

April 2011 Issue 130

Submariners Association New York Submariners Association

Barrow-in-Furness Branch

Twinned with SAOC (East)

HON PRESIDENT John. V. Hart 01229 821831

CHAIRMAN & Hon. Chaplain Alan Jones 01229 463150

VICE CHAIRMAN John F Houlding 01229 812593

SECRETARY Barrie K.Downer 01229 820963

TREASURER
Mick Mailey
01229 821290
4 Jesmond Avenue
Barrow-in-Furness
LA13 9AW

SOCIAL TEAM Colin Hutchinson 01229208604 Jeff Thomas 01229 464493

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Richard Britten 01229 820265

> WEB MASTER Ron Hiseman 01229 828664

STANDARD BEARERS
Dudley Davenport
Pedlar Palmer
01229 828120
Ginge Cundall

Ginge Cundall

WELFARE COMMITTEE

Dave Craven

Alan Jones

Peter Lorking

Colin Taylor



HMS G9



CHAIRMAN'S April Word

Yesterday I beavered away to produce what I thought would be in the grand scheme of things, my last front page contribution as your Chairman. However just before I posted it off to Ben I dug out the March 2011 issue of the newsletter and realised I had already written most of what I wanted to say, so I have had to resort to Plan "B". On reflection I have calculated that during my tenure of office in an effort to make the articles topical and interesting that I must have sweated out, approximately twenty thousand words to complete my Chairman and Chaplain Dits and that includes the words that were cut and pasted to the waste basket.

So I will not be too sorry to pass over 50% of the journalistic duties to the incoming Chairman, but will continue to find articles for the Chaplains slot. I can honestly say that I have been honoured these past two terms to be the Chairman of a Branch that in my mind is undoubtedly the strongest unit in the whole of the Submariners Association. Therefore not wanting my closing lines to read like a gushing actor at the Oscar's who thank all and sundry stand including their psychic guides with questionable insincerity. I will close with these words. The strength of a Chairman in any organisation can only be gauged by the support of the membership. As such it would be unfair of me to single out any individual who has made my tenure of office a lasting memory, "so I thank you all".

Regards

Jonsey

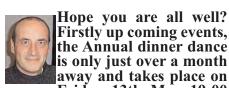
CONTENTS

- 2) Social Secretary
- 3) HMS G9
- 4) Barrie Downer
- 5) & 6 HMS Thetis
- 7) Obits
- 8) General Info

Barrow Quiz page



Social Secretary April 2011



Friday 13th May 19:00 for 19:30, dress is Blazers / Lounge suits, the price includes a 3 course meal, ½ bottle of wine and entertainment will be provided by Shindig. Cost will be £ 28 per head. The list has been circulated at the last couple of meetings and to date we have approximately 50 coming, so please contact me if you would like tickets and bring your friends too.

I think our monthly meeting in June has been designated a Ladies invite so we may do a Quiz or something for that meeting.

There are currently lists circulating for the proposed Magennis Dinner to be held by the Northern Irish Branch in May, Faslane visit in July and the Derby branch trip to Bournemouth in November. These will be in circulation during the April branch meeting.

As April is the month in which we hold our AGM I have added my report on the past years social events, again I would like to thank all members and friends that have supported the social programme and hope that you and your guests had a good time, there were some successes and some not so successes and your feedback is appreciated at any time. The committee and I hope that your support continues in the coming year and look forward to seeing more of you at the socials that are planned.

Social Secretary's Annual Report April 2011 AGM

Hello friends and shipmates its hard to believe that its that time of year again to report on the social events of the last year and to let you know what you can expect socially in the coming year and it also gives me the chance to thank all those that have supported the branch and helped during the social events.

A brief summary of social events in 2010:

Our proposed first footing visit to Morecambe had to be delayed until February due to the atrocious weather conditions, but unlike last year we managed to send a handful of first footers to attend their February meeting.

The February monthly meeting included the Ladies attending for the meeting and I also held a quiz night, this was to be repeated again in June when Jan Mead and Geoff Thomas set the quiz.

The Spring visit to Espana Levante in Benidorm, which about 20 to 30 members were looking forward to un fortunately fell victim to the Icelandic Volcano, with many of us turning up at Liverpool airport ready for a weekend of fun and frolics, to be told that our flights had been cancelled, in the end I think only John made it, as he flew before the eruption, but don't mention his and Shonas trip back.....it was long and torturous!!

It was with great regret that we took the decision not to go ahead with the annual BBQ this year. I am afraid the numbers we received that showed an interest, just did not make the event viable. My apologies go to those that were looking forward to it. A weekend of celebrations and organized events was to 50th commemorate the of anniversary Nuclear Submarines. On the Social front we held a social evening at the RBL on the Saturday 23rd October, Shindig provided the entertainment, entry was free and a good night was had by members and visitors.

On 12th of November we had our Ladies night dinner dance at the Lisdoonie, again I was very pleased with the support for the dinner with a total of 89 attending, As usual the food at the Lisdoonie was very good and plenty of it. Thank you once again for your support on the night and with the raffle.

We finished the year with our Christmas social at the RBL on December 11th, members brought plenty of good food and raffle prizes. Santa made an appearance, albeit a bit worse for wear and it was an enjoyable night.

We kicked off our 2011 social programme with a first footing visit to our good friends at Morecambe on the 7th January, where the usual suspects attended, our thanks to John Houlding for again being the volunteer driver.

Our February meeting on the 1st was an invite to the Ladies to join us and Ian Walsh kindly organized and run the Quiz in my absence.

I would like to thank you for the support you have given to myself and the organized social events. Your support for the raffles is as always fantastic and this helps to keep the costs of social events down. Don't forget if you have suggestions for social events please don't hesitate to contact myself or any member of the committee.

Colin Hutchinson

Social Secretary





Barrow Submarine Series: issue number 29

THESE three medals from the most peculiar of Barrow tragedies are a reminder of how dangerous the life of a submariner can be.

They were awarded to Royal Navy stoker H.W.T Underwood.

He drowned with all but one of his crewmates on September 16 in 1917 when the Barrow-built submarine *G*9 was sunk by a British destroyer in a double friendly fire incident.

The submarine had been launched at Barrow on June 15 in 1916 and was 187ft long.

It weighed in at 700 tons and was powered by 1,600hp Vickers diesel engines to produce 15.5knots on the surface and 10 knots underwater on battery power.

This class of submarine fired the latest design of 21inch torpedo.

Its captain, Lt-Cmdr the Hon Byron Cary, 30, was on the bridge in the dark, in heavy seas and with information that a German U-boat was in the area.

He called for full speed, had the bow tubes made ready and ordered two torpedoes to be fired. He never lived to explain what he had seen to prompt this action.

His target turned out to be the friendly destroyer *Pasley* – although it didn't stay friendly for long. One torpedo whizzed past the ship while the other struck its target but failed to explode.

The destroyer went on the attack and rammed *G9*. Only Stoker William Drake managed to jump clear before the submarine sank within 30 seconds.

There had been a brief few seconds before the collision when lookouts on *Pasley* realised that the submarine was British – but too late to do anything about it.

The *G9* survivor said after the event: "The boat heeled over to starboard and then there was a big rush of air up through the conning tower.

"I saw one man get up through the conning tower, and so I followed him.

"When I was half-way through the lower lid, somebody in the control room gave the order to close it and it caught me in the stomach.

"I got through the door and right on to the bridge."

He reported seeing only two other men get clear of the submarine before it vanished below the surface.

Pasley's captain, Cmdr Ramsey was in the ship's charthouse when the dud torpedo struck his ship and rushed to the bridge as the destroyer lined up the submarine ready to ram.

He heard a crew member shout "She's one of ours" but was unable to avoid the collision.

The damage to *Pasley* was minor and the destroyer was able to resume his convoy duties to the Shetland Islands.



TRAGIC LOSS: The crew of the Barrow-built submarine G9 before the accident



REWARD FOR SERVICE: The First World War medals of Royal Navy stoker H.W.T Underwood who was among those killed when the submarine G9 was involved in a bizarre collision



Well here we are already in April and back to the Branch Annual General Meeting time again.

This year the AGM should be a relatively painless event as there have been no Proposals or Recommendations put forward for discussion. There may be an Election however as previously advised our current Branch Chairman Alan Jones is standing down after two three year terms on Office.

Also our Vice Chairman John Houlding is standing down as, this year, he has significant other Commitments to meet. I understand we have volunteers putting their names forward for these two posts but ideally we need two names for each post for an election

We will however be hearing the **Branch Officers Reports on how** they see the past Year has gone plus we will be hearing the Treasurer on how the Finances stand at the end of the year. This year's Auditors are Ginge Cundall and **Paddy** McCormick. I will also be presenting a Delegates Report from the National Council Conference held this year in Blackpool on weekend 18th to 20th March in sunny Blackpool. This year for the first time we had a 'Stag' Members Only Reunion in March combined with the National Council Conference. For those who haven't heard the October Reunion has now been replaced by a Families Weekend and combined with the Annual Draw.

This year it will be held in the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool the hotel has been completely revamped since the Association's last visit for an Annual Reunion which by my rough calculations was probably in 2005! Apart from the Reunion and Conference March has been a pretty quiet Month for the Branch with just the Branch

Meeting and the Committee Meeting.

The Branch meeting was a bit longer than normal as it took some time to cover the two Proposals and two Recommendations on the Agenda. How ever the Branch decisions were very clear and decided the way the Branch would vote at the Conference. One other event in March was the unveiling of the Frankton Memorial to the **Cockleshell Heroes on the banks** of the River Gironde on 31st March. It was only two years ago that this project got off the ground with an original target of raising £60k that the Submariners Association was involved and, although the Submariner Community contribution to the target was relatively small it did assist in the revised target of £100k being realised on time. Hopefully there will be a full report on this event in the May Newsletter. I had thought about going to France for the unveiling but decided that it wasn't a practical option.

Falklands Visit

Several Branch Members have been off on 'Expeds' recently. Bob and Phyllis Palmer have been on a Cruise during which they visited the Falklands where Bob was able to lay a wreath at the Memorial to those lost in 1982 including the Ex-Barrow Sea Cadet AB (S) Shaun Haywood, who had been instructed by Members of the Barrow Branch. Shaun was, sadly, lost whilst serving on HMS ARDENT during the conflict. Included in the memorial was a second man from Barrow - LPT Gary T Nelson also lost on HMS ARDENT and an Submariner who had returned to General Service and who was lost whilst serving on HMS COVENTRY. He was ACWEA John D L Caddy known to several Members as an Ex-HMS REPULSE.



Bob Palmer laying the wreath

Bob says that during the day several people from the Cruise Ship told him they had seen the Wreath and photograph and that they thought that the design of the centre piece of the wreath was outstanding and unlike any other they had seen before. So have had some good publicity for the Association.

This report was sent out as Bob and Phyllis continued the Cruise and sailed from Punta Arenas en route to the glaciers and to their next stop Ponte Nontt."

Bob and Phyllis arrived back home in March and will be able to brief other Branch Members about their exploits at the next **Branch Meeting.**





Other Branch Members have also been 'gadding about' this month!

Alan and Dorothy Pillifent went off to the Maldives for a break and Alan ever the Submariner decided he needed to catch up on his underwater time and took a dive to 120 feet in a commercial submarine with female Chief Stoker and Outside Wrecker whatever next!



Outside Wrecker and Chief Stoker? Which is which?



Anyone else been anywhere interesting or done something out of the ordinary? Let us know and we'll get something in the next newsletter!



So what is coming up in April apart from the AGM?

Well not a lot really apart from the Branch Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 5th April and the Committee Meeting which will be on Tuesday 19th April and, of course, the St George's Day Parade on 24th April which we have been invited to support – that should end up with a 'do' afterwards at the Engineers and then the Steelworks as usual! Remember to come along and support our 'Pongo' oppos.

As a Branch we now down to 171 Members as I said previously this has come about partly as a result of our up dating of Branch Records and Contact details which resulted in several Members 'lapsing' themselves and several more being 'lapsed' by the Branch. Currently I understand that only five of the E Mail addresses on our contact list are not responding so I hope that all of our readers will confirm their E Mail addresses as soon as possible by sending a E Mail to me my E Mail address is on the front page. Hopefully Branch numbers will be increasing again over the next few weeks with some new Members and several rejoining Members.

Well I think that's about enough from me for the April News Letter! Don't forget the AGM on starts at 1930 30 minutes earlier than usual. Mick Mailey should have the Annual Draw tickets available for sale so bring your cash along and buy your tickets and hope to win the Big Prize at Liverpool!

If you are unable to attend a Branch Meeting(s) remember to send us your apologies. If you are not keeping too well let us know and we will see if there is anything the Welfare team can help with. Remember to let us know if there are any Branch Members or former Members that you know (or their wives, girlfriends or partners) who are not too well sometimes they may be too busy or pre-occupied with events to let us know themselves. If we don't know we

can't help! Hopefully I haven't missed out any events or anybody's names I think all the dates are right as well! See you all at the Annual General Meeting Tuesday 5th April usual place but at 1930.

Regards

Barrie

THE LOSS OF HMS THETIS THE BARROW CONNECTION

On Thursday 1st June 1939 the brand new submarine HMS (Lieutenant **THETIS** Commander Guy H Bolus) sailed from the Birkenhead Yard of Cammell Laird into Liver pool Bay to carry out diving trials. In addition to the normal crew of fifty five Officers and Ratings there were a large number of passengers both uniformed personnel civilians on board for Trials purposes. This took the total number of personnel onboard the Submarine up to one hundred and one. During the dive difficulties were countered with the trim of the submarine.

During the investigations into why the Submarine could not dive properly it was decided to determine the condition of the Tanks and Torpedo Tubes. In this process the Rear Doors of all Tubes including No. 5 Tube were opened. Unknown to the crew the Bow Cap of No. 5 Tube was already open and the Tube was full of water.

As the Rear Door was opened water rushed in and the forward compartments of the submarine were flooded. The Submarine inevitably ended up on the bottom and was unable to re surface. Eventually four of the trapped personnel were able to make an escape but, despite all the desperate efforts of both those remaining in the Submarine and all those on the surface in ships, aircraft and rescue vessels, the remaining ninety nine of the crew and passengers died in the accident.

As this was a Cammell Laird built Submarine it might seem strange that there was a Barrow connection however there was. There were four passengers on the Submarine that day all of whom had links to Barrow and the Vickers Yard and the Commanding Officers wife was also from the area.

The Commanding Officer Guy who had previously 'stood by' the Barrow built submarine HMS OSIRIS was married to Sybil Bolus (nee Poole). Sybil was the daughter of Mr and Mrs Frederick W Poole of Bankfield House, Urswick. Frederick Poole was the Furness Coroner. Guy and Sybil Bolus had one son, Martyn, who was nine years old at the time of the accident. After the Submarine has been salvaged and the casualties removed Guy Bolus was buried at sea on 27th September 1939 his wife did not attend the burial but his sister was present. Many of the Crew and passengers were buried in amass grave at Holyhead.

The three local men lost were:-

James Young who employed as a Foreman Fitter by Vickers-Armstrong Ltd at the Barrow in Furness Shipyard. He was the husband of Florence Young of 8, Falmouth Street, Barrow in Furness and he was the father of Joan and Hugh who were nine and eight years old respectively. He was buried privately by his family.

Thomas Ankers who was an employee in the Submarine Department of Vickers Armstrong Ltd at the Barrow in Furness Shipyard. He was married to Martha Ankers of 19, Derby Street, Barrow in Furness. Thomas Ankers was also buried privately by his family.

Horace Cragg who was a Submarine Draughtsman at the Barrow in Furness Shipyard of Vickers-Armstrong Ltd. He married to Sarah Cragg of Broadgate, Victoria Road, Ulverston. Again he was buried privately by his family.

The North-Western Daily Mail of Thursday 8th June 1939 reported on Page 8:

"Yesterday was a day of national mourning for the men who died on the submarine THETIS. Relatives were conveyed to the scene of the disaster in Liverpool Bay to take part in a memorial service that will never be erased from their minds.

Taking part in that sorrowful, poignant service were included the wives, mothers, and other relatives of the three local men who were victims of this greatest submarine tragedy in history.

By the sympathetic gesture of Armstrongs, Vickers bereaved relatives from Barrow and Ulverston were conveved to Liverpool by motor-cars.

Three cars, with chauffeurs, were placed at their disposal by the firm, so that they should be put to as little inconvenience as possible. It was one of those thoughtful acts that helped to sooth those in sorrow and must tend to cement the happy relations between employers and employees.

Vickers-Armstrong have also given £5,000 to the appeal fund and have let it be known that the dependants of their employees who lost their lives will be provided for.

Barrow joined in the great national memorial yesterday, for nowhere was the tragedy more regretted than in this town birthplace of British submarines.

The same paper reported (in part) on Page 9 that:

"The spacious church of St. John's, Barrow Island, was filled to overflowing, seats having been placed in the aisles and down the side walls of the building, for the memorial service yesterday afternoon for those who lost their lives in the THETIS disaster.

Her commander, Lieut-Commander G H Bolus as the son in law of the Furness Coroner, Mr F W Poole, and also well known by many of those who attended the service were the three employees of Messrs. Vickers Armstrong who were onboard."

"Sir Charles Craven, chairman and managing director of Vickers Armstrong Ltd, was unable to attend as he was representing the Company at the memorial Service at St. Martin's-in-the-Field London.

Naval uniforms were much in evidence mingling with the sombre dress of the officials and the overalls of the workmen, but however great the diversity of the outward appearance all hearts were as one in the thought of what had drawn them together."

The service was conducted by the Rev. C Williams, Vicar of Walney assisted by the Rev. J A Frankland, Curate of St. Matthew's, and the Rev. A T Bartlett, Curate of St. Luke's."

On Page 10 there were four photographs showing ceremonies at the Cenotaph in Barrow Park in which were shown:



- Officers **(1)** Naval members of the public at the Cenotaph
- Commander **(2)** Stirling Hamilton (the Commanding Officer) and Chief Petty Officer Herbert Hammond* (the submarine Coxswain) of THISTLE about to lay a wreath



(3) Mr J Callendar, director and general manager of Vickers Armstrong Ltd about to lay a wreath

(4) Navy League Sea Cadets sounding 'The Last Post'.



* CPO Herbert Hammond later died in the loss of HMS THISTLE which was torpedoed off Norway on 10th Apr 1940. One other casualty lost in HMS THETIS was also connected to the Shipyard at Barrow. He was Engineer Captain **Stanley** Jackson who was the Senior **Engineering Officer on the staff** of the Rear Admiral (Submarines) at Gosport. For the four years until 1935 he had been the Engineering Overseer for the Admiralty at the Vickers-Armstrong's works at Barrow

Barrie Downer

Going for a Song

North Korea has apparently been building an improved version of its Song (Shark) class mini-sub. The 250 ton Sang is actually a coastal sub modified for special operations. The original design is a 34 meter (105 feet) long boat with a snorkel and a top submerged speed of 17 kilometers an hour (or 13 kilohour when meters an depth using periscope snorkel to run the engines). Top surface speed is 13 kilometers an hour. Max diving depth is 150 meters (465 feet) and the boat is designed to rest on the ocean bottom (useful when trying to avoid enemy search). There is a crew of 15, plus either six scuba swimmer commandos, or a dozen men who can go ashore in an inflatable boat. Some Songs have two or four torpedo tubes.

Max endurance is about eight days. The new model is 39 meters (121 feet) long and is believed to have a max submerged speed of 27 kilo meters an hour. Over 40 Songs have been built so far, and one was captured by South Korea when it ran aground in 1996. At least half a dozen are of the new model.

North Korea has a fleet of over 80 mini-subs, plus about 24 older Russian type conventional boats (based on late-World War II German designs, as adapted for Russian service as the Whiskey and Romeo class). China helped North Korea set up its own submarine building operation, which included building some of the large Romeo class subs. North Korea got the idea for minisubs from Russia, which has had them for decades. North Korea has developed several mini-sub designs, most of them available to anyone with the cash to pay.



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Submarine Officers Association
March 2011
Richard Barklie Lakin DSO, DSC
Lieutenant Commander
Aged 96
Submarine Service from 1936
Narwhal, Ursula, Upright, H43(CO)
Ursula (CO) & Safari (CO)

Australia Branch
Lapsed
March 2011
A (Bert) Senior
Petty Officer (LTO)
P/SSX 17185
Aged 92
WWII Submarine Service
H28, Vengeful & Turpin

Australia Branch
Lapsed
March 2011
R (Ray) Smith
Leading Seaman
P/JX 175797
Aged 87
WWII Submarine Service
Otway, Vitality, U2502 & Turpin



Dolphin Branch &
Submarine Officers Association
March 2011
C A (Colin) Buchanan
Captain
Aged 69
Submarine Service 1957-1982
Porpoise, Taciturn, Tabard
Opportune (1L), Cachalot(CO)
Courageous (CO), CDR SM3
Captain SM3

Dolphin Branch
4th March 2011
D (Des) Radwell
Signalman
C/SSX 35222
Aged 89
Submarine Service 1942-1950

Oberon, Taurus, Sceptre, Statesman Solent, Tabard, Templar, Sturdy Trespasser

Non Mombon

Non Member March 2011 J T (John) Tweddle

Portsmouth Branch
(Lapsed)
March 201
R M (Jack) Frost
LMEM
Aged 63
Submarine Service 1973-1984
Finwhale & Opportune

Medway Towns Branch
(Lapsed)
March 2011
M (Paddy) Prenter
Chief EL Mech
Aged 64
Submarine Service
Dreadnought, Valiant,
Warspite(Twice) & Conqueror

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 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.



It was mealtime during a flight on a British Airways plane:

"Would you like dinner?" the flight attendant asked the man seated in the front row. "What are my choices?" the man asked. "Yes or no," she replied.

A lady was picking through the Chickens frozen Woolworths store but she couldn't find one big enough for her family. She asked a passing assistant, "Do these Chickens get any bigger?"

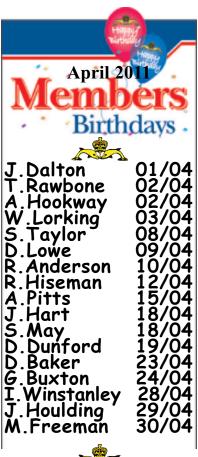
The assistant replied, "I'm afraid not, they're dead."

A lorry driver was driving along on a country road. A sign came up that read " Low Bridge Ahead." Before he realised it, the bridge was directly ahead and he got stuck under it.

Cars were backed up for miles. Finally, a police car arrived.

The policeman got out of his car and walked to the lorry's cab and said to the driver, "Got stuck, eh?" The lorry driver said, "No, I was delivering this bridge and ran out of diesel!"







DISCLAIMER

This Newsletter is published by Submariners Association the (Barrow in Furness) and is (c) 2011. The opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily the opinion of the Editor, The Submariners Association, the MoD or the Submarine Service unless otherwise stated. The Submariners Association may not agree with the opinions expressed in this Newsletter but encourages publication as a matter of interest. Nothing printed may be construed as policy or an official announcement unless so stated. Otherwise the Association accepts no liabilty on any issue in this Newsletter





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 April for the Mayl 2011 issue please try and have any information with me by the 15th of each month. Thank vou to evervone contributed to this edition.



Social Calendar 2011

April

5th April Annual General Meeting 1930 RBL 19th April Branch Committee Meeting 1930 RBL 24th April St Georges day Parade Barrow

May

3rd May Monthly Meeting 2000 RBL 13th May Annual Dinner Dance Lisdoonie 1930 17th May Branch Committee Meeting 1930 RBL 28th May Magennis Dinner W/E





Solve the submarine wordsquare

We hope you enjoyed last month's wordsquare.

If any of it proved tricky, the solution is at the foot of the page. This month we have a wordsquare based on Royal Navy vessels which took part in the Falklands conflict.

If you have any comments or suggestions on how our puzzles can be improved or developed, drop an email to Bill Myers at bill.myers@ nwemail.co.uk

CLUES

- 1. CONQUEROR
- 2. COURAGEOUS
- 3. COVENTRY
- 4. SHEFFIELD
- 5. VALIANT
- 6. HYDRA

- 7. LEEDS CASTLE
- 8. INVINCIBLE
- 9. HECLA
- 10. HERALD
- **11. ONYX**
- 12. LEDBURY





COMING HOME: The submarines Conqueror and Courageous at Devonport