

THE PEREGRINE PHOTOS POST

THE ROYAL NAVAL PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 4

MARCH 2004

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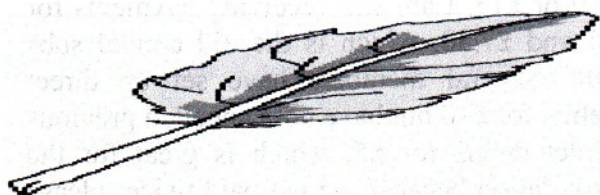
EDITORIAL

Here we are into 2004, our Secretary is back from Iraq and is already actively pursuing his RNPA duties. I have now relinquished my roll as acting secretary and I trust that all those members who contacted me in this capacity were served adequately. I would still like to receive your letters and emails, informing me of any news, reminiscences, or, photographs with captions, for inclusion in the newsletters.

For those of you who are looking forward to accessing the new web site, (I have had a few emails asking "when?"), hopefully, by the time you get this newsletter, you will already have accessed the site. Should there be any delay, Paul will advise you accordingly on the current site.

So far, only 12 members have indicated that they wished to access the newsletter on the web site and opted not to receive hard copy. I am sure that more members have the facility to access the web site, but, have not submitted the new application forms which were distributed with the August/September issue of the newsletter. This form when completed, enables us to have a database which is up to date, so, if you still have not completed the new application form, please do so as soon as possible. You can download a form from the web site, or, contact the Secretary, or myself, and we will send you one.

Pete Newton



RNPA COMMITTEE 2003/04

President: Lt. Cdr. Mike Mitchell RN.
Fleet Photographic Officer

Chairman: John Cunningham 02392 780806

Vice Chairman: Peter Newton. 01903 219996 email fawnewton@aol.com

Secretary: Lt. Stuart Antrobus, BEM. RN. .
O.I/C. FPU Tipner. 02392 547112

Treasurer: Lt. Richard Moss, BSc.(Hons) RN
023 8043 5598

Webmaster: W/O Paul Cowpe

Historian: Maurice (Jan) Larcombe.
jandor@which.net

AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Serving:- PO(Phot.) Richard Thompson DNR

Scotland:- John Berracloth. 01382 457601

Northern:- Ray Pogson 01226 763167

Midlands:- Danny De Feu. 01162 241974

Southwest/Wales:- Ian Gutteridge 01326 564514

South:- John Flack. 01329 235325

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I would like to welcome back our Secretary Stuart Antrobus from his deployment to Iraq and thank Pete Newton for stepping in to hold the fort during this period.

The 2004 Reunion in Bournemouth looks like being an exciting event and members should make every effort to support it. We have a large section of our membership living in and around Portsmouth, perhaps, we can arrange transportation to and return from the Savoy Hotel in Bournemouth from Pompey. If you wish to take advantage of this service, please let me know and if we have sufficient numbers, we will make the necessary arrangements.

I look forward to seeing most of you at the Reunion.

John Cunningham

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY

Firstly I would just like to say thank you very much to all those members and friends who took the time to send me messages of support during my recent deployment to Iraq. It was very kind of you, particularly over the Christmas and New Year period.

I won't dwell on it but I thought you might want to know that the job itself was really exciting and I'm sure I speak for all the team members when I say that it was probably one of the most rewarding assignments of our lifetime. Being in such a hostile environment has its problems, and believe me there were a few, but having served in a multi national environment was professionally very rewarding. An exhibition of some of the work will be on display later this year in Bournemouth.

I was pleased to hear that the 2003 AGM went off as planned but a little bit disappointed that so few turned up for the social get-together and the free tot of Pussers' Rum.

Now that we have a new Treasurer in place to share my workload and area reps keen to bring their area members together, a few

events are in the planning stages. Apart from the main event of the year which is our "weekend spectacular" in Bournemouth (information enclosed) we plan to have a few smaller events:

1. A visit to the Imperial War Museum, the Navy Phot Section at the Old War Office and finishing up with a few pints on the Tattershal Castle berthed on the Thames.
2. The Fleet Regional Photographic Unit (formally FPU) in Portsmouth, a visit to HMS Victory finishing with drinks at the Royal Sailors Home Club.
3. The Defence School of Photography at RAF Cosford (formally JSOP), the Aeronautical Museum finishing with drinks in the Sergeants or Officers Mess.
4. The Photographic Section at HMS Neptune plus attraction.
5. Reuters News Agency visit plus social event.
6. BBC Television or ITN Television and social event.

The above events are very much in the planning stages and full details will be advertised at a later date.

As I am about to hand over the treasurer's duties to Richie Moss I am keen to bring the database up-to-date. There are quite a few members who have still not paid their annual subs of £10 single or £15 joint membership. As it is now March I would ask you to pay this years subs by return of post if you are intending to remain a member.

Some members are paying by DIRECT DEBIT but have not amended the amount to £10 or £15. I am still receiving payments for £5 and £7.50, which is the old annual subs rate. Several members have set up direct debits for £10 but have not cancelled previous direct debits for £5, which is great for the association because we get paid twice; please check your statements.

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Our Webmaster Paul Cowpe is still working hard on the new look website but is a little bit behind schedule. He attributes this to the extra demand his new twin boys have put on him and I am sure all us parents know exactly what he means. Paul tells me that the new look site will be even better than the present one and will have several new features including Jan Larcombes' historical section which many members are very keen to see.

One or two members have said they have considered leaving as they are too old and cannot travel to our functions. If any of our members would like to volunteer as taxi drivers I will add your name to the already growing list. This would only be for pick-ups within a reasonable distance for planned visits or functions.

Finally, just a few words about the 2004 AGM in Bournemouth. The RNPA and the Royal Navy Photographic Branch really know how to throw a party and this years event will be one of the best. You will find all the booking information enclosed with the newsletter and I urge you to book as soon as possible. It may appear to be a long way off but to ensure the weekend is a success; the Association has to have approximate numbers for the hotel and caterers by the end of May.

RNPA fully paid up members will have the first opportunity to purchase Dinner and Dance tickets and reserve their choice of accommodation up until the end of April. After that date the Associate Membership (the serving photographers) will be invited to purchase the remaining Dinner Dance tickets and reserve their accommodation. Bearing in mind there are only 105 rooms at the Savoy Hotel and the rates offered are at an unbeatable price I anticipate the rooms will go fairly quickly.

The Dinner and Dance on the Saturday evening will be run as a special event in the hope that it will be the main attraction of the weekend. There are 220 places available for this function so please book early to avoid disappointment. Remember that you do not

have to be a resident at the hotel to attend the function although it may be advisable on the night of the Dinner Dance. There will be quite a few activities going on over the weekend so please give the RNPA your support for what will be a memorable occasion.

That's all for now from your secretary, I look forward to seeing you at one of the forthcoming events.

Stuart Antrobus

ROYAL NAVAL PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY By Jan Larcombe (RNPA Historian)

Having suggested that the Association needed an historian at the last AGM and been skilfully "persuaded" by John Cunningham I now find myself "In post" so to speak.

Whilst we all, over the years, have contributed to the pictorial history of the Royal Navy I suspect that, like me, few have thought too much about our own history and what should be done to preserve it.

I have proposed to the committee that we should attempt to gather as much equipment, information and as many photographs of photographers as we can and eventually gather them in one place.

On the equipment side I am thinking of things peculiar to, or modified for, the Royal Navy rather than off the shelf commercial items. I know that the FAA Museum holds around 50 Items and I aim to catalogue them fairly soon. When Whale Island closed I know some equipment was also sent to Cosford and I suspect that there is quite a lot in private hands.

Information; Branch newsletters, Newspaper articles, BRs, APs, AFOs (not that sort), DCIs and Flying logs come to mind but really anything that adds to the historical record would be suitable.

Photographs of Photographers, at work, at play, course groups, section Christmas cards.

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anything as long as they are identifiable. (Of course we all have our photographs fully dated and captioned).

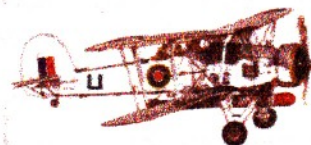
We have not finalised how we are going to achieve this yet but current thinking is a history section on the Web site with hard copies of all photographs and information being held at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton. (Yes, they are interested in course photographs and have a vast collection already). As far as equipment is concerned I believe it would be a good idea to get that under one roof as well and the museum would be happy to act as a repository for any RN Photographic equipment. The museum acts as trustees for the Nation and are only allowed to dispose of items to other museums. They cannot guarantee to display any particular item but anything held is available for research purposes.

By the time of the next newsletter I hope to have a system up and running and be asking for contributions. In the meantime could I ask that everyone delves into their archives, drags out anything of interest, annotates/tries to remember what it was all about and finally thinks about what happens to their holdings when they have gone. In my own case my sons may well hang on to my suitcase full but I doubt if the grandchildren will bother. So rather than eventually ending up in a skip it will be offered to the FAA Museum when I drop of my perch.

For those with Internet access I have put up a few sample pages to show the way we are thinking. These can be viewed at <http://homepages.which.net/~jandorr/HistoryLinksPage.htm>. If you start at the end and work backwards you will eventually come to a series of course photographs from Cosford. Individual pages are simply linked to the next but I suggest that you use the back button on your browser to return to the links page every time.

For obvious reasons most of the photographs are from my own collection. Any additions or corrections to names can be sent to me by

email at "jandorATwhich.net" (replacing the AT with @ of course). Likewise I am happy to answer any questions, take suggestions, receive lists of what you have or pointers to where anything is held. Preferable by email but my address is Lotmead, Holwell, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 5LQ.



PROFILE ON JOHN (NOBBY) GRANT – 1936 TO 1949

John is probably the only surviving member of the branch to be involved in any serious action in World War II. No doubt that statement will bring out other surviving members who will make similar claims, nevertheless, here are John's recollections of his service years.

Nobby was on *HMS Revenge* in Devonport when an Admiralty Fleet Order was posted during 1937, asking for volunteers for the Naval Photographic Branch. Nobby volunteered and in January 1939 was drafted to Tipner on Photos Class No 4, Bill Barber and George Crouch were the instructors. When war was declared in September 1939, the Class was moved to Ford Naval Air Station. He got a draft to *HMS Glorious* at Alexandria, on route he arrived at Port Said, but, missed the train to Alexandria by 5 minutes, the *Glorious* sailed without me and was eventually sunk by two German cruisers.



John Grant

He made his way back to Tipner by means of a supply ship to Malta, a troopship to Marseilles, then overland to Cherbourg and finally by sea to Britain where he joined the *Illustrious* at Greenock and then sailed to Bermuda for crash barrier trials, losing 6 aircraft in the process.

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From *Illustrious's* base in Alexandria raids were launched on enemy shipping and on the Italian and Greek Islands. On 11th November, 1940 *Illustrious* aircraft helped to cripple a major part of the Italian fleet at Taranto. Germany sent several Dive Bombers Squadrons especially to sink the *Illustrious*, which they almost did in January 1941, the ship was badly damaged and there were many casualties.

The ship made it back to Grand Harbour in Malta for repairs and the attacks continued. *Illustrious* managed to slip out of Grand Harbour one night and was out of range of the Dive Bombers by morning and soon arrived back at Alexandria. After a spell at Dekhelia in Egypt, Nobby made the trip back to Malta by destroyer, which engaged in battle with submarines.

Back in Malta, the RN Air Station had been totally flattened, so Nobby was seconded to the RAF HQ in Valetta where he was deployed to drive petrol bowlers. He soon found himself aboard *HMS Regent*, a submarine on its way to Gibraltar, which engaged two German supply ships and sank one. The sub had no torpedoes and used its guns in this action, Nobby helped by passing up the ammunition. The submarine was lost without trace after leaving Gibraltar.

At Gibraltar, he embarked on a captured French escort vessel *La Maloine* which joined a large convoy to Liverpool and the journey took a month. Nobby arrived at Lee-on-Solent and after three weeks leave, was posted to Yeovilton where he was issued with a brand new BSA 350 motorbike to ride around the perimeter track collecting and reloading G45 cameras from the Hurricanes and Spitfires engaged in target practice.

Nobby was next attached to 829 Swordfish Squadron and joined *HMS Victorious* at Scapa Flow, escorting Russian Convoys. The Squadron were involved in bombing the *Tirpitz* in Tromsø Fjord and lost quite a number of the aircrew. By contrast to the Russian Convoys, the *Victorious* sailed for the east and its new base at Colombo, it was here that Nobby was put ashore to stay at a former racecourse that the Fleet Air Arm had acquired as its air base. It was here that he

was asked to photograph top brass, Admirals, Captains and the Governor. Nobby took a half plate camera and a double dark slide. When he returned to the section he used ice, fans, formaldehyde and all aids in the processing, but, reticulation beat him and the result was a disaster.

He was later posted to Ford to do a course which he successfully completed in 1945 after which he was stationed at *HMS Vernon*, where he photographed aircraft torpedo dropping practice. In 1947 he was sent to Singapore to join *HMS Theseus*. His next draft was to Colombo and then to Malta where he broke a leg when stationed at RNAS Hal Far.

Nobby returned to Lee-on-Solent and then on to *HMS Siskin* in Gosport. His medical problem re-occurred and he ended up in the RN Hospital at Haslar, he was then discharged as unfit for further service.



John Grant again a few years on.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

If you were on No.6 Phot 2, course (1949), or, have information of any of the members of this course, Bob Lomax would like details. Should you wish to respond to this request, please let me have your replies, (email, letter, or, phone), and I will pass it on to Bob.

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Ray White would like to know of the whereabouts of old mate Wally Donkin and Charles Robinson would like to know of the whereabouts of Mike (Blondie) Edwards. If anyone has any information on Reg Clowes, or, Denis Lindley, please get in touch.



Back Row L-R Ray Pugh ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?
 Centre Row ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?
 Front Row Bill Smith John Orme + another
 Taken about 1964. If anyone can fill in the ?
 please let me know and I will pass the details
 on to Ray.



L to R : Lt. Harry Wragg, John Cunningham,
 'Todd' Slaughter, Len Hutton, Alan 'Tex'
 Ball, Len Wilmott, Jim Hinchley, Reg Marles
 Rod Saff, Mick Keeling, Terry Gill, Dave
 'Taff' Eyres.

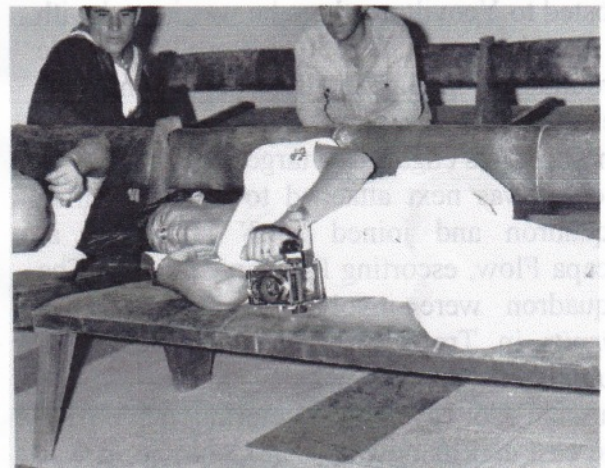


CULDROSE 1951

Back row L-R: 'Oscar' Wilde, Mark Bowcutt,
 John Cunningham, Brijan Ing, 'Ginge' Trow,
 ?
 Front row L-R: ? , Ray Pugh, 'Jock' Knock,
 Trevor Kingsley Jones



No.5 PHOT II COURSE JANUARY 1949



Horizontal again!! Pete (Jan) Thorne on a run
 ashore somewhere in the Med to get some
 rabbit pics.