

Issue 56 Winter 2018

Ahoy There



**Happy  
New Year**



Happy New Year, hope you had a very good Christmas. That was a quick year with an excellent reunion well done Ray. It was great to see the RNPA well represented at the Cenotaph thanks Danny for organising the squad.

This year is our 100<sup>th</sup> year of the phot branch so we want to see you all at our reunions which we will keep you all informed as soon as we know.

This newsletter has articles on HMS Queen Elizabeth and her trials, HMS Montrose, Ray Pogson's visit to the Devonport section and Mike Gilbert catching up with Alfie Tubb.

**Hilary & Steve King**



Two photo from the 2018 Peregrine Trophy - sorry I have no more details at this time

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Andy on the left with brother John

## Farewell Shipmates

### Andrew Sinclair

Andy joined the navy at HMS Ganges as a boy and followed brother John into the photographic branch qualifying on number 9 Phot 2s course at Lossie in 1966 with Tony Darbyshire, Eric Rooke, Paul Dixon, Steve Dargan, Maurice 'Jan' Brailey, Steve Hobden & Len Cobbett.

After he left the Navy Andy worked on cruise ships with Ian 'Dick' Emery before starting his own import business and afterward a photographic studio in Hastings. He also worked in Nigeria where he met his wife Chantelle.

Andy had been unwell for some time and was later diagnosed with stage one leukaemia. Five sessions of chemotherapy and sepsis severely weakened him and he died peacefully and without pain on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2018. He was 69. His funeral took place at the Charing crematorium, Ashford on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and the RN Photos was represented by Tony Darbyshire, Glynis Shaw and Andy's brother John.

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## Things Historic

I suspect that most of you know that the book I have been working on is now available from Amazon. If not just enter the title "A History of Royal Navy Photography" or the ISBN number "978-1981206018" into the amazon search bar and the book details will come up.

Because of the Amazon publishing system it is relatively easy to change or add anything to the text so I am still in the market for anything of historical interest, not only for inclusion in the book but for the continuing historical web page project at;

<http://www.users.waitrose.com/~jandor/index.htm>  
which is amended when I get new information.

Jan Larcombe  
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### **RNPA Remembrance Sunday March Past at the Cenotaph 2018**

Greetings everyone, it is again with a massive sense of pride that I mention the immaculate turn out that the RNPA Cenotaph Marchers' platoon, displayed on Remembrance Sunday this year, within the Fleet Air Arm column.

It was a very sunny and mild day this year and we were the first column to march down Whitehall and present the RNPA Wreath at the Cenotaph. Due to the 'Nations Thank You Procession', we didn't return to Horse Guards but carried on marching onto the Mall and through Admiralty Arch to arrive at the FAA Memorial adjacent to the MOD Building.

After a short service, where Brian Jackson laid a wreath on behalf of the RNPA, all 18 of us got together for a group photo and then made our way to the 'Tom Cribb Pub', near Leicester Square, where we were welcomed again by veterans from the 'Ton Class Minesweepers' and Bomber Command Associations. After the 'Loyal Toast' and drinks we enjoyed the generous 'Hot Buffet' laid on by the pub landlord.

As per tradition, our second venue we visited around 4pm was the 'Blue Post' pub, a few streets away where the 'Fallen Heroes Trad Jazz band', kept us entertained with great numbers interspersed with wartime songs until around 8pm. They mentioned at the start that there would be a 'Special Act' later, - guess who? Yes, you were right, our own Roger Forbes, got us and the locals dancing to a great 'Rock' number, and to close this was followed a roof lifting rendition of 'God Save the Queen'.

Danny du Feu      Cenotaph March Representative



## **HMS Queen Elizabeth returns from Fighter Jet Trials**



Royal Navy aircraft carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, sails back into Portsmouth today, after successful completion of initial fast jet trials in America, marking a new era in UK Carrier Strike capability.

The 65,000-tonne carrier's first trans atlantic deployment, which began in August, saw her embark two F-35B Lightning II test aircraft, from the Integrated Test Force (ITF) based out of Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland. She also conducted an historic, week-long visit to New York.

During the Development Trials, the jets conducted 202 takeoffs from the ship's ski ramp, 187 vertical landings, and 15 shipborne vertical landings (SRVL) —a landing technique unique to the UK. They also dropped 54 inert bombs, testing the weight loading in a variety of weather conditions and sea states. The operating envelopes will be further expanded during Operational Trials, scheduled for next year.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

"HMS Queen Elizabeth's inaugural deployment to the US has not only marked the return of the Royal Navy's carrier strike capabilities, but also strengthened our special relationship with US forces. A true statement of our global reach and power, this ship will serve the United Kingdom for generations to come, keeping the nation safe and supporting our allies as we navigate increasing threats."

Having assumed Command from Rear Admiral Jerry Kyd in New York, Captain Nick Cooke Priest summed up the deployment, saying:

"The 'WESTLANT 18' deployment has been a real success; and let's not forget that we are just a year on from the Ship being commissioned and accepted into service. The main effort – Fixed Wing Flying trials have delivered outstanding results, which is testament to the co-operation, hard work and dedication of both the Ship's Company and the US Integrated Test Force, assisted by the US Navy and US Marine Corps. Their combined efforts have put us in an excellent starting position for next year's Operational Testing. The Ship has proudly flown the flag for the UK across the Atlantic".

Commander Air onboard, Cdr James Blackmore oversaw the flight trials and said:

"Since the ship sailed from build only 17 months ago we have operated Fixed Wing - most notably the F-35B - Rotary Wing and the Tilt Rotor MV-22 Osprey – 9 different aircraft types in all. We have proved the incredible design of the Queen Elizabeth Class of ship and the partnership with the F-35B. In that combination, we have something very special that will provide significant operational capability for decades to come, strategic choice for our government and a Task Group focus for the Royal Navy; we are truly back in the Super Carrier era".

The deployment was also the first for the reformed UK Carrier Strike Group staff, headed up by Cdre Michael Utley, who said:

"This has been an extraordinarily successful deployment on the Royal Navy's journey to full Carrier Strike capability. It has once again demonstrated the strongest of relationships with our closest allies in the US and will underpin future work as we re-introduce fixed wing aviation at



sea. The design of HMS Queen Elizabeth, specifically built for the immensely capable F-35B Lightning II, has enabled outstanding progress which will form the basis of Operational Testing in 2019. The other Task Group units deployed, including HMS Monmouth, our new Royal Fleet Auxiliary Tanker RFA Tidespring and the Merlin Helicopters from 820 and 845 Naval Air Squadrons, as well as Royal Marines and members from our sister Services, have all contributed to this significant success."

The 'WESTLANT 18' Task Group comprised HMS Queen Elizabeth, HMS Monmouth, RFA Tidespring and aircraft from 820, 845 and 814 Naval Air Squadrons, as well as Royal Marines from 42 Commando and supporting units from the US Navy and US Marine Corps.

As the carrier's escort HMS Monmouth sailed back towards her home in Plymouth, Commanding Officer, Cdr Will King said:

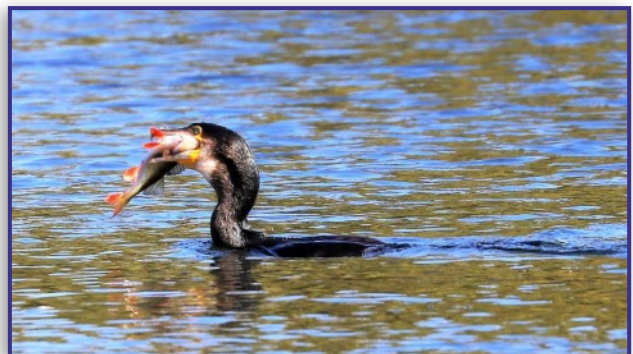
"HMS Monmouth has pioneered the way as the first unit to escort the Carrier on her historic first deployment. It marks a significant stride forward for the wider Royal Navy fleet in generating the UK's Carrier Strike capability. The training we have been able to do amongst our combined UK and US Task Group units has benefited us enormously".



HMS Queen Elizabeth will remain in Portsmouth during the early part of 2019 undergoing maintenance.

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**Photos by Brian Cartwright** - come on photographers send in your photo. Well done Brian



## Christmas meeting between Michael Gilbert and Alfie Tubb



Today at the outskirts of Inverurie we met up with Alfie Tubb and his wife Shona who reside in Inverurie. We reminisced about our time as photographers in the mob. Alfie served on survey ships Cook and Dampier also the carrier Centaur in the 50's and 60's. Having heard about Alfie from Ray Pogson who gave me his contact details we met up at my stepson's house, where we were spending Christmas, for a chat and a cup of tea.

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### **RN Barracks Devonport: Old and New**

"WHILE fellow RNPA members were scrambling up and down ladders on the 3,400-ton Churchill-class nuclear submarine HMS Courageous during the recent Plymouth Reunion, I was retracing my steps on my first 'ship' after initial photographic training," writes Ray Pogson. "...Because when it was decided to hold the 2018 RNPA Reunion in Guzz I was determined to revisit what was, for me, the scene of an influential and enjoyable 13 month's draft. I joined HMS Drake, the Royal Naval Barracks (RNB), Devonport on November 4<sup>th</sup> 1958, replacing Pete Thorne who had already departed to join Paul Yockney on 803 Squadron at RNAS Lossiemouth, and apart from brief visits during 1963/64 whilst serving on the survey ship HMS Dalrymple, I hadn't been inside Jago's Mansions since.

Stirling work by Ray Whitehouse resulted in my numerous requests to look round RNB eventually being granted, and I was met at the Camels Head Reception Centre by CPO Matt Ellison, the man in charge of the Fleet Regional Photographic Unit (West), located quite near the old phot section of my day on Lower Battery Road. After security clearance, Matt drove us to the phot unit where he introduced me to leading phot Baz Wheeler, who like Matt had generously given up his Saturday morning to host the visit. A larger group of RNPA members had been expected. Matt has been in the branch for over 19 years while Baz served with the Royal Marines for 12 years before joining the phot branch three years ago. Matt is responsible for a complement of four photographers plus one other rating based at RNAS Culdrose and two more at RNAS Yeovilton. Incidentally, the branch now has been reduced in strength to just on 40 photographers. After a welcoming cup of coffee followed by a tour of the business end of the unit including the work stations where incoming images and video footage are processed, and the editing suite, Matt showed me a seven-minute video presentation highlighting the interesting and creative work undertaken by his team and other naval photographers. "We provide photographic and video support for intelligence operations, public relations and RN ships and squadrons operating world-wide," Matt told me. "Photographers frequently spend six or seven months deployed with ships, squadrons or the Royal Marines sending images and video footage back to the UK for use by the nation's media." It was immediately apparent to me that the work of the phot branch is much more astutely directed and focused than during my time, and I think that a lot of our jobs - like an admiral's cricket team I photographed - would never get sanctioned today.

## RN Barracks Devonport: Old and New continued



Happy days: 17 year old Ray Pogson pictured in 1959 outside the phot Section on lower battery Road.



Sectioned off: The entrance to the old Phot Section (with black out windows) was up the passageway behind the metal fence.



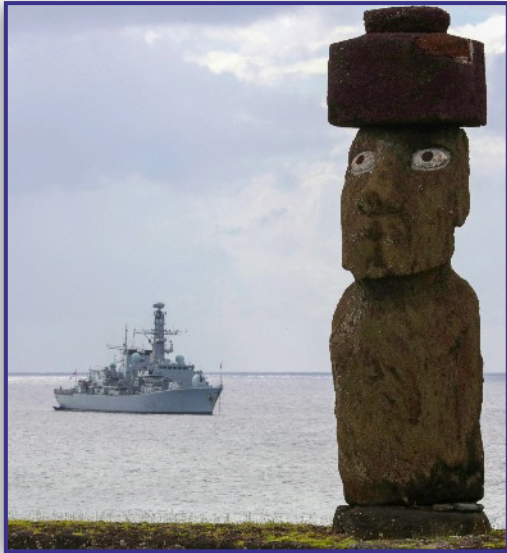
Stand easy: Matt Ellison, left and Baz Wheeler pictured outside the Fleet Photographic Unit (West).



Kit inspection: Baz Wheeler, left and Matt Ellison display some of the very latest equipment used by RN photographers.

Matt and Baz had also laid out an array of the photographic equipment currently used by the team include the impressive Canon 1DX camera preferred by Fleet Street's finest snappers, and a Movi Pro, costing around £6,000 and described as the most advanced video camera movement system ever created. We could only dream of using sophisticated kit like this. (I still can't believe the Peckham Wray was selected to be the navy's number one press camera.) The two men then accompanied me on a stroll round the barracks as I tried to recognise the long forgotten features now devoid of the hustle and bustle of gaitered seaman gunnery ratings under training doubling to classrooms on Lower Battery Road. The building that contained the old phot section remains intact but the comfortable Seamanship School messes where we were accommodated have long gone. The main gate, where I got turned back for wearing civvies while still a junior naval airman as I celebrated my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday with two gunnery messmates, is still open when I thought Google Earth showed it closed and dilapidated, and the adjacent Royal Naval Arms is still serving pints to sailors. Then it was time for me to be gone – so I said my thanks and goodbye to Baz, and Matt concluded my visit by kindly dropping me off at the Devonport Naval Heritage Centre in the dockyard where I met up with the rest of our party. People say you should never go back or look back even, and maybe you shouldn't – but I thoroughly enjoyed both comparing the experiences of old and new, and the warm welcome I received from two committed Royal Navy photographers."

**Ray Pogson**



## HMS Montrose sailors enjoy Christmas at Easter, Easter island, that is

The crew of HMS Montrose have spent the end of Christmas week on the remote Pacific Island – famous for its huge stone statues.

It's thought to be the first time this century a British warship has visited the Chilean territory, which is about the size of Sheffield – but home to fewer than 8,000 people. The frigate arrived at the island 2,500 miles off the west coast of South America – on Boxing Day as she continues her epic voyage 'the wrong way around the world' from Plymouth to Bahrain.

After a high-profile visit to Chile, which saw sailors join Princess Anne in 200<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations of the South American nation's navy, Montrose headed out into the Pacific bound for New Zealand via Easter Island. She spent Christmas Eve and Day at sea – marking the festive period in true Royal Navy style: a nativity play on the flight deck, with sailors dressing up as Mary, baby Jesus, the Wise Men and other figures from the Christmas story.

That was followed by a Christmas midnight service – four hours behind UK time – as December 24 turned to 25, led by the ship's chaplain, the Rev Peter Dixon.

*"For many of us, this was our first Christmas away from home, let alone our first Christmas on board a warship, but in the retelling of the Nativity and the singing of carols, the spirit of Christmas flowed in abundance,"* he said.

*"As Christmas Day dawned, many gathered on the flight deck in festive attire for a unique Christmas service with the sun beating down and the Pacific swell rolling us from side to side."*

The frigate's officers helped the chefs in preparing Christmas dinner, manning the serving counters and dining halls as a full three course Christmas dinner was laid on, with Commanding Officer Commander Conor O'Neill and his deputy, Executive Officer Lieutenant Commander Tom McKay, carving the joints.

The warship arrived off Easter Island the next day, with all on board given the once-in-a-lifetime chance to go ashore and see first the ancient statues, known as Moai, at Ahu Tongariki, then the quarry from which the stone came at Rano Raraki.

They ended the brief visit with a Christmas-themed barbecue on the sands of the beach at Anakena.

