

# THE PEREGRINE PHOTOS POST

## THE ROYAL NAVAL PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER 2005

AUTUMN

ISSUE 10

Editor: Peter Newton, 147 Meadow Road, Worthing, West Sussex. BN11 2SA email: [fawnewton@aol.com](mailto:fawnewton@aol.com)

### EDITORIAL

I must apologise for being late in getting this issue of the newsletter out to you, I usually ask the Main Committee to get together before I compile the newsletters, so that, I can get all the latest information from them, to update members. However, the Navy holiday period being between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August, the committee were to meet in September, but this had to be postponed till a later date as yet undecided, because of the pressure of work and commitments being experienced by some members of the committee.

I guess quite a few of us are looking forward to the reunion in Malta in just over a month, it should be quite a milestone in the history of the RNPA. Our first reunion abroad being held where so many of us older members served at one time or another, cherishing fond memories of the 'good old days'. Remember 'Sparrow' in the Egyptian Queen and Bobby and Minco in the Iron Duke, they've all moved on of course, but, the memories remain.

I was on the sea front at Southsea to witness the Fleet Review/Trafalgar 200, on 28<sup>th</sup> June and took a few pix on my Nikon D70, one is reproduced below.



Peter Newton

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**President:** Lt. Cdr. Martin May-Clingo RN

**Chairman:** John Cunningham 02392 780806

**ViceChairman** Lt. Stuart Antrobus, BEM. RN.  
O.I/C. FRPU Tipner. 02392 547112

**Secretary:** Peter Newton. 01903 219996  
email: [fawnewton@aol.com](mailto:fawnewton@aol.com) 147, Meadow Road, Worthing, West Sussex. BN11 2SA

**Treasurer:** Lt. Richard Moss, BSc. (Hons) RN  
023 8026 5212 email: [rnpa@rnac.com](mailto:rnpa@rnac.com)  
12 Ouse Close, Valley Park, Chandlers Ford, Hants. SO53 4RW

**Webmaster:** W/O Paul Cowpe

**Historian:** Maurice (Jan) Larcombe.  
[jandor@which.net](mailto:jandor@which.net)

### AREA REPRESENTATIVES

**Serving:-** PO(Phot.) Flo Foord FRPU Tipner  
02392 547113

**Scotland & N. Ireland:-** John Berrecloth.  
01382 457601

**Northern:-** Ray Pogson 01226 763167

**Midlands:-** Danny Du Fue. 0116 289 8725

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### THE NAVY'S HERE...

By Ray Pogson

HIGHSPOT of a weekend get-together in Oxford to mark Brian and Carol Lowe's 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, was the number of former Navy photographer friends and RNPA members who turned up from all points of the compass to join in the celebrations.

Jan Morgan, who was with Brian at the School of Photography at RNAS Ford in 1960, and Paul Yockney travelled up from Cornwall, Alfie Tubb made the long trip south from Elgin in Morayshire, Pete Thorne arrived from Cuffley in Hertfordshire while the couple's best man Ray Pogson drove down from the Pennine village of Millhouse Green in South Yorkshire. Paul, Alfie and Ray worked with Brian in the old and new RNSOP photographic buildings at RNAS Lossiemouth between 1961-63.

On the Saturday evening a party for family and friends which also combined their son Guy's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations for his friends was held in the Roman Way Social Club in Cowley.

Following a champagne reception at the Lowe's Horspath home on Sunday morning, the naval contingent was invited to The Bat and Ball pub at Cuddesdon village for some pints of real ale followed by a superb traditional Sunday lunch of roast beef and Yorkshire puddings.

"We were so delighted with the whole weekend," said Carol, "but I was especially pleased for Brian who was overwhelmed that all his photographer mates turned up. We are very fortunate in our friendships."



*Centre of attention: Carol and Brian surrounded by Jan, left, Paul, Pete, Alfie and Ray.*

### A MIRACLE IN MALTA

By Ray Pogson

LLANDUDNO-based RNPA member David Price witnessed a miracle on his first visit to the George Cross island of Malta 43 years ago.

HMS Owen had berthed in Sliema Creek in October 1962 for a 36-hour stop-over to collect ship's stores and give both watches a run ashore en route to Mombassa where the ship was to carry out her survey programme off the Kenyan coast.

"Unfortunately we arrived just after mid-day on a Saturday," said David. "The dockyard mates already had their jackets on and about to head home for the weekend. There was half a dozen of the them and they made it clear that there was no way they were going to hump stores out of working hours."

But Owen's quick-thinking 'jack dusty' SA David Browning – David's oppo and his best man when he later married fiancée Olga – saved the day.

Grabbing a gross box of condoms from an obliging L/SBA, he managed to negotiate a complete change of attitude by the dockies, and hey presto! the jackets came off.

"You've never seen stores move so fast," said David. "It was miraculous the way they flew on board."

Crisis averted.

The crew got their run ashore while the happy dockies each had a little something extra for the weekend...

David and Olga will be among the RNPA Reunion party flying from Gatwick in November and they are looking forward to meeting up with old friends during the week in Malta.

### THREE OLD FARTS sorry PHOTS

By Peter Pinnock

Three members of No6 Phot II's Course 1949 decided to arrange a small reunion after 56 years without contact, Shorty Walker who was visiting from the U S of A had planned to go to York, Canterbury and Bristol, so, Bob Lomax tried to arrange to meet him in Bristol,



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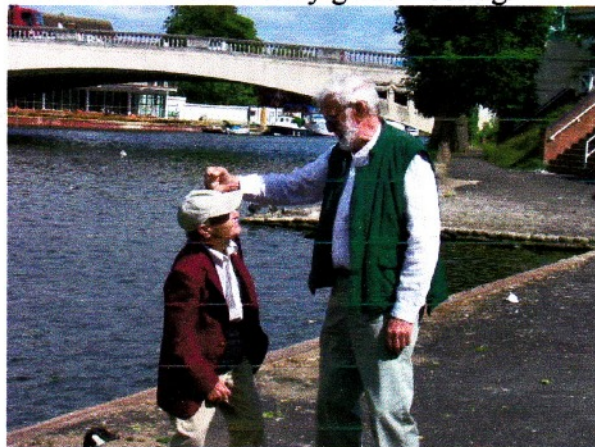
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and Shorty was going to meet me in Chesterfield on his way down from York. Well for reasons known only to Shorty, that all fell through but as Bob was staying with his daughter in Bracknell it was decided that we would all meet up at the Holiday Inn at Caversham.



*Pete Pinnock, Bob Lomax, and Shorty Walker*

Bob met Shorty off the train at about 11 o'clock on the 19 July at Caversham and my wife and I drove down from Chesterfield, arriving at Caversham about 12. We had a really enjoyable meeting, lots of 'lamp swinging', of course, I would have recognised Shorty anywhere, he was still the short-arse bumptious little sod he was in 1949 but we had a really great meeting.



*Pete keeping Shorty in check*

Apparently he gets up in the morning at 5, goes for a 20 mile bike ride or tends to his hooch making or his garden. He gives lectures now on gardening (with tongue in cheek I guess!!) and has managed to get himself some qualification as a cleric with some obscure American religious body so he can now call himself the Reverend Harold Walker, not bad for someone nearly 80 eh!! He is a great little guy and it was really something to get together after so long, we all really enjoyed it, including our wives.

Shorty said it will probably be the last time he visits the UK. His wife suffers from MS and he has to do an awful lot for her.

### PRESS RELEASE FROM THE NAVY TRAFALGAR 200

It was 'all hands on deck' at the Fleet Photographic Unit in Portsmouth this month. For two weeks Service Photographers assembled at the Unit for coverage of the Trafalgar 200 celebrations. Tents were erected and camp beds unpacked as the 'Phots' prepared for some very late nights at work.

Photographers were despatched to various locations and ships around Portsmouth for both the build-up and the International Fleet Review itself in the Solent on 28<sup>th</sup> June.



In order to cover as many aspects as possible, photographers from all three services were drafted in. These included Army photographers currently on the Senior Rates Qualifying Course at RAF Cosford, and RAF photographers from RAF Halton providing video coverage.





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Senior Rates were also tasked to photographic and video duties, some for the first time in a while! In all over 40 service photographers were assembled. A Royal Navy Lynx was used to get aerial coverage of the events, whilst the new Spinnaker Tower at the Gunwharf also provided an excellent vantage point. Meanwhile other photographers were dotted around on the other various ships, all no doubt trying to out-do each other and get the best pictures!



Some 35 nations were in attendance, representing every continent, making it the largest international gathering of vessels ever. On show included warships, tall ships, merchant ships and yachts – over 160 vessels in total. Her Majesty the Queen and The Lord High Admiral reviewed The Fleet from HMS ENDURANCE, witnessing a steam past and sail past of 300 warships, tall ships and private yachts.



As you would expect for such an event, the images taken were stunning and immediately despatched to the international media. For some this wasn't fast enough though; Sky News utilised the Navy photographer on Spinnaker Tower as their live cameraman.



On the following day an International Drumhead Ceremony on Southsea Common provided a more reflective occasion during which veterans of all maritime conflicts commemorated the personal sacrifice of war. Again some very poignant images were captured by the photographers present.



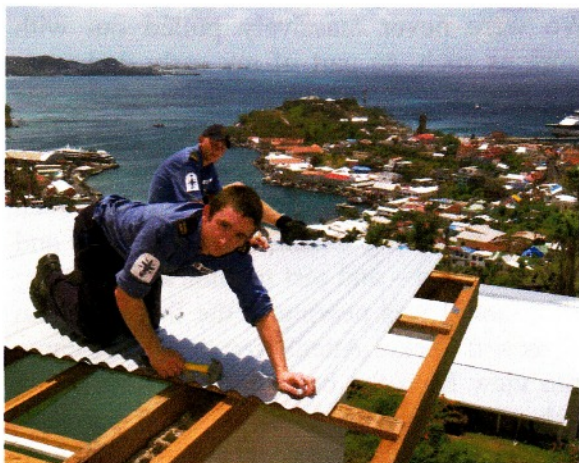
By the end of a very hectic two weeks life has begun to normalise at the FPU. The tents are coming down and now we can begin to sift through the many excellent images taken over the last fortnight; no doubt the requests for them will soon start coming in!





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Onboard the HMS LIVERPOOL Griff has been attached to the Flight assisting them in supporting the ship's operational programme and has even found time to play tennis for the ship's team. HMS LIVERPOOL'S Public relations Officer Lieutenant Commander Finch RN said "Griff has been very busy since he joined, ensuring that Liverpool's profile has been very high in the worlds media. It has been a challenging job, which he has handled very well, and he is an asset to the ship and to the Photographic Specialisation".

### **MIKE THORNE – An appreciation**

By Ray Pogson  
No 6 course Phot III's July 1958

SOME time ago a national TV company featured an advertisement in which actors, presenters and celebrities named their favourite teachers to camera.

As well as making me recall my favourite teacher - and a second teacher who introduced me to the works of Smetana, Greig, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky and to the great classical music of Europe in an east Lincolnshire schoolroom – it also made me think about the Royal Naval photographer who provided the helpful support and encouragement needed by a raw 16-year-old junior naval airman Phot III fresh off a basic 12-week course.

Mike Thorne was the PO in charge of the Fleet Photographic Section, located on Lower Battery Road in RN Barracks, Devonport, and

the man who enquired: "Who are you then?" when I tentatively opened the door to the section on the morning of Guy Fawkes' big day in 1958. I obviously wasn't expected and, naturally, didn't have a reputation to precede me like some notorious photographers acquired down the years.



*In the beginning... Ray Pogson, 17, enjoying life on Lower Battery Road*

Having spent a night in a transit mess in Frobisher Block – which, as far as the eye could see, was full of beds, lockers, stoves and bearded three-badge seamen darning their socks - I was looking for sanctuary, and I was to find it with Mike and the rest of the photographers who, at that time, constituted 'a damned good section'.

Brian 'Ernie' Earnshaw was the senior leading hand and an excellent photographer, and the rest of the section included L/Air Derek Rofe, and N/Air Mick Matthews, and, as I seem to recall L/Air Paul Slater.

L/Air 'Buster' Brown and N/Air Peter Thorne, who I had replaced, and who, 13 months later, I also took over from on 803 Sqdn (Scimitars) at RNAS Lossiemouth, had both recently been drafted. (Peter says he would be happy to express his personal reflections of the then Phot branch 'drafty' Charlie Wines in a future Newsletter..!)

We were later joined at various times during 1959 by N/Air Ian 'Jock' Paterson, L/Air Barry Russell (for demob after war-time service and pension) N/Air Percy Hawkes, L/Air Talbot Percy-Bell and CPO Len Brown (P7R). Keeping an eye on our welfare during all of this time was photographic officer Lt Brown, a master gunner.



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But in the main it was Mike who, with good humour, continuously checked my progress along the learning curve of the early jobs I was given. I recall an initial period of about six weeks when everything I did that could go wrong did go wrong. Fixy finger prints, undeveloped plates 'fixed', I even managed to crease prints on the glazer.

"Look, don't worry about it," said Mike, and eventually the ability and the confidence that comes with ability made daily photographic work a real pleasure. (Another Phot III on my course had a vastly different experience at his first section and was treated poorly when all he needed was a bit of encouragement.) It was my good fortune that when I was given a choice of three drafts I picked HMS Drake rather than either of two air stations.

Despite being the PO in charge of the section Mike Thorne was a very keen and involved photographer, and he enjoyed shooting pictures.

Everyone in the south-west of England knew how keen he was because it said so in the lead story on the front page of the *Western Morning News*. If I can remember the opening paragraph from 46 years ago, it read: "A Royal Naval Petty Officer who, according to his solicitor, 'slept, ate and drank photography', was today fined £350 at Plymouth Crown Court..." That was a lot of money in 1958.

Sometime before I joined the section, Mike had been leaving the dockyard after a photographic job and heading back into barracks with Pete Thorne when a dockyard policeman asked to look at the Rolleiflex camera he was carrying. Mike panicked – and with good reason. He had bought the Rollei abroad and not paid the duty on it. The short story is that he fought the case, lost it – and the camera – and was even threatened with a possible custodial sentence.

However, Mike must have seen a funny side to this expensive experience because we actually used a copy of the newspaper cutting as the section's 1958 Christmas card to other sections around the branch! (I wonder if anyone kept a copy of that particular 8"X6" print? I didn't, but wouldn't mind seeing it again.)

We were never massively pulled out with work as such, so part of my early darkroom experience was gained on quiet afternoons printing a selection of negatives that Mike had shot – with 'the' Rollei – on his previous sea-going draft. HMS Birmingham had been used as a floating location for The Baby and the Battleship – and just months after coming off course I was peering at the faces of John Mills and Dickie Attenborough as they came into view from the bottom of the developing dish. This gave me quite a kick – but, a couple of years earlier, it must have given Mike a bigger financial kick because he told me the shot of a happy Mills and Attenborough leaning through the ship's lifebelt had sold by the hundreds. Mike certainly knew how to operate a great rabbit firm. (Guess who was chief of the section on HMS Centaur when the ship went to the aid of the burning cruise liner Laconia which made headlines around the world.)

One printing job that will remain firmly etched in my mind till end of days is HMS Loch Ruthven crew identity photographs. "Off you go Ray, you'll be alright," said Mike as explained what was required. The scenario: A very bright sunny day in Devonport dockyard, a Watson half-plate camera, roller blind shutter at 1/90<sup>th</sup> top speed, lots of backs loaded with HP3 film (big mistake) and the 200-strong crew to be photographed in groups of sixteen on the ship's fo'c's'le. I thought I might be over exposing by a stop or so but I certainly over developed by aeons. You could just make out the faces of the crew when viewed against the open safelight – and I heard myself mumbling hopefully about reducing them! "No," said Mike. "You took them, you can print the negs as they are. It'll probably teach you a lesson." I seem to recall the exposure of each sailor's head on the GB enlarger was somewhere near two minutes wide open – and they required two prints of each man. Yet another few quiet days spent in the darkroom.

I must have learned the lesson though because when I won the Ceremonial section of the 1968 Peregrine Trophy with a picture of the C-in-C Portsmouth and the Nigerian Minister of Defence against HMS Victory



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prior to dinner on board, *Practical Photography* editor Alex Surgenor said: "This perfectly exposed picture won Class 5 for L/Air Pogson, and is quite remarkable for the superb print quality."

Mike was ahead of his time with his philosophy that life wasn't all about work, and when a directive hit the section stating that all RN personnel must be able to swim and pass their swimming test, he shut the section and we all went up to the barrack baths despite the fact that he was the only one of us who could swim - like a dolphin! Some of us foolishly passed the swimming test in a few days, others strung it out for weeks.

Occasionally Mike needed to administer a verbal kick up the backside when communications became confused. One sunny afternoon the pair of us were covering a cricket match - him with a Bell & Howell 16mm cine camera, me with the award-winning 5"X4" Peckham-Wray - between RN Barracks and a team from a cruiser in the dockyard. I can't remember its name but L/Air David Patterson was also at the match as he was the ship's photographer. Nothing much was happening so I was detailed to get the beers in. Suddenly Mike was running off towards the crease and turning and waving frantically to me. I thought he meant hurry up with the beers. He meant 'come and photograph the helicopter which is hovering over the stumps and trying to hook the bails off...' "What the bloody hell were you playing at? he demanded as the laughter subsided and the chopper disappeared into the west. I said I didn't know - but it wasn't cricket!

There was always laughter when Mike was present. When, in a quiet moment, I modified my HMS Drake cap-tally and renamed the ship HMS Duck he laughed, and then ordered me to run round the block wearing the joke. I refused, so he physically wrestled me out of the section door as two dozen gunnery ratings stamped into the TS trainer next door. They all laughed at the waffoo's embarrassment.

*A Drop of The Hard Stuff* was a popular Peter Sellars recording in 1959 - and it came as no surprise to me to learn that Mike also had a drop of the hard stuff stashed away.

One afternoon he produced a 20 oz brown chemical bottle almost full of neat Pussers' rum from a darkroom cupboard. Apparently he'd done a couple of rabbits for a chief up in the barracks. Everyone proffered a cup and he poured each photographer a tot. "What about me?" I asked holding out my cup in hope. "You're seventeen and under age for God's sake..." said Mike as he looked me in the eye. Then slowly he poured half a tot into my cup and said: "Go easy with that!" A sailor never forgets his first tot - and I never will... What a great guy.

I think that at that time the Guz phot section's rabbit firm was without doubt the best shore-based one going. On a weekly basis group photographs were being taken of trainee stokers at HMS Raleigh, gunnery ratings in barracks and at HMS Cambridge, the gunnery range at Wembury, ABCD courses at Tamerton Foliot and hardy Royal Marines at Stonehouse Barracks. And everyone bought a print.



Mike, left, and crew 'ham it up' after another heavy rabbit session on HMS Centaur

I did my first ever wedding for the firm using a Rolleiflex for the first time, which I think Mike bought to replace the one confiscated by the courts, and section members regularly photographed senior rates and their wives at various mess functions in RN Barracks throughout the year.

But it was the three little kittens pictured on a sailor's hat that was the real money spinner for us all. An artist in the barrack's design office produced a painted cap tally for each ship and shore establishment in the Plymouth



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Command. These were stuck on to the master print, copied and then printed for the number of calendars ordered by each ship and establishment. After working hours we dry-mounted prints, stuck on calendars and hangers and finally put each calendar in an envelope on an industrial-style production line that was a joy to behold.

'Ernie' Earnshaw was largely the driving force behind this particular rabbit firm enterprise. He certainly appreciated the value of money, and there were not many officers in the Plymouth Command driving a high-powered Jaguar saloon let alone a killick! What great days.

My treat for printing Mike's photographs of HMS Birmingham for his album was an 'up-homers' invitation to meet his delightful wife Kay – enjoying a few beers and nice food while getting away from gunnery ratings under training whose mess we shared.

But, as always, all good things come to an end.

By the middle of 1959, seven months after I joined the section, draft chits began flying around and new faces were appearing on the scene.



*Mike Thorne pictured on HMS Centaur in 1963*

Mike – and almost simultaneously 'Ernie' – took the sunshine route to Malta and the section at Hal Far where Mike upset the guard dogs at RAF Luqa whilst shooting action pictures for the Peregrine Trophy competition. I eventually left 'leave and draft' to join 803 Sqdn at Lossiemouth in the December.

I remember visiting Mike and Kay in their Portsmouth married quarter towards the end

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of 1964 and I last saw him in London at DPRN in Whitehall in 1974 by which time I had been out of the Navy for five years and was working as a journalist on the national edition of Steel News. We repaired to the White Cross in Whitehall in typical naval fashion where we enjoyed a few pints. That is my last memory of being with him. I heard that he died not long afterwards, and I was very sorry to hear that sad news.

Physically, Mike Thorne was a big man – but his personality was so much bigger, and he made a big impact on a lot of people in the branch – me included.

### MALTA 10<sup>TH</sup> TO 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER

#### ITINERARY

All of you going to Malta should have received your letter from Stuart Antrobus, requesting final payment and giving you details of flights etc. However, I am repeating the itinerary for your flight programme.

Gatwick/Malta – Flight No.FHE 102 on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 21:00 (Group check in at 19:00) arriving in Malta at 01:00

Malta/Gatwick Flight No.- FHE 101 on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 18:00 (Group check in at 16:00) arriving in Gatwick at 20:00

#### NORMAN GRANTHAM'S TREAT

Norman would love to have been able to attend the reunion in Malta, but is unable to do so for medical reasons. However, Norman has very kindly donated £100 for the Malta party to enjoy a drink on him. CHEERS NORMAN and THANK YOU.

#### An email from Norman on another subject:-

Dear Peter,

An amusing Limerick you might consider popping into your next Newsletter:-

A Scots sailor, name of McPhie,  
Who Spoonerised to a degree,  
Once shouted, "A wanker!"  
Instead of, "Weigh anchor!"  
And spoke of himself as "PhcMie"

As ever, Norman Grantham)



# **THE PEREGRINE PHOTOS POST**

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### **VISIT TO FORD**

A letter from your South-east Area  
Representative Ray Whitehouse.

Chilston Cottage  
Ham Manor Way  
Angmering  
West Sussex  
BN16 4JQ  
01903 - 770906

Dear all,

**“Did you train at Peregrine and fancy a nostalgic run in Chopper?”**

Having been voted as the South East Representative last November I thought it might be time to do something!

At a social event a couple of months ago I was chatting to this very attractive young woman, well you do don't you? And, it turned out the lady was Fiona Radford, the new Governor of Ford Prison!! She was keen to know anything of the time when Ford operated as a front line Naval Air Station and was particularly interested to learn that Ford was, for many years, the home of the R.N. School of Photography – her husband being an actor/photographer.

So, to cut a long story short, I have met with her a couple of times since and she has agreed to host a visit to Ford for as many “old photos” and their wives who would like to come along as guests of the Prison Service. The visit will include lunch, a tour the old Swordfish site and what's left of the airfield. Regrettably, the old R.N.S.O.P., and Wardroom area is no longer part of the prison but form part of a separate industrial complex but, I intend to contact these firms separately and see if it will be possible to visit whatever is still standing there.

It's been agreed that the visit will take place on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October starting with lunch at 1200, tours in the afternoon and possibly a nostalgic “run” to a local hostelry that evening, particularly as Ford is now a “dry ship” for obvious reasons.

I know that Fiona and her staff are very keen on this visit and we are planning an interesting day. The Assistant Governor, Glynn Hughes is also putting together a history/exhibition of Ford so will be keen to have any stories, photographs and items that you may still have.

If you would like to be included, please let me know ideally on email at [ray@chilston.com](mailto:ray@chilston.com) or at the contact details above. Look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Ray Whitehouse

### **RNPA WEB SITE**

You will have noticed that the RNPA web site has been inactive for a couple of months and we apologise for the inconvenience this has caused.

Our Web Master W/O Paul Cowpe is currently at the Royal Naval College Dartmouth (Officer Training) and will not be able to attend to the site till some time in October.

I feel you will all agree congratulations are due to a very deserving and efficient Web Master .

**CONGRATULATIONS PAUL**



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### OBITUARIES



Alexander Samuel Jamieson 1940 - 2005

DOLPHINS were performing spectacular leaps in the sun-splashed waters of the Tay estuary as the ashes of former CPO photographer Alex Jamieson were committed to the sea near Broughty Ferry on Sunday, August 7.

Alex died of a heart attack at his home in Carnoustie, Tayside on May 19 aged 64.

The committal at sea was carried out by David Kett of the Maritime Volunteer Service from the MVS launch Badger, and was attended by Alex's wife June, a former WRNS air mechanic, son Jason, daughter Sandra and his brothers John and Donald. RNPA member Ray Pogson, who became a close friend whilst under-going initial seamanship and airmanship training at HMS Gamecock near Nuneaton in 1958, was also present.

Alex was a member of No 6 Course Phot 111's which commenced at the RN School of Photography at RNAS Ford in July 1958 under instructor David 'Taff' Evers, and which included Bill 'Willie' McRobbie, Duncan 'Blood' Reid, Michael 'Viv' Lay and Ray Pogson. On completion of the course he was drafted to HMS Sea Eagle at Londonderry.



*Alex Jamieson pictured in HMS Hermes' phot section in 1960.*

His 22-year career also included drafts to: 1960 - RNAS Lossiemouth and HMS Hermes, 1962 - RNAS Abbotsinch, 1963 - RNAS Lossiemouth, 1965 - RNAS Arbroath, 1968 - RNAS Sembawang, Singapore, 1971 - HMS Tiger, 1975 - HMS Ark Royal, 1976 - Pitreavie, Rosyth until retirement in 1980.

In between these drafts Alex spent short periods at RNAS Brawdy and at DPRN in London, and was seen on stage with fellow crewmen singing "We are Sailing..." during the highly-successful TV series of the same name which was filmed during his draft to Ark Royal.



*Alex Jamieson, second left, pictured in HMS Hermes' phot section with 'Freddie' Freemantle, left, Phil Jenkins and Ray Pogson.*

After leaving the Navy he was employed for a year as a photographic technician at St Andrews University before deciding to freelance, and he worked for a number of publications in the Dundee area from his Carnoustie home.

He was a keen golfer and played off a single-figure handicap for many years.

In later life he moved away from photography with a completely new challenge, and having graduated from the Scottish School of Reflexology, helped many people overcome health problems through reflexology and magnet therapy.

"Those branch members who knew Alex will remember him as a bright and enthusiastic personality who pursued his photographic career with a smile on his face and a ready quip on his lips," said Ray Pogson. "Sadly, he died far too young."