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Summer 1993

# ROYAL NAVAL AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

Affiliated to the Radio Society of Great Britain

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The Society's Bankers are *Lloyds Bank plc 272 London Rd, Waterlooville, Portsmouth PO7 7HN*  
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Front Cover : The old HF beam comes down at HMS MERCURY (top) and its replacement goes up at the new HQ Station HMS COLLINGWOOD (bottom).



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# Newsletter

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Journal of the Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society

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No 2

Summer 93

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## Contents

Chairman's Chat.....	2
From Tashkent - to Bristol?? .....	3
Flying Doctors & Pedal Power.....	13
After the First Commission .....	14
Day to Day Life in a U-Boat in WW II .....	17
The Reason .....	22
A War Time Mystery .....	23
Letters to the Editor .....	24
When a Ship Becomes an Island .....	28
Secretarial scrawl .....	29
CW Forever .....	36
Operation Flood Tide .....	38
Scottish News.....	40
RNA & RNARS to the Rescue .....	43
Area Rep Reports.....	48
And so to Sea! .....	50
To collect or not to collect ? .....	56
Memories of an RN SBA .....	57
SWL Section.....	59
The New President.....	62

# Chairmans Chat

By Tom Biddlecombe G3WAO/0665

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The 30th July 1993 was a very special day. It saw the climax of all the efforts by the local Hampshire members to prepare the new HQ Building when it was opened by our new Patron, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Ashmore, GCB, DSC, and the Presidency was handed over by Captain Sutermeister to Captain V F Lucas, The Captain HMS COLLINGWOOD. They met and talked with over 40 members including the General Manager of the RSGB, Peter Kirby. A former Warrant Officer Radio Supervisor, Peter had served with Sir Edward in 1966. We took the opportunity to present the RSGB with the RNARS plaque that used to hang in the WO and SR Mess HMS MERCURY. It will join those of the RAF and Royal Signals ARS, with the proper precedence I am sure!!??

During the chat at the opening I overheard two serving members who had been former shipmates talking. Inevitably they discussed the drafts which they had had since they served together. When asked, "How did HMS Such and Such compare to our old ship?" the answer was, " You know how it is, different ships, different cap tallies..... "".

HMS MERCURY and HMS COLLINGWOOD are perfect examples - the former is on a hill, quite compact and miles from anywhere. The latter is close to town, flat, 30'asl, and measures over a mile across! When HMS COLLINGWOOD has a full training load, over 3000 personnel are on-site. So, it's impossible to say one is better or worse than the other - they are just different. With so many people moving in and out, security is strictly controlled. The rules for RNARS members wishing to visit the shack are still the same as before, i.e. contact the Shack Manager in good time, he will then ensure that your arrival is expected. Remember to carry proof of identity - ideally, something that has your photograph on it.

However, special arrangements will apply for the AGM and Social, as there will be a large

number of people arriving in a small space of time. If you wish to attend these events you must complete the enclosed form and return the bottom portion by the 30th September.

From the information supplied, HMS COLLINGWOOD Security staff will prepare car passes in advance, which will help to speed up your admittance. Nonetheless, I recommend arriving by 1330 to ensure you are seated by 1400 and please remember to bring the top part of the form as proof of identity on the day.

The venue of the AGM and Social is one of the many positive aspects of our new home. Just one flight of carpetted stairs lead to the sumptuously refurbished COLLINGWOOD CLUB which accomodates several hundred people in style and comfort. The AGM will start at 1400 prompt, with tea and biscuits in the RNARS HQ Building on completion.

The Social will be held in the same room in the COLLINGWOOD CLUB starting at 1930, tickets from G3LIK.

Please make every effort to attend the AGM and Social - I would like the largest possible support when I thank Captain Lucas for the incredibly warm and generous welcome that has been given to the Society by HMS COLLINGWOOD.

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## Electro-therapeutic Head Breeze

A convective electric discharge for treatment of diseases of the head.

## Electro-theranasing

Meeting accidental deathy from electric current or shock.

Hawkins Electrical Dictionary 1910

# From Tashkent ... to Bristol ?

(A sequel to the Uzbekistan Adventure)

By Barry Steele G3LZK/3400

&

Phil Whitchurch G3SWH/0409

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*(RNARS readers may remember Barry & Phil's DX-expedition to Uzbekistan in May 1991 and have wondered if Nazim & Merxem ever made it to UK. They did, and this is the story.... Ed.)*

It was always hoped that it would be possible for our host, Nazim UI8AA and his wife Merxem to visit us in the UK, although it was anticipated that it may be more difficult to achieve than our visit to Tashkent. In November 1991, Barry sent Nazim an "official" invitation to visit him, valid for any date between March 1992 and October 1993. This broad date span allowed for any delay factors which Nazim might encounter in dealing with his local authorities etc, especially as the USSR had broken up and become the CIS only a matter of weeks before. The invitation was couched in the manner prescribed by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and whilst this was basic in format, it was necessary that Barry undertook to guarantee Nazim financially in all respects after his arrival, coupled with an undertaking that both he and his wife would return to Tashkent. God knows what would have happened if, on their arrival at Heathrow, they had sought political asylum. We suspect that Barry would have been forced to flee the country for some remote Pacific atoll, having of course established it was a rare DX location and that he could obtain a licence to operate!

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office clearly indicated that any invitation had to be witnessed by a solicitor, and his practice stamp affixed and they also indicated the Russian authorities seemed to prefer 'oval' shaped stamps in preference to square or rectangular ones. This we already knew and as Barry's Company manufactured stamps, one was obtained and presented to his friendly local solicitor, who was much amused by the whole thing. Nazim received this duly signed and stamped document quite quickly and lodged it with his local bureaucracy, and there it remained as Nazim indicated that he thought it unlikely that he and his wife could afford the air fares, particularly as they were seeing the start of what has become rampant inflation throughout the CIS.

Barry and Phil decided to use some of their remaining US dollars to help with the fares, as the exchange rate was most favourable and began sending the odd ten or twenty dollar bills with letters to Nazim. Some of the earlier sendings arrived safely, but later ones were stolen, presumably by the Moscow or Tashkent postal workers to whom a few dollars represented more than a week's wages when changed on the black market. The grape vine led us to believe that a British amateur was about to visit Moscow, and we contacted him to enquire whether he would be willing to take over some \$400 in cash and hand it to a well known

Moscow DX-er who spoke excellent English and with whom we had already put Nazim in touch. Let us give the name "Ivan" to this DX-er in order to preserve his true identity. Our British traveller was agreeable and met up with "Ivan" in Moscow and passed over our cash. Nazim was now in fairly regular telephone contact with "Ivan" and arranged for the money to be passed down the pipeline to him in Tashkent without any problems.

In early May 1992, Barry received a letter from Nazim saying that his local authority had rejected the invitation, as it had not been countersigned by our local police! This unexpected requirement was also news to our Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Barry hastily put together a fresh invitation, this time signed by both solicitor and the local police, and posted it to Nazim on 27th May. Copies were also sent to "Ivan" in case there were further problems with the mail to Tashkent and to the British Embassy in Moscow, advising them they would be receiving, in due course, a visa application from Nazim and his wife requesting entry to the UK, and asked that they deal with the application promptly when received. In a QSO with Nazim in July, he told Barry that he had not received either the second invitation, or indeed the back-up copy sent through "Ivan". Nazim was still hopeful of making the trip, but said weekly inflation in air fares was giving serious doubts. Yet another invitation was drawn up and sent via the GPO's "Swiftair" service at some cost, and this was received in Tashkent within 48 hours.

We discussed whether we could afford to send some more dollars to help out and decided to send some further funds via a British amateur making the journey to Moscow shortly, or through a Russian amateur currently in the UK and returning shortly for carrying the cash. After a quick phone call to Moscow, we decided to use the Russian as courier as he was known to "Ivan".

About this time, Nazim advised us by letter that he now had a telephone installed in his home. We tried repeatedly to ring him with no success. Initially we blamed the Russian telephone service which has something of a reputation. In another QSO with Barry, Nazim said he had been informed by his local authority that

they would be issuing his passport and exit visa on 20th August. Once in his possession, he had to personally apply for his UK entry visa at the British Embassy in Moscow, and he was planning to arrive in London about 20th September for a 2 week stay. This seemed perfect, as it would allow us to take him to both the RSGB/IOTA HF Convention in Windsor on 26/27th and to the FOC Dinner at Lord's the following weekend.

After many abortive telephone calls to Nazim, Phil contacted International Directory Enquiries to find that the published Tashkent code was wrongly published, and an extra digit was needed. On re-dialling the phone was answered with a gruff "Da?". It was Nazim, who was astonished to hear Phil. He told us that he and his wife would be travelling by train to Moscow as it was a cheaper method than by air, but journey time was two days. He also said he would only buy air tickets in Moscow once he had his UK entry visa, and he was getting a lot of help from "Ivan" in dealing with our Embassy.

At around 6 pm on 9th September, Barry received a phone call from "Ivan" to say Nazim and Merxem had arrived in Moscow and were staying in a flat. The British Embassy had declined to accept the photo copy of Barry's invitation which Nazim was carrying. The original had of course been lodged with the Uzbek authorities in Tashkent. "Ivan" said the Embassy would however, accept a fax letter from Barry confirming the invitation, and that he and Nazim were returning to the Embassy the following morning to collect the visa. Barry quickly formulated a fax and we both rushed into Bristol to find a fax machine. Unfortunately the "emergency" access arrangements to Phil's office site failed, but we were fortunate that the caretaker in Barry's old office building let us in and we dispatched the fax around 7.30 pm. (Barry retired at the end of June).

The following day, Barry received another phone call from "Ivan" to say that Nazim and Merxem would be arriving at Heathrow at about 8 am UK time on 11th September. Phil hastily booked a day's leave and we planned to get up at 5 am to travel to Heathrow to meet them. He also rang Brendan McCartney, G4DYO who



## Merxam - Barry/G3LZK - Nazim/UI8AA

works as an Air Traffic Controller at the airport to let him know Nazim was arriving, and he immediately said "I don't know of an Aeroflot flight from Moscow arriving at that time" which caused us to think a bit further and consult an Aeroflot timetable, and we could not find a flight at that time either! Another call to "Ivan" in Moscow clarified things - Nazim was scheduled to leave Moscow at 8 am UK time, which meant a scheduled arrival of 11 am at Heathrow. Moscow was +2 on BST.

Barry is an aeroplane enthusiast and enjoys all things connected with aviation, so we left home at 7.30 am to meet the 11 am flight. On arrival, we parked in Terminal 2 short stay car park and went off to find Brendan. He took us up to the control tower and after a few minutes told us that the Moscow flight was delayed by two hours. Thus we had an enjoyable and informative period observing the full range of activities carried out from the control tower, and it was made all the more interesting that our visit took place during the busy morning period when, on that day, aircraft were being stacked at four points with 20 minute delays. We were greatly appreciative of Brendan's time in a very busy part of his day.

Nazim's flight eventually arrived, and we watched the big Aeroflot Illyusin 86 taxi up to the loading ramp then went inside the terminal building to wait in the arrivals area. There was the usual crush and we seemed to wait ages, but it was probably no more than 40 minutes or so. Suddenly the airport public address system made the announcement "Will Mr Barry Steele, meeting Mr Nazim Tahtarov from Tashkent please report to Airport Information"! We forced our way through the crush to the information desk, wondering "What's gone wrong now?" and Barry jumped the queue waiting for attention on the grounds we had been summoned! They advised us to proceed to Immigration Control. Barry's mind began working overtime, thinking about those legal undertakings into which he had entered so lightly without much consideration of the consequences. Perhaps this is the time to book that flight to the exotic isle. It was decided to face the music and attend to matters in hand.

When we reported to the Immigration office, we had a short wait before an Immigration Officer came to the desk holding two Russian passports. He obviously saw our worried faces and quickly assured us there were no problems.

As he spoke no Russian and Nazim's English was a little rusty, he was more than a little concerned that there was actually someone to meet them, and he was not just going to launch these two bewildered Russians into Terminal 2 of Heathrow Airport, which would be in nobody's best interests. A very responsible and caring attitude. After a short wait Nazim and Merxem appeared with their luggage and we headed for the car park and headed down the M4 towards Bristol.

One of our first questions was how long were they planning to stay, as plans to the HF Convention and Lord's were under threat. Phil also had to arrange a week's leave of absence from work. As they had arrived almost out of the blue, we had by then agreed that they would stay with Barry for the first week as he had just retired, and then to Phil and Jan for the second week. Nazim told us that he had booked to return on Sunday 27th September, the day of the HF Convention. Our plans to introduce them to the UK DX-ing fraternity seemed foiled, even to the extent of not being able to attend the Convention ourselves, but Barry offered to drive them to Manchester so that Phil could attend on the Sunday.

On the journey, Nazim's English improved markedly, but had to translate almost all of our conversation for Merxem's benefit, although we got the impression that she understood more than she let on. So we found that it was vital to have a English/Russian dictionary on hand at all times, so that we could point to the English word and let Nazim read off the Russian, and vice versa. There was naturally much to talk about and much hilarity. Our visitors were very excited, taking in all the scenery and points of interest. They particularly commented on the quality of the motorway surface and the speed at which cars were travelling - 70 mph seems to be largely ignored these days. As we knew they were Muslims we had to clarify whether there were any restrictions on what they could eat, and we ascertained there were none!

Nazim told us that they had been required to pay half of their air tickets in Roubles, and the other half in dollars. The exchange rate at the time was 200 Roubles to \$1, and 300 Roubles to £1 sterling and Barry saw the tickets which cost

194,500 Roubles each for the journey Moscow/London/Moscow, and obviously excluded the cost of the train fares from Tashkent to Moscow and the return air fares from Moscow to Tashkent which they had yet to buy. We learned in fact that there had been a significant increase in the Aeroflot fare the day of booking their tickets in Moscow for London. Inflation throughout the CIS is rampant and of the order of 1000% plus per annum. In fact when Nazim returned to Tashkent, he told Barry in a QSO that prices had risen 350 to 400% in their absence. It was for this reason along with our help, that they decided to make the trip now as they would not be able to afford it next year. He did reassure us that by making the journey, he had not put himself into financial difficulties for the future.

After a short motorway service station stop for a snack and a cup of tea, we drove on to Barry's house in the village of Backwell where we arrived at about 5 pm. It was interesting to see our visitors talking between themselves about the service station food and facilities as this was their first venture into a new environment. Once in Backwell, Phil unloaded the car and headed off home. Barry and Helen then got down to planning the various trips for the next seven days and they all spent the first evening catching up on news of their family and friends in Uzbekistan whom we had met, and went for a short walk with the dogs etc. It was apparent that Merxem was a little on edge about something and we discovered that their eldest son had just come out of hospital the day before they left having had surgery on his nose. After phoning Tashkent and speaking to her son and her parents, she visibly cheered up and after a light meal retired to bed after a hot bath and she was obviously very tired after such a long journey. Nazim took the opportunity to have his first session on the air.

It was disappointing that, after the trouble Nazim had taken in arranging special call signs for us to use during our stay in Tashkent, we were unable to reciprocate. Nazim had gone to some trouble and expense to obtain an authenticated English translation of his UISAA licence and Phil had been in touch with John Bazley, G3HCT who is Chairman of the RSGB's Licensing Advisory Committee and suggested



G0/UI8AA could be used, but this suggestion was firmly squashed, on the basis that there is no reciprocal licensing agreement in place between the UK and the USSR/CIS. We do not blame G3HCT for this decision, as we are aware that he personally raised the matter with the senior civil servant at the RA responsible for such matters. Maybe we should just have done it and expressed surprise if anyone queried it afterwards..... As a result, we were told by G3HCT that Nazim was authorised to use either G3LZK's or G3SWH's call signs under the licensee's supervision, providing that we were happy that he was properly licensed in his own country, and by the way, could he please have a copy of Nazim's licence in Russian to pass on to the RA for further evaluation!

Barry runs a Kenwood TS-940S and Nazim is a keen constructor, so he had the casing off fairly smartish ! He was obviously staggered at the complexity of the rig and what he saw inside it. He is in the process of constructing a new transceiver and busily noted down the various features and items of interest which he could put to use in the new rig. In one of their shopping expeditions Barry took him to our local 'emporium' and bought him a quantity of dial knobs and rocker switches, with which he was delighted and which seem to be unobtainable as new in Uzbekistan.

Nazim had brought with him the infamous hacksaw blade keyer which caused Barry some initial problems in Tashkent and was quite surprised when the reverse situation occurred and it would not interface with Barry's Star-Master keyer. Fortunately after a little practice he got the hang of things and converted to Barry's Bencher paddle and iambic keying. He used both CW and SSB and on that first evening was tickled pink to SSB QSO his great pal Lew in Tashkent. He had numerous QSO's with FOC members who were somewhat puzzled to be given the name, Nazim ! Barry could not understand a word of his SSB contacts, but it seemed obvious that he was describing the equipment in some detail and the word 'fantastica' was used regularly. Quite a pile up built and he later told us that many enquiries were being made by CIS stations as to the reasons he was in the UK and how had he got there ! He much enjoyed being able to narrate his story and

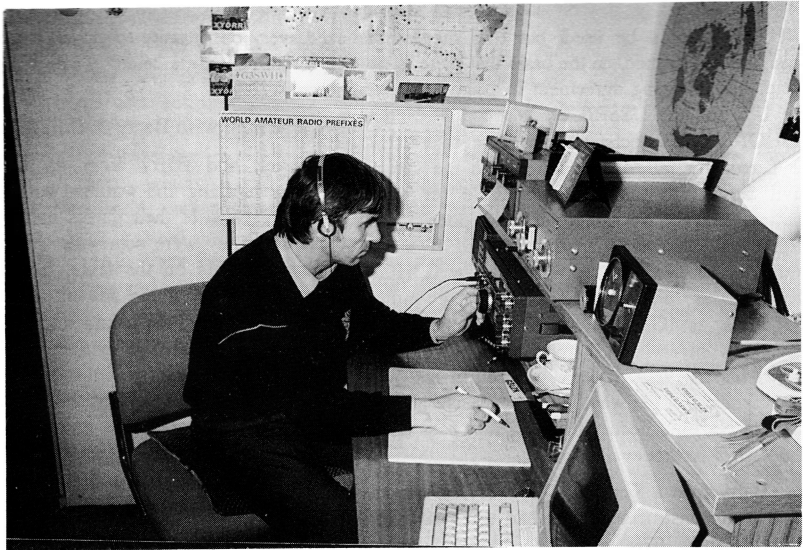
used every opportunity to get on the air. He felt he would be quite a celebrity in UI8 when he got home!

#### The stay with Barry & Helen ....

Helen and Barry were up early on the Saturday morning and watched with great interest the reaction of their guests to a full English breakfast. They were somewhat suspicious of 4 different cereals on the table, but finally took courage to try a minute amount - dry. It took a little cajoling for them to add sugar and milk, but by the end of the week they were mixing all four cereals into one helping with copious amounts of milk and sugar which they then devoured with relish. Initially, bread was eaten dry but, again, toasted by the end of the week, with butter, jam and/or marmalade. Tea and coffee was always taken black well laced with sugar, although Merxem preferred fruit juices to coffee. Also greatly enjoyed was bacon and eggs, sunny side up! In all their travels they seemed to enjoy the different diet and whilst Nazim only had a small appetite, his wife excelled herself at all meal-times eating anything and was especially fond of anything with chocolate and cream. She literally devoured milk chocolate bars!

Within a few hours of their arrival, they presented Barry and Helen with several personal presents which must have cost them a lot. They gave Helen a very delicate Uzbek necklace incorporating a miniature perfume holder, together with matching earrings. Barry was given a large metallic sheathed turkish style dagger with a personal inscription on the sheath. Apparently Merxem had taken some trouble to find this present in Tashkent. In addition vodka and bottles of homemade cognac were also given and the latter from our experience in Tashkent is not only tasty, but very potent!

Knowing what little is available in the Tashkent shops, Barry and Helen were a little anxious about their first shopping expedition. They need not have worried, as the visitors adapted themselves quickly and mastered easily the conversion of sterling to both dollars and roubles. It was interesting to see how quickly they were able to identify the cheaper shop and decide what they could afford with their limited funds. The morning was spent looking at everything and noting what they would like to



## Nazim/UI8AA operating G3LZK

buy on a return visit. They cashed their own dollars to sterling and we gave them some additional funds.

The foods shops intrigued them enormously as there was so much variety. It puzzled them as to why we had such a choice of 6 or more types of rice and countless choices of the same sorts of jams, etc. When they first entered a supermarket they just stopped in their tracks and, after an initial look, Nazim just put his hands over his eyes and laughed! Merxem was more taciturn but was nevertheless very obviously intrigued and not much missed her eyes. Knowing something of their country and lack of so much that we take for granted, one could not help but feel slightly embarrassed, even though they showed no apparent envy or resentment of anything they saw and we had to admire that. Bewilderment perhaps best describes their thinking.

In the afternoon, they visited the local seaside resorts of Weston Super Mare and Clevedon where they enjoyed walking on the sands and they had their first sight of the sea (well, the Severn estuary anyway).

The following day, they went to Cheltenham to meet Barry's son and his girlfriend. Lunch was at a 400 year old pub in the Cotswolds where Nazim sampled various beers but we were surprised that his liking was for Guinness and sausages! Afterwards they were taken to a flying display of World War 1 type aircraft. On the advice of the Ministry of Defence, the grass field had been specially sown with the same type of grass used by the Royal Flying Corps of which Barry's father was a pilot in France in 1917. Mock air battles were flown, but the cloud ceiling was only about 700 feet which rather restricted some of the viewing. The afternoon was completed with a trip around the towns and villages of the Cotswolds ending up with an English tea in an "olde worlde" cottage.

Monday morning saw us all up early and on the road to Beer, a south Devon seaside resort. It was a beautiful sunny day when we arrived and we could see for miles. A mid morning coffee and buns was eaten on the shingle beach. This was Nazim and Merxem's first real sight of the open sea and they were amused at the taste of salt water. Merxem was suffering from very sore feet after so much walking in new shoes bought

in Russia, so the first priority was to find a pair of comfortable shoes. Although it was the end of season, Helen located and bought a pair which Merxem wore for the rest of her stay. Later in the day we went off to Lyme Regis on the Dorset coast and walked along the harbour wall watching the many small yachts in brilliant sunshine. We spent about 40 minutes watching a game of bowls which again intrigued them.

On the next day (Tuesday), we drove 85 miles, again south, to the New Forest in Hampshire. Walks were taken through the forest and around the village of Brockenhurst. A caravan camping site was also taken in before meeting up with Helen's brother and his wife for yet another pub lunch. It was here that Barry discovered the loss of his camera, having left it momentarily on the roof of his car and then driven off! Its loss was reported to the police. Fortunately it was handed in later that day and, although extensively damaged, has been since repaired satisfactorily.

With filled stomachs, we drove to nearby Lymington, one of the main yachting centres on the south coast. We managed walk along the many pontoons and see the top class, ocean racers, many well in excess of 60 feet. Being on the pontoons Nazim and Merxem were able to see into many of the cockpits and they were impressed to say the least and many of the yachts there are valued at well over the £1M mark. Plenty of photos were taken as Helen's bother lent us his camera for the duration of our visitors stay. We then went back to Barry's brother in laws house in Poole for supper having firstly driven through Christchurch and the suburbs of Bournemouth. Also en-route we stopped off at a four star hotel which borders the Sandbanks ferry where, from the hotel lounge all the various craft entering Pool harbour can be viewed at close quarters, and Nazim was fortunate in seeing one of the Brittany Ferries ships arrive and, this vessel, of some 18,000 tons was the largest ship Nazim has ever seen. Despite arriving home at midnight, Nazim was on the air immediately for a couple of hours or more!

Nazim and Merxem always had a small gift or two for practically everyone they met and seemed to have an endless supply of these small

token gifts, including some beautifully printed and photographed books of Uzbekistan which they presented to Barry, Helen, Phil and Jan. Knowing this was likely to happen, we alerted our friends and relatives to their generosity and they were thus not embarrassed by having nothing to offer in return. One can only hope that their financial resources were not too depleted by this level of generosity.

After two hectic days of motoring and sightseeing, the next day was spent in and around Bristol at the shops where Nazim and his wife purchased some cheap personal stereos for their two sons, a watch, jeans, shirts etc. The amazing thing was that they had remembered exactly the shop locations for each item. They were particularly after a skate board, but these proved too costly. Several hours were also spent at a large out of town super store called Toys-R-Us, which is devoted to nothing but toys, and their minds flipped again. One or two small items were purchased but they were disappointed not to have more funds available. Helen did however buy a rather nice leather handbag for Merxem, and she was thrilled as it had built in at the base, a small folding umbrella!

The next two days were taken up by visits to the beauty spots at Cheddar and Wells. At Cheddar they went into the two huge underground caves which go down several hundreds of feet and adjacent to the caves themselves is an exhibition hall housing the many samples of rocks etc. Wells of course is famous for its cathedral which was of great interest to both Nazim and Merxem and Nazim, with his enquiring mind, asked many questions. Unfortunately we were not able to answer all his queries! Just outside Wells, we all visited a cheese making factory where the whole process from start to finish was seen. This was of particular interest to Merxem as she makes her own cheese in Tashkent. They factory had lunch facilities so we ate a good lunch before returning home and Nazim wasted no time in getting on the air once more and his day way made with some good QSOs to the USA and NZ.

Change-over date was Saturday, and Phil and Jan arrived about 10am to collect Nazim and his wife for the next part of their stay. After coffee and the inevitable comparison of notes,

off they went to nearby Congresbury some 5 miles distant.

#### With Phil and Jan .....

We installed them in their room, showed them the facilities and introduced them to our two teenaged children.

Jan is a meticulous planner as well as running her own business, and both she and Phil had both taken a week's leave. We had spent most of the previous week setting out where we were going on which days, what and when we were going to eat at home (then cooking and freezing it beforehand if possible) and when we were going to be away for meals etc.

The first activity was a visit to the local pub to introduce them to some friends and to have some lunch. Our local is a 'proper' old fashioned pub with a smoky atmosphere which serves a limited selection of first class real ale Merxem drank fruit juice, but Nazim was tempted with a pint of draught Bass, which he declared to his taste and, much to our amusement, that Barry had not given him anything like that ! (He liked Guinness !)

After lunch, we all went to watch a demonstration of horse drawn ploughing by two of the biggest shire horses you have ever seen. Jan found some mints in her handbag and was soon a very firm friend with the horses. Phil wanted to get a photograph of us all with the horses, and all was fine until the horse standing next to Merxem moved his head, where upon she jumped about three feet into the air. After some two hours we headed for home and exchanged gifts. Amongst other things, Nazim presented us with a bottle of proper Russian vodka and a bottle of his home made cognac. Merxem got unpacked and organised their room whilst Nazim went on the air.

He quickly found that that he could not cope with Phil's vibroplex bug key and asked for the microphone, which Phil managed to find and to dust off all the cobwebs. He then found that he didn't remember how to set up his FT-101ZD for SSB, and had to get the manual out! It was obviously a major shock to the rig to be used on SSB, as it did not perform very well and gave nowhere near the sort of results which Nazim had enjoyed at Barry's.

Thus that night it was early to bed, as the following morning we had to be up early for the drive to London to visit the famous Petticoat Lane market in the east end, visit some of the sights and stay overnight at a borrowed flat organised by Jan's sister and see some of the larger shops on the Monday. All went according to plan. At Petticoat Lane Merxem bought a track suit for her eldest son and some other souvenirs of London. Being a brilliant sunny day a picnic lunch was had in the churchyard of St Paul's cathedral, feeding also the sparrows and pigeons. Nazim was suffering from an eye infection and an eye patch was obtained, but he treated himself to a liberal intake of his vodka and felt little pain afterwards!

St Paul's proper was visited together with Parliament Square and Trafalgar Square. Buckingham Palace was a disappointment as it was shrouded in scaffolding and plastic sheeting. St James' Park was a great success with the feeding of more pigeons, many ducks and a few squirrels. Merxem clearly loved animals and was delighted to be able to throw bread accurately into a pelicans mouth, in spite of a large sign saying "please do not feed the pelican" ! No harm done, as every time she scored a direct hit, the pelican allowed the bread to roll out of its beak, much to the delight of the assembled ducks below.

We then drove to Chiswick to find the flat and relax before going out to dinner at a local Chinese restaurant. Nazim loved Chinese food, having lived with a Korean family in Uzbekistan for several months at some stage in his career.

It was a typical London Monday morning - wet, drizzly miserable and not very warm when we caught the metro towards Knightsbridge and Harrods. After about an hour of wandering from department to department and being truly astonished at some of the prices, Nazim declared it all to be too expensive and by the way were there any radio junk shops. Phil was unprepared for this request as his knowledge of radio junk shops in London is rather dated, and he could only recall Smith's in Lisle Street, Soho and the plethora of similar shops that used to be situated at the bottom end of Tottenham Court Road in the 60's and 70's. He doubted whether they were there any longer, but they sped off on another

metro journey.

As suspected, that part of Soho is now mostly Chinese restaurants, and even the sex shops seem to have disappeared, so there was nothing sinful to see (or do) anyway ! A few hi-fi shops were in evidence in Tottenham Court Road, into each of which Nazim dived to compare prices of video recorders. Some reasonably priced second hand ones were available, but further enquiries revealed that some Russian broadcasting standards were different to our PAL system, and they would have been of no use anyway. Nazim did say that in the whole of Tashkent there is only one small hi-fi/video shop and that was in some back street. It seemed the only components shop still in London was Henry's Radio located in the Edgeware Road, so another metro trip !

Nazim took one look at Henry's stock and declared it to be a poorer selection and more expensive than that available in Tashkent, which was a contradiction of what he had said to Barry during their visit to the Bristol emporium. In a nearby street market, Merxem found and bought the much sought after skateboard and the whilst at Paddington rail station, copies of "Practical Wireless", "Short Wave Magazine" and "Ham Radio Today" were bought for Nazim. Then a final metro ride back to the flat, load up the car and back onto the M4, arriving home at around 6 pm to allow Nazim to get QRV again.

Early the next day Phil rang Barry for the loan of his bench and Star-Master keyer to enable Nazim to use CW and after collecting this we went off to the City of Bath which is some 12 miles from Bristol. Parking in this City is a major problem but they do operate an efficient 'Park and Ride' scheme at low cost utilising double decker buses and Nazim and Merxem enjoyed sitting at the front of the top deck getting a good view on the short journey to the centre of the City. A mid morning snack was taken in the regency style Pump Rooms in which a live trio played, and then a visit to the famous Roman Baths, the Abbey and some more hi-fi shops. Back in the car once more, we drove to see the beautiful Royal Crescent before returning home in the late afternoon so that Nazim could go on the air.

That evening we had been invited to a small

dinner at a non radio friends house in Clevedon, and arranged for a taxi to and from, as there was bound to be some fairly serious drinking! Unfortunately, Merxem felt unwell during the course of the meal and spent most of the evening asleep in an armchair in an adjacent room. The host had an unopened bottle of vodka and Nazim drank most of that, with some small assistance from another guest. On arriving home around midnight, we had a night-cap and retired to bed. Jan was later disturbed by 'noises downstairs' and sent Phil to investigate. He found Merxem in the lounge, bright as a button and watching TV with Nazim !

We had planned on the Wednesday to travel to Oxford and Stratford on Avon, but Merxem was obviously feeling the strain of the unaccustomed activity, so the day's travelling was abandoned for a quiet day at home. We went to the local video library and hired some horror films for her to watch whilst Nazim spent most of the time on the air.

The same evening, Phil had invited the local amateur fraternity to his house to meet Nazim. Andy G0CAC, Pete G4DVP and Nick G3VNC arrived about 8 pm and Nazim produced another bottle of his private stock of vodka which, together with the cognac was a great success.

Thursday saw us back to the main shopping area in Bristol, a place which Phil loves to hate! After lunch, Nazim and Merxem asked if they could go off on their own for an hour or so and we readily agreed without too much thought. When they did not appear at the agreed meeting place, Jan started to get a little concerned, but they eventually appeared and we returned home for Nazim to be QRV and for Merxem to watch horror videos with Phil's daughter.

The planned trip to Torquay to visit Jan's sister was abandoned in favour of a visit to the Windsor Safari Park as this was conveniently located off the ICL Beaumont Training Centre where the RSGB HF and IOTA Convention was being held to meet other amateurs. We had also been invited to attend the evening buffet at Roger G3KMA's house in nearby Chertsey.

Again the weather was not very kind, and we arrived at the safari park in drizzle. There must have been as many as 20 other people there that day, as it is a matter of record that it was

closed by the Receivers shortly afterwards. A picnic lunch was taken in the car. Our visitors were quite thrilled to see the big cats and see live lions and tigers for the first time. The dolphin display was quite spectacular.

We arrived at Beaumont at about 5 pm to find most people already in the bar. The girls went off to find somewhere to change ready for Roger's party and Nazim and Phil made some new acquaintances and renewed some old ones. The CIS were well represented by RA3AUU from Moscow, UA9OBA, UA9OPA and UZ9OA from Novosibirsk and UY5XE from the Ukraine, so Nazim and Merxem were spared the strain of speaking English for awhile. After an hour or so, it was time to leave for G3KMA's house armed with a map and closely followed by Paul G4BKI.

Roger's hospitality was tremendous. He had hired a marquee for the garden which contained tables groaning with food and drink. The kitchen was a hive of activity with his wife, daughters, friends and neighbours working flat out to serve food etc. We all thoroughly enjoyed it and many photos were taken. The party broke up at 10 pm and we arrived home at midnight.

#### The last lap .....

Nazim and Merxem were taken back to Barry and Helen's house the following morning, (Saturday) and we arranged to meet again in the evening for a final meal at a pub in Clevedon. After lunch, Barry and Helen took them over the Severn Bridge into Wales and looked around the massive ruins of the medieval Chepstow castle and more shops.

The final get together was attended by 10, as we included some friends of Jan and Phil as well as some American visitors of theirs en route for their home in California after a South African business trip. We all had a super meal with plenty of wine and it was a fitting last night to their stay.

The following morning, 27th September, Barry and Helen drove the 180 odd miles to Manchester airport, stopping en route for breakfast and arriving in good time for Nazim and Merxem's flight at 1320. Just before departure, Barry's middle son, David arrived to meet them briefly and again our guests got out their bag of

gifts and gave him a present. Needless to say David had something for them.

Helen had had the idea to collect picture post cards of the various places which we had all visited and to put them into a scrap book for presentation as a final gift at Manchester airport.

They were delighted to have this memento coupled with some 250 colour prints taken by us in binders.

Nazim and Merxem expressed their appreciation for their holiday and with a few tears finally went through to the departure lounge. As they left, Nazim groped for the now well thumbed dictionary and made the final comment that for them that their visit had been a "fairy tale".

In closing this story it might be of interest to readers to know that Nazim in fact has two jobs. One he describes as a 'signalman' and we rather understood him to mean he deals with the communications between the various textile factories in the Tashkent area. He is picked up by a company car daily at 8 am and works until 5pm when he starts his second job, also radio connected, and this we think is the teaching of radio to adults and youngsters from the factories. This goes on until 10 pm when he is again picked up by car and driven home. He has done this for 14 years and plans to do it for another 14 years. It seems his work is also his hobby and finds it all a pleasure. After a late evening meal, he goes on the air most nights ! When questioned, Merxem seemed to accept this as normal ! As a consequence of the above he also receives two salaries, which in September , totalled 5000 Roubles, a good salary by all accounts. Just before coming to the UK, his salary had in fact been doubled. Regardless of the foregoing, with rocketing inflation at probably over 1000% pa, we sincerely hope that economically things will improve for them.

We have been asked to return to Tashkent taking our wives with us but no decisions have been made at present. Maybe in 1994 !





"I know it's his lunch hour, but I wish he'd leave his hobby at home."

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## Flying Doctors and Pedal Power

Information from Jan Stuart G0JCY/3426

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In 1911 the Presbyterian Church in Australia decided to do something about the lack of medical facilities in the Outback of Central Australia where injured farmers, miners etc. would have to travel for days on camel or horseback to reach even the smallest settlement where, with luck, there might be a Constable with a knowledge of First Aid.

The Church set up the Australian Inland Mission and started building a number of hostels in this inhospitable part of the country encompassing the Simpson desert and covering parts of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Each hostel was staffed by two female nurses.

The next need was for communications across this enormous area, and for larger centres where a doctor would be available for advice or assistance. It was a long time coming but in November 1926 an Adelaide Amateur, Alf Traeger, built a simple Tx/Rx which he successfully tested at a location not far from Alice Springs.

The rig was a 2 valve Rx/1 valve Tx which took its power supply from a hand operated generator. Naturally this had its disadvantages and so Alf changed it to a pedal operated system.

He installed these rigs in some 30 hostels where they were known as Pedal Radios, and also taught the nurses to read morse.

If both nurses were not available when messages needed to be sent there was still a problem in pedalling the generator and operating a morse key and so the resourceful Alf went back to the workshop and designed a system whereby the nurses could operate a typewriter keyboard which drove a disc to send the morse characters.

These developments paved the way for the Aerial Medical Service (Flying Doctor) and the first such base was opened in May 1928 at Cloncurry, Western Queensland, with one single engined DH50 Moth on lease, with pilot, from the Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Service (QANTAS).

The regulations for the operation of these aircraft stated:

1. Do not take the machine into the air unless you are satisfied it will fly.
2. Pilots should carry hankies in a handy position to wipe goggles.
3. Riding on steps, wings or tail of a machine is prohibited.
4. Learn to gauge altitude. Do not trust altitude instruments.
5. Pilots will not wear spurs when flying.
6. If the engine fails on take-off, land at once regardless of obstacles.
7. No spins or tail-slides will be indulged in as they unnecessarily strain the engine.

(Note. The day after I had put this article together I was lucky enough to have a good CW QSO on 24 Mc/s with VK8AV, Alan, who lives in Alice Springs and knew about the pedal radios. He also said that Alf Traeger was quite famous and lots of places in Central VK were named after him.

Maybe we can have some info on this from the VK gang ?)

# After the First Commission

By Brian Parkes GOKCI/3395

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Forty one years ago this September I entered the Annex gates at Shotley for that unique experience of becoming a "Nozzer", one at the beck and call of all and sundry. Here it began, that initiation into the making of a sailor.

I remember the horrors of the "Dhobey-House" which was ruled over by an ex Royal Marine, Nobby Clark, who was expert at flicking a damp towel to make us boys leap into the air; the white and blue striped modesty covers we had to strap on as we laboured over those huge Victorian wash basins and rubbed in the pussers yellow soap. It was while musing over this that I thought it time that I contributed again to the Newsletter.

My last letter saw me on Foreign Service Leave, living it up in the fleshpots of Notting-ham. Evenings spent at the 'Queen Elizabeth', or the NAAFI which was just around the corner, the 'Trip to Jerusalem', the 'Salutation' and others; and lots of banter on Slab Square, particularly on Saturday nights. All too soon it became time to say Saha to all of this and board the train for Keyham station for HMS DRAKE (Jago's Mansion). I recall very large carts chained to the railings here, for which one had to fetch the key from the barracks main gate. Then load up your kit and either push or pull the cart (much easier if you had an oppo to assist) over to the barracks kit inspection room. This was the local Naval Mafia HQ, and one always came out poorer in either gear, Blue Liners, or what have you, than when entering its gloomy interior. It was to be a while before the rackets here were exposed.

The Signal School at this time (1955) was over at St.Budeaux, but accommodation there was limited to those on courses, so a lot of us communicators lived over in DRAKE on the lower playing fields accommodation. DRAKE was virtually bursting at the seams at this period. The Korean War had ended and there were a lot of ships paid off, and many Queens Time ratings waiting for a second demob. Also we had a

proliferation of National Service men.

The main barracks accommodation mess-decks were crammed with three tier bunks; small groups of these arranged around a few lockers and a coal burning stove formed a mess within the main mess building. Winter evenings were spent huddled around the stove, which at times glowed red hot, swapping yarns and telling jokes. One member of the group always went out to the main gate to buy the 9 O'Clocker oggies, the usual reward being a free oggie plus the couple of pence extra he put onto the price of each one for his trouble. A good run ashore down Union Street could be had for 10/- (50p for the decimalised). This brought a few pints of Scrumpy, a packet of fags, an oggie, the bus fare back to Jago's Mansion.

The Communicators daily routine if not on a course was either to work ship in DRAKE and the accommodation huts or to catch the picket boat over to the St.Budeaux pier, usually from the old coaling wharf. Nearby lay HMS ROBERTS, the huge monitor. Daily morse and flashing exercises for all; twice a day and backwards in the Dogs if your marks were not up to par. We all had to rapidly learn the new phonetic alphabet which had just been introduced into the services. The camp Gestapo was headed by CPO (Tel) Penny and his troops. I remember he used to peer through binoculars at those of us who tried to sneak down to the pier and hitch a picket boat lift back to DRAKE early.

With the large numbers of shipless communicators in the barracks, drafts were keenly sought after and regular visits were made to Drafties Office, where personal negotiation could be made for courses or drafts. Those were the days .....

The Submarine Service did particularly well for recruits during this period, and it was not long before I was on my way for conversion - it was not long before I was on my way back either ! A short spell in DRAKE, then a crash draft on

a Sunday to join MERCURY for a Radio Warfare course. The rain in Guzz stayed mainly over us, and that day was no exception. Lugging a green pussers case, the ubiquitous grip, the large hefty kit bag from which the metal hat box was in constant effort to escape; and last but never least, one's very own bed and keep-up-afoat lashed up and stowed hammock ('mick). The rain had made the blanco rum from off my cap onto my burberry. I had 2/6d in cash, five Blue Liners and a pussers bag meal. All was well.

The train eventually puffed its way into North Road station and transported me off to Petersfield to await the tilley for HMS MERCURY, the Alma Mater for so many communicators. This was my first visit and I cannot say that I took to it, nor for that matter it to me. Nevertheless I soon fell into the routine and having got my Sandyman Cloak I was able to enter the secret huts of the North Camp Radio Warfare school. Not only did I spend my days there under instruction, but it seemed that a lot of my nights were also spent there freezing in the Sentry Hut, either writing or reading others inane comments in the log book. Fully armed with a pussers pick-axe handle I was ready to propel all. Myxomatosis was running rife amidst the rabbits on the camp at this time, so the pick-axe handle came in useful for putting them out of their misery. About half way through the course I was given the order of the boot - pity, because I wanted to go onto the Russian Linguist course - and sent back to DRAKE.

Here I was put straight onto a Leading Telegraphist's course, passed, and was drafted to the Inshore Minesweeping Flotilla at Harwich, for HMS CARDINHAM. A pontoon trot system formed a small harbour for the flotilla around the depot ship - HMS MULL OF GALLOWAY. Inshore Sweeper was a misnomer, as it was out into the North Sea most days to sweep for WW2 mines. It was great being the only sparker and I enjoyed the other various duties that I had - helmsman, assisting with the sweep gear and messdeck dodger. A good percentage of the crew was National Service. The Cox'n ruled the roost of the lower deck, which I think was nine of us. A bonus was neat rum for all. The W/T office was a bulkhead away from the heads and wash basins and directly opposite the galley. So I was

assailed by aromas of various kinds.

The equipment, to the best of my recollection, was an 86M for VHF, a TAJ and TNJ for the Medium and HF working. Watches were kept on Single Operator Periods to a local net on the MULL OF GALLOWAY, or on Local Command Net, or NL Broadcast when on passage, as well as the Ship-to-Shore organisation. AFO S1 was the bible for moving around the country. I often worried about the "Rusty Bolt Effect", as we had plenty of rust on CARDINHAM. But then that was like bothering about setting watch on the Grain Wave while transiting the Suez Canal. Both old favourite examination questions.

There were rumblings over the Suez Canal at this time and the Flotilla was ordered to make ready for passage out there to sweep it clear. The very day of sailing I was crashed drafted back to DRAKE for passage out to HMS ROOKE for Gibraltar Comcen. You can imagine just how chokka I was about that! Really hacked off. The flight out to Gib. was preceded by a night out in London in Goodge Street, a most peculiar place underground, where servicemen were herded prior to the off at Stanstead Airport for onward routing. The flight to Gib. was on a DC9, I think. We had to refuel at Nice.

HMS ROOKE consisted in the main of green painted wooden huts on stilts, close to the foreshore of the harbour. But joy of joys, each of us had a small cabin to ourselves, with a communal messdeck/dining area immediately below. The Comcen was in the dockyard, part of the Tower Block complex and just down from those huge sheer-legs which dominated the jetty side. Ships tied up outside of our windows, so the silent hours were never boring as we could always watch Jolly Jack coming back on board from a run ashore. The Chief Sparker was Tim Daley, and "Pots" of watches were John Hilder and Bob Lomas. Within a few months of my arrival my B13 arrived and I was rated up to Acting Leading Telegraphist. On such a big pay rise I brought my fiancee out from UK and we were married on May Day at the Cathedral.

Being 21 years old, I was old enough to receive Ration Allowance, but if one was married under that age then no RA and the going was tough indeed. With the border still being

open life was not so claustrophobic on the Rock. Eastern Beach, Catalan and Rosia Bays had lots to offer when off watch, and it was not so crowded which made it much more pleasant than later years. The fishing was superb, and it was easy to cross to La Linea, Algeciras or Tangiers. Main Street still provided it's own form of entertainment, from haggling for "rabbits" to watching that ever versatile performer, the sailor ashore. The latter particularly on emerging from the many bars that Gib. had. The Trocodero always appeared to have a couple of inches of discarded shrimp shells on its floor, and whenever a fleet was in it was very lively indeed. Tombola at the Fleet Canteen was also a good evening out, especially if you could shout for a full house. The peanut vendor there always bought a double ticket, memorised the numbers and ticked them off in his head while still selling his nuts. I know - I've seen him call out and win!

Suez came to it's unsatisfactory conclusion and my old flotilla and ship came into the harbour for a few days prior to proceeding back to Harwich. This was the last I was to see of the CARDINHAM, until many years later when she was being broken up in Hong Kong dockyard. I recently drove into the Cornish village of Cardinham, to see if there was a pub there and perhaps some mementos. Alas, there was not even a pub. But I've a couple of photographs of our trip up the Seine to Paris to remind me! That's another story.

The draft at Gibraltar came to an end in 1959 and it was back to the UK and the next draft. I had arrived at the Rock alone and I left with a wife and daughter. Like many another, I shall always retain a very soft spot for the Rock. And one day I intend to go back for a holiday. Until the next time ZKJ2 - QRX.

*(I think Brian's article is more a test of your knowledge of RN Slangue than anything else ..... if you're really stuck I'll include an interpretation in the next NL, if you're really desperate the translation could be mailed to you in a plain brown envelope to save embarrassment.*

*The remains of the North Camp Radio Warfare School are just about to be turned into a car park. for the Ed.'s new appointment Ed.)*

WANTED FOR NL !!

More cartoons, odd definitions etc. to fill in that awkward little hole that nothing else will fit into -Ed.

RSGB  
International  
HF  
Convention  
9 - 10 October  
1993  
Beaumont  
Conference  
Centre

(near M25 and Heathrow  
Airport)

Further information from  
RSGB

# Day to Day Life in a U-boat in World War II

By Petty Officer Torpedo Mechanic Herbert Lochner,  
Kriegsmarine.

Selected from his published writings by David Stott  
SWL/3315

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*(Those of you who remember the short article from Dave about his correspondence with Herbert Lochner (Summer 92) should find these reminiscences of interest Read on..... Ed.)*

There was U-boat U425, my new posting, still lashed to the fitting-out quay in the Danzig shipyard. Specialists were working against the clock since she had to be put to sea in six weeks' time.

I felt really strange when I first saw the U-boat's slim-line body measuring 67m by 6m during the construction phase. You couldn't really tell that it had a displacement of 750 cubic metres when on the surface from just looking at it. On the fo'c'sle there was an 8.8 cm gun which would again be dismantled before front-line action, whilst on the "Wintergarten" (the gun platform beneath the conning tower), there were two 2cm double gun carriages together with the 2cm quadruple anti-aircraft gun (later to become a 3.7cm anti-aircraft gun). In my opinion this gave the impression of a modest battle ship, especially since I had spent the previous 2 years on Destroyer Z24. Nevertheless from the pier it looked a smart U-boat and a model which had already proved its worth at the front line. Now, during the construction phase we had to familiarise ourselves with all the compartments and jobs to such an extent that we would be able to cope with any incident which might come our way.

The U-boat was ready for action on time - 21 April 1943. It had taken exactly eleven months to build, from the time when the keel had first been laid down.

The celebrations began with the hoisting of

the flag and the handing over of the U-boat by the Chief of the Training Fleet to the Commander. A reception was then held in the gaily bedecked bow compartment for guests of honour. Moreover, that was the only time that tables were set out there. Afterwards there was no room on board for them. This important day came to a close with a ceremony on the Hapag passenger steamer, HAMBURG, docked in Danzig Harbour where it served as living quarters. The whole crew took part.

Life took on a more serious aspect in the days and weeks to follow. In a relatively short space of time, and under the Commander's orders, U-boat and crew had to forge a community which would prove itself in every situation which might be encountered at the front-line. For this purpose it was essential that everyone on board was familiar not only with the role which he had been allocated but also knew how to use the technical equipment and could execute all commands quickly and efficiently.

The purpose of the subsequent practice voyages carried out under demanding conditions in the Baltic, up to the last tests in the training group for front-line U-boats (Agru Front) at the Hela Base on the off-shore peninsula, Danzig Bay, was to prepare the crew for these tasks. The Commander and a few others who had already experienced the front-line knew that in reality action far from home would place us under much greater strain than that experienced during training. Many on their first posting were already afraid on experiencing force 6 or 7 gales in the Baltic of what would befall them in the unknown and distant waters. Each new drill

which we underwent for the umpteenth time during these weeks made us increasingly aware of the skills which we had to master in order to control the U-boat.

During the training sessions a feeling of mutual trust increasingly developed between ordinary sailors, Petty Officers, CPOs and Officers. We gradually got to know each other's strengths and weaknesses, good points and quirks. Camaraderie flourished so that the Commander was at long last convinced of the reliability of his crew which would hold strong in any situation.

Towards the end of the third quarter of 1943 all U-boat crews undergoing training in the region of Gotenhaven were summoned. The U-boat Commander - Admiral Dönitz - put in a personal appearance to encourage crews in their future duties at the front-line "for our country". He then carried out an inspection with a critical eye.

Once the experts in the Danzig shipyard had finished checking the technical equipment we awaited our orders with trepidation and impatience. Our call-up came at the beginning of November 1943 and we said farewell to the people and town of Danzig which had become so dear to our hearts since we were ordered to Kiel in readiness for front-line action.

Here we obtained fuel, ammunition and provisions to last four months and departed amid an abundance of good wishes in November 1943. During the ceremony our hearts raced, not knowing if and when we would again see the safe harbour of our homeland. Many of us were filled with melancholy at the thought of the long journey which lay ahead of us. We had just entered the high seas when we learned that our first mission was to be in the Western Atlantic, in the Caribbean.

The U-boat was to be our "home" in the weeks and months to come. We had to settle in as we would spend a long time on board, mainly within the cylindrical pressure hull - the "steel tubes". The centre of this - the control room - was located beneath the tower. All the commands were issued from here. It comprised a confusion of instruments, pressure gauges, hand-wheels, valves and a convoluted tangle of differently coloured cables, the functioning of

which was vitally important to both boat and crew. We had learned all about these during the training voyages. In addition, there were seats for the two planesmen, equipped with push-button controls and manual rudders. Further on was the helmsman's post and a desk for the control-room PO at which he worked out the trim calculations amongst other things. The periscopes used in attacks and to monitor enemy aircraft were likewise operated from here. In emergencies, the Commander, First Engineer (FE) and the Quartermaster stood here.

Forward and aft the control room was partitioned off by a pressure-resistant bulkhead so that the U-boat was divided into three compartments. I have never really understood the purpose of this because I always said to myself "If water actually gets into a compartment as a result of a hit or other such circumstances the U-boat will no longer be able to keep afloat and will sink, never to be seen again". Perhaps the fact that the compartments were separated with a bulkhead served its purpose in very smooth waters, but U-boats were not intended for that. Behind the front bulkhead was the Commander's bunk and writing table - the only "home comforts" for the highest ranking officer on board.

The radio room and hydrophone booth were located opposite. From here, the U-boat kept in contact with Germany, even on the high seas. On "quiet" days, whenever possible, the crew would gather in this room to listen to gramophone music but the Commander also issued his instructions and orders from here.

Next door was the mess (living, sleeping and eating quarters for the officers) and, by partitioning with lockers, room for two CPOs (engine room artificers) and the quartermaster. In addition to this there was a toilet and washroom and, opposite, a fridge. The end of the front part was the bow compartment. This served as the sleeping, living and eating quarters for 33 men and, at the same time, bedroom and workroom for me as torpedo mechanic. I was responsible for storing and servicing the torpedoes together with the four torpedo tubes and, in the event of an attack, for preparing the torpedoes for firing.

There were only twelve bunks in the bow compartment, one of which was for me. The



stokers had one bunk between two and the seamen two between three, depending on the duty rota. Members of the watch down below who did not have a bunk slept in hammocks or, in extreme cases, on the wooden gangplanks underneath which the reserve torpedoes were kept.

Machine-room hands changed duty every six hours whereas the seamen, who were in three watches, changed duty every four hours. When the U-boat was actively deployed at the front-line, there was no space in the bow compartment for dining tables and walking was restricted.

Four reserve torpedoes were kept on the boards in the corridor, another four beneath these and then the four torpedoes in the torpedo tubes so that a total of twelve G7e and T5 ("Zaunkönig") torpedoes were kept in the bow compartment. Ammunition for the 2 cm anti-aircraft gun and provisions for the crew were also stored here.

Astern from the control room was the PO's mess - sleeping and eating quarters for the eleven Petty Officers - equipped with eight bunks and a dining table with flaps that could be folded down.

One of the two battery rooms was located beneath the gangplanks in the corridor, the second being located in the fo'cstle beneath the officers' mess. The machine-room hands used flat-bottomed trolleys to travel round and service the individual battery cells.

All of the compartments I have mentioned so far - apart from the bow compartment - were through rooms where peace and quiet seldom reigned. But the PO's mess was the noisiest and most uncomfortable place of all. Just imagine the through-traffic to the engine- and machine room each time the watch changed - six men squeezing through at a time.

At meal times, the petty officers sat here on the lower bunks and could only eat with their heads bowed. Moreover, they had to draw in their knees since crates of provisions were stacked on the floor boards at the start of the voyage. In addition to this, the galley was located directly behind the PO's mess and all food and drink prepared there was passed via the mess to the bow compartment. This meant that

officer and seaman alike had to behave considerately. We had also practised that to a fine art during the training sessions. Even under normal conditions, with a calm sea and clement weather, a great deal of mutual understanding was called for. But when the weather was rough and the sub was lurching from side to side, pitching and tossing, rising or falling, completely different rules came into play since many crew members had to hold or cling on somehow, somewhere, in their struggle to remain upright, or else were seasick. In such situations, meal times were a really complicated affair. Sometimes our appetites completely disappeared and we lay flat-out on our bunks as soon as we were off-duty.

Behind the PO's mess was a second toilet in addition to the galley. This was used by the petty officers and seamen, about forty of them in all, and possibly only whenever the ship's cook was off-duty.

Subjected to the physiological and physical laws of nature, every one was careful to use the toilet only when the U-boat was on the surface since, when we were diving, virtually super-human strength was needed to pump the waste out of the U-boat against the external pressure of the water. Up to a maximum depth of 40 m it was still possible if one exerted considerable strength, but it then took at least ten minutes for one's breathing to return more or less to normal since we were all puffed out doing this particular exercise! There was absolutely no way we could answer the call of nature and pump out the waste when we dived at deeper levels, and that was bad news! It was not until 1945, just before the last voyage, that changes were introduced which literally brought relief in this particular area.

The machine rooms were housed further on. In the engine room the two diesel engines on the left and right took up nearly all the space. In addition came the confusion of pipes, the various pumps for cooling water, engine oil and fuel for instance, the starting air bottles and, in between, the machine telegraph, gauges and thermometer. Even so, this list is far from complete. What the machine operators had to contend with here drove them almost to the limits of human endurance. Even the smallest repairs were carried out under cramped conditions with just a

narrow passage between the operating diesel engines and, together with the heat given off, it was bordering on the intolerable. Spoken communication was only possible with difficulty due to the droning of the diesel engines. Every one had cotton wool in their ears or wore ear muffs. Oral commands or communication were only possible if one roared at the top of one's voice. The men had to put up with all that. Most of the external closures were also secured in this room.

Still further aft, in the rear compartment, were the two electric motors, each of 375 HP. These were DC motors which were immediately astern of the diesel engines on the main propeller shafts. Above water, when the diesel engines were in operation, the electric motors ran in conjunction and served as generators for recharging the batteries.

At the farthest end of the machine room, right in the middle, was the torpedo launch tube. The reserve torpedo was kept underneath the floor boards, flanked by DC motors and propeller shafts. On the starboard side was the so-called Tube No. 6 for launching "BOLD", which I will describe in greater detail later on.

From then on we had to live and work on this U-boat for many weeks, sometimes even months. Slowly we became acclimatised and gradually overcame our feeling of claustrophobia.

How surprised we were that, in the places where there seemed to be no more room whatsoever, total chaos reigned and provisions by the ton - fresh products such as vegetables, meat and bread etc., packed in boxes and bags - could be stored in all those compartments I mentioned. Incredible ! With time, the Number One, the coxswain in charge, became a master at stowing things away.

We could wash every day, but this depended on circumstances, e.g. the current tactical situation, the swell of the sea and obviously on the individual's physical and mental state of health. Once a day we drew a beaker-full of drinking water from one particular tap in order to clean our teeth or a bowl-full of sea water from another tap to wash ourselves. As these methods were the most comfortable, given the circumstances, we Petty Officers washed in the control room, the crew in the bow compartment whilst the mess inhabitants used the washroom in the

forecastle. The dirty water was then simply poured into the bilge and pumped out of the U-boat at the earliest opportunity. Under these cramped conditions in a hermetically sealed steel tube from which there was no escape, we were exposed to all sorts of odours and noises both night and day. Just imagine it - the smell of diesel and lubricating oil, cooking odours, not to mention the stale smell of the bunks and bedding which intensified with time. In addition there was the stale smell of human bodies which often wore the same clothes for days on end. These clothes were sweat-stained or had been soaked with salt water and had dried out whilst the person was wearing them. Such conditions naturally made living conditions very hard and increased the pressure which every U-boat crew experienced to a certain extent depending on the situation in each operating area. The stress became even greater in rough seas or on engaging with the enemy.

We all had rescue equipment - officers and sailors alike. There was an inflatable life jacket, an escape pack to be used if we had to abandon ship under water (this also served as a life jacket) and a rubber dinghy. This was contained in a closed rubber bag which opened by pulling a cord. Once the cord had been pulled the dinghy was inflated using a compressed air cartridge and one could climb in.

Everyone stored his rescue equipment in the most convenient place, usually where he reported in emergency situations. For me, this was the bow compartment.

In the meantime the voyage continued. In lousy weather we crossed the Belt and Skagerrak and moored in the harbour in Bergen (Norway), a Hanseatic town surrounded by several mountain peaks and idyllically situated amidst the fjords. Once again we replenished our supplies of fuel and fresh water.

Late in the evening we left the picturesque silhouette of the town behind us in the wash of a barrage breaker whose task was to guide the U-boat safely through our own mine fields within the fjords and along the coast, and to protect us from attack by enemy aircraft.

We were in better spirits. The ship's cook had put a great deal of effort into making the evening meal particularly appetizing. It was

amazing what he had prepared in his narrow galley which measured barely one square metre! We Petty Officers, his immediate neighbours, praised him to the high heavens in the hope that meal times would always be like this. He was very proud. The wireless operator had just put on another record playing the lively tones of Ilse Werner in farewell when, all of a sudden, there was a loud noise. In a flash the U-boat lay approximately 50 degrees to one side. Food and cutlery disappeared from the table, the crew swayed, fell or tried somehow to get a grip. At the same time came the commands:

“Stop engines !”

“Everyone on the upper deck !”

Still in the dark about what had happened in the interim, those on duty left their posts and those members of the watch down below left their places in the eating quarters. We all flocked in the direction of the control room and climbed the tower to the Wintergarten. In spite of the darkness we could see what had happened.

A Norwegian freighter had rammed the stern of our U-boat with its bow, but fortunately had missed the pressure hull. From the rear compartment came the announcement that no water had penetrated. The Commander then issued the order for everyone to go to their posts.

Nevertheless, the U-boat could not be moved. The ballast tanks and rudder equipment were damaged but the pressure hull had remained intact so that no water had seeped in.

On this comforting note we all returned to our posts. The barrage breaker came broadside; our U-boat was securely lashed to it, fore and astern, by means of ropes. In this way we were towed back to Bergen. The dream of a long-distance voyage was dashed before it had really begun. The U-boat had to spend four weeks in the shipyard undergoing repairs.

One morning during our involuntary stay in this particular place, a lighter carrying explosives burst into flame in the harbour. Norwegian resistance groups had probably staged this attack. A large section of the historical part of the town was destroyed by this explosion which had shaken the area to its very foundations.

The U-boat was ready to put to sea again

shortly before Christmas 1943 and a few test voyages were made.

Our crew celebrated Christmas Eve at the base. The Commander had most certainly received the order to go into action and, at the very least, we knew that this kissed goodbye to the sunny weeks we had hoped to spend in Central America.

U425 was assigned to the North Sea by the U-boat Command whose headquarters were in Narvik. This meant that our next operational area lay north of the Arctic circle.

*(Permission for publication in RNARS Newsletter given by Elizabeth Lochner - Ed).*

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### Useless Definition

#### Thermal Agitation

Characteristic exhibited by a cat on hot bricks. See also - Variable Mu.

(Think about it ..... !!)

*(From Second Thoughts on Radio Theory)*

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## CHILDREN

Tired of being harrassed by  
your stupid parents ?

### ACT NOW !

Move out, get a job and  
pay your own bills while  
you still know everything

!!!!

(from VK2AYD)

# The Reason

In the beginning was the plan

And then came the assumptions

And the assumptions were without form

And the darkness was on the face of the sailors

And they spoke unto their Chiefs, saying:

“It is a crock of s\*\*t and it stinketh.”

And the Chiefs went unto their Section Officers, and sayeth:

“It is a pail on dung, and none may abide the odour thereof.”

And the Section Officers went unto the WEO/MEO/SO/XO, and sayeth unto him:

“It is a container of excrement and it is very strong such that none may abide by its strength.”

And the WEO/MEO/SO/XO went unto their Captain, and sayeth:

“It is a vessel of fertilizer, and none may abide by its strength.”

And the Captain went unto his Admiral, and sayeth:

“It contains that which aids plant growth, and it is very strong.”

And the Admiral went unto the Admiralty Board, and sayeth:

“It promoteth growth, and it is very powerful.”

And the Admiralty Board went unto the Minister of Defence, sayeth unto him:

“This powerful new plan will actively promote growth and efficiency.”

And the Minister of Defence looked upon the plan

And saw that it was good

And the plan became policy

# A Wartime Mystery

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The Chairman of the Scottish Area of the RNA (Mac Mackay) is trying to piece together details of the day 358 lives were lost in a ship explosion off the island of Arran 50 years ago.

The sinking of the aircraft carrier HMS DASHER on 27 March, 1943, remains one of the largely untold stories of the Second World War. It was hushed up at the time by the restrictions of war against Germany. But it has been recently established by a diving ship using echo-sounding equipment that the carrier is lying upright on the seabed off the east coast of Arran.

There are still people in such places as Ardrossan who recall seeing bedraggled seaman being brought ashore in little more than tattered underclothes at a time when the Battle of the Atlantic was at its height.

Mac Mackay is determined to find the full explanation and true story behind the appearance of the few survivors. He is appealing for information from survivors, relatives of the dead and eye-witnesses of the tragedy. Nowhere is there a memorial to the disaster and the RNA is asking for funds to erect a memorial obelisk on the coast overlooking the Firth of Clyde.

The DASHER was the fourth of six Archer Class aircraft carriers ordered from the American shipyards in 1941. It suffered from a series of serious faults during service with the RN, including Arctic convoys and Operation TORCH, the invasion of North Africa.

In February 1943 DASHER had to withdraw from a Murmansk convoy due to storm damage. It was repaired at Dundee then sailed for the Clyde to prepare for an Atlantic convoy.

On 27 March while its aircraft were involved in deck landing practice off Arran, it exploded and sank in three minutes. More than 350 died and 149 survivors were picked up off the Cumbraes. It is said that the explosion was caused by a dropped light igniting aircraft fuel spilled on deck.

The true story is still locked away under the 50-year rule on Secret documents but as far as is known it was the largest loss of life in home waters next to the Royal Oak.

Anyone with information or enquiries about the proposed memorial should contact:

Mr Mac Mackay,  
14 MacNeil Place,  
New Farm Loch,  
Kilmarnock,  
KA3 7EQ.

*(Information from John Cooper G4OFRJ/  
3025 & The Scotsman Ed.)*

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## Help Lines & Information Wanted

SWL/3641 - Needs crystals for a Belcom AMR 217B Rx to cover marine channels 67, 73 & 10. (Frequencies 16.186, 16.219 & 16.200Mhz).

E.D.B-Allen,  
44 Tweed St,  
Berwick-upon-Tweed  
TD15 1NG

G4WSR/3310 - Is trying to get a hold of the B7G mounted IF Filter Xtal for an Eddystone 940 Rx. QTHR

G0KRL - Ian has an old brass Admiralty key, mounted on a brown bakelite type base. It's marked: ADMY.PATT.No.7681 KEY MORSE Serial No.G.D.N. Year JC Does anyone know what year the letters JC signify ?

Information to Ed. or packet direct to G0KRL @ GB7LVA.

Editor is trying to find the UK stockist of ARRL License Manuals. I've seen them for sale at a number of rallies but can't remember on whose stand - info to Ed. please.

# Letters to the Editor

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Nanaimo  
British Columbia

From Doug VE7MAA/3771  
To Frank VK3BPV/1384

Yesterday, as I was re-reading the Winter 92 NL I happened across the name of HMAS ARMIDALE in the article you wrote about HMAS CASTLEMAINE.

Let me give you a little background. In 1942 I, together with four other RN ratings were drafted to a Free French destroyer LE TRIOMPHANT. After sailing around the Pacific, evacuating various islands etc. we ended up in Sydney for a refit. You might have seen us alongside at Garden Island. The refit took so long that the dockyard mateys called us the Reluctant Dragon.

Anyway, the RAN chose to Shanghai all four of us ashore and we found ourselves in various RAN billets. The sparker and a coder were in that overflow ferry that copped it when the midget subs got into the harbour, the signalman (my shore going oppo) went to ARMIDALE and I ended up instructing at the Asdic School at Rushcutters.

We heard rumours about the loss of the ARMIDALE but I never heard anything firm until I read your piece. I suppose my chum, Don Caldwell, was lost with the ship but I would be very grateful for any information about the action and whether there were any survivors.....

Mooroolbark  
Victoria

From Frank VK3BPV/1384  
To Doug VE7MAA/3771

..... I am pleased by good fortune to have been able to revive the events of that time with you. ....It is with sadness that you will see (from a history of the action) you chum, Don Caldwell's name in the list of those killed in

action, or missing - believed killed.

One of the survivors, Dennis Readman, is VK2DUY/3354, and lives in Sydney.

There was another RN AB, Jim Prett, on board, and Jim happily is listed with the survivors ..... an extract from the history of the action is as follows:

"RN AB Jim Prett checked that all pistols on the depth-charges were set to "safe", if they were not the depth charges would explode when the ship sank and squeeze the intestines up through the mouths of those struggling in the water. Prett, a 32yr old Englishman, was quite experienced at being sunk. Only 10 months earlier he had been in the RN destroyer HMS ELECTRA when she was sunk by the Japanese off the north coast of Java. By sheer chance an American submarine surfaced that night near where Prett and a handful of other survivors were swimming. Instead of being eaten by sharks they found themselves on board the submarine eating eggs and prunes and drinking coffee. Earlier in the war Prett had been in ELECTRA when she lost her bows in a collision off the Norwegian coast and made it back to Britain steaming astern for 900km."

The records show that Jim Prett, then aged 81 in 1990, was living in Rochester, Kent. Doug, your letter is now in the ARMIDALE history section on board HMAS CASTLEMAINE.

Newport  
Shropshire

From Arthur G4OKL/2165

Cyril Malcolm in his article in the Spring NL "Six Years Under the Red Duster" makes reference to the obscurity surrounding the explosion in Bari in 1943. The following may clarify the matter.

Bari was at that time the main supply port for the advancing allied armies in Italy and as



such was a focus of attention for the Germans. On 19 December 1943, 105 Ju88 aircraft came in at 150 ft, pounding the port with high explosives.

The ferocity of this attack and the subsequent explosions, together with the absence of survivors inevitably resulted in a confused picture of events. It would appear however that of the early vessels hit were two Liberty ships, JOSEPH WHEELER and JOHN HARVEY, carrying 20,000 tons of ammunition which blew up. JOHN HARVEY, in addition, was carrying 100 tons of mustard gas that caused burns to survivors of ships who jumped into the water. TRENTBANK lying along side JOHN HARVEY, was ripped apart by the explosion. FORT ATHABASKA carried two 1000 lb German rocket bombs which were detonated by the heat, reducing that vessel to a shattered hulk.

LARS KRUSE and the Polish LWOW, as with most of the other ships in the harbour, had their upperworks blown away and also sank. The situation was further aggravated by burning petrol spilling from a tanker. Flames reached 1000 ft. A total of 16 ships and 1300 lives were lost.

I was at that time serving in FORT DEASE LAKE, ferrying armaments from Egypt to the occupied Italian ports. We arrived in Bari on 24 December and bodies were still being fished out of the water. The appearance at the port was of some gigantic scythe which had mown away the upperworks of the ships, masts, funnels ..... the lot.

Very little publicity has ever been given to this occurrence, possibly because of the embarrassment likely to be caused by drawing attention to the fact that some of the American ships carried mustard gas.

York

From Ron G4PZS/2760

The letter from Yus TA IAN/3839 in the Spring 93 NL brought back memories for me

.... In 1937 when I was a telegraphist on the destroyer HUNTER I had a run ashore with the Acting PO Tel (in Malta). At that time units of the Turkish Fleet were on a visit to Malta. The battleship TCG YAVUZ was the flagship and

there were also destroyers and submarines. I think it was in the pub Flagship in Floriana where we were having a drink when we got into conversation with two Turkish sailors from the YAVUZ. After a few bottles of Blue Label we swapped hats with the Turks. When we returned onboard the HUNTER with Turkish lettering and long ribbons hanging from our hats we were put on the First Lt's report. Next morning when we went before him he made us go in the ship's motorboat from Sliema Creek, where we were moored, right round to Grand Harbour to return the hats to the TCG YAVUZ. We went up the gangway and saluted the quarterdeck and the Admiral came on deck to see what was going on. We told the Officer of the Watch that we had come to return the two hats. He told us that the men had been punished but, as we could not see anyone hanging from the yardarm, we thought that we might yet save them. We told the Officer of the Watch that it was entirely our fault that we had swapped hats and that his sailors were innocent, so he indicated that the men would be let off.

When we returned to the HUNTER the 1st Lt asked how we had got on, so we told him that we had told the Turkish officer that it was our fault and that he'd let the men off. The 1st Lt said "...well I'll let you off but don't let it happen again". We never did get our hats back .....

*(I bet you'd forgotten about this next letter you sent Ron ..... Ed.)*

I remember some time ago someone was asking members for photographs for the News Letter.

So here goes, I took a picture of my setup and as anyone can see my needs are simple.

The Codar AT5 is a present from a very good RNARS friend of mine and the communication receiver a Star SR-500 (11 valves) covering 1.8, 3.5, 7, 14, 21, 28 & 50 MHz.

I've had it for 10 years but have never managed to get a circuit diagram or manual (*Can anyone help Ron with this information ? Ed.*)

The TEN-TEC CENTURY 22 is powered by a 13.8v 3A PSU (should be 5A) and the aerial a trap dipole slung slack between two trees.

What more could I want when this equipment gives me world wide communications ?

The candlestick is made of teak from HMS IRONDUKE, Admiral Jellicoe's flagship at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. I wasn't there (being only 2 years old at the time) but I've had many shipmates who were.

PET-HATES - People calling "TEST" on the band, I've always regarded spurious transmissions as taboo.



Potters Bar  
Herts

Wauchope  
NSW

From G3RZP/RSGB President

It has been represented to the Society that there is no adequate record of the parts played by radio amateurs during the Second World War, and that as so few of the participants are now left, it is time that a record of their endeavours be made. To this end, I am writing to ask if it is possible that an appeal be made to your members for information that they may have to be made available before it is too late.

..... Although the Society does not have, at present, the facilities for publishing this material, it is nevertheless a valuable historical record that it would be a pity to lose. If (your) members would care to commit their reminiscences to paper, the RSGB will attempt to coordinate this material such that a proper record of the deeds, achievements and sacrifices made by radio amateurs during those years may be made.

The Hon. Station Manager, John Crabbe, G3WFM acts as the RSGB's librarian, and will be happy to receive any relevant material.....

*(If anyone does have information please send it off to the RSGB, but don't forget to send me a copy first for the NL. Ed)*

From Dave VK2AYD/013

..... Just as a bit of blowing your own trumpet. Here in NSW we have a big Field Day, called the Gosford Field Day, which is very heavily attended once a year. Its like the meeting of the Clans .... the place to dispose of all your junk and purchase more junk for selling next year.

This year they had a Morse Test with a bottle of Champers for the best sending and best receiving. Guess who won BOTH ! I felt quite proud that amongst those thousands of amateurs there, it was an RNARS member that took the Bubbly home !! Now I'm somewhat reluctant to go on 7MHz with the CW Net, just in case I make a dit out of place .... ! (Yes it WAS with a pump handle key).

I'm currently putting up a Wilson System 3 yagi, so hopefully by the time the Commonwealth Contest arrives I should have a decent signal. I tried a 1000ft loop, but had all sorts of tuning problems with it due to the fences, so have had to take it down. I find vertical quad loops currently are the best, but unfortunately they are directional and the UK is NW from here and the USA NE !

Regards to all the gang back home.

*(Plus some rude comments for 'JFF' that*

would shock the rest of the readership ..... Ed).

Eastham  
Merseyside

From Frank G3YGL/1119

..... I'm a volunteer with the Warship Preservation Trust currently working on HMS PLYMOUTH, now based in Birkenhead. Currently trying to get the electronic systems back to life but I'm having difficulty in some areas because of a lack of information and/or BRs etc. Is there anyone in the RNARS who can help me ?

I have already managed to get the 177 & 170 Sonar, 1006 Radar, 6 Displays and the QM14 fully operational but now require to repair some faulty units and need circuit diagrams, I could reverse engineer the Units but it would take a vast amount of time. The BRs and/or circuits I need are:

994 ADK Aerial	BR2369
AMI/AMM Aerial Outfit	BR4213
Synthesiser	
(NSN 5820-99-539-9250)	BR2554
JUA Display	BR1156
JYA Display	BR1173
JUD Display	?
Echo Sounder Type 776	BR2236
FM16 MF/DF	BR2494
QM14 Decca Navigator	BRF4240

*(I presume Frank has a fiche reader Ed.)*

OMEGA Navigator	?
Sonar 177	BR2139
Sonar 2008	BR2805
Sonar 170?	
640 Tx	BR2328

(Anyone know where there are any PA

Units ?)

1202 Tx/Rx	BR8606
1203 System	?
994 Radar	BR8579
1006 Radar	BRF4200
Bearing Resolver Outfit PAB	BRF1146

If anyone has any information they think may be of use could they contact me, address details below:

Frank Smith,  
34 Bridle Road,  
Eastham,  
Wirral,  
Merseyside,  
L62 8BR.

Tel.(051) 327-6358 Home/(051) 966-2014.  
Work.

*(The sharper eyed members will have noticed that some of the above equipments shouldn't be on PLYMOUTH, right - Frank is also looking after HMS ONYX. I suggest you also try the HMS COLLINGWOOD Museum c/o Lt Cdr Bill Legge, CMU HMS COLLINGWOOD - but don't mention my name to him or it'll cost me a pint (or two)!! Ed.)*

(cont. on page 60)

## Obituary VK5CGB

### Lt Cdr George Burgess RANVR

George was the leader instrumental in drawing together South Australian RNARS members in 1987 and was elected Chairman of the VK5 Group at the meeting which established the present Committee and Constitution for the Group. As regular net controller for the Monday 80m SSB Net he was well known as an enthusiastic promoter for the RNARS and it was due in no small measure to his determined efforts and never ending enthusiasm that the Group has seen a steadily increasing membership. As the RNARS Australian Manager he was unstinting with his own time for the Society and made a major contribution towards maintaining and strengthening those close links that exist between the RNARS in VK & G.

We all extend our sympathies to George's XYL Sue and his family. He was our friend.  
Eric VK5AFN

# When A Ship Becomes An Island

By Ron Checketts G0FBA/1816

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After HMS MANXMAN's brief action in Madagascar the fast minelayer sailed for Trincomalee to prepare for our next mission. From a warehouse on the dockside came a collection of camouflage netting, bamboo poles, green foliage, rope and a whole tribe of cockroaches, all of which were embarked - along with an army camouflage officer. The ship then set sail for the Maldiv Islands and anchored off Addoo Atoll. The camouflage officer then explained to the ship's company that we were to practice changing the ship into an island. The ship then being divided into areas which were allocated among the various departments, the Communications Division became responsible for the Bridge and Foremast.

Exercises began at 0800 each day when the pipe "Man Camouflage Stations" was sounded, the response being the same as "Action Stations" when everyone hurried to their particular post and began the process of camouflaging the ship. Our section lashed branches and bamboo poles to the halyards and hauled them aloft to where the Buntings & Sparkers manning the yardarms received them, made them fast and spread green foliage about. At the same time bamboo poles were lowered over the side and green netting draped over them to alter the contour of the ship. To add to the scenery there was a canvas swimming bath on the quarter deck, with a live turtle in it!! When all was in place the next pipe was to "Down Camouflage" when the reverse procedure was carried out. This exercise was repeated throughout the day and each time the camouflage officer kept a stop watch note of the time. As the days passed, tempers became frayed, the cockroaches multiplied (much to the delight of

our resident shipcats) and prickly heat abounded. No air conditioning in those days plus the fact we still had to keep watch in the wireless office, which was way below decks - rig of the day being a pair of briefs and a towel, along with a jug of lime juice.

During all this activity I collected a lovely black eye when someone aloft failed to call "Below" when lowering a bamboo pole and I looked up just in time to receive the bottom end of the pole. At the end of a fortnight, after the camouflage officer seemed satisfied with our timing and efforts, the ship sailed away from the islands and anchoring offshore, rigged camouflage. Shortly afterwards a Catalina flew around the ship and took photographs of us, on completion we de-camouflaged, stowed the gear as neatly as possible on deck and returned to Trincomalee.

In Trincomalee the gear (and turtle) were offloaded into a warehouse, which was then finally sealed. The ship then sailed to Vizagapatam, Madras and Calcutta before her next task. The intention of the operation, so we were told later, was to load up with mines and sail fast at night, remain anchored as an island during the day before laying the mines at night off the Andaman Islands. Fortunately this operation was cancelled as the ship was required elsewhere in a hurry, next stop Malta .....

*(NB - for our concerned readers. The turtle went A WOL before the warehouse was sealed. Ed)*

# Secretarial Scrawl

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Summer is now upon us, with a lot of members attending their duties in the garden. Bands are very much up and down with activity at a low spot. Talking of activity, do not forget that your logs for the 92/93 activity period should reach Don G3HZL by end of August and that the new activity year starts 1st August 1993, lets have a new high in members taking part this year, remember, it is the taking part that counts and enjoying yourselves, not the winning.

On to a more delicate subject of subscriptions. The Committee have declared that anyone who has not paid their years subscription within three months of April, will NOT receive a NewsLetter. A person will not lose his or her membership, just not receive a NewsLetter and you will NOT be able to claim it retrospectively. This ruling also applies to all those who pay by Bankers Order and have NOT amended their order to the correct amount. Please be warned of these new rules that will apply in future. All money for the year has to be paid by 1st July each year. These instructions will be followed rigidly in 1994, for this year there have been some problems with the Post Office, in that some mail has not reached its destination in my area, if you have sent your subscriptions off this year and your NewsLetter is marked "Subs Owed", please get in touch with me giving details of when you sent the money. Disciplinary action against a member of the Post Office Staff within my postal area is being made.

Still with subscriptions but with the members who pay by Bankers Orders, it has now been deemed by the Bank, that all entries on a Bank Statement should be paid for at 75p per entry. All of you who although pay the correct amount of £7 but through two entries of £5 & £2, we get charged twice. It would be prudent if you could all check that just the one payment of £7 is made in future please. It is your money that we are trying to safeguard and there are 24 (R) 24 members who this affects.

As yet we have had no volunteers for the position of Secretary, I have indicated on more than one occasion that I will be vacating the position from the AGM 1994. I have also had to take on the responsibility of Membership Manager again, if anyone out there is interested in taking on this job, please let the Secretary know. If any members wish to volunteer their services for Committee, please let the Secretary know in plenty of time so the Committee have an idea of numbers before the Summer NewsLetter goes out for postal votes. Meetings take place every other month at the HQ station.

Will all German members please check that I have your new Post Codes correct, if there are any discrepancies or it has not been changed on your NewsLetter label, please write and let me know as soon as possible.

All members are reminded that if they wish to go and operate the new HQ station in HMS Collingwood at any time, the rules are exactly the same as were operated in in Mercury, you must ask the Shack Manager's permission, who will then make certain you will be able to enter the establishment. Please note the new Shack Manager is Dave Wilkes G4KLW, C/O Wardroom, HMS COLLINGWOOD, Fareham, Hants, PO14 1AS.

1994 is the 50th anniversary of the D-Day Landings, there will be a lot happening during the summer months next year, so please book your accommodation early if you are thinking of coming down to Portsmouth. There will also be quite a number of GB50DD calls being issued for all three services, we will try and keep you posted on the various nets when the RNARS are involved.

73, Mick Puttick G3LIK, Secretary RNARS.

# NEW MEMBERS

## (Since Spring Newsletter)

Ron	4033	G7OFMR	A Squires 19 Buckingham Avenue, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside, L63 3RB.
John	4034	GM7OBQ	J Quigley 90 George Street, Paisley, PA1 2JR.
Phil	4035	G7OIUP	J Carvell 37 St Georges Road, Hastings, E Sussex, TN34 3NH.
Thayer	4036	N3TM	T K Miller 129 Old Little Creek Road, Harmony, PA 16037, U.S.A.
Frank	4037	G4NHCH	F Armstrong 52 Leicester Way, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear, NE32 4XL.
Nick	4038	G7DND	N Read 25 Childshill Road, Bookham, Surrey, KT23 3QF.
Club	4039	GOTON	HMS BRONINGTON c/o 13 Primrose Avenue, Urmston, Manchester, M31 1TY.
Peter	4040	G7GCF	P E Kell 56a Central Parade, New Addington, Surrey, CR0 0JL.
Ron	4041	G0ROE	R W Swann 3 Lawrence Road, Ham, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 7LR.
Brian	4042	AA6NM	B D Coyne G3DCC, 763 Slater Avenue, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523, U.S.A.
Dave	4043	G3UNA	D J Cutter 440 Fielden Road, Ruislip, Middx, HA4 9PD.
Dick	4044	G0TBU	R Brightwell 11 The Crescent, Eythorne, Dover, Kent, CT15 4BB.
Tom	4045	G7BLK	T H Dicks 4 Nicholad Drive, Reydon, Southwold, Suffolk, IP18 6RE.
John	4046	GM0PQV	J Maguire 64 High Street, Loanhead, Mid Lothian, EH20 9RR.
Bob	4047	VE3NMO	R W Grant 313 Eureka Street, Petrolia, Ontario, Canada, N0N 1R0.
Walt	4048	G7MBN	W Spencer 111 Rosmead Street, Newbridge Road, Hull, HU9 2TR.
Ian	4049	G0TAW	I Patrick 22 Hartland Road, Bridglington, North Humberside, YO16 5RB.
Shirley	4050	G0TBC	Miss S Lawson 27 Broadlands Avenue, Boyatt Wood, Eastleigh, Hants, SO5 4PP.
Harry	4051	GM0TFQ	H R Wignall 7 Windy Edge, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 9WJ.
Arthur	4052	2E0AEM	A Faulkner 6 Mewsey Court, Leigh Park, Havant, Hants, PO9 4EH.
Adrian	4053	GM0SRD	R A J Donaldson, 49 Arkaig Drive, Crossford, Dunfermline, Fife, KY12 8YW.
Al	4054	DL1SV	A Heinrichs An Der Warthe 18, 38271 Baddeckenstedt, Germany.
Chris	4055	ZD8X	C G Salmon CSO, BFPO 677, London.
Peter	4056	G4RAV	P R Evans 7 Pound Close, Harleston, Norfolk, IP20 9HF.
Vernon	4057	G0IGB	V Elliott 22 Kirkstead Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire, SK8 7PZ.
Stu	4058	W2LX	S D Cowan 22 Pinehill Road, Henniker, NH 03242, U.S.A.
Jim	4059	GM3DKW	J Hossack 25 Kilruskin Drive, West Kilbride, Ayrshire, KA23 9JA.
Joe	4060	N3PMT	J Lovejoy 545 Bruce Avenue, Odenton, MD 21113, USA
Tom	4061	G4YWC	T A F Stuttard 22 Taranis Close, Wavendon Gate, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK7 7SJ.
Tony	4062	G0RLX	R A Cope 75 Butterworth House, Mill Street, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 4PP.
David	4063	GW0OPY	D Griffith Craig Arthro, Llanbedr, Gwynedd, LL45 2LU
Dave	4064	G7NVS	D M Poulton 31 Gray Crescent, St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 1DA.
Dave	4065	G3NOP	D J Peacock Robin Hill, 62 Castle Road, Cottingham, North Yorks, HU16 5JG.
Jon	4066	G0FJT	J Hanson 104 Allington Close, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 2NF.
Norman	4067	G7OJH	N Wood 46 Kingsway West, Westlands, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 3PU.
Alan	4068	G7NSM	A J Bull 21 Holland Avenue, Cheam, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 6HW.
Phil	4069	G3LCF	P C Baldwin PO Box 261, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5FG.
Geoff	4070	SWL	G Reddecliffe 5 Stanley Close, Beach Estate, Dymchurch, Kent, TN29 0TY.
John	4071	SWL	W J Black 34 Riding Lane, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9HY.
Kevin	4072	SWL	K Read 15 Hagrlaxton Close, Eastleigh, Hants, SO5 4QX.
Duncan	4073	G0RJT	Rev H D Leak 15 Sutherland Road, Tittensor, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, ST12 9JQ.
Gordon	4074	KB6SAD	W G Hurd 17, 1010 Palm Canyon Drive, PO Box 783, Borrego Springs, CA 92004, U.S.A.
Bill	4075	G8TTU	C Smithson 4 Calder Avenue, Littleborough, Lancs, OL15 9JG.
Alan	4076	G8AZT	J A Jones 9 Queens Walk, Thornbury, Nr Bristol, Avon, BS12 1SR.
Maurice	4077	G1AMR	M Webb PO Box 52, Leiv Eiriksson Center Inc, 1180 S America Way, Miami, FL 33132, USA

# CHANGES

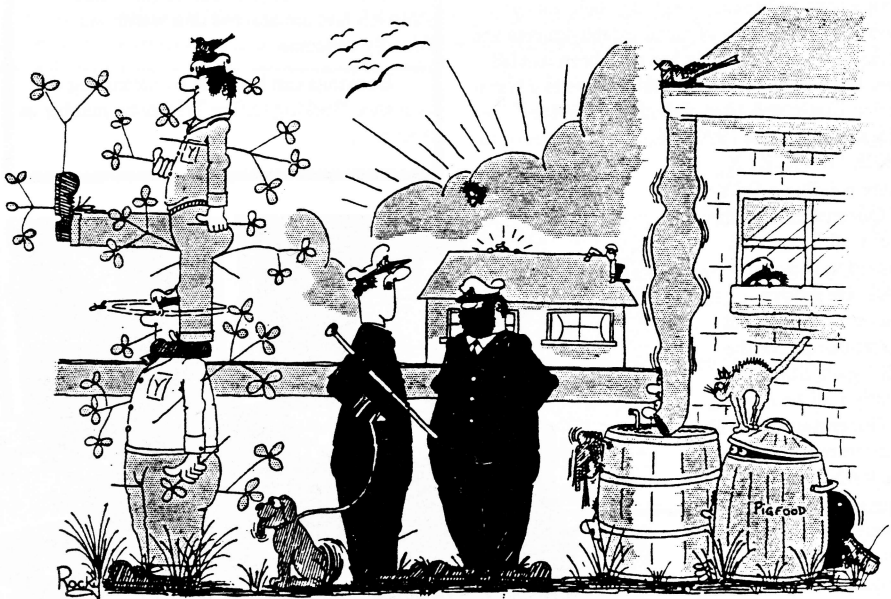
## (Since Spring Newsletter)

Ellis	0064	G3LSD	E Diggle Silent Key.
Ray	0081	SWL	R Briggs 25 Barley Croft, Cheadle, Staffs, ST10 1NA. (rejoin)
Phill	0193	G3LPN	P Hunt 19 Houlton Court, Connaught Park, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5QQ.
Val	0590	ZL2AJ	V Parminter 70 Rotherham Terrace, Miramar, Wellington 6003, New Zealand.
Harry	0647	G3XOM	H J Manning Silent Key.
Jeff	0651	ZS6FLX	J Wright PO Box 3353, Halfway House 1685, Republic of South Africa.
Ian	0748	G3XIR	Cdr I B Deane RN, 60 London Road, Calne, Wilts, SN11 0AE.
Dick	0756	WB4YZU	R C Barnes 4 Westmont Drive, Hampton, VA 23666, USA.
Peter	0768	G4DLN	P Bradley Silent Key.
Alf	0812	G3PJA	Cdr A Kennedy MBE RN, Add title.
Robin	0821	G3ZYE	R Bellerby The Abbey College, 263 Wells Road, Malvern Wells, Worcs, WR14 4JF.
Alan	0971	G4FUB	A D Frost 2 Rowley Furrows, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Beds, LU7 7SR.
Ray	1006	GI4HMI	R McCormack 17 Blackmountainway, Ballygomartin Road, Belfast, BT13 3UA.
Bob	1039	SWL	R McPhee 281 Runley Road, Luton, Beds, LU1 1TY.
Richard	1068	G8LVB	R J Hook BEM 8 Chalk Pit Road, Paulsgrove, Portsmouth, Hants, PO6 4EX.
Graham	1109	GM0IMH	C G D Taylor 10 East Lennox Drive, Helensburgh, Strathclyde, G84 9DG.
Jack	1132	G3KQF	J Anthony Post code DE23 6GT.
John	1383	VK2KRQ	J Lefevre Resigned.
David	1396	ZL2JK	D B Butler Simms Road, Rural Delivery, Te Horo, New Zealand.
Ken	1412	G4KDG	K Bartells 11 Stirrup Way, Poundhill, Nr Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 4RH. (rejoin)
Bill	1435	G3FGD	W J Mordue 48 Quarr Lane Park, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 4JB.
Hugh	1453	G4SCCH	J O'Connor - Delete, moved QTH no forwarding address.
Ray	1480	G0TRJ	R Makepeace Was G8VVI.
Barrie	1485	GW4KFD	B Wilson Hillcrest, Llansteffan, Dyfed, SA33 5JZ.
John	1490	VK2GJK	J Kenward Resigned.
Manny	1548	DK8LW	M Sievers Post code 53474 Ahrweiler, Germany.
Ellery	1593	ZL2WR	E S Whitehead First name correction.
Colin	1681	EA5/G4KLD	C J Dewhurst, 89 Moraira Park, 03724 Moraira, Alecante, Spain.
Alan	1696	G5WA	A Barber Silent Key.
Sid	1713	VK4CST	S T Clark Callsign change.
Austin	1718	G4KRZ	A C Geer Resigned.
Ken	1822	VK2WE	K W P Matthews, 9 Avenue of the Allies, Tanilba Bay, NSW 2301, Australia.
Kevin	1843	SWL	K R Hickin Delete, moved QTH no forwarding address.
Ed	1853	VE3FE	E R Bustin 11-208 Littledown Lane, North Bay, Ontario, Canada, P1B 8G2.
Alun	1855	G4POW	A Owen 60 Brighton Avenue, Gosport, Hants, PO12 4BX. (rejoin)
Chippy	1920	G4TIR	J N Ayers 49 Burton Road, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 4JE.
Horst	1941	DJ2HN	H Werner Post code 47929 Grefrath 2, Germany.
Club	1942	DL0MF	MF-Runde Post code 47929 Grefrath 2, Germany.
Bob	2004	WS1J	R Rinaldi 23 Grimes Lane, Simsbury, Conn 06070, USA.
Stan	2049	GD3LSF	S Ellis Ballahams, 43 Governors Hill, Douglas, Isle of Man.
Dick	2062	SWL	R Bridge Silent Key.
Vince	2080	GW4MOK	V Cashmore 12 Bretton Drive, Broughton, Cheshter, Clwyd, CH4 0RS. (rejoin)
Chris	2112	G7OGX	C J Inwood Was SWL.
Mike	2150	G6GVO	M J Pearce Block 401, #16-01 Pandan Gardens, Singapore 2260.
Heinz	2155	DK9HH	H Pittlick Post code 22147 Harnburg 73, Germany.
Scott	2184	VE7FKK	S Bryson Amend ZIP code V4W 3K2.
Derek	2187	G4UJQ	D Gardiner Silent Key.
Terry	2198	SWL	T J Brown 3 Tornton Crescent, Henbury, Bristol, Avon, BS10 2JN.
John	2232	G4TKO	J Sharmar 1 Trent Grove, Dronfield, Sheffield, South Yorks, SY18 6PP.
Jim	2253	G4LZB	J Pugh Silent Key.
Graham	2283	5B4LZ	G N Hut PO Box 561, PMB 6156, ICC, Gibraltar.



Eric	2289	GM6UNQ	E Leask 212 Craigcrook Road, Edinburgh, EH4 7BA.
Malcolm	2295	G8RWN	M McKenzie 9 Broomhouse Close, Denbydale, Huddersfield, HD8 8UX.
Eddie	2318	GJ4TAF	E Lloyd-Jones, Silent Key.
Ron	2343	DL8BE	R Mayer Post code 66386 St Ingbert, Germany.
John	2397	VK2GQQ	J Mouritsen Resigned.
Dierk	2402	DL8LD	D Vomheim Post code 25797 Woerhden, Germany.
Al	2422	WA1UFW	A Russ 149 East Side Drive, 220 Concord, NH 03301, U.S.A.
John	2468	G4ZQD	J Harner 24 Horsepool Road, Connor Downs, Hayle, Cornwall, TR27 5DZ.
Fred	2480	DL3TB	F Laugner Post code 25761 Busum, Germany.
Willy	2481	DL6TB	W Goldberg Agnes-Miegelstr 15, 46242 Bottrop, Germany.
Heinz	2482	DL1GE	H Pfeiffer Post code 25524 Itzehoe, Germany.
Helmut	2483	DL8JE	H Gerasch Post code 25358 Horst, Germany.
Juergen	2484	DL2YAG	J Eisinga Post code 46240 Bottrop, Germany.
Peter	2485	DL9SJ	P Braun Post code 53757 St Augustin, Germany.
Shelagh	2507	G4UUH	Ms S Rogers 4 Brookside Close, Yelvertoft, Northants, NN6 7LP.
Hans	2508	DK4VQ	H Weiss Post Code 24991 Gross-Solt, Germany.
Tony	2512	G4HYD	A Oakley Oakhaven, 26 Cartwright Lane, Beverley, North Humberside, HU17 8NA.
Anne	2519	GM0TLX	Mrs A O Wright, Was GM6WPA.
John	2561	DK4LU	J Haessler Post code 24941 Jarplund-Wedi, Germany.
Heinz	2578	DL3IM	H Diffrich Post code 58566 Kierspe 2, Germany.
Hans	2579	DL1EBU	H Henssen Post code 41239 Moenchengladbach, Germany
Gustav	2581	DL6FBQ	G Michalik Post code 31105 Bad Salzuflen, Germany.
Brian	2587	G3ZUPJ	B Jobling Resigned.
Don	2588	G4ZGA	D V Chaney 51 Third Avenue, Denvilles, Havant, Hants, PO9 2QR.
Gerhard	2596	DL9XQ	G Walkenhorst, Post code 44269 Dortmund 30, Germany.
Ernst	2609	DJ3GK	E Hartmann Post code 63571 Gelnhausen 1, Germany.
Ray	2638	DK5VC	R Schulz Post code 66740 Saar Louise 8, Germany.
Norman	2641	VE7KY	N A McCloud Silent Key.
Syd	2642	G4PVJ	S Roberts 7 Haysome Close, Crank, Rainford, St Helens, Merseyside, WA11 7SA.
Roger	2644	G3CHN	R V Thom Silent Key.
Klaus	2657	DL1JE	K Klitzke Post code now D-42859.
George	2658	VK5CGB	G Burgess Silent Key.
Joe	2704	G2PK	J C H Ellison, 6 Stanage Close, Long Meadow, Worcester WR4 0HQ.
Al	2708	FE1JUD	A G Krulls Callsign correction.
Horst	2709	DL2GBH	H Sauter Post code 88069 Tettngang/Burger, Germany.
Kurt	2710	DJ3YU	K Fritsch Post code 88069 Frankfurt-Mai, Germany.
Sylwyn	2722	GW4XLK	S Meredith 5 Woodfield Road, Llandybie, Anrnanford, Dyfed, SA18 3UR.
Arnold	2755	G0KVV	A Clark Silent Key.
Mike	2804	SWL	M J Meehan 21 Elms Avenue, Muswell Hill, London N10 2JN.
Colin	2810	G1NJQ	C D Stevens 3 Green Crescent, Rowner, Gosport, Hants, PO13 0DL.
Charles	2829	G0ECQ	C W Quinnin 58 Osprey Drive, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 3QS.
Bill	2914	GW4ZUO	W E Evans Silent Key.
Reg	2955	G0GIA	R A Keeley-Osgood, 35 Norse Walk, Corby, Northants, NN18 9DG.
Hans	2927	DL1ZQ	H Dreyer Post Code now D-22523.
Tex	2985	G0FHP	J F Linehan 11 South Crescent, Ripon, Yorks, HG4 1SW.
Eric	3003	G0GAL	E Howells 3 Ceely House, Ceely Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 8GY.
Ossi	3019	DL3JV	O Koehler Post code 63322 Roedermark 2, Germany.
Eric	3020	DJ1PV	E Salewski Post code 24148 Kiel, Germany.
John	3025	GM1TGS	J Cooper Callsign correction.
Steve	3047	G4HNW	S J Walls BEM, 14 Copperfield Close, Malton, N Yorks YO17 0YN.
Dave	3059	G1SYZ	D E Setterfield, 3 Waldon Close, Hillcrest View, Plympton, Devon, PL7 3ZA.
Dick	3074	VK2RM	D G F Mweerstadt, Silent Key.
John	3154	OZ7JR	J Raaschov Resigned.
Hans	3156	DL3BK	H Scholz Finkenweg 3, 72649 Wolfschlugen, Germany.
Walter	3203	SWL	W F Smart Silent Key.
Brian	3218	G14BTG	H W B Davidson, 106 Tudor Park, Mallusk, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, BT36 8PT.
Helmut	3257	DL2SBR	H Finze Post code 71706 Markgroningen, Germany.
Club	3262	G3VRE	Chippenham ARS, 1 Lime Road, North Coleme, Chippenham, Wilts, SN14 8PT.
Wolf	3328	DJ7AC	W Isensee Post code 71032 Boeblingen, Germany.
Al	3346	DL3AR	A Stirba Post code 91058 Erlangen, Germany.

Jack	3392	G6BVU	J H Sharpes Silent Key.
Wolf	3419	DL3ZBJ	W Koehler Post code 64673 Zwingenberg, Germany.
Jerry	3420	DA2RI	J Richter Alte Strasse 85, 66892 Bruchmühlbach, Germany.
Paul	3427	F9KP	P Levy 32 Rue Du Tire Pesseaux, 21000 Dijon, France.
Ewald	3453	DJ2ZB	E Schneider Post code 55278 Kongenheim, Germany.
Mike	3455	GM0HCQ	M E P Gloisteir, Rose Cottage, Kinlochleven, Argyl, PA40 4RE.
Bob	3484	VO1BJ	R Janes Was VO1LR.
John	3508	SWL	J J Bonar 30 Wolfe Close, Stanmore, Winchester, Hants,
Eric	3641	SWL	E Bansall-Allen, 44 Tweed Street, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1NG.
Harold	3695	DL5XI	H Joormann Post code 46562 Voerde, Germany.
Stan	3700	G3OXC	S Crabtree Silent Key.
Steve	3730	VK4LY	S J Bloxham Was VK4SJB.
Emst	3783	D17VHU	H Urban Muggelseedam 133, 12587 Berlin-Friedrichshage, Germany.
Dave	3785	VK1DL	D B Lyddieth (Was VK1AR) 19/38 Ebenezer Street, Bonython, ACT 2905, Australia.
Jack	3895	VK4AUD	J F Warts Was VK4MCI.
Jochen	3797	DJ7JF	J Trudgen Post code 26384 Wilhelmshaven, Germany.
David	3830	SWL	D Taylor Resigned.
David	3838	G4OPF	D Hambleton Silent Key.
Mike	3848	DG1JL	M Grehl Post code 42549 Velbert 1, Germany.
Ted	3867	W3TB	Lt Cdr T W Edwards CHC USN, Office of the Group Chaplain, 2d FSSG FMF LANT, Camp LeJeune, NC 28542-5701, U.S.A.
Steve	3925	G0TJE	S R Sullivan 7 Gosfield Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 1JY
David	3931	G7KTB	D Keen 42 Harrison Close, Northwood, Middx, HA6 2PN.
Jill	3958	SWL	Mrs J Wam 63 Byron Road, Harrow Weald, Harrow, Middx, HA1 1JT.
Club	3977	VE3CGJ	HMCS HAIDA c/o A Cronin, 1185 Saturnia Crescent, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, L4Y 2M2.
Derek	4006	VK2KDH	D A Holyoake Was VK2XDH.
Willy	4019	DG2LAQ	W Raeth Post code 25821 Bredstedt, Germany.
Colin	4021	G0AML	C Steward Silent Key.



"Any spare hands, Buffer?"

# Profile

Steve VK2SJB/3730

Steve - who is one of the VK2 serving members - joined the RAN at the tender age of 15 1/2, in April 1972, as a Junior Recruit at HMAS LEEUWIN in Perth. He was posted as an OS to HMAS BRISBANE after 12 months and later still to HMAS WATSON to undertake the Under Water Control Course (SONAR). After sea duty in HMAS HOBART & BRISBANE Steve was posted to HMAS HARMAN (Communications depot in Canberra) and that's where his first taste of the communications bug started! He became president of the then newly formed radio club (CB). A couple of years later saw him at HMAS KUTTABUL for a Naval Police course.

Since January 1981 he has been in the Naval Police but in those years there have been many changes. The Naval Police and Cox'n (Regulators) were amalgamated and the Naval Police now go to sea, previously their duties involved the security of naval establishments and dockyards only - but this has now been handed over to civilian security firms!!! Steve is a Naval Police Cox'n and after obtaining a Novice License in August 1990 (VK2NPC) upgraded to VK2KTI. VK4KFX came pending a QSY to Queensland and the Full Call Exam was passed in October 1992. He enjoys Packet and ATV but unfortunately for the VK2 gang Steve and family will be moving to Queensland in 1993 prior to retiring from the RAN, he'll then be able to use all that lovely spare time to get on the RNARS frequencies ..... if XYL Debbie lets him !!!!!!!!!

## AUTUMN BREAKS.

ROYAL SAILORS HOME CLUB, QUEEN STREET, PORTSMOUTH, PO1 3HS. TEL 0705 837681

4 OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 1993.

Offer any three nights (must include a Tuesday).

Bed & Breakfast, 3 course Dinner and use of the Leisure Centre & Pool.

Cost:- £49-50 per person sharing a double/twin en-suite.

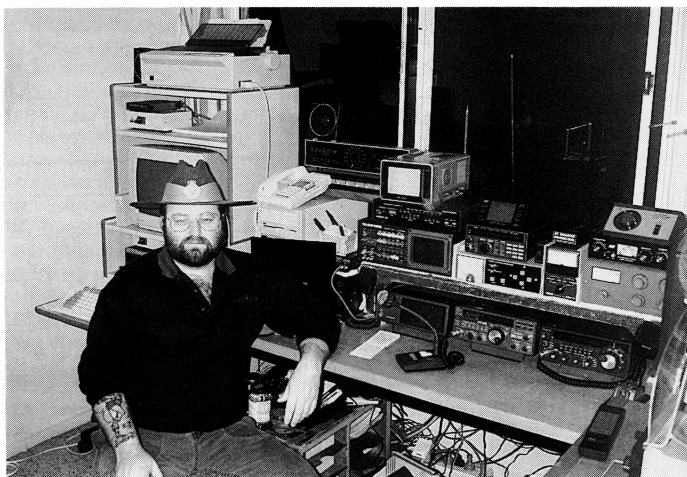
£39-50 per person sharing a double/twin room with H & C.

£46-00 for single room with shower & toilet en-suite.

Why not plan your visit to Portsmouth and take advantage of the mid-week break.

All serving and ex serving members plus Association Country members (of which RNARS are) are assured of a warm and friendly welcome.

Bookings can be made by contacting the Advance Booking Office Telephone number as above.



## CLIFF'S MOBILE RALLY LAMENT?

Use the willing led by the unknowing who are doing the impossible for the ungrateful.

We have done so much with so little for so long we are now qualified to do anything with nothing.

## WHOSE JOB?

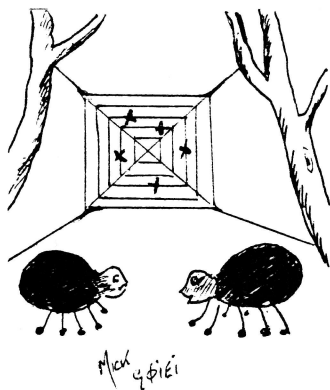
This is the story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done!

*(Sorry for this, the Hon. Sec. must have been at the magic mushrooms ..... again ! Ed.)*

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I find the Quad gives me far more gain  
than the old conventional type !

## MEMORIES OF THE OLD HMS COLLINGWOOD

First World War veteran Bert Membry took a trip down memory lane when his son arranged a visit to the namesake of a ship he had served on.

Bert, 93, of Berkeley Road, Wroughton, had volunteered as a Marine and served aboard HMS COLLINGWOOD until about 1925.

The ship was scrapped in 1927 but there is now an HMS COLLINGWOOD shore base at Fareham. Ron Membry, who lives with his parents and wife Muriel, arranged for Bert to have a visit.

"I was in Portsmouth and just happened to see it," said Ron, 64, who runs a carpet shop in Gorse Hill, Swindon.

"I rang them on the off chance to see if we could bring him down and they said they hadn't heard of anybody still alive who was on the original ship and were delighted to see him."

Ron, Muriel, 65, Bert and his wife Elsie, 90, were treated to lunch in the Officers Wardroom.

Then Bert was taken to the parade ground where the sailors gave him three cheers.

"I saw my mum had tears in here eyes. She got quite emotional," said Ron.

Bert, who is 94 in September, said he had enjoyed his day.

"It was a lovely surprise. I was one of the last to serve on the HMS COLLINGWOOD," he said.

(Acknowledgement from the Swindon Evening Advertiser.)

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## CW Forever

You must have, at times, thought into the past,  
Where some things go out, while others last,  
What comes to my mind is the Old Morse Code,  
That has weathered the storms from many abode.

To talk with ones fingers is surely an art,  
Of any info you care to impart,  
In most conditions the signals get through,  
While the same about phone is simply not true.

Those dits and dahs cut through the trash,  
Of nearby noise or lightning's crash,  
To the sensitive ears of the ham receiver,  
Who records this data with ardent fever.

He knows he's doing something unique,  
(in such poor conditions, that's quite a feat!!)  
To Roger the messages that came off the air,  
These brass pounders sure do have that flair.

They say Morse ops are a dying breed,  
But don't despair, there's alway that need,  
That when conditions get rough for the new automation,  
Be rest assured, there'll be a need for your station.

CW is dying ? believe it never,  
This mode will be 'round forever and ever,  
But one thing is sure, what we really need,  
Is to relay our knowledge to the younger breed.

To carry the torch, long after we're gone,  
To send Morse Code through the air like a song,  
When at last, Silent Keys pull that final lever,  
We can rest in peace, it's CW forever.

WA1TBY via G0JCY

RNARS ACTIVITY CONTEST RESULTS 1992.

CW.

1. G3LIK	MICK	0004	558720	24. OZ1FJB	LARS	2087	154850
2. GM4SID	SID	1629	519800	25. ON6WR	ROGER	1282	101550
3. G4SFO	NORMAN	2203	504400	26. GM3KPD	ALF	0452	98770
4. GB3RN	MIKE	0001	481500	27. G4KLF	TONY	3246	97300
5. I4YTE	URBANO	3093	404040	28. VK2CWS	CASEY	3385	93440
6. LA2JE	BOB	3768	354890	29. G0KKG	JIM	3485	85350
7. G4LZB	JIM	2253	326760	30. G4PTE	KEN	2008	80780
8. DL3ZBJ	WOLF	3419	324300	31. F5YG	JEAN	3948	74000
9. G3LCS	DES	0038	312340	32. G4RBE	JACK	2390	65340
10. CR3RN	BARRIE	2462	289740	33. VK2AYD	DAVE	0013	64440
11. G3AWR	CHRIS	1195	269060	34. G0RIJ	BRIAN	3723	62800
12. GW3IVX	GEOFF	0242	265650	35. KJ1T	MILT	1928	52800
13. G0KCI	BRIAN	3395	257010	36. W3PLI	GEORGE	1176	48070
14. GW3JI	BOB	0101	238860	37. G3WP	JACK	0236	42240
15. OE6PN	KARL	1243	195900	38. G4VHM	MIKE	N.M.	38560
16. G0JCY	JAN	3426	187110	39. VK2CGA	GERY	3015	31590
17. VK2ALG	TERRY	1196	181830	40. G0SCY	BILL	3780	22000
18. SM6JSS	BENGT	1461	180880	41. IT9PLM	GIO	1117	21140
19. G0BLE	FRED	2549	173910	42. VK3QU	MARGARET	1423	20790
20. G0MBQ	SYD	3407	170280	43. VK3RAN	FRANK	0010	11900
21. GM4CXM	RAY	0877	169200	44. VK4CY	JON	1580	5050
22. LA1IE	OTTO	2072	164700	45. OE8NIK	NIK	N.M.	1860
23. G0DID	ANNA	2917	162000				

SWL CW.

1. P RANDLOV	3675	264200
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Many thanks to all who took part, look forward to an even greater number in 1993.

73 De Ray GM4CXM.

SSB.

1. GB3RN	TOM	0001	295200	13. W4/GU0ALD	OWEN	2868	63830
2. GW0JXW	BRIAN	3369	281520	14. G4PTE	KEN	2008	62160
3. G3LIK	MICK	0004	262990	15. IT9PLM	GIO	1117	52360
4. GB4RM	HARRY	3281	180900	16. EA7HBY	JIM	3913	44110
5. PA3EKD	KEES	3825	136328	17. DL3ZBJ	WOLF	3419	37400
6. GM4SID	SID	1629	130480	18. G4RTR	IVOR	2939	24200
7. EA7HAL	GREG	3831	128358	19. G0RIJ	BRIAN	3723	19000
8. CR3RN	BARRIE	2462	121760	20. G4JLW	WALLY	1077	14520
9. LA1IE	OTTO	2072	102200	21. OZ1FJB	LARS	2087	10290
10. G0DID	ANNA	2917	92400	22. W3PLI	GEORGE	1176	9800
11. GW3IVX	GEOFF	0242	87620	23. G14CUV	NORMAN	2405	8400
12. G0RNO	DIANA	3926	72930	24. G0SCY	BILL	3780	1600

CHECK LOG:- VK2ALG 1196

Unfortunately I was unable to take part this year, but there were more contestants than last year. The main criticism was the lack of multipliers, so perhaps we can somehow encourage more of our Overseas members to take part.

73 De Butch G0C8Y

# OPERATION FLOODTIDE.

## HOW UK RADIO AMATEURS HELPED DURING THE GREAT FLOODS OF 1953.

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Thursday, January 29th, 1953, was like a spring day in Grimsby, with the sun high in a blue sky. It really looked as if winter was over. But how soon all this was to change! By the Saturday morning, a strong wind, rising to gale force in a few hours, was beginning to cause concern. By teatime, radio amateurs reading their evening papers, after seeing that their aerials were still in position and the guy wires slackened, were shocked to read of the disaster which had befallen the PRINCESS VICTORIA in the Irish Sea.

### Ships in Distress

On the Lincolnshire coast, thoughts naturally turned to the men at sea, and receiver dials were run across 160m and the shipping band. R H Collins G3AXS, whose work is on ship radio installations, was one of those on silent watch. At about 1840 GMT, he was listening to Humber Radio in contact with the SS LEVENWOOD. The ship required the aid of tugs and urgent medical advice for the First Officer who was ill. Humber Radio acknowledged this request and then called North Foreland asking that station to listen on 164m. G3AXS realising that something was wrong, tuned to 1825 khz just in time to hear Humber ask North Foreland to deal with the message as his land lines were down. Then silence! It seemed obvious that Humber Radio had closed down involuntarily, so G3AXS telephoned Mablethorpe Exchange and asked them if they knew that the land lines to the station were down. They did not, and thanked him for the information. The question now arose: what was going to happen to the SS LEVENWOOD which

was still frantically calling Humber Radio but getting no reply? After some hesitation, G3AXS rather nervously tuned his "Top Band" transmitter to 1650 KHz, called the LEVENWOOD and asked if there was anything he could do to help. When the LEVENWOOD gratefully replied, G3AXS told the operators to listen on 1735 khz, to which frequency he returned his own transmitter. He then telephoned the Grimsby and District General Hospital, obtained the necessary advice, and passed it on to the Master of the Levenwood. After this, he arranged for a tug to go to the assistance of the vessel, and reported to the Master that this had been done. He then said he would stand by on "Top Band" for any further distress traffic. An hour later, the Master of the LEVENWOOD reported that the tug was no longer required, as the ship was again under control. G3AXS was, however, asked to remain on watch for him. At about midnight, the Master informed G3AXS that the First Officer was comfortable, but asked for the listening watch to be kept on for a little longer.

Grimsby amateurs quickly realised that the situation locally would become serious for Humber ports shipping with Humber Radio out of action. Already the MV MENAPIA, which had broken adrift from, and could not establish radio contact with the tug which was towing her off Flamborough Head, was in difficulties. G3AXS promptly telephoned the owners of the tug and also informed Cullercoats Radio of what had happened. The Master of the LEVENWOOD having reported that he could manage for the time being, G3AXS decided to snatch a few hour's sleep.

### Lightship Adrift.

Early on Sunday morning, G3AXS checked to see if Humber Radio was on the air again. Alas, there was no signals from that station. Then came news that the Humber Light Vessel had broken adrift and was running before the gale with the SS MELROSE ABBEY desperately trying to render assistance and to contact Humber Radio. G3AXS put in a call to Humber Radio only to discover that all communications between Grimsby and Mablethorpe had broken down. He therefore telephoned the Humber Conservancy Board at Hull and informed them of the plight of the Humber Light Vessel. The Board asked G3AXS for the position of the vessel, at the same time telling him that they had already instructed their ship to go to the assistance of the lightship. G3AXS called the SS MELROSE ABBEY and obtained the required information which he passed to the Board. The Master of the MELROSE ABBEY asked G3AXS to stand by. At about the same time an unknown vessel was heard giving the information that the "Red Cliff Buoy" was floating rapidly down river. Humber Conservancy Board were informed of this by telephone and they requested that any further information about the Buoy should be passed on to them. The Board asked G3AXS to request the MELROSE ABBY to pass on to all shipping the new position of the Humber Light Vessel.

At about 1100 GMT the Grimsby steam trawler BOMBARDIER was heard calling Humber Radio for the assistance of a tug. Her steering gear was out of action and the trawler was drifting although trying to anchor to rig emergency steering. The tug owners were informed of this mishap by land line.

A little later the LEVENWOOD reported that the First Officer was now out of immediate danger and that the ship was safe.

The MV MENAPIA was, however, still in distress and drifting. The tug which had been despatched to her aid had been diverted to help another ship which was in an even worse plight. The Humber Light Vessel had by now made good anchorage and the MELROSE ABBEY therefore proceeded on her course. Listening watch was then kept on the BOMBARDIER. Although she was in a critical condition it was

realised that nothing further could be done for the moment.

### Ship's Aerial Faulty.

By mid-afternoon the MENAPIA was reported to be in dire distress and required urgent assistance. The tug owners, who were informed by telephone, immediately despatched another tug to the assistance of the crippled vessel. Meanwhile, the MENAPIA was trying without success, to give her position to North Foreland Radio, but owing to an aerial fault on the ship the transmission could not be heard by that station. North Foreland were thereupon informed by land line and expressed gratitude for the information.

North Foreland informed shipping of the position of the MV MENAPIA, but because of the aerial fault and the amount of other traffic on the distress channel, she could not be received properly and continued to call for assistance. A tug in the vicinity of the MENAPIA was therefore called by G3AXS and asked to pass on the fact that assistance was on the way. Dutch distress traffic was now to be heard although locally things seemed to be rather more organised. The ST BOMBARDIER, with the aid of emergency steering gear, had managed to reach safe anchorage in the Humber and was waiting for a tug to assist her to negotiate the congested shipping channels which were full of vessels sheltering from the gales. The BOMBARDIER asked that a listening watch should be maintained on her until the tug arrived. The tug reached the vessel about 2300 GMT.

### No Contact with Mablethorpe.

While all this was going on, Grimsby amateurs tried to establish contact with their colleagues in the Mablethorpe area. Calls were sent out for three hours, but no contact could be established. The writer therefore got together some portable equipment so that it would be ready to take anywhere should it be necessary, but none of the Grimsby amateurs was approached by the Authorities.

### Another Distress Call.

This was thought to be the end of the emergency, but on Monday evening at 2100 GMT the MFV RODA, another local fishing



vessel, was heard calling Humber Radio for help, as she had run aground due to the Humber Light Vessel being out of her proper position - a fact the skipper did not know because Humber Radio was off the air. After the RODA had called for 45 minutes, during which time no Government radio station had replied to the distress call, G3AXS established contact on 1825 KHz. The police were informed and they dealt with the lifeboat arrangements. In the meantime the tide had receded and left the RODA high and dry so that the Coastguard was able to walk out and board her. He then called G3AXS and asked him to pass on the information by land line. A stand by watch was maintained until news was received that help was no longer required.

The RODA emergency was much simpler to handle, because by then local amateurs had their own hastily-set-up distress system organised and had made arrangements with the Hull RSGB Group which made it possible for the two groups to handle practically any situation which might arise.

The tailpiece to this story is that it seems to be a habit with G3AXS to be in this sort of thing, for he helped during the Hawaiian disaster in 1946, when under the call sign VS6DY, he provided, in association with K6ROJ (Ella and Paul Christianson), the only means of communication with the outside world from the Island of Oahu.

Reg Collins G3AXS is RNARS member 3887 and was a Chief Petty Officer Telegraphist in the Royal Navy during WW2.

*(This was an article that appeared in the March 1953 R.S.G.B. Bulletin as told by F.R. Peterson G3ELZ. Ed.)*

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### Dutchman

A piece "fitted in" to restore a worn part or to hide a defect.

Hawkins Electrical Dictionary 1910

## Scottish News

### RNARS (Scotland) Group

All meetings of this group are now held at TS GRENVILLE, 27 Ferguslie Main Road, Paisley PA 1 2QE. The Group meets on Sunday mornings 1000 - 1300. Any member coming along for the first time will find the heavy steel doors locked for security purposes, so bang it hard until someone answers.

The club station was on the air 30 May 1993, using the callsign GB2RNR to commemorate the Battle of the Atlantic. Working only 40m 2 or 3 pages of the log were filled even though conditions were not too good.

The group now have a 2m rig partly paid for by money raised from the sale of donated surplus equipment sold at the Magnum Rally in March. The next item, when funds permit, will be a more suitable 2m aerial with perhaps a rotator.

The group will be represented at the Scottish Amateur Radio Convention, Cardonald College, Glasgow 11th Sept 1993 and RNARS commodities will be on sale.

### East Coast

For some time Colin GM6HGW/1870 has been trying to find a suitable location for an RNARS shack and meeting place. Recently the manager of the North Carr Lightship told Colin that he was looking for "something different" in the way of a permanent exhibition onboard. Those members who served at HMS JACK-DAW or who entered the Forth on a regular basis will remember the North Carr Lightship stationed off Crail to the north of the river and now berthed in Anstruther harbour as a floating museum. Anstruther is situated about 10 miles south of St Andrews and 15 miles NE of Edinburgh "as the crow flies"

*(Hum ... ! Hope some of our southern members don't try and drive this direct route. Ed.)*

In recent years the vessel has suffered from neglect but now, with a new and enthusiastic

management team, the ship has a growing reputation as a museum. Nearby is the popular Scottish Fisheries Museum which has won a number of recent national awards. Colin believes this is a golden opportunity to establish an RNARS shack onboard an historic vessel in a popular tourist area, especially in view of the North Carr management's enthusiasm for such a project.

Any members who would be interested in supporting and/or helping Colin with this project should contact GM8HGW at:

17 Mount Melville Crescent,  
Strathkiness,  
St Andrews,  
Fife KY16 9XS

(Tel: (033485 689) or on Packet via GB7NES.

## Orkney

News from the Orkney Wireless Museum GB2OWM/0468 is that the large container store has now been replaced by a glass fibre Port-a-Cabin (recently home to the VOR System at Kirkwall Airport) and that the custodians can sleep sounder at night knowing that there is no danger of their museum store shifting, as the old one did in a 120mph gale last year.

Plans to use part of the "Hope" Primary

School have received a setback when the OIC altered the layout without letting anyone else know, reducing the rooms available to the Museum from 3 to 1. Sandy GM8WOF reports that it is hoped that the problem can be resolved.

At the request of the organisers of the 2nd Orkney Science Festival the Museum Station GB2OWM was activated over the period 11 to 17 September 1992. Operation was confined to afternoons, except for Saturday and Sunday when there was also activity in the mornings. Activity mainly 7MHz or 14MHz SSB although there was a foray on CW on the 15th. The station was set up in the Museum, space being made by moving the Juke Box into the storage container

*(You need to see the OWM's Juke Box to see just how much room that would have made available! Ed)*

Band conditions were not too good but an FT101ZD, Trio 830S and inverted G5RV enabled over 200 contacts, many of them RNARS members, to be made in 30 countries. It is hoped that the station will again be activated for the 3rd Orkney Science Festival 10 - 16 September 1993.

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# OBITUARY

## G3CHN/2644

Members will be saddened to hear of the death of club member Roger Thorn, G3CHN who died on the 30th April 1993.

Roger was born in Bermuda in 1924, where his father was the manager of a daily farm belonging to Lord Kitchener. When still a young boy, his family returned to England and settled in the New Forest.

In 1941 Roger joined the Marconi International Marine Company and went to sea as a Radio Officer in the British Merchant Navy. His first voyage in those dark days of the war

was to the United States. On the return trip whilst in the North Atlantic, his ship was torpedoed by a German U boat. The ship which was carrying a cargo of iron ore, sank like a stone. Roger, who was just 17 years of age, together with the surviving members of the crew spent some 12 hours on a little raft before being rescued by a ship of the Royal Canadian Navy, which took them to St. Johns in Newfoundland. During the next four years of the war, he was to experience a number of similar incidents, all of which he was lucky to survive.

In 1953, after some 12 years of sailing the world, Roger left the sea and joined the Decca Navigation Company as an engineer, becoming a station manager before taking retirement in 1964, when he and his family moved to the Isle of Wight.

A first class operator, he was always ready to assist the less experienced and was never restrained in his praise of those CW operators that he considered to be among his peers.

Roger died at the Mountbatten Hospice, Newport, Isle of Wight after a long illness bravely borne. Just before he died, Roger had been wearing headphones listening to tapes of his favourite country and western music which he had loved since that first war time trip to America. It was a fitting tribute that the same tape was played at his funeral service on the 7th May.

Above all else, Roger Thorn was a gentleman to all. To his wife Dilla and a son John, we offer our sincere condolences.

## G3OXC/3700

Stan Crabtree passed away on the 17th March 1993 following a sudden heart attack. He was 62 years old and had been an FOC member since February 1977.

Stan's first introduction to the 'noble art', as he referred to morse code, came about when his mother decided he should become a Marine Radio Officer and he went off to Marine School in South Shields in 1946. He built a series of O-V-1 receivers which proved useful in getting his morse speed up and then progressed to a three valve TRF. Clutching his new 2nd Class PMG, Stan made his way to Glasgow to join his first vessel, "The Empress of France" which had just completed a conversion from a war time troop ship.

Stan's interest in marine radio stayed with him long after he left the sea. He became an internationally recognised authority on the history and development of mercantile marine radio equipment and operating and contributed articles to professional radio as well as amateur radio magazines. At the time of his death he was devoting much of his spare time researching into the life of the very first mercantile marine radio operator whose German family he had finally traced.

In later life Stan became a freelance writer and publisher using computer desk-top publishing techniques. He was the editor of

KADARS, the Newsletter of the Kingston and District Amateur Radio Society. We exchanged several ideas and views about the production of magazines and newsletters.

During his many years as an amateur, Stan held licences and operated under several prefixes, including GM, VQ4, VQ1, C56 and 5A.

Stan joins the select band of Silent Keys who have more than repaid for their enjoyment of our hobby through personal high standards and willingness to help others. Our condolences go to his wife Helen and two children Elaine and David.

## This is your NewsLetter, is it what you want ???

You've said a lot of nice things about our efforts (for which Assistant Ed. & I thank you very much) but nothing about changes you'd like to see! We can't be getting everything right, every time ..... can we ???

Is the type size right ?

(..... be careful, if I make the size bigger you'll either get less in every issue or we'll have to pay more for postage.)

Do you like the current typeface ?

( .... this is a standard Serif typeface, the previous Editor used a plainer Sans Serif)

Should I experiment with different typefaces in a future issue ?

Are we getting the right balance of articles or is there something missing ?

( ..... be careful again, if you make a suggestion you might be invited to contribute!)

What do you think of the regular features like Letters to the Editor, Chairmans Chat, SWL Section, Secretarial Scrawl, Help Lines etc? Do we need anyother other regular features?

If you don't let the Editorial Team know what you want YOU WON'T GET IT!!!!

# RNA & RNARS TO THE RESCUE.

By Brian Davies 3369/GW0JXW

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My part in this story began, when on my return from a Committee Meeting at HMS MERCURY on the 22nd. May, I looked at the telephone messages that my wife Debbie had taken for me during my absence.

One message in particular leapt out at me, "Will be berthed in Conwy, North Wales on 26th. May, would you like to join me aboard MANX VOYAGER to go out and see the fleet", from Stan GD3LSF.

This as you will all be aware was the assembly of some 42 ships, mainly warships from Nations World wide to commemorate the 50th. Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic. And due to assemble off

the coast of Anglesey to be reviewed by HRH Prince Philip aboard the Royal Yacht BRITANNIA.

I had met Stan GD3LSF on several occasions before as he always comes over to the North Wales Rally, held in Llandudno every October and we have had many years of QSO's on the Isle of Man DX Net every Sunday, he is also no stranger to my friend Art 9H4R and has stayed with Art in Gozo on a couple of occasions.

My immediate reaction was, what an opportunity, and I phoned him at once, unfortunately Stan was out, busy with his duties at the RNA Douglas, Cary took my message, and Stan kindly returned my call as soon as he returned home. After thanking him for the chance to come with him, Stan advised me that due to the tides we would have to sail out of Conwy shortly after 0500 hrs. and could I be aboard by this time, I assured him that I could.

So that was it I had committed myself, it was only later that I began to think about the

weather, what if it's rough, I might be ex- MN but being aboard an ex-RNLI lifeboat in bad weather is not quite the same thing.

Monday 24th. May saw the weather worsen and Tuesday 25th saw it deteriorate even further with gales for the Irish Sea forecast. Oh well, I couldn't lose face now, I had made the mistake of telling the lads on the nets of my plans and had received the usual ribbing and there were a good few chuckles at the imminent weather conditions.

The alarm went off at 0300 on the morning of the 26th. The wind was howling round our house, high in the Welsh Hills and the rain on the windows sounded as though someone was throwing a constant stream of gravel at them. It took a lot of effort to get from under the duvet and leave a warm bed and woman, knowing where I was going. A voice murmured, "Your not going in this weather are you". "Can't back out now", I replied. I have come to the conclusion that the female gender do not quite understand us, and in particular our passion for things that float.

Was soon on the road to Conwy, a distance of some 40 miles, did not get far before a friendly Police Patrol car pulled me over to ask, who I was, where I was going and who owned the car. When I explained the reason for being on the road at that time of the morning, one of the Officer's remarked that it should be a great day out, I am willing to bet they had not heard that one before.

On arrival at Conwy I could not find the Marina in the obvious place, i.e. near the water, as luck would have it I happened across another Police Patrol, on asking directions the Police- man offered to show me the way, so I arrived at the Marina at 0445 with a Police escort.

After wending my way through the maze of causeways of these modern marina's I arrived at the berth of the MANX VOYAGER, where Stan was on deck to greet me. He took me through the wheelhouse down below to the main cabin which is astern of the wheelhouse. Stan has made no concessions to comfort. Two benches run either side of the cabin, fore and aft, with the original signs above them which state, "Survivors are to fasten the Safety Belts". I saw no sign of the belts. Aft and next to the watertight escape hatch is a gas cooker, bolted to a table which in turn is bolted to the bulkhead. On the forward Port side is the Chart Table, a swivel chair all the radio gear, comprising ship to shore Racal Marine radio, VHF and a FT757, ATU etc. The Decca Radar is also at this position. The engine room is forward and below the wheelhouse, with access from the wheelhouse via a small compartment with more benches for crew. The watertight doors to the engine room were open whilst in port and the engines were ticking over. The warm smell of oil and the gentle throb of powerful diesels through the soles of the feet brought it all back to me, I was ready for my adventure, which was to be more than any of us could anticipate.

The first task was to stow the bottle of rum that I had brought along as a token of my appreciation and to warm us up later.

MANX VOYAGER is an ex-RNLI lifeboat, still in her original colours, she is not an elegant ship, she looks what she is, a powerful safe, seaworthy vessel, in much the same way as a Tugboats appearance conveys exactly what they are about, so does the MANX VOYAGER. She has one stubby foremast, which is the diesel exhaust. Forward of the engine room and approached over the foredeck down through a watertight deck hatch is the crew accommodation. Her length is 47 ft. with a displacement of 28 tons, two 5 cylinder Gardner Diesels giving her a speed of 10.5 knots. She still has all her original equipment, Decca Radar and radio gear. She was one of the last Watson type built in 1962 and spent most of her life stationed at Teesmouth. She moved down to Poole in 1980 where she underwent a major refit, and her engines were modified and uprated at great expense. After the Penlee disaster in 1981 she went down to Penlee as the replacement Life-

boat, where she was never called out until she was replaced by the "Arum" type Lifeboat. As the new lifeboat would not fit into the Boathouse the MANX VOYAGER, as she is now known, lay there in the Boathouse for some years until the RNLI decided to sell her and Stan became her proud owner in 1989.

Her crew were soon up and about, and I was introduced to them as a brew of coffee was made and handed round, first was Steve Buttery ex-MN RO, RNA, and RNLI serving, next was David Prater, Secretary RNA Douglas, his love of the sea must be great indeed for he is one of the unfortunates who suffer badly from seasickness and had endured a terrible voyage across from Douglas the previous day, and here he was fully prepared to to go out again into a forecast force 8 gale. The other crew member was Jimmy Henderson, ex-Fishing Trawler Skipper. There was one arrival after me and that was Brian Campbell a last minute replacement for a friend of Stans from Penmaenmawr who was unable to join us, Stans friend felt that Brian would like the trip. It was no surprise to me to find that Brian was ex-RN and had spent 10 years as a trawler skipper out of Swansea. our Captain was of course our fellow RNARS member Stan GD3LSF also RNA Douglas.

We slipped moorings at 0530 and Stan negotiated the tricky exit from the Marina, we were soon out into the Estuary and Stan found a use for me looking out for marker buoys as it is a tricky winding entrance to the harbour at Conwy, Jimmy is on the Radar down below the wheelhouse, Steve is watching the Echo Sounder like a hawk and giving readings to Stan, forward and out to sea there seems to be a lot of white water.

Once out of the channel it is decidedly choppy and we are still in the lee of the Great Orme, we head out due North West for Puffin Island, Red Wharf Bay and the Fleet. We can just make out to starboard three smaller Naval vessels and a large tanker sheltering from the gale, the wind seems to be due East and MANX VOYAGER seems to enjoy a following sea. Once past the lee of the land however the seas become very heavy and are now on our Starboard quarter, there is large swell, deep troughs and breaking crests. David has disappeared below, a

victim of the sickness once more. So we proceed out to the North of Puffin Island. With the seas getting progressively worse, I have wedged myself into the corner of the wheelhouse on the starboard side, against the door and with two grab handles to hang onto, I feel fine and I am enjoying myself even though it is a bit like standing on the back of a bucking horse, I know that my legs are going to ache tomorrow. Suddenly Jimmy's head appears from below with steaming mugs of coffee, how he has managed to make it in these conditions is still a mystery to me. I take a couple of sips and as I do so we hit a wall of water, we are thrown round the wheelhouse, I had been hanging on with one hand and my feet are well wedged so I do not go too far, when we have recovered and Stan has the wheel once more I look in my mug and find it empty, the coffee is all over the binnacle and ships wheel, so I set to and clean up.

All the time the wipers on the wheelhouse ports are buzzing away and the VHF keeps bursting into life with instructions to the ships in the Fleet and new arrivals. Jimmy is monitoring the Radar down below and shouts up that there seems to be only 21 of the scheduled 42 ships at anchor. we can see the lights of the Fleet at anchor through the murk by now, we are off Puffin Island and can see the huge seas pounding the rocks to port. On we lurch through the heavy seas, we seem to be the only small ship afloat, there were a couple of small yachts we passed on the way out, but we feel certain that they will have turned back on reaching the open sea.

We gradually approach the fleet, a magnificent sight to see in such appalling conditions, the ships are also feeling the affect of the storm and are yanking at their anchor chains, we learnt later that two RN ships were dragging their anchors and had to leave the line and proceed to sea (*think it was USN & CIS mine hunters that dragged .... Ed.*) there does not seem to be much life on the decks of the ships as we pass slowly past, we go about at the end of the line and turn into the seas and come through the next line, by now there are a few figures on deck, no doubt wondering who these madmen are out in this weather.

We had all been anticipating taking photographs of the fleet, Brian and myself had our

cameras at the ready as we passed the ships. The only way this was possible was to quickly open the wheelhouse door on the leeside between waves, take a couple of quick shots and slam it to again, there was supposed to be a video being made and the camera was aboard, but it was impossible to operate under these conditions. There is no sign of the LADY OF MANN, Stan has arranged a rendezvous with her as she has a contingent of Douglas RNA aboard. After a discussion with Brian, who knows these waters, Stan decides that it is too rough to hang about here to await her arrival, so a course is plotted through the sound between Puffin Island and the main Island of Anglesey for the Menia Straits, where we hope that there will be some shelter from the storm so that we can get some refreshment.

We pass through the sound, pick up the marker buoys and yes it is calmer this side compared to the open sea, time now is 0800. This is a busy time for Stan, the tide is at low ebb so he has to be especially careful to keep to the channel and there is a rip tide through these straits. At my request the whip antennae is changed to one for 20 mtrs. so that I can try to keep my sked with Art 9H4R.

The decision is taken not to anchor but to go slowly through the straits then go about and come slowly back. Soon there is the delicious smell of bacon frying, I call and call Art on the sked frequencies without any joy, then at 0925 I hear him in QSO with Val GOATB and he is telling her that I am out at sea to-day, at the first break I call him, GW0JXW/MM and he hears me 5/5. On telling Art of the conditions he cannot resist laughing, they are a cruel lot these ex-mariners, we have a good QSO and while it is going on a plate and fork are thrust into my hand, then comes bacon, fried bread, sausage, egg and beans, the smell drives me mad and I devour it in between overs to Art. I don't think a breakfast has ever tasted so good. David is recovering from his seasickness but not enough to face a good breakfast, he makes do with a banana and some dry bread.

We have gone about by Britannia Bridge by this time and everything is restored for the return journey back out to the fleet, we have heard on the radio the Coastguard giving

instructions to the LADY OF MANN so we know that she has arrived. We pass close by Bangor Pier and I joking say to David, "Perhaps Stan should put us ashore here and we catch the bus to Conwy", but David is staying aboard he wants some video of the fleet.

We pass through the sound once more and we can see that there is more water around the lighthouse now as the tide is on the turn, as we make the open sea again it seems to be even rougher, then over the radio we hear the Navy telling someone that it is now Gale Force 9.

Heading out towards the fleet we see the Moelfre Lifeboat with a very large three deck cruiser in tow, she seems to be making for the sound that we have just left, we learn later that this is the 55 ft SAMS00N which has suffered engine failure and had been dragging her anchor and was in danger of going aground.

Far out to starboard we can just make out a large white ship, this we feel sure is the LADY OF MANN and we alter course to make for her. Time now is 1100 and gradually our objective becomes larger. Suddenly on our port side we sight a red distress flare, which is being blown rapidly away on the high wind, leaving a trail of smoke, "Here we go" shouts Stan and we turn hard to port, immediately Brian is out on deck forward, hanging on to the main mast he points to the first sighted position of the flare which has now burnt itself out, always keeping his finger pointing at the same point despite the tossing and

rolling of our vessel, his quick thinking sped us on our way. Stan opens the throttles and we make full speed towards whatever sent up the flare, for we cannot see it at this stage. Then we do, a dark object being tossed about by the storm, as we get closer we can see that it is a fibreglass cabin cruiser about 24 ft. long with a cabin and open steering cockpit, meant to be enclosed by a blue canvass hood, but this has been ripped open and is flapping wildly in the wind, she has lost her hatch cover on the foredeck and looks as though she has shipped a fair bit of water.



Steve (left) & Stan GD3LSF (right) setting to to repair damage.

Coming up on our port side and on an intercepting course is the cruise ship B A L - M O R A L which plies out of Llan-dudno and was taking passengers out to view the fleet. On Stan's command Steve

calls BALMORAL on the radio, "MANX VOYAGER, ex-RNLI lifeboat here answering distress flare, please stand off". Back comes the reply immediately, "BALMORAL here, will circle and try to give you a lee, good luck". She veers off and makes a wide circle as we attempt to come along side the cabin cruiser MYWAY as we can now see she is called. She is bobbing about like a cork, one minute 10 ft. below us the next 10 ft. above us, and turning all the time as the waves hit her. We can see one person in the aft cockpit and it looks like there are more in the cabin, she seems to have engine failure or steering failure or both. All our crew with the exception of Stan and myself are out on deck by this time, I have stayed put in the wheelhouse, I



feel sure that a novice like myself could put lives in danger by getting in the crews way. The tow line is made ready on the end of a heaving line and Stan circles and tries to come up to the stricken cruiser, several times Stan has to go astern as we come up to her as it looks as though the sea will bring us crashing down on top of her, a head appears from the forward hatch and after several attempts the owner manages to catch hold of the line and haul the tow aboard and make fast to his bollard on the foredeck. We are still bow to bow at this stage and we now have to manoeuvre into a towing position, as we are attempting this MYWAY is swung round by the seas stern on to our port side where our crew are hanging on midships. I could see clearly what was going to happen next, MYWAY has large davits on her stern to carry a dinghy but she is without the dinghy at this time, as she is swung and carried high on a wave, I instinctively leap to the port side wheelhouse door which is open and shout "Lookout", whether they heard me or as is more likely they also saw the danger, they jumped out of the way, at that moment the sea brought us crashing together and the davits were over our deck as she sank down on the wave, there was a rending crash as the davits hooked onto the wire safety rails and ripped out seven stanchions on our port side. I could see from my vantage point that the tow rope was under MANX VOYAGER and I remarked on this to Stan who told me not to worry as the props on lifeboats are enclosed in sleeves for this very reason.

Soon we were on our way, and the BALMORAL which had been standing by began to move away, there were cheers from the decks as the day trippers who had witnessed this drama gave their appreciation. The cruiser in tow was tossing along behind us like a cork, Stan throttled back to about three knots and decided to take the tow back to Conwy, his rendezvous with the LADY OF MANN had gone by the board, overtaken by events.

Over the radio we hear the Coastguard ordering the launch of the Beaumaris Lifeboat to go to the aid of the cruiser that we have just taken in tow. Steve immediately contacts the Coastguard by radio and informs them that MANX VOYAGER is an ex-RNLI lifeboat and has MYWAY in tow and is proceeding to

Conwy, the Coastguard acknowledge.

Brian goes aft in the atrocious weather and wedges himself amongst the machinery to keep an eye on the tow. A few miles further in and just north of the rocky outcrop off Puffin Island he hammers on the wheelhouse door to inform us that the bollard on the cruisers deck has come adrift and we are attached only by a thin line which is attached to the winch, within minutes we have lost our tow.

So we had to do it all again, the most dangerous part of the exercise getting the tow aboard, the owner would insist on trying to take the line at the stern and had to be told with much shouting to get forward to take it. Despite Stans skill in circumnavigating him he missed the line and she was tossed away from us by the seas, if we did not get her soon she would be on those treacherous rocks which were getting ever nearer, Stan circled again and this time the tow was caught and the tow rope hauled and made fast to the winch on deck with lots of instructions from our crew.

Slowly we made our way toward Conwy and at last I was found something to do, look out for marker buoys so we could find the channel, we had tried looking for them on radar without success. Then I spotted the first on our portside, from here on in it was plain sailing getting calmer all the time and just a matter of following the channel.

Stan now had time to contemplate the damage to MANX VOYAGER estimated at some £300, he decided that he would not claim salvage if the owner of MYWAY was insured and would pay for the damage. Before coming to the Marina we stopped and pulled MYWAY alongside as it was a difficult entry with a tow. At this stage the owner disclosed that he had engines and thought that he could make it in from there, needless to say Stan was having none of this and put Jimmy aboard to take her alongside and tie her up once we had let go. We took the owner aboard to explain the situation to him, he thanked us of course but I don't think he realised how close he had come to loosing his boat. We let MYWAY go at the mole and Jimmy stayed with her while we moved off to our mooring, I suddenly remembered the "White Rose Net" would be on and with Stans



assistance the whip was tuned to 40 mtrs. and I was able to work 20 RNARS Stations Maritime Mobile, I had promised to get on the "Bubbly Rats" Net, but we were otherwise occupied. As we tied up I closed the net and we broke out the rum bottle which had been well stowed and survived the storm, we mixed it with a little coffee and relaxed at last. And what of Davids seasickness, he suddenly realised that in the worst of the weather he had not been ill at all, so we hope that he is cured but advised him that in future he should not leave harbour unless it is blowing a force 9.

There is one little twist at the end, we discovered that there were three aboard the cruiser and the lady aboard offered Jimmy the sum of £10 for rescuing them, Jimmy of course declined, we think that they thought that we were the official lifeboat, how they thought that we had managed to arrive on the scene within 15

minutes we do not know, they were incredibly lucky that we were so near and saw their flare. We gather that the problem was the steering, we still do not know why the owner did not try to use his engines to assist us when we were trying to get the tow aboard.

I say my goodbyes to the MANX VOYAGER's Manx crew and thank them for a momentous day out and compliment them on their seamanship, as I leave they are not resting on their laurels, Oh no, Stan and Steve have found brass screws and tools and are setting about making temporary repairs to the damage before their voyage to Liverpool to-morrow.

Goodbye MANX VOYAGER, thank you for a once in a lifetime experience.

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## AREA REP. NEWS.

BY BRIAN DAVIES GW0JXW/3369.  
AREA REP. CO-ORDINATOR.

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We have unfortunately lost two of our Area Reps. since the last issue, Jim G4LZB who served the membership in Essex for so many years and Derek G4UJQ who had just come back into the fold after a years absence to carry on with the Norfolk Area. I understand that there were members at both funerals to pay the Societies last respects.

The Norfolk Area has been merged with the Suffolk Area for the time being, Mickey Meras G8OIH being the Area Rep. I am looking for a volunteer for the Essex Area, mail is temporarily going to Rick G3YEC but he is too busy to take it on permanently, so please put your name forward if you live in this Area. Still need a volunteer to take over the Cheshire and Merseyside Area from Fred G8HTP who wishes to devote more time to the HMS PLYMOUTH Group. Again please put your name forward.

The Committee approved the purchase of 30 RNARS banners for use at Rallies and these

have been distributed to those Area Reps that requested them, Norman G4SFO also holds two for use with emergency rally packs. Committee have also approved the printing of the QSL Bureau User List and all members that use the RNARS Bureau will receive a List from Vic G4KEE along with their QSL CARDS, this is constantly being updated, updates are given out on the Monday and Wednesday 80 Metre RNARS SSB Nets. Please do not send cards for members that are not on the list, you will only cause Vic a lot of extra work and you will get them back in your own envelopes.

### NEWS FROM THE AREAS

#### ISLE OF MAN

Stan GD3LSF took MANX VOYAGER over to North Wales to see the Fleet Review, and then round to Liverpool for the Western Approaches 50th Anniversary Celebrations. See fuller account in this issue.

## SOUTH WALES.

Les GW0JTE attended the the Rally at Bridgend. It was well attended by some 1200 people. Les enjoyed meeting the 19 RNARS members who signed in on the day. The Barry Rally was held at the Leisure Centre, Barry in February. 17 Members signed in, one of which was Charlton 2W1BSK who has just passed his Novice License at the age of 79. Hope the members enjoyed the "tot" on the day, please don't expect it at all South Wales Rallies. The 2 Mtr. Net on S16 at 1900 on Friday is becoming well established, my thanks to Gwyn GW0NW who takes over in my absence. Swansea Rally was attended on the 18th April. Excellent Rally with 20 members signing in. GW0LDQ/3576 enjoyed his tot which had been held over from the Barry Rally. My correct telephone no. is 0685 386464.

## NORTHERN IRELAND.

David GI0PCU reports that a 2 Mtr. Net has been established on S15 at 2000 every Thursday. Net control Noel GI3XFR an old friend from Belfast Port Radio, so when on watch together were able to say it was 100% manned by the RNARS. David GI4XFR has managed to secure a regular meeting place for the RNARS at the New RNA premises in Belfast and we hope to be able to get a station up and running. He has just had his 1000 US County Award confirmed, congratulations. Joe GI3NQH continues to give the local group and the RNARS much publicity in the Belfast Telegraph Group of newspapers where he writes a weekly column under the pen name "Rectifier". My thanks to the members for their support since I took over as Area Rep.

## HERTS & MIDDLESEX.

George G3OZY reports that he attended the VHF Convention at Sandown along with Diana G0RNO and Philip G1LKJ, all Area Reps. 15 RNARS Members signed in.

## LINCS.

A stand was organised at the Spalding Rally by Tom G3YFU and Ernie G4YZC, our thanks to them.

The sudden death of Arnie G0KVV at the age of 67 was a great shock to all who knew him and regularly had QSO's with him. Arnie had a

few close shaves in his life. He joined the Navy at 16, he served in the Russian Convoys aboard HMS MALAYA, he served aboard H.M.S KELLY and was posted just weeks before HMS KELLY was torpedoed and sunk, he was relieved aboard HMS LEANDER the day before she became involved in the Albanian incident, when she was fired upon from Albania and was lost with all hands. Tom G3YFU attended the funeral to pay the Societies last respects.

## NORFOLK.

Mickey G8OIH assisted by Jack G4IFF represented the RNARS at the East Suffolk Wireless Revival, organised by the Ipswich and Felixstowe Radio Club, 13 Members signed in.

## MERSEYSIDE.

The HMS PLYMOUTH Group had a very large influx of members over the Western Approaches Celebrations. GB2PLY and the Special Call GB50WA from aboard the EDMUND GARDINER were very active and worked many members worldwide. The City of Liverpool put on a great event, which was appreciated by seamen everywhere.

## WEST MIDLANDS.

Eric G3DKH assisted by Jim G4GEU organised the RNARS presence at the RSGB Rally at the N.E.C. Birmingham, there were four Committee Members on the stand for most of the time, 70 members signed in, 3 members rejoined and 2 new members were signed up. The Rum Bottle, donated by Ken G4BUX, was much enjoyed by the Members.

## YORKSHIRE.

Harrogate Rally took place on the same day as the R.S.G.B Rally. Flags and banners were all organised at the last minute when it was realised that Fred G8HTP would not be attending. Glynn G4MVA and Roy G3VLL stepped into the breach and organised an RNARS Stand, Roy drove all the way down to Rugby from Doncaster to collect the Commodities. It was a great success with 35 members signing in.

## SHROPSHIRE.

The RNARS will be represented at the Telford Rally for the first time, this will be

organised by Don G4ZHU on 5th Sept., so go along and sign in.

#### NORTH WALES.

The North Wales Rally goes from strength to strength and will be held as usual in the Aberconwy Centre, Llandudno, 6th/7th November, the Isle of Man contingent usually attend, look forward to seeing many of you there for this two day event. RNARS presence organised by Brian GW0JXW and Geoff GW3IVX.

#### BERKS & BUCKS.

Diana GORNO will be representing the RNARS by putting on a stand at the McMichael Rally, Slough on the 1st August.

#### WILTS.

David G0BID & Reg G4GGA organised an impressive stand at the Longleat Rally, the Wx was superb and there was a great turnout by RNARS Members with 79 members signing in. Longest journey was made by Roy G3VLL who was aware that free cider was being dispensed at the RNARS Stand, this refreshment was enjoyed by all. Good commodity sales were also recorded.

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## STOP PRESS

HMCS HAIDA VE3CGJ/3977 will be operating as CF3CGJ Aug 23 - 6 Sep 93. More in next issue.

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## ...And So to Sea

By Reg Prosser  
GW4BUS/0670

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'Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea.' (Samuel Johnson, 1778)

An icy blast of January wind and a snow flurry blew me in through the double-doors of the Marconi depot. You didn't expect Yukon blizzards just off East Ham High Street, but that's what I got as I staggered into the premises of my new employers. I was confronted by a large man with a battered trilby, a florid face,

and a greenish tweed overcoat.

"Will ye be closing the bloody doors after ye, man!" he demanded. "Sure, every time I go to make a roll, the bloody wind blows me fag-paper away!" He held out a well-worn tobacco pouch, a cigarette-paper stuck to his lower lip. He was obviously half-seas over.

"Sorry, mate," I muttered, pushing the doors tight-shut. I dodged round him and ran up the stairs to the main office. There I was ushered into the R/Os' waiting-room, to await my call.

To a first-tripper like me, that shabby room with its huge boardroom-style table littered with voluminous, dog-eared railway time-tables, its sagging leather armchairs and the scattered luggage of half-a-dozen bored-looking R.Os, exuded romance and the call of faraway places. Morse code buzzed from the room's loudspeaker. From a large wall picture Guglielmo Marconi gazed down upon us - rather shiftily, I thought. That same portrait was to gaze down at me in Marconi depots all over the world, and not once did Guglielmo look me straight in the eye.

This was the moment I'd been looking forward to during all those months I'd spent at the British School of Telegraphy, Stockwell, on my ex-Regular Army resettlement course, studying for the Postmaster General's Certificate, Second Class. Fourteen years a soldier, man and boy, I wondered how I would fit into this new role.

The 'speaker crackled out my name - in not particularly good Morse, I thought. I leapt out of my chair with alacrity. The other occupants of the room looked daggers at me; it wasn't done to let yourself be called to heel in Morse. I never made that mistake again.

At the counter in the main office, I answered a list of questions and was duly given my company pay-book. This was a large, bulky tome which wouldn't fit into any sort of pocket, unlike the Army pay-books, AB64 parts I and II. In the Marconi pay-book every tiny item of payment and expenses was entered parsimoniously. (One entry made in my pay-book some time later read: Travelling expenses, East Ham to Hong Kong: five shillings and fourpence. The travel was of course by air, with BOAC feeding and tending me, but Hell-fire! For taxi fare to Heath Row,

5/4d!)

The main office doors burst open and through them came the large, florid and tweedy gent. He caused quite a commotion, genially back-slapping members of the office staff, calling all of them 'sons-o'-bitches' and shaking them vigorously by the hand.

The clerk dealing with me winked at me and said: "One o' the best, Barry O'Shea. Gets a bit lit up when he comes ashore, of course."

'No skin off my nose,' I thought, priggishly.

The clerk looked up from a sheet of paper and told me: "You'll be going to the BEN-CRUACHAN. She's in Victoria Dock right now, loading. She's on the Far East run."

The Far East run! My heart leapt within me. The Far East was my old Army stamping-grounds; six years I'd served out there: India, Burma, Japan and Malaya, during the war and afterwards.

"Yes," the man continued, "You'll find Barry O'Shea a fine Number One. Real old-timer he is. Been everywhere. Seen everything, from P. and O. liners to east coast colliers." And he nodded towards that large man in the greenish tweeds.

My heart plummeted. Just my rotten luck; a whisky-swilling Irishman for a boss on my first voyage!

The next I knew my right hand was within a vice-like grasp.

"Sure, and I'm glad to meet yer. Bit old for a new junior Sparks, I'd be thinking?"

I stammered out some polite form of greeting, and felt my heels coming together in a reflex, army way.

"The ould ship won't be sailing for a day or two yet. I'll be showing you round her tomorrow, but not too early, please. I'll be after feeling a bit delicate, ye see."

And he turned away to back-slap yet another old acquaintance. The blizzard was still howling as I stood waiting for the Number 15 Bus in East Ham High Street. Snow was drifting thick in shop doorways. Visibility was a mere yard or two. Who'd be a sailor on a day like this, I thought idly. A large form came rolling out of

the snow-mist. It wore a battered trilby-hat and a tweed overcoat, now powdered white by the snow.

"Ahoy, there!" the figure boomed. "A small world is it not, and it's me as has been around the ould bugger a time or two. Tell me, where are you bound?"

I told him I was taking the Number 15 bus to the Bank, and thence by Northern Line to my home, Morden, Surrey.

"Then I'll be keeping you company part of the way," Barry O'Shea said. "I'm off to the 'Eastern', that pub on the corner where West India Dock Road meets the East India Dock Road. Sure, it's my favourite pub when I'm in these parts. Ould Joseph Conrad, the dear man, he used to put up there whenever his ship was in the London docks."

I pricked up my frozen ears at this. I'd been reading a lot of Joseph Conrad, lately. "To be sure, I could quite easily miss it in this lousy weather," Barry said.

A frown flickered across his florid face. "I can never see the place from the bus if visibility's less than a cable."

I stored that in my mind. How long was a 'cable'?

The bus loomed out of the muck. We went upstairs. Barry hauled out his old tobacco-pouch; I stuck to my 'Senior Service.'

The bus crawled along through the thickening blizzard. A sudden roar from Barry enlivened the whole of the upper deck; "For the sake of a thirsty Irishman, will somebody please keep an eye out for the 'Eastern' pub. Hey, you son, get for'ard and keep a sharp lookout; and you there, son, go aft and do the same!" And two Cockney teen-agers rose to do his bidding. A forceful character was Mister Barry O'Shea.

The two lads kept a faithful look-out and Barry debussed just abeam of the Eastern.

"You there, what's-yer-name," he hollered up to me. "I'll be seeing you at Marconi's, around about eleven. 'bye for now and God bless." He doffed his ancient trilby; a real Irish gentleman.

On the Tube, rattling south, I collected my

thoughts. These pitiful commuters, what a way to earn your bread-and-butter. While they faced this every day, I'd be having jam on mine, on the high seas.

I had put in quite a bit of sea-time in my Army service. This had been on troopships, mostly converted liners. Somehow, when I put to sea, I always seemed to leave good fortune behind me.

The very first ship had been the ATHLONE CASTLE, back in 1942, round the Cape to India. I was on deck-sweeping fatigue with my Royal Signals draft-mate, 'Bigmarf' Burridge of Dagenham. Just as we thought we'd swept the last few yards of deck, the ship's Regimental Sergeant Major bore down upon us.

"You scruffy idle pair!" he snapped. "D'you call that a clean sweep? Why, there's cigarette ends five days old on the aft end of the boat-deck!"

'Bigmarf' just couldn't resist it, could he. A look of deep concern came over his street-arab features;

"What, taste a bit stale did they, Sarn't Major?"

We were on permanent deck sweeping fatigue, way down through the South Atlantic, and way up the Indian Ocean, blast Burridge to hell and back!

Years later, in 1947, when I should have known better, I ran into severe interference on the GEORGIC, out of Liverpool for Singapore. On that ship we troops were on friendly insult-swapping terms with the ship's Merchant Navy catering staff. One morning I came up late to the mess-deck for breakfast. All through my Army service my internal clock ran 30 minutes behind B.A.M.T. - British Army Mean Time. At the entrance to the mess-deck I encountered a character in a singlet and black slacks. He was grinning nastily, propped against the bulkhead with a stub of pencil in his hand.

"Whit's your name, then, four-eyes?" he asked, with all the charm of a Gorbals razor-artist.

One always lacks the mot juste on these occasions.

"Prick o' the Warwicks!" I answered waggishly.

They say your feet won't touch, and I'm sure mine didn't. It was a 'fall in two men' occasion, as I was escorted down into the bowels of the ship to the ship's cells. 'In irons,' I think is the naval term for it.

The ship's steward in the singlet and slacks was a sergeant in the Seaforth Highlanders in disguise. Later that day I was marched before the OC Troops and received a sentence of 48-hours in the cells. I pointed out that with eight years service, a lot of it active, it was unlikely that I'd be knowingly so insolent to a sergeant of the Seaforths, of all people.

It cut no ice. To 'durance vile' I was committed.

Earlier that year, 1947, I'd suffered another indignity. Homeward-bound from Japan, on the old trooper RANCHI, I was admitted to the ship's hospital with acute cholic - probably incurred by ventilators blowing on my midriff in my sweaty hammock.

The sick-bay was crowded but I was given the lower of two-tier bunks. After a while the pain began to ease, without medication. I would have had a good night's sleep had not medical orderlies woken me every two hours or so, to inject something into my rump.

By the time the MO did his morning rounds I was quite well. He stopped at my bunk, looked at my chart and case notes pinned there, and went on to ask me most intimate questions about my love-life back on the Occupation in Japan.

We talked for quite a while at cross-purposes, he growing more irritated by the minute. Then, suddenly, he asked me my name. I told him and he blew his top. My case-notes had been pinned to the unfortunate Royal Welch Fusilier in the bunk above me, and his notes to my bunk. The poor chap had had no treatment at all, while I'd received his full course of penicillin treatment. I reckoned I was a few shots in credit, should I ever have mischance to use them.

Then there was the hospital ship RAJULA, in 1944, Chittagong to Madras in the casualty evacuation chain from Burma. I was three-

quarters dead from my time with Wingate's second expedition behind Japanese lines. That short voyage was feverish and surrealistic for me, but I registered that the ship had all her navigation lights on and that there was no black-out of portholes - like a spring evening in the dark winter that was the war.

Just one good voyage I could recall: Bombay to Kure, Japan, early in 1946 on the DUNERA. Our Indian brigade had chartered the vessel and allocated to us - British Other Ranks - cabin accommodation. It was a blissful change from the steerage in which I was accustomed to travel. Spring-time in the South China Sea was idyllic as we sun-bathed on the platform that had once housed a Bofors gun.

Barry O'Shea looked but a shadow of his day-before self, when I met him at Marconi's the following day. He shook no-one's hand, and slapped no-one's back. He was a couple of shades less florid and generally monosyllabic. We took a taxi to Victoria Dock, neither of us saying much. He was only too evidently in pain, and my insides were churning with excitement that was part dread.

The lovely old BENCROUCHAN was a sight to behold. My first ship! She had a plain yellow funnel, varnished brown upper-works and a grey and green colour-scheme for her hull. She was 7,000 tons gross, Barry had told me. Her paintwork was immaculate. I was to learn that, so like the Forth Bridge, not far from her port of registry, Leith, the BENCROUCHAN was constantly under the paint-brush. A gang of Chinese painters was permanently thus employed.

All the ship's holds lay open and cranes were swinging general cargo into each of them. Barry cast an expert eye at the scene.

"Sure, we won't be sailing for a couple of days yet," he said, almost with a sigh of relief. "You don't need to get your gear aboard today; tomorrow will do fine."

I felt vaguely disappointed. It was taking me longer than young Jim Hawkins in 'Treasure Island' to get to sea. I followed Barry through the accommodation and up to the radio room. There the grey eminence of the 'Oceanspan' transmitter gave a friendly, familiar greeting to me. I'd done my fault-finding drill on this

transmitter at the B.S.T., Stockwell. This one had permeability tuning on M.F., I observed. The coloured controls on it lent the transmitter an almost festive aspect; blue for M.F., red for H.F. I looked forward to tuning it to a real ship's aerial and not the artificial one we used at Stockwell. And there, heavens be praised, was the CR.300 receiver, another old friend.

Barry pointed out to me, with a decided lack of enthusiasm, other ancillary items: the 579 D/F gear, the 'Seaguard' second-channel receiver and, would you believe it, a spark gap transmitter for emergencies. The radio-room was the only place I did feel at home in. Barry took me down into the living-accommodation, where the mates and engineers were gathered in Barry's cabin for a wee lunch-time 'bevy'.

All the gold-braid worn on sleeves made me feel a trifle wary. My Army instincts always put me on my guard where badges of the higher commands were on show. Nevertheless, I summoned up all the 'hail-fellow-well-met' gusto I could manage as I shook hands with everyone. (Back in my wardrobe at home hung my brand-new uniform with a single, undulating stripe of gold braid on each sleeve, and I had to stop myself from bringing my heels together and saluting the bloody reefer-jacket.

Barry skipped lunch on board to conduct me to the Shipping Office where I signed 'Ship's Articles.' In the same building a few days ago I had been admitted into the Merchant Navy. It was similar to the procedure on admittance to one of HM's prisons, I understand. I was weighed, measured, photographed and finger-printed. In exchange I received my Discharge Book with my M.N. number, which coincidentally was quite similar to my old Army number. Along with it, I was given my Seaman's Identity card bearing my finger-prints.

Barry had cheered up considerably during the lunch-time 'bevy'.

"Well, me old son," he said. "It's you who's just signed your freedom away for two years. If the ould bitch doesn't come back into a British port in that time you'll have to stick it out with her!" And he let rip a huge guffaw.

He added kindly: "But fear not - she's a 'conference line', on a fixed range of ports.

there's us and the Scouse lot, Blue Funnel, on the same runs." I asked him then: "Why did you all laugh, back on board there, when I said 'sir' to that old chap with all that wavy gold braid on his sleeve?"

He was the Captain, wasn't he?" He let go another immense guffaw at that. Getting his breath back he said, "Not at all, at all. Himself was the Chief Steward only. Faith, he has more airs and graces than the Old Man, it's true!"

Tentatively, I ventured; "But who do I address as 'sir' on board?" Barry was very positive with his answer:

"You 'sir' no son-of-a-bitch but the Old Man, - the captain, you hear!"

I heard, but with over 14 years in the Army just behind me I was wondering if I could handle all this democracy. A thaw had set in by the time I took bus and tube homewards. Tomorrow I would join the SS BENCRUACHAN. All Ben Line ships were steamers in those days. The owners would have nothing to do with motor-vessels and their stinking diesel fumes.

What is Merchant Navy protocol concerning dress on joining your first ship? I asked myself as I rose the next morning. Better safe than sorry: I opened my wardrobe and took out my brand-new, doe-skin uniform. The stiff, separate collar gave me some bother with its back and front studs. The rest went on easily enough. The squeaky-new black shoes rather gave the game away. I'd been spit-and-polishing them, Army-style for the past week.

I tried on the peaked-cap and gave it a tweak to starboard. The 'Beatty Angle'? Well, no, perhaps not yet. I surveyed myself critically in the wardrobe mirror. All the gear was there, right enough, but it somehow didn't hang together Bristol-fashion or Lloyd's A.1. The rimless spectacles, that's what it was; they detracted from the aspect of a keen-eyed mariner. My two rows of medal-ribbons did something to adjust the balance. The naval and military tailor had advised me that I should wear them if I wanted to avoid being logged, flogged and keel-hauled on my first trip. The bespoke tailors along Aldgate and Whitechapel know all about service customs and traditions.

I bade farewell to Mum and Dad. (Mum

expressed great pleasure at the sight of me in this rig. "The colour goes so well with your eyes. That nasty old khaki never did.")

For the occasion I had booked a taxi all the way to Victoria Dock. But first I had to call at the local labour exchange to collect my National Insurance card which had been with them ever since I'd started the resettlement course.

As I walked into the exchange, the lone queue was just forming up; the 'Effing Club' it was locally known as, because of the ripe language of its members - virtually unemployable in those days of full employment.

They caught sight of me, and a tremendous hub-bub broke out.

"Cor, stone a crow! Things must be gettin' bad! 'ere comes Lord Louis Mountbatten!"

That was the first and last time I wore uniform ashore.

Everybody grinned a bit when I came staggering up the gangway with my large suit-case, but they were tolerant.

"Sure, and didn't every junior R/O god and Marconi ever sent me come sauntering up that gangway dressed like a Swiss admiral. And for sure, didn't one of them have a great big old telescope tucked under his arm, for to be sure."

Barry's great guffaw engulfed me again, I sniggered sheepishly.

I was shown to a pleasant cabin, its ports opening on to the boat-deck. In a jiffy I was unpacked, stowed and rarin' to go.

The Third Mate showed his head round the door:

"Sparks," he said, "We'll be sailing on the morning tide. I'll give you a shout before we single up".

(Sparks! The morning tide! This was the language I liked to hear. But what was 'singling up'?)

I was awake and dressed long before the Third Mate gave me that call. And then I learned what 'singling' up meant as we cast off all ropes and cables. There was no fuss at all; no band playing 'Old Lang Syne' or 'Will Ye No Come Back Again' as was often the case in the

departure of troopships I'd sailed in. An unsentimental departure of a cargo-ship on a workaday, January morning.

As we slipped through the lock, out into the Thames there was just old 'Knuckle Harry' beside the lock to give us a two-fingered salute. He was joined by a Port of London official with a megaphone. Just ritual, not ceremony. "Where bound?", he hollered.

"Port Said," answered the Third Mate from the wing of the bridge.

And that, I told myself, would be the last direct communication with shore-side for 10 days or so. Communication was now the business of Mister Barry O'Shea and me.

We cleared the Thames Estuary and Barry and I commenced radio watches.

"In ye go at the deep end, old son," Barry said, and vacated his seat next to the Morse-key. "Give North Foreland a shout with our TR".

I can't say that I was at all Morse-key-shy. After all I'd been pounding brass since I was 18 and transferred from infantry to Royal Signals. My amateur radio experience as first VS2BX and then DL2PA had rid me of any shyness.

I tuned the transmitter to 500 kc/s, called GNF, and QSY'd to 468 kc/s at his invitation:

TR GNF DE GLXR BENCROACHAN  
QTO LONDON BND PORT SAID AND FAR  
EAST.

North Foreland Radio came back with a QSL and a courteous BV. "Right," said Barry.

"Now Portishead with our TR. 4 Megs at this time of day, I should say."

The Oceanspan tuned sweetly on the 4 Mc/s calling frequency. Back came GKH with that marvellous deep-throated tone, characteristic of all Portishead Radio transmitters when MCW or ICW was permitted on the H.F. bands.

A quick QSY, or rather, QSS, to our working frequency and: TR GKL DE GLXR BENCROACHAN QTO LONDON QRD PORT SAID QSX AREA 1A = 101100Z

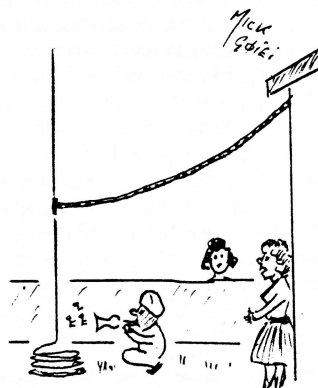
Ah, the dear, long-gone Commonwealth Area System which covered the globe with area stations in the UK, Malta (RN manned), Ceylon,

Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. If direct QSO was impossible with Portishead, then any of the intermediate Area Stations would accept traffic and QSP it with only the UK inland land-line charge to be applied.

As our vessel progressed on the voyage it would pass into new Area limits and we would signal our listening intentions to the relevant Area Station. We would copy its traffic-lists transmitted 4-hourly. Any traffic indicated in the list of ships' call-signs would be transmitted directly afterwards by 'broadcast method'. After copying any such traffic we would acknowledge with a service message to that Area Station.

As the sun set on our empire, so did the decline of the Area System set in. Portishead Radio was always an efficient and courteous station to work, and how the operators kept their temper with some of the thick-headed types at sea, I shall never know.

The advance of technology has made an entire way of life redundant, and we old Sparkies (even our honourable nick-name has been stolen by shore-electricians) can only accept what we can't alter.



I don't know Maggie, it's just another of Fred's bright ideas !!



# To Collect or Not To Collect ? That is the Question

By Peter MacDonald

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Collecting has never been difficult for the museum, quite simply there seems to be an abundance of supply and good will. This poses the problem - difficult decisions about in what directions collecting should go.

In the beginning the collection had various sources; the founder (my father) had a small collection at home. This was supplemented by a large number of sets from Robert Milne's Record and Music Shop. Another source was St Clairs Emporium roof, where father had stored sets years before, when he was a TV repair man.

It has to be remembered that early wireless was in the "junk" bracket then, and in many cases he was saving for the bin. Now of course many of these items are collectable and fetch good prices at auction.

Father had a simple but effective policy - take everything offered, be grateful and in most cases give something in return. Sets would arrive at his work, the Museum and the front door step. "Spies" operated at the Auction Mart and local refuse dumps. On his holidays south he would without fail visit scrap yards or the Barras in Glasgow, always bringing something home. My mother's patience began to wear thin, and on one occasion when a gentleman telephoned offering a set he was told "I don't think he needs it, he's got plenty already". My father only found this out a year later when he met this same gentleman at the Barras.

After my father died, I continued his collecting process, even advertising in "The Orcadian" for equipment from time to time. It was with the advent of the Registration Scheme for Museums that I had to radically change my view on collecting.

Registration gives us an official status as a museum but brings certain obligations for the

care of the collection. One of these obligations is to have a written collection policy setting out our intentions for the future. Our policy states that an item has to have an association with Orkney, and has to fit into areas in which the Trustees wish to expand the collection.

At first I found this idea of selective collecting hard to swallow, but now I am in full agreement. I believe items now have to fight for space, and we should go for quality not quantity. When you are offered something, it is good practise to ask yourself "Are we really going to store, care for and preserve this item for possibly thousands of years?". We do not have infinite space to fill. In many cases it would be better to have a representation i.e. 20 - 30 black and white TVs of all ages in mint condition instead of 100 - 200 in average condition. In many cases you can only display so much at a time. A contained collection is one which is easier managed; remember we rely on volunteers to run the museum.

There are five steps involved in cataloguing each item, which takes about an hour. Essentially you are recording:-

- (a) Who gave the item.
- (b) What item they gave.
- (c) Description of item.
- (d) The relevance or association of an item.

Items now offered to the museum can either be accepted immediately if they fit our collection policy, or at least considered by the Trustees if unsure. From experience I have found that some items offered to us are destined for the dump if we turn them down, and in these cases it is good practice to inform the donor that, whilst we do not want it for the collection, we may accept it for spares, swaps, fund raising, or as a last resort dumping it ourselves.

This saves an otherwise doomed item, whilst not obliging us to keep it. More importantly the donor does not feel rejected, and that they have contributed something. At the time of writing donations arrive at a rate of about one a week. All new items coming into the collection are now catalogued, but many pre-trust sets remain to be sorted out. This will be a long process.

Achieving Provisional Registration for our museum is something we can all feel proud of, but much work on the ground has to be done to meet its standards, and it is my hope that someday friends or volunteers will play a major part in what not only is becoming an increasing workload, but also a rewarding pastime.

One final question which may arise - What if someone in the south of England offers us an exceedingly valuable and rare piece of early Marconi equipment for the collection; would it

fit into our collection policy ? The answer to that must be "I am sure there must be an Orkney connection somewhere !!".

*(Peter MacDonald is the son of the late Jim MacDonald GM8BGF/0468 who founded the Orkney Wireless Museum at St Margaret's Hope, South Ronaldsay. Peter continues the work his father started assisted by many volunteers, including a number of RNARS members. The museum holds the callsign GBOOWM and RNARS Membership in Jim's memory. A visit to the museum is an absolute must for any member travelling to Orkney. Ed.)*

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## Memories of an RN SBA

By Albert Allnutt G4CQK/4002

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In November 1943 I was called up with some other pharmacists to train as RN Sick Berth Petty Officers. Until December we trained at HMS EXCALIBUR Alsager where the PO in Charge found I was good at scrubbing floors, so I often found myself detailed off to do his cabin. Training included survival at sea, learning morse & semaphore and how to make a bowline on a bight if you were thrown a rope.

Although miles from any water we had to learn how to row a whaler and one of the recruits thought he could use this to pretend to be daft and hence invalidated back out of the RN. One of the things practiced was lowering a whaler, this required two pins to be withdrawn from the disengaging gear on the order "Out Pins". And as luck would have it who should be responsible for one pin but our 'daft' recruit - who pretended not to hear. The error passed un-noticed and on the command "Slip" we landed on the ground with a bump .... and one end still in the air. Our 'daft' friend's efforts were to no avail and he eventually ended up as a stoker.

From December until April 1944 I was in the RNH Stonehouse in Plymouth for training in sick berth procedures and, because I was a Pharmacist, rapid promotion from Sick Berth Attendant (SBA) to LSBA and finally POSBA.

One day when an SBA I had to take a patient to theatre and on arrival was asked if I would like to see the operation. Although reluctant I agreed and was told to put on a green gown, cap and wellies. The patient was taken in, put on the table and I found myself standing near his head with the surgeons gathered round, but doing nothing. After a few moments one of them said to me "Get on with it!". Not knowing what they meant I kept silent. "How long have you been at this hospital?" I replied "Two weeks". The anaesthetist was late and I had put on his gown, with "ANAESTHETIST" right across the front!

In April 1944 I was drafted to Medical Stores HMS PEMBROKE Chatham, followed by The Lines RNH at Rochester as PO in charge of an Ear, Nose and Throat ward. Here I used to

put five patients on milk diets to ensure enough milk for our coffee! Most of my patients were awaiting being invalidated out because of deafness and one regular sailor, a PO Stoker, said when he got home he was going to write to his MP and the papers because he'd lose part of his pension. I explained to him that it might be dangerous for his ship if he was in charge of the engine room and couldn't hear instructions from the bridge. He replied, "That's how we lost my last ship!"

July 1945 saw me leaving Liverpool in the P&O MALAYA on foreign draft to HMS GOLDEN HIND in Sydney. Here the Sick Bay was about half a mile away from the main camp and those reporting sick were marched to it. However there was one consolation as the weather was hot, half way to SB ranks were broken to visit a convenient ice cream van. I often wondered how the really sick got on?

In September 1945 I transferred to HMS FORMIDABLE, one of three aircraft carriers prepared for repatriating ex-POWs by putting 1200 camp beds in the hangers. Our first trip was to Manilla in the Phillipines where most of the POWs were Australians waiting to be taken back to Sydney. The ex-POWs were being greeted by the Captain as they came into the hanger and one chap came in, looking very rough & carrying two bags. The Captain said "Never mind old chap, you'll soon feel better after your stay with us", ..... the reply came back "I've been on this ship for several weeks Sir, I'm a member of your crew!"

A week or so before getting back there was a radio programme from the ship to relatives of the POWs in Australia that said that they were all feeling fine. This was not quite true. The day before we had had stewed steak for lunch that contained a tin of 'blown' meat, as it was the custom for some individuals to queue up for extra helpings we had four classes of patients depending on the number of portions they had eaten. The fourth group were nearly dying!

Our next trip was to Tarakan in Borneo to pick up Indian POWs to take back to Ceylon and Bombay via Singapore. The Sikhs used to keep their head covered by a turban but if they uncovered the top of their head they used to wrap the turban round their jaw. This prompted

one of my staff to ask them if they had toothache! On their first evening onboard it was decided to give them a beer issue. As it was Toothy, an Australian beer with a lot of froth, we poured two gallons into a bucket to allow the froth to disperse before filling the mugs, however we had forgotten that most of the Indian POWs would be teetotal. Consequently the bucket of beer just had to be disposed of by the SBA staff, a good time was had by one and all! One side effect of their previous experience as POW's was that if you stood still in the passage-way between beds for any length of time you would soon have a line of men behind you thinking you were queuing for something.

1946 and HMS FORMIDABLE leaves for home via Durban. It was early for my demob so I kept very quiet. To no avail, when we reached Perth there was a signal from HMS GOLDEN HIND - "PO ALLNUTT C/MX 535504 to return immediately to Sydney".

Back at HMS GOLDEN HIND I was employed in the Sick Bay dispensary where I did all the work & the Chief Petty Officer in charge got 6d a day for it!

Returning to UK in April 1946 on board the WINCHESTER VICTORY, a US Liberty Ship, I had to look after the Sick Bay after the CSBPO didn't turn up. I used to sit at a desk and decide if those reporting sick needed attention or were malingering. The Doctor who had requisitioned the stores had forgotten to include balances, measures etc. so all dispensing was done by guess! There were also no medicine bottles so we had to wait until empty fruit squash bottles became available ... fortunately the MO decided to use only four mixtures!

On the first day out from Sydney, four sailors reported with toothache. We had four Dental Surgeons on board but when approached none had any tools! One of the Sick Berth Staff was an expert in dental care so he filled the cavities with a mixture of oil of cloves and zinc oxide.

At Perth some officers decided to buy fresh salad vegetables. These were put in a circular tank about 4 feet diameter and two feet deep and I was given the job of adding potassium permanganate to kill off all the caterpillars etc. To avoid the vegetables disappearing Marines on

board had to guard the tank, four hours on, four hours off, until all had been eaten.

We arrived at Southampton in June and the 26th saw my Class B Release, with a service record which included a statement to the effect that I was qualified to dispense medicines - under supervision!!

*(Albert is now a Silent Key and never saw his article in print. I hope this is a fitting tribute to his memory.Ed.)*

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## SWL Section

By Ron New G2PE2X/0183

..... For a big change I've had much more mail over the past couple of months than ever before, but as usual 90% of it came from the Tx OMs. I am looking forward to the next AGM and Social Evening at HMS COLLINGWOOD but won't be able to make the official opening of the new HQ. I have to take it steady for the next month or two after my recent encounters with the Surgeon Cdr & his scalpel wielding team. Now to get on with the mail received here over the past weeks:

Hildenborough  
Tonbridge

From John SWL/4071

..... I'm not too interested in amateur radio (yet? Ed) but rather in the technical sides of radio other than digital communications. I was at sea as a civilian sparks during WW II but am ashamed about how my morse speed has fallen, still I'm listening more to get it back to where it was. Also I am very interested in radio time signals and radio controlled clocks, mostly VLF. I still retain an interest in all Maritime matters even though the Red Duster is mostly evident on "private" boats. Last year whilst in a kayak in Poole Harbour I was hailed from a floating "gin palace" and asked the way to Wareham. It was misty so I gave him the bearing to the next buoy. "Don't give me numbers, I want to know the way" can the reply. I replied "Have you a compass?" Long pause and back came "I think so.....!". The boat had radar and a satellite

navigation aerial !!!!

Dover  
Kent

From Bob SWL/1780

..... Ron, I didn't know about the Cornish Net on 3707 kHz at 0900Z but I'll have a listen when I get a chance. I did pick up F/G4SCH in QSO with GB50RS on 3713 kHz the other evening but didn't know about the Scottish Lighthouse weekend 28/29 August, it sounds interesting. We have one quite close to us, the South Foreland Lighthouse, which has a permanent callsign GB2SFL and goes on the air at weekends when it's open to the public. Marconi made the first radio communications from there way back in 1897.....

Abington  
Northampton

From Ray/0420

To those SWLs & licenced stations awaiting special QSLs from GB50DAM Dams Raid 50th Anniversary - there has been a delay at the special QSL printers but the problem is being worked on.

Wallasey  
Merseyside

From Des SWL/3794

.....On the listening front I haven't been too active of late due to all the other jobs that have to be done. I still enjoy the "Bubbly Rats" at lunchtimes when I can listen and pick up other frequencies from time to time. I did manage to hear Ron Hill on the phone using the callsign GB50WA, that a card I'm looking forward to receiving. I did get round a bit during the few days of the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic. My wife and I went over to the Cunard Building where they had a drop-in centre for veterans. It was a very pleasant atmosphere and they went out of their way to make you feel welcome. I filled in a form giving my service details and they then gave me a veterans badge which I was proud to wear. I didn't realise that they had display boards in the hall, and that your name & ships were added to it. This was to give you the opportunity to meet old shipmates, however I didn't notice them ! I did queue for

over an hour at the World Ship Society stand - they could furnish you with a print-out and photo of any ship sunk during the campaign - the print-out gave details of the ship's position when she was torpedoed or whatever and the number of casualties. Fortunately it didn't happen to me but just as a memento of the occasion I got details for the Empress of Britain.

I have a friend who is a member of the ALGERINE association and they were invited aboard the Belgian frigate WESTDIEP, I went along and we really enjoyed the afternoon. We were shown round by a PO and it was a great advantage to have someone explain all the details.

My wife and I and one of our boys went to Birkenhead to see round the Russian destroyer GREMIASCH - this was a real trial compared with the WESTDIEP. We had to queue for over two hours in the wind and rain, and when aboard a quick look round and back down onto the quayside.....

Billingshurst  
West Sussex

From (the other) Ron SWL/3580

..... As you can see I'm still at the same address - over 80 people have been shown round but there is always something that puts the prospective buyer off!!! .....somewhere out there someone wants just such a place.

The (COLLINGWOOD) Rally seemed a great success in spite of the smaller space than previously. Ken 'PZR' was there as immaculate as ever and looking well - no doubt thriving on the "medication" from the RNAS. I have visited the Chalkpits Museum a couple of times since you were there, usually for special events days when they use the callsign GB2CPM - they usually operated mostly on 14 MHz. Reception here isn't always too good, probably due to the South Downs being in the way.....

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## Any Volunteers ??????

Hon.Sec & Editor are both looking for reliefs, any willing volunteers please let the Chairman know a.s.a.p.

# Letters to the Editor

(cont.)

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Caernarfon  
Gwynedd

From Reg Prosser GW4BUS/0670

I hope it won't be too much of a bind to have this packet of 10 pages of waffle dropped on to your front door mat. The thing is, I've just bought this Sharp word-processor, and it delights and enrages me in turn. Not content with setting it to task on another of my sporadic "memoirs" for your oppo, G3NVK, Editor of MERCURY, the RSARS journal, I thought it was time to let it loose in the direction of the RNARS.....

I'm afraid I haven't been active on any nets, RNARS or RSARS, for a while, through health reasons I won't go into. The RSARS "activity month" has brought me out of hibernation and the bit is firmly clasped between my dentures.

For a quick auto-biography: I'm 69, a Cockney retired up here with my Japanese wife, Michiko. I was 14 years or so in the Regular Army, from May, 1939, to September, 1953. After a resettlement course I went to sea as a ship's Sparks and stayed in that job until retiring one year short of the MN retirement age of 62, due to heart trouble. My radio gear now is the Kenwood TS-140S to a doublet aerial. I'm mainly CW, but enjoy a good old SSB ragchew as well. Ragchewing is my main interest, both modes.....

*(Those of you that have got this far will have already read Reg's account of his first sea going draft "And so to Sea"; I'm hoping he'll accept the encouragement and produce further instalments for us ..... what about it Reg ?? Ed).*

Whitstable  
Kent

From Eric Tubman G4SIL/2250

I have been a member for a number of years but have not given any details of myself before,

so here goes!

I joined the RNVWR in May 1939 having been on the waiting list for some time, wasn't fully trained when the war started and was called up and placed in HMS ST VINCENT to complete my training, with the prospect of being used on trawlers etc. It was not to be in my case, I was drafted to a Fleet destroyer HMS SOMALI D6 in April 1940 just after the Second Battle of Narvik and we were involved in the Norwegian Campaign until bombed. The ship managed to make it back to Liverpool where she was docked for some time.

I and others were sent to HMS TARTAR which became D6 until SOMALI was repaired. Captain D's had extra comms staff, both W/T and V/S (visual signaling) in those days. Later on I spent some time in HMS ASHANTI on similar duties. HMS SOMALI was torpedoed in September 1942, when escorting convoy QP14, and finally sank, having been towed by HMS ASHANTI for four days. On our arrival back at Scapa, Captain D returned from sick leave and took over HMS ESKIMO where I and the others of our group spent a short period until our reliefs arrived from Chatham, we being Portsmouth ratings.

I had been recommended for PO(Tel) by the Flotilla Signals Officer, but as I was a lower grade W/T3 I had to take the higher grade W/T2 course at HMS MERCURY. On completion I was drafted back to Scapa, HMS PROSERPINE and found myself in Scapa W/T (MTA). After approximately twelve months I was drafted back to HMS MERCURY for a sea draft, a course for W/T2 was refused by the Signals Officer at Scapa, but I found I was drafted to a Naval party.

There were a lot of these drafts at the time, doing assault courses and getting ready for D Day, but I and two telegraphists didn't do these strenuous exercises and eventually our draft orders came through. We arrived at Liverpool and took passage in the New Zealand Star to the Azores and to HMS LUSITANIA, Azores W/T (MTS), a small Naval party in the RAF Command. After a period in tents and equipment caravans a Nissen hutted compound and a receiving hut were completed, also the transmitter site a few miles away.

After several months here and attempts to get my lower W/T2 on the station I was finally sent back to UK and HMS MERCURY where I took the W/T2 course and was rated A/PO(Tel) on completion. I stayed in HMS MERCURY until my demob, all drafts for lower numbers had been stopped, eventually I left the RN and back to Civvy Street.

Although I had all the qualifications for an Amateur Licence I was unable to take advantage of them because of family commitments, I kept up my interest in radio during the years but it wasn't until I retired early that I decided at long last to try for my ticket. RAE & Morse Test passed I became G4SIL and had realised what I had wanted back in 1938, when the requirements were so different to those needed today.

I'm a member of the RSGB, G-QRP Club and at the recent RNARS COLLINGWOOD Rally I joined the Belfast Group and hope to operate from there when I have time to spare when I visit London.

Voerde  
Germany

From Harald Joorman DL5XJ/3695

### RNARS-DL Group Sails to England

Friday 5th February 1993 had finally come and six RNARS members from DL set off on our mini-cruise from Hamburg to Harwich. With only a light breeze blowing we boarded and took our quarters on-board the ferry HAMBURG helped by the efforts of Heinz DK9HH and Kai-Uwe DF5EX, who just happened to be the HAMBURG's Radio Officer.

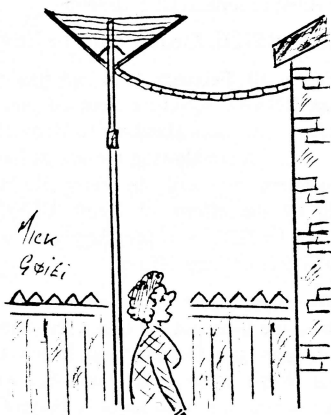
We slipped just before sunset and headed off down the Elbe and out into a flat calm North Sea through the German and Dutch Friesian Islands. While crossing the North Sea we had a chance to visit the radio room (callsign C6CQ2) onboard before it closes down forever on 1 July 1993. This will mean the end of maritime radio and many journeys round the world for Kai-Uwe, in the days of INMARSAT and GMDSS even the days of highly qualified radio officers are numbered.

Coming into Harwich it was a warm, sunny spring-like day and we were very impressed by the sight of a large number of retired light

vessels moored in a row. The Trinity House Light Vessel No. 13 is now moored in the harbour at Stade near Hamburg where it serves as a pub and hotel. Unfortunately the time ashore was only long enough to do a little shopping and a quick (but very good) pint of lager! Much as we were hoping for some bad weather the passage back was no rougher than the passage over, so we had no other option than to drown our sorrows in the bar .....!!

Up stream in the Elbe the HAMBURG was traditionally welcomed with a national anthem at the ship-welcome point at Wedel and I was surprised to hear the German anthem instead of the Bahamian.

The RNARS Group gathered for a final photo and decided that this wouldn't be our last trip to England. With a little luck, and more time to spend, we should be able to visit a few RNARS friends next time and maybe even a trip to HMS BELFAST. For us it was a wonderful weekend trip, for Kai-Uwe it was the end of a long career at sea.



Hey Fred !! Have  
you seen my rotary  
drier ???

# Captain

## V H Lucas

BA CEng FIEE FIMechE  
MINucE RN

Captain Victor Lucas is Captain of HMS COLLINGWOOD and our new President.

Born in Cheshire in 1941, Captain Lucas joined the RN as a cadet in the Electrical Branch in 1959. A year at BRNC, Dartmouth and three years at Emmanuel College, Cambridge were followed by a year at sea in the frigate HMS URSA. He completed the Engineering Applications Course at RNEC, Manadon in 1964.

Following an appointment in the conventional submarine HMS OPPORTUNE, he then, like all Electrical Officers of his year who were medically fit, commenced training to join the rapidly expanding nuclear submarine programme. He completed the Nuclear Reactor Course at RNC Greenwich before standing by HMS RENOWN under construction by Cammell Lairds at Birkenhead. In 1970 he joined the training staff at HMS VULCAN, the Nuclear Propulsion Establishment at Dounreay, Caithness. In 1972 he was appointed Weapon Engineering Officer of HMS VALIANT, then completing her first refit at Chatham, where he spent 3 1/2 years including a spell as Senior Engineering Officer. He then joined the Fleet Maintenance Base, afloat in HMS DEFIANCE, at Devonport.

Promoted Commander in 1976, he returned to HMS VULCAN as the Executive Officer. In 1979 he went to Devonport once more as Senior Engineer of the Second Submarine Squadron becoming the Weapon Engineer on implementation of Engineering Branch Development. In 1982 he attended the last National defence College course at Latimer before working in a defence policy post in the MoD with ACDS(Commitments).

On promotion to Captain in 1985 he joined the Directorate of Operational Requirements (Sea) as Assistant Director for submarines and





underwater equipments. In October 1987 he was appointed Chief Staff Officer (Engineering) to Flag Officer Submarines and in October 1989 he became the Director In Service Submarines at MoD Foxhill, Bath.

Captain Lucas is married with three sons and one daughter.



# The Legal Bits etc.

Unless so stated, the views of the contributors and comments of the Editor are not necessarily those of the Society.

Extracts from this Newsletter may be used by others subject to acknowledgement.

The Editor is always pleased to receive copy for consideration from ANY reader and not necessarily that of a member.

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THE SOCIETY HOLDS ITS RECORDS ON A COMPUTER DATA BASE SYSTEM.

## So you want to write something for the Newsletter ?

The RNARS Newsletter is prepared using Microsoft Works WP & Timeworks Publisher 2 DTP software packages on an Amstrad PC2286/40 IBM clone. I have both 3.5" (720KB/1.44KB) and 5.25" (360KB/1.2MB) disc drives available and can handle articles/letters in the following formats:

DCA/RFT, DisplayWrite/RFT, LocoScript, MS Word 4 & 5, MS Works, Multimate, WordPerfect 4 & 5, WordStar (but NOT WordStar 2000). If you can't convert to any of these styles then straight ASCII is just as easy to use.

If you are putting something in on disc please mark which of the above formats is being used, unless you say other wise I'll do my best to return the disc afterwards. When preparing an item don't bother with indents, "tiddly" spacing etc. 'cos it sends my DTP into auto. Normal wordwrapping, carriage returns at the end of paragraph followed by a blank line and Tabs between any items of data you want in a table form is all that is needed. A hard copy of the item is useful when I'm juggling column/inches.

NB. For those of you who hate computers (like the Ed !) typed or hand written copy is just as welcome. The Editor can also be reached via Packet as G0MNL @ GB7HJP.

If you send photos with a contribution please indicate if you want them back or if they can be retained for further use in the NL.

## Deadlines for the next 2 issues

Autumn/Winter 93 - 13 Nov 92

Spring 94 - 28 Mar 94

If its urgent and really MUST (!) go into the next NL - at least 1 month before deadline.

**RNARS NETS AND FREQUENCIES +/- QRM**

**UK: ALL TIMES LOCAL**

Monday-Friday	1130 -	1330	7055/3740	The "Bubbly Rats"	G0BLE/G3VLL
Monday		1900	3740	North West RNARS SSB	GW0JXW
		2000	144.350 (S14)	London Group VHF Net	G4BCJ
		2000	144.240	Teeside VHF CW	G4ANL/G4JXR
		2045	145.350 (S14)	Teeside VHF FM	G4ANL/G4JXR
Tuesday		1900	3528	RNARS CW Net	G0JCY
		2000	1965	Top Band SSB Net	GW0JXW
1st Tuesday of month only		2000	3520	Code Proficiency Run/News	GB3RN
Wednesday		1500	7088	RNARS White Rose Network	G3YHA
		1900	3740	RNARS SSB Net (News at 2000)	G4SFO
		2000	145.400 (S16)	Stand Easy Net	G1HHP
Thursday		1845	3666	NE UK RNARS SSB	G4FCH/G4AXF
		1900	3552	Scottish Group Net	GM3HUN
		2000	1845	Top Band CW Net	G3AWR
Friday		1900	10117	RNARS CW Net	LA1IE/G3APO
Saturday		0900	3660/7088	RNARS NESAT Net	G4FCH/G4AXF
Sunday		0830	3660	RNARS SSB Net (News at 0900)	G3LIK
		1000	7088	Northern SSB Net (News at 1015)	GM4SID
		1030	145.400 (S16)	Cornish RNARS VHF Net	G0RIZ
		1100	7020	RNARS CW Net	G3WP/G3AWR

**DX: ALL TIMES ZULU GMT \* non-RNARS**

Daily	0400	7090	VK2 RNARS SSB	VK2FYM
	0800	14052	DX CW Net	G3APO/VK2ALG
	0800	14303	Maritime Mobile Net*	G8OS/G4FRN
	1800	14303	Maritime Mobile Net*	G8OS/G4FRN
Monday	0930	3615	VK2 SSB	VK2CWS
	1000	3615	VK5 SSB NET	VK5RAN
Tuesday	0930	7020	VK RNARS CW	VK3QU
	1030	3527	VK RNARS CW Net	VK6RAN
	1800	3740	MARAC SSB Net*	PA3DKX
Wednesday	0930	3527	VK CW Net	VK5RAN
Thursday	1800	3740	MARAC SSB Net (Winter)*	PA3DKZ/PA0QLD
Saturday	0800	14052	RNARS CW Net	G3APO/VK2ALG
	1430	21360/28933	DX SSB Net*	G3JFF/WA1HMW
Sunday	0200	7090	VK RNARS SSB Net	VK5RAN
	0800	3740	MARAC SSB Net (Winter)*	PA3DKZ/PA0QLD
	0800	14052	RNARS DX CW Net	VK2ALG/G3APO
	0830	7015	MARAC CW Net*	PA3CVU/PA3EBA
	1230	14335/21360	Isle of Man DX	OE8NIK/GD3LSF/9H4R
	1400	18150	Malta RNARS SSB	9H4R/GW0JXW
	1430	21360/28933	RNARS DX SSB	G3JFF/WA1HMW
	1800	21052	Canadian CW Net	VE2DOH/VE4FA
	1830	14132	Canadian SSB	VE2DOH/VE4PZ/VE7FKK
	2000	14284	Nth America SSB	WA1HMW/WD4CQY

RNARS "Scene of Action" frequencies are designated:

VHF FM	145.400(S16)
VHF CW	144.035
HF CW	1845, 3520, 7020, 10118
	14052, 18087, 21052, 24897, 28052
HF SSB	1965, 3660, 7052, 14284, 18150, 21360, 28933

**NET CONTROLLERS** Please advise Mike G3JFF of any change, addition or amendment.

# Forthcoming RNARS Events

9 October 1993

AGM & Social

HMS COLLINGWOOD

2 - 10 April 1994

HMS BELFAST Activity Week

12 June 1994

Mobile Rally

HMS COLLINGWOOD