



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: 187

www.submarinersassociation.co.uk

January 2016



Page 2	Editorial
Page 2 & 3	Chairman's Report
Page 3	Secretary's Report
Page 3	Social Secretary's Report
Page 4, 5 & 6	WWI Submarine Losses
Page 6 & 7	Mesothelioma Campaign Update
Page 9 to 11	Albert Brown – Human Torpedo (Final part)
Page 12	Crossed the Bar
Page 12 to 14	K26 – the Steam Submarine

BRANCH OFFICIALS

Hon President:

John V Hart
01229 821831

jvhart34@gmail.com

BARROW BRANCH COMMITTEE

Chairman:

Dave Barlow 01229 831196
dave@davebarlow.plus.com

Vice Chairman:

Ken Collins 01229 823454
kc46@btinternet.com

Secretary:

Ron Hiseman 01229 828664
ronhiseman@btinternet.com

Social Secretary:

Alex Webb 01229 839551
alexjan1516@hotmail.com

Lay Chaplain & Welfare:

Alan Jones 01229 462150
alricia.jones@googlemail.com

Treasurer & Membership

Secretary:

Mick Mailey 01229 821290
Michael.mailey@btinternet.com

Newsletter Editor:

Barrie Downer 01229 820963
barrie@downer55.freemove.co.uk

Website Manager:

Ron Hiseman 01229 828664
ronhiseman@btinternet.com

Committee Members

Mick Dack 01229 823202
Mark Butchart (serving member)
m.butchart@hotmail.co.uk

Welfare Team:

Jeff Thomas & Brenda Thomas
01229 464943
jeffbrendathomas@tiscali.co.uk
Alan & Pat Jones
01229 462150
alricia.jones@googlemail.com

Standard Bearer:

Gordon Walker 01229 472613
gordonwalker77@talktalk.net

Slops

Malcolm Hogg 07768 170325
malcolmhogg@fsmail.net

Cover Picture: Dave Barlow and Gill (from ASDA) with Mrs Fry and her Christmas Hamper

EDITORIAL

Hello Everybody

Well here we are - nearly at the end of 2015 - and we can start to look forward to 2016. Hopefully it will be a happier year than this one where the Branch has had to say untimely goodbyes to more than our fair share of Members and former Members - all of whom will be very sadly missed.

Last month I included a couple of items about Pleural Plaques, Mesothelioma & Asbestosis. It seems that the MoD has now changed its stance concerning compensation payments to personnel affected resulting from their Naval Service. Details are included in this Issue - as is an associated article from the Sunday Post.

This MoD decision may be of some benefit to some of our Submariners Association members and friends

The WWI Submarine losses Month by Month is continued with the story of Submarines E17 and H6 - luckily both were lost without casualties although most of the crew members spent nearly three years interned in Holland. The final Part of the Albert Brown story is included as is the next Part of the Submarine K26 story - Chapter 10 - "All the Worlds' A Stage".

That's about it for this year but don't forget the first Branch Meeting of 2016 on Tuesday 5th January and, enjoy yourselves at Christmas and New Year.

Regards to all,

Barrie Downer

Chairman's Dit

Hi all I know that Barrie is trying to get this newsletter out before Christmas so hopefully he will get this in time.

Sitting down with a slightly sore head after an excellent Christmas Social at the British Legion last night. The hall was well filled with our members, families and friends and supplemented with our friends in the RAFA and the Duke of Lancaster's Association. Well done once again to Alex. To keep costs down it was a 'bring along a plate' just like we used to do a few years ago. The spread was magnificent and although I waited until the queue had diminished there was still plenty of choice which is a well done to our ladies.

Ben Britten has done a sterling job in putting together the Christmas hampers for our widows and well within

the agreed budget too which should help keep the treasurer not being quite so grumpy. Only joking Mick. Ben and I split the deliveries between us and all the ones I delivered to were so appreciative and it was a joy to see their faces. We delivered the last one together and took the opportunity to take some photos one of which I hope is attached. This was to Mrs Fry. The other lady in the photo is Gill who is the community liaison in Asda and helped Ben prepare the hampers. Well done Ben and Gill

This has been a bizarre year within our branch and one which I have definitely not enjoyed as your Chairman with the fall-out from the National subscription increase causing lots of discussion among the branch members, some of it rather heated and personal. During the

summer it was decided to carry out a referendum to gauge the feelings of the members and who was likely to resign from the Association. Although the response was not as big as had been hoped, but probably about the same as the turn-out at local elections, it transpired that just 20 out of circa 130 members stated that they would be resigning their membership of the Association. One of those has since declared that he would be staying which leaves just 19 leaving. Whilst I am disappointed that some are leaving I respect their decision as it is a personal decision and only one they can make. This means that with over 100 members we will remain the Barrow Branch of the Submariners Association and I will not be pushed into having a two tier membership as some have muted - certainly not as long as I remain your Chairman. Either you are a member of the Barrow Branch of the Submariners Association or you are not. I have said on a number of occasions that those who do leave will always be welcomed as visitors at the branch meetings and treated with the utmost courtesy as long as they understand they cannot take part in any branch discussions nor can they be an officer of the branch.

I thank those leaving who have given so much to the Association over the years but in particular Ron Hiseman who was our secretary in two spells over many years and Ken Collins who was the Chairman during the 100 years' anniversary celebrations back in 2001 and latterly as my Vice Chairman. You will both be sadly missed but I am sure that you will still join us at our social events.

If any of the 19 wish to change their mind and remain an Association member then that would make my New Year dreams and aspirations as far as the Association is concerned complete. Please give me a call or pay your dues to Mick Mailey before we have to advise the National Membership secretary.

Sadly, Michael (Ginge) Cundell lost his short battle with cancer and passed away last week. He was his usual effervescent self - right up to the end and although you probably won't get this until after his funeral I am sure it will be a very big turn-out for one of our most popular members.

Finally, and on a lighter note I really do wish every one of you a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and one which hopefully is less contentious.

Dave

SECRETARY'S DIT

Hi All

I start on a sad note in that Ginge Cundell has 'Crossed the Bar' just two weeks after attending his last meeting. Such a shame at this time of year and our thoughts are with his family. By the time you read this Ginge's funeral will have taken place and I hope the Branch gave him good send off. Judging by the e-mails I have received I am sure there was a good turn out.

The last social of the year was a good one, as usual when organised by Jan and Alex. It coincided with birthday bashes for Lynda Mead, Ken Collins and Ken's granddaughter Kelly, so it was happy birthday to them all.

So now it is down to the main point of this time of year spending time with friends and families and I hope you all have a great time.

Please remember to raise a glass to those servicemen and women who are unable to get home this Christmas, to those on patrol who will not even be able to phone their families, to our widows, some of whom face their first Christmas without their loved ones and to those who have been disabled due to their service and finally for Absent Friends.

Wishing you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year and see you all at the first meeting of 2016 on the 5th January.

Regards

Ron Hiseman

SOCIAL SECRETARY REPORT

Hi Shipmates,

December 18th was the children's Christmas party which was attended by 47 youngsters and a couple of old ones to ensure they didn't get too high on chocolate etc. The last function of our social calendar was the adult Christmas party on Saturday 19th, which was a good way to end the year - going out with a bang surrounded by mates, drinking alcohol and having a jolly ole knees up (if you can still get them that high) - see photos below! Next year's social programme has been finalised and is ready in a handy pocket size card, also it was included in last month's magazine for those who can't make the meetings; it is crammed full with things for all to do.

I am assuming next year's membership may not be as abundant as in the past and for those of you who have

decided to part company with the Submariners Association I fully appreciate and respect your decision. However, I would like to add that any submarine veteran and/or partners/friends will always be welcome at the social events I organise and, of course, will be afforded the same discount/subsidies that are enjoyed by full members.

So keeping it short and sweet I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous New Year. See you in the New Year.

Alex Webb

Social Secretary



FORMATION OF THE SUBMARINE FLOTILLA (SUBFLOT)

(Serial: Galaxy 30-2015 Dated 15th December 2015)

The intention to generate HMNB Clyde, Faslane, as the Submarine Centre of Specialisation and the Single Integrated Submarine Operating Base will already be known to you all. This plan will be realised when HMS TALENT and TRIUMPH base port change to HMNB Clyde in 2019 and 2020 respectively. As part of the process to prepare the base for this event the decision has been taken to effect the early merger of Faslane Flotilla (FasFlot) and the elements of Devonport Flotilla (DevFlot) that are focussed on submarine support from 1 January 2016.

The consolidated organisation, reporting to Commander (Operations), will be named Submarine Flotilla (SUBFLOT) and will be led by Commander Faslane Flotilla (COMFASFLOT) who will retain that title. SUBFLOT will operate as a Division of FasFlot, sitting alongside the other elements of the existing Flotilla. On merging, none of the Devonport based staff will be employed in Faslane immediately, although longer term plans will see the relevant staff transfer to Faslane to align with the projected base port changes. Similarly the day to day contact between the remaining TRAFALGAR Class submarines and DevFlot SM staff will be unchanged, however, under these new arrangements senior management functions will be discharged by COMFASFLOT instead of Commander Devonport Flotilla (COMDEVFLOT).

Further information to explain the implications of this reorganisation are contained in RNTM 368-15

Vice Admiral Sir Philip Jones KCB

Fleet Commander

JANUARY BRANCH CALENDAR

Branch Meeting	Tues 5 th January
First Footing	Fri 15 th January
K13 Weekend	22 nd /24 th January
Committee Meeting	As Required

Lofty Sibbitt	21/01/1939
Peter Hearn	22/01/1957
John Oldfield	22/01/1959
Ralph Dixon	25/01/1946
Brian Reed	27/01/1944
Ian Moore	29/01/1948

Happy Birthday to you all!

BRANCH BIRTHDAYS JANUARY 2015

Bruce Cable	02/01/1945
Andy Cundell	08/01/1971
Bob Sherriff	10/01/1949
Eric Hamer	12/01/1942

SUBMARINE LOSSES OF WWI

Two Submarines were lost in January 1916. The first was the Barrow Built 'E' Class **Submarine E17**.

In the morning of Thursday 6th January 1916 E17 was on patrol north of the island of Texel. The Submarine struck an uncharted bank and was badly damaged. The Dutch Cruiser NOORD BRABANT closed to investigate the problem but Lieutenant Commander Moncrieffe dived the Submarine to escape - believing that the Cruiser was hostile. The damage forced Moncrieffe to surface. The crew was taken off and interned in Holland for the duration. Initially the crew was interned at Den Helder but they were later moved to Groningen where other Royal Navy internees were held. E17 sank later in the morning of 6th January. The crew was made up of the following personnel:

Officers:

Lt Cdr John Robert Guy Moncrieffe, Royal Navy
Lt Napier Robert Peploe, Royal Navy
Lt Charles Victor Groves, RNR

Ratings:

PO Albert Edward Pilbeam O/N 233277
PO Charles Jennings O/N 190601
PO Charles Edmund Craven O/N 206901
L/Sea John William O'Connell O/N 216841
AB George Holwell Springall O/N J6161
AB Walter George Morley O/N J4582
AB Leolf Rothnie Lammas O/N 229434
AB Frederick Tabb O/N 211087 (Dev)
AB George Washington Parsons O/N J1878
Signalman Edward James Harvey J10580
Telegraphist William Halter O/N J12481
CERA Robert Short O/N 269501
ERA William John Thomas Smith O/N M4201
ERA Sidney George Wilson Dixey O/N M8910
Stoker PO Alfred John Mizen O/N 307529
L/Stoker Henry Reid O/N 305894
Stoker Robert John Lockyer O/N K4117
Stoker Joseph Malley O/N K5078
Stoker Frederick Thomas Parrott O/N K16221
Stoker Richard James Whittaker O/N K12786
Stoker Frederick Charles Ralph Parsons O/N K17825
Stoker John William Sears O/N K17825
Stoker James Henry Holland O/N K20759
Stoker Ernest Frederick Thomas Hill O/N K20953

The above list totals twenty seven Officers and Ratings - up to four more Seamen and Stokers are still to be identified.

The Photograph below was originally published in Family Tree Magazine May 1993 and shows Submariners & Royal Naval Division Ratings in an Internment Camp at Groningen in Holland. Able Seaman Leonard Dudley of Submarine H6 is in the Back Row - 1st Left - and Able Seaman George Holwell Springall of Submarine E17 is also in the Back Row - 5th Left. The others pictured are all believed to be members of Hawke Battalion of the Royal Naval Division who were interned after crossing the Dutch border when retreating from the defence of Antwerp in Belgium. Post War George Springall served in Submarine J2 when it was transferred to Australia and he later joined the RAN. Leonard Dudley was de-mobilised in April 1919 - having completed his 12 year engagement.

The second Submarine lost was an American designed boat which had been built by Vickers in Canada.

Submarine H6 was on patrol off the Dutch coast on 18th January 1916 when she ran aground on the island of Scheirmonikoog. Attempts to pull the Submarine off were not successful and it was decided to take off the majority of the crew. This was achieved with the assistance of the destroyer HMS FIREDRAKE and, in all two Officers and ten Ratings were rescued. The Commanding Officer and the remainder of the Crew stayed on board but were later taken off by the Dutch Navy and were interned in Holland at Groningen where they joined their colleagues from E17 for the remainder of the War - along with members of Hawke Battalion of the Royal Naval Division who had fought at Antwerp. The Submarine was later salvaged by the Dutch and then bought and commissioned into the Dutch Navy. The crew was:

Officers:

Lt Robert Neville Stopford, DSC, Royal Navy*
Lt Dudley William Ryder, Royal Navy
Lt Cuthbert Leslie Brown, RNR

Ratings:

PO Coxswain Arthur Gibson O/N 179798*
PO Henry George Saunders O/N 194067
L/Sea Ernest Henry Ridding O/N 220966*
AB David William Cooper O/N 219705*
AB Leonard Dudley O/N 236955*
AB Frederick Albert Darvill O/N 236159
AB Cecil Hanks King O/N J790
AB Harry Chandler O/N J1795
Ordinary Telegraphist John Burnett O/N J26636*
ERA Thomas Harold Whitelaw O/N M22284*
ERA Joseph Manley O/N 272478
ERA Frank Keys O/N M5105
Stoker PO Frederick James Robinson O/N 308214*
L/Stoker Sidney Victor Hawkins O/N 308323
Stoker Arthur William Beebe O/N K11810*
Stoker John William Bath Beer O/N K4194*
Stoker William Fraser Elderfield O/N K10483*
Stoker Frederick Charles Davis, DSM O/N K11937

Note: The Submarine H6 names asterisked above are those men who were interned in Holland. They all returned home safely after the Armistice in November 1918



DISCLAIMER

This Newsletter is published by the Submariners Association (Barrow in Furness) and is © 2016. 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 liability on any issue in this Newsletter.

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. 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 July for the August 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!

CHRISTMAS HAMPER THANK YOU MESSAGES

From: Diane Tiffney
Date: 14 December 2015

Please thank all the members of SOCA for my lovely Christmas hamper.

Thank you again, Diane Tiffney

From: Eileen Mitchell-Knight

Date: 14 December 2015

Just a big thank you for the lovely hamper delivered to me from the submariners association the other day. It is so generous of you all and really appreciated, when as Christmas comes round again it is so easy to feel a bit down.

Thank you all once again and would like to take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mesothelioma Campaign Update

(Thursday, December 17, 2015)

Dear All

It is with much pleasure that I write to inform you that legislation will be amended in April 2016 to enable all veterans diagnosed with Mesothelioma as a result of Service the choice between receiving a traditional War Pension or £140,000 in lump sum compensation, regardless of age at diagnosis. The average civilian compensation award under the Government's Diffuse Mesothelioma Scheme is around £122,000.

Whilst the law won't be amended until April, the Ministry of Defence have indicated that payments will be backdated to the date of the Government's announcement, which was at yesterday's meeting of the Central Advisory Committee. From 16 December, all veterans diagnosed with Mesothelioma who submit a claim to Veterans UK will receive a traditional War Pension as normal for the period up until April 2016. After that date, should the claimant decide they would prefer to receive a lump sum payment, Veterans UK will arrange for this to happen, with the value of any War Pension already received being deducted from the final lump sum award. We understand that independent advice will be offered to all veteran Mesothelioma

claimants to help them decide which payment option is right for them, given that War Pensions include survivor's benefits.

The Legion has long maintained that veterans should be compensated fairly for their suffering, and we commend the Government for taking steps to address this important issue. Whilst we welcome yesterday's announcement, we do remain disappointed that around 60 veterans who are currently in receipt of a War Disablement Pension for Mesothelioma will be unable to apply for the new lump sum compensation award. This is on account of successive government longstanding opposition to retrospection. The Legion has informed officials of our disappointment and has suggested that that this particular group of veterans should be considered worthy of 'special' status within the terms of the Armed Forces Covenant, in light of both their limited life expectancy and the severity of their pain and suffering. We are pleased that the Government has indicated that it will review this matter, and we will continue to monitor developments closely.

The Legion has also expressed concern that the £140,000 lump sum payment will not be uprated annually in line with the War Disablement Pension Scheme, within which this payment will sit. Instead, we understand that the value of the payment will be reviewed periodically in line with lump sums payable under other public sector compensation schemes. Over time, this could mean that the value of the lump sum option is eroded compared to a traditional War Disablement Pension, which would once again disadvantage those veterans who are unmarried, widowed or divorced. We will be continuing discussions with MOD officials in this regard, and will keep you updated on discussions.

The Legion estimates that the Government's recent announcement will benefit veterans diagnosed with Mesothelioma by tens of millions of pounds over the lifetime of this issue, which I am sure you will agree is a sizeable sum in the present financial climate. My colleagues and I thank you wholeheartedly for your support, without which we could not have demonstrated the breadth of opposition to the previous, unfair arrangement. Thank you.

If you have any outstanding questions or concerns regarding the recent announcement, please do feel free to share them with me as I would be happy to raise them with officials in our follow up discussions.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

Laura Pett

Public Affairs and Campaigns Manager

The Royal British Legion

199 Borough High Street

London SE1 1AA

ASBESTOS & MESOTHELIOMA

(Adapted from the Sunday Post of 20th December 2015)

Shipbuilding is part of the fabric of nation - but there is a dark side

The United Kingdom has a proud history of

shipbuilding. It's part of the fabric of the country. The industry had a lot of positive effects, starting with world-class ships.

There's a darker legacy, though - asbestos.

The building material was used in many of these gigantic vessels and it wasn't until years later that the folly of this practice was discovered.

Small fibres released from asbestos can cause various problems with the lungs when inhaled.

The surface of the lungs and inside of the chest wall are lined with a membrane called pleura which has a tiny amount of lubricating fluid between the two layers.

Breathing in asbestos dust and fibres can cause raised areas on pleura to develop and these are known as pleural plaques.

They can be seen on chest X-rays and, while they generally don't cause problems on their own, they are a sign of asbestos exposure.

Asbestos can also cause diffuse pleural thickening where the whole lung lining thickens and the fluid around the lung may build up. This can cause difficulty in breathing. Then there's asbestosis, a nasty condition which appears because the lungs become scarred. It's incurable, although the symptoms can be helped with medication.

Asbestos increases the risk of lung cancer too, and particularly a type of aggressive cancer called mesothelioma, which affects pleura. You're probably beginning to see why the various types of asbestos have been banned.

The first restriction occurred in 1985 - but, even today, we're still seeing patients who worked in the ships and shipyards throughout the country who need treatment.

THE CONTINUING SEARCH FOR SUBMARINE AE1

In an earlier issue of Periscope View I reported that a new search had been undertaken for the 'Barrow Built' Submarine HMAS AE1 - lost with all hands in September 1914. The Submarine was not located this time but the following speech in the Australian Parliament shows that the search will continue

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley) (13:56): You would know that in my time as Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence I thought that a grateful nation needed to do all it could to help the families and loved ones of those that gave the greatest sacrifice in the service of our nation know where they rested. This saw us working very hard to seek, identify the location of and recover HMAS SYDNEY (II). We had the work of Jim Burke and Operation Aussies Home' finding where those brave Vietnam veterans who fell and could not be recovered lay in that foreign country. The AE2, one of our early submarines of our nation, was found. It rests, now, off the coast of the Dardanelles. It is being properly cared for and protected. But there still is one more mystery: the mystery of whatever happened to AE1. AE1 is a submarine that was dispatched very early in the days of

the First World War, sent with a combined military and naval force to capture a German naval radio station and seize the German colony centred on the island of New Britain.

A dedicated team of people led by Peter Briggs, the retired Rear Admiral and Chairman of 'Find AE1' has executed the first stage of the search for AE1 to try and find the final resting place of that vessel and the 35-man crew that included British and Australians, and a sole New Zealander. We need to find AE1. This work is underway. In the first 200 metres of depth, we know where she is not. We have to keep working. I urge people to contribute handsomely to the fundraising efforts to continue the search.

ASTUTE SUBMARINE SECTION MOVEMENT

The movement of a colossal submarine part through Barrow was a landmark journey for a Defence Company. The latest BAE Submarine Systems 'large load' movement (one of several in the last six weeks) was the heaviest completed as part of the Company's ASTUTE submarine programme.

Weighing in excess of 1,000 tonnes, the submarine section was moved on Friday 11th December from the New Assembly Shop on Bridge Road to the Devonshire Dock Hall where the construction phase will be completed.

Similar sized units have been moved in the past but none as heavy.

Astute is a seven submarine programme. The first two HMS ASTUTE & HMS AMBUSH are in Service with the Royal Navy. The third, ARTFUL, has just been handed over to the MoD for Sea Trials.

The remaining four submarines – AUDACIOUS, ANSON, AGAMEMNON and an as yet un-named submarine – are in various stages of construction.



Royal Navy Discharges Sailors for Sleepwalking

The Royal Navy discharged five sailors last year for sleepwalking, it has been disclosed. A Freedom of Information (FOI) request also showed that anyone suffering from the disorder is barred from joining the Senior Service.

The Armed Forces' medical rules are being updated to make the entry bar official and also to disqualify those who suffer from "sleep terrors", the Ministry of Defence's Navy Command Secretariat said. Medical regulations already block sufferers of sleep apnoea, a condition where people stop breathing while they are asleep" the MoD added in its reply to the FOI.

It said:

"Sleepwalking is a bar to entry to the Royal Navy. Whilst this is not presently enshrined in MoD policy sleepwalking beyond the age of thirteen is seen as a permanent medical disqualification. Policy updates to that effect are currently in the process of being cleared for publication." It added: "The permanently disqualifying nature of sleep terrors will similarly be reflected in the pending policy update."

No details were given about how the five sailors' sleepwalking was discovered. The FOI also disclosed that 12 service personnel have been rated as having a "medically limited deployability" (MLD) for a "sleep-related disorder" since 2011.

The Royal Navy website says anyone marked as MLD "requires a risk assessment to be carried out for each deployment".

By Editor

Further to the above item a little story I came across by accident on the day the above Policy was disclosed fits in nicely and appears to justify the MoD's concerns:

Stoker 1st Class Horace David Gillam O/N 306800 of HMS PERSEUS was drowned on 16th July 1907. A note on his Service Record states that "he is understood to have fallen overboard when sleepwalking" and also records that "other crew members tried to save him but were not successful."

Obviously the current information about the MoD discharging sailors for sleepwalking is not a new policy - given the case of Gillham! It has probably been in place for many years and no doubt there are other cases hidden in the records.

Third 'Astute' Class Submarine Formally Handed Over

The third of the new 'Astute' Class attack submarines, ARTFUL, has officially been handed over to the Royal Navy.

Until now the submarine was owned by Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), the MOD's body responsible for procuring and supporting equipment for the armed forces.

The boat and her crew will now be added to the Royal Navy Fleet alongside the Navy's other units. Defence Minister Philip Dunne said: "The handover of ARTFUL to the Royal Navy is another major step in the 'Astute' Class submarine programme, which continues to gather pace.

"These attack submarines, will provide the Royal Navy with the most technologically advanced submarine Britain has ever sent to sea and will be a vital part of UK security for decades to come.

"They are being funded by our growing Defence budget and our £178 billion investment in equipment, which is delivering the very best possible kit to our Armed Forces."

ALBERT F BROWN - HUMAN TORPEDO

Final Part

(from TARTAN TOPICS)

I went home on leave and picked up the HMS WOLFE up in Rothesay Bay for the Far East. The trip out was very good until we got to almost Bombay when Lt McArthur sent for me to come to his cabin. He told me he had bad news for me that my people had been bombed out but my mother was safe. The message never said anything about the rest of the family. He asked me if I wanted to go back, if so he could put me off in Bombay and I might get a flight back. He was pleased when I said I would carry on, as everything would be over by the time I got home.

Soon after we arrived in Trincomalee we got down to training. It was another world down below but everything went ok and they gave me Bill Smith for my Number 1. We got on very well together and we were picked to go on the first job against the Japs with two men torpedoes. Our targets were in Phuket Harbour on the West Coast of Malaya at the North end of Malacca Straits. There were four of us picked. Two for each machine. We went on a short jungle training course just in case we had to bail out and make our way into an enemy training course just in case we had to bail out and make our way into enemy occupied territory. Escape kits were prepared and explained and some Shark scares had also arrived, one of these was a repulsive smelling ointment to smear over suit, headpiece and hands but we did not use it as we thought the machines and the figures riding them would be enough to frighten any sharks.

Back from the jungle course we found the submarine TRENCHANT was to take us on the operation; 'Baldy' Hazlet Lt Commander commanded her. He played an outstanding part in the early years of the enterprise.

There remained a short period of time for training to be carried out with the parent submarine, for the final trial the two machines were taken out to sea and launched about six miles from the entrance about 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. Smith and I had an eventful run; on going under the first boom, my nose clip came off and fell into the bottom of my face piece. As soon as we came to the surface inside the net I opened the visor to fix things, hoping Smith would not dive again in too much of a hurry. But with

wet hands the replacement of a slippery nose clip proved too difficult a manoeuvre so I decided to leave it off and shut the visor, judging the risk of carbon dioxide poisoning to be a justifiable one in 'practice battle' conditions. One the way out, after we had completed the attack the machine gears suddenly stripped and Smith was left with no means of varying the speed and none of going astern.

We could have surfaced alongside the net, where we knew there to be a launch from the WOLFE but we decided to carry on out to sea to pick up TRENCHANT in spite of the defect. But before we could get back to the rendezvous and because of the many extra obstacles we had to surmount, the machine was completely out of compressed air and Smith and I were completely out of oxygen, we were accordingly running on the surface with visors open when we sighted the Submarine. There was only one problem of stopping, round and round we went again and again until we could reach a line thrown from the big boats casing which eventually halted us. When we climbed out of the water it was 4.20 a.m. - it had been a long night.

TRENCHANT sailed on 22 October with the torpedoes resting on the Port and Starboard Saddle tanks.

Down below in the control room the four of us were observing all that was going on, we had checked our escape equipment just before leaving. Each of us had been issued with a 38 revolver and ammunition, local currency, a small bag of 25 gold sovereigns, a silk map, a small dagger, needle and thread for sewing up wounds, compass, hacksaw blades, a watch and a tablet of poison. All of this had to be concealed among our clothes and carried inside the diving dress. There was also the "Siamese Blood Chit", a small square of white silk. On this, in addition to a very garish Union Jack, was a message inscribed in several Oriental languages to the following effect:-

"I am a British Naval Officer who has been engaged in operations against the Japanese. If I am captured I cannot to fight against the Japanese, so I appeal to you to hide me and provide me with food until I can re-join our forces. If you will help me by giving me food and hiding me in safety until our armies arrive in Malaya, you will earn the gratitude of my Government, who will give you a big reward and I am authorised to give you a chit to this effect."

The sea trip to Selenga Island on the coast of which lay Phuket Harbour was uneventful, and on the morning of the attack, TRENCHANT was in position 6 ½ miles to seawards from the target area.

The four of us had a good look through the periscope at the targets, Eldridge's and Woolcott's target was just inside the harbour entrance, she was the 5,000 ton merchantman "SUMATRA" but our target the "VOLPI" of 5,272 tons way lying further in, right at the extreme end of the waterway, to reach her we had a considerably longer trip. She was out of commission and partly submerged and in the process of being salvaged by the same team as had re-floated the "SUMATRA." I was told the divers were working round the clock on her.

The day passed terribly slowly and nightfall brought a great sense of relief. Dressing took less time than had been expected and the four of us had to sit about in a sweltering control-room, clad in thick rubber suits, with the sweat literally pouring off us.

We were glad when we were able to man the machines at 10 o'clock, the sea was very flat as the submarine submerged and left her two offspring's afloat.

The night was lit by a brilliant moon, which had its advantages as well as its disadvantages. I couldn't see where we were going but I could see where we had come from, as we sat back in the torpedoes.

I am happily connecting myself to the machine oxygen supply, then came the trim-dive, which went well enough as far as Smith and the chariot were concerned. But for me things were not plain sailing. As soon as we submerged I felt the water coming through the vent in the headpiece and within minutes I was flooded from feet to neck. It didn't worry me very much until I had to dismount to secure the warhead, which Smith had noticed working loose. I had to keep a very firm grip on the securing gear to prevent myself plummeting to the bottom. Smith and I felt very confident about the whole job. It was quite straightforward there being no nets across the harbour and we never saw any and probably no other defences either. Both of us were old hands at the actual business of handling a machine below the water, so the night should be a 'quiet number'. We had several natters together to formulate a plan of campaign and had decided simply to ride in on the surface for the first 4 1/2 miles and keep dived for the last 2. Nothing stopped us keeping to that programme. After having gone about 3 miles we were able to distinguish first of all Eldridge's target then our own. Smith was a little worried about the phosphorescence that the propeller was churning up. This was a feature of tropical waters to which none of us had become fully accustomed.

When the time came for diving we remained below for 400 yards at stretch surfacing slowly every time to check course and to take in the situation as a whole.

This part seemed slow going, and, indeed, we were being forced off course considerably by the strong cross current, but by trial and error we eventually got into position some 300 yards away from the target and dived for the attack. Soon we could see the dark shape of the hull appear and with motor stopped we glided smoothly alongside, the depth was about 20 feet.

The intention was to place the charge vertically under the centre line of the ship as near as possible on the engine room plates, but on sinking slowly to 40 feet we both realised that with the position in which the ship was wedged we would never manage to get ourselves or a charge underneath her. Partly to think again, partly to try another attempt we withdrew. We kept deep on the next attempt but our luck was no better.

So, I dismounted and went forward to have a look at the ship's side, moving slowly past Smith and past the warhead. The water was so dark that before I had gone some four feet from the nose of the chariot I was completely out of sight from Smith, but in a few minutes

I was back, to indicate by signs that there was no hope of securing the charge on the ship's side. It was disappointing, but there was nothing to be gained by stopping where we were, so with the main ballast slowly blowing we crept up the side of the ship towards the surface. At fifteen feet we came to a deck, Smith stopped the ascent for me to dismount, well to get out of the cockpit for a third time on the trip. This time I took the charge with me and lashed it to one of the deck-fittings and took the pin out of the time-setting clock. I had about 45 minutes on the clock when the lashing parted and my hand was cut. I had to grab the charge again and struggle with it across the deck. The fuse-clock was ticking away and I knew my time was running out as I negotiated a series of steps down into an engine-room and placed the charge where it could not move. Then I had to take a chance and put another 4 hours on the clock; that's when my life was in my hands. But I was too preoccupied with several personal discomforts, to start with, my suit was full of water and one of my hands were bleeding badly from a cut sustained when I half stumbled with the charge, a further fall had torn open my head piece and gashed the top of my skull. I could feel my hair sticky with blood, through the hole in the rubber. However, as I made my way up the engine-room ladder and across the deck to where I thought Smith would be waiting, I was able to reflect on the big bang I had left just below me. By the time I re-joined Smith I had to been aboard for some 20 minutes - long minutes they had been too. I let Smith feel the split pin that meant the charge had been set, we shook hands and were away. The usual routine for departure was a long dive for about a mile at about 10 or 15 feet, course to be as estimated by Number 1. This was Smith's intention as the chariot surged slowly forward and away from her target, but they had barely gone 10 yards before he felt this breathing coming with difficulty and before we had gone very much further he knew for certain that his equipment had a defect. In a hurry he brought the machine to the surface, ripping open his visor and disengaging his mouthpiece. His mouth was badly burned by the soda lime that had worked loose from the canister. Luck had changed and we were in a not very promising situation, all we could do was to carry on at full speed on the surface and hope for the best.

We had been proceeding in this fashion for about 90 minutes and the time was between 2 and 3 a.m. when Smith sighted the TRENCHANT some 40 yards away. We had been dead on course, the next moment a dark shape appeared to port and proved to be lofty Eldridge's machine. Things could not have been better timed. Hezlet ordered the chariots to be scuttled. With my headpiece full of water and my back to Smith I was not sure what was happening, the machine started to dive and a leg hit my head so I grabbed it as I was still connected to the machine for oxygen supply. I managed to disconnect myself and still hold on until I got a hold of the Submarines Casing - if not I would have been at the bottom with all the water and hole in the suit.

As soon as we got aboard and down below Hezlet had the 'Plugs pulled out' in double quick time. My suit was almost bursting open with the weight of water inside it. I always got by but no one could swim with that. I was a non-swimmer. The mystery was that I had managed to conceal the fact through the best part of 3 years. McArthur was highly amused when he heard about it.

Back in TRENCHANT there was an air of satisfaction and the four divers after a brief comparison of notes were packed off to get a few hours sleep. We were called again at 5.30am half an hour before the charges were due to go up. Woolcott's target disintegrated to be followed five minutes later by ours. We were all allowed frequent peeps through the periscope to see the effects of our handy-work. The two explosions were quite different, the first was a sharp crack and the vessel seemed to move upward. The second was considerably duller and seemed to expand its energy horizontally outward. The TRENCHANT continued on patrol for a further three weeks much to the delight and interest of the charioteers. During this time Hezlet was able to make a successful attack on a convoy and the boat was subjected to some depth charging. On return to Trincomalee reports were submitted and the four of us went on leave to a rest-camp in the hills. When we returned to join the other teams we found them packing for home.

Authority had decided against any further chariot operations in the Far East.

The Commander in Chief had said that he would not be responsible for sending men on operations where return might not be possible, when it was known that all men captured would immediately lose both eyes and testicles. As a result everything was being wound up as far as this mode of warfare was concerned.

All those now 'out of work' would be given a comprehensive choice of jobs and every effort would be made to see them placed in the appointment of their choice - charioteering had to come to an end.

By the time I got back to the UK the war was over. I spent my last days at the DSE tank before I was demobbed.

The end had come for the lad they tried to make a Steward; and out of about 400 lads that tried to get into the job I was the only one that got through and did a successful operation.

'A non-swimmer' and at last they changed me over to a Seaman and was awarded the DSM for this operation.

Rolls-Royce shares fall over Nationalisation Contingency Plan

Monday 14 December 2015

Concerns are growing over the future of Rolls-Royce after it emerged the government has drawn up contingency plans to nationalise part of the power systems engineering firm if the crisis facing it worsens.

Shares in Rolls fell on Monday as investors digested reports that the government could nationalise the company's nuclear submarine business or force it to merge with defence manufacturer BAE Systems.

Analysts played down the prospect of either deal taking place, but the fact that the government, one of Rolls' biggest customers, is contemplating these options highlights how concerned it is about the FTSE 100 engineer.

The government holds a golden share in Rolls which allows it to block a takeover by a foreign bidder and restrict any foreign investor from holding more than 15% of the company's shares.

This restriction has become increasingly relevant because ValueAct, an activist investor based in California, has built a 10% stake in Rolls and is pushing for a seat on the company's board.

Rolls is under pressure after issuing five profit warnings in less than two years. The company's share price has fallen by almost 40% this year as it struggles against government cuts to defence spending, the falling oil price and weakening demand for the wide-bodied commercial aircraft Rolls makes engines for.

The government contingency plans are in case the performance of Rolls weakens further. The plans, first reported by the Financial Times, include taking control of the arm of the business that powers Britain's nuclear submarines. This would potentially allow a foreign investor to either acquire Rolls or pump emergency funds into the company by buying a stake larger than 15% without national security being compromised.

Another option would be to merge the nuclear division of Rolls, or the whole company, with BAE. Both companies are a key part of the project to build new nuclear submarines to replace the UK's Trident programme.

Sir Vince Cable, the former business secretary, said the government should consider buying its own stake in Rolls. Cable told Sky News that "anything which fundamentally threatens to diminish the value of Rolls-Royce could be a trigger for the government to take a stake".

Analysts said the government was conducting a "sensible" review of its plans to replace Trident, which will cost £31bn, and that Rolls was still financially robust.

Sandy Morris, analyst at Jefferies, said Rolls was investing £750m a year in research and development and £600m on new infrastructure. He added: "I think the government being totally on top of Trident, and how they're going to manage it and the supply chain, is only sensible."

Howard Wheeldon, an independent analyst, said: "To suggest that nationalisation is even a thought process in the minds of anyone currently, let alone that it may become a possible issue, is irresponsible in the extreme.

"Yes, Rolls-Royce may have a US shareholder breathing down its neck, and that ValueAct has been reported as wishing to see parts of the group hived off.

"I doubt that will occur and I very much hope that it will not. The sum of the parts is what makes Rolls-Royce what it is and provides it with global strength."

A Rolls spokesperson said: “We are in contact with government as a matter of routine and regularly keep

them updated

CROSSED THE BAR DECEMBER 2015

Branch	Date	Name	Rank/Rating	O/N	Age	Submarine Service
Submarine Officers Association & DOLPHIN Branch	30 th Nov 2015	C Edward Gibson, MBE	Lieutenant Commander	N/A	85	Submarine Service from 1950 to 1967 in ALCIDE, AMPHION, SENTINEL, SANGUINE, ALCIDE (IL), SCORCHER (CO), TACTICIAN (CO) & OBERON (CO)
Submarine Officers Association	6 th Dec 2015	Jeffrey D Bradshaw	Lieutenant Commander (E) (MESM)	N/A	72	Submarine Service in OBERON (76), OPPORTUNE (81) & SM1
Submarine Officers Association	10 th Dec 2015	Alex John Wale	Captain (EL)	N/A		Submarine Service in THERMOPYLAE (1954) & MAIDSTONE (1960)
Barrow in Furness Branch	15 th Dec 2015	Michael Cundell	Chief Marine Engineering Mechanic	D082071H	68	Submarine Service from 1967 to 1983 in Submarines PORPOISE (1967 to 1970), COURAGEOUS (1970 to 1973), CONQUEROR (1973 to 1976) & SCEPTRE (1976 to 1982)
Nottingham	Dec 2015	Dennis T Churchill	Leading Seaman (UC2)	P/JX 850011	85	Submarine Service from 1955 to 1960 in TELEMACHUS, ANDREW, TABARD & EXPLORER
New Zealand	Dec 2015	Frank A Hall	Leading Stoker	P/KX 761574	87	Submarine Service from 1948 to 1951 in TOTEM, TALENT, TRENCHANT & TABARD

K26 – THE STEAM SUBMARINE (Part 7)

By Jack Phillip (Nick) Nichols O/N J98553

Chapter 10 ALL THE WORLDS A STAGE

When asked as a schoolboy to declare what I had in mind after my fourteenth year, for this was when, in those times we parted with our schoolmaster's, and put upon us the long trousers, the symbol of the eager wage slave, I was non-plussed, and not for the last time either, the most recent example being yesterday morning, a circumstance I do not mean to relate now because I am talking about things over forty years ago. I was torn between a desire to be a Baker, this only for the mere reason that I liked the smell of new bread. I wanted also to be an Acrobat, a drummer in a municipal band, a well-known Actor, a train driver, and after reading some Dickens, a Beadle. It was pointed out to me by someone much older that the profession of Beadle had now ceased. This shortened my list by one, I knew without telling that bread was still being baked, as I could still smell it at Esslings on the way home from school. A few minutes on the wall-bars with an ex-Army P.T. instructor convinced me that somehow I had neither the muscles nor the endurance necessary to be an Acrobat. I found ten out of twelve other boys wanting to be train drivers too, so rather reluctantly I deleted my name from the Masters of Steam and Smoke. On enquiry I found that, in order to be a well-known actor I would need a long apprenticeship, a large sum of money to start with, and a good voice. As without items two and three I could not have item one the British Stage has had to do without me. My voice was then squeaky, often imitated by bigger boys who got, rounds of applause, but I don't think applause would have been forthcoming for my original words. Then of course there was my Cockney accent. So I was left, so I thought, with only the prospect of being a drummer. This prospect disappeared quickly, for in an interview with a stout "chentleman", yes that's what he called me and I supposed him to be one too. I was asked some questions as to my knowledge of music. I am afraid I was rather vague as to the duties of a little drummer boy. I was green enough to think that he just ad libbed. I really thought that al the oboes, violins, cellos, trumpets, bassoons etc., played perfect music and that the drummer merely decorated it with an occasional tum tum, or perhaps a bom! bom! I thought a knowledge of crotchets and quavers un-necessary, I though a drummer was at liberty to bong away like mad as long as it sounded good. This left my list with 'Baker'.

I might have been 'Nick the Bread' but for two things, one was Southey's Life of Nelson, and the other a visit to a bakehouse in Isleworth. Up until then I had led a sheltered life, I had never, as far as I knew, seen a cockroach. There were so many cockroaches in that bakehouse that it occurred to me that ship's biscuits might have their points. I decided. I would join the Navy. As a means of parting with cockroaches damned silly, a chap told me once there was a formula for buoyancy of a ship and it took into consideration the possible weight of them aboard and it was, if I remember, a right nasty proportion.

I regretted my decision to join the Navy about half an hour after leaving a boat that had brought me from Harwich across to Shotley to join HMS GANGES, a shore training establishment. But in the dog watches I regretted much more the fact that I had not really worked on some of the things I had had a yen for. I could never really go to a theatre or indeed a cinema without imagining that; but for a measly sum of money scraped up, a Cockney accent eliminated, and one or two other things like a couple of cubits added to my stature, I might be the star up front. Well, it was worse for a chap in L23 whose name was East, he had been stage-struck in a way, roughly one hundred times stronger.

From the age of three, I was given to understand, this chap East had wanted to be an actor. I could not have known what an actor was at the age of three. Nevertheless, his unfeeling father had put him into the Navy more or less by signing papers in advance and changing the locks on front and back doors, intimating to his son that should he return at Christmas or better still, the next Midsummer in a sailor's suit and carrying a bundle, and some ship's tobacco, he would not only be glad to see him, but would throw him down a key, back or front whichever he preferred. East told me he had tried first to get, taken on locally as a tram driver but, being rather short he found difficulty in seeing over the bows of the tram. Provided with a box to stand on he thought he was alright, but to ring the bell, which was foot operated he had to jump down from the box, and when the bell had rung, it sometimes misfired. When operating the bell this way he could not see the road or track ahead, and when his bell misfired twice he remained down long enough to run into the tram in front.

He said the 'dong' thus achieved was remarkable, much louder than the bell would have been if it had rung, if you follow me. I was given to understand that the date he joined the Ramsgate Tram Company was also the date he left, being credited with only four hours paid work and £50 worth of damage to trams. The pierrots had gone home, the beach shows closed, he found a friend at last in the Recruiting Officer, he joined, he ran, he saluted, he rowed, sailed, sewed, shot, climbed, did everything he was told to do, it was to him acting experience. "Once out of this lot laddie, I'll be expert at Naval parts, I'll show 'em". There was one drawback however. I hesitate to mention it, but it is true and has to be recorded. He was shy of the full number of his marbles. Only a few, one or two or, at the most three. Well, say four, and I'll not go any further. One thing against many, he could not see when people were having him on, pulling his leg, taking the mickey. Which was sad.

It occurred to East that here he was amongst lots of chaps who had perhaps a talent, for strutting the boards. By some mischance he did a Submarine Course and landed in L23. He was given, with another man to the Torpedo Gunners Mate to do the Torpedoman's equivalent of plough, and mow and reap and mow. About three days later the T.G.M. sent the other man away, shut the watertight door of the fore-ends and spoke kindly to East. In order to impress East with his earnestness he took out the photograph of his wife and the photos of his small son and even smaller daughter. In slow solemn tones he told East that "he wished to remain alive, he wished no widowhood for his wife, no orphaning of his children. In order that such a thing should be possible, he proposed a way of working never expected in such an important piece of the arms of a country as a Submarine.

"East, my boy" he said, forget all they told you in the training ship about initiative, for in three days you have four times risked sinking the boat by opening the wrong valves. You have twice filled a fuel bottle in one of my torpedoes with plain water, you took the propeller clamp off one torpedo and it ran cold, by the grace of God the igniters were not in. When of course all three of us would have been asphyxiated. "In future, East, listen, do just what I tell you, do nothing in advance, or in order to please me, do not take any task out of the hands of Finch the other Seaman Torpedoman." "Thus we may remain alive all three of us. Even to the end of the commission." East replied "Right to T.G.M. I'll just give the torpedoes a rub with emery." The T.G.M. held up his hand. "You miss the point. I shall tell you what to do, if for some reason I am not present, do nothing but wait for me to appear, you will be my Trilby, and I will be your Svengali." East brightened up. "Oh yes I remember that play." The T.G.M. said. "We are not playing, this is real life, you fetch, you carry, on no account touch anything electrical, and open no valves, shut no valves, we were without lights twice yesterday because you shoved two wires under the same terminal." East nodded "O.K. T.G.M. I'll soon get used to it, what'll I do now?" The T.G.M. looked around. "Put a shine on the fore ends steel deck." "Right". East got the emery and the sperm oil and happily zizzed away. The T.G.M. replaced his photos opened the watertight door and let in Harry Finch. To him he said, "If you see East here doing any work, ask him who told him to do it, if the answer is nobody, stop him, you may hit him with a body spanner if you like, to stop him that is." "All right T.G.M.". The T.G.M. went aft to get his tot. "He's a bit of a worrier the T.G.M. isn't he?" Harry Finch said. "Not really". East looked up dreamily from the emerying, "I'd cast him for Dubedad in The Doctor's Dilemma." "Is that good?" "A very good part, lots of meaty lines". East had come out from England with a play already written, all the parts were there in big round hand writing. The cast was on a separate, pasted in piece, some notes of the action details of the scenery when made, descriptions of the parts. For some time when L23 was alongside Cyclops he had been casting. \he did it in a simple way. He'd walk up to some unsuspecting Stoker or Seaman and say "You walk very well. Have you ever acted, trod the boards you know? Well an admission of walking on as second halberdier out of three in a school play would get you a part in East's thriller. "See what you think, read the part out aloud when you're alone." Funny thing was, the play was rank arrant nonsense, and several of the proposed cast found it so hilarious that they stood in turn at the door of the submarine crew's bathroom in the Cyclops and read their parts aloud to a delighted audience of naked well-soaped Seamen, Stokers and Signal staff. Detective-Sergeant McAllister was a favourite one, he had to have a Scots accent, and so bad the casting, he being from

Padstow in Cornwall, it was a delightful farce. When East appeared, the play reading stopped but like the good Thespian he imagined himself to be he slapped all his "actors" on the back and asked "How's your part coming on, Laddie?" As K.26 happened to be secured up next to L.23 I could not escape, I did not try hard, my memory of my missed opportunity to stump the boards, was with me. My accent with the years had got no better, but my voice had deepened with the years and I could say "Put that gun down Chandler" with a chilling emphasis. I was just an ordinary constable in the play, which was another example of miscasting, I never knew any policemen of 5ft. 3½ inches. The play was something of a mystery to me, I didn't come on until the third act I think it was and all I know was that the hero Jim was at that time in the hands of the gang who were anxious to know the whereabouts of a lot of money and jools, with Jim rather reluctant to say. The gang-leader, very well cast - a little sinister looking Stoker, suggests torturing Jim. Well all the gang are in favour of this; round about 1930 torturing of people and animals had almost dropped out, and you never knew when it might come in useful. They make rather a debate of this, hot irons, versus various other uncomfortable things, all to give the audience a vicarious thrill. There were bludgeons which consisted of tightly rolled copies of the Times of Malta dipped in creosote for colour but unfortunately not quite dry and liable to give Jim large brown bruises. Everybody having said that their lines were perfect, a full rehearsal was to be held at which the public were not to be welcome. In fact the Invitation was to stay away. East feared skylarking so it could not be in the CYCLOPS.

Eventually the word was passed to the cast "Rehearsal tonight 7 p.m. in L.23". East's own boat in East's own fore-ends, big enough if you ducked down under a suspended torpedo here, and stepped round a big torpedo toolbox there. Plenty of lights rigged by Harry Finch, who had agreed to do lighting and props for his mate. The cast assembled down the boat parts in hand. As there was only a single plank across from boat to boat an obliging big ugly Stoker- called Baines stood by up top ready to whip the plank away if it looked as if there were to be any gatecrashers. Down below the play droned on, there was one female part, a Signalman stood in for Nell or it may have been Sally, reading the part for cues, East hoping to talk an R.N. Captain's English maid into having a go at the part when it got into production. They got to the line. "I'll make him talk, tie him up". The gang with lots of business brought out nose and tail lines, pieces of oily rope and trussed Jim up like a parcel whilst he defied them with lines like "You will never find out from me where the money and jools are hidden." The Stage Manager or some other person got him to repeat this line several times whilst the tying up went on, and the lines of rope were passed round Jim and the rungs of the for'd torpedo hatch. When he was secured to the ladder doing alterations to his defiant expression as Signalman Kent shone the light of an Aldis on him in good imitation of limelight, the leader of the gang says, "So you think we can't make you talk Lefty, let's give him the water torture, ha! ha! That'll see if he's going to keep silent." There were a few "No boss's" to impress the audience, if there had been one, the seriousness of the water torture. The dialogue gives no clue whether it's cold water, hot water, running water, salt water, fresh water, clean water. In the stage instruction it said it was to be a slow drip... drip... drip down on to Jim's forehead, when he would show his contempt for the gang by gazing steadily ahead in the brilliant white light of the Aldis. But the jocular boys of the cast had so arranged at the cue line from Jim, which was "do your worst", to pour from the top of the hatch not only a couple of buckets of dirty water, but some potato peelings, a generous helping of once used tea leaves and some flour. It was a smash-hit, the cast felt, all but the star that is.

The time had wound on as time has a habit of doing it was five to nine, at nine the Duty Officer was due to visit each boat in turn. Normally he arrived on a boat across the plank, the Duty Stoker or Seaman reported battery fans run, ventilation shut off etc. The rounds arrived on L.23, no-one on the upper casing, it should have been East. Duty Cox'n holding torch before him goes down ladder of hatch standing on bound figure of Jim the hero. The explanation went on far into the night, the cast drifting back one by one to explain that it was only a rehearsal. Jim was untied. He remembered what the T.G.M. had said, he went in board the CYCLOPS to bath and shift. At nine next morning he stood in the fore ends the pool of wet rubbish round him. The T.G.M. came down, he'd heard about it, the grapevine has tendrils in Stoker's Messes that intertwine with P.O.'s Messes etc., even to the Ward Rooms so it is said. The T.G.M. looked at East. East looked back. "Clear all this up" said the T.G.M. "Righto T.G.M." said East. East whistled "Come cheer up me lads" - then checked himself. The T.G.M. smiled "Carry on whistling East." East smiled, he continued, "To add something new to this glorious year. Harry Finch came down the ladder, he knew all about it, "I'll give you a hand mate," he said. He did. You see you can have associates, assistants, juniors, directors, but what you really want in any situation is a Mate. Especially if you haven't got a full count of marbles. I am glad to be able to report that L.23's T.G.M. returned to the bosom of his family at the end of the commission, but I missed my big moment, I never had the chance to say "Put that gun down, Chandler" which I think would have been well received although it happened that in the play Chandler then actually shot me dead end that was my first and only line unless you count my dying groan, which I was told was pretty good. It was Bertram who gave me this piece of encouragement. You see I had this play so much on my mind that I used to dream about it and say my line and groan as I woke up. I asked Bert as man to man if he thought I had all my marbles. He said, "Yes Nick, I think you've got 'em all." Well Bertram was my mate, and you'd expect that from a mate, even if you were a few shy of the right number.

To be continued in February 2016