

## The Branch Invades Chatham, 2 June

It was crack of dawn; fog bestrewed the fens, and fifty hardy souls from the Branch and from the Royal Lincolns set out at **8am** on our coach trip to the Royal Naval Dock Yard, Chatham (RNDY). I had forgotten such a time still existed.

It was hot when we arrived and, after a quick recce, I think most of us indulged in an early lunch and replenishment of essential bodily fluids. But then we sallied forth, clambering round bulkheads, in and out of hatches, and up and down ladders on the three beautiful warships exhibited there – HMS Gannet, HMS submarine Ocelot, and the destroyer HMS Cavalier.

We were surprised at the cost of tea, effectively £1.20 for one teabag, but I managed to discover an excellent pint of 6% proof *Press Gang* beer at £2.00 at the Nelson Brewery, tucked away behind one of the large sheds – Intelligence Corps training!



*Naval Dock Yards are hot work*



*Trust the Secretary to find the Dockyard Brewery*

This was my first visit to an RN base and I was somewhat surprised at how small it was – hardly larger than an Army barracks and certainly smaller than an RAF base – considering it once was one of our major naval bases. And, although a major effort has been made to preserve major aspects of it, it still looked rather sad and woebegone. Chalky White, who last saw it in 1948, especially remarked on this. Nevertheless, RNDY, Chatham is still very worth a visit to recapture some of the prestige and glory of our naval past. Our special thanks go to Roy Prentice for organising the trip and to all those who brought raffle prizes which raised £72 to split between the Royal Lincolns and us.



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