



# PERISCOPE VIEW

The Newsletter of the Barrow-in Furness Branch  
of the  
Submariners Association

Patron: Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce KG GCB OBE DL

Issue No: 177

[www.submarinersassociation.co.uk](http://www.submarinersassociation.co.uk)

March 2015



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### **Cover Picture: The Barrow Team 'First Footing' the Morecambe Bay Branch**

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#### EDITORIAL

O.K! I know 'First Footing' is supposed to take place in the early hours of New Year's Day but the Branch has adopted the term to mark our annual visit to the Morecambe Bay Branch. We used to aim to meet them at their January Meeting but several times that was not possible owing to snow and high winds etc. so we switched to February instead. This year fourteen of us made the trip for a very convivial evening as you will see from the Cover Picture. Hopefully the Morecambe team will be able to make a return match in the not too distant future.

This month we have said goodbye to two Branch Members. On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February a coach party of fourteen Members made the trip to St Mary's Church at Ambleside for the funeral service of Colin Lee. The Branch provided a Guard of Honour and Pall Bearers, the service was conducted by our Branch Padre Alan Jones, a lesson was read by Branch Chairman Dave Barlow and the story of Colin's Royal Navy service and his civilian life was read by myself – and is repeated at the end of this newsletter. The church was packed with friends, family and colleagues and Colin received a suitably dignified send off. Afterwards we repaired to the 'Golden Rule' pub for a few pints and a toast to the memory of Colin. One week later on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> we gathered again at St Mary's Church – this time in Barrow to say farewell to Branch Member Tony Sainty. Once again we provided a Guard of Honour and, again there was a packed Church for a 'Short' Mass before the final ceremonies at the Thorncliffe Crematorium. A few of us

then visited the Railway for a pint or two in Tony's memory.

The last event in a busy month for the Branch was the Rock and Roll Evening organised by Social Secretary Alex Webb at the RBL on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February. A very good evening was had by all.

Coming up in March is the Branch Meeting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> at which we will be finalising our decisions for the National Council Conference. On 10<sup>th</sup> March three members, Dave Barlow, Mick Dack and Barrie Downer have been invited to the Sea Cadets HQ in Dundee Street for their Annual Royal Navy Inspection for which they have been preparing for the last few weeks.

Thank you to all those who responded to Steve May's request to 'borrow' two Bosun's Calls. This was a very short notice request as the Calls were required to 'Pipe on Board' some VVIPs at the 'commissioning' of a new Cruise Liner. Alan Pillifent came up trumps and loaned his own Calls which Steve will return in April. Hopefully Steve will also give me an article and photos of the event for a future Issue.

Please enjoy this March Issue of Periscope View and, as I always say, don't forget that you too can send in your contribution for the Newsletter – everyone has a story to tell - and let me know of any comments you think relevant – polite ones only – of course!

Regards to all,

**Barrie Downer**

**CHAIRMANS DIT - MARCH 2015**



**Hi to you all**

The month started off with us first footing the Morecambe Bay Branch. We hired a 17 seater bus and very nearly filled it, so a good attendance from our members. As usual Alex supplied a beer or two to enhance the journey and we arrived in good time to partake of a couple of beers before the meeting. As is normal it was a very swift meeting before copious amounts of rum were shared around. The Morecambe Bay lads put on a splendid buffet for us to help soak up the alcohol. We started our journey home about 10.30 ish. Now we knew the road was going to be shut near the Greenod roundabout but the driver was prepared as she knew all the back routes. What wasn't planned was the road being shut at the Newby Bridge roundabout so we had no option but to go up via Ambleside and back through Coniston so we didn't arrive home until the wrong side of 01 dubs.

The following Friday we hired another slightly bigger bus to take us to Ambleside again to attend the funeral of a good member Tansy Lea. Alan Jones took the service with Barrie helping out by doing the Eulogies and a very good job they made of it too. The church was pretty full which reflected the esteem that the people of Ambleside had for Tansy. After the service, a lovely buffet had been prepared in the church itself and then we walked the short distance to Tansy's local. We toasted his passing with a tot of rum each before getting the bus back to Barrow.

I would like to thank all those who attended one or both of these events. We were well represented at both.

They were the good parts of the month. Last week we had two, yes two committee meetings to discuss the National Conference Agenda. The final upshot was that as a united body we are able to make recommendations to you the members on how our delegate should vote at the national conference.

I am very pleased to announce that Jeff and Brenda Thomas have volunteered their services as our welfare reps. It is very good of them to step forward as it is an area that has been lacking in the past year or so. Jeff will continue to be the rum bosun at the monthly meetings so thanks again Jeff. It also looks like we have a volunteer to take over the Slops

Ted Budgen is back in the FGH. He went in with breathing problems which they have pretty well got sorted. However his knees are playing up again so until he can run and catch a nurse or two they won't let him out. He is currently in the Abbeyview part of the hospital.

That's all for now, see you all on Tuesday.

Dave

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**SECRETARY'S REPORT**



**Hello All**

Welcome all to the final Secretary's Dit before our Annual General Meeting next month. As previously advised the positions of Vice Chairman and Secretary are up for re-election this year, so if you feel you wish to contribute to the Branch and would like to put yourself forward for either position please let a Committee Member know as soon as possible.

At this Month's Branch Meeting the main topic of conversation will be the National Council Conference Proposals and Recommendations. The Branch Committee have discussed these at length and will make their Recommendations to the Branch at the meeting. It is up to you as Branch Members to make your views known so if you have an opinion to share please be at the Meeting.

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'Mad Dog' Mackenzie from the National Committee - who produces the Association Diary - has asked the Branches to nominate Members whose autobiographies would make an interesting addition to the Diary. The Committee has agreed that Alan Hoskins, Terry Spurling and Barrie Downer's names are to be put forward. Unfortunately I will not be at the next meeting as my presence is required in London so again my thanks to Barrie for stepping up to the plate.

Kindest regards  
Ron

### SOCIAL SECRETARY REPORT



Hi Shipmates,

The first Friday in February saw 13 hardy souls dash off to Morecambe for the 'First Footing'. After an uneventful but alcohol fired trip there we were warmly received with a very wet reception from the Morecambe Branch. Lots of laughing, drinking and the lads very generously laid on a buffet for us on completion of the meeting – where (unsurprisingly) we did a lot more drinking and some even had a shot on the karaoke.

At 22:30 Chairman declared Harbour Stations and we departed. Unfortunately, the road works on the A590 meant we had to divert via Ambleside on the way home, but we did have a lot more beer on the bus and stopped to water many parts of the beautiful countryside and did our bit for the environment.



Karl Allerton, Malcolm Hogg, Alex Webb & Steve May



Mick Dack, Keith Halliwell & Dudley Davenport

On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February we had a Rock and Roll night with 'Four of a Kind', Elvis, Disco and a Bosun's Locker buffet. The evening started at 1900 with a disco selection of 60s and 70s music as everyone was arriving, sorting out where they were sitting and getting the drinks in. 'Four of Kind' came on at 2000 and things got a lot livelier and a few brave souls started out on the dance floor. The 'Lead' Singer had a bit of a 'frog in his throat' but soldiered on and we had renditions of hits from all your favourite singers and bands from the late 50s, the 60s and the 70's although they avoided Elvis Presley's hits so as to not step on the toes of 'The King' who came on later. By the end of 'Four of a Kinds' session the Dance Floor was quite crowded.

The Bosun's Locker Buffet was well up to standard and no-one went short of sandwiches, sausage rolls, mini quiches and spring rolls. The raffle was well supported and the lucky winners had the choice of the usual alcoholic beverages, chocolates and shopping vouchers.

The evening rounded off with the arrival of the King who ran through the Elvis repertoire with a very lively and energetic performance with everyone joining in with the singing and on the dance floor.

#### **Diary Check:**

**Sat 18th April** Unfortunately the VIP footie day out to Barrow AFC (this year against Tamworth) has been cancelled due to availability. Sorry but will re-organise this event at the start of next season (August onwards) when Barrow are promoted and in the Conference proper.

**Sat 25th April** The Members Dinner at the Chetwynde hotel. A semi-formal function with 3 course dinner, port toast and lots of good company and chat; no groups or discos so only £25 per person which (this time) is being subsidised by the branch by £5 and will cost you only £20; limited to 50 for this event so please get your name down soonest. Dress code for this is Association blazers or lounge suit (negative medals). List closes on Friday 17th of April with full payment being required and menu selected.

**Friday 22nd May** Meet & Greet. This is an added event at the request of the Leicester Branch members who are coming into town to cause chaos. Format not sure yet but will include food, alcohol and lots of dit spinning – support this and show other branches what we are made of.

**Sat 13th June** The Canal Cruise. Transports starting the pickup run at 2pm, Canal Cruise from 6 – 7:30 with food, pub stopover for an hour and then canal cruise from 8:30 to 10 with live music on the return trip. Then on the coach home, arriving safely back circa midnight. Lots of fun to be had; limited to 53 this is a fantastic trip for just £30!!!!

**Sat 27th June** We are off to the Prince of Wales, Foxfield for a DTS with some free beer thrown in to help dampen the blistering sunshine; more details to follow.

The Members (free) draw was not won in February so for March we have £15 in the pot, plus, of course, the birthday boy beer if you are eligible.

Dust off the winter blues and let's get the 2015 party started proper.

**Alex Webb, Social Secretary**

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### **BARROW SEA CADETS VISIT TO ANTHORN 1953**

(From North west Evening Mail dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013)



**L to R: Back Row:**

Sub Lieutenant G R Brill-Edwards, Derek Peters, Mike Holmes, Walter King, Terry Shannon, Tont Hulse, George Walker, Brian Morrow, Ken Griffiths, Tony ?, ? Preston

**Middle Row:**

Dave Hewitt, Eddie Cooksey, Eddie Nelson, Graham Thompson, ? Heywood, ? Taylor, ? Hayden

**Front Row:**

George Martin, Bob Faragher, Bernard Quinn, George York, Tomy Thompson, Malcolm Geldart, ? Lloyd

The picture of the Sea Cadets at ANTHORN was supplied to the Evening Mail by Dave Hewitt and the names were supplied by George Martin.

The article was provided to the News Letter by Branch Member Bob Faragher who is in the front row 2<sup>nd</sup> from Left. The face at the back between Brian Morrow and Ken Griffiths is the Bus Driver - name unknown!

The visit was to the Royal Naval Air Station, Anthorn - HMS NUTHATCH. The Unit in residence at the time was the No. 1, Aircraft Receipt and Despatch Unit, Fleet Air Arm which specialised in the American supplied Vought F4U CORSAIR. No Fleet Air Arm Squadrons were in residence at the time as operational flying had ceased in March 1953. The Sea Cadet Officer, Sub Lieutenant Geoffrey Ronald Brill-Edwards, MiD, S.C.C., had previously served in Submarines as a Temporary Acting Stoker Petty Officer from 1st Apr 1940 to 15th Nov 1944. He was in Submarine L23 from 7th May 1940 to 26th Sep 1941, Submarine HMS UNRUFFLED 'on Commissioning' at Barrow, The Submarine Base HMS MEDWAY II (Spare Crew) from 1st May 1944 to 17 Sep 1944 & HMS DOLPHIN (Spare Crew) from 18th Sep 1944 to 15th Nov 1944.

Geoffrey Brill-Edwards died in Barrow in Furness on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at the age of 96 – several Barrow Branch Members attended his funeral.

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**SUBMARINER VICTORIA CROSS HOLDERS OF WWII**

The following is the fourteenth article of a series commemorating those Submariners who have been awarded the Victoria Cross and this article covers another of the World War II Submariners.

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**Lieutenant Peter Scawen Watkinson Roberts, V.C., Royal Navy**

Peter Roberts was born in Chesham Bois, Buckinghamshire on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1917. He joined the Royal Navy as a Cadet in 1935 and was advanced to Midshipman on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1936. He was promoted to Sub Lieutenant on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1938. Peter Roberts joined Submarines on 11<sup>th</sup> Sep 1939 when he was appointed to HMS DOLPHIN 'for the Submarine Course'. On completion of the Submarine Course he was appointed to HMS DOLPHIN 'for Submarines' on 28<sup>th</sup> Oct 1939 and he was further promoted to Lieutenant on 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 1939. On 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 1940 he was appointed to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS CYCLOPS (3<sup>rd</sup> Submarine Flotilla) at Harwich 'for Submarines' and, a week later on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 1940, to the Submarine Depot ship HMS ALECTO (5<sup>th</sup> Submarine flotilla) at Portland 'for Submarine H32 as 3<sup>rd</sup> Hand/Navigating Officer'. Just over three months later he joined the Submarine Depot Ship HMS AMBROSE (9<sup>th</sup> Submarine Flotilla) at Dundee 'for Submarines'. This was only a brief appointment as, on 15<sup>th</sup> Jun 1940 he was appointed to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS FORTH (2<sup>nd</sup> Submarine Flotilla) at Rosyth 'for Submarine HMS TRIBUNE as the Navigating Officer'. He returned to HMS DOLPHIN (5<sup>th</sup> Submarine Flotilla) on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1941 'for Submarine HMS THRASHER as the First Lieutenant – standing by whilst completing' at the Cammell Laird Shipyard at Birkenhead 'and as First Lieutenant on Commissioning'. HMS THRASHER was completed on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1941 and, after 'Work Up' and a Patrol in Home Waters the submarine was sent to the Mediterranean to join the 1<sup>st</sup> Submarine Flotilla based on the Submariner Depot Ship HMS MEDWAY at Alexandria.

Peter Roberts was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions whilst serving in the Mediterranean in HMS THRASHER in February 1942. On 16<sup>th</sup> February 1942 THRASHER was patrolling off Suva Bay, on the north coast of Crete, when she torpedoed and sank an escorted 3,000 ton Axis supply ship. The escorts and covering aircraft attacked with about thirty depth charges and some were reported to be close. THRASHER survived these attacks and carried on with the patrol. That evening THRASHER surfaced to recharge batteries. On altering course the Submarine rolled in the swell and loud banging noises were heard from outside the pressure hull. After surfacing and an investigation a bomb was found to be lying on the casing forward of the gun mounting.

Lieutenant Roberts, as the First Lieutenant with Petty Officer Gould (the 2nd Coxswain) volunteered to remove the bomb. As it was thought that he bomb might roll off the casing on to the saddle tank and detonate Gould held the bomb and Roberts put a sack round the bomb and tied it with a length of rope. It was manhandled forward to the bows and dropped overboard as the Submarine went full astern to get clear.

Further checks identified a jagged hole in the casing and another bomb was lying under the casing on the pressure hull. The only way out was through a hinged metal grating about twenty feet away. The two men lowered themselves through the opening and crawled on their stomachs to where the bomb lay. There was a danger that if the bomb was detonated the submarine would be sunk. As THRASHER was off an enemy coast and the enemy were aware there was a Submarine

in the area there was also a danger that the Commanding Officer of THRASHER, Lt. Hugh Mackenzie, would dive the submarine if enemy forces were sighted. If that happened the two men would be drowned.

Petty Officer Gould had to lie on his back with the bomb in his arms while Lieutenant Roberts laid in front of him and pulled him along by the shoulders as they made their way back to the hatch. With only the aid of a torch they worked the bomb through the casing and eased it through the grating. The bomb reportedly made a twanging noise when it was moved and it was 40 minutes before they had it clear and it could be wrapped in the sack, carried forward and dropped over the bows.

The Commanding Officer did not make much of the incident in his patrol report and merely commended Roberts and Gould for their "excellent conduct". The incident was forgotten until several months later, when, as Mackenzie recalled, he was "shaken by the news that Roberts and Gould had both been awarded the Victoria Cross. A great personal honour to themselves and, as they and I felt, also to their fellow submariners."

The Victoria Crosses were awarded on the recommendation of the C-in-C Mediterranean, Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham. The award was opposed by the Honours and Awards Committee in London, which argued that the act of bravery had not been performed in the presence of the enemy as the Victoria Cross regulations stipulated. The Committee thought that the George Cross would be more appropriate. Cunningham replied that two large enemy bombs in a submarine off an enemy coastline constituted quite enough enemy presence.

The Citation for the Victoria Cross read as follow:

London Gazette, 9 June 1942

Petty Officer Thomas William Gould & Lieutenant Peter Roberts, Royal Navy. HM Submarine THRASHER. *On 16th February 1942, in daylight, H.M. Submarine 'Thrasher' attacked and sank a heavily escorted supply ship. She was at once attacked by depth charges and was bombed by aircraft. The presence of two unexploded bombs in the gun casing was discovered when after dark the submarine surfaced and began to roll.*

*Lieutenant Roberts and Petty Officer Gould volunteered to remove the bombs, - which were of a type unknown to them. The danger in dealing with the second bomb was very great. To reach it they had to go through the casing which was so low that they had to lie at full length to move in it. Through this narrow space, in complete darkness, they pushed and dragged the bomb for a distance of some 20 feet until it could be lowered over the side. Every time the bomb was moved there was a loud twanging noise as of a broken spring which added nothing to their peace of mind.*

*This deed was the more gallant as H.M.S. Thrasher's presence was known to the enemy: she was close to the enemy coast, and in waters where his patrols were known to be active day and night. There was a very great chance, and they knew it, that the submarine might have to crash-dive while they were in the casing. Had this happened they must have been drowned.*

Peter Roberts was presented with his Victoria Cross by King George VI at Buckingham Palace on the 4th July 1942. For his service in HMS THRASHER Peter Roberts was also awarded the DSC – see the London Gazette dated 30<sup>th</sup> Jun 1942. Peter Roberts was appointed to HMS DOLPHIN on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1942 for the 'Commanding Officers Qualifying Course' however, unfortunately, he did not complete the Course and he then returned to General Service with an appointment to HMS BEAGLE on 14<sup>th</sup> Aug 1942. Peter Roberts is reported to have died at Newton Ferrers, near Plymouth on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1979 at the age of

Peter Robert's Victoria Cross and other medals are on display in the Ashcroft Gallery in the Imperial War Museum in London.

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### MARCH BRANCH CALENDAR

Branch Meeting	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March
Sea Cadets RN Inspection	Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March
Committee Meeting	As Required

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### BRANCH BIRTHDAYS MARCH 2015

F. (Frank) Bowen	01/03/1928
T.R. (Charlie) Henshaw	05/03/1946
R. (Bob) Arthur	07/03/1948
R Emmerson	11/03/1943
D.M. (Garth) Craven	15/03/1950
M. (Michael) Cundall	15/03/1947
H. (Hughie) Short	17/03/1940
H Weaver	23/03/1983
A.B. (Alan) Hoskins	31/03/1949

Happy Birthday to you all!

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### SUBMARINE HERITAGE PAINTINGS COLLECTION

Prints of all the paintings from the Submarine Heritage Collection and included in the book 'Dive, Dive, Dive! Barrow Built Submarines – the Best' are now available for purchase on line. The site is:-  
[etsy.com/uk/shop/submarineheritage](https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/submarineheritage)

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### SUBMARINE LOSSES OF WWI

This is the sixth article in a series listing Submarine losses month by month during WWI, Crew Members lost and other submariners lost. No Submarines were lost in March 1915 but three Submariners are reported to have died one from illness and two by accident. They were:

**Able Seaman William Mitchell O/N 187436**

William Mitchell was born in Downton in Wiltshire on 13th Dec 1879 and he was the son of George and Ellen m Mitchell. He joined the Royal Navy on 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 1896 and, after serving in a variety of ships, left the Navy on 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 1909. He then joined the Royal Fleet Reserve but re-engaged in the RN on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1912. He was drafted to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS MAIDSTONE (based at Harwich in Essex) on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1913. One report indicates that he was accidentally drowned on 13th Mar 1915 although a note on his Service Record states that he was accidentally '*killed by a fall of staging*'. Thirty five year old William Mitchell was buried in the Shotley (St Mary) Cemetery in RN Plot No. 31.

#### **Able Seaman (ST) James Fawcett O/N J2134**

James Fawcett who was a member of the crew of the Submarine Depot Ship HMS BONAVENTURE is reported to have died on 27th Mar 1915. James Fawcett was born in Battersea in London on 4th May 1892 and he was the son of Hannah Fawcett of Bramford Road, Wandsworth, London and the late George Fawcett. James joined the Royal Navy at the age of sixteen on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1908. He joined Submarines at HMS DOLPHIN on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1914 and HMS BONAVENTURE on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1914. James Fawcett is understood to have become ill with appendicitis and he died in the Jubilee Infirmary in North Shields. He is buried in the Tynemouth (Preston) Cemetery in Gave no. KC 12133.

#### **Able Seaman James Hill O/N J3361**

James Hill was a member of the crew of the Submarine C16 (Depot Ship HMS BONAVENTURE) and he is reported to have died on 28th Mar 1915 and to have been accidentally drowned after falling overboard from the Submarine whilst securing the boat to a buoy. James Hill was born in Portsoy in Banffshire in Scotland on 26th Jun 1892 and he was the son of Mr & Mrs Hill. His body was not recovered until Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May and was returned home to Moretonhampstead on Thursday 20th May 1915. He was buried in the North Bovey Churchyard in Moretonhampstead. A report appeared in the Western Times of Tuesday 25th May 1915 as follows:

#### **Funeral of Moretonhampstead Sailor of Submarine C16**

The body of James Hill, who was drowned by accident whilst serving on H.M. submarine C16, on March 28th, was recovered on Saturday last, and conveyed to Moretonhampstead Station on Thursday morning. The funeral took place at North Bovey Churchyard at 12 o'clock, amid tokens of great respect from the village.

The chief mourners were: Mr. and Mrs. Hill (father and mother), Geoff Hill (brother), Mrs. D Hill (aunt), Mr. D Hill (uncle), T Hill (uncle), Violet Hill (niece), T Endacott (brother in law),

Mrs. E Endicott (sister in law). The funeral services were conducted by Rev. Law (curate). Among those present were: Mr. East, Mr. R T Chudleigh, Miss E Coniam, Lieutenant Ioman, Mr. B Parker, Mr. Anthony, Mr. Jones, Mrs. Leer. The bearers were schoolmates of the deceased.

Floral tokens were from: sister and brother; Old Teachers, S E Smerdon and E M Cuming, Mr J and L Taylor: Mable, Nellie and Emily Holland: Mr. and Mrs. Coniam and family: Jessie: Viscountess Hambleden, of Manor House: 'In loving memory of James (Jim) Hill, who was drowned while serving on Submarine C16: A token of remembrance from the sorrowing boatmates,': Captain and officers, HMS BONAVENTURE; Mrs Oldroyd: Mrs. Tapper: Mrs. Sampson: Officers and Shipmates Submarine C16 and from Shipmates HMS BONAVENTURE.

The wounded soldiers from the Manor House were lined up at full salute as the deceased left the church. The coffin was of polished elm, with brass fittings and bore the inscription, 'James Hill, drowned March 28th 1915, aged 22.'

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#### **DISCLAIMER**

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Nothing printed may be construed as policy or an official announcement unless so stated. Otherwise the Association accepts no liability on any issue in this Newsletter.

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#### **NEWSLETTER CONTACT INFORMATION**

Do you have a story to tell or have information you feel should appear in the Newsletter then ring Barrie Downer on 01229 820963 or if you wish to send me an article my postal address is listed above under Committee Members. You may also send your contribution by e-mail to me [barrie@downer55.freemove.co.uk](mailto:barrie@downer55.freemove.co.uk). Come on – every Submariner has a story to tell – some more than one! Let's see yours in print!

Constructive suggestions about the newsletter are also very welcome. The newsletter will be published in the last week of each month i.e. the last week in December for the January 2015 issue. Please ensure you have any information with me by the 15th of each month to ensure its inclusion in the next issue. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition – keep them stories coming!

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**CROSSED THE BAR FEBRUARY 2015**

Branch	Date	Name	Rank/Rating	O/N	Age	Submarine Service
Barrow Branch	23rd Jan 2015	Colin (Tanzy) Lee	Able Seaman (Radar Plotter)	D/SSX 865330	82	May 1953 to Dec 1958 in TRADEWIND (Oct 53-May 54), SIDON (Oct 54-Aug 55), SCORCHER (Aug 55-Oct 57) & TOTEM (Feb 58-Nov 58). Survivor from SIDON on 16th Jun 1955
Barrow Branch	11th Feb 2015	A (Tony) Sainty	Able Seaman	TBA	69	1966 to 1971 in WARSPITE (1966-1969 1 <sup>st</sup> Commission Crew) & CHURCHILL (69-71)
Resolution Association	5th Feb 2015	Derek Bradley	CPO (EL) (SM)	TBA	TBA	REVENGE (S) (1st Commission Crew) on 4th Dec 1969 & RESOLUTION
Northern Ireland Branch	February 2015	Brian (Bungy) Edwards	POMEM.	TBA	68	1965 to 1986 in FINWHALE (66-67 & 69-71), WALRUS (67-68), CACHALOT (72-78) & OPPORTUNE (80-82)
Former Gatwick & Merton Branches	31st Jan 2015	Charles Rubin Parsons	Able Seaman (UW3)	P/SSX 889235	80	May 1954 to Aug 1958 in THULE, THOROUGH, SENECHAL & TURPIN
Non Member	14th Feb 2015	J (Jim) Manningham	LMEM	TBA	TBA	DREADNOUGHT (on re-commissioning at Chatham on 9th Oct 1976)
Submarine Officers Association	13th Feb 2015	Peter G Lester	Lieutenant Commander	N/A	73	Jul 1964 to 1972 in ORPHEUS (65), TIPTOE (65), ODIN (66), REPULSE (1 <sup>st</sup> Commission Crew on 28th Sep 1968) & ALLIANCE (IL 71-72)

**A RUSSIAN DIARY (Part 3)**

We got back four days before our time. The blessed engines sold us again. We started work on them as soon as we arrived and then came the news. The Germans had taken Riga. We had all the 'Tiffys' in the Navy working in the boat then. Soon had everything finished and ready for running; we had things in top line for shoving off too. The Germans were making very rapid progress. The speculation there was as to whether we should have to intern ourselves! It made a splendid topic for quite a long time. Honestly speaking there were not a few of us who would have been glad to get away. I expect the boats would have tried to get back to England. But that all died out, and things are much the same as before. In Reval the news created a panic. People were leaving there by thousands, which had the effect of cheapening things considerably. Hundreds of soldiers from Riga were arriving there every day. They had all thrown their gear away. The Russians literally walked away from Riga, throwing away everything and leaving guns etc. behind them. Four or five Regiments under an English Naval Officer out up a bit of a fight and that is all that was done. The people at home must realise by now what the Russians are. They are absolutely impossible; I cannot give an adequate description of them. Will continue that subject later.

**September 14th.**

We were out again for a short trip. Six days this time. All that happened was that we had a jolly session of rough weather and were uncommonly glad to get in again, which we did on the 19th. We got quite a reception. Why? Because we arrived the same as we went out; nothing wrong at all! Here is some talk of giving a medal to celebrate the occasion. A day or so after there was a spasm, and all the boats were under two hour's notice. E8 and 19 left in the forenoon, and E9 and E1 were still waiting to go. Eventually E9 went about three in the afternoon. We remained in Harbour but were only given leave until 10 o'clock and had to keep five days provisions in the boat. We remained like that for eleven days, then went to sea on 6th of October. Jolly glad we were, too. Up till today Wednesday we have seen nothing. On Monday we went in very close to Libau and were able to see the ships in the Harbour. There was a light cruiser and one three funnelled cruiser but they were right behind the breakwater. The channel leading too it is very narrow and about five miles long so there is no chance of doing anything. The weather is beginning to get very snappy, next trip it will be very cold. The sea is none too pleasant for some of the lads. On these sort of trips there is always plenty to eat. As we are standing by to leave on Saturday a mail came. Many thanks. A Russian submarine brought it; from Reval I think.

### **October 10th.**

Am rather inclined to think we have sighted something, possibly our old friends. These are the two trawlers that patrol just outside Libau. We often get our hopes raised, then they are dropped and bent. Didn't mention it before, but E9 fired three torpedoes and missed. After all that E1 has gone through, at present she is the only boat fit for running. E19 has several tanks leaking, as also has E9. E8 has lost a propeller, and burnt a motor out.

### **October 19th.**

E8 and E19 have gone to Reval to refit. All the C Boats are away at another base, Rodigue. C35 just returned from a trip below Dago. To continue about the trip. Two days before coming back we had rather an exciting time. It appears that on this particular day, every time the Captain put the periscope up to have a look round there were about fifteen small Torpedo boats about a mile astern of us. They were too small to fire at; I mean they did not draw enough water. Whether they saw us or no, we are not certain; am rather of the opinion that they knew we were somewhere in their vicinity. They were using 'detectors'. Well, this went on all day. We waited until it was fairly dark at night before we came to the surface; then we put in both engine clutches full speed. It was no good loafing around. The boats were stretched right across our stern, but fortunately for us the night was so dark they couldn't see us. We had one piston out of the starboard engine, and the clutch of the port engine was out of line, so we were taking chances. We got away from them all right after a lot of manoeuvring. At first the Captain was going back because we were on the verge of breaking down, but he decided to have another try, so we went back on our billet next day. The only disturber of the peace this time was a Zepp. Some distance away. We had to keep down though in case of accidents. We went back the next day to the base. The first thing to greet us was the news that the ship was under orders to shove off at any time. The Germans had started bombarding the Baltic Ports. How much truth there was in the statements we did not know. Until we saw our Press telegram we would not believe it, but it was right enough. Then the fun commenced. We saw visions of German Battleships going under and goodness knows what, but we did not go out. We passed E9 going out as we came in off the trip. They returned days later having fired two fish at a transport and missed. In the meantime the Russians were getting it in the neck; the Germans had landed troops in Oesel. A later report had it that the Germans had landed on the weakest part of the island, but they could not be supported owing to the fact that the Russians had mined the approaches. The Russians had also landed several thousand troops on Oesel. The reports had been more or less conflicting ever since; certainly there has been a good deal of fighting done in the Baltic. How it will turn out God only knows. Three ships have been badly damaged – the "RASPUBLICA" sunk or severely hurt, the "BARIAN" on fire, and the "SLAVA" sunk or damaged. The beastly part about it is this – Here we are two good fighting boats, stuck in harbour. I cannot think why they won't let us go. I believe someone is still selling these poor devils. The C. & C. at Helsingfors is an Estonian, naturally the Russkys will have it he's a German. Anyhow he has got some good fighting ships he is not using. One thing about it, the Russian sailors will fight even if the soldiers won't. On the evening of the 16th someone smelt a Zepp. Panic immediately. Out all lights, rig fire hoses, out collision mats and goodness knows what. It was only a scare after all. There were certainly a few flashes and reports a long way off, but nothing came of the. The next night more panic. The ship had orders to proceed at 6 a.m. on the 18th, destination unknown. We had to get enough gear in for a month in the boat, and 14 days' provisions. E.9 ditto, and 'seven days'. We went alongside the "EUROPA", the Russian submarine parent ship. On Thursday the 18th we were given a mess deck on the "EUROPA", so during the morning we had a good clean out and made it habitable. After dinner came orders to proceed to sea at 3.30. Our billet is just south of Dago. Our Captain went to the C. in C. for his orders. The C. in C. told him there were some ships there, and when the Captain asked him how he knew, he said "Oh, I saw it in our papers." What a country!!! Left punctually at 3.30. Bit choppy and cold on the way down. Reached our billet about 6 a.m. on the 19th. Apparently we have something in line, the periscope goes up every few minutes. I think all the boats crew are praying that we get a hit. To go back a bit, this is the latest theory with regard to our movements. As the Germans advance with their Fleet, so we retire eastward until we get to Petrograd. How soon that will be depends on what sort of show the Russians put up. I don't know how we shall manage about mails; I have a lot to answer yet. We have had about three mails this week, so that's not so bad.

### **October 20<sup>th</sup> 5.35 a.m.**

How long is this lot going to last? Nothing much to record. A trawler kept us busy yesterday with the periscope. There might be some joy today. Have just dived until tonight. Of course you know that in a boat one must have some way of recording the speed. Well, this is registered by patent log. One of the crew whose duty it is to enter the speed etc. in the log book when the log is pulled up before diving, always enters it thus – "pulled up "patients" log". Not so bad. It runs thousands of miles and says not a word, so I consider it very patient. Might as well get on with the business. I had this first hand from the Chief Actor (?) – A Paymaster in a certain ship was very fond of using naval slang. One day a member of the light party, whose duty it was to look after certain lights in the Officer's quarters, did a little job for him. Having done it satisfactorily, he was told to get a bottle of "stuff" from the Wine Steward. He got it; whiskey. Of course at the

end of the month the paymaster received his wine bill. Naturally he wanted to know why the whisky and was told the circumstances so he sent for the man who had the "stuff". This was the explanation he got. "Well, Sir, you sent me for a bottle of stuff so I asked for it and I got it." "Yes, I Know, but I meant beer, not whiskey." – in Naval Slang whisky is "stuff". Of course the man knew what the Paymaster meant, but preferred to be ignorant until he got it. Anyhow the Paymaster was a sport and let it go. Guess he won't ask anyone else to get a bottle of "stuff" in a hurry, I don't think I have mentioned it before, but this boat has taken a great many notable people on trips. The King, Prince of Wales, Churchill, Asquith, numerous Members of Parliament, and since we have been out here we have taken Sir George Buchanan out for a dive, also his daughter. The Czar has also paid us a visit.

### **October 21st. Sunday - Trafalgar Day.**

I wonder whether we shall celebrate it in a fitting manner. Sunday, for E.1 at any rate is a momentous day. Why, I don't really know. This morning something went wrong with the starboard engine, but fortunately it was soon remedied. Yesterday nothing of interest occurred. Today is the last on the patch, tonight we start back. We must not be away from the base too long, in case of "accident". The weather is still holding good. It is quite a treat to be on the bridge during the night. At present there is no moon but the stars are a wonderful sight to see. One thing I've noticed about the water out here, is the amount of phosphorus in it. It is sprayed up all over the boat when we are under weigh, and it makes quite a pretty sight. When I started to write this diary I fully intended to make a study and record my impressions of the Russians, but I've got so disgusted with them that I cannot take the interest I would like to. I think that this winter, if things do not get too critical, I will take up Russian. It ought to be useful later on. It is regarded as the most difficult of all European languages, but if one applies one's energy to it, it is soon mastered. I can speak a good many words now. French is another language I would like to study. We started on our way back at 7 p.m. It is only about ten hours run, but there are a lot of islands to go through, so we had to go on one engine for some time, so as to make them by daylight. We managed all right and arrived safely this morning, the 22nd, about 11.30 a.m. More momentous news this time. E.8. had come from Reval the day before, and had lots of news for us. People were evacuating the town, and it is possible the Germans may get there any day. A number of Russian sailors, survivors from the destroyer 'GROIN' that was sunk a week or so ago, came back to Reval and were feted by everybody. Volunteers were asked for to go and help re-capture Dago. Plenty of sailors came forward but not a single officer. Evidently they had the Revolution in mind. No doubt they thought "Well you got yourselves into the mess, you must get out of it."

To be Continued!

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### **BRANCH MEMBER -COLIN LEE - A TRIBUTE**

Able Seaman (Radar Plotter 2) Colin Lee (known to all as Tansy) was born at Seascale near Whitehaven in Cumberland on 31st Dec 1933. Tansy joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman aged 15 or 16 at HMS GANGES – the Training Establishment for Boys at Shotley, near Harwich in Essex. All Lee's in the Royal Navy are nicknamed Tansy and for a long time the origin of the nickname was unknown. However it seems that one hundred years ago there was a Scottish 'Flyweight' Boxer James 'Tancy' Lee who in January 1915 defeated the reigning Welsh Champion to become the first ever Scottish born boxer to win a Lonsdale Belt. The name association stuck and thereafter all Naval Lee's were called Tansy. After completing his basic training he qualified as a Radar Plotter and was rated Able Seaman. He then went to sea in the surface fleet but no details of ships served in are known.

Colin Lee joined the Submarine Service on 28th May 1953 when he arrived in HMS DOLPHIN '*for the Submarine Course*'. After successful completion of the 'Training Course' and his 'Part 3' Training at sea his first 'boat' was the 'T' Class Submarine HMS TRADEWIND in which he served from 10th Sep 1953 to 12th May 1954. On 8th October 1954 he joined the 'S' Class Submarine SIDON. On 16th June 1955 Colin was on board HMS SIDON alongside the Submarine Depot Ship HMS MAIDSTONE at Portland. The Submarine was preparing to go to sea for torpedo trials with the experimental HTP fuelled Mark 12 'Fancy' torpedo. The Submarine was at 'Harbour Stations' and Colin was at his 'Special Sea Duty Man' Station in the Radar Office.

In the Fore-Ends the Torpedo Party were preparing the torpedoes for the Trials but, it appears, there was an un-noticed problem when loading one of the torpedoes into the tube.

At twenty five minutes past eight the volatile HTP fuel mixture in the torpedo exploded. The torpedo shot forward fully seven feet forcing the bow cap open and leaving six feet of the torpedo protruding from the tube. Simultaneously, the rear door of the torpedo tube was blown off and hurled through the fore-ends like a missile. The blast was accompanied by a sheet of searing hot flame. The bulkhead around the starboard tube-space door was peeled back as if made of tin. The accommodation space forward bulkhead doorway 20-feet further aft was also distorted by the explosion.

Continuing aft the blast ripped out the interior of the accommodation space and rammed the debris against the forward control-room bulkhead. Access to the accommodation space was completely blocked by the compressed wreckage. The ignition of the fuel mixture created huge volumes of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and thick black smoke that

instantly filled the forward compartments. With both ends of No. 3 tube open to the sea the submarine began to sink, settling by the bows almost immediately.

Every man between the tube space and the control room bulkhead was either killed outright or fatally injured. Six died instantly in the blast. Six others succumbed as a result of their injuries and asphyxiation.

In his Radar Office Colin was badly shaken by the explosion and was affected by the smoke and fumes and was in difficulties in trying to get out of the sinking Submarine. However Colin was a survivor of the accident. He recalled to me that he was pulled out of the sinking Submarine by the Canadian Telegraphist 'Moose' Parsons. Following medical assistance and a period of leave to recover Colin was interviewed for the Board of Enquiry. Which found no blame attached to any members of the crew

Colin continued to serve in Submarines and, on 4th August 1955 he joined the sister Submarine HMS SCORCHER. His next and last 'Boat' was the 'T' Class Submarine HMS TOTEM which he joined on 13th February 1958. After his experiences in SIDON it seems that the remainder of his submarine service was without incident. Colin left the Submarine Service on 24th Nov 1958 but he always kept in touch with his fellow SIDON Survivors and was delighted when a white Portland stone Memorial to the Submarine and Crew was unveiled on the 50th Anniversary of the accident in 2005 on the cliff top at Portland Heights overlooking the site of the tragedy.

Colin became a member of the Barrow in Furness Branch of the Submarine Old Comrades Association (later the Submariners Association) on 6th Jan 1998 and was a regular attendee at Branch Meetings. However, as he lived in Ambleside and the Meetings are in Barrow, he relied on the bus service to get him to and from the Meetings. He was most disappointed when the bus schedules were altered and he was no longer able to attend meetings as he could not get home on the bus afterwards.

### **Colin Lee in Civilian Life**

After his naval service Colin, for some time, worked for Aer Lingus in their Baggage Handling Department at Manchester Airport and, as keen sportsman and rugby player, he played for the Burnage RUFC in South Manchester. After leaving Aer Lingus he returned home to Ambleside - where he lived with his Mother Mary and Stepfather Ted Alexander at Lower Stone Croft. From the late 1970's he worked for the Hays Garden Centre - joining them as a Shop Manager and, as the Company expanded, he became the overall Manager. He continued working there until retirement age was reached but then continued part time helping out with Admin and Health & Safety until he fully retired in 2001.

I have seen a note which says that he was renowned for his organisational skills and efficiency as he helped Hays Garden World expand and that he would always be remembered for his loyalty and complete dedication to the company.

Apparently he was a very keen gardener (working at a Garden Centre must have been a great help) and he enjoyed his time spent growing vegetables and, particularly, tomato growing.

He continued with his interest in Rugby - playing at full back for Ambleside RUFC. Not content with just being a player he became involved with the running of the Club. He was the Fixtures Secretary from 1974 to 1981, Club Secretary from 1978 to 1986, Match and Team Secretary from 1976 to 1979 and was the Club County Representative from 1974 to 1986. Colin was always involved in the 'run of the mill' parts of a rugby club - running the touch line on both home and away fixtures, putting out the corner flags, arranging for the oranges at half time and spending time washing the player's kit and the rugby balls! After the matches he liked to join the lads in the bar for a pint and the gossip.

He liked his time in the sun and regularly travelled to Thailand to visit his adopted family and, I understand he helped in setting up a 'Tuk-Tuk' business for them. He also assisted in putting one of the sons through university. He was most disappointed that he could not make his usual winter trip to Thailand to see them this winter.

Colin always kept the Submariners Association aware of his absences from the country and made sure he put in his apologies for 'non-attendance' at Branch Meetings. A few days before he went into hospital for what turned out to be the last time Colin sent me an e mail explaining that he was going into hospital for a few tests and would need to stay in overnight but would I put in his apologies for the February Meeting. I replied to wish him well and hoped the tests went well and he then told me that he would be alright and all he needed was a new pair of lungs.

We will all miss Colin.