



SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION BARROW-IN-FURNESS BRANCH NEWS LETTER



THE DECEMBER WORD



Advent Sunday 1 the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western tradition, begins on the fourth

Sunday before Christmas Day, which this year is December 2nd so it becomes a time of reflection, before the frenetic activity kicks off with a vengeance. I feel that John Houlding our Vice Chairman's reflective thoughts have touched on all right points and thanked all the right people for the undoubted success of our Branch. I also agree whole heartedly that we all must be prepared to engage in "out of the box thinking" in seeking innovative ways of expanding both our membership and improving the way that we conduct our month on month formal/social/pastoral/ business. With our vibrant membership I can accept that there is an argument for saying - if it isn't broke then why fix it. Yet I recall it was one of the members of the London Branch during their recent visit. Who said to me wistfully, that their Branch once was as strong as us, but the ravages of time and boasting a high percentage of octogenarian members they have become like an aged aunt brought to reduced circumstances.

Wearing my Chaplains hat for a mille second I feel that Biff had a good send off, his sister Rachael and family were highly delighted with the branch support, that they have given me one bottle of rum towards our next "Up Spirits". Had it not been his

eulogy, I feel Biff would have seen the funny side of my Lebanese Freudian-slip. There was also a second glaring error that was pointed out by one of the Army member of the family, first correct answer collects a bottle of Lambs Navy Rum.

A Christmas Snippet

Yule Logs today: If you ask people what a Yule log is today the most common answer would be a log shaped chocolate cake eaten around Christmas time.

Where does the word Yule come from? Yule is an old word for the winter festival, dating back to Viking times.



It is traditional to light a special 'Yule' log on Christmas Eve and keep it burning through the 12 nights of Christmas until Twelfth Night. Traditionally, a huge log would be selected in the forest on Christmas Eve, decorated with ribbons, and dragged back home. This was known as 'Bringing in the Yule Log'. The magical properties of the Yule Log were said to ensure good luck in the coming year to all those who lent a hand at pulling it over the rough ground. Once it was brought to the fireplace, a blessing was said over the log, asking that it should last forever. Wine was poured over it at this point to make it feel welcome. It was then placed on the fire and lit with a torch made from a piece of wood left over from last year's Yule Log.

After lighting, it was kept burning throughout the twelve days of Christmas.

Why?



The Celts believed that, for twelve days at the end of December, the sun stood still (which is why the days grew shorter and shorter). If they could keep Yule logs burning bright for those twelve days, then the sun would be persuaded to move again, and make the days grow longer. If a Yule Log went out, then there would be terrible luck. For Christians, the symbolism of the Yule log was that it represented the need to keep the stable warm for the Infant Christ.



I HAVE NOW REACHED THAT AGE WHERE I HAVE THREE BOOKINGS TO BE FATHER CHRISTMAS AT TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAVE A GOOD ONE REGARDS JONSEY HO! HO! HO



Social Scene



The Ladies night dinner dance took place on November the 9th with 91 Members and guests attending. Cdr Mike Wallicker of Astute was the principle guest and Ian Hillbeck who runs the Barrow SA website also attended with his wife Ann. Margaret Hart responded to the toast to the Ladies. A presentation was made to Ian in recognition of his 10 years service he has put in on the website. As usual the food at the Lisdoonie was good and hot and the entertainment by our friends Midnight went down well, I think everyone had a good time and thank you all for supporting this event.

Xmas Social

Our next event is the Christmas social at the Roose Conservative club on Saturday 8th December. Tickets are £2.00 per head, if you can bring a plate of food and a raffle prize if you wish. Entertainment will be provided by Shindig (Billy Daniels and Brian Wadeson). At present I only have 40 names, so spread the word and bring your friends for what is a cracking start to the Christmas festivities, If you haven't got your name down and would like to attend give me an e mail or ring on 01229 474927. you can pay either at the next meeting or on the night, bring your friends and have a good time.

Manchester Market

It was agreed by those who put their names down to postpone the visit to Manchester for the Christmas market due to the unsuitability of the Hotel and availability of other hotels at a reasonable price. I have said to Derek Jacobs of the Manchester branch that we will look to visit them in the New Year.

Valantines Weekend

I had very little response to what you wanted for the Valentines weekend, but I have had a good suggestion that we look into having a small Valentines dinner

at the Harbour (I need to speak to Leon and Tracy first) and me and Lynne will hold a Valentines quiz afterwards; I will keep you posted on this. Numbers will be limited.

Barrow SA 45th Anniversary year

I will shortly be putting together the social programme for 2008 our 45th Anniversary year. Our branch will also be holding a number of National level events including the National conference and the National draw a sub committee is well on with the organisation for these. Notable dates are 26th April 45th Anniversary dinner and 5th July for the combined Branch BBQ and National draw.

Well yet another year is drawing to a close, it has been a busy social programme and both Lynne and myself would like to thank you all for your support at dances, quizzes and raffles, we I hope you have all enjoyed yourselves at the socials and look forward to seeing you all in 2008.

Colin Hutchinson – Social Sec.

HMS Tireless

FIVE budding submarine commanders plus their mentor assessor (aka 'Teacher') joined HMS Tireless for a frantic month beneath the waves.

Everything a submarine's commanding officer might be expected to deal with and much more besides was thrown at the quintet as the latest Submarine Command Course, commonly known as Perisher, reached its climax off western Scotland.

There can be few sights more frightening to any submariner than a destroyer or frigate bearing down on their boat at full speed.

But the 'eyes only' section of Perisher is also regarded as the most exhilarating parts of the course: to launch a successful torpedo attack while every skimmer in the area tries to charge you down. And then there's what the Germans call the Freijagd the free for all, where any ship venturing within torpedo range of Tireless became a target, foe and friend. In true deep fashion, the watches

squabbled over who had sunk the most tonnage.

In between this game of hunted and hunter, the Devonport-based boat squeezed in Exercise Neptune Warrior, weapons drill tests in the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre on the Kyle of Lochalsh, intelligence gathering and Tomahawk missile launch procedures.

Just to add to the pressure for the Perisher students, the final stages of their assessment were witnessed by Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent... a course he passed three decades ago.

The Perishers finally left the boat in Devonian waters to be replaced by ten potential officer cadets experiencing life at sea in a submarine for the first time.

The cadets sailed across Lyme Bay to Portland, where a fairly lengthy stop was planned Tireless was the first submarine to visit since the RN base closed a dozen years ago.

Tireless was in town to test the harbour's Z-Berth, a quay designated specially for nuclear submarines.

But she also paid homage to her forebears.

Thirteen men were killed in June 1955 when a hydrogen peroxide-fuelled torpedo exploded in HMS Sidon, sending the boat to the bottom of the harbour.

Tireless' CO Cdr Ed Ahlgren joined veteran submariners and local Sea Cadets at a commemorative service, laying a wreath on the Sidon monument fittingly a slab of Portland stone which overlooks the harbour.

Tireless finally returned to Devon port in exciting fashion.

The boat conducted a series of training exercises with frogmen in Whitsand Bay and inside Plymouth's breakwater which was apparently a "spectacular show for the watching yachts, fishing vessels and ferries."



Secretary's Dit



Lots of things to report this month! At the Branch Meeting we had some visitors from the London Branch. Ian Tyson and his wife Desna were escorting Peter Green (both Ian and Peter are ex-ASTUTE's the Conventional one!). They were here because Peter had commissioned a painting of HMS ASTUTE (the old one) and he was presenting it to the new HMS ASTUTE. Coincidentally they were here on the day of our Branch meeting and they were invited to join in the Meeting and with 'Up Spirits' as well. The presentation of the ASUTUTE Painting had been photographed by Mike Vallence the Yard Photographer and a framed copy of that photograph was brought along to the Meeting by Cox'n Hendren to be presented to Peter as a memento of the day.



Peter Green (Centre)

The Ladies Night Dinner Dance was held on Friday 9th November at the Lisdoonie and our main guest this year was Commander Mike Walliker - the Skipper of HMS ASTUTE and our other guests were Ian Hillbeck and his wife Ann. Mike Walliker told us a bit about the new HMS ASTUTE and updated us on what is going on in the Submarine world. Ian Hillbeck for those aficionados of the Internet and the Branch Website will know that Ian is the



Webmaster of the Branch Website (I see we now have a few new changes to the Website thanks Ian!) and, as a recognition of the fact that Ian has been running the Website for some ten years now and that the Site is recognised as one of the best Submarine Sites going we have a lot to thank him for and the Branch made him a presentation of an engraved decanter and glasses on a tray.

Next up (as they say) was the Barrow Remembrance Parade on Sunday 11th November. It started off with Breakfast at the Harbour Hotel at 0900 about twenty attended for breakfast this year and included a good contingent from HMS AMBUSH Crew with a few ASTUTE's most of the ASTUTE's were at the Wirral for their adopted towns Parade.

We 'Marched Off' at 1032 (very precise timing this year). The Parade Commander was our own Branch 'Serving Member' Paul Douglas and in addition to the Standard Bearer and Escorts there were about 18 members on Parade and several more who met up with us at the Cenotaph. John Hart laid the Wreath on behalf of the Submariners Association. After the Parade it was back to the RBL for a pint or two and then on to the Harbour for our own Submariners Remembrance Ceremony at 1300 complete with 'Up Spirits' and Tracey's 'Hot Pot' with and without Black Pudding and 'dit spinning' with all your friends. The party was still going with a swing when I left at about 1600 and I gather it went on quite late not quite as late this year for some Members I understand.

A bit of a bonus for us all this month from the Keswick to Barrow Walk Committee. Our President John Hart was invited to go along as we were to receive a small donation. This turned out to be £700 not so small after all and a fine recognition of all the work that the Branch does locally.

Well done to all those who have provided 'Stewarding' support at the 'K2B Walk' over the years. The Committee has agreed that this donation should go into the Charity Chest whilst we consider what to do with the funds. More 'Stewarding' this past Weekend with several Members helping out with the crowd management at the turning on of the Barrow in Furness Christmas Lights not sure if the Reindeer were here this year as well! Thank you to those who helped out.

On the good news front we have three more new Members in Dave

Cooper (from the MoD ASTUTE office in the Yard, Dave Dunford and a rejoining Member - Brian 'Blood' Reed. Welcome all!



However on the bad news front we have had to say goodbye to our good friend John 'Biff' Byrth. Many of you will know that John had not been well for some time now. On Wednesday 14th he went into St Mary's Hospice at Ulverston as he told me 'for a bit of a rest and to build up his strength'. Sadly his rest only lasted to Saturday 17th. We were able to say goodbye to him on Friday 23rd at St. Patrick's on Barrow Island and afterwards the Royal in Anchor Road 'Biff' local

Well over twenty Branch Members turned out on a very cold but sunny afternoon to give 'Biff' a good 'Submariners Send Off' and Alan Jones gave the Eulogy in St Patricks Church and read the Submariners Prayer at the Thorncliffe Crematorium. Thanks to all who turned out and I hope there were not too many thick heads on the next day as I understand there were still a few in the Royal at 0345!

Mary Wetton has moved from Penrith to Morecambe to be close to her Grandchildren. She wants to know when the next Branch visit to the Morecambe Bay Branch is due I told her we normally go 'First Footing' to the Morecambe Branch in January and we'll let her know when we are coming. She sends her best regards to all Branch Members. By the way Mary is sponsoring one of the Submarine Heritage Centre 'Decade Paintings' in memory of Harry Wetton. She has selected the Decade 1901 to 1910 the painting content is currently being defined and Tom Murphy hopes to get started shortly. Joan Cole is also part sponsoring one of the Decade Paintings in memory of Bill Cole. Joan's painting is the 1971 to 1980 decade as two of Bill's Submarines were completed in this Decade and Joan is sharing the Sponsorship with Ian Edmondson who is keen to see SMITE as part of this painting.

Now my usual reminder that the 2008 Calendar is now available (at the bargain price of £5.00) and includes the new Painting of HMS ASTUTE for the June 2008 page. Remember that this may be the last Calendar of the current series as we have now completed and used all of the individual Submarine

'Class' Paintings of the SHC Paintings Collection over the last four years. We have made a start on the first six 'Decade' Paintings for the Collection. We now seem to have sponsors for three more but are still looking for Sponsors for the other three in the Series. Any volunteer sponsors will be more than welcome the remaining 'decades' are 1911 to 1920, 1921 to 1939 and 1931 to 1940. As I said before the 2008 Calendars will make good Christmas presents if you are having trouble thinking of something different this year. If you are feeling flush you might also think about buying a Print of ASTUTE or any other picture of the Collection as a gift but they do cost a bit more than the Calendars (£45.00) and copies of the Potted History of the SOCA/SA are still available at a reasonable price see Dave Barlow.

Dissemination of information (Meeting Minutes, Branch News Letters and the 'In Depth' quarterly News Letter) to you all at the moment has been a little difficult but has improved lately. I still need updated E Mail Address and, in sending out various items I still have a number of E Mail addresses which either don't work or which will not allow me to attach Newsletters, minutes etc. The Members who have only given me work 'E' Mail addresses (mainly people from the Yard) are requested to advise me of your home 'E' Mail Addresses so we can continue to keep you all fully informed. Have you changed your 'E' Mail Provider recently please let me know how to get hold of you!

Don't forget one more very important bit of business the National Council Conference will be held in Barrow Town Hall on the last Saturday in March 2008. Items for the NCC Agenda have to be lodged with the National Secretary by the end of December 2007 some proposals have already been advised. However - if there is a burning issue which you wish to raise at the National Conference get the details to any one of the Branch Committee as soon as possible so that we can fully consider the matter, get it agreed at Branch level, find a seconding Branch and get it to the National Secretary in plenty of time we are running out of time for processing any items!

Filming for the SA DVD started at the Reunion and some good copy was gathered in. More filming was achieved at the Embankment Parade and some more interviews with Members were recorded on

HMS PRESIDENT after the Parade. Filming of Memorial Events such as K13, Vandal/Untamed, Truculent, May Island, Sidon etc are planned to be filmed in the New Year to be included in the DVD. The 'Bear' at the Submarine Museum is advising on the inclusion of Archive footage from the Submarine Museum and other sources. DVDs will be available to Members in due course at a modest fee of course!

That's all from me for now! Don't forget the Christmas Social at the Roose Cons on Saturday 8th December don't forget your £2.00 per person, a plate of food and a raffle prize would go down well! See you all at the December Branch Meeting on Tuesday 4th December at 2000.

Yet again the Rum Barrel will be out as well this time in memory of 'Biff' Byrth so as I usually tell you get a lift, a taxi or be prepared to walk!

Letters

Dear Ben,

Please can I bring to the attention of your newsletter readers the publication of my new book called 'Subsmash - the Mysterious Disappearance of HM/s Affray.' This is the first full account about the loss of the 'A' class submarine which went missing with 75 officers and ratings in April 1951. She was taking part in a routine peacetime 'war exercise.' She dived, never again to resurface. The Royal Navy transmitted the signal 'Subsmash' indicating that a submarine was in trouble. They had just days to find Affray and rescue her crew before oxygen supplies run out.

Britain held its breath while all available ships and searching aircraft undertook what was to become the country's largest ever sea-air rescue operation.

Five days later the Admiralty announced there was no longer hope of finding Affray or her crew. Had Affray collided with another vessel? Was she the victim of Cold War espionage? Was she overloaded? Had an explosion taken place on board?

Two months later, underwater radar on board HMS Loch Inch discovered a 'cigar-shaped object' sitting on the seabed in nearly 300

ft of water, nearly 40 miles away from where Affray had dived. Divers and crews using primitive underwater television equipment found no outward signs of damage, but closer examination revealed that Affray's 35ft-long snort mast had become detached leaving a 14-inch gash in her hull.

Was this the cause of the disaster?

A top-secret Admiralty Board of Enquiry concluded that metal fatigue was responsible for shearing off Affray's snort mast while cruising at periscope depth. Experienced submariners disagree, stating that the mast snapped after the submarine hit the seabed. So, what really sent 75 men to their deaths?

My book investigates Affray's disappearance using once top-secret documents, transcripts from the official enquiry, contemporary newspaper and broadcast coverage, interviews with relatives who lost family members on the submarine and sailors taking part in the search.

The book features informed opinion from submarine and diving experts and reveals that in 1951 the Admiralty withheld important information from both the government and the public about submarine safety measures.

Subsmash is a fascinating and fast-moving recreation of HM/s Affray's last mission and the effects of its loss on the relatives and shipmates of those who perished. The book asks a number of questions still demanding answers over half a century since the doomed submarine made its final dive.

'Subsmash' costs £19.99 from all good bookshops but Submariners Association members can buy copies for the reduced price of £14.99 including free postage and packing to any UK address - providing you order no later than December 20. To request a discount form, please email

alan@alangallop.co.uk or drop a line to:-
Alan Gallop,
'Melody House,' 22
Ashford Crescent,
Ashford,
Middlesex
TW15 3ED

enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

Thank you - and a happy Christmas and 2008 to you all!

Vice Chairman



Happy Christmas and a Very Happy and Successful New year.

Hi to all; the time of year has come to reflect on the past 12 months and have a look at what was good and what was not so good. As your Vice Chair it is not for me to give my personal opinion but I wish to propose that any branch member who has an opinion or suggestion to come forward and let the committee know about it.

I am going to suggest, to the committee, that we have an open forum gathering for just this purpose sometime in January 2008 and subsequent to that gathering we make some plans and proposals to retain and / or improve the things we thought went well in 2007 and also to change the things that did not go too well and additionally we can try new activities or processes that may be suggested through this forum.

To make this sort of exercise of any value we must have the input of all members who have something to say. Both positive and negative criticism is welcome and in particular any new ideas will be discussed and tried where considered practicable and beneficial.

The rest of this dit is an uncoordinated rant of disjointed thoughts which are intended to get your thinking caps on and solicit your support in the new year.

Some prompts on the sort of things I hope will be discussed.

- 1) How is the current format of the monthly meetings going any improvements or changes?
- 2) Are we meeting on the best day for the majority of members?
- 3) We know that the membership exceeds the capacity of the current venue and that on some occasions it gets a little cramped. Should we be thinking of changing venue and

if so are there any good suggestions?

4) Are you happy with the way your committee is managing the branch on your behalf?

5) Are there enough, or too many, socials? Do we wish to visit more away from Barrow or should we attract more visits from out of town.

6) How do we engender more interest on several occasions over the past year our social secretary has been concerned over lack of numbers until the last minute and almost cancelled a number of social activities.

7) Should we create a "Ladies Section" of the Barrow Branch?

8) The subject of Associate Members comes up every now and then should we be considering this form of membership? I remain firmly on the fence on this one but to enable a balanced decision we should brainstorm the concept and lay down the criteria where a non submariner can be welcomed as an Associate Member of the Barrow Branch; what activities he can join in and attend; what voting rights they could be afforded; what identification they may be entitled to wear; etc. Only after such an exercise should the subject be raised at AGM.

There is no limit to the size or scope of your commendation or gripe as even small changes will be assessed and implemented if agreed.

In my humble opinion we have not had a bad year, membership has increased, not just because of the crew of Astute and more lately Ambush but some more local ex-submariners have joined or rejoined to swell our numbers. Welcome one and all.

Colin and Lyn have done a tremendous job as the social team and deserve a big pat on the back. As always they would appreciate some more support both in practical terms and in your early declaration of interest in proposed events.

A resounding round of applause

goes from me to our Welfare Rep, Dave Craven, and his small team of helpers. Dave I believe I have the support of every member and lady in saying you are doing a great job.

The committee has operated reasonably well though it has been difficult to get any volunteers to accept the role as "committee member". Come on, take an active part of YOUR branch.

The Committee meetings are always published with the monthly meeting minutes and are 'open door' meetings which any branch member is welcome to attend. Why not come along once or twice in January, February and March and see how it goes and consider putting your name forward as a committee member during the formal elections at the AGM in April.

We are often rushed at the committee meeting due to the social activities of the Harbour, darts, dominoes etc and perhaps need to consider meeting earlier or at a different venue

Enough mindless ranting from me I can hear the echoes of 'put a sock in it' however what I really do want to say to one and all, is "I wish you all a very happy Christmas"

And I am looking forward to helping you all take the branch forward through another year. Together we can make this coming year; Our 45th Birthday year; one we can remember with happiness and satisfaction.

**Have a good time.
Regards
John Houlding
Vice Chairman**



Lord These Departed shipmates with Dolphins on their chest are part of an outfit known as the best. Make them welcome and take them by the hand you'll find without doubt they are the best in the land. So heavenly father add their names to the roll of our departed shipmates still on patrol let them know that we who survive will always keep there memories alive

The names of those members reported in November to have 'Crossed the Bar'



SAA Victoria Branch
1st Nov 2007
Clive Enrnest Taylor Mid
Lieutenant RANVR
Submarine service 1942-1945
Sea Rover, H50, Vivid & Sidar



Welsh Branch
Nov 2007
TJ (Trevor) Leyshon
Able Seaman (AA3)
P/JX 325683
Aged 84
Submarine service 1943-1946
Sea Nymph



None Member
(Former Fosm) 8th Nov 2007
Sir Arthur R Hezlet
Vice Admiral
Submarine service 1935-1946
Regulus, h43, Trident, H44
Upholder, Unique, Ursula,
Trident, Trasher & Trenchant



Mersey side Branch
(Former Secretary)
Nov 2007
R (Ray) Hedgecock MBE
Leading Stoker
P/KX110812
Aged 87
Submarine service 1944-1945
Osiris (1)



Colchester Branch
(Chairman)
Nov 2007
M (Morry) Clary
LRO
P/JX912116
Aged 70
Submarine service 1955-1964
Talent, Seneschal, Springer,
Thule, Totem & Tiptoe



Leicester Branch
Nov 2007
JA (Jack) Wilkinson Mid
Stoker Petty Officer
C/KX94292
Aged 86
Submarine service 1940-1945
Tuna, Regent, P346, Vivid
Oberon(1) & Proteus



Leicester Branch
Nov 2007
RA (Roy) Manning
Stoker Mechanic
P/SKX 872947
aged 75
Submarine Service 1953-1957
Talent, Seneschal, Toledo,
Alcide & Ambush



Dolphin Branch
17th Nov 2007
David Patrick Blackwood
(Paddy) Ryan, OBE
Commander
Aged 70
Submarine service 1959-1990
Grampus, Sea Devil, Narwhal
Olympus, Odin, Ambush(CO)
Narwhal(CO), Onslow(CO)
Sovereign & Renown (CO)



Non Member
19th Nov 2007
P J (Peter) Mosley
Leading Seaman (UW3)
P/J940166
Submarine service 1957-1964
Seraph & Oberon



Portsmouth Branch
13th Nov 2007
Thomas (Tom) Whitehead
Chief Ordnance Electrician
P/MX 915187G
Aged 72
Submarine service 1953-1974
Trump, Trenchant, Tudor,
Anchorite, Token, Oberon
and Narwhal



Sheffield (Lapsed)
Nov 2007
P (Pete) Jensen
Petty Officer Telegraphist
Aged 88
WWII Service in Zeehond
and O22



SAA
17th Nov 2007
Jack Ernest Stanley Tooes
BEM
Chief Petty Officer Coxswain
P/JX157485
Submarine Service 1939-1958
Oswald, POW(40-43)
Varangarian, Saga, Sentinel
Turpin, Amphion & Tactician



Barrow-in-Furness Branch
16th Nov 2007
John (Biff) Byrth
Aged 58
Petty Officer Stores
Accountant
D086838D
Submarine service 1969-1990
Sealion, Walrus, Onyx,
Opposum & Upholder



Canadian Submarine overhaul extended to 2009

Navy says it's a more complex, costly and time-consuming job than refitting a Boeing 777 commercial airliner.

Published: Saturday, September 22, 2007

Everywhere Lt.-Cmdr. Mark Wilson looks, he sees work that needs to be done. Not just a little bit of work, but hundreds and thousands of hours stretching the 70-metre length of HMCS Victoria, one of Canada's four troubled diesel electric submarines. Wilson stands in the sub's operations room and points above his head. When Britain owned the subs, one of three periscopes was there. But the Canadian navy concluded it didn't need three periscopes. And so, it decided to remove one. "You wouldn't think that looks like a big job," said Wilson, gesturing to the empty spot and thick steel pressure hull above his head.



Fleet Maintenance Facility production coordinator Gary Edge passes through a water tight hatch in the submarine HMCS Victoria in drydock at CFB Esquimalt.

"But just to cut that out and re-weld all the frames, that alone was an approximately 7,000-hour job." And just like that, you begin to understand how much time it takes to fix a submarine. More than 200 trades people have been working on HMCS Victoria since it was hoisted into drydock for what's called an extended docking work period in 2005. The job requires some 600,000 combined worker hours, installing 500,000 parts supplied by 1,600 different suppliers.

The navy says it's a more complex, costly and time-consuming job than refitting a Boeing 777 commercial airliner. "It's a hell of a job," said Wilson. "I may never do

something this complex in my career again." At first, the navy estimated repairs would be done this year. That's now been extended to mid-2009. "The first time you tend to do anything, it tends to take a lot longer than the next," said Wilson, the project manager.

Canada bought four of the Victoria-class diesel-electric subs from Britain in 1998 for around \$750 million. They have to be stripped and serviced after so many hours in the water.

And even though Canada has barely used them Victoria has spent only 115 days in the water since 2000 the British-run hours are enough to warrant an overhaul. All that work is above and beyond the "Canadianization" refits Canada completed when it bought the subs. It also doesn't count the time and money spent on subsequent emergency upgrades, such as when the fleet's high-pressure air tanks were found to be rusting, when cracks were found in diesel exhaust backup valves, when Victoria's engines started sparking during a mission in 2005, or when HMCS Chicoutimi suffered a fatal fire in 2004 during its maiden voyage back to Canada. Three of the four subs are currently out of service. HMCS Windsor is undergoing its own extended docking service in Halifax. HMCS Chicoutimi was yanked from the water after the fire and will be serviced when Victoria is done. HMCS Cornerbrook is still out at sea running missions on the East Coast.

When it's all said and done, the navy estimates repairs for Victoria alone will cost approximately \$195 million. It's taking extra time for workers to familiarize themselves with Victoria's technology and gather baseline information the navy can use to upgrade the rest of its fleet, said Wilson. On a recent tour of the submarine, Wilson highlighted the hundreds of items on the to do list, including rebuilding the crew quarters, mess area, torpedo loading system and engine room. Everything needs to be covered to reduce noise and preserve the submarine's stealth, he said. In one of the construction offices, diagrams of the ship are mounted on the wall and covered with hundreds of blue pins - each

representing a missing valve that has to be reinstalled.

One major project centred around a pizza-sized dent in the pressure hull dating back to before Britain mothballed the subs. It took 5,000 worker hours to fix the dent, said Wilson. But it was important, he said, because a submarine needs pressure to be distributed evenly or the weakest point in the hull could be breached.

When work on Victoria is finally complete, the sub will be good for five years before heading back into another, shorter, extended docking period scheduled to last fewer than two years, said navy Cmdr. Scott McVicar, submarine operating authority for Maritime Forces Pacific commander Rear-Admiral Tyrone Pile.

McVicar was also Victoria's commander from 2001 to 2004, and brought the submarine home from Halifax to Esquimalt through the Panama Canal. "She will take all the time she takes," he said of repairs. "You can't cut corners. You won't cut corners. It's frustrating, but there are some things you just don't mess with. You're not going to risk your sailors."

Kiddies Book

Queenie and Billikins is a wonderful new kiddies book or for SA and SCA members in their second childhood which is sponsored by the RN Submarine Museum and is now on sale at £4.99 plus a pound P and P. It is a wonderful little story based on the two circus sealions bought down from Scotland to Fort Blockhouse to be trained as U Boat hunters during World War 1. The Kelvin Hughes "Sealion" Trophy is named after them. It can be obtained from the giftshop online or ring the giftshop direct or send cheque made out to RNSM Enterprises Ltd direct to The Giftshop RN Submarine Museum Haslar Jetty Road Gosport Hants PO12 2AS.

Any queries ring the Bear on 02392 510354 etn 225

Thanks all its an excellent pressie for your grandchildren

Reagrds
Bear

**Engineer Lieutenant
Commander
William Rabbidge**

BARROW with its Vickers shipyard and engineering works has built or fitted diesel engines to everything from frigates to railway locomotives but it is in submarines where the town became a world-leading expert.

This role is recognised in a new book by American engine specialist Lyle Cummins.

Diesels for the First Stealth Weapon: Submarine Power 1902-1945 is a comprehensive illustrated history of the world's submarine diesels.

It tells of their designers, builders and the dedicated submariners caring for those state-of-the-art engines in their demanding roles often under combat conditions.

The book gives Barrow credit with inventing the engine which drives the modern world. The principle of the common rail diesel engine used in almost all modern wagons and buses was stumbled upon by a Barrow Admiralty worker on submarine sea trials 90 years ago.



It was developed into a successful working system by a team led by Engineer Lieutenant Commander William Rabbidge, of Southfield, Ulverston.

One of the Vickers-built common rail diesel engines survives at the Submarine Museum in Gosport in HMS Alliance, launched in 1947.

Mr Cummins said: "The basic principle of the Vickers common rail one or more pumps discharging into a common, high pressure

delivery line serving multiple injectors remains unchanged in today's systems.

"A further similarity Vickers pioneered was the use of an external triggering mechanism to allow injection of a charge over a controlled time interval into the combustion chamber.

"Whereas Vickers mechanically opened a needle valve in the injection nozzle, today's systems electronically employ a solenoid valve in the injector to quickly open and close a fuel valve which performs the same function."

Naval officer Mr Rabbidge was born in 1880 and died in 1960. He was an honours graduate of the Royal Naval Engineering College in 1903.

In 1915, the engineer lieutenant had his arm twisted to resign from the Royal Navy to join Vickers as head of diesel development. He was being paid £1,500 a year worth around £120,000 at today's prices.

He remained on the Royal Navy's emergency list and was promoted to the rank of engineer Lt commander. He led work at the shipyard on injector nozzle design.

The wartime shipyard had huge problems in getting its engines to work efficiently and without leaving the enemy a tell-tale cloud of exhaust smoke.

Rabbidge's team helped cut the delivery time of submarines by six months. Submarines with Vickers diesel engines went on to form the backbone of the navy's underwater strike force during the First World War.

The new book has an entire chapter on the British navy's unique submarine diesels from 1906 to 1918. There is also a chapter on the Sulzer engine a name which will be familiar to many retired yard workers in Barrow.

The book also deals with submarine diesels produced by countries around the world, including the US, Russia, France and Japan.

The 740-page book is available in this country through distributor Adam Harris, of Camden Miniature Steam Services, Barrow Farm, Rode, Somerset BA11 6PS. It costs £46.50 plus postage.



Never Argue with a Woman

One morning the husband returns after several hours of fishing and decides to take a nap. Although not familiar with the lake, the wife decides to take the boat out. She motors out a short distance, anchors, and reads her book.

Along comes a Game Warden in his boat. He pulls up alongside the woman and says, "Good morning, Ma'am. What are you doing?"

"Reading a book," she replies, (thinking, "Isn't that obvious?") "You're in a Restricted Fishing Area," he informs her. "I'm sorry, officer, but I'm not fishing. I'm reading." "Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment. I'll have to take you in and write you up."

"If you do that, I'll have to charge you with sexual assault," says the woman. "But I haven't even touched you," says the game warden. "That's true, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment." "Have a nice day ma'am," and he left.

MORAL: Never argue with a woman who reads. It's likely she can also think.



News Members
Dave Cooper
 (from the MoD ASTUTE
 office in the Yard),
Dave Dunford
 &
Brian 'Blood' Reed.
**A warm Welcome to you
 all!**



A Different Christmas Poem

The embers glowed softly, and
in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I
cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head
on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic
in rest.
Outside the snow fell, a blanket
of white,
Transforming the yard to a
winter delight.
The sparkling lights in the tree
I believe,
Completed the magic that was
Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my
breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love
I would sleep.
In perfect contentment, or so it
would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I
started to dream.
The sound wasn't loud, and it
wasn't too near,
But I opened my eyes when it
tickled my ear.
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't
quite know, Then the
sure sound of footsteps outside
in the snow.
My soul gave a tremble, I
struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to
see who was near.
Standing out in the cold and
the dark of the night,
A lone figure stood, his face
weary and tight.
A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty
years old,
Perhaps a Marine, huddled
here in the cold.
Alone in the dark, he looked up
and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and
my wife and my child.
"What are you doing?" I asked
without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's
freezing out here!
Put down your pack, brush the
snow from your sleeve,
You should be at home on a
cold Christmas Eve!"
For barely a moment I saw his
eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the
snow blown in drifts...
To the window that danced
with a warm fire's light
Then he sighed and he said "Its
really all right,
I'm out here by choice. I'm

here every night."
"It's my duty to stand at the
front of the line,
That separates you from the
darkest of times.
No one had to ask or beg or
implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my
fathers before me.
My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a
day in December,"
Then he sighed, "That's a
Christmas 'Gram always
remembers."
"My dad stood his watch in the
jungles of 'Nam',
And now it is my turn and so,
here I am.
I've not seen my own son in
more than a while,
But my wife sends me pictures,
he's sure got her smile."
Then he bent and he carefully
pulled from his bag,
The red and the white, ... a
Canadian flag.
"I can live through the cold
and the being alone,
Away from my family, my
house and my home.
I can stand at my post through
the rain and the sleet,
I can sleep in a foxhole with lit-
tle to eat.
I can carry the weight of killing
another,
Or lay down my life with my
sister and brother...
Who stand at the front against
any and all,
To ensure for all time that this
flag will not fall."
"So go back inside," he said,
"harbor no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll
be all right."
"But isn't there something I
can do, at the least,
Give you money," I asked, "or
prepare you a feast?
It seems all too little for all that
you've done,
For being away from your wife
and your son."
Then his eye welled a tear that
held no regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and
never forget.
To fight for our rights back at
home while we're gone,
To stand your own watch, no
matter how long.
For when we come home, either
standing or dead,
To know you remember we
fought and we bled.
Is payment enough, and with
that we will trust,
That we mattered to you as you
mattered to us."



A footnote to the Poem

PLEASE, Would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our Canadian service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us.



*Dont worry about
the world coming
to an end today.
It is already
tomorrow in
Australia*





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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:

Rwbritten1@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 Decmber for the January 2008 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.rnsubmus.co.uk



Members Birthdays

December 2007

L. Thwaites	02/12
P. Douglas	03/12
G. Livingston	06/12
D. Carter	12/12
M. Bown	15/12
M. Dack	17/12
V. Miles	17/12
K. Collins	19/12
D. Taylor	23/12
N. Morrison	27/12
S. Doughty	28/12
C. Lee	31/12
T. Pyne	31/12



The Editor

May I take the opportunity to wish our members and readers a very Happy Christmas and thank everyone that contributed to the News letter throughout the year.

This news letter is the 90th to be published with the 100th edition due for publication in October 2008.

Congratulations to Ian Hillbeck on the recent update of the www.submariners.co.uk website and you can always download the PDF of this newsletter from the site.

Well done to Colin, Lyn and the social team for there outstanding efforts this year in organising the social events.

Have a good one.



Merry Christmas

From all members of the Barrow in Furness branch of the Submariners Association.

This message goes to all readers of the branch news letter and to all friends of the branch.

We particularly want to pass our best wishes to the widows and families of those of our members who have unfortunately departed on their final patrol.

It is difficult sometimes to know if we are intruding into your lives or if you welcome the contact with some or all of the branch members and have to rely on you letting us know how you are and if you wish to retain contact.

We will pass this copy of the branch news letter to those we know with our sincere best wishes for Christmas.



Dot Moody and family

Joan Cole

Eileen Mitchell-Night



MaryWetton

Sue Harries

The Braithwaite family, Paul, Melanie and Mrs Braithwaite



Mary Layden

Joyce Tull

Doreen Anderson

The family and friends of John (Biff) Byrth

If your name is not listed above we apologise for losing contact and will be more than happy to get in touch again should you wish us to, just contact our welfare team in the first instance, or any of the branch members you might know and we will do the rest.