

Editorial

So into another new year--and a cold start it has certainly been. But the upside is that we can now look forward to Spring which is not too far away.

One important change so far this year is that the branch committee will now meet on the Thursdays prior to branch meetings (still to be held on the second Wednesday of each month). It was felt that previously committee meetings held a fortnight before (or a fortnight after, according to your point of view) created too long a gap between branch meetings and some matters had to be resolved before they could be put to the membership (e.g. the matter of the straw poll on the Royal Charter). The new arrangement should overcome this.

The possibility of holding an informal branch meeting once a month on a Sunday is still being explored and arrangements are being discussed with the Conservative Club.

I now face a further 12 months of editing "In Touch" and endeavouring to keep it informative and interesting and, I hope, a newsletter that you look forward to receiving. In this I still need your help. So please, keep those articles and anecdotes coming for inclusion in future issues.

Meanwhile, enjoy this month's contributions: Mark Hudson recalling life as a sub-mariner; some RBL history; news of the January branch meeting which you probably missed; and the all important Diary and Notices columns. Then be patient until next month's good read!

Once again, a Happy and Prosperous new year to you all. Ω

used in exercises with other subs and are recovered by surface vessels after the exercise. Before a fish is loaded and after the tube is drained down after being fired, someone has to do a tube crawl. This entails climbing into the tube with a flash light and a greasy rag to check that the guide rails are clean and that there is no damage to the tube. The tube rails must be kept spotless from rust and paint; this requires frequent cleaning and greasing. (There are no real claustrophobic Fore Endies) If the tube has to be cleaned and the sub is deep they tend to shut the hatch behind you. (This is why you must trust your shipmates).

In your 6 hours off watch you have to eat, sleep, wash and if you are a trainee learn the various compartments and safety procedures throughout the submarine. You have 3 months from joining the sub to do this; if you do not you can lose privileges and also your submarine pay. If you are studying for promotion this also has to be done off watch. If you have any remaining time and want to you can watch movies in the "mess" (no trainees), play cards etc.

Once you are proficient in your own department (as a Fore Endie) you can be moved to another department, this is usually the Control Room, where you join the control room watch keepers, also known as Grumpy Corner. This entails learning the submarine to an even greater extent than the normal crew man. When in



H M S Vanguard—the submarine on which Mark Hudson had his near fatal accident which ended his Naval career.

the corner you have to be qualified to sit at the control room watch keeper's panel from where the boat is trimmed, hydraulic pumps are run, the high pressure air is controlled and much more.

As a grumpy you have to know how to line the submarine up for diving and surfacing, how to "blow slop drain and sewage" how to do a multitude of other jobs like changing the sub's ventilation system for various tasks such as getting rid of smoke during a fire, bringing fresh air on-board at periscope depth etc. When the boat comes along side in a foreign port you have to man the panel as a member of the watch keepers so you tend to have more time off depending on the crew manning levels.

This was just some of the things we do in an average day. A busy day is even more fun. If we were on a 'sneaky' the exercises are cancelled and so are the films, music etc

as the noise has to be kept to a minimum.

Ω



Welfare

Each year a number of the local ex-service community, mainly widows, are each given a small gift to make Christmas a little more festive than it might have been. Their letters of thanks give the Welfare Team much satisfaction and help to show that their work is so worthwhile. Ω



A Trip in a Hunter Killer Submarine

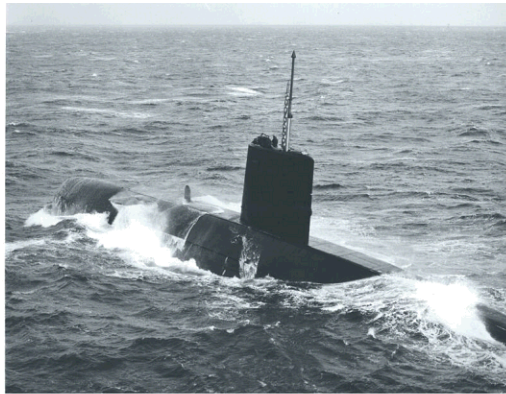
From a *Fore endie's*,
(Torpedo compartment)) and
Grumpy Corner view (late 80's)
By Mark Hudson

We work 6 hours on 6 off starting at 7 am till 1 pm then on at 7 pm till 1 am and so your counterpart works 1am till 7 am and 1 pm till 7 pm.

This routine starts from when the submarine dives after leaving port and stops when harbour stations are piped when we come alongside. We could be going to sea for a week or 3-4 months but this is still our routine.

The department is closed up to set sail, all members are present, we have checklists which are carried out and reported to the control room. When all departments have checked in, we set sail. When we reach deep water they announce “stand by for diving stations”, all watertight bulkheads are closed, the upper and lower hatches on the conning tower are closed and when ready we dive.

The next pipe will be “do you hear there we are now at 50 feet—check all hatches and report”. When this is done, the boat's trim is checked and then we make the first deep dive and if there are no problems we fall out from diving stations and the 6 hour watches start. Depending on the time you might only be on watch for a ½ hr when you are relieved by the next watch.



The Churchill Class H M S Conqueror

In the time that you are on watch various tasks have to be completed. Cleaning up for rounds takes place in the evening watch for a week then moves 6 hours for the next week so everyone has to clean up for rounds and no-one does it all the time.

The first week normally has all the exercises to get the crew up to scratch: fires, floods, hydraulic bursts, air bursts. These last are the worst as a member of the wreckers crew will come in and plug a blank connection

into an air line and then turn it on. In a submarine 100 psi IS VERY LOUD AND YOU CANNOT HEAR YOUR SELF THINK LET ALONE SHOUT TO ANYONE. (You cannot wear earplugs in a sub). A real air burst could be up to 4,000psi. Normally the person who would be in the compartment with the problem will become a victim so that someone else has to get in and isolate the “burst”.

Fire exercises are frequently carried out and everyone from the wardroom stewards to the motor room watch keepers have to know how to isolate the electrics, hydraulics and air to a compartment. The submarine's lighting can be reduced dramatically and some of the fire fighting gear has tape put over the visors so you have to really know a boat to be able to get around in the dark and smoke filled atmosphere.

Once all the crew has demonstrated that they are up to scratch the exercises become less frequent but they do not stop.

In the Fore Ends we will load “practice” torpedoes which do everything except go bang. These fish are



Branch Meeting

BEREAVEMENT. Members were asked during the silence of the Act of Homage, to have in their thoughts John Standish, our Treasurer, whose youngest son had died on 30th December. A message of sympathy and condolence had been sent on behalf of the Branch.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Was it the weather or being “under the weather” that accounted for only 27 members being present? Still, if we think back a few years, with that number it would have been an excellent turn-out!

NEWS ITEMS.

- **Poppy Appeal Organiser** Andrew Marriott's appointment confirmed by HQ.
- **County Standard Bearers' Association** Re-dedication Service, to be hosted by our branch, now on 16th June, not 2nd. (see p 11)
- **Jack Quain Trophy & Haig Cup.** Entry documents have been submitted to and received by County for both competitions.
- **Website.** The number of visits to the site had reached 2386 but few visitors are signing the “Guest Book”.
- **2002 Meetings.** Room availability confirmed. Branch meetings to stay as 2nd Wednesday, Committee Thursday prior to Branch meeting.
- **Membership/ Treasurer Matters.** Please excuse any delay in receiving your new Card or other response from John Standish. He will contact you as soon as he can.
- **Welfare Caseworker Courses.** Local courses will again be available. John Liddell is hoping to arrange for two of his team to attend.

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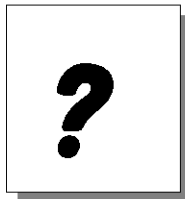
COMMUNICATIONS. In response to a question it was stated that the cost of production of In Touch had averaged about 20p per copy, i.e. about £2.40 a year for each recipient. A new printer purchased by the Branch should reduce this to about 14p (£1.68 a year) by eliminating the need for photocopying. The cost could be partly offset by having advertisements but the newsletter would either have to be enlarged or the content reduced to accommodate them.

During its first year the newsletter was self-financing but only because there were only six issues, nine traders each paid for adverts and photocopying was provided free by a friend (until he moved away). Since then In Touch and In Touch, Too were financed from the Branch General Fund, the Social Fund (derived mainly from Coffee Mornings), donations and until March 2001, advertisements. Although providing the newsletters to those who cannot get to meetings because they are house-bound or in ill-health, could be regarded as a form of Welfare, no Benevolent Fund money has been used.

There was some limited discussion on these matters which boiled down to the wish that In Touch should continue, it should come out monthly and there should be advertisements.

SOCIAL. See Notices on p10 and Diary p 11

AFTER BUSINESS. What do members want from attending Branch meetings? Let's discuss in small groups and compare results. The comparison was between the third who preferred beer in the bar to taking part and the more polite who stayed but were not much more interested. Now we know they do not want discussions!! Ω



Did you know?

You may remember Bob England's lighthearted piece in the May issue written after we were the runners-up for the Lister Cup when we had entered for the Haig Cup. Both cups are awarded annually for the branches having "made the most progress in all aspects of achieving a high standard of efficiency." One cup goes to the 'best' small branch and the other to the 'best' large branch. One year the Lister goes to a large branch and the Haig to a small one and the next year it is the other way round. Actually large and small refer not to the size of the branch but to the population of the branch catchment area.

But what is the origin of these awards? Their names are those of the British Legion's first President, Field Marshall Earl Haig and first Chairman, Mr T F (later Sir Frederick) Lister. At the end of the Great War there were a number of ex-service organisations each independently trying to secure improved conditions for their members. Haig argued strongly that a single unified ex-service organisation would have far more influence with gov-



Field Marshall Earl Haig & Mr T F Lister
Picture from 'Keeping Faith, The History of the Royal British Legion,'

ernment and the public. His view was shared by Lister, an ex-R A gunner, who was then President of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers. It was largely as a result of these two men, Haig a national hero with considerable influence and Lister, a clear thinking very able and sincere negotiator, that on 15th May 1921 with the symbolic laying of wreaths at the Cenotaph, unity was celebrated. The British Legion was f o u n d e d o n 1st July 1921.

It was important quickly to build a strong branch network with active and growing membership and in 1922 the President presented a trophy, The Haig Cup, for the branch with the best membership and the most activity – not very different from today's criteria!

For much more detailed information about the early days of the Legion and its forerunners, about Haig, Lister and many others who have shaped our organisation, the authoritative work is

the recently published "Keeping Faith, the History of the Royal British Legion" by Brian Harding. However, I have been unable to find out when the Lister Cup was introduced, or when the idea of large and small branches arrived. If someone "out there" knows please let the Editor know.

An interesting sideline to all this is that the conference at which the delegates from the various ex-services organisations agreed to unification was on 14th May 1921, Whit Sunday. The Legion Annual Conference has been held during the Whitsun (now May) bank holiday ever since. Ω



Pub Lunch

Our first visit to the Coach & Horses at Lubenham on 15th January was a success. 'Mine host' was most welcoming, the food was good and plentiful and the company relaxed and friendly. It was unfortunate that illness had caused some cancellations but with 15 people round the table it was more like a family get-together. Ω



COFFEE MORNING

Helpers—needed for door & kitchen duties, setting up & manning bric-a-brac, book, cake & tombola stalls

and making visitors welcome. Please arrive at the Theatre by 8.30 am.

Contributions for Raffle & Tombola should be delivered, if possible, to Irene Blissett, 12 Northbank, Coventry Road on or before Friday 1st February. Ring MH 431 789 to arrange a time. Other items please to Tom Ashmore, 9 The Pastures, Brookfield Road (MH433108) by Friday or to the theatre by 8.40am Saturday. Need help with delivery? Ring Tom ASAP.

NATIONAL SPACE CENTRE

Almost on our doorstep, we now have in Leicester this world class exhibition centre. Those who have already been say what a fascinating experience it is. If you would like to go on Saturday 23rd February, please sign the clip-board at the next meeting or ring Tom Ashmore (MH433108). We'll go by car, buy our own tickets (£5.50 for OAP/disabled, £7.50 otherwise) & meet for coffee in the **Satellite Bar** at about 10.45 then do our own things and maybe meet again for lunch. Please say if you need or can offer a lift. Location—off Corporation Road, off A6 about 2 miles north of city centre.

POPPY FACTORY

If we can fill a coach we hope to make a visit in May. Please sign the clipboard or ring Tom Ashmore. Cost depends on numbers but would not be more than £10. More details later.



Diary

Reminders for February with some other dates to keep free (see also page 10)

- 2 Feb Coffee morning—Harborough Theatre
- 7 Feb Branch Committee
- 13 Feb Branch meeting + Buffet
- 23 Feb Visit to National Space Centre
- 22 Mar Birthday Dinner—venue to be announced
- 27 Mar Jaguar visit (with Photo Soc.)—fully booked
- 16 Apr Pub Lunch—venue to be announced
- 15 Jun Coffee Morning— Harborough Theatre
- 16 Jun** County Standard Bearers' Service
- 18 Jun Pub Lunch—venue to be announced
- 30 Jun Poppy Race Day—Doncaster
- 13 Jul Royal Jubilee Concert— Beaumanor Hall
- 18 Oct Annual Dinner—venue to be announced
- 2 Nov Remembrance Concert **Date confirmed**

Meetings

Branch meetings are held on the **Second Wednesday** of each month at 7.30 pm in the downstairs Function Room, Conservative Club Building, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.

The next meeting is on 13th February, and will be followed by a Buffet.

The Branch Committee meets on the **Thursday** prior to the Branch meeting, in the Upstairs bar, Conservative Club Building.



The Royal British Legion

Reg. Charity 219279

Market Harborough Branch



Founded in 1923

In Touch

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