

HMS Phoebe
Association

October 2011
Newsletter



“Monty” Burnett RM
1928 - 2011

It is with the deepest regret I report the sad passing of an old friend and shipmate, Royal Marine “Monty” Burnett.

Monty, suffering with Prostrate Cancer, had been a patient in a hospice for quite some time, and sadly crossed the bar at 4.40 am Saturday 30th July.

Monty had been a policeman for over twenty years and a great many of his colleagues attended the funeral. Unfortunately we did not get the information of where and when the funeral was taking place. Lilian and I intended to be there to represent the Association, however condolence and sympathy on behalf of shipmates had been offered to Margaret and Family, we have also been in touch with Margaret since the funeral.]

S/m Albert Hoyle: (06/09/11).

We were getting a bit concerned about Albert, he promised to keep in touch after he left hospital, but that was weeks ago, so we phoned him only to find he had been home for a while and being looked after by a nurse who came in to see to his injured leg, but she went on holiday and his GP surgery took over, but his leg became worse and Albert was hospitalised again. And that is where a phone call found him this morning, loafing about in a private room being waited on hand and foot, not forgetting the leg! which thankfully is healing nicely enough for Albert to leave hospital, probably on Friday. This time we hope the healing goes on until Albert is fit again.. Might even see him in Bournemouth in May, lets hope so.

As you all know I gave a gentle hint in the last newsletter that it was my 80th on August 5th, I expected a few cards from shipmates, but I was overwhelmed with the avalanche of cards, notes, phone calls and emails and of course the presents from many of you had me almost in tears. How does one thank everyone, I am lucky to be able to do so through the newsletter, it would be nice to thank you all personally, but instead I raised my glass to you all quite a few times and named each name with a sipper, just like being back on board again except this time no jankers to worry about, just Lil? Cheers shipmates and friends here’s to you all, “Glug! Glug! Glug”!

I made a grave error in last Junes newsletter. I said that Associated members who are wives or partners of Life Members will not pay subscriptions, I am afraid I was completely wrong in stating that, it should have read **“Shipmates widows would not be required to pay a subscription”**

I am sorry to have misinformed you.

I did not think we would be saying this, not yet anyway. But after a long discussion with Lilian we have decided we will not attend the Bournemouth Remembrance Service or Parade this year, nor in future years, and with great regret this includes our own short service at our memorial stone. This year, shipmates who normally attend the memorial have had to opt out because of other commitments, without their help it would be too much for Lil and I to carry on alone.

The reason we have decided this is on health grounds. Neither of us can walk very far without getting breathless and having to stop. Too much exertion, or the slightest touch of stress activates my angina. We are both diabetic. Lil injecting insulin is prone sometimes to giddiness. She has also lost the sight in one eye and has limited vision in the other. We both have wheeled frames, but they are not much good when it comes to hills or steps, like wise our mobility scooters. I have to take a water tablet which means I need a toilet quite often, and the public toilets in Bournemouth are permanently shut. The adverse weather conditions down there during November can have a bearing on what we are capable of achieving too.

Hopefully someone may volunteer to replace us, it would be a shame if after 10 years we have to draw a curtain over our Memorial Service. This year Lilian and I will travel to Bournemouth on Friday November 11th, we will attend our memorial at the appropriate time, and observe the two minutes silence, and lay our wreath. If no one takes over this is what we will do for as long as we are able. Any one wishing to join us, we will be there on the 11th at 1045..

Closer to Remembrance day, If no one has come forward, I will inform the Mayors Office that the Deputy Mayor will not be required this year. I will also inform the TS Phoebe officially. We thank Mike Fox for volunteering to lay the Association wreath at the Bournemouth Memorial on the day of their service.

Roy & Lil.

Our Thanks and best wishes to Bob, Pat, & Emma Hobbs, who have, with Stuart & Yvonne Bundy been magnificent in their attendance at the parades since 2003 without their help there would not have been a memorial service. Of course we must not forget our Padre Ray who has only missed one service in that time, and has done us proud come wind & rain. And Alderman Emily Morell Cross, without her help there would be no memorial in the gardens, no seats either. And Mike Fox, a man of all seasons who, like Emily, never takes no for an answer, who talked so much to the stone-mason the stone was freely given.

Roy & Lil.

Members reserving for the reunion are coming in slowly, we have roughly 30 rooms booked so far. Some of you are asking for the same room you had this year but not stating what the number was. At the moment we do not have a proper list of actual room numbers from the hotel, I have asked for one a few times, but I'm still waiting. (I have just phoned the hotel and they are going to email me a list??). So if you do want the same room let me know the number. Although there is no actual cut off date, I think it best if we do the same as we did last year, and that is for you to make your reservation by the end of January, and be fully paid up by the end of April. Be aware that you do not have to pay the full amount in one go, all we need to start with is a £10 pp deposit. The rest you can pay off in bits and pieces as and when you like. Until we tell you otherwise, your payments will be repaid to you if the need arises up until the end of April, after that date it will be subject to any charges the hotel make if they cannot re-let your room. Don't forget we have a coach trip to Portsmouth Dockyard arranged for the Sunday, make sure you tick the box on your reservation form and state how many seats you require..

Ceylon....I had recently come ashore from my ship *HMS Phoebe*. We had returned to Trincomalee on the East side of the island, after making landings with Gurkha troops and Royal Marines on the Arakan coast of Burma. We had followed these up with further expeditions up the River Irrawaddy seeking out the last remaining pockets of Japanese troops and engaging in an amphibious assault, re-taking Rangoon.

On our return we had a few days relaxing at anchor in Trinco' harbour. Peace had not yet be declared but most of us thought the fighting was over. One afternoon, when most of the ships company were having a well-earned rest below, I was on the upper deck in a deckchair fashioned out of an old camp-bed, reading *Love in the Sun* by Leo Walmsley- a peaceful story of high enterprise, love and the sea on the Cornish coast.

Suddenly I heard a violent explosion; a lone Japanese plane had quietly flown in and dropped a bomb, aimed at a large hospital ship anchored nearby, but thankfully missing its target and the wounded on board her..

The pilot then flew towards the *Phoebe*, I sprang up rushing to my action station, he machine gunned me as I ran down the port side, I was an obvious target being that I was alone on deck. I presumed he had no bombs left as he raked the port side with his machine guns making me alter course to the

starboard side for my action station. Having survived Arctic Convoys, Burma and tracer bullets in the Irriwaddy, I wasn't about to go down within a few days of peace. *Phoebe's* light armament was quickly brought into action, but the plane was brought down by other gunfire. So far from his base, and probably short on fuel, the plane was almost certainly to have been flown by a kamikaze pilot. It was sad to think of him and his family in Japan, but we, the hospital ship and its patients were saved.

Lt Cdr Raymond Coleman.

.1806 - HMS Shannon was a 38-gun frigate. Since the 1750s, the term frigate had described the smaller, faster types of warships. They had two decks with the main armament carried on the upper deck.

Completed in 1806, Shannon was a Fifth Rate 'Leda' class frigate mounting 28 18- pounder guns, the Royal Navy's largest type of frigate during the Napoleonic era. In the 1790s America built some very large 44-gun frigates and when war broke out between Gt Britain and the United States in 1812 these ships won a series of single ship actions against the British incensing the British public accustomed to naval victories regardless of the odds.

In response the British instituted a closer blockade of American ports. Shannon, commanded by Captain Philip Broke was one of the ships patrolling off the coast of the United States. During his seven years in charge, Broke had worked up his ship to a peak of fighting efficiency with the best gunnery drill of any vessel in the RN. His gun crews were trained to fire into the hull of the enemy ship to kill the crew instead of shooting down the masts. Throughout his career Broke had prepared for a single ship action. He even refused to capture American merchant ships, as this would require him to put crews on board and reduce Shannon's efficiency.

After a long patrol off Boston, Broke was rewarded on 1 June 1813 when the 38-gun frigate USS Chesapeake came out to challenge him. Captain James Lawrence, the new commander of the Chesapeake, was confident in the ability of his veteran crew, but had reckoned without Broke and the Shannon. As the American frigate approached, the Shannon fired her first devastating broadside at a range of about 35 metres. Lawrence was wounded but ordered his ship to slow down to enable her to return fire, but the American gunners did not have time to adjust their aim as the cannonades of the Shannon swept the Chesapeake's Quarter-deck, and on her upper-deck two thirds of her gun crews were already casualties.

At a crucial moment the Chesapeake's wheel was destroyed by the 9 pounder

gun that Broke had installed on Shannon's Quarter-deck for that purpose. Out of control the vulnerable stern of the American ship was exposed to the raking British fire, and in desperation Lawrence ordered his men to board as the Chesapeake drifted stern first towards the Shannon/ Instead it was Broke who seized the moment and led the boarding party in person onto the Chesapeake. Despite a final "Don't give up the ship!" appeal from Captain Lawrence, the battle was effectively over. In a final act three American sailors, probably from the rigging, attacked Broke; he killed the first one, but the second hit him with a musket, and the third sliced open his skull before being overwhelmed.

The entire action lasted only 11 minutes, but its unequalled ferocity left 148 American and 83 English sailors killed or wounded, all the American officers were wounded, and Lawrence died three days later. Broke made a miraculous recovery and returned to England where he received a hero's welcome for restoring the pride of the Royal Navy. Later in his career he made a decisive contribution to the establishment of professional standards of gunnery at HMS Excellent.

HMS Shannon was placed in reserve in 1831. She was renamed the St Lawrence in 1844 and became a receiving ship at Sheerness, before finally being broken up in 1859. Her name and that of Philip Broke will forever be associated for her swift and devastating victory over the Chesapeake. Compare statistics of HMS Shannon and USS Chesapeake

HMS Shannon:	USS Chesapeake
In Service 1806 - 1859	In Service 1800 - 1813 USN 1813 - 1815 RN
Displacement 950 tons	Displacement 1,244 Tons
Length 150.2 ft	Length 152.5 ft
Beam 39.11 ft	Beam 40.9 ft
Complement 330	Complement 440
Armament -	Armament
Upper-deck	Upper-deck
28 x 18 pdr guns	28 x 18 pdr guns
Quarter-deck	Quarter - deck & Forecastle
1 x long 6 pdr gun	1 x 18 pdr gun
2 x 9 pdr guns	20 x 32 pdr carronades.
2 x 12 pdr guns	
1 x 12 pdr boat carronade	
14 x 32 pdr carronades Forecastle	
2 x 9 pdr guns	
2 x 32 pdr carronades.	

Josie White wrote me this longish letter a while ago, too late for the August newsletter and rather early for this one but here goes, it is now probably in the past tense, Josie will soon let me know if things are better or worse.

"I will start with our health first, George has 'nt been too bad, still having his injections. But I have not been too well since before the reunion. I have a rare form of Polymyalgia called Tempora Arteritis which is treated for at least 3½ years. I went to hospital and spent my birthday morning there, the Doc finally let me leave at 1 pm. We had the family up for a birthday celebration so everything ended up ok. I was on 14 steroids a day, but now I am reduced to six, I hd visions of me looking like a baby elephant, but I am actually losing weight because of all the salads I am eating. Now the reason for writing; George and I, Lynn and Terry our granddaughter Nicola and Gt grandsons Caleb & Gabriel visited the I of W for a weeks holiday. As we left home it started to rain and we had the most horrendous journey, it belted down all the way to the ferry arriving just in time to wave goodbye to the 3pm ferry, and waited an hour for the next one, but the rain had stopped as we arrived. We had a lovely trip across on the ferry. Terry, Nicola and the boys arrived at the caravan site ok. George and I got lost but still arrived in time for tea. On Saturday George and I was told to stay and rest while the others went to Sandown where they walked along the Pier and front. On Sunday we wnet to Colemans Barn where the boys had a great time seeing all the animals and playing on the toys and in the hay. We had lunch at the Horse & Groom which also had a play area. On Monday we went to Ryde shopping, very hilly which was not good for me, but got a bus down to the esplanade, had an ice-cream and watched the Ladies golf Tournament for a while and watched the Hovercraft come in. The kids all went to Shanklin in the evening and played 'crazy golf'.

It was Calebs ninth birthday on Tuesday, and he chose to go to Black Gang Chine for the day. He had a lovely time going round all the attractions and went on the roller coaster and the water slide. Gabriel on the roller coaster laughed on his first ride, felt sick on his second and needed the toilet quick after the third ride. Wednesday saw us at Allum Bay where the boys filled their sand cat and dog cans and then we played 'crazy golf' which Nicola won, it was great fun. On our way back to the caravan we stopped for a look round the Botanical Gardens. In the evening we met up with Bob & Pat Hobbs and spent a lovely couple of hours with them at their home enjoying coffee, cheese and biscuits, booze ,and a long chat.

On Thursday we spent a a wonderful morning at the Butterfly Farm, it was very peacefull and we took some lovely photographs, one butterfly even landed on my shoulder. In the afternoon we went to Shanklin where we visited the shops after we had lunch, and in the evening in the family went and played golf again while we cleaned the caravan and relaxed.

On Friday Nicola Terry and boys went straight home, we stopped for a 'cuppa' and watched the 'satelite tv' which took us on a 'Cooks Tour' through Epping Forest and a area we had not been to before. We finally arrived home about 6.45 pm thoroughly shattered. And that is it for now, hope you enjoyed our little adventure.

George & Josie

PS. Oh Yes! Almost forgot? Its Georges 80th on October 19th??

Thank you Josie, we look forward to seeing you all next year. Keep well.

Dear Members,

Greetings from Venice, Florida. Just a short to say hello and hope that everyone is well. I think of you often as I reminisce with photographs and memorabilia from my first reunion with you at Scarborough in 2006. I am sad to report that after 53 years my chapter "HMS Phoebe" has been forced to disband this past December 2010. The majority of ladies found it difficult to continue due to age and mobility. I would like to extend my very best wishes to everyone and continued success with your yearly reunions.

Sincerely,

Jean Taylor.

This note arrived just a bit too late to make the August newsletter. I told you earlier of the demise of the Phoebe Chapter, other chapters have closed down too, which is a pity, they did so much for charities. Jean joined another chapter just to keep her hand in, but its not the same although she enjoys the members. Jean also carries on attending the memorial service to the RAF trainee pilots who lost their lives during WWII at the Florida US Air Force training base. Something she will keep doing as long as she is able. Although parted now from Richard who escorted her to the reunion, they still get together whenever they can. Jean also has her children and grand children she can visit now and then. We hope you are well Jean and we send our best regards. From the HMS Phoebe Association Shipmates.

The Battle Of Mays Island

A project to construct a huge wind farm off the coast of Scotland has resurrected a Royal Navy disaster that claimed 270 lives, and was kept secret for over eighty years.

The incident, one of the worst Royal Navy disasters ever, occurred during the First World War on the night of the 31st January 1918. The tragedy, known as the "Battle of May Island", occurred some 20 miles off Fife Ness, on Scotland's east coast. It resulted in the loss of two submarines and serious damage to three more submarines and a battle cruiser – without a single enemy shell or torpedo being fired.

The two submarines sunk were of the notorious "K Class". This class of submarine proved far more lethal to its crews than to the enemy, so much so that the "K" was sarcastically said to stand for "Kalamity" by submariners. Driven by oil-fired steam turbine engines, they were large and cumbersome, too slow to keep up with surface ships and difficult to manoeuvre. Of the 18 that were built, none were lost in action but six were sunk in accidental collisions.

A spokesman for the Submariners Association, describing the episode, said: "It was an absolute bloody disaster from the beginning. The K Class submarines did not have a very impressive record. You can see why those who served in them were known as the suicide club." So embarrassing and sensitive was the disaster that despite one officer being court-martialed, the facts were concealed for decades.

During the afternoon of 31st January 1918, a fleet of some forty Royal Navy warships steamed north from Rosyth to join the main battle fleet at Scapa Flow in the Orkneys, they were accompanied by two flotillas of submarines. The vessels steamed in line astern led by the cruisers HMS Courageous and HMS Ithuriel. After nightfall the leading two submarines in the second submarine flotilla, positioned in the mid – rear section of the line, found themselves bearing down on two minesweepers and took evasive action to avoid colliding. The record shows that the third submarine in the flotilla, K14, veered to starboard to avoid colliding with them but performed a complete circle as its rudder jammed.

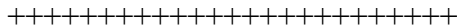
The "maneuver" brought it back into line – just in time to be rammed by the last submarine in the flotilla, K22. A battlecruiser, HMS Inflexible, then ploughed into K22, bending it into a right-angle, and rupturing its fuel tanks.

As was to be expected the leading ships in the convoy then turned back to rescue the submarines and steamed straight into the chaos. One cruiser, HMS Fearless, rammed K17, another of the submarines. The K17 sank within eight minutes – allowing time for many of the crew to save themselves by diving overboard. To make matters worse two further submarines, K4 and K6, then collided. To complete the disaster, a destroyer then steamed through the debris zone in the darkness killing many of the survivors from K17.

The entire 59-man crew of K4 was lost and all but eight of K17's. From sheer embarrassment, more than for any other reason, the Admiralty subsequently ordered the incident to be hushed up. The deceased's next of kin were presumably informed that their men folk had been killed in action – although thousands of sailors knew differently having witnessed the catastrophe at first hand. It was not until 2002 that a commemorative plaque was erected on a cairn in Anstruther, the nearest village on the coast; though even that does not refer to the cause of the loss of life. The Submariners' Association does, however, now hold an annual commemorative service.

The two sunken submarines rest on the seabed some 100 yards apart and 50 yards down. Divers have recently subjected the site to survey as it forms part of the proposed Neart Na Gaoithe offshore wind-farm project.

As it is a registered war grave construction plans will have to be suitably amended so as to not to disturb the site.



I have received from John Vickers a copy of a letter he had from a ex boy seaman`who has organised a memorial plaque to be let into the floor of Portsmouth Cathedral depicting the names and service numbers of all 534 RN Boys who were killed in WWII. HMS Phoebe had nine boys killed in 1941/42 and they are named on the memorial. Most of the work that has gone into making the plaque possible has been completed, the Cathedral Authorities have agreed to the placement of the memorial and to the availability of a Book of Remembrance. The cost is £8000 and donations are asked for, a fund has been set up to accept donations.

I sincerely believe that anything that brings to the fore the sacrifices made by our sailors during WWII, especially the loss of such young men should be remembered forever, and the plaque and the Book is a way of doing so. I will be asking the Committee if the Association can make a donation towards the cost of the plaque and its construction in honour of our lost shipmates. When everything has been completed there will be a commissioning service at the cathedral, we will be informed when that will be, and also invited to attend. The information may arrive anytime from now. If there is anyone who would like to join Lil and myself at the Cathedral please let me know ASAP so that when I get the info, I can pass it on by phone. No doubt Standards will be paraded, I hope ours will be too.

Tampa, Florida

Deep-sea explorers said on Friday they have hauled up what could be the richest sunken treasure ever discovered: hundreds of thousands of colonial era silver and gold coins worth an estimated \$500 million from a shipwreck in the Atlantic Ocean.

A chartered cargo jet recently landed in the United States to unload hundreds of plastic containers packed with the 500,000 coins, which are expected to fetch an average of \$1,000 each from collectors and investors. “For this colonial era, I think [the find] is unprecedented,” said rare coin expert Nick Bruyer, who was contracted by Tampa-based Odyssey Marine Exploration to examine a batch of coins from the wreck. “I don’t know of anything equal or comparable to it. ”Citing security concerns, the company declined to release any details about the ship or the wreck site.

Company co-founder Greg Stemm said a formal announcement will come later, but court records indicate the coins might have come from the wreck of a 17th-century merchant ship found off southwestern England.

Because the shipwreck was found in an area where many colonial-era vessels went down, the company is still uncertain about its nationality, size and age, Stemm said, although evidence points to a specific known shipwreck. The site is beyond the territorial waters or legal jurisdiction of any country.

What a find! after all the costs have been taken into account it will still be huge.

I’ve sent the FNA reunion booking form for next year. As you see it is by far the cheapest 3 nights Half Board you’ll ever get. I have already booked Lil’s, mine & daughter Sharon’s rooms. While we are there we will make enquiries about cost for a 2013 reunion there, maybe we can get the same discounts for May as the FNS got for March, I doubt it, but one never knows till one tries. Roy.

Got a Mobile Phone

A few days ago, a person was recharging his mobile phone at home. Just at that time a call came in and he answered it while the Mobile was still connected to the mains! which resulted in the Mobile being blown up.

This happened in the USA where it is 110 voltage, what would it be like if it happened here with 240 volts, it could be life threatening.

Don't do it. Disconnect the charger first.



Any electrical appliance should be switched off first then the main switch and lastly take the plug out. Some times removing a live plug induces a spark, doing it in the dark its like a flash light going off. You may think it safe if the power is from a 1.5, 9, or 12 volt battery, that is what is being fed into the appliance but there could be something inside the appliance that is generating thousands of volts. So be careful, any electricity is a hidden danger. The pictures above show what damage just a small mobile phone can cause.

Lil calling:

Just to remind you that annual subscriptions should have been paid by the end of September. If you have not paid your subs yet could you please do so ASAP. It makes it so much easier to keep the records straight. Think you may have paid but cannot recall doing so, wether you have or not will be recorded in the ledger, give me a ring, 01235 211501, I won't mind.

We are still operating the savings club, which could be a blessing with the state of increases in the cost of things, remember it is your money, not the associations, and can be withdrawn by you at any time you need it..

A receipt is sent for all transactions, whether it is money in or money out.