

HMS Phoebe Association

*Newsletter
August 2006*



Shipmate Ron Franklin

August seems to have come round quicker this year, it only feels like it was a couple of weeks ago that we were at Scarborough enjoying another reunion.

We hope that Tom Bateman has got over his chest complaint, and is continuing to with the doctors advice. We wish you well Tom, and wish all shipmates and friends who are not well a quick trip back to health.

With much regret I report the sad passing of S/m Ron Franklin into calmer waters. Ron had been in hospital a long time, he had trouble with his legs that could not be diagnosed, however Ron did have a operation and it was successful in as much that he could now move about, but a chest infection developed. Beryl, Ron's wife was keeping me informed of his progress, she phoned me in the evening of June 7th to tell me about the chest infection. Early the next day, June 8th Beryl phoned to say Ron had died that morning, he had contracted Bronchial Pneumonia and died peacefully in his sleep. It is a very sad thing to report a shipmate crossing the bar, more so on this occasion as I knew Ron when we were aboard ship together during the last commission.

Lilian and I attended Ron's funeral at Hastings Crematorium on Tuesday, June 20th. There were so many in attendance the chapel pews were full and many people had to stand. A card of condolence and sympathy was sent to Beryl and Family on behalf of shipmates in the Association.

A donation was also made on your behalf to St Michaels Hospice.

Our visitors from Florida, Jean and Richard have been in touch and expressed their appreciation to all shipmates for their friendliness towards them at the reunion. Jean said that she was not expecting such a friendly atmosphere and so informal. She enjoyed every moment of it and is definitely coming again, she said it may well be next year as she has relations in Kent she can visit.

I wonder if telling her ladies in the Chapter of what the reunion was like if any others will be thinking of coming!! My thanks to all shipmates who made their stay a memorable one.

Don't forget about the TS Phoebe's Trafalgar Night Dinner at the Belvedere Hotel, Bournemouth. it was in the last newsletter, get in touch with S/m Ernie Clewes if you are thinking of attending. Please make your own arrangements for overnight accommodation. (More details to follow).

Subscriptions are due in September for the year 2006/2007. Please forward renewal slip and cheque ASAP. Make cheques payable to HMS Phoebe Association. Please make sure you write the amount and not put numbers, and don't forget to sign them. All subscription arrears will be notified on the subscription renewal slip. Please check, and bring payments up to date.

Treasurer

Lil and I stopped off at the King Charles Hotel on our way down to Thanet for a weeks holiday, mainly to make arrangements for next year and to check out the hotel. We met with the assistant manageress, Fiona, who was most helpful. The hotel has had the main bar area refurbished and extended, it is now more modern looking and looks quite trendy, the reception area looks clean and tidy, and the staff were friendly.

Entertainment will be on three nights, the main night being Saturday.

The AGM will be on Saturday as usual but we may be able to hold it a little later as dinner will be served from 1900 each night.

I have not been in touch with any coach companies yet, I wanted to check on places that may be interesting to visit. Spending a week in a caravan at Minster, near Ramsgate gave us the opportunity to visit the seaside resorts of Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Deal, Herne Bay and Whitstable. Ramsgate is a definite NO! there is just nothing there now, it is an eyesore, most of the shopping area is closed, and only a small part of the sea front opposite the harbour is open.

The fun fair, amusement arcade and road alongside the beach has been demolished and boarded up, but one can still walk along the beach path.

Margate has not altered much except quite a few shops etc were closed down and boarded up, Dreamland is still there but whether it will be there next year is suspect at the moment. Broadstairs is still thriving but like all the resorts is suffering from the huge shopping complex built at Westwood on the Margate Road, now called Westwood Cross, all the big stores are here and more are being built. Herne Bay we

could not muster any interest in, and Whitstable was much the same.

We did venture into Deal and spent a couple of hours there, a nice sea front and a reasonable shopping area. One thing we did find in Thanet was how disability friendly it was, disabled parking everywhere was free.

Of course we visited Canterbury and gave that a once over, we found it easy to park in the centre at the disabled badge holders car park, with just a two minute walk into the pedestrian shopping precinct.

There are places to visit in Canterbury, the Cathedral is well worth a visit, and there are canal boat trips to be had, the old hospital is open, and you can walk along part of the city walls, there are plenty of places to rest and eating places are in abundance, there are a couple of pubs in the main street and some in the side turnings. I am not sure what the place is like on a Sunday, so I think Saturday would be the best time to visit when everything is open. I have asked for a group price quote to visit the Shepherd & Neame Brewery in Faversham, the tour lasts about 2hrs. We could visit there on the way to Canterbury.

Sunday we will have to look into a bit more, maybe a Paddle Steamer trip on the Medway if its viable, (It has a licensed bar aboard)!! I have asked for a quote. More information on the above as soon as I have it.

A Rededication and Memorial Parade will take place at ex RNB Chatham (HMS Pembroke). The Memorial Plaque commemorating the 135 men killed when the Drill Hall received a direct hit during WWII, was lost when the hall became the library for the University of Greenwich & Kent. The University have authorised the funding of a replacement plaque which will be unveiled at 11am Sunday 10th September 2006.

A parade in support of the unveiling will take place on the parade ground.

All RNA, RMA, ex-serving Chatham personnel, and ships associations are invited to attend, Standards are also invited. Adequate car parking on site, and those not parading can view from the terraces above the parade ground. Those wishing to parade will form up in North Road behind Drill Hall at 0945.

If any shipmate would like to join S/Ms Derek West, John Barrat, myself and Lil please do so. Lil and I will be staying Saturday night at the King Charles, if you want to stay here too, phone: 01634 830303. John Barratt will be parading the RM Standard, and Derek West will be parading with our HMS Phoebe Standard, Lil & I will be on the terrace.

The following is a note from S/m Derek West:

On Tuesday 11th July five members and their wives met with Lil & Roy for lunch at the Toby Carvery, Westwood Cross, Thanet. I suppose you could loosely call this a Mini- Reunion. Those present were S/Ms Derek West, John Barratt, Bill Harrison, Peter Pope, & Roy Walsh. Plus of course Roy & Lil. This get-together was set up to coincide with Roy & Lil's visit to East Kent for a weeks holiday to visit family and the King Charles Hotel to make further arrangements for the 2007 reunion. The lunch and 'lamp swinging' was most enjoyable and revived many pleasant memories.

The Toby Carvery is a good and reasonably priced place to eat for anyone visiting the Thanet area, but unfortunately this time drinking had to be just one half pint of shandy each, as we were all driving. But Roy did manage to drop Lil's camera in the coffee. Hope the film is ok Lil?

D West.

I would like to add some more to Derek's note. The camera incident was purely an accident with the strap, and No!! I had not been on the rum, tho' I might have been if Lil could drive.

Meeting up with shipmates and their wives and partners is always a pleasure, more so this time because I met up with Roy Walsh who I last saw as we left the troopship HMT Orduna at Liverpool in October 1950. I have been searching for him and other ex Boys ever since, of course in the wrong places. Then finding out only last year that while I was living in Ramsgate, Roy lived a few miles away in Birchington.

I also found out that another friend lived close by in of all places Minster where we were staying on holiday, but sadly my friend

Smudge crossed the bar a short time ago, a lot of you 48/51 commission seamen, especially Topmen will remember Smudge or "Blackie" quite a comedian and a joker, who would have thought that later he would become the village Policeman at Minster. I had some photos of Smudge which I have passed on to his widow Doreen and to his son. The rest of my holiday? I have related earlier in the newsletter. So I finish this with many thanks from Lil and me to the shipmates and wives who made that Tuesday a memorable occasion for both of us. We know we will see John and Derek at Chatham and the reunion, perhaps we will see the others there too.

If any one is able to open < www.hmsphoebe.co.uk > web site you may notice that the June newsletter is now in place, well not exactly in place, in fact it's a bit out of place, but at least it can be opened to read. I have been trying for weeks to get it uploaded but it just would not work, I am sure it is down to BTinternet not closing Neil Avery's account which means the site was still activated in his name. His email address is still activated, I tried sending a email to it and it was not returned so it must still be activated. Neil has not been in touch yet, I expect he is still enjoying a long vacation and settling in to his new environment.

I am hoping to do something about the unwanted visitors to the web site, the guestbook has had 147 visitors sign in, but only 34 of them are actual visitors, the rest are advertising sites, some are not very nice ones, definitely not the type we want to be associated with. And the worse thing about them they are the first ones on the list , it takes ages to scroll down to the proper visitors. As it looks at the moment, until I hear from Neil, it looks like I will have to delete that guestbook and start a fresh one that allows such visitors to be deleted, I have one ready to upload but it will mean the bona fide visitors in the present guestbook will be lost, I will have delve into it a bit more before I delete anything. Once I am conversant with placing things in the site I will be asking if anyone wants to add to it, stories, photos etc.

Reunion 2007:- The Reservation form for the King Charles Hotel is enclosed, it is a bit different in lay-out, so if you have any queries phone

me. Although it states February as the cut off date it may be advisable to reserve as soon as you possibly can. Cancellations with a refund of deposit can be made up to 48 hrs before arrival. Make a note of your reservation and the hotel Phone No before you send your form off. The actual price for the whole weekend would have been £141. But as you see we have quite a good discount. I am sorry that the single price is more, but that is normal at most hotels, may I suggest that if a shipmate/friend is also going alone you could double up in a twin room it would be much cheaper that way. There is a triple room with 3 single beds available. Rooms are available from 1500, but you can use the hotel facilities while waiting. What used to be the nightclub is now the hotels leisure centre, you have full use of its facilities. The old swimming pool has gone and should be a garden area by the time we arrive. Reduced price entrance tickets to the Historic Dockyard are still on sale at reception I advise you to get the tickets here the actual entrance fee is £11.

I had a note from, (I think)? S/m Fred Silks daughter to say he had spent some time in hospital but is now home, I tried phoning Fred before our trip down his way, but as there was no answer I thought he was away. If we had known he was hospitalised we could have visited him while in Canterbury.

Sorry Fred, we hope you are a lot better now you are home.

I have letter here that should have been in the last newsletter but I forgot to include it, there are a couple of photos too for the album.

Sorry Jimmy, hope you don't mind the editing.

S/m Jimmy Sutcliffe applied for the Lottery Recall grant to visit his brothers grave at Trincomalee, his son was to be his carer.

Dear Roy, Just to put you in the picture ref our visit to the War Graves Cemetery at Trinco', it was a success with a lot of help from a nice lot of people. It wasn't straight forward booking the trip, the girls at the First Choice travel office had to do a lot of phoning regarding the Sri Lanka Tamils situation. The North is not fully settled yet. First they

got a railway time table that stated a train left Colombo at 0600 arriving Trinco' at 1800, 12 hours to do 120 or so miles? That was bootied out. Our hotel was 45 minutes by coach north of Colombo. The solution was to have a word with the Rep' at the hotel and put our position to him. Getting to the Grave was the most important part of the trip. The Rep said the thing to do was go by Taxi it would cost £210 return and take two days, and stopping for a short visit at places of interest on the way, it meant we passed through lots of towns, and as far as I could see Sri Lanka had not changed much or moved on over the years. We left at 0700 Saturday morning, stayed overnight at Sigirtya, left again at 0700 & arrived at Trinco at 1100am. The further north we went from Sigirtya the more check points we went through and armed guards in Pill Boxes. We had just an hour to visit the War Graves Cemetery Our driver had a chat with the armed guard at the gate and we got the ok to enter. The Cemetery was very neat and tidy and well looked after. I asked the care-taker how many graves there were, 358 he said.

It was a very sad moment for me standing there at my brothers grave 60 years after my last visit.

When Phoebe arrived in Colombo early in 1945 leave was given until midnight. My brother Bill was stationed with the RM at HMS Ukussa, I managed to find him and stayed half an hour with him. Phoebe sailed for Trinco' the next morning, later Bill was drafted to HMS Bambara, at Trinco'. I got Bill to stay aboard Phoebe for two days which he thoroughly enjoyed doing. I was looking forward to more meetings in the future. The offensive was under way and Phoebe was away quite a while, I think Rangoon was taken and Phoebe returned to Trinco' at the end of May. Mail came aboard and I had one from Mum & Dad to say Bill had died 27th Jan 1945 and was buried at St Stephens Cemetery, Trinco'. Visiting Bill's Sergeant he detailed a RM to take to Bills grave. Whilst at Trinco' I visited the grave whenever possible. We left for the UK in October 1945, I said my last farewell to Bill as we left the harbour by saying " I will return Bill".

Thanks to a lot of nice people, to yourself Roy and to Vic Chanter for your information and help, to the Recall fund for the grant of £2100, and my son Peter who acted as my carer. It was a lovely trip.

Sri Lanka is lovely and so are the people who looked after us, nothing was too much trouble, they were truly great. On our way back from Trinco' trying to get back before dusk, our driver was pulled in for speeding and fined £10. During our stay we made friends with a lot of people from the UK and a few from Germany, after hearing our reason for the trip to Trinco', they came to wish us good luck and say farewell when we left on Saturday night. It had been a great two week holiday. On our flight out from Heathrow to home we flew over the oil depot fire, it looked horrendous from the air, and deadly serious with flames and thick black smoke billowing up.

Once again I thank all who helped to make my visit so memorable.

Jim Sutcliffe.

"It was a pleasure Jim, its what the Association is about".

Associated Member No 22D. Mark Randolph (new address):-
7 Aspen Walk - Heathfield - E. Sussex - TN21 8YP

Internet users:-

If you cannot read foreign messages or write them, there is a free web site that does it all for you. Open www.freetranslation.com On the first page click the box saying "I only want free instant translation" on next page Click the box for the language you want to write, say English to French. Type your message in English, when finished click the Free Translation box, your message appears translated to the language you chose, now you can click either the cut or copy icons at top right and paste it in whatever you want. To read a foreign language message, copy it, and past it into the translation message box, changed the language box for example French to English, hit the translate box and there is the message in English, you can cut, copy or print from the icons at top right. Takes about a minute to complete the change. Try it.

TS Trafalgar Night Dinner:- 14 th October.

Choose from the menu and phone Ernie Clewes 01202 246900 ASAP. For overnight accommodation phone the Belvedere Hotel Reception: 01202 293336 or E-Mail enquiries@belvedere-hotel.co.uk

Dress will be formal, Jackets & Tie or Lounge Suits for men
Evening Gowns or similar for ladies, (Below Knee skirts please)

Menu: TS Phoebe Trafalgar Night Dinner

Starters

Option 1- Fresh Smoked Salmon Roulade on a Cucumber & Dill Salad with
Lime & Herb Mayonaise.

Option 2- Melon & Lychee Terrine on a Pool of Blackcurrent Sauce.

Option 3- Hearty Minestrone Soup with Parmesan.

Main Course:

Option 1- Roast Rib of Beef, Yorkshire Pudding & Horseradish Sauce.

Option 2- Butterfly of Chicken Breast Pan Fried with wild Mushrooms, Diced Leek,
White Wine & Sauce.

Option 3- Paupette of Rainbow Trout stuffed with Prawns in Tarragon Sauce.

Option 4- Vegetarian- Oyster Mushroom, Leek & Courgette Stroganoff served with
Saffron &
Lemon Rice.

Dessert

Option 1- Belgium Chocolate Tart, Crisp chocolate pastry filled with Dark Chocolate
&

Brandy Cream.

Option 2- Diced Fresh Fruit Salad in a Light Syrup with Crème Fraiche.

Option 3- Cheeseboard. A selection of English & Continental Cheeses, Crackers,
Grapes & Celery.

Option 4- Bread & Butter Pudding

Cost of Dinner £20 pp. Seating Time 1900-1930..

On Friday 13th October at 1900 hrs, the cadets will be holding their Annual RN Inspection, Parade & Evolutions. This is becoming quite an event, the number of cadets families attending is growing each year. The unit is limited for viewing space, and the request is for you to be seated by 1830. It should not be taken for granted that a seat will be available. I advise being there by 1800. The Wardroom bar will be open once the parade etc, has ended. Parking at, or near, the HQ is very limited. The SCC staff will be too busy to run a bus from and to the hotel, suggest you share a car or Taxi

Remembrance Sunday is on the 12th November, we will be having our normal ceremony at our memorial in Central Gardens, Bournemouth after the Town' ceremony. More about this in the October newsletter.

To Whom It May Concern

(Vic Chanter)

I have received the following information from the Royal Naval Association, which may be of some interest to a few veterans:

“**THE ARCTIC EMBLEM** The Arctic Emblem will be available shortly. It will consist of a small white enamelled star with a red dot in the centre representing the field of the flags of Russia and Norway. It will have an arc with the words “The Arctic” above the centre. It may be worn on the lapel, or above the breast pocket, either on occasions when it is appropriate to wear medals, or on its own with either formal or informal dress. All those who served for at least one day north of the Arctic Circle (Latitude 66 Degrees 32 Minutes North) and West of the Urals, between 3rd September 1939 and 8th May 1945, in the Armed Forces or the Merchant Navy will qualify for the Arctic Emblem. There will be no charge for the Emblem. In common with the issue of campaign medals, the surviving next of kin may claim the Emblem on behalf of Arctic veterans who have died, but they will not be entitled to wear it. Please write to the following branch of The Ministry of Defence for an application form: DS Sec Honours 1, Level 8, Zone J, MOD Main Building, Horse Guards Avenue, London SW1A 2HB”.

Are you entitled to the £200 heating allowance:- Everyone aged 60 or over from 24th September 2006 is entitled to the heating allowance whether you work or not. If you are not sure, phone the Winter Fuel Hot Line: 08459 15 15 15. If you received the allowance last year there is no need to check or claim, you will be in their files and receive it yearly.

All new claimants must apply by 24th September. Do it now !!

With much regret and sadness I report the passing of a dear friend and a gracious lady, Mrs Peggy Mason. Peggy passed peaceably away in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Birmingham on Wednesday 12th July.

Unknown to us Peggy was suffering with cancer, not being a person to pass her troubles on she kept it to herself. Peggy, whose name was really Elizabeth Kesterton, changed it to Mason when S/m George Mason became her partner. Peggy never really got over it when George died, but always appeared happy and content.

When George passed away, Peggy sat down and wrote out all her funeral arrangements, including the addressing of 97 envelopes to friends and relations.

Peggy was always the first to phone after attending a reunion to thank us. She loved the reunions and meeting with you all, one special shipmate will miss her more than all of us.

The funeral will take place at 1pm on Monday. 31st July at Yardley Crematorium. Birmingham.

At Peggy's request just one flower will be laid.