

# HMS COSSACK ASSOCIATION

## Newsletter No. 2/2009

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## NEWSLETTER NO. 2/2009

### Chairman's Chatter

(by Ken Satterthwaite)

Another successful Reunion under our belts and I was most impressed by Geirr Haarr's presentation. The Chatsworth Hotel did us proud yet once again. It was great to see old and new faces present and again we must thank Peter Harrison for his tireless work for the association.

At the AGM I gave undertakings with regards to the landmark 2010 reunion. You will be please to hear that things are moving, albeit slowly, in that quarter.

The Royal Naval Museum is interested in having the Boards that were placed in Jossingfjord, now owned by one of the Late Admiral Vian's daughters', the main problem there, is getting them from Oban to Portsmouth, anybody got any suggestions?

I have also contacted the CO of TS Cossack in Southwark, regarding the annual award, to be named the 'Admiral Vian Award' for the most improved cadet in the unit. He is more than enthusiastic about it, we will present it for the first year at the 2010 reunion, and he also will provide a small band, if we have a parade on the Sunday Morning.

Other matters which were raised at the AGM are being progressed by members of the committee, but at this moment in time nothing is secured, so we cannot report on progress.

The main thing for the 2010 reunion is "you", without your full support we will be doing it all for nothing, so I anticipate a clear lower deck with no exceptions, so make sure it is your diaries.

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> of May, Sheila and I had the honour and pleasure of being invited to the Fleet Air Arm's Centenary Celebrations in St Pauls Cathedral and lunch afterwards in the Guildhall, HRH Prince of Wales & Prince Andrew were present, also Henry Allingham, who you may remember was our guest some years ago, he is now 112. It was a splendid day. On the Saturday we went Greenwich for a visit to HMS Illustrious as part of the centenary celebrations, although she is getting on years she still gave a good impression, though big ships are not for me. In the afternoon the ships helicopters gave a flying display over the Thames, all in all it was a very interesting weekend.

Well that's all my ramblings for now and I hope this finds you in the best of health as it leaves me.

*"As for the future, your task is not to foresee, but to enable it" Stuart Gilbert 1948.*

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### Membership Matters

Since our last newsletter we have sadly lost four more of our shipmates. two in January and two more in March. John Nevard (D57 1948-51) and Charles Allen (L03 1938-40) passed away in January and Fred Barton (D57 1951-53) and George Riley (D57 1951-54) in March. Their obituaries are given below.

### OBITUARIES

#### Shipmate J. Nevard

John Nevard joined the Association in its very early days and remained a member right up to his last days. He served in Cossack D57 as a Stoker Mechanic from 1948 until 1951.

John died on 18th January 2009 but as we didn't hear about it until February we were unable to provide representation at his funeral.

Our sympathies and condolences were sent to his widow, Ruby.

### **Shipmate C. Allen**

Charles Allen served as a Stoker in Cossack L03 from 1938 to 1940 and also served in HM Ships Hood, Buxton, Bulldog and Loch Tralaig before leaving the service in 1946. He died on 27th January, with the funeral held on 19th February but we were only informed after the event.

### **Shipmate F.H. Barton**

Fred Barton, who was an Able Seaman in Cossack D57 from 1951 - 1953, died on 4th March 2009.

The funeral took place at the Medway Crematorium on 20th March and was attended on our behalf by Shipmates Pat Gaffney and Dusty Miller. The service was well attended and included members of the Chatham R.N.A. and the British Legion.

Pat Gaffney says that Fred's grandson thought it "was pretty cool" that he, Pat, had served in the same ship as his grandad.

### **Shipmate G.E. Riley**

Tim Riley who died on 31st March 2009, served as a Leading Stoker Mechanic for the 1951 - 1954 commission. After battling a number of illnesses he finally succumbed to throat cancer.

Tim joined the London Fire Brigade on leaving the RN and rose rapidly through the ranks to Senior Divisional Officer with the West Midlands Fire Service. His two sons followed him into the Fire Service and have between the 60 years of duty. Tim was given two guards of honour by his colleagues, one at his last fire station and one at the crematorium.

He leaves Jean, his wife of 55 years, and two sons. His son Paul, who informed us at the end of April, says that his father never spoke much about his time in the Navy, other than to say he enjoyed it immensely and that it made him the man that he was.

Our sympathies and condolences were passed to the family.

## **MAY THEY FIND A SAFE HARBOUR FOR EVER**

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### **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS (continued)**

As a result of the piece published in the Portsmouth Evening News we have had several enquiries, mostly from relatives, about joining and attending our reunion in 2010. Mrs. Ruby Nevard, widow of John Nevard gets one year free Associate membership and the

following new members have joined since the last newsletter in January:

S/M W.H. Sheldrake	Able Seaman	D57 1956 - 1958
S/M W.S. Lewis	Able Seaman	D57 1948 - 1950
S/M C.H.R. Hopkins	Ldg. Signalman	D57 1955
S/M J.W.F. Jackson	Able Seaman	L03 1938 - 1940
Mrs. Beryl Bye	Associate Member	Wife of S/M G. Bye (D57 1949 - 1950)
Mrs. J. Maby	Associate Member	Daughter of PO Arthur (Sandy) Saunders (Killed in L03 23/10/41)

Membership now stands at 229, made up as follows:

Full/Life Members	143 (12 L03. 131 D57)
Associate Members	80
Honorary Members	<u>6</u>
	229

However, there are unfortunately a large number (47) included in the above numbers who have not yet paid their subscription for the current year. 23 of those are full D57 members 24 are Associates and we really don't want to lose any of you. Although there was a reminder in January's newsletter, a further reminder is being sent to them with this newsletter. With regret, a failure to respond will mean that they will be struck off.

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## REUNION 2009

Thanks to a few early risers getting set up on the Friday morning for the reunion went with a swing and many willing hands made short work of getting Keith Batchelor's extensive archive material up to the 1st floor archive room was achieved quite quickly.

It is always great to see members arriving and meeting up again. It should be stressed that not all the friendships were made whilst serving together. Many have resulted from attending previous reunions.

The evening seemed to go well, with entertainment being provided in the Devonshire Room, although as usual there was more talking than there was dancing. Many took the opportunity to look at Keith Batchelor's latest incarnation of the archives. It gets better every year. This year's additions included two photo-frame continuously changing displays, one showing photographs from the L03 collection and the other with those from D57.

We were once again blessed with good weather but, with an early start to proceedings on Saturday morning, only the WAGS were able to take advantage of it until later.

At 10 o'clock precisely Geirr Haarr's extremely interesting talk and presentation about Cossack's involvement in the Norwegian war began. It was very well received by the audience of our members and he was given a great ovation at the end. Both our President, Admiral Sir Jim Eberle and Chairman, Ken Satterthwaite, thanked Geirr for giving it.

Immediately after, the AGM was commenced. The AGM is reported on separately after this report. At the end of the AGM “Up Spirits” was piped and with our Rum Bosun, Shipmate Pat Gaffney suitably attired in his old sailor’s suit, and assisted by his mate, Val, doling out the tots the rum tub was soon emptied. The Queen was well and truly blessed.

With us for the day was Jonathan Eastland, a photographer and reporter for ‘Warship International’. He was particularly interested in photographing and interviewing the few remaining L03 members attending the reunion. Fred Court, Ken Robinson and Geoff Embley were much in demand as Merry (Meredeth) Swan, who was attending her first reunion, is also writing a book and wanted to get some first-hand information from our old salts.

Members and guests then dispersed to take lunch in the hotel, or elsewhere, visit the shops or take a walk along the beach front.

At 1830 members and guests assembled in the bar lounges for drinks before taking their places in the dining room just before 1900.

Led by our standard, carried by S/M Peter Taylor, the President, Sir James Eberle, honoured guests and the Chairman and Mrs Satterthwaite processed into the dining room at 1900. After the announcement by the M.C., Shipmate Jack Price, the grace was said by Shipmate Peter Hampstead. And dinner was served.

No complaints were received by the Officer of the Day and it must therefore be assumed that everyone enjoyed the meal.

Once coffee has been served, the Chairman, Ken Satterthwaite, asked everyone to stand and proposed the Loyal Toast. As always, it was responded to enthusiastically. He then thanked the kitchen and dining-room staff for the excellent meal and the hotel for looking after us so well. He then went on to thank the members and guests for attending this 18th annual reunion and to thank those who worked to organise it. He then passed the baton to Geirr Haarr who proposed a toast to the HMS Cossack Association. Our President, Admiral Eberle then spoke about his attending the AGM that morning and how pleased he was the support that we were giving to the Sea Cadet Corps since they were the ones who will be the Navy of the future. He mentioned that he was also President of the HMS Belfast Association and found that there were great similarities between the two associations in their enthusiasm and their aims.

On conclusion, the President was asked to present Geirr Haarr with an HMS Cossack badge wall plaque. Geirr was then asked to draw the winning number for the door prize. The winner of a good bottle of wine in a leather carry case was Shipmate Geoff Embley. As Geoff lives in Canada said he thought he might have to see the wine off to save weight on the flight back!

The President and those at the top table then lead the exodus from the dining room to the Devonshire Room, where the remainder of the evening’s activities took place. The more active amongst us showed their prowess on the dance floor, the less active watching or nattering. The bar also did excellent business and remained open to the early hours when the last stragglers decided to go to bed.

Thanks to the generosity of those attending there were a large number of prizes for the general draw. Les and Jean Taylor and their helpers worked their usual persuasive magic selling the tickets and raised a total of £266.00. The prize tickets were drawn during the evening and each prize labelled with the winning ticket number so that each person could check their tickets and claim their prize if lucky. It seemed that almost everyone won something. Our thanks go to Les and Jean & Co, for all their hard work.

The draw also took place later in the evening for Cash Prize raffle. This one was of course only sold by mail so that members unable to attend the reunion could also participate. The winning tickets drawn were:

1st Prize (£100)	No. 9254	S/M Gordon Saville
2nd Prize (£50)	No. 9383	S/M Russell Campling
3rd Prizes (£25)	No. 9215	Mrs. Joyce Harris
	No. 9345	S/M Brian Wakeley

Only Joyce Harris was present so she was paid out on the spot and cheques sent to the other winners. A total of 436 tickets were sold so, after paying the prizes, £236 was raised for the funds. Thank you to all those who took part.

Except for a Committee meeting there was no organised activity on the Sunday and although a good few were staying on for that night most were leaving to make their way home. Some, like Merry Swan who came all the way down from Roxburghshire, had got a long journey ahead of them. With promises to meet again at Portsmouth next year we said our goodbyes.

The number attending this year was a bit down on last year but still a creditable 82 sat down for our reunion dinner. One couple who were sadly missed were John and Jo Bishop. They had booked to attend but had had to cancel at the last minute when John was taken into hospital following a stroke. It's good to report though that John has recovered well so we look forward to seeing them both in 2010.

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## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009**

The Chairman called everyone to order at 1100 and opened the AGM with a welcome to all those attending and especially to those attending for the first time.

With the names of the 12 members who had passed over the bar since the last meeting, he asked for 2 minutes silence so that each could pay his own tribute to them. The 12 were:

S/M C. Allen (L03 1938-40)  
S/M F.H. Barton (D57 1951-53)  
S/M P.J. Cain (D57 1949-51)  
S/M N.C. Drake (L03 1941)  
S/M L. Hazell (Associate member - Afridi & Mohawk)  
S/M A.W. Lunn (D57 1951-54)  
S/M J. Nevard (D57 1948-51)  
S/M J. Rhodes (L03 1938-41)  
Olav Rothli (Hon. member from Skjelfjord)  
S/M A.J. Swann (L03 1941)

S/M A. Tarbard (D57 1951-54)  
S/M R.G. Woodford (Associate member)  
They were and will be remembered.

**The minutes of the last meeting.** These had been published in newsletter No. 2/2008 and, with no questions from the floor concerning them, the Chairman proposed that they be accepted as a true record. Seconded by S/M J. Price this was carried unanimously.

Matters arising from the last meeting. The Chairman said that the only item arising was that of the 2010 Reunion and he would be dealing with that separately under a later item.

**Financial Report.** The Chairman called on Peter Harrison, the Hon. Treasurer, to give his report. An Income & Expenditure Report had been given to each member on arrival at the hotel and he referred to this and asked whether there were any questions about it that members wished to ask. There were not. He said that the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2008 had been examined and passed by the appointed Independent Examiner, S/M Peter Hampstead, and subsequently approved by the Committee and signed off by the Chairman on their behalf. He said that copies of the accounts were available for those wished to have one. S/M J. Price proposed that the financial report should be accepted. This was seconded by S/M P. Hampstead and carried unanimously.

Election of Officers. The Chairman said that the only current position due for election was that of Hon. Secretary/Hon. Treasurer. He said that the present incumbent, Peter Harrison, had agreed to being put forward for re-election for a further year. Proposed by S/M J. Price and seconded by Hon. S/M A. Edinborough, that S/M Harrison should be re-elected, it was carried unanimously.

The Chairman said that he wanted next to run through what had been his vision for the future when he was elected in 2007 and what had been achieved

1. A working Committee - Achieved
2. A Constitution - Achieved
3. Increase in Membership - Numbers had gone down again
4. Planning of reunions for 3 years - Achieved
5. Close liaison with the Board & Search School
6. Close liaison with a Sea Cadet Unit
7. A Charity of Choice each year.

Expanding on these, he referred to the efforts of our Membership Secretary/PR Officer, S/M Parkinson, to get more publicity. This had been achieved but the number of new members gained was outweighed by loss of members who had died and those who have not renewed their membership. The latter are a continuous source of worry since we seldom know why they don't renew despite being asked.

Planning for next year's reunion was proceeding apace he said. After looking at the alternative of the King Charles Hotel at Chatham it had been decided that it wasn't suitable. This conclusion was reached after visits by Committee members, S/M P. Gaffney and S/M P. Harrison, and attendance by the Chairman at another ship's reunion held there. A company named IOW Tours had previously been in contact. They were specialists in organising reunions like ours and were asked to put forward a proposal, based upon the Portsmouth area.

As a result their proposal was for it to be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea - opposite the South Parade Pier. Most of the Committee met there with the IOW Tours representative and were shown the facilities available. The conclusion was that this venue would suit us well. It has a car park which, although maybe not large enough to get every car in, should be able to take at least 30. The package and prices presented by IOW Tours was considered by the Committee and accepted. IOW Tours also relieves us of a lot of the administrative detail, taking care of booking, etc. Reunion 2010 will therefore be held at the Royal Beach Hotel on the weekend 9th - 11th April 2010.

The Chairman went on to say that there were still many things to be finalised for the reunion. As members were aware, 2010 was a special year for Cossack being 70 years on from the Altmark Incident and the 2nd Battle of Narvik. It was the intention to get the press and media involved. Two of Admiral Vian's daughters had been in touch and have been invited to attend. One of them, Mrs. Sarah Keats, inherited some artifacts from her father and wished to present them to us. These were one side of the notice board erected by the Germans alongside Jossingfjord, and a plaque presented by the prisoners rescued from the Altmark. After consideration, especially since we have no permanent place for such things, it has been agreed with her that they should be presented to the RN Museum at Portsmouth after being on show at our reunion.

Ongoing actions include involving HMS Raleigh (Board & Search School), invitations to representatives from Norway, invitations to merchant seamen rescued from the Altmark. It is also hoped that we shall be able to arrange a church parade at St. Anne's church in Portsmouth Dockyard and that a Sea Cadet band from TS Cossack at Southwark will be able to attend.

The Chairman also noted that commemorations would be taking place in Norway in 2010 - at Jossingfjord with the opening of a museum and at Skjelfjord with the opening of a memorial garden. It is hoped that some members will attend each of these.

The Chairman said that in order to support all these things, especially to assist travel to Norway, an application for funding from the Lottery 'Awards for all' grants. One of the requirements for this though was that cheques drawn against our bank account had to be signed by two persons. Under the Constitution agreed at the last AGM only the Hon Treasurer, or an alternative signatory, was required. He proposed that the Constitution should be changed to reflect this new requirement. The Hon. Treasurer said that, since the Committee didn't meet on a frequent regular basis nor did we live close to each other, this would create an administrative nightmare. For example, when he collected the printed newsletters from the printers he had to pay for them by cheque. There was no opportunity to get another signature beforehand. He proposed therefore that only one signature should be required for amounts less than £250 and two signatures on cheques of £250 or more. Currently the two signatories registered with the bank are the Hon Treasurer, Peter Harrison, and the Vice President, Alan Edinborough and he proposed that the Chairman should also be registered as a signatory.

S/M J. Price proposed that the Constitution be amended to embody the requirement for two signatures on cheques of £250 or more and for the Chairman to be an approved signatory. This was seconded by S/M T. Kay and carried unanimously.

**Charity Support.** The Chairman said that he felt that there were two aspects of charitable

support which needed to be addressed. The first was the Sea Cadets, and ongoing commitment, and the other was other charities, perhaps on an annual basis.

Turning first to the Sea Cadets, he said that his visit to TS Cossack's headquarters at Southwark had been reported on previously and he had been very impressed by the HQ, the staff and the cadets. There were he had been told about nine sea cadet units throughout the country with the name TS Cossack and it was obvious that we couldn't support them all. He said it was his opinion that we should adopt the unit at Southwark as the one for us to support. To do so he suggested that this could be done by giving an annual award to the most improved cadet, consider an annual financial award to the unit, members attending when invited to unit's events and by inviting their CO and possibly a senior cadet to our reunions. He said that he had discussed the cadet award with the CO, Lt.Cdr. (SCC) David Bradbury, who thought it an excellent idea.

He proposed that the Association should annually award a gold-plated bosun's call, suitably engraved, with a Certificate and nominal monetary token, to the most improved cadet of the year and for it to be called "The Admiral Vian Award". The proposal was seconded by Keith Batchelor and carried unanimously.

The Chairman then asked whether there were any other charitable organisations that members wished to nominate. S/M Peter Harrison pointed out that in the last newsletter we had received an appeal from the Marine Society and Sea Cadets for funds to assist them in completing the new National Sea Cadet Training Centre which is under construction at Weymouth. He said that one of our members had individually donated £20. He thought that a contribution from the Association would be a way of supporting many cadets and units at the same time. He proposed that the Association should make a donation of £100 to add to the individual donation. Seconded by S/M J. Price the proposal was carried unanimously.

**Any other business.** The Chairman said that if there was no other business he would close the meeting. S/M Peter Hampstead said that under the Constitution an Independent Examiner of the accounts should be appointed. The Chairman asked whether he was willing to be re-appointed and, on his assent, it was proposed that S/M Peter Hampstead should be re-appointed as Independent Examiner and seconded by S/m Peter Harrison it was carried unanimously.

The Chairman said that the next AGM would be held at Portsmouth on 10th April 2010. The meeting was then closed and "Up Spirits" ordered.

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## **REUNION 2010 - 9th to 11th April 2010**

As you will have noted from the report on the AGM above, planning for the 2010 reunion goes on. However, certain things have now been finalised, such as the dates and the venue.

The following rates have been proposed by IOW Tours and accepted

3 nights (dinner, bed and breakfast) £164.00 per person  
2 nights (dinner, bed and breakfast) £139.00 per person  
1 night (dinner, bed and breakfast) £ 72.00 per person



Past gone are Drake and Raleigh's men?  
But no! They live and sail again  
To icy seas and narrow fiords  
And seamen's lives are their reward.  
For men and mothers' hearts that broke  
Did heal again when this was spoke  
"The Navy's here!" With shaking lips  
Men answered from a Prison Ship.  
When hope had gone and in despair  
They'd lived to find the Navy there.  
O Gallant Cossack! the cheers you raised  
Your country and the world amazed -  
And further deeds another day  
You silenced guns in Narvik Bay.  
Take care your ship O Cossack men  
When you sail and fight again  
For when the war is done you'll see  
"Cossack" 'longside the "Victory".

Composed by a Member of the British Legion, Southgate Branch)

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## **THE SKJELFJORD MEMORIAL**

There's no further information yet about a completion date and opening of the memorial. Nor indeed about the cost of the bench we had proposed as our contribution towards the project.

Initial investigations into the possibility of making a combined visit to both the Jossingfjord and Skjelfjord commemorations to be both expensive and impractical. The commemorations at Jossingfjord are likely to be at the end of May 2010 but no date has yet been given for the other. Our planning will therefore have to be on the basis of two separate visits. A great deal will also depend on whether we actually get a lottery grant.

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### **Challenger's War.**

That's the name of a book written by one of our new members, Clive Hopkins. He says that, bored with retirement, in 2000 he joined others who set about restoring HMS Cavalier in Chatham Dockyard. Whilst involved in this it reminded him of his own service in such ships and so the seeds of the book were sewn. Clive served in Cossack/Cheviot 1955/56.

Challenger did not exist of course but Clive says that she is an amalgam of all the ships of the 8th D.F. which served in the Korean campaign in the early 1950s. It is fiction but he has taken a series of actual happenings and linked them together with an entirely fictional narrative and with fictional characters. Cossack is mentioned in the book and a picture of Cossack which adorns the cover.

Challenger's War is available from Chatham Historic Dockyard shop, on request (ISBN13-1-906710-04-0) from W.H. Smith, Waterstones, etc from Amazon.co.uk on line or directly

from Clive himself at a cost of £8.00 post free. His address is 3, Boscobel Lodge, 16 Boscobel Road, St. Leonards, E. Sussex TN38 0YL. If you need further information you can e-mail Clive at [aine@smartemail.co.uk](mailto:aine@smartemail.co.uk)

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### TS COSSACK - Southwark Unit Sea Cadet Corps

News from the unit recently is that some of the cadets were there to help Henry Allingham, now the world's oldest man, celebrate his 113th birthday.



P.O. George Whitfield, the senior cadet, was also at 10 Downing Street to publicise the new Armed Forces Day.

It's great to see the cadets getting so involved.

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### **The Altmark Incident Painting**

Many of you will be aware of the painting by Sir Norman Wilkinson which, when the RN Board & Search Unit was at HMS Cambridge, was hung inside the Cossack Building.

As part of the planning for creating a museum by the side of Jossingfjord in Norway, Finn Nesvold asked us to find out about getting copyright permission for them to use an enlarged version as a back-drop. Our Chairman, Ken Satterthwaite, took on the task but found that, after the move of the B&SU to HMS Raleigh the painting was not transferred to the new building and Raleigh assumed that it had been returned to the RN Trophy Store.

He therefore asked the O i/c to investigate its whereabouts and explained about needing approval to use the image in Norway. However this produced a new and wholly unsuspected turn of events.

Lt. Cdr. Costigan, RN, the Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the RN Trophy Centre found that the painting had indeed been received back from HMS Cambridge on closure and was now hung in the Wardroom of HMS Nelson, where it was originally hung.

We had been told previously that the painting had originally been hung in the National Maritime Museum but Lt.Cdr. Costigan's further investigations found that the painting had been presented in 1979 to the Wardroom by J. Harvey & Sons Ltd (thought to be Harveys the wine merchants) probably because of the absence of an HMS Cossack at that time and it was unveiled by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Philip Vian. He also found that the painting which hung in the Maritime Museum is still at that museum.

The paintings, both originals by Norman Wilkinson, have slight differences, the smoke from the funnel being a different shape for example.

Although we, the Association, had been given a photographic image of the Cambridge painting, and permission to use it, Lt.Cdr. Costigan's investigations have shown up problems with that under copyright law. However, the National Maritime Museum is licensed to reproduce and sell photographic prints of their painting and, for a fee, a copy and display licence can be obtained.

We will probably have to buy one of those ourselves if we wish to have a copy displayed in our reunion archives and we know how Finn can get what he wants too. Well done Ken.



*I hope that the copyright police don't see that one!*

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## **Can you help (2) ?**

### **Photographs and the Archives**

From time to time I am asked to supply photographs of L03 and D57. Following the successful visit of a nautical journalist to the last reunion an article has appeared in **Warships International Fleet Review**. They now wish to print further articles containing pictures of both ships in war and peace. In addition they wish to include photos of the ship's company about their daily tasks onboard or ashore. I have some photographs but would welcome more so please dig them out –serious or humorous. I can accept originals and after scanning send them back or good quality copies. Receipt by email is also OK as long as they are good quality.

If you have already sent in photographs but do not want them published please let me know as soon as possible otherwise you may find yourself being given the credit for helping to win the war –WWII or Korean.

So any photos of the ships (internal / external), their activities, yourselves, your shipmates or your activities ashore (sport etc) or afloat would be most welcome.

Keith Batchelor  
Archivist  
(Address inside front cover)

*ED: The article which was published in the May issue of Warship International Fleet Review is reproduced, with their permission, on the following two pages. Whether you'll be able to read it is another matter! It gave us some good publicity as the magazine goes to all RNA branches.*

*If you can help with some good photographs we shall be able to get some more of our old shipmates out there to join us.*

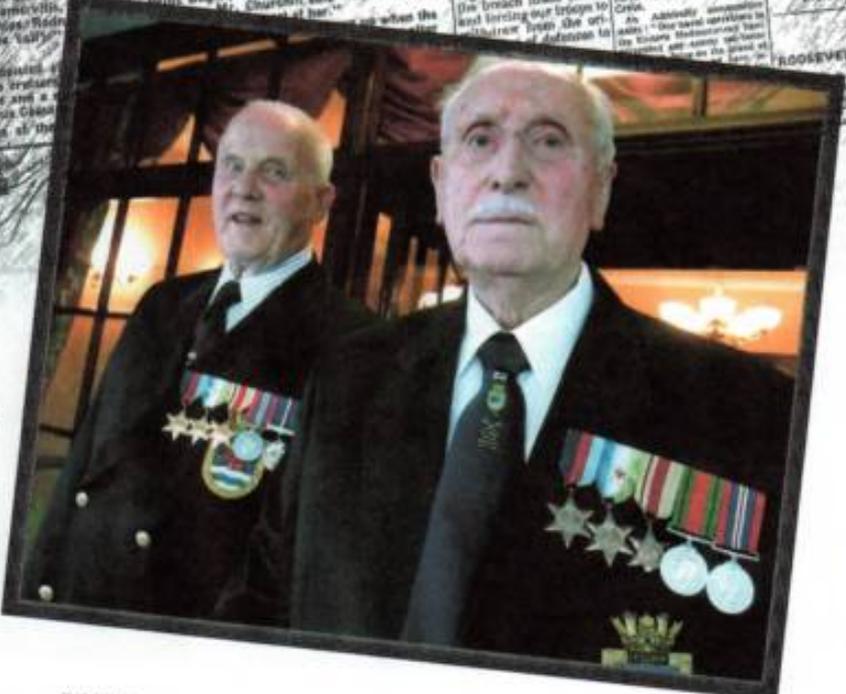
is month sees the 68th anniversary of the sinking of the German battleship Bismarck, one of the legendary episodes of history. To mark the event, we carry an extract from a new book on the Bismarck and look at some other recently published titles relevant to the tale of her ill-fated May 1941 breakout into the Atlantic, including the British battle-cruiser Hood, which was destroyed by one of the most feared ships in Hitler's fleet. Here, though, we begin our special section with an eyewitness account of the famous pursuit and destruction of Bismarck.

Below: A newspaper front page from May 28 1941, the day after the Bismarck was sunk. It details the British side of the dramatic story, including how Winston Churchill broke the news to MPs. Bottom (left to right): Cossack veterans Ken Robinson and Fred Court (both 87) at last month's reunion in Worthing. Photos: Jonathan Eastland/Ajax



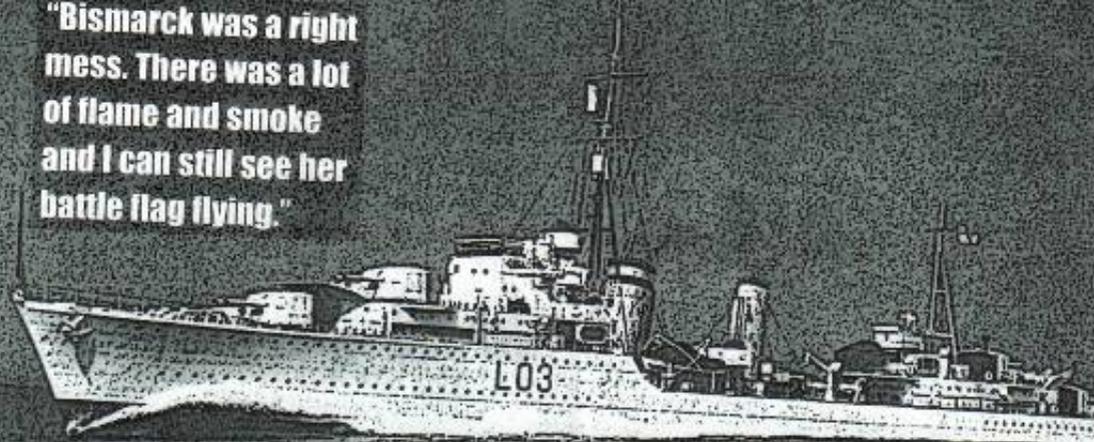
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THE HMS COSSACK SOCIATION 18TH ANNUAL UNION AT THE CHATSWORTH HOTEL, WORTHING, ON ENGLAND'S SOUTH COAST, LAST MONTH (APRIL). WARSHIPS IFR EDITOR-AT-LARGE JONATHAN EASTLAND MET A VETERAN OF THE BISMARCK PURSUIT. HE ALSO TALKED TO OTHER SAILORS CONNECTED WITH THE LEGENDARY WARSHIP NAMED COSSACK BOTH IN WAR & PEACE.



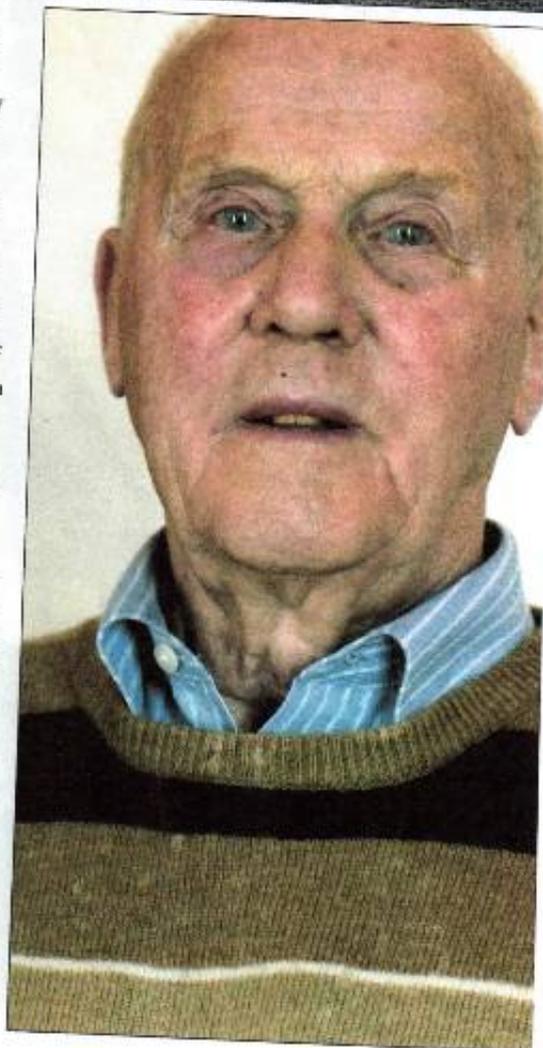
WARSHIPS INTERNATIONAL FLEET REVIEW

**"Bismarck was a right mess. There was a lot of flame and smoke and I can still see her battle flag flying."**



KEN Robinson, aged 87, from Tenby, Pembrokeshire, in Wales, was a rating feeding 2lb shells into Cossack's starboard, pom-pom anti-aircraft weapon during the Bismarck chase. He told me: "Our job was to shadow Bismarck, to try and slow her down. But she was fast. Normally, Cossack could do 38 knots, 40 with the sea up her backside. She corkscrewed quite badly and that made life difficult although most of the time Cossack was quite comfortable." Under the command of the dynamic and highly aggressive Captain Philip Vian, who led the 4th Destroyer Flotilla, Cossack had charged after Bismarck, determined to mark her down for the big battleships King George V and Rodney to destroy. On the night of May 26 1941, in mountainous seas, Vian decided the 4th Flotilla should try and slow Bismarck down by attacking her. Ken recalled: "I can't remember being all that worried. You were really involved in the job and responding to people around you. Eventually we were up with Bismarck and went in to attack live-ahead with the flotilla's other destroyers, Zulu, Maori and Sikh." The destroyers mounted a team effort, turning side on, with a total of 16 torpedoes fired in the first attempt. "Then it was up smoke [screen] and out as fast as you could go," said Fred. "We tried about four times to get within distance like that but each time Bismarck had our range and straddled us with her 15-inch guns. She was firing starshells and using gunnery radar. Then we were ordered to act independently, so we went in head to sea and fired a spread of four torpedoes. At the time, we

thought that one of them had hit but some of Bismarck's survivors said we hadn't. They managed to shoot away our aerials." But, with her steering damaged by a strike from Swordfish torpedo-bombers, the Bismarck could not get away and on the morning of May 27 the British battlewagons came hammering down upon the pride of Hitler's fleet. Cossack watched from a distance, the unfolding battle still vivid in Ken's memory. "We had a good view because we were screening the big ones from subs. Bismarck was a right mess. There was a lot of flame and smoke and I can still see her battle flag flying. The ship was just a massive wreck under all that fire and smoke. Occasionally, one of her guns would fire but she was stopped and they sent the cruiser Dorsetshire in to finish her off with torpedoes. I wouldn't like to have been aboard Bismarck. I think Maori picked up survivors but we were already escorting King George V back to Loch Ewe in Scotland." Next year sees the 70th anniversary of the episode that made the Cossack's name in the early days of WW2, the notorious Almark Incident. This magazine intends running a short series of articles to commemorate the event, and also tell the story of the British destroyer's sinking in late 1941, after her part in the destruction of Bismarck. We will also look at later Cossacks and profile the Cossack Association. Among the veterans participating will be Fred Court, aged 87, who found himself staring down the barrel of one of Almark's 6-inch guns during the famous episode of February 1940.



**Above:** The Cossack of the Almark Incident and Bismarck battle era makes an impressive sight at speed. **Image:** Strathdee Collection. **Right:** Veteran Ken Robinson who recalled a battle with Bismarck. **Photo:** Jonathan Eastland/AAIA.

## The Credit Crunch

S/M Peter Marchant passed on this suggested letter to Alistair Darling

**Dear Mr. Darling,**

**Please find below my suggestion for fixing Britain's economy. Instead of giving billions of pounds to banks that will squander the money on lavish parties and unearned bonuses, use the following plan. You can call it the Patriotic Retirement Plan:**

**There are about 20 million people over 50 in the work force. - Pay them £1 million apiece severance for early retirement with the following stipulations:**

**1) They MUST retire. Twenty million job openings - Unemployment fixed.**

**2) They MUST buy a new British CAR. Twenty million cars ordered - Auto Industry fixed.**

**3) They MUST either buy a house or pay off their mortgage - Housing Crisis fixed.**

**4) They must send their kids to school/college/university - Crime rate fixed.**

**5) They must buy £50 of alcohol / tobacco a week - there's your money back in duty/tax etc**

**It can't get any easier than that!**

**P.S. If more money is needed, have all members of parliament pay back their falsely claimed expenses and second home allowances**

*Sounds pretty good to me.*

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### THE LAUGHTER LINES

This next was received from S/M Eric Eaton, via the USA I should think, but funny just the same:

#### CAKE OR BED

A HUSBAND IS AT HOME WATCHING A  
FOOTBALL GAME WHEN HIS WIFE INTERRUPTS,

HONEY, COULD YOU FIX THE LIGHT IN THE HALLWAY? IT'S BEEN FLICKERING FOR WEEKS NOW.

HE LOOKS AT HER AND SAYS ANGRILY, FIX THE LIGHTS NOW? DOES IT LOOK LIKE I HAVE ENERGEX WRITTEN ON MY FOREHEAD? I DON'T THINK SO.

FINE,

THEN THE WIFE ASKS,  
WELL THEN, COULD YOU FIX THE FRIDGE DOOR?  
IT WON'T CLOSE RIGHT.

TO WHICH HE REPLIED, FIX THE FRIDGE DOOR?  
DOES IT LOOK LIKE I HAVE WESTINGHOUSE WRITTEN ON MY  
FOREHEAD? I DON'T THINK SO

FINE, SHE SAYS

THEN YOU COULD AT LEAST FIX THE STEPS TO THE FRONT DOOR? THEY  
ARE ABOUT TO BREAK

I'M NOT A CARPENTER AND I DON'T WANT TO FIX STEPS  
HE SAYS, DOES IT LOOK LIKE I HAVE BUNNINGS WRITTEN ON MY  
FOREHEAD? I DON'T THINK SO

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU. I'M GOING TO THE PUB!!!!

SO HE GOES TO THE PUB AND DRINKS FOR A COUPLE OF  
HOURS.....

HE STARTS TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT HOW  
HE TREATED HIS WIFE, AND DECIDES TO GO HOME

AS HE WALKS INTO THE HOUSE HE NOTICES THAT THE STEPS ARE  
ALREADY FIXED.

AS HE ENTERS THE HOUSE , HE SEES THE HALL LIGHT IS WORKING  
AS HE GOES TO GET A BEER, HE NOTICES THE FRIDGE DOOR IS FIXED.

HONEY, HE ASKS, HOW'D ALL THIS GET FIXED?

SHE SAID, WELL, WHEN YOU LEFT I SAT OUTSIDE AND CRIED  
JUST THEN A NICE YOUNG MAN ASKED ME WHAT WAS WRONG, AND I  
TOLD HIM.

HE OFFERED TO DO ALL THE REPAIRS, AND ALL I HAD TO DO WAS  
EITHER GO TO BED WITH HIM OR BAKE A CAKE.

HE SAID, SO WHAT KIND OF CAKE DID YOU BAKE?

SHE REPLIED, HELLOOOOOO..

DO YOU SEE **SARA LEE** WRITTEN ON MY FOREHEAD?

I DON'T THINK SO!

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### **An apology from the Editor**

This newsletter was supposed to have gone out in May but, after the reunion, I had to put my other hat on and give priority to getting the accounts ready for audit - sorry Independent Examination. Then there were some family commitments but just when I had knuckled down to it, my computer decided to have a nervous breakdown. That took a couple of weeks to get sorted after which I lost my Internet connection and another couple of days! So, my apologies for the long delay since the last newsletter. Anyone want a job?

***THAT'S IT FOLKS - BE CAREFUL OUT THERE***