



# The Peregrine Phots Post



Winter  
2010/11  
Issue 24

**Happy New Year**  
from your editors

*The Royal Naval Photographer's Association*

Yes I know its a bit late but better late than never.

We hope you all had a great Christmas and now looking forward to some of our Social events of 2011 which our social secretary Ray Whitehouse is busy setting up. We can't make Edinburgh but looking forward to Gibraltar and hopefully all the others to catch up with you all.

In this newsletter we thought we would pay tribute to The Ark Royal as she has been de-commissioned.

This is a smaller newsletter than normal because Steve & I have run out of time & in 12 hours we take off to Hong Kong on our way to Aussie land for a bit of sunshine & catch up with our old mate Alan (Chick) Fowler. You will see our social secretary has been busy page 5 & 6 but I believe he is also enjoying the sun at the moment. Thank you everyone that has sent photos & stories including Paul Yockney for sending his album most helpful you will be reading about it in future newsletter. Steve Pratt sent most of the Photo's of the Ark Royal (R09) I know he was crew at xmas 1977 as he's on the xmas card .

I intend to write a piece about the WRNS joining the branch and if you have any stories to include please contact us. **THATS ALL FOLKS** Happy reading. Hilary & Steve King



**Ark Royal** was an English galleon, originally called Ark Raleigh ordered for Sir Walter Raleigh & later purchased by the crown for service in the Royal Navy commissioned 1587. She was used as the English flagship in a number of engagements, including the battles that resulted in the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and had a long career spanning over 50 years. Sunk in April 1636, raised and broken up in 1638 Her fame would subsequently lead to a number of warships of the Royal Navy being named Ark Royal in her honour, including a number of flagships of the fleet.

#### General characteristics as built

Propulsion: Sails

Complement: 268 sailors, 32 gunners,  
100 soldiers

Armament: 1599 - 55 guns:

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### **Membership Secretary's Report – Jan 2011**

Hi everyone, your Membership Secretary here, and a belated Happy New Year to you all!

This year has the opportunity to the Best Ever for the Members, with a long list of visits and reunions, as long as your arm to choose from, stretching from Edinburgh & Rosyth in Scotland to Gibraltar in the Med, all thanks to our Social Secretary, Ray Whitehouse. Well done Ray!!

Sorry to bring this up but, just a gentle reminder that the Membership Fees were voted in for a slight raise over a year ago, so those of you who haven't changed your Standing Order subscription please make it your New Year's resolution to do so as outlined below, Thank You.

And those of you who haven't started your subscription yet, please email or write to me for a Membership and Standing Order Form

Single/Associate/Serving Membership Fees - £15

Joint Membership Fees - £20

I feel like an Ogre keeping on about keeping your Membership up to date,  
BUT IT IS THE LIFE BLOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION – WITHOUT AS WITHOUT YOU - WE ARE NOTHING!

Looking forward to hearing from you, and meeting up with all you again,

Yours Aye, Danny du Feu  
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**Please visit - The RNPA web site: <http://www.rnpa.info>**



## The Ark Royal



With the de-commissioning of the Ark Royal we thought we would give a small tribute of its history. Thanks to Steve Pratt who now lives in Germany, he supplied us with some of the photos.

HMS Ark Royal (R07), the last Invincible-class light aircraft carrier to be completed, is the fifth ship of the Royal Navy named in honour of the flagship of the English fleet that defeated the Spanish Armada. Ark Royal is slightly larger than her sister ships and during construction she was fitted with a steeper ski-jump ramp, (twelve degrees, as opposed to seven degrees of the Invincible) to improve STOVL take-off performance for the Harrier aircraft.

Her keel was laid by Swan Hunter at Wallsend on 7 December 1978. She was launched on 20 June 1981 sponsored by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother and commissioned on 1 November 1985. Originally intended as Indomitable in line with her sister ships (HMS Invincible and HMS Illustrious), public resentment at the scrapping of the previous Ark Royal (Britain's last large aircraft carrier up to that date) in 1980 led the Royal Navy to announce that the name would be revived on the new



**Harrier on the Ark Royal**



**Steve Pratt who served on the Ark Royal**

In May 1999 Ark Royal put into Rosyth for refitting, which included the removal of the Sea Dart missiles and covering over of the foredeck to allow for an enlarged deck park for aircraft. She was recommissioned in 2001. She sailed to the Persian Gulf for the 2003 Invasion of Iraq in 2003. Helicopters from Ark Royal played a crucial role in the Battle of Basra.

In April 2004 Ark Royal entered into extended readiness, following which she entered refit with the return to service of Illustrious. Ark Royal completed an extensive refit in August 2006 and returned to Portsmouth, her home port, to rejoin the fleet on 28 October 2006 where she underwent 10 weeks of training and sea trials. Ark Royal will be utilised as a landing platform helicopter, replacing Ocean while she undergoes refit. On 16 November 2006 a British Army WAH-64 Apache attack helicopter landed on Ark Royal for the first time marking an increase in the carrier's capability.<sup>[5]</sup> On 22 March 2007, HMS Ark Royal was returned to the Royal Navy Fleet after a two-year refit worth £18 million. As of May 2007, she once again became the Fleet Flagship, reclaiming the title from her sister ship, Illustrious, which had been Flagship since the end of her refit in 2005.



HMS Ark Royal (R09) was an Audacious-class aircraft carrier of the Royal Navy and, when she was decommissioned in 1978, was its last remaining conventional catapult and arrested-landing aircraft carrier. She was the world's first aircraft carrier to be commissioned with an angled flight deck. Ark Royal was the sister ship to HMS Eagle, which was initially named HMS Audacious, hence the name of the class. Four Audacious-class ships were laid down, but two (HMS Africa and the original HMS Eagle) were cancelled at the end of the war, and construction of the other two suspended for several years. Both surviving ships would be extensively upgraded throughout their lifetimes.

The ship was originally designated Irresistible, but was renamed Ark Royal prior to launch. The immediately previous Ark Royal, also an aircraft carrier, was torpedoed off Gibraltar on 14 November 1941 with the loss of 1 member of the ship's company.

She was launched in 1950, and her completion took five more years. In this time, she underwent redesign and, when completed, she was markedly different from her sister ship. When commissioned, she had a 5.5° partially angled flight deck, two steam catapults capable of launching aircraft weighing up to 30,000 pounds (14,000 kg), a deck-edge lift on the port side (the first British ship to be fitted with such a device), modified armament, and the new mirror landing system. Ark Royal was the first British ship to be constructed with an angled flight deck and steam catapults, as opposed to having them added after launching.<sup>[1]</sup> These innovations allowed aircraft to land and take off from the carrier at the same time. Her flight deck as built was 800 by 112 feet (240 by 34 m).

About a year after commissioning, her forward port 4.5 inch (113 mm) guns were removed to improve aircraft operations over the angled deck. Four years later, the port deck-edge lift and the forward starboard 4.5 inch (113 mm) guns were also removed. The remaining 4.5 inch guns were removed in the 1964 refit. From March 1967 to February 1970, she underwent her final major refit, partially to enable her to operate the larger Phantom and Buccaneer Mk.2 aircraft. Modifications included an 8.5° angled flight deck, new catapults and arrestor cables, a modified island and a partially new electronic suite (some of her original radars were retained). She was also fitted for four Sea Cat missile launchers, but they were never installed, so she emerged from this refit with no defensive armament.

Initially on entry into service, the ship had a complement of up to 50 aircraft comprising Sea Hawks, Sea Venoms, Gannets, Skyraiders and various helicopters. As later aircraft types grew in size and complexity, her air group fell to below 40 when she left service in 1978.



HMS Eagle &  
HMS Ark Royal



Hangar Deck



Coming into  
land



Colin Stu & Steve



Last visit to Gibraltar

# **Social Report Ray Whitehouse**

Dear all,

As promised I should like to update you all with regard to the various social events that are in planning for next year; the response to my last email has been excellent and very encouraging, with 44 provision bookings for Gibraltar, 26 for the Midlands (Arboretum etc), 24 for Edinburgh, 16 for the Social on Victory and 24 for the AGM.

## **Gibraltar Reunion**

Dates - arrival on Friday 28th to departure on Monday 31st October 2011 at The Rock Hotel. Rooms are being held on option and the cost will be £47.50 per person per night Bed and Breakfast sharing a double room.

Regret I am still not able to give a final weekend "package" price as the airlines are reluctant to confirm fares for October until March. I have registered our group movement with EasyJet, Monarch and British Airways and I will be chasing them as soon as they open their flight schedules.

I am working on a programme of events and tours for the weekend but I am pleased to advise that The Governor, Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns, has agreed to join us at our Reunion Dinner on the Saturday and maybe...I will be able to get him, and the Tourist Board, to participate in other ways as well!

## **Edinburgh**

Confirmed for the dates arrival on Wednesday 13th April to Saturday 16th April and I am holding rooms at the Queensferry Hotel which although not in the centre of the city is more convenient for Rosyth, Britannia etc., but still reasonably close to Edinburgh for those in need of some retail therapy! The cost of the hotel is £40.00 per person per night Bed & Breakfast sharing a double room.

The social programme is coming along nicely, a visit to Britannia is booked including a light lunch in the Royal Deck Tea Room; BAE Systems are working on a visit for us to see the New Carrier build; I am also in discussions with the liaison officer of Illustrious with regard to a visit on her, (she should be completing her last refit around then and may be on daily sea-trials, so not impossible that we could get some sea-air for the day); a visit to the Glenkinchie Distillery is also on the cards and an evening social event at "Hawes Inn"...where I hear some of you ask? It's the old inn where Robert Louis Stevenson wrote "Kidnapped" and it's also mentioned in the story...but then most of you knew that anyway!

Important...if you still wish to join us in Edinburgh then please let me have your confirmation a.s.p. together with the names of who will be attending. It will also be helpful if you let me know how you will travelling, i.e. train, plane or car together and also please let me have your deposit cheque (dated 15th February) for £25.00 per person.

## **Midlands Visit**

Am pleased to advise that the dates will be from arrival on Wednesday 13th July to Friday 15th July and I have booked the Bosworth Hall Hotel at Market Bosworth. The cost of the hotel is confirmed at £40.00 per person per night Bed & Breakfast sharing a double room.

A packed social programme is being planned and will centre on a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum near Lichfield where I am hopeful that we will be able to hold a short service to dedicate and unveil a RNPA commemorative plaque as part of the Fleet Air Arm Memorial.

Also looking at a visit to a brewery in Burton, maybe Gamecock Barracks (the old HMS Gamecock at Bramcote - which should stir a few memories for many), and the recently discovered "proper" site of the Battle of Bosworth which I am sure you are all aware Bosworth was one of the most historically important battles that took place on English soil.

Again, please let me know if you wish to be confirmed on this visit with names etc., together with a deposit cheque, dated 15th February, for £25.00 per person.

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## **Social Evening on Victory**

Am still looking at organising this for the 23rd September but it is impossible to confirm that date until much nearer the time; they have to sort out the Second Sea Lord's diary first (we come second)...but I am on the case and will let you have details as soon as they are to hand.

## **AGM**

Provisionally booked for the weekend of Saturday 24th September at The Maritime Club, Portsmouth.

Planning to hold the Meeting late afternoon on the Saturday and follow it with a casual social evening in the Nelson Lounge with an open bar, buffet supper, entertainment etc.,

Cost	AGM only £5.00 (Coffee/tea, biscuits and a tot of Pusser's)
	AGM and Social only £29.00
	AGM, Social and accommodation (Sat) B&B £73.00
	AGM, Social and 2 nights' accommodation (B&HB Fri) (B&B Sat) £129.50

No urgency in getting your bookings in yet unless you need to confirm accommodation, in which case, please let me have your booking details together with a post dated cheque for 1st September 2011

If anyone would like additional information about any of the above please feel free to contact me, preferably via email, as I may not be around much in January and early Feb...time I flew south again, fed-up with this cold weather!

Please make any cheques payable to the RNPA, and a small favour please...as this missive is only going out to those members on email (except for the odd one or two), please forward it on to anyone you may know who still communicates only via snail mail.

Lastly, Pam and I wish you all a very happy Christmas and our very best wishes for 2011...look forward to seeing you at some point during it.

Regards Ray