

# 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

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#### **BRANCH OFFICERS**

Hon President: Alan Hoskins 01229 588792 Abhoskins@btinternet.com

Chairman: Richard Cambridge 01229 586668 Richard.cambridge1@btinternet.com

Vice Chairman & Secretary: Barrie Downer 01229 820963 frozennorth55@gmail.com

Social Secretary: Alex Webb 01229 839551 alexjan1516@hotmail.com

Treasurer & Membership Mick Mailey 01229 821290 Michael.mailev@btinternet.com Chaplaincy: Rev Andy Batchelor Revandyb@gmail.com

Committee Members:
Mick Dack 01229 823202
Mark Butchart 07965 272933
m.butchart@hotmail.co.uk
Jeff Thomas 01229 464943
jeffbrendathomas@tiscali.co.uk
Bob Faragher 01229 474284
bob.seadevil@outlook.com

Welfare
Mick Mailey 01229 821290
Michael.mailey@btinternet.com
Richard Britten 01229 820265
r.britten@btinternet.com

Newsletter Editor: Barrie Downer 01229 820963 frozennorth55@gmail.com

Standard Bearer: Alex Webb 01229 839551 alexian1516@hotmail.com

Slops: Malcolm Hogg 07768 170325 bloke52@hotmail.co.uk

Website Manager:
Dave Oakes 01229 475140
Dave.oakes@btinternet.com

Cover Picture: The TS SOVEREIGN Sea Cadet Band heading the Armed Forces Flag Raising Parade on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019

#### **EDITORIAL**

Hello Everybody,

Well - what did we do in June? Apart from the Branch meeting on 4th June we had the D Day 75th Anniversary Parade at Ulverston on Thursday 6th June with a very good turn out from the Branch - thank you to all who attended! On Sunday 9th June we had a Memorial service in St John's Church on Barrow Island to mark the 80th Anniversary of the loss of HMS THETIS – not a Barrow built Boat however, particularly to remember the three Vickers Shipyard workers lost in the accident - one from Barrow Island, one from Barrow and one from Ulverston. It was the first Branch Event for our new Branch Chaplain - the Rev. Andy Batchelor - again thanks to all who attended! Coincidentally, it was also the exact one hundredth anniversary to the day of the loss (with all hands) of Submarine L55 in the Baltic in 1919.

Sunday 16th June saw the Branch back on parade for the Civic Sunday Service for the new Mayor - Councillor Kevin Hamilton – at St Mary's Church. It did rain a bit on the way back up to the Town Hall for tea and sandwiches, but no-one got too wet!

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June saw our Annual Armed Forces Day Flag Raising Parade at the Town Hall followed by a March through Duke Street, Abbey Road and Holker Street to the Legion. This event followed the same format as last year but was better supported by all the Services Cadet organisations, the serving submariners from the shipyard and the Veterans Associations – there is a fuller report in this Newsletter.

Our final event for June was the Canal Trip – as ever brilliantly organised by Alex Webb and assisted by Jan. The weather wasn't as brilliant as predicted by the forecasters but, apart from patches of cloud and periods of sunshine there was only a minor sprinkling of rain just before harbour stations. Alex deserves a very big hand from the Membership for all his hard work with events so far this year – with many more events to come! If you want to find out what is next on the Branch Calendar make sure you read the Social Secretary's Dit carefully – lots of these events get booked up quickly – book early to avoid disappointment!

The very sad news this month was the loss to the Branch of our former Social Secretary – Colin Hutchinson - on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Colin, who many will know had been ill for some time, had only just got back from his big adventure – a trip to New York where, unfortunately he was taken ill. I was very honoured to be asked by Anne to write the eulogy for Colin and then to read it at his funeral along with the Submariner's Prayer. The turn-out at Thorncliffe and after at the General Burgoyne was very big – which is a measure of the respect that everyone had for Colin – thank you to everyone who made the effort to be there to support Colin's family. I have included Colin's eulogy in this Newsletter for the benefit of those who couldn't be there on the day.

Steve May sent in some photos he took during his recent enforced 'holiday' in Sweden. For those who didn't know Steve was taken ill on his cruise ship and the Captain had to divert to Sweden to get Steve to hospital. Luckily his problem was treated with stents rather than by having a more drastic operation - although he had to be medically escorted back home. Whilst waiting for his escort he had a bit of a 'bus man's holiday' at the Karlskrona Submarine museum - hence a few Submarine Snaps in this issue. Steve's enforced 'holiday' will continue for the present – until he is deemed to be fit enough to go back to sea!

And now – some assistance is required - Joyce Tull is hoping for some help (2 volunteers needed) to assist

with the RNLI Gala Day at Roa Island on 4th August. If anybody is able to help out then can they please contact Joyce directly?

That's about it from me this month - see you all at the Branch Meeting on Tuesday 2nd July -usual time – usual place - don't be late!

Best Regards, Barrie.

#### SOCIAL SECRETARY REPORT

#### Hi Shipmates

June was a very busy month with regards to official business and also saw our first away day on the canal trip. On top of this I had the added issue of the Chequers hotel closing down which threw a spanner in the works for the dinner dance in November. How bad can it be I thought? Given our do is on a Friday in November; wow. The Dunes is now full, Lisdoonie is being turned into a Co-op funeral shop and flats and there are very few places big enough to hold a function like ours in town. However, fear not fellow party animals; the Imperial hotel has come to our rescue and we are back on track for a fantastic evening in November.

#### Diary Check:

**Saturday 6th July** is the date for our members free drinks at the Prince of Wales, Foxfield, there will be a committee meeting at 12; where the branch kindly buys us a beer and a pasty for our efforts throughout the year. Then from 2pm until the pot runs dry will be free beer for any member who wishes to join us.

The Audacious lads have made plans to first foot the Blackpool branch on **Friday 19th July**; we need to know how many of you would like to come along to this for transport purposes. In a nutshell the coach will be around £10 per person, with the normal beverages available en-route leaving at 5pm from the Legion. Blackpool branch is putting on a chilli and this is receiving some financial support from the branch and Audacious and (hopefully) a bottle of rum to take with us from the branch. If you want to come along please see me and put your name down, ladies are welcome on this trip, but I need to know by the July meeting if you intend to come along to be able to book a coach.

The Cartmel trip is on Saturday **20th July**, leaving the Ferry at 11 so we get there in plenty of time. This trip is full. Please note that payment is for a return trip to and from Cartmel and does not include entry to the racecourse.

**Friday 13th Sept** is our annual race night at the Legion. £5 per person which gives you entry, a race card and Kath Browns pie and peas. Please support this, these are great evenings and if you wish to become an owner or a jockey I will have the names at July's meeting.

Another addition to the social programme is the Gallon club/DTS/shopping trip to Lancaster on **Saturday 21st Sept** (please note the date change due to other commitments on my part). We will depart the Legion at 12, I will have all the details if anyone is interested regarding the challenge and pubs available, we will depart to come back at 6pm. This will be limited to 25 people so if interested I need names by the July meeting, cost will be £12.50 per person.

I am contemplating having a Christmas market trip to the Trafford centre and Manchester city centre at the end of November. Anyone who has done this trip with the local paper knows that they pick up from all over the place (a real challenge) which in turn limits your time there. I am going to organise it so that we can go straight from here to there, you can pick up your Christmas presents, you can visit the market (good dit), you can go for lunch and a few bevies in a different location to the Hope and Anchor and it will only cost you a fraction of the cost. Names to me soonest – this will be limited seat availability and is open to our ladies and or families.

#### Other items

The members draw was not won in June so stands at  $\int 25$  for July.

Don't forget to get your free beer if you were born in July, and finally July's meeting food will be Pot Mess & French Stick.

#### JULY BRANCH CALENDAR Standard Dedication Sun 1st Sep Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> Jul Tues 3rd Sep Branch Meeting Branch Meeting Sat 6th Jul Committee Meeting (Foxfield) Fri 13th Sep Race Night Fri 19th Jul AE1/2 Memorial Ceremony Sat 14th Sep Blackpool 'First Footing' Cartmel Races Sat 20th Jul Lancaster Trip Sat 21st Sep AUGUST BRANCH CALENDAR Committee Meeting As Required RNLI Gala Day Sun 4th Aug Branch Meeting Tues 6th Aug **JULY BRANCH BIRTHDAYS** Committee Meeting As Required M.J. (Mike) Kirk 06/07/1943 SEPTEMBER BRANCH CALENDAR I.L. (Iain) Bradford 11/07/1980

B.D. (Brian) Downie	13/07/1948
M. (Mark) Butchart	13/07/1979
M. (Malcolm) Hogg	15/07/1957
R. (Dickie) Cambridge	16/07/1947
J.A. (John) Davies	20/07/196
D.J. (Dan) O'Connell	23/07/1937
R.G. (Bob) Faragher	24/07/1940
S. M. Stephen) McKay	24/07/1961
B. (Barney Naylor	27/07/1964
A. D. (Alan) Jones	29/07/1938

Happy Birthday All!

REMEMBERING FORMER BRANCH

<b>MEMBERS 'CROSSED TI</b>	HE BAR' - JULY
N T V Evans	1985
Herbie Rowlands	1988
Francis Jordan	1992
Kenneth Martin	1993
Len Malkin	1998
David Melvin	2001
Christopher Breeze	2010
Ben Skeates	2010
Terry Spurling	2015
Peter Lorking	2015

#### RESURGAM

#### **DISCLAIMER**

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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 The Firs, Dundalk Street, Barrow Island, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria LA14 2RZ You may also send your contribution by e-mail to me on frozennorth55@gmail.com. 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 June for the July 2019 Issue. Please ensure you have any information with me by the 15th of the month to ensure its inclusion in the next issue. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition – keep them stories coming!

## SUBMARINE COMMISSIONING CREW LISTS

Still looking for 'First Commission' Submarine Crew Lists/Brochures as follows: Diesel Boats: PORPOISE, RORQUAL, GRAMPUS, NARWHAL, CACHALOT, WALRUS, OBERON, ONYX, ORPHEUS, ODIN, OTUS & UNICORN.

Also, any Crew Lists for any Re-Commissioning and Re-Dedications of any Conventional 'A', 'S', 'T', 'O' & P' Class and any refitting Nuclear Boat - SSN or SSBN. Have a look through your records and 'Ditty Boxes' and see what you can find. You can contact me by E Mail, Snail Mail or Telephone – see above. Thanks, Barrie

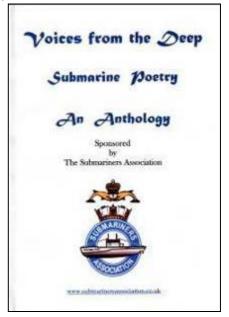
#### **VOICES FROM THE DEEP**

A while ago the Submariners Association sponsored a book - 'Voices from The Deep - Submarine Poetry - An Anthology' (see front cover below) as a way of raising funds for the Association. It had been thought that all copies of the book had been sold but, recently, Barrow Branch Member & Association Vice President Dave Barlow, discovered a full box of forty copies in his loft. After discussing this with Jim McMaster these books have been offered to Association Members on a 'first come first served' basis at £5.00 per copy (inclusive of post and packing) with all proceeds going to the Association funds.

Orders for the Books (16 copies still available) should be sent to:

Barrie Downer, The Firs, Dundalk Street, Barrow Island, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria LA14 2RZ

Cheques (£5.00 per copy) should be made payable to the Submariners Association and enclosed with each application.



#### **COLIN HUTCHINSON - EULOGY**

It is my great honour today to give the eulogy for a very good friend of the Barrow Submariners Association. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all those who are here today and for Colin's family, very many friends, relations, shipmates, workmates and colleagues some of whom,

unfortunately, are unable to be here to say goodbye, when I say that Colin will be greatly missed.

Colin 'Hutch' Hutchinson was born on 22nd July 1956 in Pembury in Kent. His parents were Mary & Eddie Hutchinson and Colin was lucky enough to have two sisters - Sarah and Jenny. On leaving school Colin joined the Royal Navy at HMS GANGES as a Junior MEM (Official Number D126231B) on 14th February 1972 at the age of fifteen and a half – well nearly 16! After leaving GANGES Colin joined the Aircraft Carrier HMS ARK ROYAL. Colin then saw the light and joined Submarines and served in Boats from February 1975 to July 1996.

As a Marine Engineering Mechanic, he served in HMS SOVEREIGN from 1975 to 1978 and then came to Barrow to join HMS SPARTAN in 1978 - 'standing by whilst building' - along with quite a few of us who are here today. In 1979 Colin left HMS SPARTAN for his Mechanician's Course at HMS SULTAN but soon returned to Submarines when he joined HMS TRAFALGAR in 1981 - but now as a Petty Officer Marine Engineering Artificer – again 'standing by whilst building' and he was a member of the 'Commissioning Crew' on 27th May 1983. Next came a bit of a career change for Colin when he joined the Polaris Submarine HMS REVENGE in 1984 (although I'm not sure which crew he joined) and he served in REVENGE running from Faslane until 1986. Colin came back to Barrow as a Chief Petty Officer Marine Engineering Artificer for vet another 'Building Boat' and this was HMS TALENT which he joined in 1988 at about the same time as Dave Oakes. After the Commissioning Ceremony on 12th May 1990 he stayed with the Boat until 1993 making visits to the Mediterranean, north European ports and the United States. Colin left the Royal Navy in 1996 after a couple of years working back in Faslane where he shared a Married Quarter with Dave Oakes owing to a shortage of accommodation in the base. In civilian life Colin went on to work at the Power Station at Fellside. After a while he left Fellside and took a job in the Barrow Shipyard but later returned to the shift-work job at Fellside.

Colin became a member of the Barrow in Furness Branch of the Submariners Association at a Branch Meeting on 1st September 1998. When the late John Houlding stood down as our Branch Social Secretary Colin seamlessly took over the reins and arranged many functions and events for the Branch Members and wives before handing the job over to Alex Webb.

Colin was married first to Kim Holliday in London in 1975 and his eldest son Warren was born in the same year. Later, Colin met and married Lynne Blundell in Barrow in Furness in 1983 and two more children followed - Rebecca in 1985 and Ashley in 1987. The Hutchinson family grew larger over the years and Colin was extremely proud of his seven grand-children – Megan, Ella, Max, George, Edward, Polly & Arthur. Latterly, Colin met Anne Sullivan in 2008 and he finally gave up his Walney Island passport and moved to Great

Urswick in 2011. Colin and Anne were married in Ford Park in May 2018.

One of the many Juniors who joined the Navy at GANGES with Colin was Edward Anderson, who wrote recently on Facebook that, not only did they serve together at GANGES, but they both joined Submarines, both served in Swiftsure Class Submarines and also, both worked together at Fellside – I believe Colin also trained at GANGES with Rob 'Scouse' Thompson. Another friend, Neil Jonah, remembered the 'Four O'Clock Club' in HMS TALENT. Apparently, going to the Senior Rates Mess after one 'Four O'Clock Club' session, Colin transgressed against Mess Rules and sat down to his evening meal wearing his Number 8 working rig – a very big 'no, no'. He ended up having to formally apologise to the Senior Rates Mess President for that - and also for having been a bit short tempered with some of the Chefs!

I am sure that there are many more stories about Colin, judging from the number of 'likes' and comments I have seen on the Facebook pages, and no doubt we will hear some of those stories later at the General Burgoyne. As I said, at the beginning – we will all miss Colin greatly! Barrie Downer

#### SWEDISH SUBMARINE MUSEUM











#### **HMS SCEPTRE**

For all those who were on SCEPTRE during build the then CO, Commander Rob Forsyth, has written a good dit in the latest British Legion magazine. Basically ,a short resume on his Naval career and, as the now, chairman of the Deddington branch of the Royal British Legion

## THE ARMED FORCES FLAG RAISING PARADE REPORT

Everything went off fine this year. The Town Hall was open on time and all our prerequisites were in place. Our guests and VIPs were: Air Commodore Peter Smith (Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cumbria), Councillor Kevin Hamilton (Mayor of Barrow), Councillor Markley (Cumbria County Council), Mr John Woodcock (MP for Barrow and Furness), Captain Scott Bower, RN (Commanding Officer of HMS ANSON, Mr Russ Watson (Engineering Director of BAE), Air Commodore Steve Molloy and Councillors Helen Wall and Anita Husband (Armed Forces Champions for Cumbria and Barrow respectively).

Those participating in the Parade included Members of the Crews of HMS AUDACIOUS and HMS ANSON, TS SOVEREIGN Sea Cadets and their Band, Royal Air Force Cadets, Army Training Corps Cadets, Veterans from the Barrow in Furness Submariners Association, the Royal Air Force Association, the Duke of Lancaster Regimental Association, the Royal British Legion and the 'Riders Branch'.

The Parade was announced by the Town Crier (Mr Alan Brown) and the Parade was 'Fallen In' in the Town Hall Square after a Trumpet Call. The Parade Marshall was Mr Tony Eglin assisted by Mr Eddie Grayless (Deputy Parade Marshall). Half of the Parade was inspected by Air Commodore Peter Smith and Councillor Kevin Hamilton and half by Captain Bower and Councillor Markley. The Armed Forces Day Flag was presented to the Mayor by a Sea Cadet escorted by an Army Cadet and an RAF Cadet. The Service of Dedication and Prayers was led by the Reverend Andy Batchelor (the Honorary Chaplain to the Barrow Submariners Association) who also blessed the Armed Forces Day Flag - which was then hoisted from the Town Hall 2nd Floor Balcony Flagpole.

A one minute Silence was marked by the Last Post and Reveille (played by Trumpeter Mr Dave Dryden) followed by the Lament 'Flowers of the Forest' (played by Piper Mr Mike Ramsay). The 'Exhortation' and the 'Kohima' Epitaph was given by the President of the Barrow in Furness Submariners Association - Mr Alan Hoskins. This was followed by the National Anthem and 'Three Cheers for Her Majesty the Queen'.

There was a good crowd at the Town Hall to watch the parade. All the timings seemed to work well and adding in the Reveille and the National Anthem this year padded out the time almost precisely. The March to the Royal British Legion was fine and the Sea Cadet Band kept very good time and the Parade up Abbey Road was

in step all the way to the Legion - no stopping this year. A very good crowd on both sides of Abbey Road clapped the parade nearly all the way. At the Legion all went fine, the Standard were 'Laid Up' on the Stage and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant made a good speech congratulating the Cadets and other participants for a very smart turn out. Refreshments were appreciated by all.

We got some publicity on Radio Cumbria before the Parade and the Evening Mail had some pictures of the Parade on Tuesday 25th June with some words of mine from a phone interview. Mike Vallence from BAE provided a CD of many photos of the Parade – some in this Newsletter - which I will send round to participating organisations in due course. Thanks are due to Huddlehub (Elaine Roberts and John McIntosh) for assistance with Stewarding the Parade and printing services.

All in all, a very successful Parade after a lot of hard work from the organising committee and the many participants. Next year we just need to do the same!

#### HMS AUDACIOUS - SOME DELAYS?

HMS AUDACIOUS yet to begin sea trials, risking further decline in Royal Navy submarine numbers.

Construction of AUDACIOUS has fallen yet further behind schedule. From the limited public information available, here we briefly assess the situation.

As recently as February 2017the MoD said it expected AUDACIOUS to enter service in November 2018. More than two years later it is clear something is amiss. It is now June 2019 and AUDACIOUS remains afloat in the dock at Barrow and yet to put to sea, 12 years after her manufacture started.

In late 2018, HMS MAGPIE was dispatched to survey the Walney Channel at Barrow, supposedly in preparation for the submarines' imminent departure. Sources at a company involved in supporting AUDACIOUS on sea trials stated in October 2018 that they expected to be called on to assist "next Spring". Responding to enquiries today, the MoD is only able to confirm AUDACIOUS will commence sea trials "this year" which could imply next week or months away. As for boat 5, HMS ANSON, the MoD is even more vague, saying she is "expected to enter sea trials in the early 2020s."

The delays to AUDACIOUS risk the RN's attack submarine force declining even further, at least temporarily, down to just 5 boats. Whether the current 6-boat fleet can be maintained is now probably dependent on the oldest submarine, TRENCHANT, being kept going beyond her planned decommissioning this year. Even if AUDACIOUS started sea trials tomorrow, it will take many months to rectify the inevitable snags, be commissioned and then work the boat up to be fully operational.

When asked if TRENCHANT's decommissioning might be postponed, the MoD issued their stock answer; "The planned out-of-service and in-service dates for Royal Navy submarines are withheld as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces". This is a significant change in policy, back in 2013 the Defence Minister was happy to publish planned 'in service dates' of nuclear submarines. One might conclude the sudden shyness about discussing the strength of the submarine force has everything to do with obscuring increasingly embarrassing delays and little to do with operational security.

According to the written answer to a Parliamentary question given in 2013, TRENCHANT was due to go in 2019. (It should be noted TIRELESS and TORBAY retired in 2014 and 2017 respectively as scheduled and in line with the dates given in the written answer.) TRENCHANT completed a 3-year refit in April 2017 described as "the largest and most complex ever undertaken at Devonport". After such a considerable investment was made in the veteran boat it is possible, although launched 33 years ago, she could manage to continue to serve beyond this year. This would mostly be dependent on the material state of her hull and how much life is left in her reactor core.

AUDACIOUS successfully completed her first trim and basin dive in the Devonshire Dock in January 2018. AUDACIOUS is in effect a 'batch II' boat with some significant internal changes and improvements building on lessons learned from the first three boats. Details are sketchy but some of these upgrades have already been de-risked and 'back fitted' to boats 1-3, especially to the combat system and electronics taking advantage of their open architecture. The batch II design is supposed to eliminate some complexity and utilise more commercial off the shelf (COTS) equipment.

It is acknowledged that the submarine supply chain has struggled due to lack of continuity and the MoD has lost some expertise in this procurement speciality. Other than these background issues, the precise reasons for the delays and spiralling costs remain conveniently hidden behind the blanket of secrecy surrounding the submarine programme. There is little justification for the deafening silence about problems with what is arguably the most critical conventional UK defence asset and the taxpayer deserves a proper explanation. It is the failures of the construction programme that is 'prejudicing the capability of the Armed Forces' and it is not as if our adversaries cannot easily find out for themselves our inadequate number of submarines. Creating public pressure for the RN to get the submarines it needs in a timely manner could, however, be politically inconvenient.

In the 1960s and 70s, British industry was consistently turning out nuclear submarines in around 4½ years at a time when it was plagued by dire industrial relations and supposed inefficiency. While in the 21st Century, despite the benefits of digital technology and automated tools it is taking about twice as long to build an SSN. There are undoubtedly dedicated people at Barrow doing their best in partnership with DE&S and the Navy to get Audacious to sea. The story of the ASTUTE class

submarine procurement is long, complicated and a lesson in what happens if you allow your skill base to erode. But by now we might expect the acknowledged historic failures of the programme to be firmly in the past and it is hard to understand why the construction time of the later boats is little better than the first.

#### **MYSTERY OBJECT**

Not many answers about the mystery object in last month's newsletter. No conclusive answer yet but several suggestions along the lines of it being an attack instrument – definite usage still unknown!



The accommodation unit for the new DREADNOUGHT submarine is seen here being moved across BAE Systems Submarines site in Barrow, where it is being constructed. It is the first unit of DREADNOUGHT's forward end to be moved into the new Central Yard Facility. (BAE Tweet 21st June 2019)



Ulverston D-Day 75th Anniversary Commemoration

### ARMED FORCES PARADE – PHOTOS

(Courtesy Mike Vallance - BAE)



The Rev. Andy Batchelor (Hon Chaplain to Barrow Submariners Association) leads the Service at the Armed Forces Flag Raising Parade



Captain Bower inspects the Sea Cadets



Air Commodore Peter Smith chats to Dave Barlow



Captain Bower



Mark Butchart

#### **NUCLEAR SUBMARINE DECOMMISSIONING**

Luke Pollard Shadow Minister (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) (Fisheries, Flooding and Water) 2:13 pm, 19th June 2019

I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to require the Government to prepare a strategy for recycling out-of-service Royal Navy nuclear submarines and to report annually on progress, to consult on extending decommissioning powers in Part 1

of the Energy Act 2004 to include the recycling of Royal Navy nuclear submarines, and to publish estimates of the taxpayer liability associated with such submarines; and for connected purposes.

Britain still has every nuclear submarine that it has ever had. There are 13 old nuclear submarines tied up in Devonport in Plymouth and seven tied up in Rosyth. When I was elected in 2017, I said that I would make safely, securely and sustainably recycling these submarines one of my priorities. I have asked the Prime Minister two questions at PMQs about the lack of a funded plan to recycle them. I have helped to put together a cross-party campaign with the hon. Members for Dunfermline and West Fife (Douglas Chapman) and for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Anne-Marie Trevelyan). We have met Ministers, submitted proposals and encouraged the questioning of the Public Accounts Committee, which published an excellent report on the subject today. We now present our arguments and proposals in this Bill. The Bill has cross-party backing from a range of colleagues who are all as passionate as I am to get these nuclear submarines recycled safely and securely, and I am grateful to see so many of them in the Chamber.

Many people are not aware that we still have all the submarines that have served in the Royal Navy. The 13 stored in Devonport and the seven in Rosyth are potentially just the start of many more to enter storage. The oldest submarine stored in Devonport is HMS Valiant, which was launched in 1963 at the height of the cold war. The submarines can be seen on Google Maps—if you zoom in on Plymouth, on the left-hand side of the city, at No. 3 basin in Devonport, they will see lines of nuclear submarines, many of which have been there for decades.

It would be easy for me to make cheap headlines by saying that these nuclear submarines pose a safety risk, but populism is not my style. I want to be clear that there is no immediate safety risk to our local communities from these submarines. Babcock does all it can to look after the submarines, ensuring that there are no leaks and no risks to our communities. I thank the company and its staff for their work, but Plymouth and Rosyth cannot be asked to look after the submarines indefinitely without a plan for their disposal.

This is a personal matter for me. I am the son of a submariner who served on HMS Swiftsure and HMS Conqueror and worked on refitting and extending the operational lives of many of these submarines as an engineer in Devonport—my family know these subs well. It is a point of curiosity not lost on my old man that one Pollard served on them, and his son is busy trying to chop them up and dispose of them, but both Pollards are doing what is in the national interest. We already have a civil nuclear programme dealing with the clean-up of our civil nuclear past. The taxpayer-funded Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is working on cleaning up 17 old civil nuclear sites, but its work does not currently cover decommissioned nuclear submarines. The taxpayer has an unlimited liability for the clean-up, as clearly stated in the Energy Act 2004, and rightly so. We know that nine of the 20 submarines retired since 1980 contain nuclear fuel. They are not currently a risk, but they need to be dealt with. My Bill seeks to prepare the ground for the extension of the unlimited taxpayer liability for civil nuclear clean-up to these old Royal Navy submarines. If we extend the line of credit from the Treasury, work can begin, and we can genuinely deal with our nuclear legacy.

These submarines are not only taking up valuable space in our dockyards but costing the taxpayer millions of pounds a year in storage and maintenance costs. The Public Accounts Committee has today released a report that puts the cost to the taxpayer at £30 million a year. That money could and should be used for dismantling and defuelling the submarines and finally dealing with these retired boats.

The report warns that the Ministry of Defence is reaching a "crisis point" in terms of space and will run out of space to store submarines by the mid-2020s. In the next four years, three more Trafalgar class submarines will need to be stored somewhere, as they are replaced by the new Astute class subs being built in Barrow. The Prime Minister told me in this Chamber that they will be stored at Devonport, taking our number of old retired submarines up to 16. A decade later, the four Vanguard class Trident subs will need to be stored when they are taken out of service and replaced by the new Dreadnought class submarines, but where will they go? There is no space at Devonport, and Rosyth is closed for more submarines. That is why we need a funded plan to deal with the ones we have and make space for the ones that will come out of service soon.

Instead of further delaying this decision, it is clear that the Government need to act now. I know that Rosyth has plans for the dock space currently used by the submarines, and I want No. 3 basin in Devonport to be used to enhance the base-porting location for the brilliant new Type 26 frigates we will get, and hopefully the Type 31 frigates in due course. Over a year ago, I helped to kick off this campaign with colleagues from all parties. We wrote to the Prime Minister urging her to fund a defueling and dismantling strategy. These submarines will not go away on their own. Although they have been hidden out of sight for many years, the longer this recycling project drags on, the more expensive it becomes to deal with them. Retired submarines have been ignored by Governments of all colours for more than 50 years. They need to be dealt with properly—I think all parties can unite on that—to secure a safe and decent future.

A properly funded defuelling and dismantling strategy—broadly, submarine recycling—would present opportunities to invest in skills and innovation. It would also foster greater collaboration between the defence and civil nuclear sectors. The workforce already moves between those sectors, as does the science of decommissioning, but at the moment the Government still deal with them in two distinct silos. There is an efficiency for the public purse in collaborating, and the future really must be more joined up between the ministerial and official level and the work on the ground and in the docks. Decommissioning is highly skilled and technical work that creates good jobs and supports the local economy and community. Above all, recycling these old nuclear submarines is in the national interest. Plymouth and Rosyth cannot be asked to store old nuclear submarines indefinitely. That is why we need a properly funded plan for these submarines, using

the same principles as in the civil nuclear clean-up programme, because they must be recycled safely, securely and sustainably.

We know that once people find out about these submarines, they are concerned about what will happen to them. We also know that once people have seen them—whether on Google Maps, in person by driving alongside the docks in Devonport and Rosyth, or on the warship tours in the dockyard in Devonport—they have no choice but to think about what should happen to them. That is why, on behalf of the hon. Members for Berwick-upon-Tweed and for Dunfermline and West Fife, I am presenting this Bill as part of a campaign that will not rest until we win. I am doing so to highlight these subs and to demand—politely, but firmly—that a solution is found. We need to acknowledge that these nuclear submarines exist and need to be dealt with. We need a proper plan from the MOD for recycling these submarines, with a clear timeframe, and we need to extend the unlimited taxpayer liability to ensure that this essential work can be delivered. That is what my Bill will do, and that is why it has cross-party support. I hope Ministers will pick it up and run with it. Question put and agreed to.

Ordered, That Luke Pollard, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Douglas Chapman, Dr Julian Lewis, Meg Hillier, Mrs Madeline Moon, Ruth Smeeth, Sir Gary Streeter, Richard Harrington, Dr Alan Whitehead, Jamie Stone and Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi present the Bill.

Luke Pollard accordingly presented the Bill.

Bill read the First time;

(Citation: HC Deb, 19 June 2019, c264)

#### The Desmond Gerrish Biography

(Continued from the May issue of Periscope View)

On 21st May our group started the first really demanding Course – Gunnery. This great empire was based at Whale Island, near the northern end of Portsmouth Harbour and had been growing in stature for over 200 years, as Naval guns advanced in size and accuracy. The Navy with the best guns and gunners ruled the oceans, right up to the 2nd World War, when the submarine and aeroplane interrupted this supremacy.

From the start of the 2nd World War the main purpose of guns in warships was to shoot down attacking aeroplanes, but the odds remained stacked with the 'planes until after the war when missiles replaced the guns. We were to learn our gunnery at the time of the first missiles being introduced into very limited service and hence our dependence remained with the guns.

The practical side of what we had to learn was robust, exciting and pretty easy – loading and firing guns in turrets, firing the Bofors, Pom-pom and Oerlikon, fast firing smaller guns at dummy aeroplane targets, firing rifles and machine guns and, of course, Parade Ground work. Much more difficult to learn were the automatic machines, linked to the ship's radars, which aimed the guns at ship or aeroplane targets. The aim of the gun was continually being adjusted by these complicated machines to take account of your own ship manoeuvring wildly at high speed and the enemy target doing likewise. We had to learn the difficult mathematics that these machines were solving.

I did well in my Gunnery Exams, and they earmarked me as a potential Gunnery specialist for the future. However, long ago, I had made up my mind that war at sea was now ruled by the submarine and warships, with their guns, were already obsolete.

H.M.S. Dryad

On 2nd July we moved to H.M.S. Dryad – a lovely country mansion – to learn navigation which included the art of disseminating the vital information, pouring in from any ship's radars, into a clear picture of the battlefield. This was done on automatic machines on which sailors would plot the movements of ships and aircraft.

July was the time for the annual Sub. Lieutenants' Field Gun Competition, when each group would represent the establishment they happened to be at in July. So, we represented H.M.S. Dryad and underwent three weeks' intensive training of Field Gun racing as an extra-curriculum activity. The risk of mangled fingers, arms and legs made this very gutsy Naval type of competition hair raising and always exhausting anyway, from heaving this ton of wheels, barrel and limber over barriers and obstacles set in the race-track. In the run-up to Competition Day, Dryad plied us with treats and favours, not ordinarily afforded to lowly Sub. Lts, like special meals in the Mess and free beer at times. Anyway, the 16 of us in the team got through all the training runs without serious injury and, each day, fractionally improved our race times. However, we didn't win the Competition and the day it was over our Mess treats ceased abruptly!

An interesting feature of the main Ante-room of Dryad's Wardroom was a huge wall plot of the D-Day Landings, frozen at the time Eisenhower ordered the Invasion to commence. It is still there today, preserved as a national museum piece. In August we moved on to the School of Amphibious Warfare in Southsea. This was a role met by the Royal Marines and we enjoyed the short break from the R.N. Schools, to learn the fundamentals of storming ashore in Tank Landing Ships etc. Later in August we moved to H.M.S. Mercury – the home of the Navy's communication specialists, another appropriated mansion on the outskirts of Portsmouth. Subjects were radio, secret codes, flag signals etc. Mountbatten had been a communication specialist and his successors remained of the same ilk – polo playing upper-crusters (or so they thought!) aloof from the gunners and torpedo men. So, our bunch did not get with these types, who rewarded our disdain of them with low marks for our exams.

His name was Parry, who had come through the war with many distinctions – a good bloke, kind and friendly and a very senior Captain; he knew how to run a happy ship. Based on the age-old Naval formula that efficiency came first, and the rest followed easily. The Commander was a war veteran, who suffered shell shock, named McWhinney, and was spitting image of Gilbert and Sullivan characters. Once, when I had to summon him to see the Captain, he was busy blanco-ing dirt patches on his jodhpurs before going to Marsa Club with Mountbatten and the boys! He also let everyone know that he painted watercolours. And Jock McPherson, a 3 Badge A.B. -lifelong Naval criminal, about the same age as the Commander, would dart into McWhinney's palatial cabin when pursued by the O.O.W. and Naval Police for returning on board drunk (again!) and blatantly admire the Commander's latest work of art. The Commander fell for it every time, since no-one else ever bothered to admire his crappy paintings – ordering the O.O.W. and his police team to push off and stop hounding Jock!

Jock was probably the most outrageous character in this cruiser full of close contenders. He went ashore every time leave was given and always returned hopelessly drunk – a Naval offence to return aboard drunk. He had false teeth top and bottom, not a tooth of his own left and these two precious plates, together with his hammock pillow, he would deposit with the Master-at-Arms (Chief of Police) before proceeding ashore. The pillow would be in one of the ship's 4 cells where Jock was locked up in on return and the false teeth returned to him two minutes before The Commander "heard his case" and summarily punished Jock next day.

Three other 'Wild Ones', all war veterans, deserted when the ship was in Athens to join the Greek Resistance Army (Greece was in a terrible civil war following the War) and one of them, A.B. McGarry, stole a ship's rifle too, since he learned the Greek Communists promoted you to Officer rank if you joined complete with a weapon. They were finally returned to Euryalus in Malta three months later for their inevitable Court Martial and two-year prison sentences.

The war was too recent to wind down a mighty fighting machine from top gear. One Sunday afternoon in Malta, with a Force 11 Levanter gale blowing which had closed even Grand Harbour to normal traffic, our Cruiser Squadron was ordered to sea, in full Action State, to test our war readiness. The 4 cruisers were moored by 2 anchor chains each to huge buoys. No question of putting sailors on the buoys to unshackle these enormous chains in such violent sea conditions, so we cut our cables inboard and headed for the breakwater entrance. The huge breakwater was almost submerged by monstrous waves rolling over it and we had to go full steam ahead to punch through the breakwater entrance. Euryalus lost 2 big motor launches, smashed away from their davits by the same Levanter monstrous rollers which were sweeping over this big cruiser. The 3 other cruisers suffered similar superficial damage in the onslaught of breaking out of Grand Harbour.

Once at sea, ships can manoeuvre to suit the prevailing seas conditions and this we did on our Active Exercise of going to bombard pretend enemies in Crete, being continually attacked en route by the R.A.F. imitating an enemy Air Force. We fired 'blanks' at them and they fired live ammunition at the 'splash' targets we towed astern. Cruisers were five or six times bigger than destroyers and the main decks were therefore much higher out of the water. Nevertheless, in severe storms, you kept to the higher network of cat gangways above the main decks when moving about in cruisers, so as not to be caught out by the occasional roller that swept the main decks.

The Bombardment Practice was spectacular. Live shells are fired at the Army Range – always on an uninhabited island – at dummy targets laid out by the soldiers. Warships always steam in Line Ahead for bombardment of land targets, the first ship of the Line opens fire abreast the target and as she finishes firing, the next ship of the Line has started firing and so on. The 'victims', for their part, experience an unremitting explosion of a large shell every 5 seconds, moving along the target road or whatever. For us, we get the thunder of our 5.25" turrets firing one barrel at a time in 5 seconds sequence and cordite smoke all over the ship. Upon the (open) Bridge we got lungful's of cordite smoke, which is not unpleasant to smokers – rather like a very strong cigar!

During my 2 years on Euryalus we visited all the major ports in the Mediterranean. One such visit, to Port Said, was political. King Farouk of Egypt was causing trouble to the U.K. Government by his declarations to his people that he was going to throw the British out of Egypt. At that time, we ruled Egypt, kept major military bases there and owned the Suez Canal. The Government knew Farouk would be quite friendly with Mountbatten as another 'Royal', so Liverpool and Euryalus were dispatched for a 'courtesy visit' to Port Said.

Mountbatten gave us the 'l lowdown' on the passage there and asked us to put on a show of good behaviour, smart ships and dress during the visit. This we did and Mountbatten was Farouk's 'best friend' as the 5 day visit came to an end. Farouk told the two ships that he was so pleased with our visit that every man would receive a present from the King of Egypt. The 'present' was dished out to us on our way back to Malta – an orange and a box of Egyptian matches to each man. Mountbatten apologised for this by saying Farouk was really bonkers!

Schooling consisted of 3 half days a week of formal teaching by the Instructor Officer – subjects were Maths, English, History and Geography in a classroom in the ship, backed up by 'homework' in your spare time. There were about 6 of us C.W. candidates and, out of this bunch, I was the only one to go on, eventually, to become a fully commissioned Officer. Most of the others succeeded in becoming Warrant Officers much later on though. The wonderful Med. climate was not conducive to work of any sort. So, we all skived a lot. Daily work was invariably cleaning or painting ship. The Quarterdeck – Officers' territory – was kept immaculate. The large expanse of deck was covered with teak planking lining the armoured steel deck underneath. We hosed down and scrubbed the teak deck every morning before breakfast. The

minute the ship arrived in any harbour we would spread the huge canvas awning which shaded the entire Quarterdeck. This demanded at least 50 men to haul the rolled-up monster out of its locker and spread it over the central backbone wire, finally pulled taut by no less than 20 tackles.

During the Med. summer most Officers chose to sleep outside on camp beds on the Quarterdeck, but our awning 'roofs' were at a premium for space – the Forecastle and small areas amidships amongst the Boat and Gun Decks – so those who turned-in last had to gamble with the rain under the open sky. Our working dress through the long hot summer was simply a pair of shorts and sandals. We became very bronzed.

The ship's high side was painted overall every summer. Hundreds of us sailors worked on stages – a plank with 2 ropes for each pair of men, slung over the side, starting at the top and lowering yourselves at intervals until you had painted your section down to the waterline. Officially, once at sea level, you were supposed to step into the ship's boats complete with stage and paint pots and go up the gangway to start another section. But – of course – sailors kept 'falling' into the blue cooling sea for an unofficial swim at every opportunity.

So, you've got the picture. Annual 'paint-ship', moored to a buoy in the middle of Grand Harbour, Malta, was an unruly, but always hilarious, carnival. It was also a contest of law and order. The 'law' were the agitated supervising Officers charged with completing paint-ship before dark. Every sailor who 'fell' into the sea was a delay for his allocated section. We not only 'fell in' for our own enjoyment but spent half our time untying the knot on one's neighbour's stage, for the 2 of the hapless 'stagers' to be catapulted into the sea, preferably from the highest point, together with their full pots of paint and brushes. In the mean -time you spent half your working time defending your own stage from attacks from both sides. The 'law', of course, had powers of punishments. You could be, and often were, charged with 'Deserting His Majesty's Ship, Euryalus, at Grand Harbour, at 1416 on Friday, the 8th day of July, in the Year of Lord, 1949' anytime you fell into the sea. This charge still carried a long prison sentence. So, at the subsequent Assizes, in front of the Commander, this charge would be watered down to 'Was negligent in carrying out duties properly assigned' and you were punished according to how the Commander assessed your real contribution to his 'paint-ship'. Anything from being let off if you were one of his good workers to 30 days loss of pay and leave if he knew you were an itinerant skiver.

Loss of pots of paint and brushes was much more serious. You were charged with 'Deliberate sabotage of Admiral's Stores' and since any Commander was rationed with paint and brushes to keep his ship pristine, he didn't 'water down' the charge and, if it was proved that it really was your fault, he would sentence you to 14 days' Extra Work, Drill, loss of pay and rum and loss of cinema and canteen privileges.

As a C.W. Candidate it was axiomatic that should never get an official sentence; it was the end of the line. I had some close shaves and the few times I was charged with any offence I was found 'Not Guilty'.

Sensible sailors, in the heydays of paint-ship, tied the brush and paint pot separately to their waists. I've seen less well prepared sailors swimming to depths of 30 feet to retrieve their slowly sinking paint pot after a 'fall in'.

At this time, 1949, it was 'de-rigueur' for Officers to pitch in and work at the especially objective tasks set to their men, but, fortunately, for good leadership, attitudes changed for the better and by the 1960s you could lead from the front!

My 16 months spent on board Euryalus was as an Ordinary Seaman until promoted to Able Seaman at age 19 years. Benefits of becoming an A.B. were: more pay, eligible for daily Rum Ration and eligible for All Night Leave – previously, you had to return onboard at midnight; now this was extended to 7 a.m. which meant you could sleep ashore in any of the many clubs (Y.M.C.A. etc.) or Bed and Breakfasts that catered for sailors in every port. Most important though, you were free of the Cinderella Syndrome of rushing to get back before the strike of midnight.

One of my several changes in job was to Officers Fast Motorboat Crew. Officers were ferried to and from shore or to other ships in sleek fast motorboats, while the sailors were ferried in large pinnaces, open to the elements.

Quite a gruelling job. On duty for 24 hours at a time with 3/4 of the next 24 hours off. All the ship's boats were lowered and tied to booms sticking out from the ship's sides on arrival in any harbour. Each crew was made up of a Coxswain, Bowman and Sternsman. Every time a demand was made for your 'taxi' you had to clamber out along the boom and down a rope ladder to get into the boat – no mean feat in some of the Med.'s wicked winter gales. Your Officer passengers were collected and deposited at the large set of wooden stairs rigged down the side of the Quarterdeck. The crew, of course, had to keep their boat immaculate, which, among other things, involved scrubbing it inside and out and polishing the brass work every morning at 5 a.m.

When severe gales struck, all boats were ordered to 'lie-off' to prevent damage against the ship's side and you would ride out the storm underway staying close to the ship.

All the ship's boats were 'coxswained' by Leading Seaman and Petty Officers for the big pinnaces, except a small boat called the skimmer which was a very high speed 'flyer' carrying only the driver and one passenger – invariably the Captain. The driver was an A.B. and I was allowed this highly prestigious job for a couple of weeks. Most enjoyable.

	SUBMARINERS 'CROSSED THE BAR' REPORTED IN JUNE 2019					
Branch	Date	Name	Rank/Rate	O/N	Age	Submarine Service
Essex Branch	14th April 2019	Geoffrey E Truss	Leading Seaman	P/SSX	81	Submarine Service from 1956 to 1961 in TAPIR, SEASCOUT &
				921328		TACTICIAN
Non-member	May 2019	Charlie Scripps	Not given	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service from 195* to 196*
Barrow in Furness Branch	2nd June 2019	Colin Edward Hutchinson	Charge Chief Marine Engineering Artificer	D126231B	62	Submarine Service from February 1975 to July 1996 in SOVEREIGN (1975 to 1978), SPARTAN (1978 to 1979), TRAFALGAR (1981 to 1983), REVENGE (1984 to 1986) & TALENT (1st Commission to 12th May 1990)
Australia Branch	3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2019	Geoffrey Arnold	Chief Mechanician	P/KX 891281	86	Submarine Service from 1953 to 1963 in ARTEMIS & TIRELESS
Non-member	5th June 2019	David William Vaillant	Control Electrical Artificer	TBA	75	Submarine Service in VALIANT
Non-member	11th June 2019	Brian Clark	Petty Officer Cook	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service in REPULSE (S) (1968 to 197*)
Non-member	14th June 2019	Christopher P Horn	Chief Radio Electrician	TBA	ТВА	Submarine Service from 196* to 1990 in RENOWN (S) (1968 1st Commission), REPULSE (P) (1972 2nd Commission) & STWG
Gosport Branch	15th June 2019	Adrian P Harrison	Ordnance Electrical Mechanician	D101362Y	72	Submarine Service from 1971 to 1979 in GRAMPUS (1971 to 1972), CHURCHILL (1974 to 1976) & (1978) & COURAGEOUS (1978)
Non-member	15th June 2019	Leonard Evans	Cook	TBA	87	Submarine Service from 1949 to 1957 in SOLENT & AMBUSH
Sunderland Branch	19th June 2019	Edward Gibson	ME1	P056732	78	Submarine Service from February 1964 to May 1969 in ORPHEUS, (1964), AMBUSH, OBERON (1965), ANDREW (1965 to 1967) & OSIRIS (1968)
West of Scotland Branch	21st June 2019	Barry J Gibbs	Charge Chief Weapons Engineering Artificer	D056107T	75	Submarine Service from December 1966 to May 1994 in ARTFUL, RESOLUTION, REPULSE (S) (1st Commission Crew) on 28th September 1968 & REVENGE, RESOLUTION (P) on recommissioning at Rosyth on 27th November 1976
Submarine Officers Association	28th June 2019	Howard McFadyen, OBE	Captain (MESM	Not given	TBA	Submarine Service from 1976 to 1999 in SWIFTSURE (1976 to 1978), OPPORTUNE (1978 to 1979), NEPTUNE (1980 to 1981), TRAFALGAR (1984), TIRELESS (1985 to 1988), NEPTUNE (1997 to 1999)
Sussex Branch	June 2019	L H (Laurence) Holding	Chief Radio Superviser	P/JX 646388	90	Submarine Service from November 1948 to May 1967 in ARTFUL, ALARIC, SCORCHER, SPRINGER, SERAPH, TELEMACHUS, CACHALOT & OLYMPUS
Dolphin Branch	June 2019	W F (Bill) Harris	Able Seaman (SDR)	C/JX 732232	92	Submarine Service from February 1945 to December 1947 in TALENT, TAKU & TACTICIAN (loan)

Portsmouth	June 2019	Peter Tilley	Chief Petty Officer	D136546B	63	Submarine Service from 1973 to 1995 in NARWHAL,
Branch			WEA			DREADNOUGHT & TURBULENT
(lapsed)						
Dolphin Branch	June 2019	John L Taylor	Petty Officer Radio		93	Submarine Service from January 1945 to November 1946 in
			Electrician			UNSPARING & TALLY HO
Non-member	June 2019	S C (Taff) Rowlands	Petty Officer Radio	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service in TRAFALGAR (1st Commission Crew) on
			Superviser			27th May 1983 & TORBAY (1st Commission Crew) on 7th
						February 1987
Non-member	June 2019	Christopher Rich	Not given	TBA	TBA	Not given