



The Rum Tub or Norrie's Nocturnal and Nautical Natter.

HMS Ulster

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2013 The Last Big Reunion? What do you think?

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Special points of interest:

- * HMS Ulster was in commission for 37 years, somewhat of a record.
- * Holds the world record for height above sea level for a British warship, 600 feet and over 2000 miles inland on fresh water.
- * We are in contact with 55 1958-60 crew and 28 non-58-60 crew.

We said in 2001 we would have one big final reunion in 2008 to mark the 50th anniversary of our unique commission. We all (those that attended a remarkable weekend) attended a meeting on the Sunday morning and then surprise, surprise, a unanimous vote to stage yet another event.

The majority were call-

ing for one the following year, but no one seemed willing to take it on, I agreed to do another one but with a two year interval as I needed a break.

We came, we saw, we enjoyed the 52nd anniversary of our unique commission and the 50th of our paying off. It was obvious that quite a number liked these get togethers, so I arranged a min reunion for 2011 and joined up with HMS Cheviot association, so we were able to fill the hotel with all navy.

A great weekend was

enjoyed by all, being regally entertained by Shep Woolley on the Saturday night.

Once again on the Sunday morning we had a 'mess meeting' and it was decided to do the same for 2012, but to stage a bigger (last?) one in 2013 in the center of the country, possibly Tamworth.

Now that has been set up and the answers are slowly (very slowly) coming in and so far response has been very positive indeed.

**Will it be the last?
What do you think?**

2013 Reunion Draft Schedule

Inside this letter will be some useful distances and travel information.

The roughed in program thus far is:

Friday
- Meet & Greet
(quiet evening)

Saturday
- Bus trip to Lord Leycester Hospital.

Saturday evening
- Official Dinner followed by Shep Woolley.

Sunday
- Bus trip to National Arboretum.

Sunday Night

- TBD

Monday

- Have a safe journey home shipmates.

Travel Information



Car Distances

To Tamworth

Plymouth	220
Portsmouth	164
Dover	205
Southend	156
Bristol.....	110

Ipswich	155
Norwich	163
Cambridge.....	100
Grimsby	130
Newcastle	195
Carlisle.....	196
Manchester	87
Leeds	106
Wrexham.....	72
Shrewsbury	50
Gloucester	78
Newton Abbot	196
Oxford.....	80
London (Central) ...	121

Salisbury	150
Brighton	180
Guildford	140
Eastborne	200
Cardiff	130
Glasgow	290
Edinburgh	291

Trains & Buses call at Tamworth from Glasgow, York, Newcastle, London and Plymouth.

Taxi fare from Bus & Train station to hotel £3.00 approximately.

AB Just Nuisance Part 1 (From a book by Terry Sissions, extract edited by Norrie Millen)

This is the story of a dog, a very special canine and certainly a unique mutt in the annals of war. His name was Just Nuisance and he was the only dog ever officially enlisted into the Royal Navy.

After joining the Royal Navy in August 1939, his official rank and name were entered as Able Seaman Just Nuisance. In addition he was the only member of the Senior Service to be excused by Admiralty Orders from wearing a cap at any time. (Even when he was on the Dog Watch!)

As a new entry he was sent to serve at *HMS Afrikander I*, a shore base at Simon's Town, 25 miles from Cape town. He quickly became and remained for the rest of his life, a ratings dog. The ordinary naval rating was more boisterous and jovial, towards both humans and animals, than Officers and Chief & Petty Officers. It is undoubtedly due to this fact that Nuisance preferred their company.

As this account will later describe there were exceptions to this rule. Human females he ignored. Great Dane Bitches he loved, but then as a Great

Dane himself that was quite understandable.

Before enlistment in the RN, Nuisance was allowed onboard naval ships moored in the Dockyard, and this was how he came to be christened Nuisance, being normally found sprawled on the

After joining the Royal Navy in August 1939, his official rank and name were entered as Able Seaman Just Nuisance and was the only rating in the RN to be excused hats!

gangway. He would accompany ratings (without a ticket) on trains from Simon's Town to Cape town and his vendetta with South African Railways Officials, who put him off the trains, is well recorded. It was this that led up to his being accepted into His Majesty's Royal Navy as an able seaman.

The South African Railway informed Nuisance's owner that, unless the dog refrained from travelling on trains without a ticket he would be destroyed. As

Nuisance was now a legend among naval and civilian personnel of the Cape, there was an angry protest by thousands of people. The Admiralty intervened, enlisted him into the Royal Navy and provided him with a complimentary railway ticket.

During his entire naval career Nuisance never bit a human being, though came close several times. Nor would he attack other dogs, unless they threatened him which was rare, as Nuisance was one metre in height, just under two metres standing upright on his rear legs and weighed 67 kg, all bone and muscle. He did kill other dogs. On August 4 1942, he caused the death of the mascot of *HMS Shropshire* and again in November 1943 he killed the mascot of *HMS Redoubt*. He was exonerated on the grounds that both dogs had attacked him first.

Nuisance would tolerate Officers, Petty officers and various ratings of the RN - such as



AB Just Nuisance

Just Nuisance continued

Cooks and Stewards - who wore the "fore-and-aft" rig, however the dog would always attach himself to a rating in "square-rig". He would stay with as rating for several hours then, with no warning, leave him and tag along with any other sailor in "square-rig" who happened by.

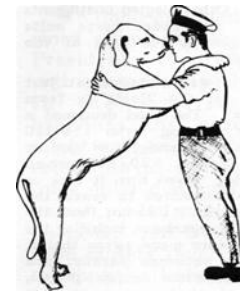
If a rating tried to prevent Nuisance from going his own way by holding the dog's collar, his great jaws would open menacingly, showing hefty incisors, the flesh on each side of his snout would wrinkle, the great head would turn, and

a deep rumble would emerge. These warning signs were invariably successful in making the matelot remove his hand rather smartish.

Nuisance would also interrupt two or more sailors fighting. He would launch his massive body between the contestants, rear up on his hind legs, and push the men apart with his huge paws, or run between their legs and bowl them over. Once they were separated, Nuisance would walk between them growling, indicating that if the fight resumed, he'd act as peacemaker once more. Sometimes he would grip and arm or leg in

his jaws, preventing the man from moving but never tighten them enough to pierce flesh.

The official naming of Just Nuisance and his habits which left even Stokersé ..but that's another story.



"Yer too tall to be a stoker lad!"

Ode to a Sweeper

Oh the Navy's sleek destroyers
And Mighty cruisers too
With their speed and fighting power
Sail o'er the ocean blue.

They are firm and sturdy vessels
With their missiles and their power,
They can steam for weeks and longer
At over thirty knots per hour.

But don't forget the sweepers
With their small and wooden frames,

Where men are made of iron
And deserving of no shame.

They know they serve their purpose
As they slowly sail the sea,
For they serve with pride and honour
For the country of the free.

They lack the speed and glamour
As every tar should know,
But until they've swept the channels,

The other ships can't go.

Anon

'But until they've
swept the channels,
The other ships
can't go!'

The Royal Navy had the cure! Rum, Turpentine and Tobacco

Tobacco smoke was a cure for drowning, rum was a tonic for tarantula bites, and brandy was good for almost anything.

Ben Lara, surgeon aboard HMS Princess Royal during a deployment in the English Channel in 1802, knew what to do when Seaman James Calloway was dragged from the water after being submerged for 12 minutes.

Lara warmed him with heated plates wrapped in flannel, but saw no im-



provement until he resorted to tobacco. "Tobacco smoke was conveyed to the lungs through the tube of a com-

mon pipe," he wrote. "In three-quarters of an hour I observed an obscure palpitation of the heart ... In four hours from our first applications he was perfectly collected."

Rum was the favoured medicine aboard HMS Arab in 1800, when Thomas Sappen used it for spider bites and scorpion stings.

Extracts from ship surgeon's notebooks from the 18th and 19th centuries.

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Although there are 50 1958-60 on email and in addition 28 other commission crews on email, I rarely receive more than 5 or 6 responses to my emails. This is very frustrating especially when I am trying to get essential information, for example the 2013 reunion. In order to complete provisional forward planning I asked for responses, Yes/No/Maybe. I received 5 yeahs, 1 nay and one maybe!

Dear Norrie, I have just found the "Reply" button...

The Rum Fanny

There are a number of stories regarding the origin of the name 'Rum Fanny' into Royal Navy slang. The most authentic is substantiated by records of the brutal murder of an eight year old girl, who's name was Fanny Adams.

Fanny, born in April 1859, was murdered by lawyers clerk Fredrick Baker on 24th August 1867. Her dismembered body was found in a hop field north of her home in Alton, Hampshire. Baker was found guilty and hanged outside Winchester jail on Christmas Eve. He was the last person to be executed at Winchester.

Fanny Adams was buried at Alton cemetery and a stone was erected over her grave. The grave can still be seen today.

During the mid 1860, the process of canning food had become more efficient, the manufacture of cans had been mechanized and the cooking time reduced drastically. This resulted in a cheaper product and the Admiralty opened a canning factory in

the Deptford Victualling Yard, tinned mutton became part of the diet of the Royal Navy, much to the displeasure of the sailors.

This displeasure led to a rumour that parts of the dismembered body of Fanny Adams had been traced to the Deptford victualling yard and tins contained her butchered remains.

'Fanny Adams' became the Royal Naval slang for tinned meat and stew. The term "Sweet Fanny Adams" meaning 'Nothing' was also born and was a description of the sailor's opinion of the tinned meats.

However, a use was found for the large empty meat tins. Up until that time, when sailors and Royal Marines lived, ate and slept in 'broadside mess decks' (a system that was still in use, at least until the late 1950s,) wooden buckets were used to collect food from the galley, water for washing crockery etc. and to collect the **Rum Ration**. The empty meat tins were modified and gradually

replaced the wooden buckets. These new buckets were given the slang name '**Fanny's**'. Needless to say, the **Rum Fanny** was treated with great respect and became the responsibility of the mess rum bosun.

How many survivors from the broadside messing days remember being cook of the day, amongst our duties was washing up after meals? Do you remember ditching the "dishing up" water down the gash chute and found that the Dishing up fanny wasn't quite empty after all?

This Gave birth to the killick of the mess's lament:

**Tinkle, Tinkle little spoon,
Knife and fork will follow soon.
Down the gash chute hear them
fall,**

Soon the mess will have....

None at all.

Or, perhaps...

"Sweet Fanny Adams"?