



The Peregrine Phots Post



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The Royal Navy Photographers Association



Ahoy
Shipmates

Happy
Easter

Hope you are all looking forward to Easter and have put your water wings away and dusting down the Bar B Q, it seem it was a long winter here's hoping for a great summer.

The RNPA committee had a meeting last week and confirmed that Val Darbyshire had taken over as treasurer. The Webmaster is now Martin May - Clingo and it was agreed that he should register rnpa.org.uk in the associations name for a five year period, we will let you know when we are up and running with full details. Steve reported that we have 93 paid up members, 34 of which were joint membership and 3 serving members. Danny de Feu has been co-opted onto the committee because of his expertise in producing photographic exhibitions which will be put to good use in the coming events - so please look through your photo albums for Navy photos at work and send them to Danny all photos will be returned to you.



Fairey Swordfish

Ray outlined his plans for two social events for the coming year...

The first being a Family Day / Weekend visit to RNAS Yeovilton on Saturday 12th July. The day will be centred at The Fleet Air Arm Museum with hopefully some involvement with the Fly Navy Historical Flight but this will depend on their flying programme at the time.

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It's our intention to make this event a family day geared to members, their spouses, guests, children and grandchildren. We have reserved the Swordfish Room at the museum for our exclusive use for the whole day and we will start proceedings there at around midday with a welcome buffet lunch, presentations and a nostalgic photographic exhibition which will look back at the people, places and events of the Phot Branch over the past hundred years.

After lunch attendees will be free to visit the museum where we hope to arrange a further public exhibition about the branch, what we did and the gear we used. In the early evening we will gather in the Concorde Room of the Museum for a drinks Reception and Buffet Dinner hopefully with entertainment.

The all inclusive members subsidised cost of the day will be £25.00 per head and the same for up to two guests. Non members and additional guests will be £36.00 per head. Reductions for children are still be negotiated and will depend on their ages and the numbers attending.

The Second event will be in London on Sunday 19th October where we will spend the day in HMS Belfast; we have reserved the Wardroom for our exclusive use and the programme will be meet-up onboard for coffee late morning, "Up-spirits" followed by a sandwich lunch and the AGM. The rest of the afternoon will be free to tour the ship etc and then in the early evening a drinks reception in the Wardroom followed by dinner. We are still working on the budget for this event and it will be announced as soon as Ray has finalised arrangements.

The timings for both events are being planned to make it possible to participate without the need to stay overnight unless of course you wish to or have to travel a considerable distance. For those who wish to overnight at Yeovilton on the Saturday we are planning a visit to St. Bart's, the Fleet Air Arm's official church, on the Sunday morning followed by lunch in either the Wardroom or the Senior Rates Mess afterwards.

If you wish to make a weekend of it in London Ray is planning a visit to the Houses of Parliament on the Saturday afternoon followed by a casual evening onboard the Tattershall Castle (the floating restaurant/pub) on the Thames.

Please let Ray know (via email ray@chilston.com) of your interest in either or both events with any questions you may have; he will be sending out further information later this month together with a booking form. Please also let him know if you need help or advice with accommodation.

I have enclosed a small item about the Royal Navy Historical Flight to wet your appetite, having visited the FAA Museum myself you will find it very interesting. I found the first aircraft I flew in & one I maintained when I was an air mechanic at Culdrose. There is also a large article by Tony Darbyshire about his time in the Navy - Happy reading

Happy Easter

from your editors **Hilary & Steve King**

Royal Navy Historic Flight

The Royal Navy Historic Flight operates a flying collection of some of the rarest and most historically significant Royal Navy aircraft in the world. The Flight was established in 1972 to preserve and promote the nation's Naval Aviation Heritage and serve as a living memorial to the courage and sacrifice of all those who served in the Royal Naval Air Service and Fleet Air Arm.

Based at RNAS Yeovilton, the Flight operates three historic aircraft types, each of which reflects a key period in the FAA operations from the 1930s to the 1950s. These include the iconic Fairey Swordfish a significant national treasure embodying the very essence of the FAA, the last of the piston engine fighter aircraft, famously credited

with shooting down an enemy jet, and the Hawker Sea Hawk, the only airworthy example in the world, representing the FAA's entry into jet-age aviation from the decks of aircraft carriers.

The aircraft display annually at air shows and public events up and down the country, representing the Royal Navy and raising awareness of the history, technological innovation and achievements of naval aviation to wide-ranging.

Few people today are aware of the important part played by the Royal Naval Air Service and Fleet Air Arm in our nation's history

The first aircraft to join the collection was Swordfish II LS326, which was presented to the Royal Navy in 1960 by Westland Aircraft Company. Later additions to the collection were Hawker Sea Hawk FGA.6 WV908 from RN Air Station Culdrose in 1982, Fairey Swordfish I W5856 as a gift from British Aerospace in 1993, and Hawker Sea Fury FB. 11 VR930, completely rebuilt by Bae Brough in 1997. A third Swordfish is currently in storage and awaiting an opportunity to be rebuilt. Additionally, the Flight operates a Sea Fury T.20 G-RNHF.

Together these magnificent aircraft are an enduring legacy to the remarkable history of naval aviation providing a powerful education link between the Royal Navy's historic past and the FAA's in worldwide operations today.

Farewell to our Shipmate



We have been informed by that John Branson - top row left has recently passed away he was on his Phot 3 Course 1958. we have no other information.

Back row L-R: John Branson, 'Ginge' Beamont,

Front row L-R: G Nixon, PJ McKay, Chief Taff Evans,
Dave Watson, Dave Matthews

Hist724



All Our Yesterdays

A Memoir from the last Navy Phot. in Northern Ireland

HMS SEA Eagle

By Tony Darbyshire



Some of you reading this may remember that there was a draft for one photographer based in Londonderry, Northern Ireland. In fact it was actually an attachment to 819 Squadron, based at RAF Bellykelly, about thirteen miles up the road – a mile or so from the town of Limavady.

Although my principal role was to be the photographer for the squadron my working day was spent in this small hut within the grounds of HMS Sea Eagle. My mess was in Rodney block, a large red brick building just behind the NAAFI



My phot. section hut was solidly built and measured about 12 x 20 feet. It was to become my work place for fifteen months from October 1968 until early February 1970. I'm now glad that I had the wisdom to take a photograph of the building, on a snowy winter's day in January '69. 35 years later it was demolished so I'm glad I've still got a picture in my collection to remind me of it. Lots of other buildings were knocked down at the same time as part of the re-development of the 'ship' into Ebrington Square that has transformed it into a lovely residential, commercial and arts complex that the locals and the visitors can enjoy today.

The loyalist community in the province always refers to Londonderry as Derry. The city was at the heart of "The Troubles" that kicked off around the time I got there and, for more than thirty years, until the Good Friday agreement was reached in 1998, this lovely historic city was blighted by tension and conflict.

Prior to my move to Northern Ireland I was the phot. on 845 Squadron on HMS Bulwark. My time with 845 came to an end after a NATO exercise up in the north of Norway in the summer of '68. I'd had a very enjoyable time with them but I was surprised to be given another helicopter squadron as my third draft after completing my training in 1966. 819 Squadron flew the Westland Wessex 3's, equipped with a sonar and radar equipment designed to help find, and sink, submarines.

I'd been enjoying a few days late leave after the NATO exercises in Scandinavia and seeing the fiords and Norwegian towns like Harstad and Tromsø, both inside the Arctic Circle, was enchanting. This region has mild winters and cool summers. The street party thrown by the people of Harstad to welcome us was terrific. But the beer was pretty weak. The more the ships' company of the Bulwark drank of it, the more they sobered up! We also found out, despite the long light days, that it was decidedly cool, even at the hottest part of the day. At midnight, standing in the streets was very cold for June. Nevertheless it was a new experience and, as I'd never been to that part of the world, very pleasurable.

My next port of call would take me to another country I'd never been to. After staying with my mum at home in Birmingham for a few days, I exchanged my rail warrant for a train ticket to Liverpool and then caught the overnight ferry crossing to Belfast, arriving the next morning. All that remained, after a seemingly endless twentyfour hours, was to catch the train that goes along the Antrim coast up to Londonderry. My memory of that day is of lovely autumn sunshine. No rain, very little wind and magnificent scenery that the people of Ireland, quite rightly, shout about. Less than two hours later the train pulled into Derry railway station and I was picked up by a 'tilly and ferried up to my new establishment.

I took over 819 from Wilf Bridge. I remembered Wilf, a jovial man with a good sense of humour, from when we worked together at Fraser Battery at Eastney. He stayed around for the next couple of days to show me the ropes, introduced me to a few people, and then moved on to his next job. I don't know who preceded Wilf at Sea Eagle. If anyone can remember any of his predecessors then let us know. I'm sure Jan Larcombe, our historian, would love to note it down for our records.

At the time of taking up my new post I was unaware of what the future held. A civil rights march a few days

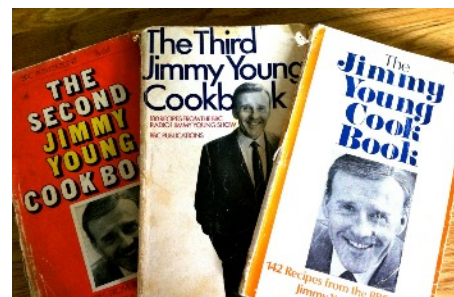
before I got there was to change everything. It turned out that the lives of many people in the coming years would be blighted by conflict, and many innocent civilians would be touched by the war that came to dominate the news broadcasts on radio and television.

One thing I didn't foresee is that I was to be the last navy photographer to get the draft to Sea Eagle. Unfortunately, it became a regular pattern of my own time as a sailor. We all know the navy has been shrinking for many decades and it's certainly a shadow of its former self. But, even back in my day, it was ever thus. Everywhere I went I seemed to be lugging pusser's kit back to the stores for it to be shipped off somewhere else for re-use. This was the first of several drafts that saw me putting the lights out and, metaphorically, locking the door for the last time. It happened in Singapore (my next draft) and it happened in Lossiemouth where we handed over the base to the RAF. As we all know, nothing lasts forever. Not even empires last forever!

Sea Eagle, like so many navy shore establishments, was a vibrant self-contained community and I made lots of new friends; writers, seaman, communicators and sailors in branches I'd previously not had the pleasure of getting to know, or working with. I still remember many of them with affection; Charlie Pollock, a writer in the Captain's office and the killick of my mess, Wesley Ferris, a staunch supporter of Glentoran, and who always called me "Darby Tonyshire", which is a good play on words! Another friend at that time was Katie Postgate, the niece of the children's writer Oliver Postgate. We called her Katie 'Gatepost', yet another play on words that sailors are often very good at. I only wish I knew what has happened to them all. Alas I don't, which is a pity. Friendships are often fleeting in the services. Perhaps acquaintances is a better term, though at the time you think you'll know them forever. Despite losing touch, memories of them stay with you for a long time.

When processing my films I spent my time in the tiny darkroom with Jimmy Young. Not literally of course. Those old enough to remember will recall that when his success as a singer slowed up he reinvented himself by becoming a disc jockey. He'd been given a show a few months earlier in a premier slot on the new radio stations, 1 and 2. More research tells me that the first hour was on both stations and the second hour was broadcast only on Radio 1. The JY show was good company when working on my own. My memories of listening to him include a couple of catch-phrases: "What's the recipe today Jim?" given out by a very strange childlike squeaky voice. (If you go to youtube.com and type this phrase in the search box you can actually hear it!) And JY always closed his show with 'TTFN', an abbreviation for "ta-ta-for-now".

As I write this Jimmy is now in his 93rd year and still going strong. Long after I moved on from Sea Eagle, he continued to run his show for another 32 years before the younger man, Jeremy Vine, replaced him in 2002. He was then in his early eighties. Not a bad innings for running a prime time radio show, and he even beats Alex Ferguson's tenure as the Man. Utd. Manager... Fergie only managed to stay in his job for 26 years. Fergie chose to 'retire'; Jimmy Young was retired by the BBC, even though he didn't want to give up at the time.



I've always been a fan of Terry Wogan, who got his big break during August '69 by standing in for JY when he went on holiday. Wogan's sense of humour, and timing, has become legendary and I've loved his broadcasts ever since. The radio is a godsend when you're in need of another voice to help you through the day.

Jimmy Young also produced a series of cookbooks, a compendium of listeners' recipes. We bought several of them and they sit with the other books in our collection. They're pretty dog-eared now and the covers are falling off. But they've travelled a few thousand miles around the globe so that's to be expected. But hey, the price was only three shillings and sixpence in old money! That's seventeen and a half pence in new money; several hundred recipes for around ten bob must represent good value for money surely? Thanks (Sir) Jimmy!

The military presence in Londonderry goes back a long way. Research has shown me that there have been men (and women) in uniform there since 1738. Since that time British armed forces have occupied the site on the bank of the Foyle right up to the withdrawal of the army in the mid-1990's. I hadn't realised it was an area steeped in military history for nearly three hundred years. Now there is no military in the town so times really have changed.

The Royal Navy's first existence on the site was HMS Ferret, back in 1940. Then, in 1947, the shore establishment changed its name to HMS Sea Eagle and it became the base for the Joint Anti-submarine School (JASS). Submarines regularly undertook exercises in the north Atlantic and used the dockyard in Derry at their base.

The Fleet Air Arm was based at the old wartime airfield at Eglinton, HMS Gannet, albeit this was before my time in the province. I'm not sure when Gannet finally closed down but I do know the airfield lay empty and was slowly deteriorating for many years. Thankfully the site has now been put to good use as a commercial airport and it's used by several of the low-budget airlines.

With my joining routine card in my hand I made my way around the ship. Starting at the Captain's office, I picked up my first 'stamp', and then continued the walk to various departments to get my card filled out. I'm sure today they use modern technology to keep a record of the comings and goings of sailors. I'd be very surprised if you have to do it by the foot-slogging method. But the joining card was an integral part of joining a new establishment for my generation and others before mine. The Pay Office was a crucial stamp to collect on your way round because it made sure you got your pay! Pay was given out in 'cash' and doled out fortnightly. You had to queue up for it and salute the officer who shoved it in your hand. Now it's all done by BACS, the automated bank transfer system. How times change eh? But this was probably a change for the best.

It was during the ritual of my joining routine that I discovered many of the sailors working at HMS Sea Eagle were citizens of Northern Ireland. In some ways, being English, I felt a bit like the odd one out. But I later realised that Sea Eagle was the only naval establishment in Northern Ireland, so it was a good draft to be given if you had family in the province.

I made lots of good friends there, though occasionally I was drawn in to political discussions I felt uncomfortable with. At the time, I had no idea what the issues were about so I didn't feel I was qualified to either comment or have an opinion. All I will say is that I found the local people warm, friendly and welcoming. Docherty's bar, opposite the main gate served great Guinness and I probably drank more than my fair share of it. But it was good stuff, certainly better than the Guinness you got on the mainland! And I got to know quite a few of the locals too. They didn't seem to care where you were from, or what religion you had written down on your service docs .

The most significant 'stamp' I collected on my joining routine was at the Education Centre. I met Leading Wren Education Assistant Val Beamond, and she stamped my joining card; but says she doesn't remember that and always insists I've made it up. That's not true, but I can't have made much impression on her. However, we struck up a friendship soon after, on Bonfire night a couple of weeks later, when formally introduced by a seaman petty officer, Roger Smith.

Val and I married the following spring, on 12th April 1969, which also happened to be my 22nd birthday. The Saturday we married was the middle one of our Easter leave break and it fitted our plans to marry on that day. In another year that Saturday would not have been my birthday, so fate played a hand in making our wedding anniversary easily memorable for me as they share the same day.

You will have gathered by now that Derry holds very special memories for me. I met and married the person I now clean and cook for! In fairness she does tell me that she's happy to help me with my maths and English whenever I want any help and, if I get stuck with spelling, punctuation or grammar, she's there to guide me through and make any corrections.

However, it would be remiss of me not to mention that she did give a fair chunk of her life to giving a good upbringing for our three children. And, for most of the first 20 years of our time together, she did do the cleaning and cooking with no help from me! So I do accept that she did her 'bit' before returning to paid employment herself in the early '90's.

One of my first jobs at Sea Eagle was to take pictures of the change-over of the outgoing captain and the inauguration of the new captain, Anthony Storrs Morton; or Sir Anthony Morton, as he became known. He was appointed as a vice chief of the Defence Staff a few years later. A little research on the internet has told me a lot more about his life than I knew about him at the time. I remember him as a very pleasant gentleman who, like so many senior officers, had considerable people skills.

Taking photographs of the change-over of captains was actually really tough. I used an MPP 5x4 plate camera with a Courtney Courier flash to do the job. Quite why I didn't use a Rolleiflex is a puzzle to me now; a medium-format camera would have made the job much easier. In October the days in the northern hemisphere are getting very short. By around 5 o'clock the daylight has gone, so this made the use of a flash-gun essential. The problem is that a Courtney Courier weighs close to half a ton and having that on your shoulder for a long period gets to be more than a little painful, as many of you reading this can vouch! I still have the grooves in my shoulder to prove it!

The photographs I have in my collection of this hand-over show that getting the exposure right was hard in

the twilight of the day. Today, with my Canon 580EX flash, attached to my Canon 5D, the equipment does all of the calculations, and no mental arithmetic is needed to get the exposures correct. Modern kit does it all for you. Back then you had to do the calculations manually, by doing a lot of mental arithmetic, in order to set the correct f-stops and shutter speeds. I'm sure you remember doing it yourself; stuff like dividing numbers by other numbers and trusting that you got the arithmetic spot on. The proof of the pudding was when you processed the film and, after a few minutes in developing tank, you discovered if you'd got your sums right. I will admit to finding it stressful at times and was often anxious as I switched the lights back on to see the results of my efforts.

On top of the stresses of such calculations, with the MPP plate camera you had to set the distance to the subject by guessing how far away the subject was standing from you! No auto focus to help you, just a bit of guesswork and then setting the distance on the scale. Those of you who used the MPP will remember getting uncannily good at judging distances.

Looking back at the photos I took that day I should be pleased with my efforts, but they really don't look very good. Many of them have the appearance of being under-exposed, probably because the flash couldn't cope very well with the darkness, even on the 150 joules setting! But I can tell you the pictures are pin-sharp, so my skill at judging distances was pretty good. Whenever I see a football referee award a free kick these days and the defending wall take up their position, I often yell: "That's not ten yards!"

Most of my work over the coming months was routine stuff; LSGC medal awards given out by the Captain, or his deputy; ships leaving and returning to the dockside, A21-defect pictures etc. All run-of-the-mill events we covered back then. But public relations photography made up the lion's share of the jobs, as I'm sure it does today. One such job was to see me step on a coach and travel to Stormont, the Northern Ireland Parliament, where the sailors formed the Guard of Honour at the official opening ceremony. Not long after that, their rights to run their own Parliament were removed and it was a long time before they were restored.

I made lots of trips with 819 Squadron on exercise, and our time at sea was spent on the helicopter support ship, RFA Engadine. Luckily I've never been very prone to sea-sickness. Whilst on the Bulwark we weathered some pretty freakish storms in the Far East, and on our way back home to the UK. I don't ever recall being sea-sick once. That was to change with my trips on the Engadine. As you know, the north Atlantic, and the Irish sea, can get very rough. The Engadine was a ship that would catch out the hardest of sailors and give them a tough time. I remember hearing that one of our senior chiefs at the time, Ray Pugh, was not a good seafarer and would get sick whilst in dry-dock? Is that true? If it was true I suspect that Pug-H would not have been a happy bunny on a sea-going voyage on the Engadine. It had a very strange yawing motion, a mixture of going up and down with the swell and 'cork-screwing' at the same time. Such motions made the toughest of tummies feel rather queasy, mine included. The smell of diesel oil and galley food didn't help either!

In the UK we have a number of cities that are inside walled enclosures, and York and Chester are possibly the most well known of them. But Derry is the only walled city in the UK that still has its walls intact. There's a myth that says if you walk the complete circuit of the walls of Derry you will return to do it again. It's a lovely walk and a few weeks into my time there Val and I did see the city from its ramparts. We always wondered if, when we departed, if we do it again one day and find out if the legend was true. For those that have not been to Derry it's well worth a visit. Just make sure, if you do get there, to go and walk up on the walls!

One other notable job I did at sea was to accompany the Lord (Ralph) Grey of Naunton, just after he was appointed to the post of Governor General of Northern Ireland. He served for the period of 1968-1973 and was to be the last person to hold this post. The role was abolished after his tenure and no other appointment is likely to be made again.

I followed the Lord around in a chopper for the day when he was shown what ships' companies on warships do with their time, to earn their corn. This involved us both being winched down to the deck from a great height from above the ships on several occasions in rough seas. Not easy and not much fun if you've not got a head for heights.

My biggest recollection when covering his visit was the anxiousness I felt when we were due to be moved from one warship to another by jackstay transfer. Getting a lift via a chopper held no fears for me because I'd had plenty of flying experience by that time. But doing it via a jackstay transfer? That was something else! At first I thought it would be a lot of fun. I'd witnessed the replenishments at sea, the RAS, for our beer/fags/eggs/spuds etc. on numerous occasions on the Bulwark. I'd even taken photos of other sailors being moved across the sea in this way. But I'd never been hauled from one ship to another myself on a pulley! When I learned that this was going to happen to me, and Lord Grey, I was a bit excited. I actually

wanted to do it. That's the innocence of youth for you.

My excitement soon changed. I watched the two ships, a few yards apart running in parallel, and saw the seamen rig up the jackstays. I then stood on the bridge of the frigate, alongside Lord Grey and the captain, watching the dummy run. This, as you may know, involves sending over a heavy metal weight on the hook. What I witnessed over the next few minutes was, to put it bluntly, terrifying. The weight, meant to mimic the human body in transit, began to dip very deeply into the sea. They went through several dummy runs; each time the weight got a good ducking. The more I watched the more nervous I got. If Lord Grey was to make the transfer they needed to find out if it was safe for him to do so. The first to make the crossing was going to be me, his official photographer for the day. It was only then that the penny dropped; they were intending to send me over on the jackstay first. So I was to be the human guinea pig! I'm a coward at the best of times but hey, who was I not to take an order? I was a young naval airman who just did as he was told. These days I'd be called a wus! I admit it, I was a wus! I really didn't fancy a dip in the freezing cold sea one bit.

Thankfully a decision was made that the conditions were much too rough to go ahead with the jackstay transfer. We resumed our journey around the fleet via the helicopter and I let out a sigh of relief. They were probably more concerned about their honoured guest than me (and probably just as concerned that my expensive pusser's kit might be written off) than they were about giving me an early bath. To this day I've been grateful that this method of transportation was deemed to be too hazardous! Talk about being let off the hook. Literally!

A most momentous event in the history of Northern Ireland happened in October 1968. The civil rights march, led by Bernadette Devlin in Londonderry, was the catalyst for 'The Troubles' to start all over again after several years of 'peace'. At that time I knew very little about politics, or history. Sure, I knew a few dates; 1066, 1215 1914-18 etc. But I knew very little about Irish history; also I don't recall knowing much about Northern Ireland and their split from the republic when it happened in 1922, when the six counties were destined to remain British. I've since learned about the complexities of the politics and understand it much better, but then it was something I knew nothing about, or had any interest in.

Devlin's civil rights march took place just prior to me joining Sea Eagle. The march took its route across the Craigavon bridge, and it was to start a change in the course of northern Irish history. For the next thirty or so years more than three and half thousand people, both civilians and armed services personnel, lost their lives. The Birmingham and Guildford bombings, the guards and horses in London, and the notorious Bloody Friday debacle on 21 July 1972, which became a major TV drama with James Nesbitt, all played out to a world-wide audience in the media. All events that were painful for the families and residents in the province. Wikipedia has an excellent entry on 'The Troubles'; well written and worth reading if you want to know more about this period of torment in Northern Irish history.

By the time we reached the mid-summer of 1969 the conflict had escalated to the point of army intervention. Initially the RUC moved into Sea Eagle and the residential blocks were filled up with policemen. Then, in August '69, the main parade ground became a sea of army vehicles. A few months later, shortly after I'd left, HMS Sea Eagle once again reverted to being called Ebrington Barracks and the army moved in permanently.

The record shows that the Royal Navy presence came to an end in the early 1970. The decision was taken that no further drafts would be given to a phot. and I packed up all of my equipment and returned it to the stores for redistribution elsewhere. In July of '69 I received a notification that I was to go and spend a couple of years in Singapore, with Val, on a married-accompanied draft.

We left our first married quarter at 2 Mill Path, Eglinton, just down the road from the airfield location of HMS Gannet, and flew off in an RAF VC10 (also now assigned to history) from RAF Brize Norton. Val's mum and dad drove us down to see us off. Very wintry, and lots of heavy snow gave us difficult driving conditions. Our flight was delayed a few hours because of fog and ice. But later that day we said our goodbyes to Val's parents and flew up into the clouds to start our eight thousand mile journey to an island that sits eighty miles or so above the equator, and a very different climate to Northern Ireland!

So, another chapter in our young lives was about to begin. Unfortunately, Val's career as an Education Wren came to a close too. After a brief stop-over at RAF Gan, the most southerly island in the Maldives, we were met by Pete Bunting at RAF Changi. Pete had found a house for us, 23 Jalan Telang, Sembawang Hills, just opposite their own, so our transition to our new home was made easy. This was also the first time we met Pete's wife, Bridget, and their new son, Michael, who was just a few weeks old.

In May 2008 Val and myself made the trip back to Londonderry, nearly forty years after we first met. We wanted to see what had happened since we departed in early 1970. As you would expect we found a lot of change; a new shopping centre in Derry and a new 'Peace' bridge crossing the Foyle which gave a direct link to Donegal. No need for border controls or any checks at all. People come and go as they please across the border and no police or customs operate there now. So very different to our time back in the late '60's when border controls were strict.

Apart from two security guards who had the job of keeping out intruders, Ebrington Barracks was empty, and many of the buildings had been demolished; the JASS buildings, the Transport section, my little Phot. section... all gone. A big sign stood at the gate showing how the site was to be redeveloped by Ilex, a regeneration company set up to redevelop the site and put the past behind them. It's now been turned into a modern residential area and renamed Ebrington Square, and was officially opened in the spring of 2012. If you type Ebrington Square into a search engine and you can see how it now looks. The main buildings have been kept, but most of the others have now been bulldozed.

So, the history of the military presence in Derry was brought to a close. I hope the folks of Northern Ireland can all put aside their differences and live together in peace and harmony. It's a hope and not an expectation but I do hope I'm right.

I mentioned earlier that Val and myself walked around the city walls when first there in 1968/9; well, given the legend that those who make the complete journey around the walls get to do the walk again, we took the opportunity to prove it right. On our return trip we did go and enjoy the views once more from high up on their battlements. Perhaps one day we will return and do the walk again? You never know, we may well do that. We loved our time in Northern Ireland and we hope to go there again before shuffling off this mortal coil.

I could share lots more stories about my time in the province but I will close with just one more. Val and I used to baby-sit for the Commander of HMS Sea Eagle, a lovely man named Cdr. Brooke-Popham. During the Second World War his dad, Air Chief Marshal Sir Henry Robert Moore Brooke-Popham, GCVO KCB CMG DSO AFC, was the Commander-in-Chief of the British Far East Command in Singapore. The Air Marshall's career had been blighted by the demise of Singapore when it was surrendered to the Japanese forces in 1942, whilst under his command. A 'claim-to-fame' I'm sure he would have preferred not to have.

I suspect that Cdr. Brooke-Popham's own navy career was not helped by the connection to his father, though that's speculation on my part. What I do know is that he and his wife were grateful for our help in taking care of their children whilst they went off to functions at the wardroom!

Writing this has brought back lots of good memories, I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as the pleasure I've had in writing it.

Post Script: Pete's son, Mike, also joined the navy many years later, and had a successful career before leaving for pastures new a few years ago. I'm hoping at our family day re-union at Yeovilton, over the weekend of 12/13 July 2014, to meet him and his family. The last time we met he was in nappies.

Second post script: Our editor, Hilary, is in need of YOUR stories! We'd love to read about your own experiences so please take a little time to jot them down and send them to her. She needs your help... so get scribbling and send her your own memoirs.

Tony Darbyshire Chairman

PHOTOKINA
Photography
ExhibitionCologne
Germany
16th - 21st
September2014

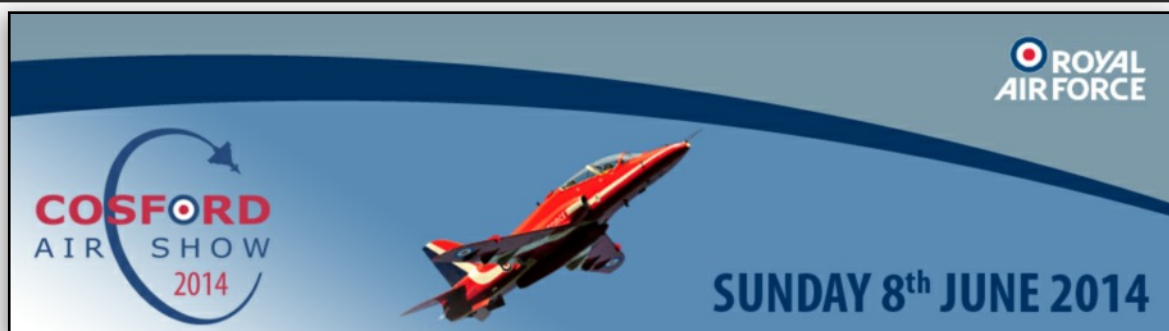




RNAS Yeovilton Air Day Saturday 26th July 14 also at the Museum at Yeovilton

The **Navy's Air War 1914-18 Exhibition Opening**
To commemorate the start of the First World War we have chosen to officially open our new WW1 Exhibition on Thursday 3rd July. The new exhibition will introduce new hands-on exhibits to help people better understand the actions and life of those serving in the Royal Naval Air Service during WW1. The new exhibition will showcase the Sopwith Pup, Short S27 and the Short 184 which was the first naval aircraft to have taken part in a naval battle (Battle of Jutland in 1916).

Including The Vulcan



Vintage submarine HMS Alliance brought back to wartime glory after £7m refit

HMS Alliance – Britain's only WW2-era submarine reopens to the public after a three-year restoration project. Around £7m has been spent revamping the boat at the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport, making her appear brand new both inside and out. **Now open.**



RNAS Culdrose Air Day
Thursday 31st July 2014

FAMILY DAY/ WEEKEND

at Fleet Air Arm Museum and
The Fly Navy Historical Flight
RNAS Yeovilton

Saturday 12th July & Sunday 13th July 2014



Saturday 12th July

12:00	Registration & Welcome Light Buffet Lunch Presentation - Historic Flight RNPA Photo Display	FAA Museum restaurant The Swordfish Room
14.00 /1700	Visits & Displays	FAA Museum
17.30	Reception	Concorde Hall
18.00	Buffet Dinner & Entertainment	Concorde Hall

Sunday 13th July

Visit & Service	St Bartholomew's
Lunch	Wardroom or Senior Rates Mess

Cost: All inclusive **£25** per head for members and two guests, further guests and nonmembers would be charged **£36** per person.
Alcoholic drinks are not included.

For those staying overnight please make your own accommodation arrangements

To book this event please contact:

Ray Whitehouse: Tel 01903 366505

email: ray@chilston.com