wine bottles he smashed against the bulkhead. Two weeks later we came alongside in Singapore, as we tied up two jeeps with a Lt Cdr, Master At Arms, and two hefty Patrolmen pulled up alongside, they went down to the cabin, we last saw our Lt being taken away in a straight jacket. Later I found he was dismissed on Medical Grounds!!

All of us were placed in the same mess in the barracks, because we were, as they said, “in transit” we did not do a joining routine or any duties, we were allowed ashore every day, but because we only had a limited amount of kit, we could not stay out overnight. The first place we went to was Nee Soo? where we ordered civvy suits from the chinky tailor at £6 a suit. We had to pay for them there and then, they would be ready to collect on just three days later. But staggering back to the barracks on Thursday we were rushed off to RAF Changi for a flight home, leaving on Friday, I wonder if our suits are still there, a bit moth eaten by now!!

We arrived at RNB Chatham three days later, and went straight off on two weeks leave. Back in RNB again, I was once again called into the barrack masters office, this time my friendly Lt Cdr offered me a job as Harbour Master(Chatham) Boats Crew. I stayed at this job until demobbed in 61. I only went out in the boat once officially, and that was for a week tied up at Tower Bridge when an Italian warship was berthed there. For something to do we went out with the Thames River Police and pulled in a girls body. The rest of the time was spent looking after the HMs big house.

The Harbour Master was Captain Suther, he and his wife were lovely people, and looked after us well. The Captain called me into his study a week before I was due to leave for de-mob, and asked if I would like to have his barge for a river trip, all his staff went on the trip, wives as well, and the Captain to our surprise had stocked the boat with booze. Quite a nice way to end 14 years..

Roy P.

Reunion weekend - Saturday Coach trip to Canterbury:-

I must thank everyone who heeded my request and re-submitted their names, I now have the list on a CD and Lil has a written list. There has been a good response to this trip, at the moment we have just one (1) seat vacant. I have asked for the coach to be at the hotel for 0930, it may be there earlier! the quicker its loaded the sooner it leaves, an early breakfast is advised. Please make sure that you confirm with the driver at what time, and where, in Canterbury he will pick you up.

Please be there on time. The AGM will be held shortly after you return.

ONLY THOSE NAMED ON THE LIST CAN TRAVEL

There will be the usual raffles on Friday and Saturday night.

Now Lillian Beckerton is no longer with us, we may require some help with the raffles. Donations of Raffle prizes most gratefully appreciated.

All raffle and auction proceeds go to the Association funds, this helps to keep subscriptions at their present level.

There will be a few Polo type shirts and Fleece jackets of various sizes on sale at the reunion, with either a Frigate or Cruiser crest embroidered on each item. They are also available by post. Phone Lil 01235 2115

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One liners:

My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was 60.

Now she's 97 years old and we don't know where the hell she is.

The only reason I would take up exercising is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.

I joined a health club last year, spent about 200 quid.

Haven't lost a pound. Apparently you have to go there.

I exercise early in the morning before my brain figures out what I'm doing.

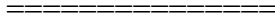
I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

I have flabby thighs, but fortunately my stomach covers them.

The advantage of exercising every day is that you die healthier.

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.

Congratulations to S/m Ernie Clewes upon his promotion to 1st/Lt of the TS Phoebe Sea Cadet Corp. Well done Ernie, I am sure you will do a good job



. It is very pleasing to welcome new members to the Association and on this occasion we welcome two shipmates, S/m Alan Lowe from Tauranga New Zealand. And S/m Roy Talbot from Rochester, Kent. (Yes! another Roy joins the family).

S/m Alan Lowe spent from 1966 to 1968 aboard the Frigate, his rating then was LRO(G) (Not sure what that means, no doubt soon will). Some one may recall Alan and may like get in touch with him, his details are in this newsletter, including his email address.

S/m Roy Talbot, who actually lives in Strood, was a Boy/Sigs aboard in 1942, joining after the ship returned from Brooklyn the first time, and one of the surviving boys in the second torpedoing, was also aboard for “Operation Pedestal”. On a visit to Bournemouth Roy visited our memorial. I expect some of the names brought back sad memories. Roy’s details are also enclosed, including his email address.

As the above was received after the 2007 members list was printed would you please write/stick in their details, (see back page) in the space provided in the new list.

I have been asked to remind you that old members lists need to be disposed of safely; **shred or Incinerate them**, not doing so could find unsolicited mail etc being delivered to shipmates.



The Angioramm I had showed just small amounts of furring of the heart arteries not enough for stents to be inserted, medication will be used to clear the furring. Which means I shall have to live with angina until such times as arteries clear, there is a chance that the dosage of Thyroxine I injest daily can be reduced to help the process. (Fingers crossed).



Would all committee officers please phone me their interest in staying in office and for their names to be put forward at the AGM.

(Constitution Section V)

It's All Right - The Navy's Here!

(Vic Chanter)

There are so many things in my life that I have been privileged to experience. There are a few of them of which I have been proud.

This particular one has been brought home to me as I read an article in The Mail On Sunday, 14th January 2007. The heading reads: 'My father served in the Navy when it was our pride and power'.

As an island fortress, the UK has for many generations possessed a Navy to be proud of. It's good to think that what we have experienced will be confined to history books and museums, along with the rest of our great heritage, but sad that we are about to see the end of our country's great naval tradition. Already we have seen the cut-backs, and despite the 'sterling' work that our remaining ships are called upon to do, we have the distressing sight of the breaking up and the rusting hulks of our once magnificent fleet. As an ex-Chatham rating, I felt a certain sadness at the closure of HMS Pembroke. After my discharge from RN to RNR, I suspected that never again would I return to wander through the gates and along the barrack's roads, squares and blocks, but I was always aware that the opportunity was there. Now, the area is a museum.

Like so many other matelots, I remember Devonport. Good old Guzz. Not quite as well as Portsmouth. Good old Pompey. Now Portsmouth too is almost a Naval Ghost Town: more rusting hulks, more mothballed destroyers and frigates awaiting selling off or breaking up. I believe there are a couple of old carriers tied up, with no planes of course. And there are no longer sufficient experienced seamen to keep up the tradition of the once world's greatest navy. The old dockyard's history from the 18th century will soon be completed when it ceases to be a serious naval base and becomes merely a museum piece, housing HMS Victory and any other vessel worthy of being preserved. Portsmouth will still remain a coastal defence port. But, against what?

Once Navy, Always Navy. I couldn't discuss this with outright civilians; they wouldn't understand. There is a great understanding between members of the armed forces, and probably more so within the navy, within the confines of a ship. One learns to get along with other shipmates: every Taffy, Jock, Paddy, Scouser and Geordie; trading insults and cursing the powers-that-be, doing a drip every now-and-again, and moaning, 'Roll on my ****ing twelve!' But...from all corners of the UK we were banded together as the Royal Navy, and remained loyal to one another.

We, and those who served before us, built a tradition that others knew they could rely upon. I'd like to quote three occasions that says it all for me:

In February 1940, when HMS Cossack rescued 300 British merchant seamen from the German prison ship Altmark, the liberated sailors were heard to say, 'The Navy's here!'

In May 1940, at the evacuation of Dunkirk, the word went round the BEF waiting on the beaches, 'It's all right, the Navy's here!'

In April/May 1941, following the evacuation of troops stranded on the beaches in Greece and Crete: in Alexandria, in a speech by a New Zealand officer, he said, 'We in the army didn't worry much when we were retreating to the beaches, we knew the Navy would be there. When we got to the beaches, the word was passed around,

"It's all right. The Navy's here!"

Badges*(Vic Chanter)*

Do you possess more than one blazer? Do you belong to more than one club or association? If your answer is ‘No’ to the first question and ‘Yes’ to the second, you may have a problem. Do the clubs or associations require you to sport their blazer badge? Yes?, then you really have a *major* problem.

Someone dared to ask a club secretary’s advice on the matter of replacing his present badge with the new one, on his one and only blazer. Some bright spark

disparagingly offered, “Haven’t you heard of Velcro?” Now I don’t know about you, but I much prefer to see a neatly sewn on badge than one that stands off a quarter of an inch from the pocket, no matter how convenient it is to change every time you go to a different meeting. Owing to age (mine), and the fact that my blazer had shrunk, whilst parading in the rain (?). (I still retain the sylphlike figure that I had as a lad, hidden somewhere under this fat protective outer shell that I have acquired), it was necessary to buy a replacement blazer. My old badge had seen some service, and showed it, but I remembered the care I had taken trimming it to shape and sewing it on with all the expertise which I had learned as a sprog. So it was with some misgiving that I agreed to allow the

professional tailor, ‘We know how to do these things!’, to sew it on for me. I was right though; there is nothing like the good old sewing-on training we had in the Andrew. It rankled, but I put up with the travesty of the bodged stitching of the professional, with the thought that no-one else could see it until ... One bright summer day, I decided to transfer my sunglasses from my shirt pocket to my top blazer pocket and, you guessed it. “It was sewn up”!

In 1953 - Laying alongside in Sheerness dockyard the skipper cleared lower deck, all eight of us mustered on the foredeck, he read out a signal; we were to proceed ASAP to Portsmouth and act as guard ship for the Fleet Review. I wondered what a 70ft ex Harbour Defence ML, max speed 13 knots now converted to a Survey ML, with no armament at all could possibly do as a guard ship. But the thought of actually being there was something to look forward to. The trip to Portsmouth would take 3 or 4 days, we could not stay at sea after dusk. We left harbour in the forenoon, our first stopover would be Dover. We stayed aboard that night, Dover was not much of a run ashore then. Leaving there as soon as it got light we sailed along the south coast and arrived at Newhaven just as it was getting dark. This time we did get ashore and spent some time in the Deep Sea Mission using their baths and diner, then the nearest pub. Our third night was spent anchored in some inlet near Selsey Next day we arrived at Portsmouth our berth was in the Haslar MTB base.

While we were there we got out our little Dory for a trip round the harbour, but we had no petrol for the small Seagull outboard motor.

Astern of us was the Gay Bombardier, a gas turbine MTB, we cadged a gallon of high octane juice from their engineer. For about half an hour we tore round the harbour looking at the foreign war ships, the Seagull was going flat out all the time, the Dory had never gone so fast, it was almost planing. then the engine literally blew up, bits flew off it before it fell off the transom and sunk. Luckily none of us were injured, except our pride when we had to row back to our berth. we had to replace the outboard somehow before the skipper found out. I forget now how it was done but a day later we had another outboard, a much bigger one, telling the skipper our old one had been upgraded, I'm sure he did not believe us, but said nothing. Our guard ship duty turned out to be chasing after the hundreds of small boats expected at Spithead dodging in and out of the warships anchored there. Most of the motor boats dashing about left us standing so we were sent to make sure the big three & four-masted schooners and training ships anchored in the right place. On the day the review took place the skipper's wife Janet came aboard dressed in a RN officers uniform, this was before women were allowed to sail aboard a RN ship. The Cox'n was sent ashore to look at Janet standing on the bridge to see if her disguise worked, Janet was quite large up-top and it showed until she donned a extra large watch-coat. How she felt during the review we could not imagine it was boiling hot in the sun, and what she felt like under that thick and heavy watch-coat one could only guess. As the Queen came by in I think, HMS Surprise, we stood to attention ready to give three cheers, but a big speed boat sped by its bow wave crashing against bows, four of us standing on the foredeck went flying across the deck almost over the guard rails into the 'oggin'. By the time we were lined up again the Queen had gone. We later found the culprit tied up alongside a massive yacht, our skipper went aboard to complain and came back with a crate of beer and some bottles of wine. We were issued with neat rum aboard the ML, mostly in the evening after surveying was ended and we were back in harbour, we often bottled our tots if we were going ashore. The beer was shared out and our bottled rum came out, we had a glorious night aboard. All feeling the worse for wear the next morning when we had to supervise the dispersal of yachts, the sea was not very kind to us, but all went well and we got a "Well done" from the Admiral. After refueling we sailed for Ramsgate to start a survey of the Goodwin Sands. We did not see much of the skipper during the trip to Ramsgate. Janet had sailed with us, he was otherwise engaged. rwp

Date of Entry: 30-3-2007 CET Name: Thomas Curran Jr.

Website Address: <http://wdovt.com>

Comment: My father Thomas Curran Sr. was from Newfoundland and served in the British navy from 1938 through 1944. He is deceased since 1991. I have a wonderful photo album from his tour of duty aboard the Phoebe including everything from the captain's cat laying in the captain's hat to photos of royalty boarding the ship. I currently live in Vermont, USA and have a web site design company called Website Designs of Vt. I will make a web site with my father's pictures on it and let you know its address when it's ready. Meanwhile if any of you knew my father or would like to contact me about his photos, please email me.

Thank you and thanks to you and your relatives for serving.

Tom Curran Jr.

NB. The above was in the guestbook on our web site, an email was received asking if we agreed to it, I have done so because most of our photos on the site disappeared when Neil Avery left, and I am not quite up to it yet in replacing them .

S/m Tony Brown change members list number to: 223

COPY OR CUT OUT & STICK IN YOUR MEMBERS LIST

22 H	ROPER Eric	459 Wherstead Rd Ipswich Suffolk IP2 8LH	01473 690288	(Associated List) Son of Shipmate
225.	LOWE Alan	181 Omokoroa Rd Tauranga New Zealand	0064-7548-2251 alanlowe@gmail.com	LRO(G) 1966/68
226	TALBOT Roy	15 Westergate Rd Strood Kent ME2 3RZ	01634 710685	Boy/Sigs 1942/+