



CNOA

Chatham Naval Officers' Association



The CNOA Newsletter for October 2019

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Pictured above are personnel from RFA Mounts Bay, delivering aid to the community of Fox Town on the island of Little Abaco.

The town was shut off from the main island when the connecting bridge was washed away during hurricane Dorian. RFA Mounts Bay deployed the RLC's MEXEFloat to deliver the aid.

The ship has distributed Department for International Development (DFID) relief items, including vital shelter kits.

The ship has been in the Caribbean since June in preparation for the hurricane season and was re-tasked last week to sail to the Bahamas in anticipation of Hurricane Dorian, the strongest ever recorded in the Bahamas.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The next meeting of the Association will be on **Friday the 11th October** in the Warfare Room, RSME HQ Brompton Barracks 19.45 for 20.00 when Ian Maplin will speak about the Rise and Fall of the Hovercraft. The evening will then continue with refreshments and fellowship in the Officers Mess.

Chairman's Flag Hoist:



Dear Fellow Members,

Welcome back everybody from our summer break. I hope you all enjoyed good weather for your holidays.

Before we know it, our Trafalgar Night Dinner will have crept up on us. Please try to get your forms in to David Houston as soon as you have your party organised (which I know from my own personal experiences, is not all that easy sometimes!). Please NB the deadline in the application details that appears later in this newsletter. Please also remember that we now welcome our ladies to this function. Our Guest of Honour this year is Rear Admiral R D Leaman-Grey CB

OBE who will be accompanied by his wife, Jacqui.

An even more pressing matter will arise at the AGM in February next year. Unfortunately, we have an unusually large number of committee members standing down. We shall need replacements for the following:

Chairman

Hon. Treasurer

Social Secretary

Newsletter Editor

It is clear from this list that the association will struggle to function without these appointments being filled. I also know that it can be difficult to make the necessary commitment to take on these jobs. Nevertheless, someone has to step up and take them on. Please give this serious consideration. Yes, it needs some of your time. But truly, is there a genuine reason why you cannot help?

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting and of course, at Trafalgar Night.

Yours Aye,

Colin

Colin Tozer

Cdr RN (Rtd)

CNOA Chairman

2019 / 2020 Future Speakers & Events:

Please note the date changes below to the second Friday of the month

11th October: Brian Maplin – Hovercraft

25th October: Trafalgar Night

8th November: Glenn Jones – A war of two halves, the Second Afghan War

13th December: Cmdre Bryant – The President's Address

10th January: David Howarth – The Shetland Bus

18th January: New Year Luncheon

14th February: CNOA AGM – Agenda items to the Hon. Sec. please

13th March: Hannah Hockin - Carers UK

10th April: CNOA diary clash with Good Friday and Good Friday wins!

8th May: John Johnson-Allen – The loss of HMS Truculent

12th June: TBA

10th July: TBA

14th August: CNOA is on leave

11th September: Guy Bartlett - Planes

9th October: TBA

13th November: TBA

11th December: Cmdre Bryant – President's Address

Additional events will be included as details become available. As always, we are most grateful to those who send items for this Newsletter. **All such contributions by the 5th of each month please.** Could other CNOA members also provide a short presentation for us? Yes, of course they could! Please let Jon Vanns know or email contact@cnoa.org.uk

Derek Ireland (Hon. Secretary) and *Graham Storey* (Newsletter Editor)

Remember the first hovercraft? And the bumpy but very fast trips across the Channel?

It's 60 years since the British inventor Christopher Cockerell demonstrated the principles of the hovercraft using a cat food tin and a vacuum cleaner. Great things were promised for this mode of transport, but it never really caught on. Why? This amphibious mode of transport, with its rapid disembarkation - not needing the building of a pier or port - was once seen as the future. But the Solent is now thought to be the only place in western Europe where a full passenger service by hovercraft still operates. Much more to discover at the CNOA meeting on Friday the 11th of October.

HMS Queen Elizabeth undertakes Operational Testing From MoD Navy

HMS Queen Elizabeth is bound for the east coast of the USA for operational trials. For the first time, UK fighter jets will join this state-of-the-art ship in a significant milestone for the programme. The deployment, known as 'WESTLANT 19,' will see the carrier conduct 'Operational Testing', with British F-35B Lightning jets embarking for the first time as she moves closer to her first operational deployment in 2021.



HMS Queen Elizabeth conducting a Replenishment At Sea with RFA Tideforce on 08 September 2019 whilst simultaneously enabling a VERTREP training serial by 820 Naval Air Squadron. © Crown Copyright MoD Navy 2019

Operational Testing is designed to put the jets, ship and supporting units through their paces. The tests allow the equipment and crew to operate under realistic warfighting scenarios to ready them for their first operational deployment. The deployment represents the continued positive relationship

between the UK and US. Units from the United States Navy, US Air Force and US Marine Corps will all take part in the 'WESTLANT 19' deployment, further demonstrating the close partnership between the two NATO allies.

While at sea, HMS Queen Elizabeth will be accompanied by other units of the Commander UK Carrier Strike Group (COMUKCSG) including Type-45 destroyer HMS Dragon, a Type-23 frigate HMS Northumberland and air assets from the Carrier Air Wing. RFA Tideforce will provide tanker support to the Strike Group

Who was Churchill? A talk by the National Trust from Chartwell From Lt Cdr Barbara Borland



HONOURABLE COMPANY OF MASTER MARINERS

HCMM LADIES CENTENARY GROUP

Have arranged for the National Trusts Chartwell's Learning Officer to give a talk on

"WHO WAS CHURCHILL?"

OCTOBER 05 2019 1400 HRS

At the Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadet Detachment Albion Road, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1PF

The talk will last about one hour with questions being taken at the end.

Tea, coffee, soft Drinks and homemade refreshments will be served following the talk.

If you wish to attend the cost is £10.00 per person and can be purchased from Lt Cdr B Borland RNR
email:barbara0194@btinternet.com

All proceeds will go towards The Ladies (HCMM) Centenary Celebration Fund. All Members, their Family and Friends will be welcome.

We look forward to your company for what promises to be a very interesting afternoon

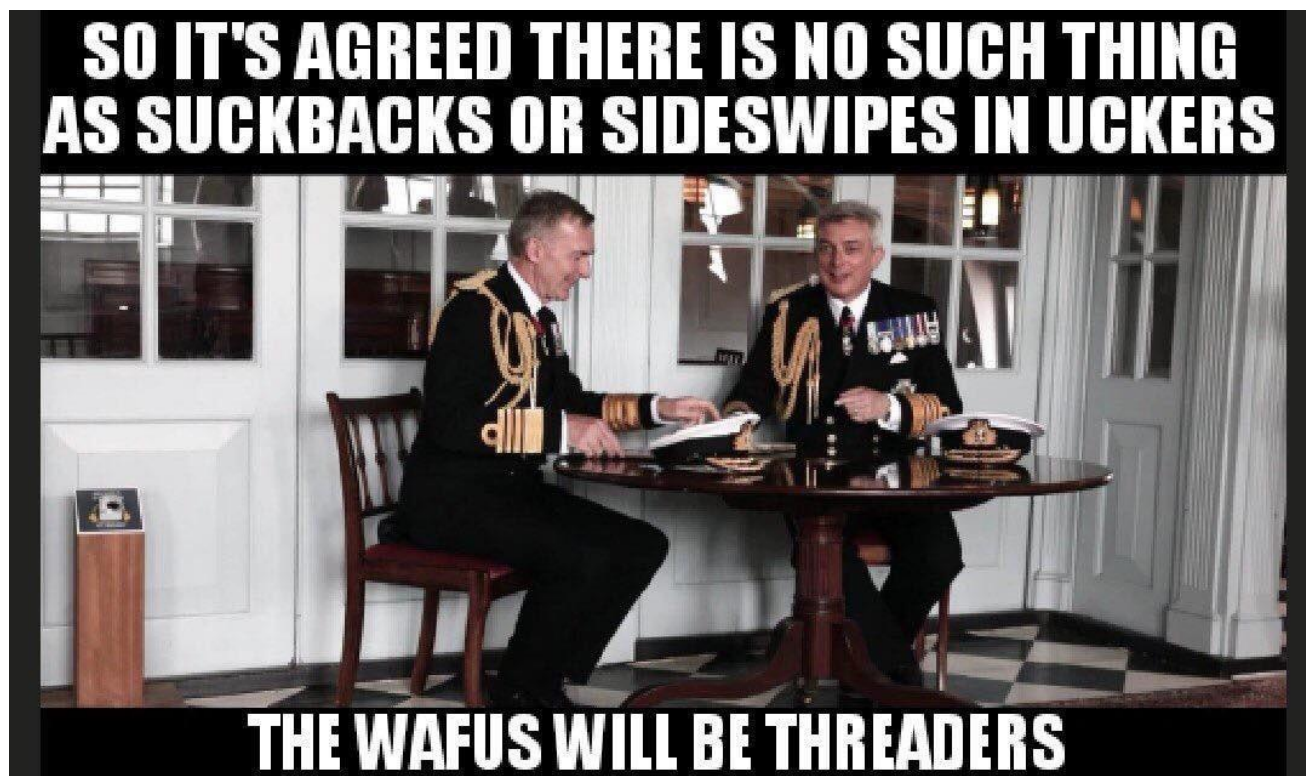
HMS Medway Commissioning at Chatham on 19th September From Lt Clifford Mickleburgh

HMS Medway will be formally commissioned during a visit to Medway in September and Mr Russell Race JP DL, the link Deputy Lieutenant for Medway, will represent the Lord-Lieutenant at the event, at Chatham on **Thursday 19 September** 2019 at 09.45.

Following the Commissioning Ceremony, HMS Medway will provide the Royal Navy with patrol capabilities in home waters or overseas.

UPDATE: On **Sunday 22 September**, the ship will be open to visitors at Chatham Maritime from 10am to 4pm. No visitors will be admitted unless they have booked in advance. Visits can only be booked online and will be available via the website www.eventbrite.co.uk from Tuesday, 17 September.

High level strategic decisions for the Fleet From Lt Cdr Stephen Small



VE Day to be remembered on its 75th Anniversary From Lt Cdr Jon Vanns

When VE Day dawns on 8th May 2020 it will be 75 years since the guns fell silent at the end of the war in Europe. Years of carnage and destruction had come to an end and millions of people took to the streets to celebrate peace, mourn their loved – ones and to hope for the future, but not forgetting those still in conflict.

The 75th anniversary will provide our nation, and our friends around the world, with an opportunity to reflect on the enormous sacrifice, courage and determination of people from all walks of life who saw us through this dark and terrifying period. To commemorate this important time a co-ordinated group of good cause organisations are organising VE Day 75, a three-day international celebration that will take place from 8th May to 10th May 2020. More details from <https://www.veday75.org/>

It will be an opportunity to remember the enormous sacrifices that were made at home and abroad and to joyously celebrate as people did 75 years ago, the arrival of peace in Europe. The members of the Armed Forces and Merchant Navy from many countries will be remembered. Those who gave their lives or returned home injured in body and mind, the hard-working women and men who operated the factories, mines, shipyards and farms. Not forgetting all the others including ARP wardens, police officers, doctors, nurses, firemen, local defence volunteers and others who toiled selflessly on the home front during difficult times.

Friday 8th May 2020, has already been designated by the Government as a Bank Holiday (after some specific legislation to move it from its traditional date in May) to enable as many towns, parishes district, community and other councils, along with individuals, voluntary organisations, the holiday and hospitality industry including pubs, clubs and hotels etc, to join in the VE Day 75 celebrations.

There is a dedicated website <https://www.veday75.org/> showing the national plan that includes the Last Post to be played across the country at 1500, a call for peace, a national toast and the ringing of bells. If anyone is organising a local event they can submit a page with their details and artwork to be published on the national site at the cost of £1,000.

Many local authorities including Kent County Council are supporting road closures at no cost for street parties.

Places currently available for the 2019 CNOA Trafalgar Dinner From Cdr David Houston



TRAFALGAR NIGHT DINNER 25th October 2019 1915 for 2000 RSME OFFICERS' MESS BROMPTON

Dress: 2A Mess Dress or Black Tie Dinner suit, miniature medals and neck decorations
Ladies – Evening Wear

(PLEASE PRINT NAMES)

Member

Surname	Rank / Title	Initials	Post Nominals	Car Registration Number.	Accommodation Required?	(A) Veg (B)Celiac (C) Soft Drinks

Guests - There are no restrictions on guest numbers

Dinner Cost per Head: £ 55.00 (Wine included and served by staff at the Table, as are soft drinks for those not taking wine at the meal)

Accommodation – Please indicate who needs accommodation – Members must pay the mess directly for their Bed and Breakfast. Cost is approximately £20 per person.

Cheque enclosed for the sum of: £ Payable to: CNOA

Member's Signature: Date:

Please return this form together with cheque to: Commander David Houston, Landway House, Northfleet Green, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 9PN Tel: 07719 378993. No later than the 4th of October 2019. However, the List will be closed if the permitted numbers are achieved prior to that date.

Remember the subs increased at the 2019 AGM?

From Lt Cdr Ken Sprowles

"Can you please publish another reminder in the newsletter about the annual subscription increase to £20 after agreement at the 2019 AGM. This month alone I have received 7 payments of £15. Members are requested to make the necessary change to their Standing Orders and those that have paid only £15 are requested to pay the additional £5 either by cash to the Treasurer at the next meeting or to the Secretary if the Treasurer is not available. If online payment is preferred the account details are :

Barclays Bank Sort Code 20-25-42 Account No. 93932702.

To date there are 18 members who have paid only £15.00"

Royal Navy Carrier Ski Jumps – A History

From Cdr Colin Tozer, via <https://www.savetheroyalnavy.org/> with thanks



AUGUST 12, 2019

Royal Navy aircraft carrier ski jumps – a history

British inventors have been responsible for many of the innovations that have made carrier aviation possible. The 'ski jump' was first developed in the 1970s to enable the Sea Harrier jet to launch more safely and efficiently and is a feature of the new QEC aircraft carriers, helping launch the latest generation of jets. Here we look at the history, design and purpose of the ramp.

Background

The first known use of an angled ramp to launch aircraft at sea was in 1944 when a temporary wooden ramp was installed on HMS Furious. This crude construction was employed specifically to help underpowered, Fairy Barracuda aircraft stagger into the air armed with 1,600 lb armour-piercing bombs for operation Tungsten, an attack on the German battleship Tirpitz in Norway.

The Harrier GR1 first entered with the RAF in 1969 a land-based close-support aircraft but various trials were made with the aircraft operating at sea. The RN's conventional aircraft carrier project (CVA-01) had been axed in 1966 and many in the navy began to realise the Harrier had the potential to provide a basic fixed-wing fighter than could operate from the much smaller vessels of the future. British Aerospace was keen to produce a navalised Harrier and studies were well underway before the Navy Board formally approved the development of the Sea Harrier in April 1975. Although the Harrier could take off vertically when given any kind of useful weapon and fuel load, this was impossible and a short rolling take-off was required. It was determined that wind over the deck and a 299-metre runway would be needed to launch a Harrier with a full war load. The RN needed a solution to the Short Take-Off (STO) problem as the Invincible class 'through-deck cruisers', then under construction, had only a 200-meter flight deck.

Inspiration

Lt Cdr Doug Taylor, studying at Southampton University in 1973 was tasked to write a thesis looking at options for resolving this problem. His apparently simplistic idea of a curved ski ramp was initially met with some scepticism but further investigation quickly revealed that the concept showed real promise. Hawker Siddeley Aviation in Kingston, responsible for designing and manufacturing the Harrier (before it was consumed by British Aerospace in 1977), and the MoD explored and verified the concept further using simulation and computer modelling techniques.

On 5th August the 1977 first ski-ramp trial was conducted at RAE Bedford using a test aircraft (The first Sea Harrier did not fly until 20th August 1978). Within a year, the ramp had been tried at angles between $6.5 - 20^\circ$ and the tests showed that the aircraft was indeed able to get airborne with much heavier loads. The ramp also added a considerable margin of safety, even if the ship pitched down at the moment of launch, the aircraft would still have enough height above the sea. If the engine failed during launch, the pilot had about three times the amount of time to eject than if launched off a flat deck.



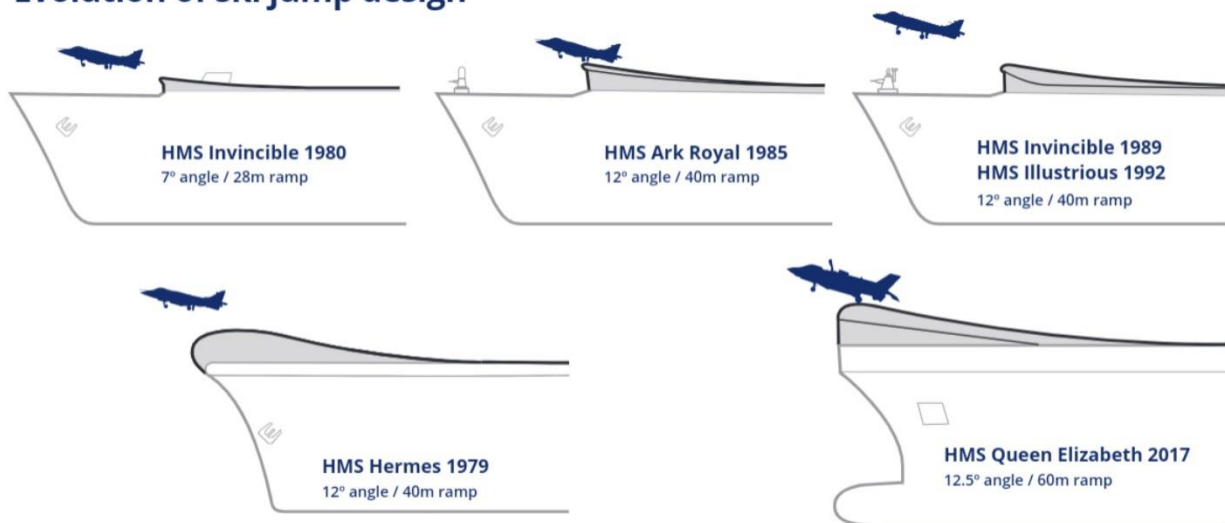
Early days. A Sea Harrier FRS1 launches from the 7° ramp, HMS Invincible, 1980. (Photo BAE Systems)

In simple terms, the aircraft does not fly off the ski jump, instead, forward momentum is partially converted into vertical thrust by the ramp. Together with upward thrust generated by the vectored jet nozzles, the aircraft follows a semi-ballistic trajectory for a few hundred

yards until it has enough forward speed for the wings to provide all the lift. As the aircraft moves along the ramp, there is additional force applied to the landing gear but both the Sea Harrier and F-35B were designed with heavy vertical landings in mind which often put far greater stress on the undercarriage.

The first ski jump was added to HMS Invincible while she was fitting out in Barrow and was set at a conservative 7° angle, so as not to interfere with the firing arcs of the adjacent Sea Dart missile launcher. Invincible commissioned in July 1980 and on 30 October, test pilot, Lt Cdr David Poole made the first Harrier launch from a ski jump at sea. HMS Illustrious, hurriedly commissioned in 1982 was also fitted with a 7° ramp while HMS Ark Royal, commissioned in 1985, was built with a 12° ramp from the outset. The first two ships were subsequently retrofitted with 12° ramps which was found to be the optimum angle. Improving the performance of the Harrier was deemed of much greater importance than a small limitation on Sea Dart firing arcs and the entire missile system was subsequently removed entirely to provide more space for aircraft and stores.

Evolution of ski jump design



Lessons learned

The ski jump is a relatively cheap and simple addition to the carriers, being a straightforward steel construction with no moving parts. However it was discovered, once in service that apparently small differences in the build quality of the ramps of the three ships affected the life of the Sea Harrier undercarriage. The original design work assumed an absolutely smooth ramp but small ruts or imperfections in the surface were enough to cause cracking on some aircraft landing gear. This issue was expensively resolved and the lesson led to higher design tolerances being specified for the QEC ramps. Additionally, the F-35 has a wide tricycle gear which is more affected by small bumps, demanding more careful ramp design than for the Harrier's tandem main gear. The centre section of the QEC deck is slightly cambered to help water runoff, further complicating the interface with the ramp.

By 2003 the decision had been made that the QEC carriers would be configured for STOVL operations and would have a ski ramp like the preceding Invincible class CVS. The QEC design is an 'adaptable carrier', configured for STOVL but capable of being fitted with catapults and arrestor gear, if required at some point in the future. (The brief flirtation with CATOBAR configuration between 2010-12 is a controversial rabbit hole, well beyond the

scope of this article). This meant the ski jump would be a removable structure that was added to the forward flight deck, rather than a fully integrated into the bow design of the ship (as seen in the 2002 QEC '[Alpha](#)' concept).

Detailed work on the ramp design was started but in 2007, once Lockheed Martin had done enough simulator work and had developed mature flight control models. The QEC ramp was designed by BAE Systems with input from LM, rather than the shipbuilders. It is not immediately obvious but the ramp has two very subtle curves. The entry section is a long 'cubic' curve that leads to a second let-down or 'ellipse' section where the aircraft is launched.

The next generation

Work on ski jump trials with the F-35B began in 2014 in the United States at NAS Patuxent River, initially using offline and manual simulation. Most of the work involved exploring what would happen if problems occur during take-off, such as a sudden drop in wind velocity, loss of engine power, blown tyres or nose wheel failure. A UK company, Williams Fairey Engineering Limited (WFEL) was awarded a £2M contract to construct a test ramp in the Centre Field at Pax River. The design was based on the CVS ramp profile and completed in 2009, although the first F-35B ski-jump STO was not made until June 2015.

By June 2016, 31 test launches had been made testing a variety of approach speeds and internal loads with speeds off the end of the ramp ranging from 65-95 knots. Some issues were discovered during testing but nothing serious and the results informed the minor design changes to flight control software. A second phase of trials numbering around 150 launches was begun in 2017 to understand the characteristics of the aircraft during overspeed or underspeed take-offs and carrying external weapons, including asymmetric loads. When the first jet was successfully launched from HMS Queen Elizabeth's ski jump on 25th September 2018, years of simulations and preparation ensured it was considered a very low-risk aspect of the programme.



One of 202 successful F-35 launches from HMS Queen Elizabeth achieved during developmental flying trials with two aircraft during in the Autumn of 2018.

Despite its vertical landing and ski-ramp launch, the 21st Century F-35B Lightning II has very little in common with the Harrier designed in the 1960s. The Harrier had four side-

mounted swivelling nozzles used to direct thrust down or aft. The supersonic F-35B has a more conventional jet tailpipe but is fitted with a 3-Bearing Swivel Module (3BSM) which rotates down from the horizontal to generate 18,000 pounds of downward thrust from the engine exhaust. To provide longitudinal balance, a cold air shaft-driven lift fan directly behind the cockpit also provides up to 20,000lb of additional vertical thrust during take-off and landing. The lift fan incorporates a vane box which can direct thrust up to 50° aft to provide extra forward thrust during the rolling take off. There are also roll posts under each wing which can deliver up to 2,000 pounds thrust to give lateral balance. To maximise forward thrust, the roll posts are turned off for a few seconds during the STO run and switched back on just as the aircraft leaves the ramp.

Automation has made both landing and take-off, much simpler procedures for the F-35 Pilot. A Harrier pilot had a tricky job to manually operate the stick, the throttle, and the nozzle lever with his hands during launch. Advanced control law software in the F-35 means the pilot must only push the throttle to full power, release brakes, and steer towards the centre of the ski-jump. Sensors on the aircraft detect the change in pitch rate and attitude, taking the controls into 'ski-jump mode' it automatically sets the horizontal tail position, engine nozzle angles, and changes the balance of thrust between the lift fan and the tail nozzle. When on the ramp, more of the forward thrust comes from the lift fan, but as the aircraft leaves the ramp the 3BSM is very gradually moved so that the engine thrust moves from about 45° to the horizontal. Once flying, the lift fan is disengaged and the doors closed to aerodynamically 'clean up' the aircraft.

It is interesting to observe that while the F-35B is exceptionally capable and has low pilot workload, its mechanical complexity is staggering with the greatest number of moving parts ever put into a fast jet.

The British ski ramp was quickly copied by many other navies and remains in use today. The Russian, Chinese, Indian, Italian and Thai navies all possess aircraft carriers with ramps. The Australian and Spanish Juan Carlos-class LHDs also have ramps with an eye to potential F-35B operation. In 2018 it was announced the Japanese Izumo class 'helicopter destroyers' would embark F-35Bs and the addition of a ski ramp would clearly be desirable.

The US Navy has never adopted ski ramps for its Harrier and F35-B-equipped assault ships, although the benefits of the ramp are fully appreciated and well understood by the Marine Corps aviation community. Unlike other nations, whose STOVL aircraft are the primary armament of the ship, the *Gator Navy's* main purpose is to deliver Marines ashore and the helicopters have priority. With limited flight deck space, a ramp would take up at least two helicopter spots. The USMC concept of operations also sees the fixed-wing aircraft being sent ashore at the earliest opportunity to work in close support of the troops while flying from small airstrips. There is an unspoken political concern within the USN that the addition of a ramp might see the assault ships become perceived as small aircraft carriers, undermining the case for the giant conventional carriers (CVN) that are the centrepiece of the surface fleet. For the Royal Navy, this relatively simple invention will continue to play a key part in enabling fixed-wing operations from its two aircraft carriers for many years to come.

Flying the Red Ensign to Signal the UK's Dependence on Merchant Navy

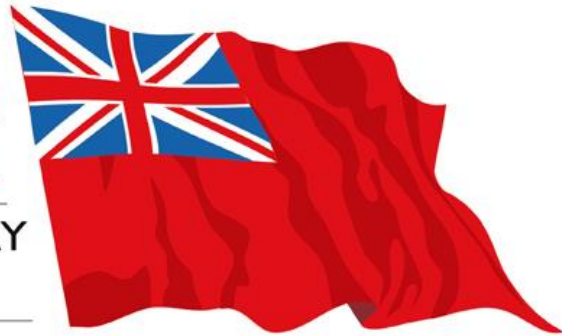
From Seafarers UK



Seafarers UK is asking owners of flagpoles throughout this island nation to raise awareness of Merchant Navy seafarers by flying a Red Ensign ashore on Merchant Navy Day, Tuesday 3 September 2019.

**FLY THE
RED ENSIGN**

FOR MERCHANT NAVY DAY
3rd SEPTEMBER



Continuing its campaign started in 2015, the charity has invited more than ten thousand local authorities and councils around the UK to hoist the British Merchant Navy's official flag on civic buildings and prominent flagpoles in public places. Nick Harvey, Campaigns Manager at Seafarers UK, said: 'Merchant Navy Day on 3 September provides a perfect opportunity to show support for the seafarers on which the UK depends by proudly flying the Red Ensign as publicly as possible, for all to see.'

Seafarers UK is now reaching out to owners of private and commercial premises with flagpoles, offering inexpensive Red Ensigns in a wide range of sizes from the Hampshire Flag Company.

A free guide to taking part is available to download at www.merchantnavyfund.org/merchant-navy-day/ and all participants are added to a prestigious 'Roll of Honour' at www.merchantnavyday.uk

The Exploits of Captain Ginger From Lt Cdr Trevor Pratt

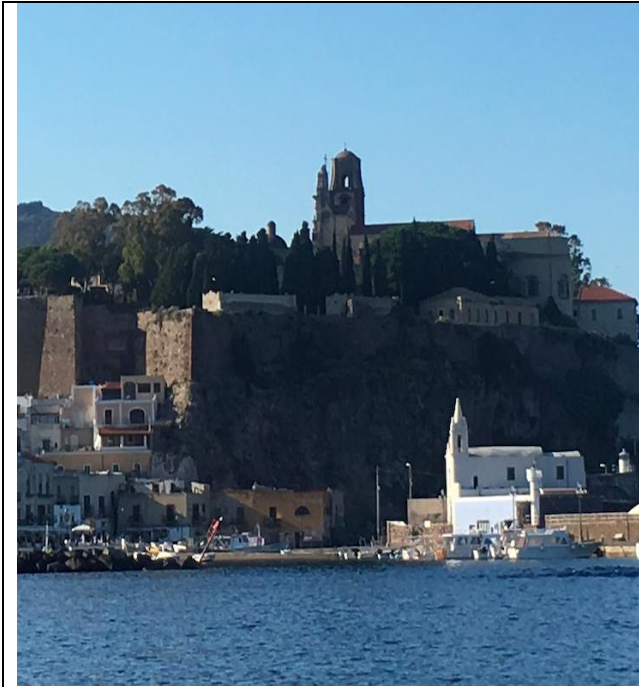
There are several marinas in the large harbour at Catania, which is a busy commercial port. We used NIC as we had been there before and found it quite friendly with helpful staff. It's a large sprawl of a city and not somewhere we wanted to stay longer than necessary but it does have a wonderful fish, fruit and veg market where we bought tuna steaks and cooked them on the BBQ.

Malcolm and Frances joined us here and after two nights we left for Syracuse. It was another day with very little wind but we did hoist the cruising shute which carried us along nicely until the wind dropped.

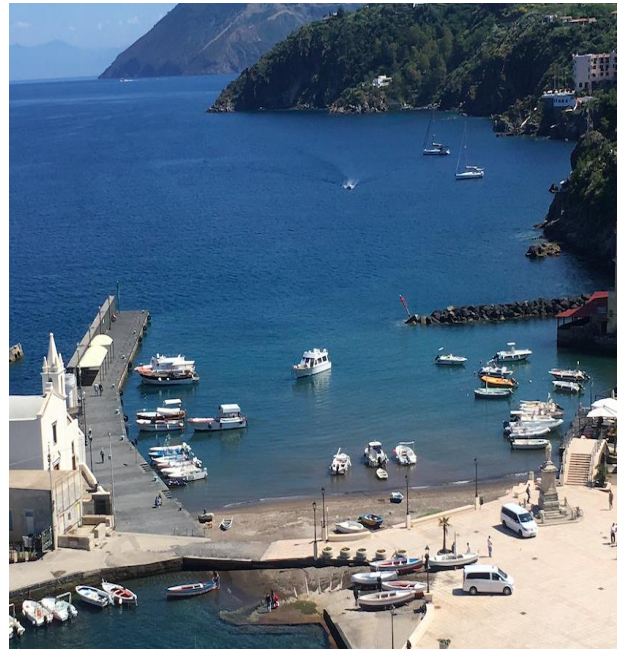
At Syracuse we anchored in the large sheltered bay along with about ten other boats and that evening took the dinghy to go ashore for a meal. The following morning we went to the fuel dock to fill our tank and then into the marina for a night as we needed to do several shopping trips to re-provision the boat for a three day passage to Corfu.

We left our berth the next day with a favourable wind, at least for the start of our journey and with sails set for beating into the wind we watched the landscape of Sicily disappear over the horizon. All we could see now all around us was the seascape, the occasional dolphin playing around our bow and a few other vessels on the horizon.

In the morning we retraced our passage, this time to visit the island of Lipari, the largest of the Islands in the group and anchored just off the small but busy port of Marina Corta. The Citadel on the peninsular overshadows the harbour; it is a world heritage site, houses the archaeological museum and offers wonderful views over the harbour but it is quite a climb to get there.



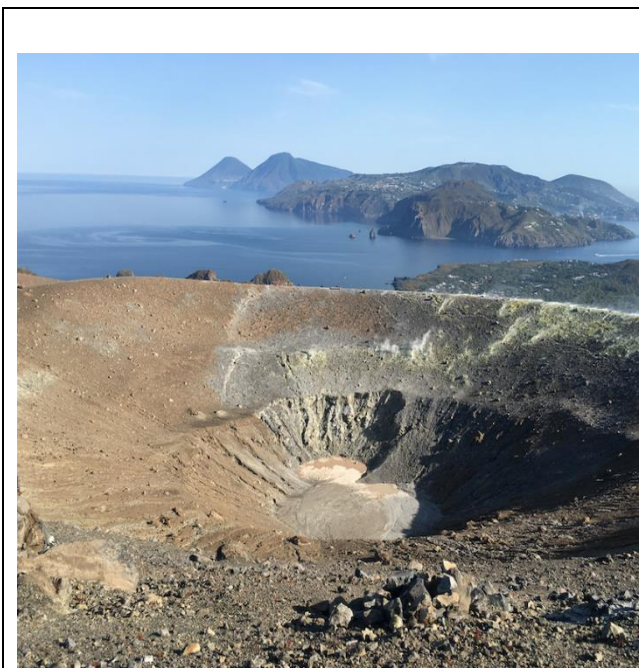
The Citadel, Lipari



Lipari, Marina Corta

We spent a couple of nights here before a very short trip to Vulcano where we anchored next to the ferry port as Pam was returning to UK early the next morning. That evening we had a meal ashore at Maurizio's Restaurant, popular for its local cuisine.

The following day was an early start so once Pam was on the ferry, Joycie and I took the opportunity to climb the volcano in the relative cool of the day. Fantastic views from the top and this time we managed to walk all the way round the rim of the caldera.



Vulcano



Vulcano – view of both anchorages



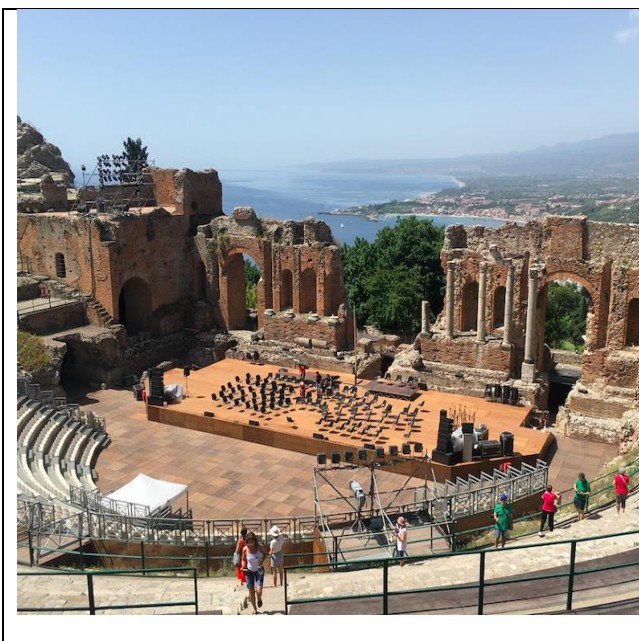
Vulcano – the quick way down!



Vulcano – mud baths!

Once back onboard we motored round to the bay on the west coast where it was more sheltered with no wash from passing ferries to set the boat rolling. We spent two more nights there exploring the island and avoiding the sulphurous mud baths, which always seem popular but not sure about the medicinal effectiveness!

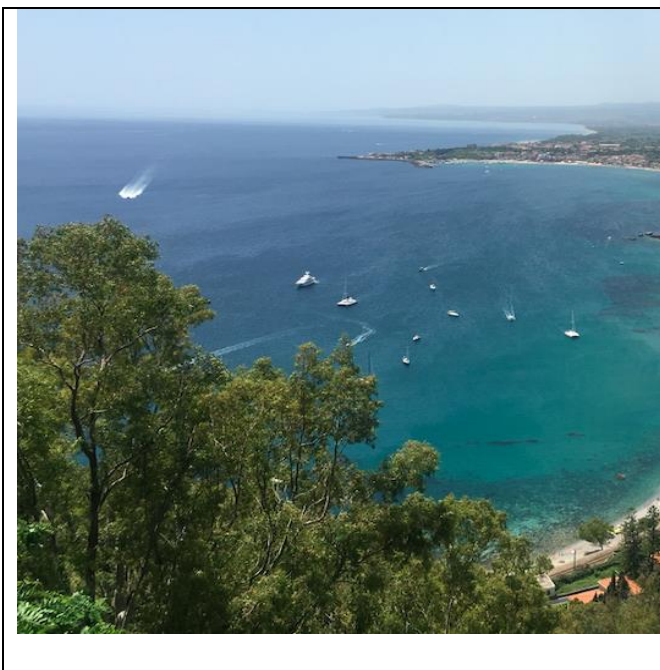
Leaving the Aeolian Islands we did a long day passage back to Sicily, through the Messina Straits. Hunting for swordfish in the Straits continues in the traditional fashion and we were fortunate to see one boat in action. The boats have a thirtyfoot tower for the spotter and when one is sighted the hunt is on but swordfish can swim at up to 60mph so the odds are on their side. We anchored beneath the tall cliffs of the hilltop town of Taormina taking the local bus to explore the town; famous for its ancient Greek amphitheatre and gardens overlooking the bay across to Giordino Naxos. The daytime temperature is now around 30c and exploring the sights of the town involves a lot of uphill walking so we were glad to collapse in a restaurant for a pizza lunch followed by a Granita. Jamie Oliver describes Granita as “basically a crushed ice-lolly” but made from pureed fruit and is delicious on a hot day – must try making it when I get home!



Roman Amphitheatre



Granita on a hot day



Our anchorage at Taormina



Swordfish hunting

This leg of our journey is almost over, it has been pleasant having a few lazy days here at Taormina but tomorrow we leave early morning for Catania where we have two nights in a marina. It is twelve days since we left Palermo, spending nights at anchor, so it is time to fill up our tanks with water and do some laundry and have a shower!



Palermo to Catania

Dawn Owl – Journal for July 2019

From Lt Clifford Mickleburgh

Barney and I joined the boat in Sneek where I keep the vessel, as it costs me ⅓ price of keeping it in the UK. The boat had also had the hull repainted, due to storm damage, in early March, but thankfully I could claim this as an ‘insurance job’. I arrived to find the boat still in the paint shop, but an hour later it was wheeled out looking very smart indeed.



DAWN OWL out of the paint shop



Barney likes being back in the Netherlands

The intention was to leave and make for Vlissingen [Flushing], down the English Channel to Honfleur, and proceed up to Paris for a few days in the Paris Arsenal (which is the Bastille Marina), then press on south down the Bourgogne Canal through Dijon and St Jean-de-Losne, and then east along the Rhone/Rijn canal to Strasbourg and Switzerland. But water levels were dropping significantly, because of the very hot weather unrelieved by sufficient rain or winter snow, so many of the locks were closed. Hence Plan B was formulated!

Still on to Vlissingen and then either down the coast, weather permitting, or through the French Canals to Paris. From Paris to Brussels on the inland waterways and on to Nijmegen on the Rhine, then to Koblenz and the Moselle to Luxemburg where I can refuel [.94c per litre] and return down the Rhine back to Sneek by September

Sunday, 30th June - Barney and I took the night ferry and left after a hearty breakfast on board to take the train to Sneek in Friesland arriving after lunch on the Monday



Lifting Bridge at IJlst



IJlst waterway

Tuesday, 2nd July – After the inevitable last minute jobs to be completed I slipped at tea-time for Stavoren and stayed in the old fishing harbour of the IJsselmeer, which was once open to the North Sea. A 16 mile Afsluitdijk [Barrier Dam] has been built transforming the Zuiderzee into a wonderful fresh water sailing area

Wednesday, 3rd July - with no tides to worry about I left mid-morning and crossed the IJsselmeer and locked through into the Markermeer in calm seas and sunshine. I then locked into the North Sea Canal, making for the Amsterdam Marina, eventually tying up by the



The Lady of Stavoren

The wicked lady of Stavoren forced a Captain to throw his cargo of wheat into the harbour. He told her that she would be duly punished and in time she was and ended up penniless.....



The old harbour - Stavoren

wave-break pontoon. A great location from which to watch the passing barges and ships and the rosy sunset while indulging in a glass of wine. There is also a very good restaurant in the marina, Loetje's serving excellent food. On this occasion I chose to eat on board



Sunset at Stavoren

Thursday, 4th July - I slipped early and went to the fuel barge at Zandaam where I was able



to refuel at €1.20 per litre. I then headed south through the Amsterdam Canals, which now operate automatically, after a brief phone call and keying in the received bridge number. On leaving the canals I passed under one of the many flight paths of Schiphol airport and continued to Gouda, of cheese fame. I secured on the tidal river named the Hollandse-IJssel,



Railway bridge for the night convoy



Amsterdam Canals



Commercial vessels have right-of-way



The lock to the Schiphol flightpaths

where you need long lines to allow for the rise and fall of the tide. A weekly cheese market is re-enacted in the market place with the auction done by traditional ‘hand-clap trading’, which completes the business sale



Gouda market square



Dordrecht lifting railway bridge

Friday, 5th July - With an early start I made my way down the Hollandse-IJssel, part of the mast-up route, down through Rotterdam and Dordrecht to Willemstad, a delightful star-shaped fortress town. You have the choice of a marina or, where I prefer to go, the town quay. Here you can watch everyone’s comings and goings, and all of this happening, against



the backdrop of beautiful buildings, a typical Dutch windmill and listen to a range of church bells and a clarion of bells



Willemstad Harbour – Town Quay



Typical Dutch Windmill

Saturday, 6th July - a leisurely start, with the sun shining and a gentle westerly breeze, from Willemstad the Hollands Diep through two large locks, the Volkeraksluizen into a tideless fresh water lake and then through the Krammersluizen, into the tidal salt-water lake of the Oostershelde. Both locks can accommodate about 30 yachts each. These waters are very busy with barges travelling from or to Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Antwerp and up the Rhine into Europe. The average barge carries the equivalent of 50 lorries and so are environmentally friendly, severe problems occur if the water levels drop as the barges can only then be half-filled to reduce their draft. I now headed for Goes

Sunday, 7th July - Goes [pronounced 'Khoose'] is at the top of a 7km canal to a picturesque basin in the middle of the town where you live cheek-by-jowl with the natives, surrounded by eating houses and music. Barney and I went to church here and then after a light lunch slipped and proceeded back to the Oostershelde, which is salt water and tidal, to make our



Goes



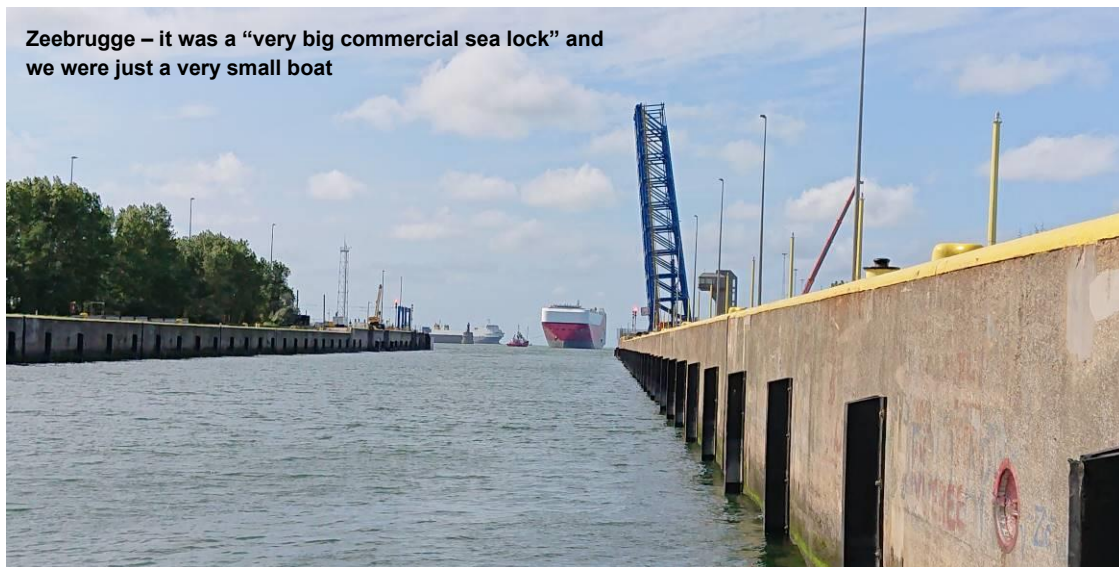
The Waterway POLITE [Police] they go in pairs !



way through the Zandkreek Sluis, and along with many other yachts into the Veerse Meer [lake] and on to Middelburg where my good friend Bob Hadley [Dr] joined me.



Monday, 8th July - we topped up with fuel before leaving Middelburg and made our way down the canal in convoy with several other yachts to the sluis at Vlissingen [Flushing] and headed down the coast in lumpy seas to Zeebrugge. Had permission to enter and made our way to the canal entrance only to eventually be told that it was not in operation. We were



instructed to enter before the expected car transporter and make our way to the front of the large lock. On leaving the lock we passed through the port of Zeebrugge where there were thousands of new cars, tractors, lorries and buses on the jetties. We made our way down a long straight canal and found ourselves a quiet mooring on the outskirts of Brugge

Tuesday, 9th July - We called on VHF Channel 18 requesting permission for the lock and were advised that a barge was due in an hour, and on arrival, we were to enter first. The lock operated very efficiently and we moved out to a large open stretch of water and had to wait 30 minutes for another barge to enter the lock, and then a fleet of other vessels arrived from the east intending to head west. As soon as we were all assembled the bridge opened and we made our way as a convoy towards Diksmuide. All of the bridges opened as we approached. We arrived at Diksmuide late afternoon. The river here was about 50m wide. Of note, in WW2 the Germans were one side and the Belgians on the other. There is a large “Peace Memorial” on the north bank depicting scenes and the atmosphere of fighting at the front

Wednesday, 10th July - Gosh, we are always going shopping and here there was a very good Lidl so we were able to top up our stores. We also met an interesting couple from New Zealand and an English couple who keep their boat here at Diksmuide

We slipped after lunch for Ypres and were advised to take care as the water levels in the IJzer canal were low. The bridges opened with the usual Belgian efficiency. As we slowly made our way up the canal we “touched” bottom on several occasions but eventually made our way safely to the first of two locks and finally berthed in the Ypres Marina

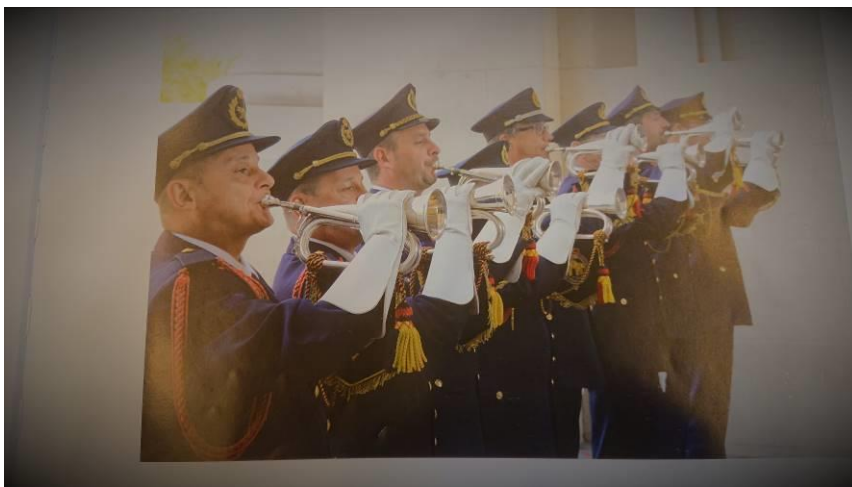
Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam
HERE ARE RECORDED NAMES OF OFFICERS
AND MEN WHO FELL IN YPRES SALIENT BUT
TO WHOM THE FORTUNE OF WAR DENIED
THE KNOWN AND HONOURED BURIAL GIVEN
TO THEIR COMRADES IN DEATH

TO THE ARMIES OF THE BRITISH
EMPIRE WHO STOOD HERE FROM
1914 TO 1918 AND TO THOSE OF
THEIR DEAD WHO HAVE NO KNOWN
GRAVE



The Menin Gate

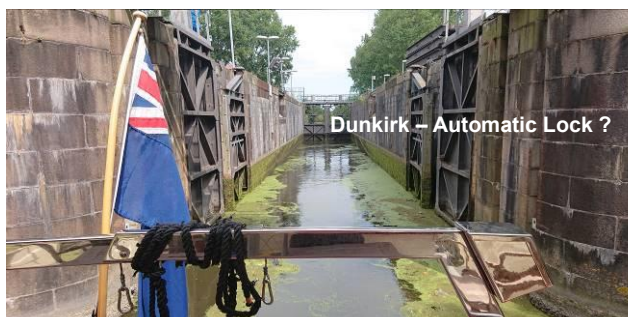
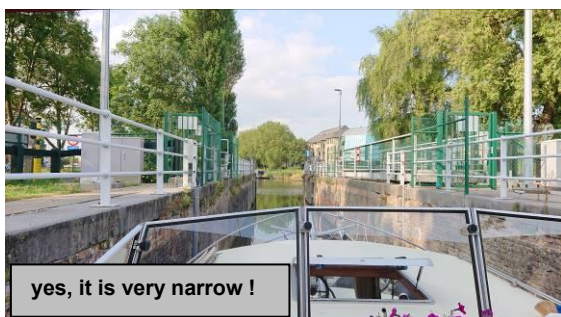
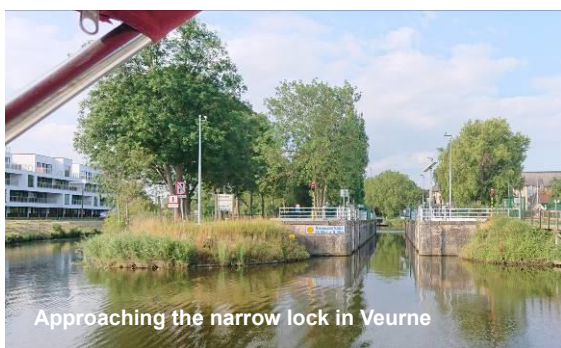
That evening we made our way to the Menin Gate for the Last Post Ceremony held every evening except Christmas Day. It is a very moving ceremony and it was good to see so many youngsters who were on school trips to visit the cemeteries. The cemeteries are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission [CWGC]. The nearby CWGC office is open until 21.00 and they are very pleased to help you find relatives who might have been lost in the Great War. Tyne Cot Cemetery is the largest CWGC in the world. 11,956 graves of soldiers from many lands and faiths are here, and the names of 34,957 missing are carved on the curved wall beyond the Cross there



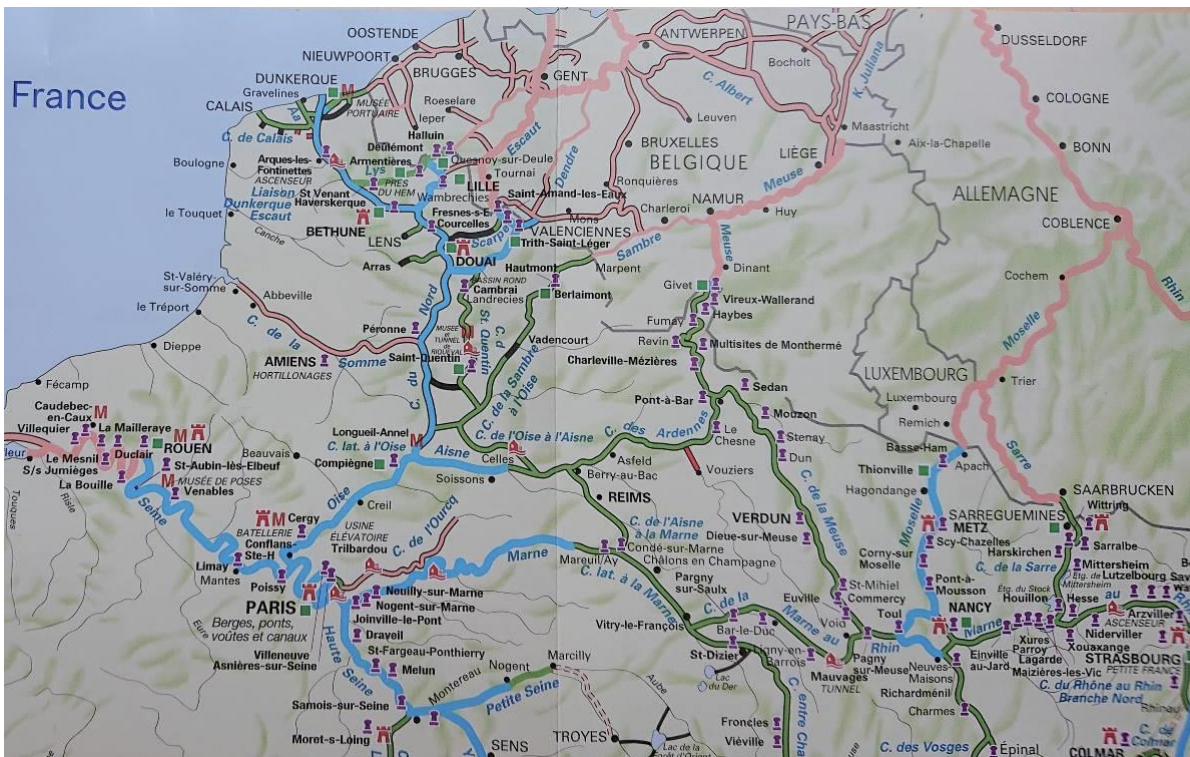
There is no mute memorial, standing unnoticed for most of the year. The Menin Gate straddles one of the busiest roads in Ypres, a constant reminder of sacrifice. Once a day, at 8pm, it resounds with a living tribute from the people of Ypres; buglers of the Last Post Association sound the Last Post

Thursday, 11th July - After visiting the "In Flanders Fields Museum" which is an assessment of the First World War – in which you must allow 3 hours to take in the horror of the Great War. After a well deserved drink at a hostelry we made our way back to the boat and slipped to make our way North to Veurne and Dunkirk. The bridges and locks closed at 19.00 and we found a peaceful mooring to stay the night at Fortem

Friday, 12th July - We slipped at 08.00 and made our way to Veurne and onto the French border. All of the bridges and locks opened as we arrived at each one. The open sluice at



Veurne was very narrow. On reaching our first French bridge at 10.55, there was no bridge-keeper. The office ashore was shut but there was a number to call, but it didn't work! I eventually got through on another number but the operative did not speak English, we did eventually agree that a bridge operator would be with us after lunch at 14.15. Lunch for the VNF office is 11.00 to 14.15. He arrived on time and we were able to get underway. We then reached the Dunkirk automatic lock which was out of commission! This required a call to Dunkirk Port Control on VHF Channel 73, and an hour later two engineers arrived and managed to bring the lock back to life. Now we headed to the VNF office arriving at 16.25 only to find it closed at 16.00 !!! So no "vignette", the licence required for the French waterway system. But we had a piece of paper issued by the lock-keeper which acted as a temporary licence, and we were able to head south to the Watten Ecluse [French for lock]. This was closed and we found a temporary mooring in the middle of nowhere. Whilst there an elderly lady had driven her car down the tow-path and was distraught that she couldn't turn it round and was in danger of finishing up in the canal. I was detailed by Bob to go and help her. I had to reverse it nearly 300m back up the tow-path where I could turn it round. The old lady who was now in the car with me was burbling away in French, she eventually drove off with the hand-brake on and eventually disappeared into the sunset, I assume that she was happy ?



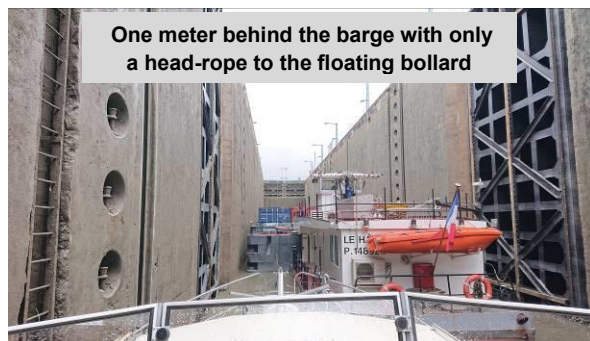
Saturday, 13th July - Bob was now leaving to return home on the train to Calais and then with P&O to Dover. He missed the first train as we were waiting on the wrong platform. Bob eventually arrived home at 20.30 having left the boat at noon. I moved on down the canal knowing that the next lock would not open until Monday and found a quiet marina with 4 other British boats, they had been stuck here for days waiting for repairs to be carried out with the ecluse Arques.

Sunday, 14th July – I was 200m from the Arques ecluse [lock] and as it was Bastille Day the locks were all closed. Having visited the town centre, which was a 35 minute walk, I returned onboard to catch up and putting the pictures into my journal. The day was overcast and chilly but there was still time to take Barney for two long walks which he enjoyed

Monday, 15th July - Slipped from Arques at 08.00, then waited and waited for the ecluse to be opened, then it took just over 3 hours to transit 2 locks and 4km. The first, the Flandres ecluse, with a 4m rise and the second, just past the redundant 'boat lift', the Fontinettes ecluse with a 13m rise. Both ecluses had a dearth of bollards with the second having both the fixed bollards and the floating bollards positioned inappropriately for pleasure craft. Both locks were a challenge, and there were many more yet to negotiate



Waiting to enter as the barge leaves



One meter behind the barge with only a head-rope to the floating bollard



Tuesday, 16th July - I had spent the previous night at Douai which was a 'home' for redundant barges. A 30m sailing boat arrived and moored behind me, with a Russian couple and their two young children on board. They were on passage from Sweden to North Africa through France, I spent a pleasant hour chatting with them in English about where they had been and their plans. This morning the day started gloomy and overcast. I slipped early as I had a 16 ecluses to negotiate and the Grand Souterrain Ruyaulcourt tunnel which is 4,350m



Approaching the Ruyaulcourt

The tunnel which is 4,350 metres long

long. North and southbound vessels can enter simultaneously at each end, pass each other in the middle portion, and exit simultaneously from each end. There is remote monitoring and a traffic control system with lights, ensuring the minimum of delays to the barge and pleasure craft traffic. There are six ecluses each with a 6.3m rise, and six more with a 6.3m fall after the summit. By lunchtime the sun had broken through, and we had blue skies until sunset, pleasantly warm at 28°C with very little wind. I eventually arrived at Peronne on the Nord Canal where it is joined by the River Somme. There is a small pleasure craft harbour with limited facilities but there was no room for me. I took advantage to tie up FAL [Free Alongside] at an aggregate yard which suited me and Barney just fine



Vessels can pass in the middle

and then daylight as another barge enters

Wednesday, 17th July - Left Peronne early. I was now over the summit and continued south in good weather to join the l'Oise to the Seine and Paris through beautiful scenery. Here it is the height of the season, but there is little traffic, I stopped the night at Compeigne in a marina accessed via a gap in the wall off of the l'Oise, blink and you could have missed it! I met a French boater who spoke perfect English and he proved to be very kind and helpful.



Marina Compeigne



Hotel de Ville [Town Hall] - Compeigne

The marina in Compeigne was a pickle, you just squeezed in “somewhere” and hoped for the best! Barney and I walked to the town centre. It took over 40 minutes to get there passing many people eating and drinking outside on the way, creating a very convivial atmosphere. The Hotel de Ville was quite a smart building.

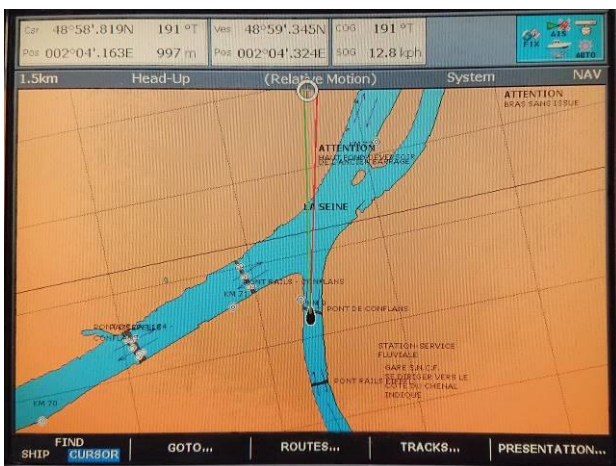


Some barges just make it under the bridges !



Barney jumped ship here for a “P” at Pointoise ecluse and nearly missed the boat !

Thursday, 18th July - I left just after 09.00 with another English boat. I had 8 locks to negotiate to reach the confluence with the Seine, with roughly an hour between each lock. There was no point rushing as there was a barge going downstream as well, and if you arrived early you just had to wait for the barge to catch up before the lock-keeper let you in. I eventually reached the big wide Seine by 19.30, I was again looking for an overnight stop. The few harbours that I passed were either full or not suitable. It was late and it had been a long day. I eventually secured alongside a disused factory site at 20.45. The weather had also turned inclement, chilly with a fine drizzle which turned into a downpour all night.



DAWN OWL joining the Seine from l'Oise



Monument to the dead of battle at the confluence of l'Oise and the Seine

Friday, 19th July - Still 50km to reach Paris. There was heavy barge traffic, which had priority at both ecluses. There was no room at the first lock, and I had to wait. I then followed a barge into Ecluse Bougival which had seen better days. Then the barge left his engine running and screw turning, causing me to turn through 360°, for a few minutes it was a bit

hairy, as you do not normally turn around in a lock. The bollards were sparse and many broken and not usable; it was a challenge! The next lock was no better, but this time I was prepared. The weather had now improved and there was that magic moment when you turn a bend in the river and see the Eiffel Tower, you have made it to Paris and it was warm with beautiful sunshine. I was following a barge and this helped me get through the busy tripper boats, the Bateau Mouche. Then the Notre Dame, looking sad after the fire, with the Port d'Arсенal - the Bastille Marina where I have John Ludgate and Ruth joining me for two weeks



Monday, 22nd July - Having paid our dues we departed the Port d'Arсенal 09.00 to go down the Seine to the statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower. There was little traffic on the river and it was already 31°C with blue skies and it was idyllic passing all the wonderful monuments and buildings that line the river



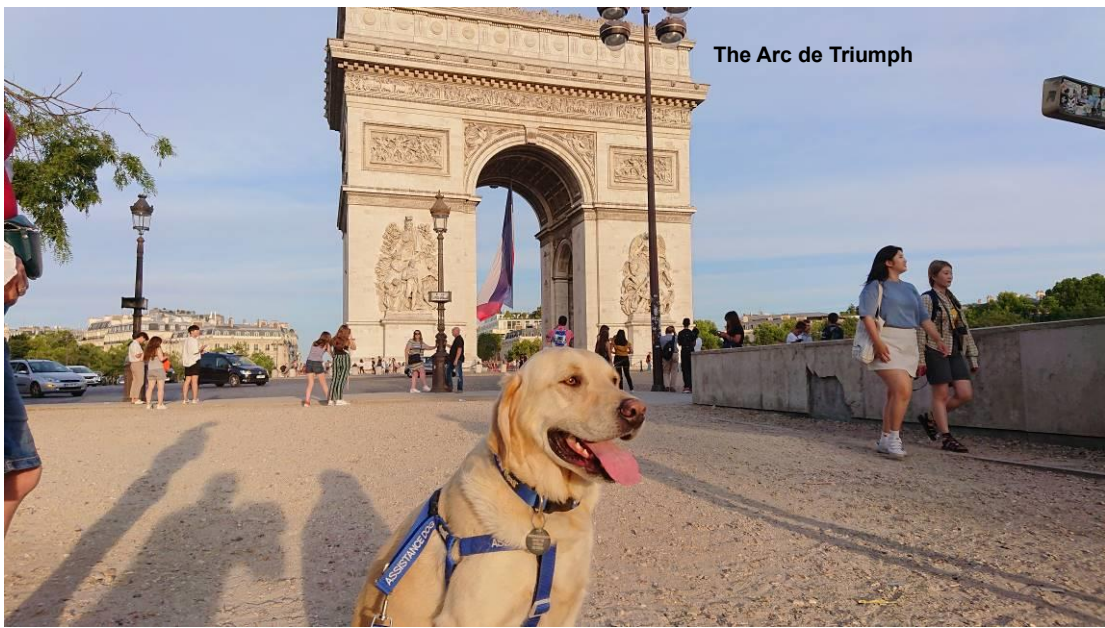
Notre Dame – post fire



Pont de Concorde - Eiffel Tower



Hotel de Ville



Tuesday, 23rd July - We left Paris heading east for Epernay and the Champagne district

Wednesday, 24th July - Tied up in Langy a very pretty village with free moorings which included water and electricity. We saw an Abbey with a monument to St Jean of Arc



Tunnel de Saint-Maur



"Furry friend" resting peacefully in the ecluse

Thursday, 25th July - we continued along the Marne and lateral canal to Epernay, which is the centre of the Champagne district; on our way in we were able to tie up alongside and shop for victuals in a large Carrefour Marchè, and then move on to the small marina

From the boat it was quite a long walk into town, it was also very hot 39°C. We decided to visit the House of Moët & Chandon tour, which started at 09.30 the next morning. Barney was also permitted to join the group which included a party from the USA. We descended many steps into the cool and dark chalk cellars, connected by tunnels totalling over 45km in length. Our guide was very knowledgeable and clear, explaining how Champagne was produced. Only rain water is used and there are no chemicals employed in its production. Napoleon 1st was a great supporter of the mayor of Epernay, Jean-Remy Moët and awarded him the Légion d'honneur



Back at the boat, we had also been issued with a “zapper” to operate the locks automatically. The locks operated from 07.00 through to 18.00. So now we just had to point and press the relevant button to go up or down, and as if by magic, the ecluse is prepared. You then pull a lever to close the gates, the lock begins to fill or empty as necessary. The gates then open and off you go!

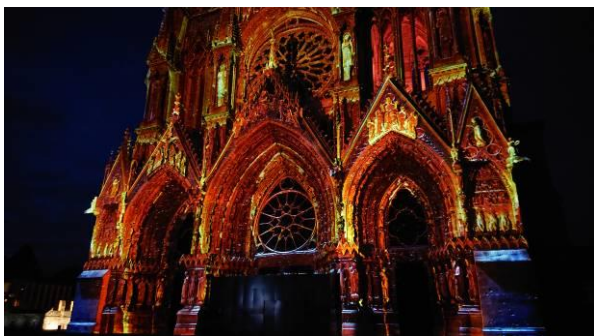
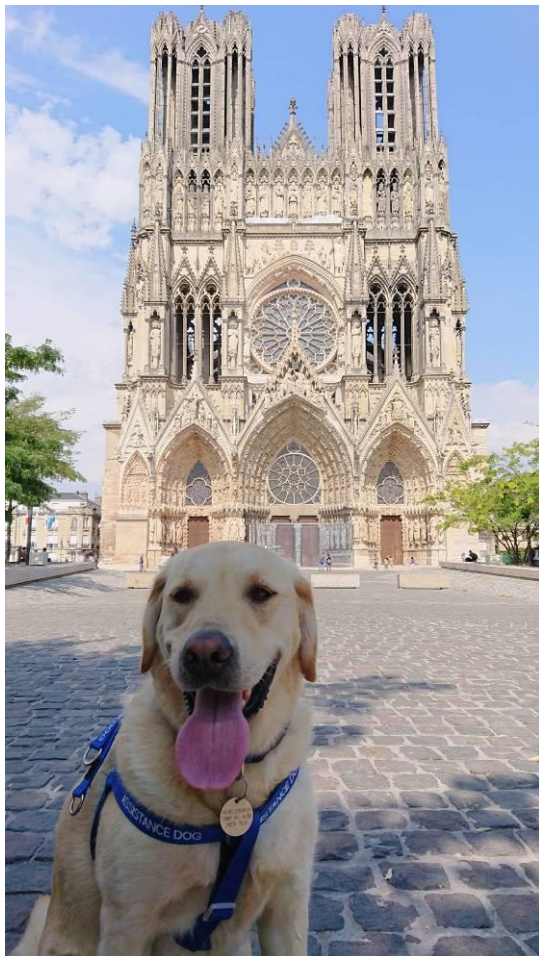
Friday, 26th July - We were still on the Canal de l'Aisne la Marne and had another tunnel 2,300m long to pass through, eventually arriving at Reims [pronounced Reems} the capital of the Champagne district. We secured by a very busy road junction, a 10 minute walk from Reims Cathedral [another Notre-Dame]

We learned that from 1027 onwards all the Kings were crowned in Reims with the exception of Louis VI and Henry IV. After the Revolution only Charles X received the sacrament, in 1825. A memorable coronation was that of Saint Louis in 1226, when the cathedral was under construction; and the young King was only 12 years old.

One of the most famous coronations was that of Charles VII who was brought to Reims thanks to the tenacity of Joan of Arc in 1429.

The Cathedral had many beautiful stained glass windows one depicting the various stages of the production of Champagne

Here, in this Cathedral, General de Gaulle and Chancellor Ardenaeur set the seal of reconciliation between France and Germany on the 8th July 1962



In the evening we watched an amazing “light and sound” show on the facade of the Cathedral

Saturday, 27th July - Left Reims early and had to transit another tunnel, which gave us respite from the awful weather (It had been raining or drizzling all day). The locks were controlled by lights and we finished at Pinon where we secured and on walking ashore discovered a Carrefour supermarket that opened on Sundays from 09.00 to noon. We were able to replenish our larder! There were no facilities and so we would have liked to go further, but since the locks close at 18.00 that is when the day's travels finish too.

Sunday, 28th July - Had a lie in and continued along the St Quentin Canal heading towards Belgium and two more tunnels. The first, the Lesdins, is 2,300m and is strictly controlled by traffic lights, we could see from one end to the other but there are problems if you ignore the lights !!!

The second tunnel, the Riqueval, remains the longest in France at 5,670m. The tunnel has a navigable width of 6.75m and headroom of 3.58m and you are towed through in convoy by special electrically-driven tugs, which warp themselves along a chain laid on the bed of the canal. Journey time is just under two hours and you have to concentrate or you begin to “snake” and can damage the boat. Up to 10 boats are towed once each way, once a day. There is also a charge for the towage of about €22.00. Boats are secured with two 30m lines crossed and there is no opportunity to adjust the ropes once under-way



Special electrically-

Lines crossed – ready to tow

Tow underway approaching the tunnel



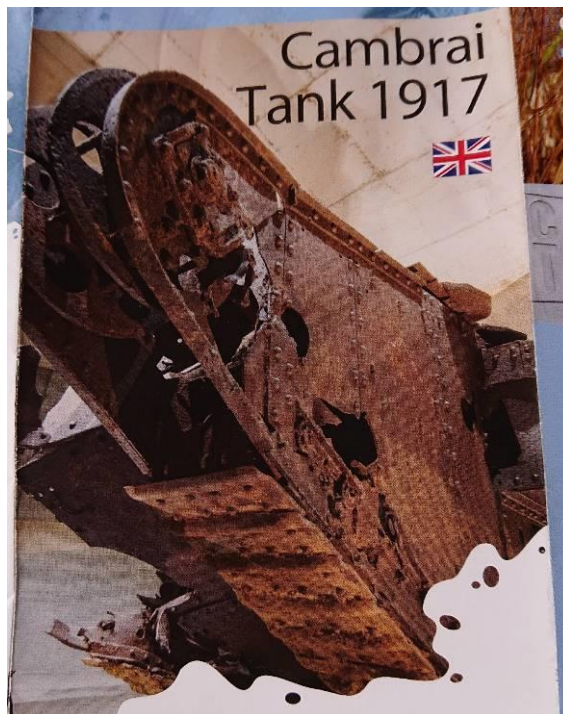
The tunnel was started in 1768 and work was interrupted when most of the excavation had been completed. In 1806 or so, it was restarted by Napoleon 1st. At first 7 or 8 men used to haul the barges, taking 12-14 hours to traverse the Riqueval tunnel. Horses then replaced manual labour, then a steam towing engine replaced horses, but this posed serious problems with intoxication from the fumes. In 1906 an electric towing-engine was installed.

In 1916, after two years of war on the Somme, the tunnel became an army barracks. The Germans set up the “Hindenberg” line, a defensive line linking Lens in the Pas-de-Calais to la Fère south of Saint Quentin. The large Riqueval tunnel, occupied by 34 barges and sealed at both ends, then became one of the Germans’ safest shelters. The fortress was presumed impregnable, but was nevertheless taken by the Americans on 29th September 1918



Tuesday, 30th July - The small convoy of 3 pleasure boats formed at 07.15 and the tow commenced at 07.50 travelling at 4kph. It took just under 2 hours. We then pressed on to Cambrai.

Some history: On 20th November, 1917, at 06.20, 476 British Mark IV tanks launched an assault on the Hindenberg Line. At dawn the silence was broken by the sound of engines and the clatter of tank tracks moving across the chalky soil in thick fog. The battle was planned in the greatest secrecy; the offensive heralded the birth of tank warfare



“Deborah”, a female tank, was one of the 476 discovered in 1998 when she was unearthed from the battlefield

Wednesday, 31st July - we departed Cambrai at 11.00 on passage east towards Belgium and on l'Escaut [the canal] we met up with a delightful Dutch couple who, whilst waiting for the lock invited us to secure alongside. They spoke good English and were able to talk with the lock-keepers and secure our position in the locks. We paired up and followed them into a very quiet and peaceful marina at Valenciennes. Berthing, water, electricity, showers, refuse facilities and security were all inclusive for €13.00

August - the intention is to head for the Strepv-Thieu boat lift, the Ronquiere Plain, and then on to Brussels, Charleroi, Liege, Maastricht and on to Nijmegen the Rhine and up to Koblenz and Luxembourg to refuel and return to Sneek in Freisland to leave for the winter

Clifford & Barney

DAWN OWL July 2019

The Newsletter Editor has only 4 CNOA Newsletters left to go! From the Newsletter Editor

After editing the February 2020 edition of the CNOA Newsletter, and so having done it for more than seven years, I will pass the role to another willing CNOA member. This will allow me to deliver some additional marketing support for a couple of “good cause” organisations who really do need some help in visibility, fund raising and attracting more supporters.

The new CNOA Newsletter Editor may not have all the digital skills needed right now but for the right person there is ample time for the new CNOA Newsletter Editor to acquire the necessary skills. They can be very useful for years to come in many other activities, could even be life enhancing. One’s children and grandchildren may even think but never say “How did you do that?, Respect.”

Few would deny that much of UK society is going digital. If you think online tax returns to HMRC and vehicle licencing are game changers, before then farmers were required to do their livestock census online each December. So, do you want to learn and practice some more digital skills?

Most members will have use of the Internet with a full sized screen (very useful when designing the Newsletter pages). Building the CNOA Newsletter using a phone screen could be interesting. Having access to an up to date licence for Microsoft Word would also be good as it allows the Newsletter to be built in Word but sent out as a smaller and secure .pdf file.

Building on the digital basics that most have, the right person will be introduced to some very useful information sources (ever wondered where the CNOA Newsletter images and news items come from, you just have to know who to ask). The distribution list is held securely on the web, the Hon Sec helps to keep it up to date and the Newsletter distribution is easy and fast powered by one of the best known names in consumer IT.

The website www.cnoa.org.uk is based on some older web platform technologies and is already being upgraded to use some much newer, more "user friendly" tools make updating the website very easy. It's another skill set that opens many other doors.

Some members already receive from friends emailed news items/holiday reports in all sorts of different formats that can send the cursor (sorry, the Mouse pointer) all over the place and the PC seems to have a mind of its own. Fear not, the new editor will be shown how to easily "re-format" most things that arrive by email or are taken from a website so they behave themselves while being used to build the CNOA Newsletter.

Interested to know more? Just click on contact@cnoa.org.uk Could even be life enhancing.

A note from the CNOA Hon. Secretary

If you enjoy the CNOA activities, why not extend an invitation to a like minded serving or retired officer? or ask them to look at cnoa.org.uk



CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

President: Commodore Barry Bryant CVO RN

Chairman: Cdr Colin Tozer RN (Rtd)

APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

SURNAME		FORENAMES	DATE
HOME ADDRESS Tel. No:- E Mail Address:-		BUSINESS ADDRESS Tel. No:- E Mail Address:-	
RANK	TYPE OF COMMISSION	SPECIALISATION / AWARDS & QUALIFICATIONS	
BRIEF CAREER DETAILS			
<p>General Data Protection Regulation: - I agree that all the above details may be maintained and kept by the CNOA and RSME for the purposes of membership records and security. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to my details being published in a membership booklet.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SIGNED.....</p>			
PRESENT OCCUPATION			
PROPOSERS NAME	PROPOSERS SIGNATURE	HOW LONG KNOWN	
SECONDEES NAME	SECONDEES SIGNATURE	HOW LONG KNOWN	