



# SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION BARROW-IN-FURNESS BRANCH NEWS LETTER



## The January Word



A Combined Chairman and Chaplain Ditt: The time is 0730 hrs Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> December I have just read that England has lost the Ashes what's surprising about that I here some of you say, and I am attempting to put together some words that will not be published until the New Year. So by the time that you are reading this all of the year end festivities will be well and truly done and dusted and all of us will be counting the cost that range from bulging waist lines and dented credit card. Having



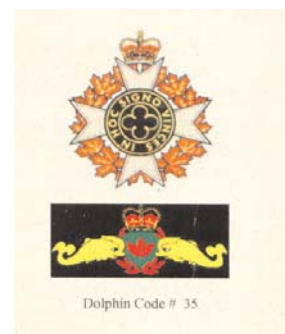
said all that I trust that you all had a good one and that you are now fully refreshed to face the challenges of 2007. Colin has produced our Social Calendar for next year and there are a lot of events that should keep us active, but as Colin says if there is any other event that you

think we should add to an already full diary then he will explore the feasibility. I believe that one of the strengths of our branch that keeps it so vibrant, is our full social calendar events, and a successful Committee System of governance and long may it continue. So I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all of our Committee members for often hours of unsung work that helps keep us on the straight and narrow. In the wee hours last night there was a programme about Canterbury Cathedral telling the tale of their preparations for Christmas, an event that had been taking place on the same spot since 597AD, when it was first established by St Augustine. The programme generated a sense of timelessness and a much slower drumbeat than our frenetic lifestyle. It made me reflect in general terms on submariners who have "crossed the bar" both in War Time and Peace they now are part of that timeless pattern, their role is over, their life story is now complete. I thought of Joan and her family as we said our farewells to Billy Cole. Over these past two years I have been honoured to support over forty families during their difficult time of early days of bereavement by leading the funeral service. I can honestly say I have never seen the crematorium filled by so many

people as it was for Bill. If a man's life is measured and honoured by the number of people that come to pay their last respects, Then Billy was much loved and honoured both inside and outside of his close family and circle of Submariner Colleagues. Some of you have asked about The Submariners Prayer that I used at the funeral. It has come into my possession along the way, and I cannot for that life of me remember how. However on the obverse side of the Prayer Card there is one clue in that I believe the dolphins to be those for the Canadian Submarine Service, however I have no clue as to what the medal/clasp/ are for. So it's a cry for Help!!! from anyone that knows of these things

I will end with 2007 Thoughts and Prayers for the Branch and all of its Members.

Regards Jonsey



## Social scene for January

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On Friday December 1<sup>st</sup> a party of 11 members from the branch visited the Morecambe bay branch for a social visit to their December meeting. We were very well received and Morecambe Chairman Tim Roberts made a poignant toast to the memory of Billy Cole. The desired effect I believe was achieved by those who attended and I won't forget the drive home, the Astute boys really need to revise their songs!! The normal routine is usually to first foot the Morecambe bay branch but seeing as we have just visited we will try for a summer visit hopefully to Flookborough.

On December 2<sup>nd</sup> we held the Christmas social at the Roose Cons club. What can I say, the support from the branch was exceptional with a superb buffet supplied by all and fantastic support for the raffle. The entertainment was provided by Billy Daniels and 5 O'clock shadow, Billy confessed to me that he nearly called it off, due to his lead singer being away on holiday and his replacement losing his voice on the night. Well in true showbiz tradition the show went on and the band did a fantastic job, well done Billy!! I asked Billy what his plans were for next year and he may be forming a duet, so watch this space you may see him in action again. We were also reunited with a long lost branch asset, the raffle barrel had apparently been holidaying at the Roose Cons, it is now back with us!

## Valentines weekend

I have now confirmed a booking of 16 rooms at the Park House Hotel Blackpool for our Valentines week end on 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2007. If you have missed this deadline but still want to go, you may still get in by dealing

with the Hotel direct, Cost is £84.00 per person for 2 nights' dinner, bed and breakfast plus evening entertainment, if you do book by this route tell them that you are with the Barrow Submariners Association.

I have attached the proposed social programme for 2007 to this newsletter; most dates are confirmed, if they are not members will be updated by a dit in the newsletter. In addition to events declared on the programme, I reserve the right to add other socials events as they arise, these may include a Bingo night, Bus trip to a power station with visit to the best real ale pub in Cumbria on the way back and visits to other branches that we don't know about yet!!

## April 14<sup>th</sup>

The next big social occasion will be the Annual Dinner and Dance on April 14<sup>th</sup> at the Lisdoonie, details will follow in the New Year. Some members have already donated items for the car boot sale (all money raised goes to the Anniversary celebrations) I will be attending one or two after Christmas, if you have items you no longer need please contact me on **01229474927** and I will collect.

Finally, John Houlding has been a hard act to follow as Social Sec but I have enjoyed my first 9 months in the job, and Lynne and myself want to thank you all for supporting the Social team over the last year and I look forward to seeing all the regulars and new faces at the socials in 2007.

Colin Hutchinson  
Social Sec

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## REDS IN SETT

**THE azure warm waters of a 100ft column of water towering above Gosport bare little relation to those of the Barents or Black Seas or the vast Pacific.**

But the principles of ascending

through 100ft of water are the same the world over.

The world-renowned Submarine Escape Training Tank has witnessed a first in its 52-year history: the first Russian submariners to successfully complete a practice escape.

Since the end of the Cold War relations between the two former enemies have enjoyed a 180 degree turnaround.

And so it was that Russian submarine officers from Moscow and St Petersburg found themselves in Gosport for five days to undergo emergency training for escaping from a stricken boat, RN style.

One of the Russians undergoing the training was involved in the operation to rescue the crew of the midget submarine Priz AS28 in August 2005 a rescue eventually effected by a RN led British team.

More recently, British submariners have been in Sevastopol in the Crimea to talk to their counterparts in the Black Sea Fleet about co-operation on any future 'subsunk' the NATO codeword for sunken boats missions.

"The facilities at SETT are first class," said Capt Dmitri Podkayek. "It's been a pleasure to work with the Royal Navy submariners we always prefer to meet face-to-face and the training has been invaluable.

"Sharing of expertise in this environment is so important."

Successfully accomplishing the course as SETT, which is run by 24 experienced 'deeps', is mandatory for every man in the Silent Service



## Secretary's 'Dit'



As I said back in August this year (2006) seems to be zooming past at a pretty fast rate before we know where we are it will be Christmas again and here it is or, at least it was and we are now back at the start of another year! 2007 already where does it all go? Anyway I hope Santa was good to you all, that you met lots of friends and family over the Festive Season and, having recovered from all that food and wine and from seeing in the New Year, you all have a happy and prosperous 2007.

On the Membership front in 2006 we lost several Members and very good friends including Dave Tull, Harry Wetton, Johnnie Walker and most recently Bill Cole. Back in the Summer we were getting very worried about Membership and how we could keep up the numbers. For various reasons we had dropped from a high of 136 down to 126. The Branch started a recruiting campaign and produced a Poster which you were all encouraged to take copies of and post up around the town in places where Submariners and ex Submariners gathered. Several members have returned to the Branch of recent months and I know that two 'lapsed' Members have recently rejoined. However our numbers have been boosted of late by Serving Members from the MOD and HMS ASTUTE Crew and I am pleased to say we are well past our recent maximum and are now at 142 members with several more applications being processed.

I know all the older/original Members will make our new Joiners very welcome (someone else to 'spin that dit' to) and we encourage all the new Members to join in our busy year. Just one point on the Membership front please keep us up to date with your correct Phone Numbers, Addresses and e Mail addresses. It makes it so easy to get in touch

if we have full records. Also please remember that if you can't make it to Branch Meetings send in your apologies either by phone, e mail or by telling some one you know is coming. It is one of the Branch Rules that you should let us know and it helps us to work out whether we need to find out if you are OK. By the way if you can't get along because you are ill or if you know some one who is ill let us know and Dave Craven will get in contact to see if any help is needed. If you have a transport problem let us know as well and we can see if another Member can give you a lift there and back.

Before too long it will be the 2007 Annual General Meeting. At the first Committee Meeting following the 2005 AGM it was decided that we needed to stagger elections to the various Branch Officer posts rather than have them all come up at once! Well it will soon be time for the first of the Posts to be submitted to the Branch Electorate. The post up for offer at the 2007 AGM is the post of Secretary. I have enjoyed the filling post of Secretary and I am willing to continue in Office if the Branch Membership wishes it but other Members must be given the opportunity if they want to take up the challenge. So if you've got the urge to serve the Branch in a more direct way and wish to put yourself forward think about it get yourself a Proposer and a Secunder and we can have an election at the AGM

Anyway – that's enough from me I'll let the rest of the Committee have their say now the Social Secretary I know has lots to tell you about the forthcoming year. I'll let you all get on with reading the rest of the News Letter.

See you all at the Branch Meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January!



## FALKLANDS CAMPAIGN 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

June 2007 sees the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the successful Campaign to recover the Falkland Islands. Many events are being arranged around the Country to commemorate this important Anniversary. It is understood that Events to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary are also being planned in Barrow in Furness led by the Barrow Borough Council and BAE to coincide with the actual Anniversary in June and with the Launch Date of HMS ASTUTE.

Many Members of the Submariners Association will have served in the Submarines (and some in the Surface Ships) which participated in the Campaign. All of these Members will have their memories of those hectic months and some may have kept notes or diaries.

It is planned to produce a document containing the memories and records of those who served in the Falklands planned to be available to match the date of the Barrow Commemoration.

Anyone who is able to contribute to the compilation of this document is asked to send their contribution to Barrie Downer – the Secretary of the Barrow in Furness Branch of the Submariners Association on [barrie@downer55.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:barrie@downer55.freeserve.co.uk) or at 37, James Watt Terrace, Barrow Island, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria LA14 2TS. Remember to include your Rank/Rating and Official Number at the time, which Submarine or Surface Ship you served on and time spent in the Operational Area and names, Rank and /or Rating of others you served with (where possible) and any other information you think is relevant.

## Norway tackles toxic war grave

Robotic excavations have found some canisters of mercury. It was not quite the deadly legacy the Germans had in mind when they deployed a U-boat on a daring mission to Japan in the last desperate months of World War II. When it set sail in December 1944, U-864 was packed with 65 tonnes of weapons-grade mercury destined to help the Japanese win back supremacy over the US in the Pacific - and divert American attention away from Europe in the process.

Neither the cargo nor the 73 men on board made it. The U-boat was torpedoed to the bottom of the North Sea floor by a British submarine.

More than 60 years on, its toxic cargo is slowly leaking into the waters off the coast of Norway, an ecological time bomb threatening marine and potentially human life.

Now the Norwegian government is set to act, following recommendations that the wreck be hermetically sealed to prevent any more of the mercury from escaping.

"We are worried about the long term consequences of the contamination," says Ane Eide Kjeras, spokeswoman for The Norwegian Coastal Administration.

"We need to do something as soon as possible."

### Deadly dive

The fateful mission of the submarine has been documented by a forthcoming BBC Timewatch programme.

By December 1944, the Germans were hemmed in on all sides and one of the only possible operational routes left was through the North Sea.

Plans were laid for Operation Caesar which would see the U-864

embark on 5 December, 1944 from the German port of Kiel on its underwater mission. It was loaded with 1,857 canisters of mercury to be used in the production of weapons at Japanese sites, as well as a variety of parts for jets.

But British code breakers at Bletchley Park learned the details of the operation - even the names of the German and Japanese scientists and engineers on board.

The British submarine *Venturer* was deployed to intercept the vessel after it left the Norwegian port of Bergen.

Aware it was being followed, the U-864 desperately tried to trick its stalkers by zigzagging. The *Venturer's* commander, 25-year old Jimmy Launders, took a chance by setting all four of his vessel's torpedoes off at once.

As the U-864 dived to miss one of the oncoming missiles, it headed straight into the fourth. The submarine was split into two parts and as such went to rest more than 150m (500ft) below the surface on the seafloor.

There it lay unknown until the Royal Norwegian Navy, alerted by local fishermen, found the wreck in early 2003, just off the island of Fedje.

### Willi's grave

A no-fishing zone was imposed around the wreck site after the discovery of documents listing mercury as part of the vessel's cargo. Tests were carried out on the water and silt, with alarming results.

The Norwegian coastal authorities have decided against raising the wreckage, deeming it too dangerous, and are recommending the two parts should be sealed.

Ms Kjeras said an area of about 150m in diameter would be covered with up to 12m (40ft) of material. It is thought a special type of sand or gravel could be used.

Nearly 2,000 eroding flasks of mercury will be covered as a result. But it will also seal up what is the watery grave of 73 men.

One of them was 18-year-old Willi Transier, who had just asked Edith Wetzler to marry him before he set off on a mission he suspected he might never return from.

"It still hurts," says Mrs Wetzler, who is now 84. "But I am so thankful that we had the few years we did have together."

***Timewatch: The Hunt for U-864 will be broadcast on BBC2 on 5 January at 2100***



## Letters

From  
*Joan Cole and Family*



Joan and her Family would like to send their personal thanks to all Bills friends in the Submariners Association with special thanks to Alan Jones for his readings.

I would also thank the Branch for the wonderful tribute given to him in the December news letter and for the fantastic turn out at Bills funeral.

Thank you to Everyone

Joan



## Branch Membership By Vice Chairman



January 2007 sees the start of a New Year and on the down side all members will be aware that Subscriptions for 2007 are due from 1st January. Please make every effort to submit your subscriptions to Mick Mailey the treasurer as soon as you can. Collecting outstanding subscriptions is a thankless task unless we all make the effort to pay as soon as we can.

Mick told us at the December meeting that there are six members who have still to pay subscriptions for 2006.

As the old year closes it becomes the time to consider those members who have been forgetful or have been unable to pay subscriptions within the requirements of the branch rules.

The members who are in arrears, who were on the branch membership books at the start of 2006, will unfortunately have their membership of the Submariners Association and the Barrow in Furness Branch lapsed should they not be paid up in accordance with clause 5(b) of the rules. So you have at the latest until the February 2007 meeting to submit subscriptions for 2006 and 2007.

As you will all know the core membership of the Barrow branch has varied over 2006 as, unfortunately, we lost 4 members on their final and eternal patrol, and we treasure the memories of those departed members and also one or two have left the area to pastures new and we wish them well whatever they are doing.

On the good side, however, we have had an influx of new members (and some old members returning) such that our membership total, which stood at approximately 132 at the start of

2006, is currently 142. An encouraging overall increase which sadly is not a claim too many branches around the country can make. We have received messages, from Canada, of two ex members wishing to reinstate their membership which is also great news and bodes well for the future. It would be great if all branch members who know of submariners, past or present, in the Barrow area:

\* who have so far not made the decision to join us

\* or who for their own valid reasons decided to leave

encourage them.

John Houlding

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### BILL GATES

Love him or hate him, he sure hits the nail on the head with this! To anyone with kids of any age, here's some advice.

Bill Gates recently gave a speech at a High School about 11 things they did not and will not learn in school. He talks about how feel good, politically correct teachings created a generation of kids with no concept of reality and how this concept set them up for failure in the real world.

Rule 1: Life is not fair get used to it!

Rule 2: The world won't care about your self esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

Rule 3: You will NOT make \$60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.

Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your Grandparents had a different word for burger flipping: they called it

opportunity.

Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parent's generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.

Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

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### The Editor

2006 has been a difficult year for the branch with a number of members crossing the bar :-

**Harry Wetton**

**Dave Tull**

**John Walker**

**William (Bill) Cole**

I am sure you will join with me in wishing all there families well for the new year.

In the year that HMS Astute is launched can you remember the date it was actually ordered or the date the keel was laid down.

Happy new year  
ED



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### HON PRESIDENT

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& Hon. Chaplain

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## News Letter Contact Information

Do you have a story to tell or have information you feel should appear in the news letter then ring Ben Britten on 01229 820265 (evenings) or if you wish to send me an article please ring for postal address. or send your contribution by e-mail to:

**ben\_britten89@msn.com**

Constructive suggestions about the news letter are very welcome. The news letter will be published in the last week of each month IE last week of December for the January 2007 issue please try and have any information with me by the 15th of each month. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition.



**WWW.HMSCOURAGEOUS.CO.UK**



## Members Birthdays

January 2007

H. Cable	02/01
A. Cundall	08/01
D. Burnside	09/01
R. Sherriff	10/01
S. Sibbett	21/01
B. Kerr	21/01
P. Hearn	22/01
A. Hines	22/01
G. Meadows	23/01
R. Dixon	25/01
I. Moore	29/01
S. Walker	30/01
L. Willcox	31/01

## Australian Families

A man in Brisbane calls his son in Adelaide two days before Christmas and says, "I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing; forty-five years of misery is enough." "Gees Dad, what are you talking about?" the son screams.

"We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," the father says, "we're sick of each other, and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Darwin and tell her."

Frantic, the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone. "No way they're getting divorced!" she shouts, "I'll take care of this."

She calls Brisbane immediately and screams at her father, "You are not getting divorced. Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back, and we'll both be there by tomorrow. Until then, don't do a thing. DO YOU HEAR ME?" and hangs up. The old man hangs up his phone and turns to his wife. "Okay," he says, "they're coming for Christmas and paying their own way."