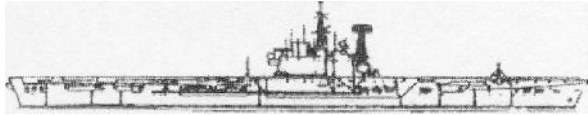


# **SUMMER 2017**



## **R08**

**JOURNAL OF HMS BULWARK ALBION & CENTAUR  
ASSOCIATION**



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Vice Admiral Sir Patrick Symons KBE

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Views and opinions expressed in the R08 are those of the contributors and unless stated are not necessarily those of the Association.

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## EDITORIAL

For the cover picture I have used a good shot of Albion(L14) passing Plymouth Hoe for the first time in six years on her way out for sea trials, thanks to John Finlay for sending me the picture. With the Queen Elizabeth now on her builders trials the pendant number R08 is back on a ship at sea for the first time in 36 years. More to report on both of these ships in this issue. Thanks to all those members after the AGM who passed on material to be used in the R08 I can assure you I will be using it all in forthcoming issues before returning it to you unless you specify otherwise. I do try to ensure all three ships are covered in each issue so please keep sending in anything you think would be suitable, photos,

memories, funny stories you name it all goes to make interesting reading for everyone.

I have recently sent out a circular to all on my members online list, no less than six were bounced back to me. Please me know if you have changed your email address and are registered for online copies of the R08 or if you want to receive the information circulars which I send out in advance of the R08 from time to time.

As this is the last issue to come out before Remembrance Day I have included a suitable poem.

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# IN MEMORIUM

Joe Bell (718) Bulwark 1958 NAM(AE) 810 Sqn 1959-61  
Bulwark 1959-61 NAM (MET)  
CTB 6 September 2016.

Michael(Max) Axford(1142) Albion 1962-64 NAM(AE) 846 Squadron  
CTB 11 March 2017

Also been informed of ;  
Clem Clements Albion 1st Commision LME. Clem was Killick of A mess and a Fresh Water. Tanky

CTB 22 March 2017

Anne Reece wife of Colonel Mick Reece RM  
CTB 16 June 2017

# R I P

+++++

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

" How honoured I am with this memento of my connection with the Association. It is 24 years since I over as your President from the late Vice Admiral Sir Lancelot Bell-Davies and what pleasure it has been. I am delighted that it is still going strong and continues to bring together shipmates who remember their times together in the old ships though I can no longer join you at the annual gatherings.

The elegant plaque you presented to me serves as a vivid reminder of happy times past and especially of Bulwark's last Commission recounted by Colin Bushell in Spring 2017 RO8 which I remember with particular affection - but I am naturally biased!

My thanks to you all Patrick"



## **CHAIRMANS SCRIBBLES**

First of all I would like to express my sincere condolences on behalf of us all to Colonel Mick Reece on the loss of his beloved wife Anne in June.

The AGM at the Royal Beach Hotel went well, once again the Hotel rose to the occasion, we even had good weather. It was great sharing our weekend with the HMS Sheffield crew and being able to attend their memorial service on the Sunday morning. Our new Standard Bearer Neil Pearson did the Association proud on his first official duty with the Standard.

I am still finding my feet as your Chairman, hopefully I didn't make too many mistakes at my first AGM in the post.

Denis has the arrangements for next years AGM in Plymouth well in hand. Due to our Treasurer Keith Harris retiring at the end of the year we are looking for a volunteer to take over the post.

Thank you so much Keith for doing such a good job.

Today Mike and myself had the pleasure of visiting Sir Patrick Symons to present him with a Life Membership Certificate to the Association. It took him by surprise and he was delighted to receive it. I think we all thought it was long overdue.

## **VICE CHAIRMANS WALKABOUTS**

Due to weather conditions the ship had to come along side instead of anchoring offshore. We arrived at the ship by bus then escorted up to the wardroom for tea and tiffin. The wardroom staff were very attentive coming round continues with tea/coffee & nibbles.

At around 1100 hours we made our way down to the vehicle deck.

The Royal Marine band and Guard of Honour were preparing for H.R.H. The Princess Royal to arrive.

The Guard of Honour performed extremely well as did the Royal Marine band per usual. The service was taken by the Chaplin of the Fleet, it was a very good service throughout.

The highlight of the visit for me was meeting and chatting to H.R.H. the Princess Royal, she was very down to earth and easy to talk to.

We all had a good meal of curry, creamed beef or the stroganoff. The catering staff and chefs did an excellent job full marks to all concerned. It was now time to leave the ship and head back to the hotel.

Chris Miles, our liaison officer, looked after me throughout the visit. He even managed to take a few photographs of my chat with the Princess Royal Well shipmates that is all for this trip.

**FULL MARKS TO THE SHIP AND HER CREW**

Cheers Jim....



Jim shares a dit with HRH Princess Anne



Jim also found the time to check on our tree and plinth at the NMA on July 12th

It is well worth a visit if you are in the area

## SEC'S SCRIBBLES

Enjoyed the Southsea get-together & am looking forward to the Plymouth event next May.

I have been in touch with the CO of HMS Bulwark, Lt. Cdr. Chris Jones. He is seeking permission to hold our next AGM onboard the ship. I will let you know the outcome.

Many members have already booked rooms at the Duke of Cornwall Hotel in Plymouth. It promises to be a memorable weekend.

Our Vice-President Jim Ure attended the Re-dedication of HMS Albion recently.

Jim is also the contact for the Remembrance Day march in November.

Thanks to all who have been in touch.

### REUNION WEEKEND 11-14 MAY 2018

**Best Western Duke of Cornwall Hotel  
Millbay Road, Plymouth PL1 3LG  
Telephone: 01752 275850**



This will be the first occasion that our association is holding its annual event in Plymouth. As per AGM I have booked 64 rooms at The Duke of Cornwall Hotel & I hope it will be a popular choice especially for West Country members who have been unable to travel further afield.

I have negotiated a price of £200 per person for the 3 weekend nights for everyone. No single supplements. This includes the Gala Dinner on the Saturday evening & dinner, bed & breakfast otherwise.

**A deposit of £25 per person is the required booking fee. Cheques made payable to “THE DUKE OF CORNWALL HOTEL”. Please book direct with the hotel for your reservation. My contact is Sandra Douskova at the above hotel number. Just quote Bulwark Albion & Centaur Association Weekend.**

As HMS Bulwark is alongside in Devonport I am hopeful that we may be able to hold our 2018 AGM onboard the ship. Other things may develop as I communicate with our Liaison Officer on Bulwark.

The hotel has also presented me with a super menu choice for our Gala Dinner.

It will be printed in the Xmas R08 & then I will remind members & guests to send the choices to myself.

Looking forward to a bumper attendance in Plymouth.

Denis Askham

## TREASURER'S REPORT

I am writing this earlier than Mike's RO8 reports window because I will be away at that time. Nevertheless it is again time to issue a reminder to those members who are now in arrears with the annual subscription. This year also includes some members who previously paid by bank standing order or faster payment whose subs have not been received, in addition to the outstanding cheque-payers. This may be because those affected meant to update their annual bank payment to the revised £10 subscription, cancelled the earlier instruction and then did not replace with the new amount. Please check your bank payments if so affected.

If your subscription has not been paid (at this end-June time of writing) – and if I do not have any information of a later payment arrangement – you will find a reminder/payment slip in this Summer RO8, thanks to the Editor's placement at my request. Please either send a cheque payment to myself using the slip, or instruct your bank to make a faster payment now and followed next year by an annual instruction. Here are our account details, again:

Sort Code: 30-96-11 (Lloyds, North End, Portsmouth)

Account No: 02739754

Name: HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association (up to the allowed spaces)

Amount: £10.00p

Thank you for your cooperation. These are the last few months of my Treasurership which will end with the 31 December Statement of Account.

I would like to pass an accurate paid-up Membership List to my successor and your committee members. Instructions as to whom will be assuming the role of Hon Treasurer should be in the Christmas edition.

## NEW MEMBERS

- 2641 Carole Kenyon Associate Member Widow of the late Mike Kenyon
- 2642 \*C Hancock 4 Penny Close Exminster Devon EX6 8SU
- 2643 Margaret Newey Associate Member Wife of Keith Newey
- 2644 Colin James Reed email only – [colinrd@gmail.com](mailto:colinrd@gmail.com)  
Albion Mar 1961- 64 LREM

\* Rejoinder Welcome Back



## **NAVAL ASSOCIATIONS BI-ANNUAL PARADE CENOTAPH LONDON SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER**

If you would like to join us at this parade please contact me Mike Noonan contact details on page two.

## **REMEMBRANCE PARADE SUNDAY NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>**

Once again members will be marching at the Cenotaph, if you have not participated before and always intended to why not make it this year ?

There is not much time left for Jim to apply for tickets so you will need to contact him ASAP.

Contact Jim Ure on [jimure1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jimure1@hotmail.co.uk)

## **CONA NEWS & INFORMATION**

At it a recent meeting it was stated there are now 70 Naval Associations joined up to CONA, with so many members the committee are now looking at holding an annual conference, it is hoped the majority of member associations would then attend. At the moment the bi-annual meeting attracts about half of that number.

For further information on CONA go to their website *cona.org.uk*

As the membership grows and is known to various organisations either specialising in the forces and veterans community or offering deals/discounts to the same I will include them in this section and hope it will be of interest to you.

## **Veterans UK Gateway**

The Veterans UK Gateway is now open for business. It provides a single point of contact for veterans seeking advice and support. The Gateway puts veterans in touch with the organisations which are best placed to support their need –from healthcare and housing to employability, finances, personal relationships and more.

Please follow the link for more specific details ;

<https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk>

## **State pension A more measured view**

This article is written by John Lavery CEO of the White Ensign Association concerning National Insurance and the State Pension and may well be of interest to you.

“Many of us may have been invited to sign a petition in Facebook or something similar against the changes introduced last year to the State Pension on the grounds that this action unfairly discriminated against members of the Armed Forces. This campaign caused significant anxiety amongst a number of the serving sailors and marines as well as the veteran community so I offer this wider explanation of the situation. This is a change that has affected large elements of the public sector and has been on the cards for a while and well published –I would suggest that many didn’t understand its implications and didn’t appreciate that they were making a lower level of national insurance contribution(approx. 10.6%) than many (12%) before 2016.To help I offer the following facts and observations as I understand them:

- The new state pension was introduced on 6th April 2016.
- The basic rule is that those MEN born ON or AFTER 6 April 1951 and those WOMEN born ON or AFTER 6 April 1953 will be eligible for the new state pension.
- The basic state pension before the change was £119 a week or just over £6,000 a year. This could then be topped up by additional state pension entitlements – either the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS) which were in place from 1978 to 2002 or the State Second Pension, which replaced it. The armed forces along with much of the public sector were “contracted out” of these second top up pensions –the explanation offered was that they already had a public sector occupational pension and thus didn’t need the additional state pension entitlement–they were thus charged a slightly lower rate of NI.
- Between April 2016 and April 2021 there will be an element of transition for those reaching state pension age but after April 2021 there will be ‘flat rate’ pension for all. This is currently £159.55 a week, which would amount to almost £8,300 a year.
- The new state pension does not allow “contracting out” thus all those who previously contracted out making the lesser NI contribution saw an increase in their NI charge as of April 2016 to the national standard rate (12%).
- Up until April 2016 individuals needed to have 30 years of qualifying National Insurance contributions to get the current full state pension, but as a result of the

introduction of the new scheme they will need 35 years of contributions to get the full flat rate state pension.

- The pension calculation now starts with a default of the full pension (£159.55) and then makes deductions for such things as lower contributions or less than the full qualifying period.

- For those who have fallen short of the new rules there are ways of “topping-up” the deficit to some extent, however for those still serving in the Armed Forces they should not worry about it too much - It has been calculated that for those who have been “contracted out” for 30 years it should take them an additional 8 and a half years paying the full rate of NI to get the new state pension at its maximum rate – which of course cannot be claimed until 66, 67 or 68 depending on your age. The less time an individual has been “contracted out” ie less service before 2016 the shorter the time before they have made up the deficit in NI payments.

- State Pension Age is 66 for those aged 57 to 63, 67 for those currently between 40 to 56, and 68 for those 39 and under.

- In all honesty this change has the greatest effect on those individuals who become eligible to draw their state pension in the next 5 years or so – thus is predominantly a veterans’ issue.

- The Facebook petition intimates that this adjustment of the rules has been applied only to former members of the Armed Forces and Civil servants - this is not the case – contracting out was normal practice across the whole public sector and indeed amongst many independent Final Salary schemes as well.

- If an individual is unsure about what their pension entitlement is likely to be they can apply for a State Pension Statement to give an estimate of how much they are likely to get upon reaching state pension age. The statement will be based on the National Insurance contribution record as it stands on the date the statement was produced – link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/check-state-pension>

If you want further information or are still concerned please feel free to get in touch with the WEA.”

*New plans announced in July 2017 mean that the rise in the pension age to 68 will now happen in 2039, which will affect people born between 6 April 1970 and 5 April 1978....ed*

## **New Citizens Advice service for CONA Members**

“Seafarers’ Advice and Information Line (SAIL) is a Citizens Advice service for all UK seafarers. We have been helping merchant seafarers and fishermen for 20 years. Now SAIL is expanding to cover the Royal Marines and Royal Navy. SAIL’s advice is free, fast and confidential. All of our advisers are all professional and fully trained.

If you’ve ever served in the Royal Marines or Royal Navy, you and your partner can get advice from us on a wide range of issues, for example on debts, benefits, pension problems, housing, immigration and much more. There are further details on our website at [www.sailine.org.uk](http://www.sailine.org.uk).

For example if you’ve got debt problems, we’ll contact all your creditors to stop them adding interest to your debts. Together with you we’ll make up an Income & Expenditure statement, and then we’ll advise you what next steps you could take. We’ll help you as long as you need us.

To contact a SAIL adviser – call 020 3597 1580 between 10 and 4 on weekdays (answer phone service outside these hours) or email [advice@sailine.org.uk](mailto:advice@sailine.org.uk)  
Funding for this expansion of SAIL’s service is coming from Greenwich Hospital.

Thank you

Miles Cowley Manager, Seafarers’ Advice & Information Line (SAIL)”

### **Project Semaphore**

The scheme is up and running with over 200 former seafarers now using their ipads having been given one and then shown how to use it. With the 1<sup>st</sup> years costs including broadband rental are paid for, this could well be extended. It is a very useful means of opening up a new world to veterans previously not online and unable to send/receive emails browse the websites etc.

If you are resident in the UK, over 65 and a service veteran with no access to the internet and would like to find out more about the scheme contact Sarah Clewes at [sarah@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:sarah@royalnavalassoc.com)

Hopefully a family member or a person in your local library will be happy to do this for you.

The money for this project comes from Libor funds.

### **Coleman/Ansvar Insurance**

Discounted Branch and House hold Insurance - 01323 744149

<http://www.thecolemangroup.co.uk/coleman-insurance-brokers/organisation-specific/cona>

## **The Veterans Bereavement Support Service**

The Veterans Bereavement Support Service was created by those who have served in the Armed Forces and Merchant Navy for those who serve and have served and to ensure that they have full access to a specialist bereavement support network at the time of need for their family and friends. Since its inception, the service has grown and through the massive network of professionals we are able to offer a comprehensive range of services that support people not just after they have lost someone special but also before, so that the support is available and that they can plan ahead.

We offer a bespoke service for families needing assistance with bereavement and support including advice on funeral care 365 days a year from our national office in Romsey.

**We do not charge for our Advice and Information services and we are all volunteers.**

We are a not for profit organisation run by Volunteers in a clear effective way and we are signed members of the Armed Forces Covenant. No one is paid to work for us and we ensure all of the donations that we receive are used for the benefit of veterans.

We work very closely with Ex-Service Organisations, Veterans and their families, the current Armed Forces and a great network of professional bodies including Funeral Directors, Celebrants, Counsellors and advisers to enable our comprehensive and well known support services.

We are run by an elected management team who come various occupations and have family links with the Armed Forces and we also have tri-service advisers to the team, so that we encompass the military aspects into the running of the organisation. In addition to the management committee there are numerous sub-committees each with own military link person so that every part of our project is managed effectively.

We are not funeral directors and we refer families to respected funeral directors across the UK who specialize ex-service funerals at affordable prices.

Website; [Veteransbereavementsupport.co.uk](http://Veteransbereavementsupport.co.uk)

Email; [info@veteransbereavementsupport.co.uk](mailto:info@veteransbereavementsupport.co.uk)

Tel No. 01794 874149 or 07889009393

### **Funeral Service**

- Significant discount for Veterans UK [www.veteranfunerals.co.uk](http://www.veteranfunerals.co.uk)  
Tel 07889 009393

*This service works closely with the Veterans Bereavement Support Service..mn*

## Legal Services

Free 30 minute legal advice with Coffin Mew.  
[armedforces@coffinmew.co.uk](mailto:armedforces@coffinmew.co.uk) 0800 827168

# RAC

RAC Breakdown and recovery service [asec@arno.org.uk](mailto:asec@arno.org.uk) or 0207 4025231



*Organisers of Reunions should be aware the CONA Travel will match or better any other 'like for like' Reunion/Group Trips bookings so why not give them an opportunity to impress you.*

*They can also arrange individual bookings*

By Phone: CONA Holiday Service on 01603 886744

By Email: [conatravelservices@justforgroups.co.uk](mailto:conatravelservices@justforgroups.co.uk)

By Post: The CONA Holiday Service, c/o Just For Groups!,  
The Old Bakery, Queens Road, Norwich, NR1 3PL

# DEFENCE Discount Service

The ONLY official Ministry Of Defence Discount Service



Supporting the Armed Forces Community

### Who qualifies for the service?

The official Ministry of Defence discount service is available for all members of the Defence Community and you can join for free and start saving £100's a year. The Service is available for the following:

**Serving Armed Forces - Reserve Forces - Spouses/Partners of serving personnel - Forces Veterans - MOD Civil Servants Bereaved Family Members - War/Service Widow(er)s - Cadet Forces (over 16)**

*If you have not yet heard of this official government backed scheme it is well worth looking into. Once a member there is a fee of £4.99 for the privilege card which lasts for five years. I have found it very useful for saving money with discounts available over a wide range of shops and services ...mn*

At the Reunion weekend I was asked about baseball hats which I last mentioned in the Summer 2014 R08. If anyone is interested in acquiring one I am reproducing the piece below.

Although the design shown is for Bulwark the hats are also produced with the same carrier design for Centaur R06 and Albion R07



If anyone would like one they are produced by BS Embroidery Plus Units 12-13 Holman Road Liskeard Business Park Liskeard Cornwall PL14 3UT Telephone 01579 324170 Email ; bosunstore@aol.com Website www.bs-embroidery.co.uk They are priced at £12 each including p&p

**Please order direct they are not available from the Treasurer**

## REUNION 2017

Once again a successful reunion was held at The Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea. It was great to see the many familiar faces of our regulars but also some new first timers, everyone appeared to enjoy themselves.

We shared the Hotel with the 1982 Sheffield Survivors Association who were only to keen to swap yarns with us over a pint or two, in fact they extended an invitation to join them for their memorial service on the Sunday morning an offer which was taken up by some of us including Bernie carrying our standard.

Jerry Stanford Presided over the meeting whilst Bernie Keane chaired his first BAC AGM which was well attended with the proposal to hold AGM 2018 in Plymouth very well received.

Sub Lt Chris Miles RN our liaison officer in Albion was our guest at the gala dinner and took the salute at the end of the Royal Marines drum and bugle beatings.

**Don't forget to book early for Plymouth the best rooms go quickly.....mn**

## AGM 2017



Sub Lt Chris Miles  
with Mike and Molly Noonan



Royal Marines  
Corps of Drums  
perform mess  
beatings



Fred and Rita Hodgson



## Our New Standard Bearer Neil Pearson



Neil flanked by the Chairman and Vice Chairman

Neil (2<sup>nd</sup> from left foreground) first parade with the standard.

HMS Sheffield survivors Memorial Service held at the Falklands Memorial Old Portsmouth



### GIBRALTAR 2018

Following the successful visit to Malta last September some of us thought it would be a good idea to pay a visit to Gib next year. When mentioned at the AGM it met with a lot of interest.

Before going any further with this project would anyone definitely interested please contact me preferably by email to give me some idea of the numbers.

I have it in mind to go in September if possible to be there for National Day on the 10<sup>th</sup> which is probably the best day of the year to be in Gib.

Other Associations who have done this trip seem to differ on whether it is best to arrange flights individually and make a group booking for the Hotel as flights prices seem to vary or make a group booking for both flights and Hotel.

I welcome suggestion and ideas.

My contact details are on page two.....*mike noonan*

## Can You Help

Tigress Productions would like to contact any members of HMS Bulwark Ships' Company that were on the deployment which involved the SS Melika and the SS Ferdinand Gillibert collision on the night of 12/13 September 1958.

If you can assist please contact Gemma on 0117 933 5620 or

[gemma@greene@tigressproductions.co.uk](mailto:gemma@greene@tigressproductions.co.uk)

Stuart Wakefield isn't a member but requires information from anyone especially connected with 848 Squadron in Malaya in the 1950s.

“I am at the stage of composing an application for a PhD History to be submitted around September. My chosen subject relates to pioneering helicopter operations during the Malayan Emergency from 1950 to 1960. At this stage, I am accumulating contact detail from willing contacts, and also gaining an overview of archived material. I am not seeking specific detail at this stage as this is a minimum of a three year project subsequent to agreeing the ground rules with a yet-to-be-identified academic supervisor.”

Stuarts' email address is [esende@live.co.uk](mailto:esende@live.co.uk)

## BULWARK L15

A spectacular shot of Bulwark with the Red Arrows 'bomb bursting' over her.

Now in Devonport dockyard and unlikely to go to sea again for about six years the ship will be spending some of that time in care & maintenance followed by a refit, much the same routine as Albion has just emerged from.



I hope it will still be possible to include a report from the ship from time to time.

## ALBION L14

Having emerged from her long slumber and refit the ship sailed on sea trials on June 16<sup>th</sup>. The trials lasted four weeks, all the ships systems and ships company were tested. Sea Riders from FOST put the crew through their paces including fire fighting, flooding casualties even a blaze from a crashed aircraft on the flight deck. Once satisfied the trials began in earnest. An extra 130 personnel were embarked which were the specialists involved in the refit and installing the new equipment. With everyone satisfied that everything works the ship returned to Devonport to prepare for Rededicating



With the dock flooded for the first time Royal Marine craft operate from the ship off Plymouth

## YOUR LETTERS

“Spring 2016 edition for Richard Sims 2016  
An ex Centaur bod 1958-60 relates to a pair of kippers.

In January 1960 Freemantle (Perth) had a short weekend to see some old pals of my Brother who was with them in Malaya earlier. Arranged to meet Merle on the Post Office steps (Perth) at 5.30pm. Found the steps at 12.30 pm and a bar at 12.31 pm. So after this bar or another at 4.30 ish because we had to leave for 5 mins to sweep out the ref-raf.

A chap sad to me “wona boy sam kippers” oi said now he said “if yer don’t boy em oirl shove em up yer a-----le” oi sed oi lav kippers and we had another beer until 5.15 pm.

I found the Post office steps with the kippers under my arm staining my whites and smelling a bit or was it me ?

Merle turned up on time and the two of us boarded a bus for Scabro Beach.

On the way she threw the kippers out of the window and left the window open and then said “wake up dozie we are here”.

After a short w/e with friends got back to the ship early Monday morning with clothes all washed and pressed by my new friends(maybe) at Western Aussie.

Richard (oldies) I wonder if the guy with the kippers was you as I was 8 years after you at Ganges 1954-55.

Good times, great memories a lot of us can relate to.

Cheers Geoff Clegg (1856)

ps had a dog called Kipper for 15 years, reminds me of Aussie”



An unusual shot of a Royal Marines Gazelle on Bulwarks forward lift



A good picture of a jackstay transfer between Centaur and the Destroyer Solebay taken in 1961 whilst the ships were on passage Ceylon to Aden.

## Two R08s

1954



**Displacement 26,200 tons**  
**Length 224.8 metres**  
**Beam 37 metres**  
**Draught 8.5 metres**

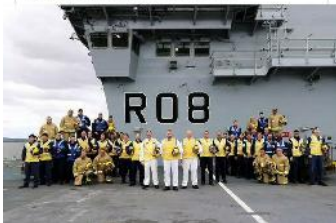
*Source wikipedia*

2017



**Displacement 70,600 tons**  
**Length 280 metres**  
**Beam 73 metres**  
**Draught 11 metres**

First flight deck party on HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH all ready to sail.



Simulated flight deck scene.

Flyco is located in the after of the two islands.



The simulated picture shows an F35 Lightning over the deck with other F35s and Merlin helos ranged on the starboard side.

1954 Bulwark is shown with most of her 1956 (Suez) Air group of 30 Seahawks on deck.



Everything is now ready to welcome the QE into Portsmouth. An extensive dredging programme has been carried out, the harbour approach channel has been altered to allow a straight run in and out instead of the corner turn off Southsea Castle. The harbour entrance is going to be a tight squeeze as shown in the simulated picture and it will be very interesting to witness the ships arrival which according to the latest information is still some weeks away. There is always a possibility it might be sooner

depending on how her sea trials work out. The jetties on the front we used to know as Pitch House, Middle Slip etc where our carriers and the Vic used to berth have been rebuilt, strengthened and straightened out. They have also been renamed, Pitch House is Victory Jetty and Middle Slip is Princess Royal Jetty. As things stand the ship will be unable to enter Devonport, many of you will remember it was a tight turn around Drakes Island for the old Ark and Eagle with one or other of them touching the bottom on occasion.



Royal Arthur – Wadswick Green

There may be many who belong to the Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association who were 'invited' to attend this establishment either as a staff member but probably, more likely, for leadership training. I live very close to the location and provided some historical data to people who live in the surrounding area via a local 'freebie' magazine. The information I have provided here gave them a historical link with the past and I hope that for the R08 readership it will either refresh memories but also quash some myths and legends about the establishment. The question therefore must be, "What was Royal Arthur?" and why was this Naval Establishment strangely located in the Cotswolds, miles away from the sea.

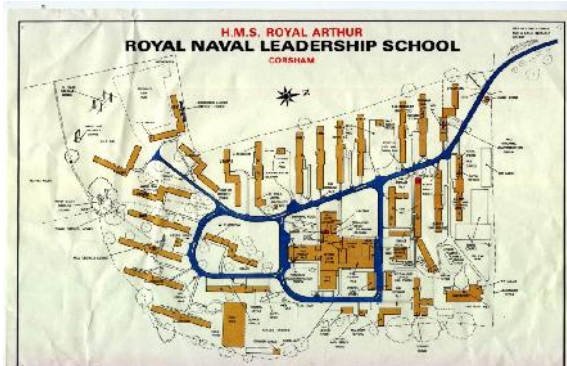


Royal Arthur site aerial photograph, post closure – main entrance bottom left

I had joined the RN in 1962 and eventually my naval career reached a point where, as a young Petty Officer, NCO, I was ‘invited’ to carry out leadership training at this establishment called Royal Arthur. The duration was for six weeks and it took place from 8<sup>th</sup> June to 19<sup>th</sup> July 1972.

Why here in Neston, or perhaps Westwells; the boundary becomes a little fuzzy here; although in general terms it was always referred to as Royal Arthur, Corsham. The answer to that is somewhat involved but let me start with N.J McCamley’s thoroughly researched book “Secret Underground Cities”. A chapter within this book is devoted to Hostels and Married Quarters for the workers of the Ordnance Depots and Factories situated underground during World War 2, at this location. The recent Royal Arthur therefore began life as Kingsmoor Camp, or to be more precise, Hostel Site (HS) 10, constructed circa 1941. The information displayed in his book however, shows that after its construction it was transferred to the Admiralty in 1943.

The original purpose for the buildings is supported by Commander Patrick Durrant Hoare’s book, From Ceylon to Corsham (Chapter 23) where toward the end of his naval career he was Commander in Command of Royal Arthur; 1956 to 1958. It is similarly supported by a report entitled MOD Corsham, Wiltshire, Values Study by Oxford Archaeology; taking cognisance of the disclaimer in the preface of that report.



Plan view of Royal Arthur –  
Note the entrance, top right.

Somewhat conflictingly the detailed narrative provided by Godfrey Dykes ([http://www.godfreydykes.info/KINGSMOOR\\_CAMP](http://www.godfreydykes.info/KINGSMOOR_CAMP)) suggests that between the two world wars the camp had been built for the Army and was known as Kingsmoor Camp as it had been built 'in the environs of Kingsmoor Wood'. I have, however, been unable to trace any information to substantiate that fact although it is possible that it was called Kingsmoor Camp from 1943 to 1947 (see later).

In the meantime, however, further north of the country and during the early stages of WW2, the Butlins holiday camp at Ingoldmells near Skegness, Lincolnshire, was turned over to the RN as a training establishment for HO's (hostilities only) personnel, it being adjacent to the North Sea, with adequate accommodation and facilities to feed the new naval ratings during their training. This establishment was commissioned on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1939 as HMS Royal Arthur. It was decommissioned and paid off in 1946.

Royal Arthur was then recommissioned at Westwells, Corsham on 2 January 1947 and carried out a dual role, firstly as a junior rate leadership training establishment, and secondly, one of several assessment camps where new recruits, particularly National Servicemen, were assessed, kitted out and sent to their various depots. Its most notable instructor was the then Philip Mountbatten, shortly before his wedding to Princess Elizabeth in 1947. Legend has it that he holds the record from a standing start for the journey from Corsham to the gates of Buckingham Palace.

Prior to 1949, leadership and management of ratings within the RN put a heavy emphasis on drill, or square bashing as it was known, which was a necessary function for many evolutions, gun crews and damage control for example. These were the type of areas where immediacy for effect (blind obedience, if you will) would be required but hardly a requirement where information needed to be transferred quietly, within a submarine for

example. Similarly, for when skilled technicians/mechanics were fault finding or carrying out maintenance tasks or cooks were preparing a meal. Lord Louis Mountbatten understood this and had conceived a much overdue plan to train Petty Officers (PO's) to improve their quality of leadership. The plan was approved by the Admiralty and since Royal Arthur had become available, the Admiralty re assigned the establishments role to the PO leadership training in 1950. To the layman, the rank of PO is equivalent to Sergeant in the Army and Air Force.

It must be said though that the drill element within the RN, though much reduced, continues and even today it is necessary firstly to give New Entries a grounding and a respect for discipline and for immediacy where required. Secondly it also has a dual purpose in providing the RN with the capability of carrying out a ceremonial function at any time and at any place. The ability to give orders (Power of Command) is still a part of leadership training for Leading Hands, and at this time for Petty Officers it was conducted at Royal Arthur.



Although manpower numbers had decreased significantly since the end of the Second World War, the Navy of the 1970s-remained manpower intensive. This was necessary mainly to maintain and operate many ships and equipment that were designed in the 1940s and even later ships where the equipment reliability was of a poor standard. The majority of surface ships were still powered by steam which also required a high proportion of maintenance. In 1972, the total manpower for the RN was approximately 87,000 of which 12,000 were officers. This number also includes the Fleet Air Arm element. The fleet consisted of:

4 Aircraft Carriers

2 Cruisers

County Class Destroyers

Daring Class Destroyers

6 Different Classes of Frigate

Porpoise and Oberon Class (P&O) diesel electric submarines

Resolution Class Nuclear Class Submarines carrying Polaris

Nuclear Missiles

Valiant Class Nuclear attack submarines and a plethora of minor war vessels such as minesweepers and survey vessels

It can be seen therefore that it was vitally important that supervisory skills be stimulated in whatever branch of this large organisation. I will let you draw your own conclusions as to how the RN of the mid-1970s compares to the navy of today.

The RN, at this time, was still very much an “up-and-at ’em” organisation. Who can forget the Field Gun runs at the Royal Tournament where two teams (out of four provided for the event) would race against each other manhandling the gun and limber whilst negotiating obstacles on the way. In many ways, some of the evolutions and management training experienced within the courses syllabus at Royal Arthur reflected this.

So, what was the course content all about? The location of Royal Arthur was significant as it meant that the student was taken out of the day to day naval environment that he (yes, he, as it was a total male environment then) experienced on his ship, air station, submarine or establishment. In addition, it was also a separation from domestic duties such as home, wife and family. PO’s came from all branches from within the RN thus giving a collective insight into how they operated and the areas they operated in. All the students were treated almost as if they held no rank. The course started as soon as the PO passed through the Main Gate as student scrutiny and assessment began almost immediately. The class was formed and a Divisional Officer and Class Instructor were appointed, the latter of which was either a senior Chief Petty Officer (CPO) or Colour Sergeant RM. The establishments main compliment, other than the courses under training and those I have just mentioned, was made up of other executive officers, Physical Training and Parade Instructors, Cooks and Medical Staff plus a mixture of other branch Junior Rates who assisted in the maintenance and running of the camp; all headed by a Commanding Officer. Many civilians, academics, professionals and others

were brought in for specialist evolutions and for the running of the camp and the training programme.

The course syllabus, developed in the 1950s, and brought up-to-date to reflect the changing times, included a wide variety of topics. Physical fitness was key in supporting practical leadership and endurance tests. Parade training, in support of issuing words of command together with exercises in public speaking, presentations and lectures in topics wide and various (both given and received) were all essential ingredients. Compulsory inter-course games during the early evening (the Dog Watches) involving staff, brought about the close-knit relationship between staff and course students.

One gruelling event worth mentioning was The Cliff and Chasm, or known within Royal Arthur as the 'Cough and Spasm'. (See Figure 2, top right hand corner for its location). This timed event required fitness and stamina to manoeuvre a barrel of sand up a steep bank and over a chasm, the equipment having firstly been run to the site in a hand cart. The site can just be seen through the trees on leaving Wadswick Green toward Westwells.

The final course test being an 'assault' on the Black Mountains in Wales where various objectives had to be located to accrue points. Points were also awarded for particular leadership skills. The student was then given his final assessment by the staff and the course was then completed.



The start of the Cliff and Chasm  
(Class and date unknown)

On return to Royal Arthur the student was interviewed individually by the course Divisional Officer and given an assessment for the whole of the course. The PO then returned to duties within the fleet.



Class 243, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1972, The Author front row 2<sup>nd</sup> from right  
Royal Arthur ceased training on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1992 and closed with staff and civilian personnel finally leaving on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1993.

With the reduction of ships, submarines and increased equipment reliability resulting in reduced manpower levels and the RNs (MoD's) reduction in its estate over the years, leadership training, having been reassessed, moved to the Royal Naval School of Leadership and Management at HMS Excellent, Portsmouth in 1993. Further academic assessment of the leadership requirement then ensued and in 2002 leadership training of NCOs and ratings moved to, and as part of, the Royal Naval Leadership Academy at HMS Collingwood, now the School of Maritime Warfare, at Fareham in Hampshire.

Royal Arthurs buildings were left derelict until 2014. Many proposals had been offered to redevelop the site but it was not until then that Morgan Sindall had planning permission approved to build the first £18M stage of a £60M retirement village, Wadswick Green. The Royal Arthur ships crest and a plaque to commemorate its closure can be found in the entrance to Corsham Town Hall.

Finally, a note to the occupants of Wadswick Green - if during the silent hours, you hear shouting of orders, the sound of men running in boots or cries of encouragement or anguish mixed with occasional laughter, don't be alarmed, it's only the ghosts of thousands of Petty Officers who for approximately 42 years sweated blood in pursuance of their leadership goals on the site of your home.

Colin Bushell, CPO. RN. (1962 to 1986.)

*Recommended reading and viewing:*

*'Secret Underground Cities' NJ McCamley ISBN 085052 733-3.*

*'From Ceylon to Corsham', Commander Pat Hoare RN. ISBN 978-0-946418-82-4*

*YouTube: Field Gun Run Royal Tournament – Last Run video*

[www.johnadair.co.uk/articles/royal\\_navy.pdf](http://www.johnadair.co.uk/articles/royal_navy.pdf)



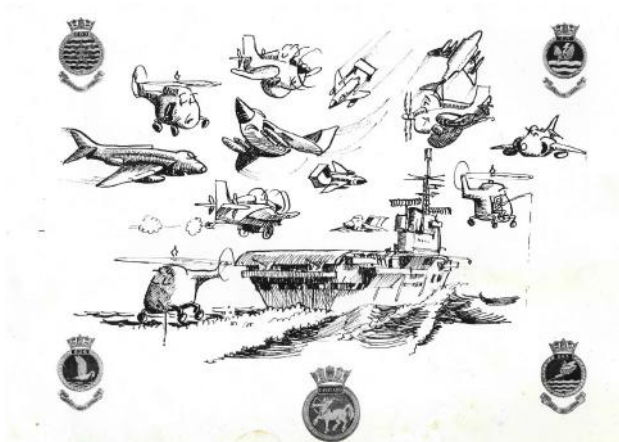
Anyone know what the Pussers Bus was doing on the flight deck ?

# One for the Centaurs one the 1961 commission



## OUTLINE OF THIRD COMMISSION

3rd March	Commissioning Ceremony
9th March — 24th March	Sea Trials
29th March	Sail for Mediterranean
3rd April — 30th June	Exercises and Visits in Mediterranean
1st July — 13th August	Exercises and Visits
Mid-August	Return to Portsmouth
Mid-August — mid-September	Self Maintenance and Leave at Portsmouth
Autumn 1961	Sail for Service East of Suez





Working Party from Culdrose helping in the recent flooded village of Coverack



**To prevent your estate going to people you would not wish to inherit, then make the last clause in your Will, that if all named beneficiaries pre-decease you, then your estate goes to Charity,**

Many people, who have made Wills, do not give enough thought to the possibility that those they have named to benefit from their estate may not survive them, and that if there has not been time to change the Will in such an event, who will then receive what had been Willed to them? Will it be a relative they would not have wished to benefit from their estate?

There is only one way round that situation. You need to include a clause in your Will saying if any of the beneficiaries do not survive you, their benefit shall go the other named beneficiaries or if none survive you, to a named charity or charities.

Naming charities in a Will can cause its own problems. If you change your mind about the named charity, you have to change your Will.

The way round that problem is to name the Charity Aid Foundation as the charity. You then tell them in writing which charities you wish such benefit to go to. If you later change your mind, you only have to write to CAF about the changes you want. You do not have the expense and trouble of changing your Will.

With Will's being kept on computer file today, there is no need for Codicils to be used for any changes. It costs not more for a New Will to be printed off with the changes; no beneficiaries will know there have been changes, and no disputes which Codicils have caused in the past.

CAF can be contacted at 25, Kings Hill Avenue,  
Kings Hill, West Malling,  
Kent. ME19 4TA  
Tel 03000 123 000  
Fax 03000 123 000

David Angell(1566)

A poem for Nov 11th,

A POEM WORTH READING

He was getting old and paunchy  
And his hair was falling fast,  
And he sat around the Legion,  
Telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he once fought in  
And the deeds that he had done,  
In his exploits with his buddies;  
They were heroes, every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors  
His tales became a joke,  
All his buddies listened quietly  
For they knew where of he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer,  
For ol' Joe has passed away,  
And the world's a little poorer  
For a Veteran died today.

He won't be mourned by many,  
Just his children and his wife.  
For he lived an ordinary,  
Very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,  
Going quietly on his way;  
And the world won't note his passing,  
'Tho a Veteran died today.

When politicians leave this earth,  
Their bodies lie in state,  
While thousands note their passing,  
And proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories  
From the time that they were young,  
But the passing of a Veteran  
Goes unnoticed, and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution  
To the welfare of our land,  
Some jerk who breaks his promise  
And cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow  
Who in times of war and strife,  
Goes off to serve his country  
And offers up his life?

The politician's stipend  
And the style in which he lives,  
Are often disproportionate,  
To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary Veteran,  
Who offered up his all,  
Is paid off with a medal  
And perhaps a pension, small.

It is not the politicians  
With their compromise and ploys,  
Who won for us the freedom  
That our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger,  
With your enemies at hand,  
Would you really want some cop-out,  
With his ever-waffling stand?

Or would you want a Veteran  
His home, his country, his kin,  
Just a common Veteran,  
Who would fight until the end.



He was just a common Veteran,  
And his ranks are growing thin,  
But his presence should remind us  
We may need his likes again.

For when countries are in conflict,  
We find the Veteran's part,  
Is to clean up all the troubles  
That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor  
While he's here to hear the praise,  
Then at least let's give him homage  
At the ending of his days.

Perhaps just a simple headline  
In the paper that might say:  
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,  
A VETERAN DIED TODAY."

Author 'Unknown'



Some of Tuggs cartoons once seen on the wall in Rubys pub Pompey



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