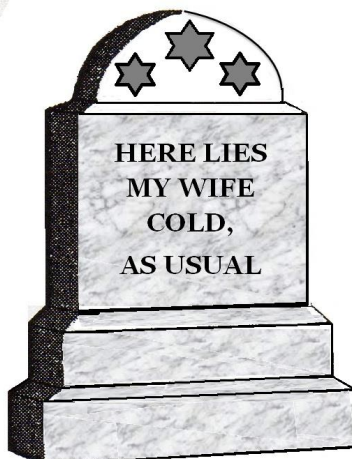




The Rum Tub or Norrie's Nocturnal and Nautical Natter.

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HMS Ulster

Volume 2,

Issue 3

August, 2013

Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen



The weather has been fantastic in my neck of the woods and I have been in my No. 10a's for weeks, getting the old bronzy, bronzy back too, what a refreshing change from last few summers. This also reflects the large number of visitors to the town and the beach and sea front being crowded for the first time in years.

As I prepare this newsletter it is only 53 days to reunion, for those of you that have not booked in, I strongly urge you to do so. It will have to be last real big one given the average age of our crew; no doubt we will continue to have our mini "Meet & Greets" though. It will definitely be Sir Cameron's last one and he will be spending two days with us for his final farewell to us all, another good reason to attend and give your personal goodbye.

We still have 40 people booked in for the 2013 reunion, despite the fact that Brian and Barbara Beer have had to cancel due to some serious health problems; I know we will all be thinking of them and wishing them well; however, a new booking keeps the number at 40. Plenty of rooms left and the two bus trips, with Shep Woolly as our entertainer on Saturday will make a good weekend.

With this newsletter I will be sending out a request that you all acknowledge its receipt. Of the 54 1958-60 crew and 32 other commissions in my e-address book, I rarely receive more than a half dozen replies. I would like to know that you are still interesting in receiving information on HMS Ulster and related topics. As I have often said communication is supposed to be a two-way medium, your acknowledgement of my emails would be very much appreciated.

Here's a thought, why don't you look out a picture of when you joined RN and at latter part of your career/or now and a few words about your time in the Andrew e.g. when you joined, why you joined, what ships and shore bases you served on, amusing anecdotes of your time in the RN for me to publish in the newsletters. It would make very interesting reading for remainder of the crew. (See page 4.)

The way I see it any way!

Liverpool and the American Civil War

Detailed information related to the construction and supply of warships to the Confederate States of America during the Civil War 1861-1865. This article from the Merseyside Maritime Museum encapsulates this little known piece of Liverpool's history

Submitted by Norrie Millen

Liverpool, the Wirral, Lancashire and most of the surrounding area, had strong political, emotional and financial connections and sympathies with the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War (1861-1865). Indeed, so strong were these connections that it has been quoted that at one time "more Confederate flags fluttered above Liverpool than over Richmond" (the Confederate capital in Virginia). One of the main reasons for the link was economical, based on the importance of cotton, upon which both the Southern States and the Lancashire mills depended. However, the ties were much deeper and emotional than purely economical ones, and the history of this relationship is still able to raise controversy and argument even today. The outbreak of hostilities in 1861 found the Southern States in the worst position with the North having more manufacturing, arms production and industrial power. The South, because of its lack of resources, was forced to look to Europe. The already strong links from the cotton trade made Liverpool the obvious choice for organising supplies and aid for the Confederacy. It was also important to keep open the supply line for cotton upon which the South and the Lancashire cotton mills depended. A fleet of Confederate blockade-runners and naval cruisers were built on Mersey-side to keep this vital supply line open.

James Dunwoody Bulloch, a Confederate naval officer, arrived in Liverpool on 4 June 1861 with orders to buy or have constructed 6 steam vessels suitable for use as commerce destroyers against the Union, to be delivered, unarmed, under the British flag at any Southern port. In addition, he was

to purchase and blockade run arms for the cruisers. He was assisted by Fraser, Trenholm and Co, foreign bankers to the Confederacy.

His first contract was with Fawcett & Preston Engineers and WC Miller and Son, Ship Builders, to build a steam sloop, CSS *Florida*, which was delivered in 1861. The second contract was signed in July 1861 with Laird Brothers, for number 290 (known as *Enrico*). On 29 July 1862, *Enrico* sailed to Anglesey for trials with various dignitaries on board, and after putting them off by a tug, quietly sailed off for the Azores to take on armaments and ammunition from the *Agrippina*, and to begin life as the CSS *Alabama*. *Alabama* had mostly British and mainly Liverpool crew on; board, as when she had left Liverpool under secrecy, after being given the choice, most of her 30 or so Liverpool crew signed on for the Confederate Navy. A certificate of competency of George Freemantle, Quartermaster in the Museum archives collection. (DX/1841)

Captain Raphael Semmes took command of the *Alabama* on the 13 August, and from that time until June 1864, she captured and burned 55 Union merchantmen worth \$4,500,000 and bonded ten others to the value of \$562,000. On the 19 August, the *Alabama* met the USS *Kearsage* off Cherbourg, France, and after a spectacular battle matched by thousands on the French coast, the *Alabama* was sunk. Fortunately the steam yacht *Deerhound* also built at Laird's) and owned by Englishman John Lancaster, saved a number of crew, including Captain Semmes and a number of officers, who were given a hero's welcome at Southampton.

The *Alabama* is known to have been photographed only twice in her brief career, once when at Singapore (a profile distant view) and once in Table Bay, off Cape Town on 12th August 1863 when a photographer was allowed on board. Cape Town photographer Arthur Green took a series of photographs of Captain Semmes, First Lieutenant John Kell and several of the crew on deck, and seven of the surviving images are held at Cape Town Archives, US Naval Historical Centre, George Eastman N York or in private collection. The Merseyside Maritime Museum acquired three of these photographs in 2005.

James Dunwoody Bulloch ordered several more ships from Laird's including the "Laird's Rams" (Nos. 294 & 295) which were impounded by the Government and later sold to the Royal Navy. The rams took their name from the iron piercer, which protruded six to seven feet from the prow and was used for striking opposing vessels below the waterline.

After the end of the war, Bulloch remained in Liverpool, and died in 1901. He is buried in Smithdown Road Cemetery, Toxteth. In 1873, the United States Government's demand that the British Government should pay compensation for the damage caused by the Confederate ships was settled. Known as the "*Alabama* Claim"; because she had caused the most damage, and together with the *Florida* and *Shenandoah*, had accounted for half of the total number of Union vessels captured. It resulted in the British Government paying £3,000,000 compensation for allowing the Confederate Government to purchase the ships in England and allowing them to use British ports

Dover Patrol

Submitted by Shipmate John Soanes

As a youngster I was told that my grandfather was serving in a requisitioned fishing vessel during the First World War engaged on the infamous Dover patrols. As a result of which his ship was blown up and sunk and that my grandfather was 1 -the sole survivor, and that he was 2- in the water for nine hours before he was rescued and 3 - that my mother was conceived during his survivors leave.

We must never let the facts get in the way of a good story; however a few years ago I decided to research details of this incident:

My maternal grandfather John (Jack) Spalding RNR Trimmer/Cook was serving in HM Drifter *GEORGE V* engaged on the Dover Patrol employed as a net barrier tender.

As an anti-submarine device a number of net barriers had been laid across the straits of Dover. These had electro-contact (EC) mines placed in them, which were connected by electrical cable which would be triggered when a submarine snagged the net, dragging the mine onto the hull which would complete the circuit, thereby triggering a number of mines and blowing up the snagged U-Boat.

About 1145 on Sunday 3rd June 1917 a premature explosion near one of the buoys had been observed, which had broken the net. *George V* after embarking Lieutenant Henry Brodie Conby RNR, the senior officer of the division who was to oversee the recovery operation, was ordered to investigate and make repairs.

On arrival at the scene the drifter recovered the end of the net as it tailed away from the buoy and started hauling the net in. As they did so there was an explosion which blew a hole in the ship's side and she rolled over and sank within two minutes taking nine men with her, including the skipper and Lieutenant Conby. As soon as one of the mines had touched the ships side it completed the circuit and exploded.

From the subsequent enquiry it would seem this was a case of over confidence which led to neglect in carrying out correct recovery procedure. Lieutenant Conby had

failed to take the basic precaution of disconnecting the battery. Earlier, before embarking in *GEORGE V*, Conby had said that he did not intend doing so as he believed the circuit had been broken by the premature explosion. Lieutenant Conby was one of the smartest and most gallant and hard- working officers in the Patrol. He had previously been recommended for the DSC for his work in 1916.

My Grandfather John (Jack) Spalding was indeed one of only TWO survivors, (the other survivor Ernest Letley was severely wounded) and part of my grandfather's statement submitted to the enquiry reads:

"While in the galley preparing dinner for the crew, I felt a heavy explosion which seemed to strike the vessel on the port side amidships. I came on deck and spoke to the skipper who was injured and he told me the vessel was sinking.

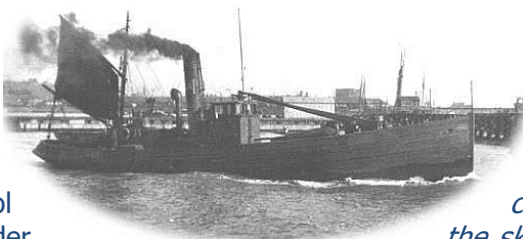
*I went to the wheelhouse and got a lifebuoy and met engineman George Gunn who was carrying his life saving belt and he asked me to help him get the small boat out which we tried to do, but owing to the ship listing to port, we had not time, so I got on to the starboard quarter and jumped overboard and did not see anything more of Bunn. I was later picked up by the small boat from HM Drifter *COSMOS*"*

HM Drifter *COSMOS* was only two hundred yards away at the time of the explosion and immediately steamed to pick up survivors so I suspect that my grandfather was in the water for nine minutes not nine hours!

Finally if my mother was conceived during his survivors leave then she would have been in the womb for over twelve months.

But as I said/wrote earlier never let the truth get in the way of a good story.

Footnote: HM Drifter *COSMOS* was lost at 0216 on 15th February 1918. Apparently three German destroyers attacked and sank one trawler and seven drifters including *COSMOS*, five other drifters were damaged during the same incident, 11 dead 34 wounded of *Cosmos* crew.



Who is this handsome young sailor?



I joined the Royal Navy as a 'Boy' (Junior Seaman II Class) aged 15 years and 2 months, on May 7th, 1957; as a Seaman, Signaller or Telegraphist, for a period of nine years to date from age 18, so effectively committed to 12 years' service.

Twelve months 'boys' training, at HMS St Vincent, partially academic, partially nautical subjects and a lot of time laying out kit, doubling around the shuffle track and several sessions of that old St Vincent favourite punishment "Dartmouth Routine" also known to Ganges boys as a "Shotley Routine".

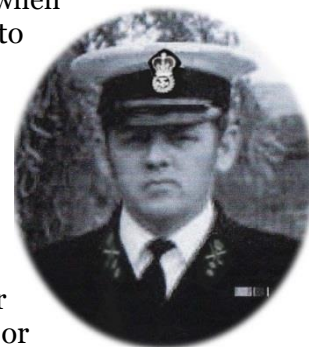
"Dartmouth Routine" entailed packing ones entire kit, with duty instructor ensuring that next item of kit to be worn was at very bottom of kitbag. The class were then doubled to some other point in the camp, where we were ordered to strip, put on the bottom item in our kit bags, repack the kitbags then double to some other point where the procedure was repeated Ad Nauseam.

Once we had completed our years 'sentence', we were dispatched to various trade and training establishments for next phase of our training, in my case HMS Osprey at Portland, which was then the ASDIC training school (later known by American term of SONAR).

Many ships followed including; big and small ships, their lordships, hardships but most importantly friendships. Nothing like "Swinging the lamp" from time to time and recalling All the good times and maybe some of the bad ones too!

Still I persevered and after a slow start, clawed by way eventually up to Chief Petty Officer Torpedo & Anti-Submarine Instructor

(CPO TASI), but when MOD(N) decided to form the Operations Branch in mid-70's and abolish all instructor rates, I was officially known then as a PO(Sonar) and later CPO Ops Sonar or CHOPS for short. Having said all that as far as I am aware we all refused to change and relinquish our two-star instructor badges and still drew our shilling a day instructors pay until discharge, in my case 1982.



One shilling may seem a paltry amount, but when the instructor rate was introduced in the mid 40's, Petty Officers pay was 4/s (four shillings old money approximately 20 new pence in today's money) a day so the extra 'bob' was a massive pay increase. Sadly their Lordships never index linked Instructors pay so hence shilling a day until demob. (See poem bottom of page)

My ships (full commissions) included HMS Ulster, Vigilant, Loch Killisport, Daring, Blake and Zulu; with loans drafts to Gay Charger, Ramehead, Miner III & Murray. After my initial training at HMS St Vincent, I served at Osprey, Drake, Vernon (numerous times) Cochrane (x3), Neptune, Caledonia and Fort August Abbey Public school (CCF Instructor). From each I drew many skills and experiences which enabled me to obtain a first class position as a Senior Support Engineer First Class in Canada after discharge from RN.



ALL FOR A SHILLING A DAY

The TAS Instructors are a happy band
Some serve at sea and some on land
He has a lot to learn and a lot to say,
And for that gets a shilling a day.

The RAF and Army have instructors as well,
And they are always quick to tell,
They do not get any extra pay,

So be thankful for your shilling a day.

But like all sailors we like to drip,

When shall we see the GI ȳPart of shipȳ

Theres no difference between us I would say

Donȳ ALL qualified Instructors get a shilling a day?

H.M.S. GANGES – VC Winners

Of all the thousands of boys and men that trained in the shore establishment HMS Ganges from 1905 until 1976, only two are believed to have been awarded the Victoria Cross.



Able Seaman Albert I Edward McKenzie of HMS Vindictive, was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry in the British and Commonwealth armed forces, following the famous raid on Zeebrugge in 1918

He was chosen by his shipmates to be awarded the VC and it was presented to him by King George V at Buckingham Palace during the summer of 1918.

He had almost fully recovered from his wounds when he caught flu in the epidemic which swept across Europe at the end of the Great War. He died at Chatham Naval Hospital in October 1918 aged nineteen.

Leading Seaman James Magennis was the only other boy trained at HMS Ganges to be awarded the highest British medal

for valour in WWII. Boy Seaman Magennis of Belfast, Northern Ireland joined HMS Ganges in June 1935 and on completion of training served in HM Ships Royal Sovereign, Dauntless, Enterprise, Hermes and Kandahar. Before being drafted for wartime service in HM Submarines in volunteering for special duties in midget submarines.

His medal citation read: "The King has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Victoria Cross for valour to Temporary Acting Leading Seaman James Joseph Magennis, D/KX144907. Leading Seaman Magennis served as diver in His Majesty's Midget Submarine XE3 for her attack on 31 July 1945 on a Japanese cruiser of the Atago class.

Owing to the fact that XE3 was tightly jammed under the target the diver's hatch could not be fully opened, and Magennis had to squeeze himself through the narrow space available.

He experienced great difficulty in placing the limpets on the



bottom of the cruiser owing both to the foul state of the cruisers bottom and to the prominent

slope upon which the limpets would not hold. Before a limpet could be placed therefore Magennis had thoroughly to scrape the area clean of barnacles, and in order to secure the limpets he had to tie them in pairs by a line passing under the cruisers keel.

This was very tiring work for a diver, and he was moreover handicapped by a steady leakage of oxygen which was ascending in bubbles to the surface.

A lesser man would have been content to place a few limpets and then to return to the craft. Magennis, however, persisted until he had placed his full outfit before returning to the craft in an exhausted condition



Shortly after withdrawing Lt. Fraser (Skipper of XE3) endeavoured to jettison his limpet carriers, but one of these would not release itself and fall clear of the craft.

Despite his exhaustion, his oxygen leak and the fact that there was every probability of his being sighted, Magennis at once volunteered to leave the craft and free the carrier rather than allow a less experienced diver to undertake the job. After seven minutes of nerve racking work he succeeded in releasing the mine carrier. Magennis displayed very great courage and devotion to duty and complete disregard for his own safety.

Can you read this?

7h15 m3554g3 53rv35 7o pr0v3 h0w Our m1nd5 c4n d0 4m4z1ng 7h1ng5! 1mpr3551v3 7h1ng5! 1n 7h3 b3g1nn1ng 17 wa5 h4rd bu7 n0w, On 7h15 lin3 y0ur m1nd 1s r34d1ng 17 4u70m471c4lly w17h Ou7 3v3n 7h1nk1ng 4b0u7 17, b3 proud! Only c3r741n p30pl3 c4n r3ad 7h15. pl3453 f0rw4rd 1f u c4n r34d 7h15.

This message goes to prove how our minds can do amazing things!

SONIA SNELL

This is the tale of Sonia Snell
To whom an accident befell,

An accident, as will be seen,
Embarrassing In the extreme.

It happened as it does too many
That Sonia went to spend a penny,
And entering with unconscious grace
The properly appointed place,
There behind the railway station
She sat in silent meditation,
Unfortunately unacquainted
The seat had recently been painted.
Too late did Sonia realise
Her inability to rise,

And though she struggled pilled and yelled
She found that she was firmly held.

She raised her voice in mournful shout,

"Please-- someone come and get me out"

A crowd stood round and feebly sniggered,

A signalman said "Well I'll be .jiggered".

"Cor blimey" said an ancient porter

"We ought to soak her off with water"

The station master and his staff

Were most polite and did not laugh.

They tugged at Sonia's hands and feet.

But could not shift her off the Seat.

Remarked "I know what I can do"

And quickly sawed the seat in two

Sonia arose only to find

She'd a wooden halo on her behind

But an ambulance drove down the street

And bore her off complete with seat.

They rushed the wooden bustled girl

Quickly to the Hospital

And grasping her hands and her head

Placed her face downward on a bed.

The Doctors came and cast their eyes

Upon the seat with some surprise.

A surgeon said "Now mark my word,

Could anything be more absurd?"

Have any of you, I implore,

Seen anything like this before?"

"Yes cried a student, unashamed

Frequently.....**but never framed!**"





Out and about

By Norrie Millen

During my travels recently in Cornwall I came across this super looking boat in Padstowe Harbour which belongs to local Sea Cadets! It's amazing how successful some units are and this unit obviously well-heeled to able to afford to purchase and run this boat. Unfortunately I was unable to get any more information about the boat as it seemed to be unmanned at the time (All crew make and mend with leave!). I know of other units that are struggling for survival and a few I know rely on the support of their local Royal Naval Associations and this may well be the case in the Padstowe unit's setup.



Although I served on Dartmouth Training Squadron for nearly two years, I never got the chance to visit the Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. Meeting a CPOET (ME) [Current title for Chief Stoker] at Torbay Armed Forces Day I soon put this right, by persuading him to organise a private free tour. Normally college charges £7.50 per head for these visits.

Unfortunately the Chief went sick on the day of our visit, so the colleges 1st Lieutenant showed us around and conducted the guided tour and very professional and knowledgeable was the Jimmy. He had been among the last Junior Seaman to pass through HMS Ganges and had worked his way up to Warrant Officer (M) before taking

up his CW papers. Commissioned as a Special Duties Gunner, he made early promotions up to his current rank of Lieutenant Commander and had served in Royal Navy for 37 years and was considering an offer to take up a commission with the Royal Australian Navy. Now that has to be anchor faced doesn't it!

~~~~~

### A Special Package for Businessmen.

An Airline introduced a special package for Business men.

Buy your ticket; get your wife's ticket free.

After great success, the company sent letters to all the wives asking how the trip was.

All of them gave the same reply..."What trip?"

~~~~~

New SIM to surprise her husband

Woman buys a new Sim Card. Puts it in her phone and decides to surprise her husband who is seated on the couch in the living room.

She goes to the kitchen, calls her husband with the new number:

"Hello Darling."

The husband responds in a low tone:

"Let me call you back later Honey, the stupid woman is in the kitchen."

~~~~~

### Cool message by a wife

Dear Mother-in-law,

"Don't teach me how to handle my children, I'm living with one of yours & he needs a lot of improvement"

~~~~~

Throwing knives at wife's picture

Husband was throwing knives at his wife's picture.

All were missing the target!

Suddenly he received call from her "Hi, what are you doing?"

His honest reply, "MISSING YOU."

~~~~~

### Habit of talking in sleep

A lady to doctor: My husband has a habit of talking in his sleep! What should I give him to cure it?

Dr: Give him an opportunity to speak when he is awake.

~~~~~

NATURAL DISASTERS JUST HAPPEN

Nobody teaches volcanoes to erupt,

Tsunamis to devastate,

Hurricanes to swirl around

& no one teaches a man how to choose a wife.

NATURAL DISASTERS JUST HAPPEN.

HMS Glamorgan

On Saturday 12 June 1982, Glamorgan was attacked with an MM38 Exocet missile which was fired from an improvised shore-based launcher. The two MM38 Exocet missiles had been removed from the destroyer ARA Seguí and secured on the launcher, a technically difficult task requiring reprogramming. The launcher was dubbed 'ITB' (Instalación de Tiro Berreta) by the Argentine personnel which approximately means in Argentine slang "trashy firing platform". Two MM38 Exocet missiles, their launcher, transporter, and the associated electronics trailer were assembled by the Argentine navy at Puerto Belgrano and flown by a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft to the Falkland Islands. A RASIT radar supplied by the Argentinian Army tracked Glamorgan's movements.

Glamorgan was steaming at about 20 knots (37 km/h) some 18 nautical miles (33 km) off shore. The first attempt to fire a missile failed. A second attempt was successful and a missile was launched, but it failed to find the target. The third attempt was more successful. The incoming Exocet missile was being tracked on both the bridge and operations room radar by the Principal Warfare Officer and Navigation Officer.

Before the missile impact, the ship was moving at high speed. After the



ship executed a rapid turn away from the missile in the limited time available, a few seconds, the Exocet struck the port side adjacent to the hangar near the stern. The turn had prevented the missile from striking the ship's side perpendicularly and penetrating; instead it hit the deck coaming at an angle, near the port Seacat launcher, skidded on the deck, and exploded. This made a 10 ft. by 15 ft. hole in the hangar deck and a 5 ft. by 4 ft. hole in the galley area below, where a fire started.

The blast travelled forwards and down, and the missile body, still travelling forwards, penetrated the hangar door, causing a fully fuelled and armed Wessex helicopter to explode and start a severe fire in the hangar. Fourteen crew members were killed and more wounded. The ship was under way again with all fires extinguished by 10:00.

On the following day, repairs were made at sea and, after the Argentinian surrender on 14 June, more extensive repairs were undertaken in the sheltered bay of San Carlos Water. She sailed for home on 21 June, and re-entered Portsmouth on 10 July 1982 after 104 days at sea.

"That's all for now folks"