



CNOA

Chatham Naval Officers' Association



The CNOA Newsletter for May 2020

Email: contact@cnoa.org.uk

Website: www.cnoa.org.uk

Contents

Next CNOA meeting details

Chairman's Flag Hoist

Future Speakers & Events

Collision: Call for review of
navigational status fields in AIS

Merchant Navy: some facts

Venezuelan Navy patrol ship sinks
after collision with cruise ship

Two cruise ships swap passengers
to solve port closure

Arctic light pollution affects fish &
zooplankton up to 200m deep

European Bank could help Russia
lift sunken submarines

Interview with 'Midshipman'
Barney

Meanwhile...

VE Day Mess Dinner & Dance –
UPDATE

DAWN OWL Spring Summer 2020

Exploits: the Bahamas

I fell off the boat deck of a cargo
ship and survived!

CNOA Member Application Form



HMS Defender in Portsmouth © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2020

HMS DEFENDER RETURNS HOME FROM SEVEN-MONTH DEPLOYMENT

HMS Defender returned to HM Naval Base Portsmouth on 20 March after a hugely successful 222 days away from home.

Her crew of 270 and embarked Wildcat helicopter from 815 Naval Air Squadron safely accompanied 38 British-flagged tankers and cargo ships through the troubled waters of the Strait of Hormuz and made two significant drug seizures.

There would normally be hundreds of family and friends on the return jetty waiting for the sailors to disembark but, to help preserve good health, the homecoming was cancelled.

Chairman's Flag Hoist:



Dear Fellow members

Firstly, I hope you are all keeping well during our period of distancing. Please let me, or any of the committee, know if you are in need and we will do our best to help.

Your committee met at the end of March via the internet to crack on with running the CNOA. One thing we need to sort is membership; there are quite a few members who have not renewed and I ask that all consider paying by BACS to save this administration headache.

This period of home lock down has enabled me to start on producing a timeline of my time in uniform since 1977. I have dug out the photos, press clippings and programmes and started to create a word document showing all my roles, visits and events. It's been a trip down Memory Lane and I have able to scan some of the photos and send them to others featured in them, which has enabled us to catch up. Currently I am up to 1990.

Some of you may know that, since taking early retirement, I now restore some of the historic gas street lamps from London. This has stopped as I can no longer get the materials but I have written a short history on the subject; if anyone wants a copy, drop me an email.

I have watched the building of the NHS Nightingale Hospital at ExCeL London with pride as our armed forces joined ranks with the NHS to put this in place in just days. At writing I have learnt that the owners have agreed to give the site rent free to the NHS. The NHS Nightingale Hospital will draw nurses, doctors and other staff from across the health service, as well as a number of military medics.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "Our military planners and engineers are working hand in hand with the NHS to support their development of the NHS Nightingale Hospital. The Armed Forces have already been distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) to meet the increased demand and we stand ready to assist further in any capacity needed." He added: "The NHS and our Armed Forces are both world leaders in their fields, and this ambitious project is just one example of what can be achieved when they come together to help the nation."

If you subscribe to Navy News you may have seen a feature on my recent visit to Germany. Meanwhile the CNOA had a page in the ARNO Yearbook.

HMS Medway arrived in Jamaica recently to start her 5-year deployment to the Caribbean as part of her three-pronged mission: to provide British and Commonwealth reassurance; to promote UK interests; and to provide

assistance in the wake of a natural disaster. We saw her leave Chatham only a few months ago.

Please all consider contributing to our newsletter, we have a wealth of experience and adventures amongst our membership and many members of the Association currently enjoying home confinement will welcome your stories and articles.

Stay safe.

Yours Aye,

Jon

Jon Vanns
Lt Cdr (SCC) RNR
CNOA Chairman

2020 Future Speakers & Events: Subject to revision

1 May: John Johnson-Allen – The loss of HMS Truculent – **Postponed**
12 June: Lt Col Duffield – Chatham Dockyard from old images – **Postponed**
26 June: Ladies' and Guest Night – **Cancelled**
10 July: Peter Goodwin – Nelson's Arctic Voyage – **Postponed**
14 August: CNOA is on leave
11 September: Guy Bartlett – Stealth Aircraft, State of Art War Machines
9 October: Vanessa Nicholls – Dementia Friends
23 October: Trafalgar Night Dinner, Officers' Mess, Brompton
13 November: Derek Goodwin – Reflections of Marine Engineering Sales
11 December: Cdre Bryant – President's Address
16 January 2021: New Year's Luncheon, Bearsted Golf Club

Additional events will be included as details become available.

As always, we are most grateful to those who send items for this Newsletter. **All such contributions by the 5th of each month please.** Please email contact@cnoa.org.uk with articles, news items and photographs.

Derek Ireland (Hon. Secretary) and *Suzanne Wood* (Newsletter Editor)

Could other CNOA members also provide short presentations based on their own service related experiences for the CNOA meetings? **Yes, of course they could!** Please let Jon Vanns know or email contact@cnoa.org.uk

Please note, the Ladies' and Guest Night has been cancelled.

Correction: We appreciate Nicki Lockhart's assistance, following last month's Newsletter, in the correct spelling of Maj Simon Kerly's name. Apologies. Editor.

Deployment of RFA Argus to the Caribbean From MOD Navy

RFA Argus' deployment to the Caribbean had been scheduled for the hurricane season but she will now be able to play a part in ensuring the UK Government is ready to support the Overseas Territories during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As Royal Navy sailors and Royal Marines continue to stand ready to assist the United Kingdom in its efforts to defeat the pandemic at home, the support ship left Devonport on 2 April to cross the Atlantic and head south for the Caribbean.



RFA Argus preparing for her deployment to the Caribbean © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2020

The Ship's commanding officer Captain Terence Barke said: "RFA Argus' Ship's company, consisting of both Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Royal Navy personnel, will rise to this challenge. We understand that there are people in need in the UK Overseas Territories who require our support."

Minister of State for Defence Jeremy Quinn, responsible for the Overseas Territories, said: "The Armed Forces are taking decisive and coordinated action both at home and overseas to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak. The Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary have worked hard to ensure that RFA Argus is ready for the hurricane season in the Caribbean and is now also able to support the UK's Overseas Territories during the pandemic.

"The deployment of this ship is just one way the UK Government is supporting communities at home and overseas as together we face the biggest public health emergency in a generation."

The principal role of RFA Argus is to serve as a Primary Casualty Receiving Ship. She has a fully equipped 100-bed medical complex on board, which includes an emergency department, resuscitation and surgical facilities, and a radiology suite complete with a CT scanner.

The personnel of RFA Argus boast more than 40 different medical and surgical specialities and are drawn from the MOD Hospital Units and Royal Marines Band Service.

Merchant Navy: some facts

From Lt Cdr Jon Vanns

Recently you may have experienced some shops near empty due to panic buying. I have reflected on the hardships of World War II. In 1939 Britain imported 55m tons, including 70% of its food, by sea and we had the worlds largest fleet employing 144,000 men and women aged from 14 to 70. Now we have the world's tenth largest flagged fleet, with Greece controlling 23.2% of the world's merchant shipping (according to Google).

In 2018 the tonnage handled by UK ports was 483.3m tons, with the EU being our biggest trading partner.

The wartime Merchant Navy was crewed by brave souls who took part in Atlantic crossings, being attacked by U Boats, ships and planes, then not being much safer when alongside in the UK, as the ports were a frequent target for bombing raids.

My former CO, Eric Goodwin, a fantastic man with so many skills and a caring nature, was involved in DEMS, Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships; these were armed with a limited number of anti-aircraft weapons and low angle artillery. By the end of 1940, some 3,400 ships had this kit. All merchant ships were armed by 1943.

We lost 3,500 merchant ships and 175 warships in WWII ferrying supplies across the Atlantic. A turning point to the heavy losses came in 1943 when improved radar, Enigma decryptions and wider air cover helped in the war against the U Boats. By the end of the war, 783 U Boats had been sunk in the Atlantic.

Most of our population is unaware of how dependent we are on trade by sea, as pointed out by our President during his annual address.

Collision: Call for review of navigation status fields in AIS

Damage to ANL Wyong

From The Maritime Executive

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has released its report into the collision between container vessel ANL Wyong and gas carrier King Arthur, citing risks associated with AIS data.

On 4 August 2018, the UK registered container vessel, ANL Wyong, and the Italian registered gas carrier, King Arthur collided in darkness, dense fog and an area of heavy shipping traffic south-east of Gibraltar. Both vessels were destined for Algeciras, Spain. ANL Wyong was stopped and waiting for a pilot as there was no berth immediately available; King Arthur was heading towards a boat transfer position near Algeciras.

The accident happened because neither vessel appreciated the risk of collision in enough time to take effective action and pass at a safe distance, says MAIB. The investigation highlighted risks associated with the inappropriate use of VHF radio and AIS information when assessing risk of collision. The collision occurred within a recognised vessel traffic service (VTS) area, however the vessels were not warned of the developing risk by the shore authority responsible for traffic safety in the area.

Although both vessels were monitoring the shipping situation, neither bridge team responded effectively to the developing, hazardous situation, says MAIB. On board ANL Wyong, the officer of the watch was aware of numerous other vessels approaching but perceived that they would all keep clear, so took no action. On board King Arthur, the master's action to



avoid ANL Wyong was insufficient and collision-avoidance decisions were largely based on Automatic Identification System (AIS) information and VHF conversations, which were misleading and distracting.

King Arthur's master was conning and altered course to starboard intending to pass astern of ANL Wyong. Although King Arthur's master could not see ANL Wyong, his assessment of the situation

was primarily based on AIS data. However, ANL Wyong was stopped in the water and not making way as King Arthur's master had perceived.

As a result, the decision to turn King Arthur to starboard had the effect of putting the vessels on a collision course. When King Arthur's master realised that a dangerous situation was developing, full starboard rudder was applied. However, this action came too late to prevent the collision. ANL Wyong's officer of the watch was monitoring the situation but took no action when it became apparent that a multiple close quarters situation was unfolding.

A safety recommendation (2020/115) has been made to the Spanish Ministry of Development to review the navigational safety arrangements for shipping traffic in the approaches to Algeciras.

A safety recommendation (2020/116) has also been made to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to propose an amendment to the IMO to review the navigation status fields in AIS to incorporate a status for vessels underway, but not making way.

Venezuelan Navy patrol ship sinks after collision with cruise ship **From The Maritime Executive**

An encounter between the Venezuelan patrol vessel GC-23 Naiguata and the ice-class



expedition cruise ship RCGS Resolute resulted in the patrol vessel's sinking, according to the government of Venezuela.

In a statement, RCGS Resolute's operator asserted that the cruise ship was approached by an armed Venezuelan Navy vessel at a position about 13 nm off Isla de Tortuga. The Resolute was drifting with one engine idling and one engine undergoing maintenance. The Venezuelan

The patrol ship Naiguata was sunk in the encounter © Luis García Curado.

vessel ordered Resolute's crew to follow to the port of Puerto Moreno, Isla de Margarita. As this would result in a deviation from the cruise ship's planned voyage, the master sought to confirm with the shipowner before complying with the request.

While the Resolute was consulting with the owner, the Venezuelan Navy vessel allegedly fired shots and then purposely collided with the Resolute's starboard side. The ramming was repeated, the firm said, until the Venezuelan vessel encountered Resolute's hardened bulbous bow and sustained severe damage. Resolute did not suffer any harm affecting her seaworthiness, and after contacting maritime rescue authorities in Curacao, she waited on scene for one hour, her operator said. After MRCC Curacao released her from the scene, she got underway for Willemstad.

Images taken from the pier in Curacao show that the damage to Resolute appears relatively minor.

The government of Venezuela identified the lost vessel as the 1,500 tonne, 80m patrol ship Naiguata, and it has accused Resolute of improperly departing the scene after the casualty. "The action of the ship Resolute is considered cowardly and criminal, since it did not attend to the rescue of the crew, in breach of the international regulations that regulate the rescue of life at sea," the statement reads.

In a second statement attributed to Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro, the government in Caracas alleged that the Resolute collided with the Naiguata in an "act of aggression and piracy." Further, the government speculated that it could not rule out that Resolute "was transporting mercenaries to attack military bases in Venezuela, unloading them out there on the high seas."

Venezuela faces a strict sanctions regime imposed by the U.S. and allied nations. The United States contends that Maduro is not the country's legitimate rule and it has effectively blocked a large fraction of Venezuela's oil exports. The nation's petroleum-dependent economy has largely collapsed, and millions of Venezuelan citizens have fled to neighbouring countries.

Two cruise ships swap passengers to solve port closure challenges

From The Maritime Executive

In an example of the measures that cruise lines are taking as they wind down operations, the Cruise and Maritime Voyages (CMV) vessels Columbus and Vasco da Gama swapped their European and Australian passengers at sea on 18 March so that all could return home.

The unusual transfer operation was originally slated to occur at the port of Phu My, Vietnam, where the two vessels were scheduled to take on fuel and stores while exchanging passengers. However, CMV said in a statement that it had been granted permission to carry out the operation off the coast of Phuket instead.

"In light of the continued border closures and flight cancellations, to repatriate all passengers as close to their home country as possible and ensure a safe onwards journey, we will transfer European nationals from Vasco da Gama to Columbus as well as transfer any Australian and New Zealand nationals from Columbus to Vasco do Gama," CMV said. "Vasco da Gama will then proceed towards Fremantle, Australia to finally disembark passengers around 27 March. Columbus will then proceed towards London to finally disembark passengers around the 13th of April. Due to the closure of ports, there is no option for passengers to disembark the ship in any other port than London or Fremantle."

CMV said that it is working with the Australian government and its Border Force, and it understands that the vessel will be exempt from Australia's port closures. The details of disembarkation procedures are still pending.

"Finally, on our way back to Australia all passengers transferred and their luggage as well as more supplies of food and drink - time to relax now and enjoy."



Image courtesy Sue Carter

Several passengers expressed gratitude for the hard work of the crew in making the transfer at sea. "These guys, who you never see, busted their guts out today transferring huge, heavy suitcases in very choppy seas. My hats go off to you," said passenger Angie Browne for Vasco da Gama cruisers.

"It has been incredible to watch the loading and unloading of the tenders from my cabin. First, they moved over 500 pieces of baggage, and the big blokes lifted the cases like bits of paper, then pax came and went, and now they are swapping stores," a Vasco da Gama passenger wrote in an online forum. "Boxes, and boxes, and boxes and the men have been loading and unloading since early morning. Apparently, Columbus can bunker and take on provisions in Sri Lanka whereas we are heading straight home."

There are currently no suspected coronavirus cases aboard either ship. One passenger aboard Vasco Da Gama was medically disembarked in Phuket on 13 March and checked for Covid-19. The passenger tested negative and the vessel was cleared to sail, a spokesman for the cruise line said.

Arctic light pollution affects fish and zooplankton up to 200m deep

From The Maritime Executive

If artificial light shines into the Arctic Ocean during the polar night, does it matter? A new paper in *Communications Biology* says the answer to this is a strong yes.

The Arctic polar night is a time when the sun remains below the horizon for a full 24-hour cycle. It is dark, but not completely. Nevertheless, the lack of light has long led researchers to assume that the organisms that live through this dark period are mostly dormant.

For a decade, an international team of researchers has been exploring the polar night to see exactly how organisms survive in the dark. Over the course of their surveys, they've learned the only way they can really understand what's going on is to turn out the lights on their research vessels and rely on autonomous underwater vehicles that need no light to do their work. And when they've done that, they've found birds that dive into the nearly pitch-black ocean to feast on bioluminescent plankton and krill, and deep-water fishes that normally live at great depths foraging in kelp beds just 2m deep, to name just a few.



Photo: Geir Johnsen, NTNU/UNIS

“As the sun becomes less and less visible on the sky, the relative importance of the moon, the stars and even the aurora borealis becomes more and more important,” says Jørgen Berge, a biologist at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway and NTNU – who headed the international research team. Now, Berge and his team, which also includes scientists from the UK, Canada and the US, has been able to quantify just how much light can affect the behaviour of all these creatures. Their results have been published in *Communications Biology*.

Just how dark is dark?

It turns out it doesn't take much light to affect organisms at all, the researchers found. Some reacted to light levels as low as one millionth that of daylight, including algal cells that entered a photoactive state a full six weeks before the return of sunlight. So much so that all previous biological surveys of everything from plankton to fish stocks may be fundamentally wrong, the researchers say.

“We have been able to document light-regulated biological processes that are still ongoing throughout the polar night,” Berge said. “Many species of fish and zooplankton remain active and migrate vertically in the water column over a 24-hour period. These migrations are fully regulated by small changes in either sunlight or moonlight.”

Geir Johnsen, a biologist at NTNU who was one of the authors of the paper, says this sensitivity was surprisingly extreme and has important consequences.

“Even the light from a research vessel, or a vessel estimating the stock size of zooplankton and fish, can influence organisms down to 200m below the ocean surface. They can either be attracted to the light or flee from it,” Johnsen said. “All of this makes it very difficult to say anything accurate about behaviour or populations, and stock assessments of fish may be influenced by this at nighttime all over the world.”

Johnsen is a key scientist at NTNU's Autonomous Marine Operations and Systems (AMOS) Centre of Excellence, where he describes his role as “trying to merge enabling technology with the natural sciences.” In this situation, he says, where light is so critically important, the researchers need to use autonomous robots that don't need any artificial light and that can give them information that is not affected by artificial light. This ability to study the dark without disturbing it is how the team was able to determine how profoundly light could upset behaviours that were normally tuned to the polar darkness.

Less ice, more light

This picture is complicated by global warming, the researchers say. Arctic sea ice is melting faster than at any time in recorded history, and growing human activity in the Arctic, with respect to fisheries, oil and gas, mineral extraction, new transport routes and tourism, is rapidly increasing as areas become free of ice. Consequently, light pollution is pouring into the Arctic, and is now thought to be among the fastest growing sources of pollution in the region. Johnsen says it's critical for researchers to learn as much as they can about how this ecosystem works before it is irreparably changed.

"About 50 percent of the oxygen that we breathe is from these microscopic algae in the world's oceans. Without those key groups there would be no life. Simple as that," he says.

A movie and a book

Over this past year, the research team has also worked on the movie project "Into the Dark", which attempts to unravel the mystery of the polar night. The movie mostly follows Berge, who is head of the Polar Night project and includes David McKee from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, and Johnsen.

"The film director, Michael Snyder, managed to get the best from us, and the team was brilliant. They followed us closely and were very thorough in making sure that the science was presented correctly, stating the take home messages to a larger audience globally," Johnsen said. Berge, Johnsen and their colleague Jonathan Cohen from the University of Delaware are also editors of a book entitled "Polar Night: Marine Ecology, Life and Light in the Dead of Night".

European Bank could help Russia lift sunken nuclear submarines

From The Maritime Executive

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has signalled its readiness to help Russia raise Soviet-era radioactive debris, including two sunken nuclear submarines, from the bottom of Arctic seas. While the deal is not yet final, it is thought that financial assistance would be allocated by the bank's Northern Dimensions Environmental Partnership programme, whose Nuclear Window fund has disbursed millions of dollars to help clean up radioactive hazards in Russia and Ukraine.

Talks on funding the recovery of these Cold War artefacts have been underway since the end of last year, when the Russian government reinvigorated long-dormant discussions on retrieving the sunken radioactive cast offs. Alexander Nikitin, who heads Bellona's St



Petersburg offices, has been a part of these discussions. According to the Russian government's official website on submarine decommissioning programs, the plan to raise the submarines was presented at the EBRD's assembly of donors in December, where the cost for the project was estimated at €300 million.

It will now be up to Russia, the site reported, to furnish the bank with a comprehensive plan on raising the subs. While Moscow has considered various methods for raising the submarines over the years, those who participated in the December discussions concluded a special ship might have to be built to get the job done. Beginning in the 1960s, the Soviet Navy used the waters east of the Novaya Zemlya atomic weapons testing range as a sort of watery nuclear waste dump. While the Soviet Union was hardly the only nuclear nation that resorted to dumping radioactive waste at sea, it was one of the most prolific.

According to catalogues released by Russia in 2012, the military dumped some 18,000 separate objects in the Arctic that could be classified as radioactive waste. These included some 17,000 containers of radioactive waste; 19 ships containing radioactive waste; 14 nuclear reactors, including five still loaded with spent nuclear fuel; and 735 other pieces of radioactively contaminated heavy machinery. Scientists at the Nuclear Safety Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, or IBRAE, say that time and corrosion have managed to decay thousands of these hazards and render them harmless. This leaves about 1,000 that continue to pose a high risk of spreading radioactive contamination.

Chief among these are two submarines, the K-159 and the K-27, both of which officials say pose the greatest threat to the environments in which they now lie. The K-159, which sank while it was being towed to decommissioning in 2003 and killed the nine sailors aboard, now lies in some of the most fertile fishing grounds of the Kara Sea. Raising this submarine, say Russian experts, should be a priority. Its reactors hold some 800 kilograms of spent nuclear fuel, which they fear could contaminate the sea floor, leading to an economic crisis for the Russian and Norwegian fishing industries.

The K-27 submarine, unlike the K-159, was scuttled intentionally. Launched in 1962, the submarine suffered a radiation leak in one of its experimental liquid-metal cooled reactors after just three days at sea. Over the next ten years, various attempts were made to repair or replace the reactors but, in 1979, the navy gave up and decommissioned the vessel. Like the K-159, the K-27 claimed its share of victims. Nine members of its crew of 144 died of radiation related illnesses shortly after returning to shore. Many more of the crew succumbed to similar illnesses in the years that followed. Too radioactive to be dismantled conventionally, the Soviet Navy towed the K-27 to the Arctic Novaya Zemlya nuclear testing range in 1982 and scuttled it in one of the archipelago's fjords at a depth of about 30 meters.

The sinking took some effort. The boat was weighed down by concrete and asphalt to secure its reactor and a hole was blown in its aft ballast tank to swamp it. But the fix won't last forever. The asphalt was only meant to stave off contamination until 2032. Worse still, the K-27's reactors could be in danger of generating an uncontrolled nuclear chain reaction, prompting many experts to demand it be retrieved first.

Raising these submarines from the depths will require technology Russia currently lacks. Even the lifting of the Kursk – perhaps the most famous submarine recovery to date – required the assistance of the Dutch. But the K-159 lies at a depth much greater than the Kursk did, leading many experts to suggest building a new vessel for the purpose.

From 1946 to 1993, more than 200,000 tons of waste, some of it highly radioactive, was dumped in the world's oceans, mainly in metal drums, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency. The lion's share of dumped nuclear waste came from Britain and the Soviet Union, figures from the IAEA show. By 1991, the US had dropped more than 90,000 barrels and at least 190,000 cubic meters of radioactive waste in the North Atlantic and Pacific. Other countries including Belgium, France, Switzerland and the Netherlands also disposed of tons of radioactive waste in the North Atlantic in the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

Interview with 'Midshipman' Barney

By Lt Cdr Suzanne Wood

The following is the first of an occasional series of interviews by me in my role as CNOA Newsletter Editor. I undertook this 'virtual' interview with our newest honorary member, Barney, and was pleased to have Clifford's input as interpreter.

Suzanne: *Hi Barney, you're a handsome chap, how old are you?*

Barney: I was born in September 2015 and I went to a family living in a small house with two children; they thought that I was too noisy and lively and that I chewed too much. They couldn't cope with me and they took me to Kent Labrador Rescue to be re-housed! I was labelled as "boisterous". I had been in the Kennels for over 8 weeks before Clifford came to see me. He had an old Labrador "Charlie" who was 12 and he was looking for a younger dog to eventually replace him. I took no notice of Clifford, I just ran around the yard enjoying the freedom. Clifford thought that I was full of spirit and that I had potential and so he took me, there and then, that day.

Suzanne: *How long did it take you to train as an Assistance Dog?*

Clifford: Barney was a real handful; he was initially very disobedient, chewed everything in sight and the rest of my family thought he should go back to Labrador Rescue. Barney loves my grandchildren's LEGO and they are very good at retrieving it from him.

Barney: I didn't like being on a lead, I thought that perhaps I would have been better called "Freedom", I was always escaping and I was very disobedient.

Suzanne: *What specialist skills do you have that allow you to wear the coveted blue harness?*

Barney: I eventually began to respond to treats and found that I benefited. I knew that Clifford, because of his medication, had balance problems. It took a long time but I eventually learnt that if he lost his balance and fell over then he would expect me to lie beside him and bark; and every time he fell and I lay beside him and barked I would be given a treat. I don't know why, but he thought that if he was on his own in town and fell over people might think that he was a tramp or a drunk.



Clifford persevered with me for a long time, it was like a game. I now know when he might lose his balance and I begin to bark and attract attention; people take notice and look at me (because I know I am handsome) and Clifford gets help, he recovers very quickly. I can sense when Clifford might lose his balance or fall, we practise it frequently. When we are out and I am on the lead and wearing my harness I am there to look after Clifford. I know that when I have my harness on I am working; with my harness off I am just an inquisitive, mischievous happy dog. I still love chewing things especially LEGO, logs and paper

Suzanne: *Do you still want to greet other dogs when you go out for a walk or has that been trained out of you?*

Barney: I love going for long walks (off the lead) in the country where there are lots of smells. We don't see many people out and about. We walk through open countryside, fields

and woods and the occasional pond where I can get wet and muddy. I like meeting other large dogs. We sometimes meet Maurice, a Lurcher; I have trouble chasing him because he is so fast but it is great fun. I don't like little dogs, they always seem grumpy and want to snap at me. They are not friendly like me

Suzanne: What's your favourite treat – is it something to play with or something to eat?

Barney: I'm a Labrador, I love food, Clifford tells me that I should have been called "Scavenger". I have this awful habit, when I am let off the lead, of searching out rubbish bins looking for a Big Mac or some other tasty leftover – I can smell food at 100 paces. I will do anything for a treat (food) hence I am kept on a very strict diet with plenty of exercise. I love chewing logs.

Suzanne: What's the best bit about having Clifford as a pet?

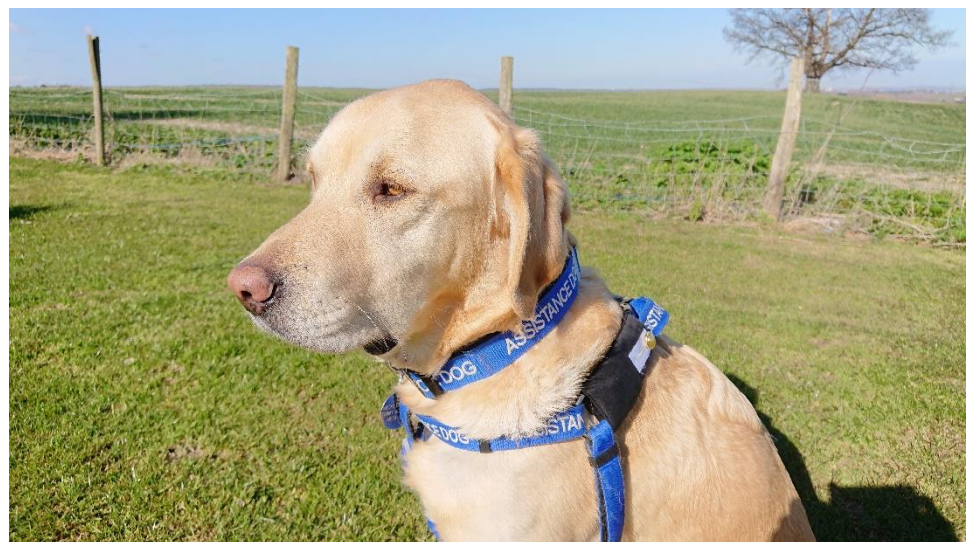
Barney: Clifford takes me everywhere, so I am never on my own. I love going out in the car and on the boat. I am a real Sea Dog, we go off on the boat for 3 months in the spring and the summer, I have a Pet's Passport and I am able to go everywhere with Clifford, I think he loves me. We went to the Royal Albert Hall not long ago to see the Mountbatten Festival of Music, it was a great evening. Last autumn we went to the Seafarers Service at Southwark RC Cathedral, we were asked to do the Offertory Procession, that was a privilege and very thoughtful of them. The Archbishop gave me a special blessing

Clifford has this strange job called an Appropriate Adult. We spend a lot of time in police custody and I have to sit in interviews and keep absolutely quiet. Sometimes I sit next to the detained person who is being interviewed and help them relax. I am told that I am a calming influence, the police officers all like me as well as I help to break the tension. Some custody suites keep treats for me. So, I am not a pet, I am a happy working dog and everyone loves me.

Suzanne: And finally, how do you feel about being a lifetime Associate Member of CNOA?

Barney: That came as a complete surprise and I am very honoured. I am very much looking forward to being a lifetime Associate Member of CNOA and being part of the organisation.

Being a Midshipman was the icing on the cake. I am looking forward to the Trafalgar Night Dinner.



Meanwhile...

In these unusual times, hope you find these video clips amusing, we did!

https://youtu.be/OoA2EMTh_4g

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7LKJXvf_do

Thanks to Graham Storey for this contribution, with your editor's apologies to those receiving this in printed version only.

VE Day Commemoration Mess Dinner and Dance - UPDATE

From Lt Cdr Derek Ireland

Due to the current Covid-19 situation the VE Day Dinner due to take place on 8 May at the Salomons Centre, Tunbridge Wells has had to be postponed. The ramifications of cancelling the dinner is the loss of the £500 deposit. Following a discussion with Salomons Centre a revised date has been agreed upon which is now Saturday 5 September.

A number of guests will be unable to make the revised date due to other already planned commitments and so there will be seats available. Attached is the revised dinner application should you wish to attend.

Revised Date: Saturday 5 September 2020

Place: Salomons Estate, Broomhill Road, Southborough, Kent TN3 0TG Tel: 01892 515152

Dress: Service Personnel Rig 2B with miniature medals or 1B, Civilians Dinner suit, or dark lounge suite with black bow tie. Ladies - Evening Dress

A **Formal** Naval mess dinner. Hotel rooms can be booked directly with the venue at a cost of £105 for a double including breakfast. Rooms will be released into the open market on 1st March 2020. Quote Mess Dinner when booking.

- Pre-Dinner Drinks **18.30**
- Dinner Call **18.50**
- The loyal toast to conform with the nation's timing at **19.00**

Starters

A – Sweet potato soup, crispy leeks, garlic croutons

B – Hot smoked salmon, beetroot puree, horseradish, sippett

Mains

C – Free range chicken breast, fondant potato, baby carrots, leeks, red wine jus

D – Orzotto Verde with smoked tomatoes and parmesan crisp (V)

Desserts

E – Warm chocolate brownie with salted caramel ice cream

F – Salomons Estate Eton mess

Passing of the port and toasts, followed by tea and coffee in the conservatory. Then dance the evening away to 'Swing the Bluz'. Carriages at 23.30

Cost is £39 per head, (a pre-dinner drink and glass of port included) wine not included and can be pre-ordered or purchased on the night. The event can only host approximately 80 people, so attendance is on a first come first served basis. Please return slip with printed name, choice of food by indicating the letter of menu choice. Contact me if you have a dietary request.

Closing Date for applications is 1 August 2020 unless places have been filled prior to that date.

Payment by cheque or BACS – BACS mark with surname and number of guests to:
Sort code 11-11-08 account 00510406. Cheques payable to *Mr J Vanns*. Payment with menu choice please. (No payment, no place.)

If you'd like email confirmation of receipt of menu choices and payment, please enclose an email address.

Reply to *Lieutenant Commander (SCC) J Vanns MCGI FirstLM. Royal Naval Reserve*
No. 8 Fairfield Ave, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 3SD or Jonvanns@aol.com

Name	Postnominals	Starter	Main course	Dessert
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

DAWN OWL Spring Summer 2020 From Lt Clifford Mickleburgh

It won't come as a surprise to you that I have had to cancel DAWN OWL's Spring and Summer Itinerary.

We are all on lockdown, "shore leave" cancelled, self-isolation; schools, cinemas, pubs, restaurants, churches all having to close.

We must learn to live like a hedgehog or turtle and hibernate for as long as it takes...

The Dutch Rally that I join annually at the end of May has been cancelled. The Netherlands, Germany, Poland and Denmark borders are all closed

I have also, for the time being, stopped being an Appropriate Adult – to date I have been out 193 times.

At home James, Jayne with Rachael and Katie have come to live with us for a year whilst they build their new house. We also have middle son Simon with us but not sure how we will deal with the five boys, Max, Luke, Ellis, Harvey-Jo and Samuel. We are all in self-isolation, living one day to the next.



DAWN OWL and Barney in Amsterdam

We are going to experiment this afternoon and have a virtual "lunch by video" with Christopher, Vicky and their children Poppy-May and Grace (who, you will probably be aware, now has Type 1 diabetes).

We must all take care and share.

Clifford

Exploits: the Bahamas, March 2020 From Lt Cdr Trevor Pratt

The Bahamas archipelago's northernmost point lies just 50 miles off the East coast of Florida; it comprises 700 breath taking islands and boasts the clearest water on the planet. Part of the West Indies and a former British Colony, its heritage is clearly seen in the architecture, the culture and even the archetypal Police Force. It became independent in 1973 but interestingly changed its currency from £sd to the Bahamian Dollar in 1966 which is tied to the exchange rate of the American dollar. The economy is based on tourism and of course the vast majority of visitors are from North America so this change to the dollar made economic sense!

Our adventure started in Nassau, the capital, located on New Providence Island, staying at a rustic Colonial style villa just minutes from Saunders Beach, our host Stuart a 70-year-old retired Professor from Wales (and still has his Welsh accent) was sitting in his rocker on the porch to greet our arrival.



Our Colonial Residence!



Paradise Island

We had six nights here, exploring downtown Nassau, Paradise Island (very expensive exclusive resort area) but with public access to the proclaimed best beach on the Island, the inappropriately named Cabbage Beach. It was nice, but busy and we found Nirvana Beach (Love Beach) a few days later much more to our liking.

The Island is full of history, from its first discovery by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and named in Spanish: San Salvador. Its piratical history is legend and the stuff of books, theatre and films, think Robert L Stevenson and Johnny Depp! although in fact its period in history was very short from around 1696 to 1718. During this period New Providence Island was the stronghold of Pirates until British Rule was re-established by Benjamin Hornigold when, on the morning of 12 December 1718, nine remaining pirates who had refused to surrender were executed.



Nirvana Beach



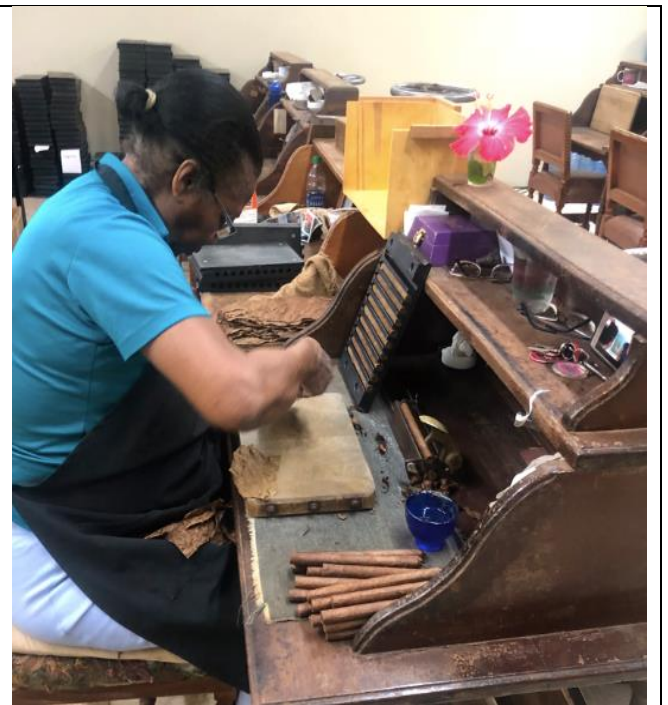
Pirate Museum, Nassau

A very good mini bus service operates on the island and we never had to wait more than five minutes for a bus; all the drivers are budding racing drivers and the Ten Commandments of Driving on the Island clearly apply:

1. Have Faith;
2. Traffic Lights: Green – Go, Amber – Go faster, Red – Go if you have faith you and can still make it;
3. If you are stuck at a traffic light and the right hand says Right Turn Only – Ignore and when the lights change put your foot down and have faith;
4. And so it goes on... but you get the gist, the roads are not for the faint hearted!



Fort Fincastle



Hand rolling cigars

We walked the historic area of town visiting Fort Fincastle, where the fort is in the shape of a Paddle Steamer and the ancient Rum distillery founded in 1713! Watched cigars being hand rolled, visited the Historic Society Museum which was fascinating and listened to a short talk by the Curator. Herbs and spices grow on the island and she gave us a small dried leaf to crush which we identified as Allspice from the very powerful aroma it gave off – and I thought Allspice was a mixture of different spices!

Towards the end of the week Fran and Julia arrived and on Saturday we joined our 44ft Jeanneau at Palm Cay. We spent the first night in the marina but unfortunately, strong winds prevented us leaving for a couple of days to make the thirty-mile crossing to the Exuma chain of islands. Our first night there was spent at anchor at Highborne Cay having motor sailed with just a reefed jib and seas that were still pretty high. A lovely large anchorage which suited us well.

The following day was still windy, but we managed to sail fully reefed to our next destination, Normans Cay, where the main attraction seemed to be an old DC3 aircraft crashed into the water. The main fuselage was visible at low water, but we didn't take the plunge to snorkel round it!



Waiting to board the boat



Our boat

The maritime national park started at the next island, so we decided to skip this one and go a little further to Warderick Wells Cay. A delightful spot and most unusual in that the centre of the bay is shallow, drying at low water with the main channel around the perimeter. Here we had to pay for our mooring buoy, anchoring and even stepping ashore on the island – but all in a good cause. The colours of the water are amazing, there are many trails on the island and a small nurse shark took a great interest in our bathing ladder. We fed him left-over beef burgers which he seemed to like and kept coming back for more! This did make us think twice about swimming off the boat. At low tide the sandbank in the middle of the bay dries out so we joined other boats in taking our dinghy across and walking from end to end.



Sunken Aircraft at Normans Cay



Anchorage at Warderick Wells Cay

At Staniel Cay we visited the Blue Grotto with the sunlight cascading through a hole into the cave bringing alive the colourful fish and coral. This cave features in several movies, including the James Bond film Thunderball. In another nearby anchorage we took the dinghy to feed swimming pigs with apples, they live on the beach and swim out to visiting boats to be fed!

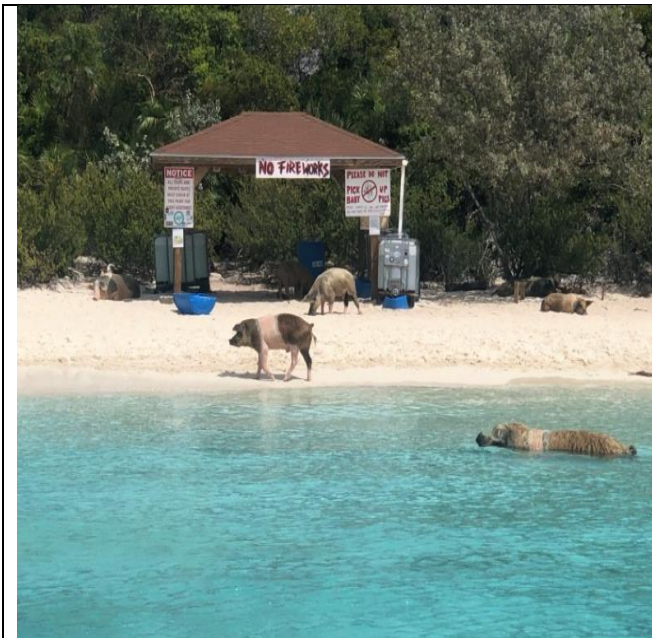


Nurse Shark – Warderick Wells Cay



Blue Grotto – Staniel Cay

At Staniel Cay we went ashore to explore and buy provisions from the small supermarket. The Yacht Club there has a very lively bar and we later went ashore later to have dinner. They specialise in fish and Conch is a local favourite; the portions large, needless to say we ended up with a doggy bag.



Swimming pigs – Big Major

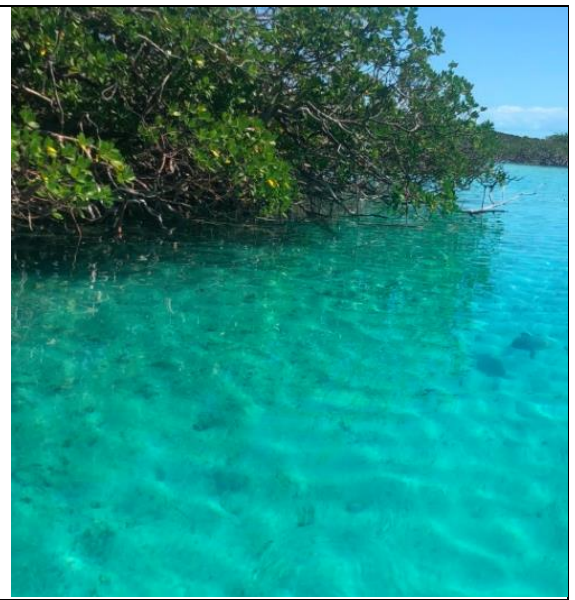


They even have names!

Staniel Cay was as far south as we wanted to venture so our next leg was northward to Compass Cay and this time, we chose to go out of the island chain to the east, the seaward side which becomes deep very quickly. We had a good sail but even though the winds were only force 5 we still had large waves. The entrance to Compass Cay was quite challenging and even though huge motor yachts go in there our depth sounder showed zero on a couple of occasions. Once in we had a pleasant anchorage and were able to take the dinghy up the mangrove river, not as dramatic as we expected as the mangroves were quite small and didn't overhang as expected. We did see a number of turtles though, quite small, rather shy and swam away at great speed as we approached.



Dinner ashore at Staniel Cay



Mangrove River – Compass Cay

Our cruising now was marred by uncertainty of flights home due to the Corona virus so the next day we made our way north to Highborne Cay to be in a position to return to our base at Palm Cay at short notice. Our eventual return crossing of thirty miles was uneventful, we had a good sail and a challenging bit of navigation getting through the shoal patches where the depth sounder often alarmed as the depth below the keel went to less than a metre.

Was it good? The colours of the sea and sky are so dramatic as to be unbelievable, the navigation was challenging as there are so many shoal areas and narrow channels. Anchoring was excellent, the wind was fairly constant 15 knots day and night with no respite and I found this a bit wearing. The current set up by the wind meant we always had about 3/4 knots running passed the boat at anchor which made swimming off the boat difficult. The islands are remote and many uninhabited, so the peace and tranquillity was wonderful.

Yes, it was good!

Goodness knows when I will be sailing again, my plans to return to Captain Ginger at the beginning of May, will I think, be thwarted by the current corona virus!

Who knows!

Best wishes and stay safe

Trevor

I fell off the boat deck of a cargo ship and survived! **From Brian Bissell**

I first went to sea in the Merchant Navy as a Navigating Apprentice (cadet) when I was 17½ years of age. I joined a shipping company called Royal Mail Lines and it was when I was 19 years of age, on a voyage down the West Coast of South America, that the ship I was on, RMS Pilcomayo, was anchored off the port of Callao, Peru (which is the port of Lima, the capital of Peru).

Owing to there being many ships of different nationalities waiting to discharge their cargoes at Callao we found ourselves at anchor for a number of days before we were allowed to go alongside the port. On one of these days the Second Officer told us we could go out for some sailing and/or rowing and therefore arranged for one of the lifeboats to be lowered into the water. The boat deck is, of course, many feet above the water line, though I can't recall how many, but certainly a long way up! On the boat deck, coiled-up and bolted to the deck, was a Jacob's ladder adjacent to each lifeboat, ready to be uncoiled and lowered down the

side of the ship for entry into a lifeboat. It is also the means for a pilot to come on board from his vessel when a ship enters port waters and exiting the ship when leaving.

On this voyage we had four cadets; two of the cadets went in the lifeboat with the Second Officer and the other two, including myself, remained on the boat deck where I uncoiled the Jacob's ladder and proceeded to climb down it in order to enter the lifeboat. My fellow cadet would then follow me. I lowered the Jacob's ladder and then got on it from the boat deck, but I had no sooner got on the ladder and descended to the next rung when the ladder swung away from the ship's side. When this occurred, the correct procedure would have been for me to remain holding the ladder and not to let go of it as I did! I must point out that the ladder was still securely attached to the lifeboat deck, but I had failed to notice that I had not fully uncoiled the ladder. Consequently, it completed its uncoiling with me on it! As I let go, I plummeted straight down into the water alongside the ship. I will never know why the lifeboat was not alongside the ship when I hit the water and sank, because it would normally have been for me to enter the lifeboat. Whatever the reason that the lifeboat had moved away from the ship's side, thus allowing me to enter the water safely and not breaking my back on the boat or something even worse, I know I must have experienced a miracle.

I have heard of Guardian Angels and I can only conclude that one of them was around for me at that time. I emerged out of the water and climbed aboard the lifeboat to see the startled and alarmed faces of the Second Officer and two of my fellow cadets! We then proceeded to the ship's side to receive the remaining cadet who climbed down the Jacob's ladder safely and off we all went for a sail. It was a day I would never forget.



I don't recall whether this incident was reported to the Captain and entered in the ship's log. I suspect it was not.

This is one of many stories I recall from my experiences during my years in the Merchant Navy which began in May 1960, significantly exactly 60 years ago next month!

Brian Bissell

A note from the CNOA Hon. Secretary

If you enjoy the CNOA activities, why not extend an invitation to a like-minded serving or retired officer? or ask them to look at cnoa.org.uk



CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

President: Commodore Barry Bryant CVO

Chairman: Lt Cdr Jon Vanns (SCC) RNR

APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

SURNAME		FORENAMES	DATE
HOME ADDRESS		BUSINESS ADDRESS	
Tel. No:		Tel. No:	
E Mail Address:		E Mail Address:	
RANK	TYPE OF COMMISSION	SPECIALISATION / AWARDS & QUALIFICATIONS	
BRIEF CAREER DETAILS			
<p>General Data Protection Regulation: I agree that all the above details may be maintained and kept by the CNOA and RSME for the purposes of membership records and security. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to my details being published in a membership booklet.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SIGNED.....</p>			
PRESENT OCCUPATION			
PROPOSER'S NAME	PROPOSER'S SIGNATURE	HOW LONG KNOWN	
SECONDER'S NAME	SECONDER'S SIGNATURE	HOW LONG KNOWN	