

The Peregrine Phots Post

Autumn
2014
Issue 43

The Royal Navy Photographers Association

Ahoy There

Hope you all had a haunting halloweeeen.

A good time was had in Chatham starting with a Barn dance on the Friday night with a great group and enthusiastic participants - what fun. Saturday we visited the dockyard including the Ropery and a very entertaining guide who certainly made the visit worth while. The Set of Call the Midwives were explored and a visit to The Nelson micro Brewery which was very much enjoyed. The Evening Dinner was excellent and talks down memory lane from Brian Jackson & anyone who cared to join in - thanks Pete Thorne very entertaining. The AGM was on Sunday morning (minutes on the RNPA website) and in the afternoon a visit to Leeds Castle - a Great weekend thanks Ray for your hard work.

Numbers were down so Jan has sent email survey to see if we can improve our social events to encourage more to attend, if you receive a hard copy of the newsletter it is attached at the back please return to Jan Larcombe.

In this newsletter we have an article from Reginald Davis MBE very interesting reading and also the winner of the national sea view competition Photo by Bernie Pettersen ex navy phot. 'I'm Proud of' photo this time is by Paul Yockney. Thank you all for sending in your photos I had great difficulties deciding which photos to publish but welcome all, I have a reserve for the next issue which will be sent out for Christmas.

HMS Gannet Chatham Dockyard

Hilary & Steve King



Top Row: Doreen & Jan Larcombe, Roy Penny, Michael Lay, Pete Bunting, Pam Whitehouse, Michael Mc.Knight, Mike Gilbert.

Bottom Row : Hilary King, Bridget Bunting, Stephen King, Janet Mc.Knight,, Elizabeth Penny, Mary Gilbert, Catherine Kelly, Jo & Keith Tuttle, Jean & Mike Keeling, Pete Thorne, Ray Whitehouse, Tony Darbyshire, Ben Cartright, Andrea, John Flack, Angela Thorne, Val Darbyshire, Angela Pogson, Bill & Anne Porter, Ray Pogson.

RNPA COMMITTEE

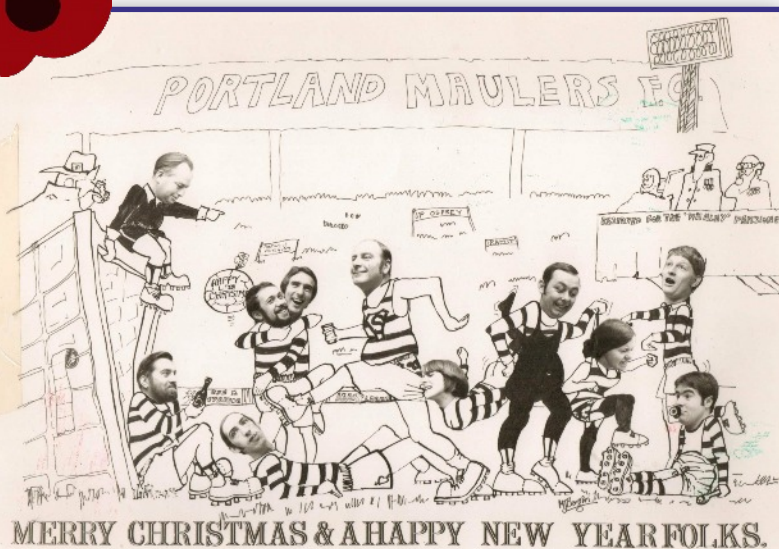
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Farewell to our shipmate Susan Dixon nee Hartley

We have learned through The Wren magazine (October 2015 edition) that one of our fold has crossed the bar. Susan died on 6 July 2015, aged 63.

Sue served in the WRNS as a Leading Wren photographer and joined the service in 1973.

I remember Sue very fondly. After she did her training at RNSOP Cosford, her first draft was to HMS Osprey, which is where I met her.



She was a bubbly girl and turned out to be an excellent phot. At the time I didn't have a car and Sue often gave me a lift in her beautiful 'Inspector Morse' Jaguar which, if I remember correctly, was a lovely classic dark green colour.

We are reliably informed that Sue married another phot., Paul Dixon, but we have no information on when they married, or if they had any children.

After she left Portland she worked at HMS Warrior and HMS Excellent at the FPU.

If any of our members can supply us with more information about Sue, and her time both when in the WRNS, and her life on leaving the service, we would like to hear from you.

The photo, taken from our archive, is of the RNAS Portland's Christmas card which was sent out in 1974. Sue is third from the right in the picture. RIP

Tony Darbyshire

A teaser from Ray Whitehouse.....who is Ng Muk Kah BEM?

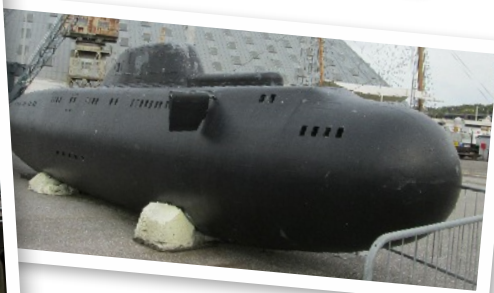


RNPA
2015 Reunion
Bridgewood Manor
Hotel
Chatham
9th to 11th
October 2015



Friday night - Barn dance

Great fun & entertaining as you can see by the dapper foot work.



Saturday

Chatham Dockyard

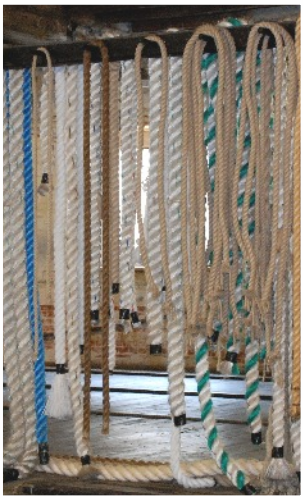
Below Mike & Jean Keeling
 onboard HMS Cavalier



The Ropery



Bill Porter & Roy Penny
Back to work again.



Call the Midwives film set



Bridget & Pete Bunting & Val Darbyshire

Saturday Night RNPA 2015 reunion Dinner Chatham



Janet & Michael Mc.Knight & Paul Yockney



Bill Porter, Mike & Mary Gibert & Angela Pogson



Ray Pogson, Bill Porter, Jan & Doreen Larcombe, Mary Gilbert, Pam Whitehouse & Mike Gilbert



Michael Mc.Knight & Hilary King



Brian(Mr del Monte) Jackson & Pete Bunting



Michael Lay & Roy) Penny



Mike & Jean Keeling



Pete Thorne Bill & Ann Porter



In a quiet corner of HMS Cavalier Ray & Bill 'Up Spirits'



Steve enjoying a pint



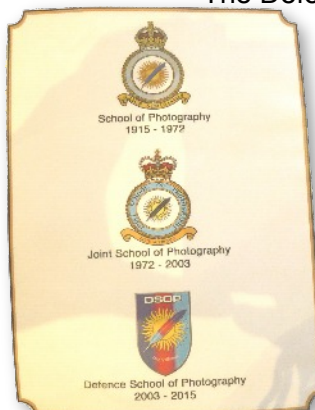
Sunday - Leeds Castle



Mr Happy & Mr Grumpy!!!!



On 22nd August 2015 Jan Larcombe attended the Centenary Gala Dinner to celebrate The Defence School of Photography - below with members of Staff.



I was a member of the St. Albans sea cadets for two years prior to being called up on 17th March 1943 to the Royal Navy and sent to Skegness, – Butlins, the original holiday camp, named, HMS Royal Arthur.

After several weeks training at HMS Royal Arthur I was then transferred to the Fleet Air Arm and had photographic training at Felpham near Bognor under the supervision of the RAF photo division. We lived in a house named 'Haim' . As part of the training, I had to fly in an Anson aircraft and was lying down in the nose of the plane which was all in perspex, taking photographs and it was rather scary as if I was a bird and all I could see was land and sea.

After passing photo exams I then became a Fleet Air Arm photographer and was sent to the Royal Naval air base at Yeovilton before going to Greenock in Scotland, HMS Waxwing, and waited there before boarding a troopship sailing to Bombay. We had all different personnel onboard, Americans, Canadians, and West Indians and a few women, and the ship was called “The Maloya” an Indian vessel. From Bombay, we were transferred to a Polish vessel of 6000 tonnes en-route to Colombo, Ceylon, (now Sri Lanka) and the heavy seas made nearly everyone onboard sick, except myself and a few of my colleagues.

Now in Colombo, stationed on the racecourse (no horses of course) and the name of our base was HMS Bherunda. The photographic section consisted of six with an officer in charge. I was there for about five months sleeping on a bench in the stand. The work consisted of processing films and printing photographs and making mosaics for the instructions for the pilots, who were bombing and strafing the Nicobar Islands and the oil fields of Sumatra. It was here in Colombo I caught Dinghy which is a form of malaria. I recovered after some five or six days.

My time had now come to join the aircraft carrier HMS Victorious, a beautiful ship of some 23,000 tonnes. I was assigned as a photographer to 1836 squadron, one of the two Corsair squadrons onboard (Fighters). Also there were two bomber squadrons of Avenger aircraft. The work was quite similar to what I had been doing, plus loading and fitting cameras to the aircraft. Each aircraft had a vertical camera, one oblique at the side of the fuselage and of course the pilot's firing camera. It was also my job as a member of the ship's company to be on the Captain's bridge at times for photographing the landing and taking off of aircraft in case of any mishap, and there were quite a few.



We operated in the Indian Ocean for many months and never saw any enemy ships. Life was quite pleasant, although there were long boring periods at sea without seeing the sight of land. We had the occasional enemy aircraft attacking the fleet but nothing like the heavy attacks which were to come in the Pacific. We then sailed south to Sydney, Australia, and we were all excited knowing the ship was going in for a refit for several weeks and we would be sent to a land base during this time. The crossing across the Great Australian Bight from Freemantle to Sydney was quite harrowing with the swelling seas.



On arrival in Sydney we were sent to Paramata a base some 30 minutes outside the city, and the food we were given was wonderful, my colleagues and I spent a lovely few weeks more or less on holiday. Back to the ship sailing north to join the American 6th Fleet under the command of Admiral Nimitz at Leyte in the Philippines. In our British Fleet, we had our sister ship HMS Illustrious, accompanied by HMS Formidable and HMS Indomitable. Sailing at the stern of each carrier was a Destroyer for picking up pilots who may have to ditch their aircraft through either damage or lack of fuel. We were told one evening at a lovely sunset on the blue calm sea that the following morning we were going into action off the island of Okinawa. I and many of us were quite scared and wondered what sort of action we may encounter. I know we all prayed and thought of home and our families.

Onboard the ship, the only weapons I had were the cameras and my life belt. Being a photographer, my action station was really left up to me to take the most advantageous positions. I had access to roam the ship at will. There were three other photographers onboard and our section was below the waterline. When action stations sounded, if one was off duty they would be in the photographic section, and whilst in action the hatch above would be sealed until after the all clear. However, if we were hit by a torpedo one could not get out and this was quite a danger. Fortunately we were not.

Morning came and action stations were sounded. We were in the middle of a Japanese onslaught off Okinawa. Kamikaze aircraft were all round the fleet, like bees around the honey pot. The noise of the orlican guns and the 4.5 inch shelling coupled with the screeching of aircraft was deafening; many aircraft falling into the sea, both theirs and ours. The gunners wore their anti-flash gear and everyone wore lifebelts. In those days a lifebelt was a circular tube of navy material which one would blow up like a balloon.

Japanese zeroes were coming in low and fast and hitting our ships. It was hell. On VE day (Victory in Europe Day) our ship was hit by several Kamikaze zeros and we lost many lives.

I remember one Kamikaze hit us forward – our deck was 4" steel – and it made a huge hole tearing the metal apart. I was photographing on the flight deck and seeing the sky full of white smoke from the fighting. It was indeed a terrible day.

After action stations it was peaceful once again and we had a church service of thanksgiving.

We returned to Leyte, our base in the Pacific for a few days' rest and replenishments. We had beer and ice-cream on board sent to us by our American partners. Then back into action again and for the next month or so we saw nothing but sea and action and we were down to eating corn beef, biscuits and potatoes and onions. We were told we were 36 miles off the coast of Japan. News came through that an Atom bomb had just been dropped by the Americans and we cheered as we knew the war would soon finish. And so it did. What a wonderful wonderful relief and excitement all round.

We sailed back to Sydney. We were alive. Then home, which took six weeks sailing into Portsmouth. Our ship was dressed overall and the crowds cheered on the dockside as we entered the port.

I left HMS Victorious and was sent to Padstow in Cornwall, a shore base establishment named HMS Vulture and there demobbed in August 1946.

My service life helped me in civilian life, because I became a professional photographer.

I married in Brighton in 1948 to Audrey Fields. We were blessed with one daughter, Marilyn, who married Dr Jonathan Warren in 1977 and now we have three grandsons; Nicholas, Elliot and James. Nicholas is married to Sarah and they have a daughter Phoebe.

So we are Great Grandparents now.

My medals: 1939-1945 Star: Burma Star with Pacific clasp: War Medal.

Peacetime Medals: Order of Taj (Iran): MBE.

On the right:
Reginald Davis photographing F16 fighter flying over the Persian Gulf at Kish Island with the Crown Prince Reza in the cockpit.



Smooth Harbour Photo by Bernie Pettersen



The winners of a national photography competition to find the UK's best sea view have today been announced by one of the UK's oldest maritime charities, and Acceleris client, the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society.

With a flood of entries from across the UK, the overall winner was Bernie Pettersen, an ex Petty Officer in the Royal Navy, for his photo *Smooth Harbour*, which captured a storm crashing into the Bickford-Smith Institute clock tower building in Porthleven in Cornwall.

The competition was judged aboard the Cutty Sark in London, by a prestigious panel of media and maritime experts, including the picture editor at the Sunday Times, Ray Wells, the head of pictures at the Independent, Sophie Batterbury, the editor of Amateur Photographer, Nigel Atherton, and the chief executive of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, Commodore Malcolm Williams.

See more at:

http://www.accelerismc.com/news_03_09_15_shipwrecked_mariners_society_ultimate_seaview.htm#sth

I'm Proud of - Photo by Paul Yockney

From tail - end Charlie Position, 17 Wessex of 848 Squadron in formation. Albion arrives at Pierhead 5th May 1967 on the Mersey.



Tickets for the Historical Dockyard, normal ticket price for Portsmouth area naval museums are shown at: <http://www.historicdockyard.co.uk/tickets> - £32, but you can get a one day veteran ticket for £10 from the visitor centre if you flash your RNPA membership card.