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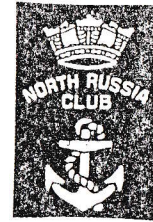
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NORTHERN LIGHT Nº35

Special Edition

JUNE 1995

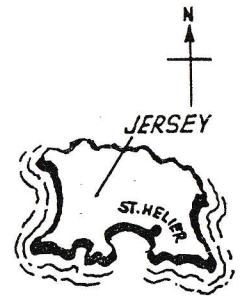
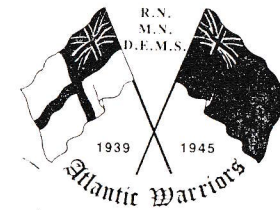
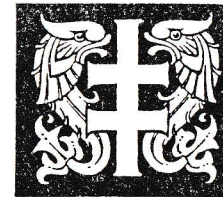


Metropolitan
Borough of
Sefton



The City of Liverpool

Liverpool Cathedral



Western Approaches. H.Q.

JUNE 1995

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ISSN 0958-1014

NORTHERN LIGHT No 33 - "SPECIAL EDITION"

THE GLORIOUS AND WONDERFUL MONTH OF MAY

Following what was undoubtedly the most interesting and successful month in our nine-year history, we have decided to issue this special edition of Northern Light, so that the many events that have taken place can be shared by all members at a time whilst they are topical. Our next regular edition is not due on your door mat until early September! Thus, your committee are maintaining their desire to bring the club to you and not just rely on those who can attend events. "Old Scrooge" the Hon. Treasurer readily said "go ahead" even though printing and mailing costs will throw his projected budget out by nearly £1,000!! He's not such a bad shipmate after all!

My special thanks go to the contributors who have readily rallied round, at very short notice, to provide the articles and photographs for the ensuing pages. We hope you all enjoy the contents, they are all eye-witness accounts and are not 'sensational' like some given by the media!

Articles on following pages include:-

PRE-OPENING VISITS TO WESTERN APPROACHES HEADQUARTERS

CONFERMENT OF THE FREEDOM OF ENTRY INTO THE CITY OF LIVERPOOL UPON H.M.S. EAGLET

NORTH RUSSIA CLUB'S REUNION IN JERSEY C.I.

RECEPTION AT THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY IN LONDON

RECEPTION ABOARD H.M.S. BELFAST

NORTH RUSSIA CLUB'S SOUTHERN REUNION AT H.M.S. NELSON, PORTSMOUTH

PREVIEW OF THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC GALLERY AT MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM

"BA 93" COMMEMORATION EVENTS

CAPTAIN WALKER'S OLD BOYS ANNUAL DINNER AT BOOTLE TOWN HALL

SCATTERING OF CAPTAIN WYBURD'S ASHES AT SEA
(Captain . Wyburd DSO, DSC, RN was the first SBNO North Russia in WWII)

Contributors: C.B.Tye; L.A.Sullivan; E.Skelton; G.Shelton; W.Gleeson; J.R.Badger-Smith; J.McHugh; P.A.Skinner; W.Ryan (USA); M.Vallee (USA) and the editor.

WESTERN APPROACHES HEADQUARTERS
(A pre-opening visit)
By R.D.Squires.

The glorious month of May started on 1st and 2nd when, on each day approximately 45 club members, together with other veterans including the Russian Convoy Club, were invited to a free preview of the "Citadel" or "Bunker", as it was known during the war.

The developers, Walton Commercial Group, with the Northern Design Unit have worked wonders in re-discovering so many of the old artifacts and reinstating the underground headquarters. A member remarked "We have waited 47 years for the privilege of entering the H.Q.". Whilst another said "If this had been sited in London it would have been a national shrine now, and as well known as Churchill's War Rooms ! Who could argue with them ?

It was a pleasure and interesting to meet and talk to ex-WRNS and WAAF's who had actually served in the bunker during the time of the Arctic Convoys. It was also good to see NRC committee man Les Jones there, as he did two short spells there during the war. He also came back on the second day with younger members of his family.

Dr James Fox and Mr Fred O'Brien were able to explain the many problems encountered in meeting the opening dead-line, such as breaking through one metre thick tungsten reinforce concrete wall to satisfy the Safety and fire inspectors! They were also able to tell us that Phase Two of the development is on schedule and that a further 20,000 sq.ft. will be opened in early July.

Many of us have already made return visits and we intend to go back again!! It's well worth it!!

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THE CONFERMENT OF THE FREEDOM OF ENTRY INTO THE CITY OF LIVERPOOL ON H.M.S. EAGLET
By J.J. Howes.

I understand that we were allocated 40 seats at the service. What a pity that there were only 30 bums on seats!

It was an enjoyable service conducted in true naval style, with the added dignity of the city fathers of this great seaport city.

The moments to cherish for me (as an ex-Eaglet), was the Dedication of the White Ensign, followed by Last Post, Silence, Reveille and the laying up of the Ensign in perpetuity in the War Memorial Chapel.

I must also record that the address given by Revd. John Williams RNR, Eaglet's Chaplain, could not, in my opinion have been bettered.

Finally, the company of H.M.S. Eaglet marched through the city, colours flying, drums beating and bayonets fixed, with the salute taken on the cathedral steps by the Lord Mayor and Admiral Sir Anthony Morton GBE, KCB.

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RECEPTION AT THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY IN LONDON
By Peter A Skinner Hon. Sec.

On 10th May, 25 members of N.R.C., together with a similar number from the Russian Convoy Club, assembled at the Embassy of the Russian Federation, at the invitation of Mr. Boris Pankin, to celebrate the 48th Anniversary of the end of hostilities in Europe - "Victory Day".

On this occasion we were entertained at 13 Kensington Palace Gardens, a magnificent building on the opposite side of the road to the one previously used. On arrival we were shown into a large reception room at the back of the building, beautifully decorated in the Victorian style, and overlooking well maintained gardens backing on to Kensington Palace Gardens. The hustle and bustle associated with London could hardly be heard, we might as well have been deep in the countryside.

At the appointed hour Mr Pankin joined us and addressed us with a few words of welcome. I, as Hon. Secretary (and deputising for our President and Chairman who were living it up in Jersey), replied on behalf of all present, followed by Bob Allan, Chairman of the R.C.C. The Ambassador then presented five members from each club with their 40th Anniversary Medals, and we were then ushered into the Garden Room for a Buffet Lunch.

Another change from previous occasions was that the food and drink was brought round by neatly dressed waitresses, in other words, we could not help ourselves to the Vodka, but we did not go short! It was interesting to mingle with the other guests, three Ladies from H.M.S. Centurion and a Wren - Maggie - who is the Deputy Controller of the Wrens. Also present were senior members of the Embassy staff, and in particular one of the Assistant Naval Attaches, Captain Alexander Antropov who had been to several of the Russian Embassies around the world, including the United States.

As the Vodka began to disappear, so did the guests, and another interesting visit to our friends from the Russian Federation was over.

I did write to the Ambassador to thank him on your behalf.

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OUR WEEK IN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

SUNDAY 9 May: We arrived from various points on the mainland on "Liberation Day" to a wonderful welcome - even "Drinkies on the House" from 1800 to 1900. Then, following dinner we were entertained with a Cabaret in the Ballroom at the Westhill Hotel.

MONDAY 10 MAY: A full-day coach tour of Jersey, visiting "The Living Legend", Jersey Potteries and the Wildlife Preservation Park. (Next time on the island dont miss the newly opened "Living Legend" - it's an unforgettable experience!

After dinner and back to the Ballroom for a very entertaining talk on "My Island of Jersey" by Alan Churchill.

TUESDAY 11 MAY: For most of us it was a "Day on the Town" exploring, shopping, seeing the market and generally obeying "She who must be obeyed".

Then after dinner an International Entertainer Tom Weston, who

denied the suggestion that he was a descendant of dear old Aggie Weston!
WEDNESDAY 12 MAY: This was our BIG DAY and is reported by Les Sullivan:

Weatherwise it turned out to be perfect, which was lucky because for the rest of the week it was disappointing. However 0930 saw everybody boarding the coaches which were to take us to the Church in St Hellier. No fault could be found with the appearance of the "ships company" - any C.O. would have been proud to have them, with spotless dress and medals shining! It was a proud moment to see our Standard paraded down the aisle and laid on the altar. The church was packed with N.R.C. members, their wives and members of the public. An excellent thanksgiving service was conducted by the Dean of St. Hellier, the Very Reverend Basil O'Ferrell.

From the church we had to walk to the Cenotaph, which necessitated crossing the main thoroughfare so to make sure we arrived safely extra traffic wardens were on duty. One of them was kissed by a club member - but she was very attractive and charming! To see a traffic warden being kissed whilst on duty must be some sort of record. After a prayer and wreath laying we then walked to the Town Hall.

Here, we attended a "Vin D'Honneur" - which is really drinks on the house. Not just a sedate glass of sherry but trestle tables carrying just about every kind of drink one could ask for. We were joined by the Dean, and the Bishop of Winchester. The company was officially welcomed by the Constable (Mayor) of St. Hellier, Bob Le Broq and many photographs were taken.

After a very convivial hour we boarded the coaches again, this time being taken to the "Old Coach House" at Goray for lunch. It was a really splendid lunch enjoyed by everybody and afterwards our President Chris Tye, made a presentation to our excellent host, Bob Smale. This was a brass clock which chimes the bells of the Navy's watches, in appreciation of all that he had done in arranging such a wonderful re-union.

Eventually, the well fed and watered assembly returned to our hotel after a thoroughly satisfying and enjoyable day.

But the day was not over! As, following dinner there was the "Mickey Maskell Party Night".

THURSDAY 13; FRIDAY 14; and SATURDAY 15 MAY. Quite sensibly, the itinerary allowed us all to do our own things, and there was no shortage of places to visit, shops to explore, etc., etc. followed each evening with more live entertainment. On Thursday, we again were treated to "Drinkies on the House" and also a further surprise when the Dean returned to read the fax message which he had received from the Russian Ambassador in London:

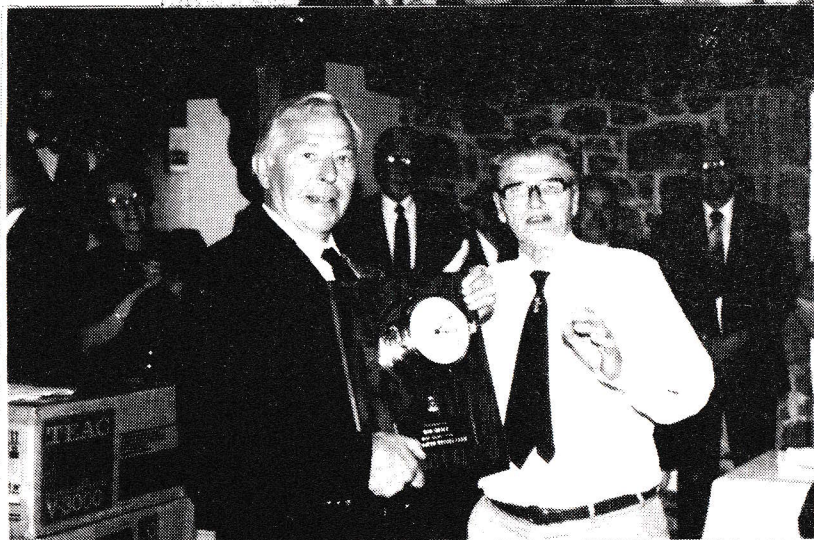
North Russia Club
Dear British Veterans!

The people of Russia appreciate the major contribution made by the British servicemen to our common victory over fascism in the Second World War. It is only due to our comradeship in-arms that we overcame the greatest danger to humanity.

With special pleasure I would like to greet the great British veterans from the North Russia Club who took part in the northern allied convoys to Archangel and Murmansk.

Your help to our people in the wartime years was unprecedented by its scope and significance. We pay tribute to you, dear veterans, for your heroism and gallantry and wish to thank you most heartedly for what you did for a peaceful life in this world.

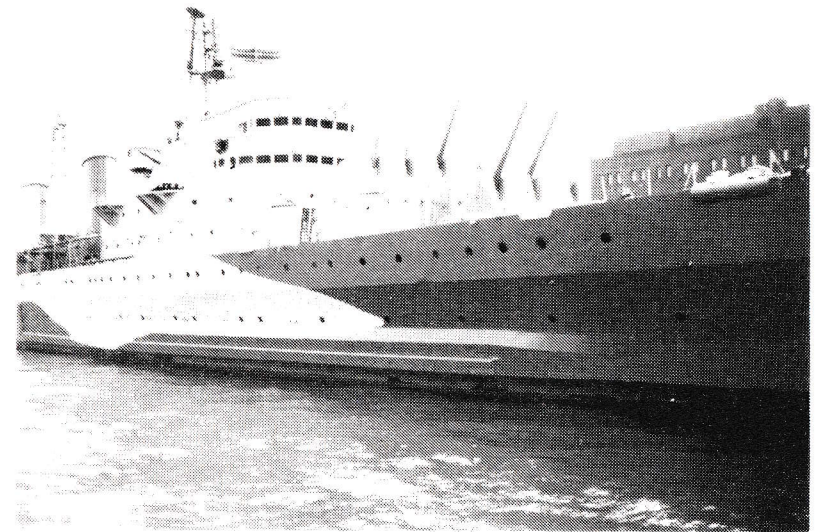
(signed) Boris Pankin
Ambassador of the Russian
Federation in Great Britain



H.M.S. BELFAST IN "WAR PAINT"
By the Editor wearing his Chairman's hat.

On 19 May, I had the privilege, together with other selected persons including Chairmen of several ex-Service Associations to attend a Buffet Reception on board our headquarters ship H.M.S. Belfast.

The invitation was received from Dr Alan Borg CBE FSA, the Director General of the Imperial War Museum. Guests assembled at Festival Pier adjacent to Festival Hall to board the paddle steamer The Elizabethan to view H.M.S. Belfast in her wartime camouflage. Following this a reception was held in Belfast's Wardroom.



BELFAST IN WAR PAINT - 19 MAY 1993

During the day Mr J. Wenzel, who is Captain Collins' successor as Director of Belfast, explained that the idea of camouflage was mainly to make the ship more visible from her berth. It certainly does that and is quite the opposite to the wartime reason! Also, "A" and "B" turrets are now trained and elevated to an 'action' position. If the guns were fired in this position it is confidently estimated that they would score direct hits on Scratchwood Service Station on the M1 motorway! Scratchwood does advertise Belfast as a tourist attraction!

Mr Wenzel has several other plans for the ship/museum.

.....
PHOTOS OPPOSITE

Top "JERSEY" - THE HOMAGE" Capt George Bryson MN, Standard Bearer.
Middle "VIN D'HONNEUR" From Left: The Constable, Bob Smale, Bishop of Winchester, Dick Squires, Chris Tye.
Bottom "THE PRESENTATION" Bob Smale and Chris Tye.

THE "SOUTHERN" REUNION AT POMPEY BARRACKS

On Saturday 22 May.

By Ernie Skelton

I have been asked to prepare this short report on the reunion in the absence of the reunion organiser Mervyn Williams, who is away in New Zealand at this time.

Many members met at the Home Club for a "wet" and to meet shipmates old and new. During the evening more than 100 members, wives and friends assembled in the mess at H.M.S. NELSON (R.N.B. Pompey). The guests of honour were the Deputy Lord and Lady Mayor of Portsmouth (he being of office just five days prior) and our Patron Rear Admiral Bruce Richardson RN (Rtd), CB,.

The evening started in earnest at 1900. The tables had been arranged so that all could sit in small groups and were able to move freely to meet shipmates old and new. Members were present from U.S.A., Australia and as far north as Aberdeen, in fact from far and wide.

Speeches were kept to a minimum and came from Mervyn Williams and our President Chris. B. Tye. Replies were made by the Deputy Lord Mayor and Admiral Richardson. Presentations were made to the City of Portsmouth by Bill Ryan and Martin Vallee, both from U.S.A. A club shield and a wall pennant from New Zealand were presented to the mess.

Dancing followed to a superb D.J., an excellent buffet was provided - then dancing continued, and for those not wishing to dance a "sing along" took place, led by an N.R.C. member. Judging by the gusto, it was well appreciated. A medley of Welsh songs were rendered by the Welsh Chorister. A "huge" raffle took place (all profit!) - Mervyn had "scrounged" most of the prizes and others were donated by members and guests. The evening ended at midnight, I did however notice that some slid away at 2330, no doubt to dismiss their baby-sitters!!!

In all, a most enjoyable evening, and congratulations to Mervyn for all of his efforts - we dont really mind him going to New Zealand as long as he doesn't divulge England's cricket plans to the Kiwis.

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Letters in response:-

FROM THE DEPUTY LORD MAYOR OF PORTSMOUTH

Thank you for inviting me to attend your wonderful reunion last week. The Deputy Lady Mayoress and I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of meeting so many of you again, the feeling of comradeship and being included in it was marvellous.

Thank you for my plaque and the one from the American delegation. It would be most fitting for both of them to be hung in the D-Day Museum and this will be arranged shortly.

Thank you for your generous hospitality, we thought the whole evening superb, particularly as we had the luck to win a prize.

We look forward to seeing you all when you return next year.

Yours sincerely

Jim Patey

From: Rear Admiral A.B. RICHARDSON, RN (Rtd), CB

A quick note to say how very much I enjoyed myself yesterday evening at the Reunion. You said that everyone would have a good time and you were proved absolutely right.

For me, as the new boy, it was a welcome opportunity to meet again some of those with whom I had shared the unique experience of Dervish 91. Equally, it was a great pleasure to meet for the first time as Patron many of the members and their ladies. I greatly look forward to continuing that process on future occasions.

As I promised, I have dropped a quick note to the Commodore of the Barracks to say how well the Victory Club staff looked after us, how much the N.R.C. appreciated using the club, and expressing my hope that HMS NELSON would continue to support us and to make the club available in the future.

Again my congratulations and thanks for a most successful evening. I look forward to seeing you again at future functions.

Yours sincerely

Bruce R.

.....



The Commemorative Celebrations really started on May 22nd, with an exhibition by Sefton Metropolitan Council at Bootle Town Hall entitled "Bootle - the Home Port". It told the story, amongst many other things of Gladstone Dock and the escort vessels that sailed from there. To many of us this brought back many memories. The Town Hall also held a Commemorative Service on Sunday 23rd. It was here that we first experienced "BA93 Rationing!" The lack of space for all who wished to attend!! We had 10 pews but wanted 30!! A Conference took place from 25th to 28th, and a report is being prepared by one of our American members and this will be published in a future edition.

Several other events will not receive full coverage in the ensuing pages but the main events are included - some of them more than once. Many participants had differing stories to tell!

It has not been possible to publish the stories in strict chronological order, but read on! We hope you enjoy it!!

A letter from one shipmate to another:

FIVE DAYS ON MERSEYSIDE

By Geoff Shelton

(Geoff was a last minute replacement for Charlie Smith (unfit to travel)

Dear Charlie,

I deeply regret that your indisposition prevented you from attending the celebrations. I was very honoured to go in your place and whilst you were very much missed, your health was drunk so often that we were all in danger of getting pi...., sorry inebriated.

We had all booked into the New Manx Hotel and I was sharing a room on the top floor (forty six bloody steps), with Chris. Tye our illustrious President and Peter Skinner our hard working Secretary. You can see that I mix with the cream of society. There were two single beds and a double one. They were either pulling rank or maybe they thought I was too big to get into a single or maybe they thought I had aspirations in other directions but anyway I got the double.

Arriving on the Thursday my first engagement was to go to the Liverpool Parish Church overlooking the waterfront and known as Our Lady and St. Nicholas. N.R.C. members occupied half a dozen rows on the left hand side and took part in the dedication of the Maritime Chapel. We then adjourned outside to dedicate a plot of ground for the Arctic Campaign Memorial. The space allocated will eventually be the site for the ROYAL ARTHUR mast. It was of course pouring with rain. The Good Lord did provide umbrellas for David Shepherd the Bishop of Liverpool, Derek Worlock the Roman Catholic Archbishop and the Moderator of the Free Church. But, he must have thought we were used to it and left us to brave it out. Bill Gleeson was the official N.R.C. photographer but as he forgot to put a film in, we are denied the opportunity of seeing our Chairman with cascades of water running down his neck. The date for the Court Martial has yet to be fixed.

As you may know the late Captain Walker is somewhat of a hero up here so it was appropriate that the Sea Cadets from the training ship STARLING (Captain Walker's old command) should invite us and a number of sailors of the Russian Destroyer GREMYASHCHI, to be their guests at their unit. We went by coach to pick up the Russian sailors, but of course it was still raining. Among them was a retired officer who I had met in Murmansk two years ago. (In fact I thought in Murmansk that he was trying to lead me astray, but in reality he was trying to direct me along the correct road to the hotel). The only one trying to lead me astray on Dervish was a Scotsman from Drymen but I digress. The evening was slow to start and yet for some unknown reason as soon as the bar opened up so did the evening. The bar was free to the Russian sailors and then I saw a huge bottle of Vodka being removed from behind the bar by the sea cadets "Jimmy" and then it suddenly surfaced in the hands of our Chairman. He was very generous in dispensing the contents to all and sundry with the result that a number of recipients developed glazed eyes and sappy grins all over their faces. It did not take long for the singing to start and none was more vociferous than Nicolai Vassiliy, the retired Russian Admiral, who conducted the singing and encouraged his young compatriots to join in. We all had a wonderful time except when we had to go out in the rain to see the cadets parade for "Sunset"

We arrived late back at the hotel only to find that Helen and Al Grant, the proprietors were awaiting our return with a suitable supply of nightcaps. Again the singing continued until way past midnight. Al then said, "Would you mind if breakfast was deferred until after 0800, as I have taken in two young ladies who were desperate for accommodation even though I am fully booked, so have had to make up a bed in the breakfast room?" We began to realise that this kindly act was just one of the many we were due to receive in the next few days. However, unaware that one of the young ladies was standing behind me I said to Al, "How can you do that when you know that I am

sleeping on my own in a large double bed". Before Al could reply a voice behind me said very sweetly, "Well you wont have to worry about getting me pregnant because I already am". Charlie, you could have knocked me down with a feather. I mean, invitations like that dont come too often when you're a young man, but at my age the mind boggles!!

I'm coming over all sweaty thinking about it, so I'll pass on to Friday quickly.



We had an invitation to a reception aboard RS GREMYASHCHI, so Peter Skinner suggested we leave the hotel early and go over to Birkenhead by ferry. It was of course raining so after waiting half an hour for a bus we had to get off after two stops and then walk at least another mile. The reception we received was magnificent. The wardroom table was bedecked by an array of food including caviar, plus champagne, brandy, wines and vodka. Our hosts expected us to down the vodka in one gulp, so being courteous sort of guys we obliged them, again and again and again. I blamed the raw fish for giving me the belly ache, but in retrospect I am not so sure.

On leaving the ship we couldn't get a taxi and it was still raining, so Peter spoke to a motor cycle policeman, who promptly stopped a mini-bus and asked him to take us to the ferry. The driver was taken by surprise but would not allow us to pay him. I should add that Dick was presented with a gift that took the form of shell casing which had been erected on a polished board. Between you and me Charlie, it appeared to resemble a phallic symbol.

Returning to Liverpool we saw the Royal Yacht and also some old planes rehearsing for the fly past. I must confess to a lump in the throat when two old Swordfish and a Hurricane flew over. How they survived the rigours of the Arctic and indeed landed on 20,000 tons of steel rising and falling 30 feet or more is a miracle in itself.

Friday evening was an evening of elegance. The ladies in their finery and the men resplendent in evening dress sporting an array of miniature

medals: The occasion was a dinner dance at Bootle Town Hall where Captain Walkers Old Boys Association were holding their 29th Annual Reunion. Chris Tye, Peter Skinner and myself were there on the invitation of Dick and Peg Squires. It was all very formal with a delightful meal (menu card with nautical variation below), congenial company and some very good speeches. It was again well past midnight before we got back to the hotel. When it became apparent that the walls were moving we went to bed.

M E N U

* * *

Masthead Lookout's Soup & Ping Bosun's Cheese
(Minestrone Soup & Parmesan Cheese)

Western Atlantic Rolls & Depth Charge Slide
(Bread Rolls & Butter)

* * *

Sole of Tanky's Seaboot
(Fillet of Beef Wellington)

'Stork' and 'Starling' Spuds
(Fondant and Parsley Potatoes)

Golden Rivet Carrots and Minted 'Deptford' Peas
(Vichy Carrots and Minted Garden Peas)

Sprog's Delight
(Green Salad Bowls)

* * *

Stoker's Bubbly Supreme & Sea Daddy's Cream
(Sherry Trifle and Fresh Cream)

* * *

Paybob's Bung 'ole
(Traditional English Cheese)

* * *

Char or Q.M's Kye
(Tea or Coffee)

* * *

Hello Sailor!
(Baskets of Fruit)

Wines:

Plonk Cotes de Caradoc 1942
Vino Cabernet d'Rock Ape 1940
Port-in-a-Storm 1943

No Scrumpy! No Oggies! No Pot Mess!
Who's the Mess Caterer?

To our surprise the sun was shining when we arose on Saturday morning. We prayed that it would continue to do so as today is the day of the big march through the centre of Liverpool. The veterans gathered at Mann Island which is somewhere near the waterfront. A "buzz" went round that the North Russia Club would lead the veterans behind the Standards. A lot of other veterans were not aware of this with the result being a mixture of various

clubs though N.R.C. was the prominent one. There were at least three Royal Marine Bands, the Canadian Maritime Forces Band, the Royal Artillery Band, the Band of the Royal Air Force and last but not least, the Band of the Russian Northern Fleet. In between were sailors from all over the world and from many nationalities. Meanwhile, a Petty Officer Gunner's Mate was trying to get the veterans to form up in lines of six abreast. This would have been difficult enough fifty years ago but deafness, stubbornness, age and hangovers from too many nights on the town were beginning to take effect. At long last with a lot of shouting and cajoling he achieved his object and then he barked, "WIND UP YOUR PACEMAKERS BECAUSE NOW, YOU ARE ALL MINE!" If that didn't remind you of Whale Island then nothing would.

The parade had passed and then it was the turn of the veterans - over 2,000 of us. Charlie, we felt proud as we threw our shoulders back, tried to pull our stomachs in and by the left quick marched. Suddenly the streets erupted in a crescendo of cheering and shouting and clapping which went on and on and on. Never have I experienced the waves of warmth and affection that the people of Liverpool bestowed on us that day. Charlie, I bit my lip in a fruitless attempt to stop the tears flowing, the crowds became out of focus as I thought of our shipmates lying in cold and hostile waters of the Barents Sea. The Arctic Ocean swallowed the bodies of those young men and will keep them to eternity in its chilly embrace. I was brought back by an old lady in the crowd shouting "We love you all". There were youngsters waving flags and teenagers applauding us. There were veterans in the throng proudly wearing their medals but were too infirm to join in the march, we gave them a wink or the thumbs up sign. The march went up a gentle incline but the crowds by their reception gave us that extra spring in the step and then as we approached the saluting dais the occupants on the podium rose as one and cheered us. Charlie, pal, forgive me if I sound emotional but I am. The thought of all the love that has been showed upon us this weekend and that part of that love is due to our departed shipmates, somehow it spans fifty years, it brings back painful memories. We know that there is a certain indefinable bond that ties we shipmates together. I think that in Liverpool this day her citizens tapped that bond and were able to share with us maybe just a portion of the ache we still feel for our comrades as well as the mutual bond of affection that makes a shipmate special.

The march ended with a civic reception at the magnificent St Georges Hall.

On Saturday evening Al very kindly ferried two lots of us to Goodison Park. He was not sure of the route (probably a Liverpool F.C. supporter!!) and stopped to make enquiries off a van load of policemen. As Al was talking I noticed he wasn't wearing a seat belt, and hoped that the policeman hadn't spotted it, but he did and said very nicely "By the way sir, the roads are wet and could be a little dangerous. If I were you I would wear a seat belt". Al was so surprised he drove off and went straight through a red light. We were due to see a Charity Gala performance in the presence of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. This featured the massed bands of the Royal Marines, the Royal Marine Fanfare team, the Royal Naval Guard from H.M.S. LIVERPOOL, the Hall Choir, the Royal Marine Kings Squad and Corps of Drums, the Canadian Maritime Forces Band from Nova Scotia, the R.M. Commando Free Fall Parachute Team, one of them falling outside the stadium and others only just landing on the turf in high, blustery winds. There was also the bands of the Royal Artillery, Royal Air Force and the Sea Cadet Force with dancers and finally beautiful soprano Lesley Garrett with the lovely voice (talking about 'Singing in the Rain' - Gene Kelly had nothing on Lesley!)

The marching, the counter marching, the music, yes, it really was a spectacular evening, and it wasn't marred by the continuous rain - though I confess the man who had the best job was the Royal Marine who held the umbrella over the singer.

On Sunday morning I awoke to a pleasant sunny day and decided to go and get a paper. The surrounding streets were all closed off and guarded by policemen as a wise precaution due to the fact that the Prince and Princess of Wales were due to attend the service at the Cathedral. I spoke to a police lady who said "I could murder a cup of tea". I told her I would see Al and try and get her one. Al duly obliged then took a mug of tea to another policeman, then not satisfied with that, he started to invite them in to breakfast, "On the House". Al and Helen's generosity was not confined to the veterans because he laid on forty breakfasts - and that was one hell of a kindness. He did of course blame me for starting it, but all I did was ask for a cup of tea for one cold young lady.

Al would pipe all hands to breakfast or come in with the meal singing a song that had the slates jumping up and down on the roof. We then joined in causing an uproar that had the other guests wondering what the hell was going on.

The Liverpool Anglican Cathedral is a massive place and situated in a delightful setting. Tickets were scarce but Dick Squires managed to get 42 of us in. Apart from Royalty there were present the Prime Minister and two other Cabinet Ministers, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside plus a host of other top brass including the clerics covered two pages of the Order of Service. The service was ecumenical in context and in attendance. It was the sort of service one might expect on such a commemorative occasion, it was moving, thoughtful, sad, nostalgic and emotional. It is a factor of life that one rarely hears sailors talking of faith and yet I sense that with their closeness to the elements they have a deep and abiding faith in the God of Creation. The prayers that are said, the songs which are sung, the sermons which are spoken, open up the memories of our youth and with sadness we remember our fallen shipmates and pray to God that he too will remember them.

Now Charlie, for the first time in my life I've been locked in church. Yes Charlie, you heard me right, we were all locked in church, security was the reason they said, so they let Charles and Di out to take the salute at the march past. I would have liked to have seen it but there was a big bouncer on the door and I didn't feel like arguing with him.

On Sunday evening at St Georges Hall there was a "Nostalgia Musical Extravaganza". The first half of the programme was once again our Canadian Maritime Forces musicians who devoted their programme to songs from the last war but mainly American orientated. After the interval a youth band took over, the conductor of which was quite a character. He soon had everybody singing. The colours were paraded and then the Band of the Lancastrian Regiment gave a exhibition of drumming with all the lights turned out. All one could see were the fluorescent gloves of the drummers together with green and white decorations to the drums. Oh, yes, it also had a very revealing effect on one young lady's blouse but we will not talk about that. By the way it was the Ashton-in-Mersey Youth Show Band and their Musical Director was Ernie Waite, an excellently good band.

Well Charlie, we thought that wrapped up the celebrations, but no, because when we got back to the hotel, Helen and Al had a table in the hall covered in drinks. Bill Ryan of Florida had already gone to bed but his compatriot Nelson William out of Mass. U.S.A. had already made himself comfortable with a glass in hand. Bill and Peggy Gleeson together with Chris Tye, Peter Skinner, John Kenny and Bob Badger-Smith and myself settled down to imbibe with our hosts and bring to a conclusion what proved to be a happy and joyous few days. Yes there was sadness, but there was happiness too. There was love and kindness and caring, there was a great warmth and a welcome from the citizens of Liverpool that will forever be etched in my mind.

We sang and we sang and sang, we sang to the other guests as they came in, we sang to Helen, at the drop of a hat we sang about everything, but

there was an exception and that was Nelson. It was of course appropriate that someone should be called Nelson, but I hardly think that Horatio would have approved of him singing "I was working on the Railroad" throughout the night and every time there was a lull in the proceedings. Incidentally, someone in our club introduced another member named Hardy to Nelson and said "This is the first time Nelson and Hardy have been together since the Battle of Trafalgar". Mark you, I didn't see them kiss, so maybe it was two other people. If Nelson ever gets to read this I hope he knows a bit of British history. At 3 o'clock in the morning (there's a song in there somewhere) we retired to our bunks in the Crows Nest. Crawling on all fours is hardly a function of retiring but you know what I mean.

There are so many people in Liverpool that should be thanked but I will confine my appreciation to two great people as being representative of all the citizens of Liverpool and they are Al and Helen Grant of the New Manx Hotel. No words can adequately express for making us so welcome, their constant acts of kindness, the tributes we would find affixed to the walls. The list is endless, so we owe our deepest and heartfelt thanks to them and indeed to their two young daughters.

Well Charlie, I guess that's it. I hope that by means of these few words you will be able to experience a brief insight into what took place and of our feelings and emotions. The lads did not forget you and they asked me to convey to you their very best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Take care old Timer.
Your shipmate
Geoff Shelton.

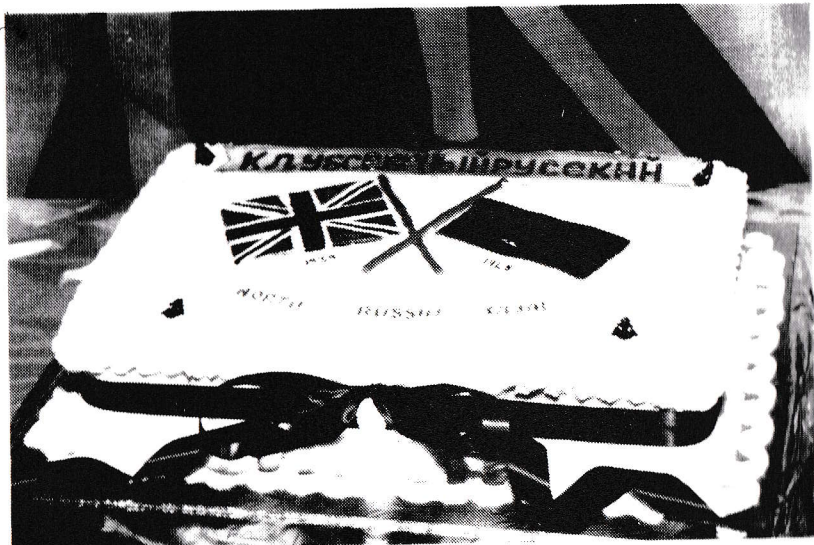
WITH THE SEA CADETS

By Jim McHugh (Sea Cadet Committee and North Russia Club Member)

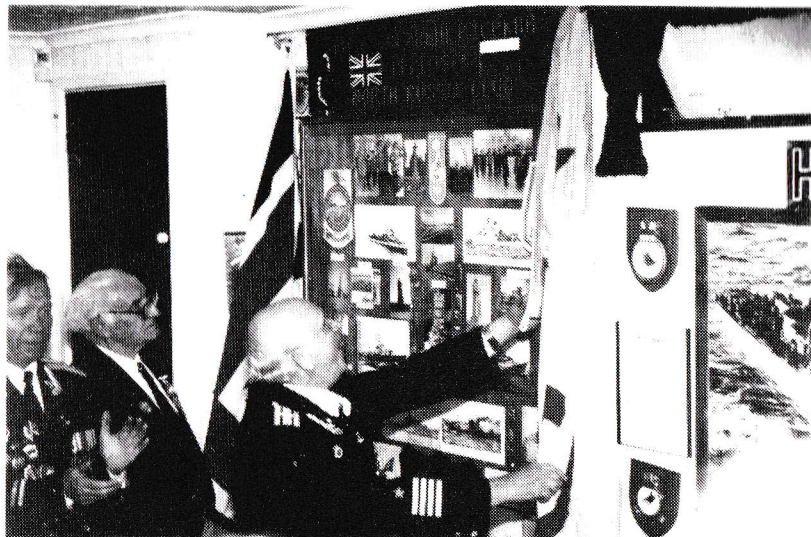
The time is 1900, the coach pulls up at the gates of the unit at Litherland. It was teeming but we were all outside - the C.O. Lieut Cmdr N. Woods, the 'Jimmy' Lieut Steve Kirkham, the Chairman of Committee Eddie Hutchins, myself and of course all the boys and girls of the unit, 85 of them. Off the coach stepped a Captain, 6 other officers, two veteran Contra-Admirals (Nikolai Phillipovitch Vasiliev and Kuzma Vasillovitch Yefimov) and 16 young ratings from GREMYASHCHY. They were our guests for the evening (with N.R.C. members). There was no problem with introductions as 5 interpreters were rounded up. They were piped aboard. As they entered the main building they were shown the large pictures featuring that gallant ship of WW2 from which our unit has got it's proud name STARLING. We all then squeezed into the wardrobe and the bar was opened (the till remained closed to our guests). The ratings were told by their officer in charge that they should drink lager, not vodka. So we soon made sure that the pint pots were in plentiful supply. The night then really started and the wardrobe was buzzing. Until, our guests were informed that the cadets wished to put on the Sunset Ceremony with full Cutlass Guard and Buglers. We all assembled outside and ignored the rain. The cadets were proud, the C.O. was pleased and our guests were impressed and happy that the ceremony had taken place despite the weather. Back to the wardrobe - more lager for the troops - more whisky and vodka for the officers (and Dick!). Part of one wall had previously been draped with a Union Jack and a Northern Fleet Ensign. Nikolai and Dick were invited to remove the drapes. The unveiling revealed a large panel devoted to North Russia Club and the Arctic Convoys. The title-panel of polished wood had been engraved by our chairman's son Gary and the numerous photographs and memorabilia of WW2 which had been collected over the years was displayed to all. Many ships are shown - Onslow, Opportune, Oribi, Obdurate, Matchless, Achates, Northern Gem as well as the memorials and graves in North Russia. (We hope that many more N.R.C. members will be able to see the panel soon, as it is intended to be the Sea Cadet's memorial to our shipmates who did not return). Next a large iced cake was produced and this was cut by Kuzma and Dick (using a naval cutlass of course!) The iced decoration included the flags of both of our countries. The cake was presented to our guests, who in turn expressed the wish that it was shared with the younger cadets of the unit. Well, it soon became 'buffet time'. No sausage rolls,

no pork pies, barbecued ribs or curly sandwiches!! We were sure that if the evening was taking place in Russia we would have a Russian dish - so Carol Regan and Anne Brownley produced two large pans of "Scouse" served with red cabbage and soft crusty bread. You bet they went "round the buoy" - not once, but two or three times. Then of course there was the singing, to our own George Ford and the accordion - "Sailing", "Sons of the Sea", "Hearts of Oak" "Volga Boatman" even "Tipperary" in English and Russian.

The evening came to a close at 2330, our cadets had long since gone home, many of them clutching a plastic bag of gifts from the Russians, but all of them happy, because tomorrow they have been invited aboard Gremyashchi. My old shipmate Joe Howarth and his wife said it was a night they would never forget and that goes for many of us.



THE CAKE AND THE UNVEILING



A VISIT TO GREMYASHCHY

By J.R.(Bob) Badger-Smith.

The highlight of the BA 93 week was of course the march through the City of Liverpool, but ranking next for me, was a visit to the Russian Destroyer GREMYASHCHY (Thunderer) by fifteen N.R.C. members.

Our first sight of this 6,500 ton destroyer brought immediate comparison between the destroyers and frigates, etc which we had known back in the 40's.

Making our way on to the quarterdeck we were not exactly piped aboard, but were met by the Officer of the Watch and guard, amid introductions to various officials, two English speaking Russians, and one representative from Izvestia, who had come up specially from London to meet N.R.C. veterans, and to forward reports to the peoples of Russia. The sheer size of this destroyer was overwhelming and I think it is appropriate to publish the statistics and photograph (over).

We were taken on a guided tour of the ship and thus there was plenty of interest for us, and the Russians were very forthcoming concerning the myriad questions asked on all aspects of the ship, it's equipment and role it is designed to play. This primary role is escort duties in time of war, whether it be convoys or larger naval vessels, and it's ability to give support to ground troops, particularly troop landings.

After our tour we adjourned to the wardroom where a sumptuous spread was awaiting us. We commenced with an abundance of champagne (or wine) with vodka or cognac pushed into one's hand as soon as one's glass was empty. There was fruit juices for the IT's amongst us.....but I can categorically say, that I saw no one drinking fruit juice.....but certainly vast quantities of vodka. I was informed that the secret for vodka drinking is to eat a slice of lemon dipped in sugar after each glass, and I must say it proved to be most efficacious. Along with the drinks we were provided with more than enough to eat by way of small snacks, with caviare predominating.

This feast was accompanied by numerous toasts on each side and many declarations of friendship and goodwill. The Captain gave a speech in which he spoke warmly of the material help given in WWII and the hardships overcome by allied ships in the face of tremendous odds to ensure that the maximum aid reached the U.S.S.R. The Admiral also gave a toast to the British Navy and a wish for continued co-operation and good fellowship between the two Navies. Our Chairman Dick Squires responded with thanks for the hospitality shown and hopes that the future would show more like demonstrations of friendships and that more like meetings would occur.

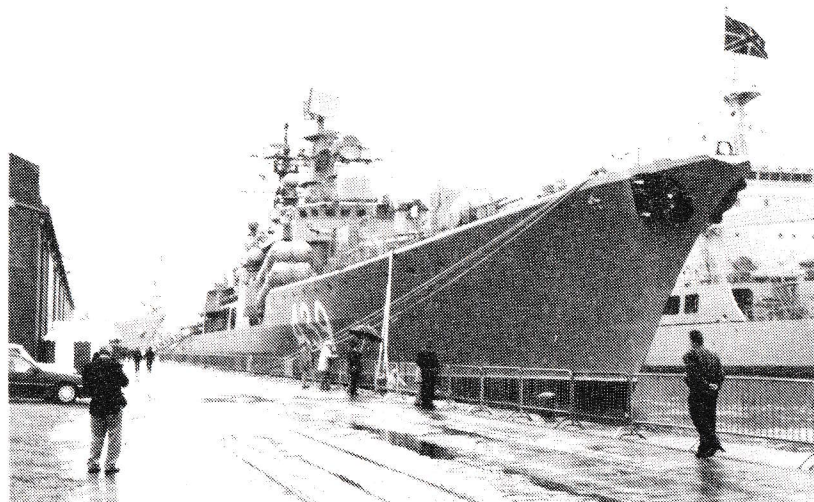
The whole affair lasted 2½ - 3 hours and once again (with the help of the vodka) the language barrier was overcome and communication was established in a remarkable way. I think it will suffice to say that in one capacity or another, we all served as ambassadors for Britain and served also to cement bonds of friendship even further than previously existed, assisted by the efforts of two Russian veteran captains who joined in wholeheartedly throughout.

From a personal point of view it was an outstanding success. Having served on the GREMYASHCHY during the period 1941 - 43, I was accorded special status and made an Honorary Member of the Gremyashchy Association and given the Freedom of Murmansk (whatever that benefit may be). Also, whilst celebrations continued I gave an interview for Izvestia which was broadcast throughout the Russian Federation, on wartime experiences aboard GREMYASHCHY

and thoughts and opinions on present day relations between U.K. and Russia and what could be done to help under present conditions. I trust that my views adequately reflected that of the Government!

All in all, a day that will be long remembered!

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GREMYASHCHY AT WEST FLOAT BIRKENHEAD, MAY 28, 1995

The 9th ship in Russian naval history to bear the name. Built in Leningrad (St Petersburg, now) in 1989. Her home port is Severomorsk (was Vaenga). She took part in our "Dervish '91" celebrations.

Displacement 6,500 tons; length 156 m; beam 17.3 m; draft 9 m; speed 32 knots; Complement 360 including 37 officers; Equipped with two ship-to-ship missile launchers; two air defence missile systems; two twin gun mountings; four small calibre guns; four torpedo tubes; two six-barrelled bomb throwers and an anti-submarine helicopter. She is also equipped for mine-laying.

The crew represents nearly 20 nationalities of the Russian Federation. Most of the commissioned staff are career officers who graduated from various naval schools and academies. 85% of these officers are married. Warrant officers serve on a five year contract and have the greater experience having completed secondary special or secondary technical schools. Men and petty officers are 18-22 years of age. Following their two-year tour of duty they return to civilian life but retain their Reservist roles.

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BA 93 PARADE MEMORIES OF AN OLD SOLDIER/SAILOR

By Bill Ryan, ex U.S. WW2 Merchant Seaman/Post War U.S. Army C.S.M.

THE "CITY" MARCH: It rained every day we were in Liverpool for the BA 93 commemorations, with the exception of Saturday morning. The rain lifted just in time for the street parade.

The active duty crews of the various Naval ships assembled on Merseyside, led the parade. Then came the Royal Marine Band, followed by over 2,000 veterans of the North Atlantic war. The original plan was for only 1,200 veterans, however, those without a pass, just formed up and away we all went.

The members of the North Russia Club led the veterans contingents. We were told that we had the hardest time during the war(!) and therefore we should have the honour of leading the veterans. As soon as we crossed Strand Street and came to the waiting spectators, a round of applause broke out. This ovation continued all along the route of the parade, until we were dismissed at St. Georges Hall. This old sailor/soldier couldn't believe it. Not since the parade in Archangel, Russia, in September 1991, have I heard such a spirited ovation. On hearing this applause, my chest went out a few more inches, my head was held higher and my step was definitely lighter.

After the parade was dismissed, we were all invited into a reception, hosted by the City of Liverpool, in their beautiful St Georges Hall. During the reception, Admiral Benjamin Bathurst, GCB, ADC, the First Sea Lord, introduced himself to me. He said he wanted to thank us "Yanks" for not only coming over during WWII, but for our presence in Liverpool during the BA 93 celebrations. Also in attendance were, I believe, every Admiral in the Royal Navy. They were shaking hands with all the veterans. (Boy, how the "Andrew" has changed since WWII). On behalf of the North Russia Club I congratulated our old friend from Glasgow, Admiral Sir Hugo White, on his recent promotion to full Admiral.

A SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION - A TIME TO REMEMBER

By John Kenny - ex H.M.S. EDINBURGH

Sunday morning had dawned with appropriate Atlantic type weather; grey skies, misty, and with a threat of rain but fortunately still dry, and as we made our way to the Cathedral the thorough nature of the security arrangements were apparent with police everywhere. Liverpool Cathedral is built on the heights overlooking Liverpool and its towering strength was seen as one of the landmarks by sailors returning from sea up the Mersey during the war. Today, with its nearby neighbour, the modernistic R. C. Cathedral (affectionately known as Paddy's Wigwam) and the Pier Head buildings, form the distinctive Liverpool outline we all recognise. The red sandstone Cathedral, the largest Anglican Cathedral in the world, was designed by the 22 year old Sir Gilbert Scott who won the design competition. Building started in 1904 and it was completed in 1978. It is a modern expression of medieval Gothic of massive dimension, 671 feet long, with a tower 300 feet high which spans the whole width of the building. From the outside it looks formidable but its built-in strength has produced an inner building which is quite outstanding and which enabled the thousands attending the service to be easily accommodated.

We were early as we all had to be seated by 0930 and, as we entered the Cathedral the sheer splendour of Scott's creation - a masterpiece - became apparent and totally fitting for our commemorative event. The inside was expansive, a series of redstone arches, softened by the curved stonework ceiling all glowing in the T.V. lights. There were no pillars to obstruct, or medieval tombs or monuments to distract and no offshoot sections to divide the congregation - we were all one in a living church. The long central aisle with the memorial design to Scott embedded half way down the Cathedral led to the Sanctuary and the large red covered High Altar backed by the high stone with

reredos. Behind, filling the whole of the back wall was a huge magnificent stained glass window, with Christ with arms outstretched - Blessing, in the upper part. Overall a wonderful setting for a great and significant occasion and the television cameras reminded us that countless thousands at home would too be participating in the service.

The first nine rows were allocated to V.I.Ps., U.K. and Foreign Service personnel and other Great and Good! - the remaining seats were allocated in alphabetical surname order from the front - so the "A's" were fortunate, although everyone had a good seat. As a "K", I sat next to Ludovic Kennedy and passed a pleasant half-hour swapping war experiences. About 2,000 veterans were present - the majority having seen active service.

Shortly before 1030 there was an expectant hush as Trumpeters in the Sanctuary and the high galleries opened the proceedings with a fanfare which was stirring, and Prince Charles and Diana walked down the aisle to their seats. Then the organ, said to be one of the great organs of the world played as the choir sang Herbert Howell's "Jubilate", and the various processions of clergy, service participants, visitors from the twin city Cologne, the Bishop of Liverpool, the R.C. Archbishop and Free Church Moderator, and finally the Archbishop of York all took their places in the Sanctuary.

Opening the Service the Dean of Liverpool welcomed all present and said the service was to recall the sacrifice of all from the 17 nations involved in the Battle of the Atlantic, to honour their courage, to remember those still bearing the scars of war, and in reconciliation to work for peace. There followed the singing of the Sailor's Hymn "Eternal Father, strong to save", and the national flags of the ships attending the Commemoration were taken to the Sanctuary. The First Sea Lord read the Naval Prayer and we all joined with Vice Admiral Cairns of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Lord's Prayer.

The service of prayer, music and deep reflection continued with a beautiful rendering by the choir of Psalm 107, "They that go down to the sea in ships; and occupy their business in great waters", and during the singing Lieut. Cmdr. Ian Fraser V.C., D.S.C., R.N.R., a local man, escorted by veterans of the Merchant Navy, Royal Air Force Coastal Command, Women's Royal Naval Service and the Maritime Regiment Royal Artillery, carried the red bound "Record of the Battle of the Atlantic" to the High Altar to be "safeguarded in perpetuity" in the archives of Liverpool Cathedral. Sumsion's setting of the Psalm was very haunting - very evocative of the changing moods of the sea, from calm to turbulence and it rose gradually in strength as the five veterans progressed to the High Altar.

Appropriately the First Lesson was read by the Flag Officer Plymouth, Sir Roy Newman, K.C.B., the present day successor to Sir Max Horton (C. in C. Western Approaches, 1942 - 1945), the text being Thomas Traherne's "The qualities and nature of a brave man's soul" a favourite reading of Sir Max. The reading was followed by the anthem "Greater Love hath no man" set to John Ireland's music - the singing being specially moving by first a young choir boy's solo and then a fine tenor voice. During the singing Books of Remembrance of the Merchant Navy and of Service personnel who lost their lives during the Battle were borne to the High Altar, and at the same time wreaths were placed on the memorials of Sir Percy Noble C. in C. Western Approaches and his successor in 1942 Sir Max Horton; the wreaths were laid by Squadron Leader A.A. Walker R.A.F., son of Captain F.J. Walker CB., D.S.O***, and Commodore M.P. Gretton RN, whose father Vice Admiral Sir Peter Gretton, K.C.B., D.S.O* had been an outstanding escort captain. The Second Lesson was read by the Prime Minister, John Major, and as the service was not only about commemoration but also reconciliation of wartime opponents, the text emphasised reconciliation, but I think the thoughts of most of us went to Charles and Diana and hoped that even at this late stage there could be a turn around.

We were now approaching the central and most sacred part of the service where each individual's thoughts and experiences would be set against the general background of the service. Whilst the hymn "O God our help in ages past" was sung the ensigns of the Merchant Navy, Royal Navy, Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Air Force and Maritime Regiment Royal Artillery were borne to the edge of the Sanctuary. Prayers were then said by the Bishop of Liverpool, the R.C. Archbishop and the Free Church Moderator and a hush fell over the Cathedral when Binyon's lines "We will remember them" set to Edward Elgar's music were sung. The Last Post played by the trumpeters filled the Cathedral and in the ensuing silence memories flooded in when, as individuals and collectively, we were in spiritual communion, in the eternal present, with those we remembered from the past. Then there was the Reveille.

The Archbishop of York, John Hapgood, gave a good address worthy of the occasion, and we all sat up when he mentioned the dangers of relying on "flags of convenience" shipping in any future conflict. No doubt he had noted that both the Minister of Defence and Minister of Transport were also in the congregation. His address was followed by the singing of "All people that on earth do dwell" when a collection was taken for service charities and the cathedral. A true symbol of reconciliation followed when prayers were led in turn by representatives of the Royal Norwegian Navy, Federal German Navy, United States Navy and the Master of the Queen Elizabeth II. (I was pleased to see in the congregation the Russian Senior Officers who had entertained us on their ship earlier in the week.

It was now time for the finale which centred on the Merchant Navy Ensign flanked by the standards of representative branches of the Veterans Associations, (including the Standard of North Russia Club) within the Sanctuary. To the massed trumpeters of the Royal Marines and Royal Artillery the Cathedral rang to the hymn "All praise and thanks to God above" based on a prayer by Sir Francis Drake, the Blessing was given by the Archbishop of York, and the National Anthem concluded the service.

The magnificence of the service and the deep sincerity of all of us there ensured it was a worthy commemoration and spiritual reflection. Grateful thanks are due to the organisers and Liverpool for the superb organisation.

THE CATHEDRAL MARCH & PARADE OF STANDARDS More by Command Sergeant Major Bill Ryan, U.S.A.

On Sunday, we were not so lucky. Not only was there a fine mist constantly falling, the wind was blowing at least Force 7 or 8. With the cathedral situated on the high ground, it was exposed to those winds coming in off the Irish Sea.

We, who were going to participate in the parade of Standards, waited outside the Cathedral for the completion of the Memorial Service. Thank God for those B.B.C. T.V. vans - they provided a temporary shelter from the cold winds. I'm sure these weather conditions brought back a lot of very unhappy memories, of our convoys to North Russia?

After the service, Prince Charles and Princess Diana, took their positions on the steps of the Cathedral, in preparation to take the salute of the assembled Standards and Veterans. I'm sure you have all seen the pictures of the Princess, trying to hold on to her hat and keep her dress from blowing

up? In between these actions, she flashed that very famous smile of hers.

I made sure I was not on the right flank. That way, when the command "Eyes Right" was given, I had a direct view of Princess Di. What a beautiful girl. Her contagious smile made us all forget about the bad weather. We all had a good laugh at her actions, and the old "vets" were all telling her "Hang on love!" You can't beat the WWII Veterans!!

After the parade, the two of them "worked the crowd". (As we say in the Colonies, but I guess you say, did a walk-about) They shook hands with a large number of spectators and included the wife of my mate, Martin Vallee, U.S. Armed Guard. To sum up both marches. I was visibly moved by the respect the people of Great Britain have for the World War II veterans. With the exception of weather, I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Liverpool. I am looking forward to the 100th Anniversary!?!?!?!?!?

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ATLANTIC REQUIEM

Bill Johnston NP 100 & HMS TRACKER

It spanned the wartime years across the ocean wide
From that first day our nation went to war,
Until at long, long last, the battle won
The seas were free again, for all to sail.

But while it raged it was both long and fierce,
And took it's toll in men and ships, women and children too,
From Caribbean coasts to Arctic shores it ranged
And on our West seaboard, we knew it well.

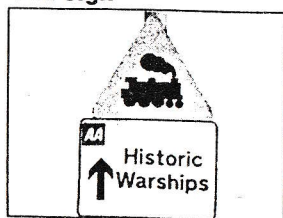
Belfast and Mersey, Bristol, Clyde and other ports,
All chapters in it's story, and the part they played -
Pray God it never comes again, to be refought,
For yet another generation still to come.

A heavy price we paid, when Victory was won, at last,
But then from out this long affray, some good emerged
To bring some small reward,
The comradeship of those surviving men.

They fought this battle, and today share memories fond,
In Britain, Canada, U.S.A., Norway and other Allied lands,
And they remember those who paid the cost in full -
With GRATITUDE,
They lie at rest, at peace, in fathoms deep!

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Odd sign



I TOOK this odd snap in Birkenhead, Wirral. Looks like a bit of a mix-up.
T. Gibson, Wallasey.

OUR PRESIDENT'S "BA 93"
(Or, Not All Plain Sailing")

At 1010 on 26 May I boarded the "1020" Euston to Liverpool train. I had my Scouse Passport ready as beady-eye Dick would be looking for it at Lime Street. We did not move from Euston until 1035 as we had to change locomotive. At Stafford we did not move at all for 1½ hours! Crewe signal box had been struck by a thunderbolt! On the train were two other NRC members and at Chester four others got on. We proceeded to drink the bar dry, the food ran out but B.R. allowed us a free phone call. The guard informed us that there were 16 trains in front of us and that we were moving signal to signal. The 1120 from Euston drew alongside us and we could see Bob Davis, Hugh Noble and Ron Young also enjoying themselves. We got to Liverpool at 1750! Next, a taxi to the New Manx Hotel where we had a great welcome. Also there were Geoff, John, Bill, Peggy, and our American cousins Bill and Nelson. That evenings itinerary said Canadian Vets. Social Evening - we thought a chat, coffee and sandwiches were due, but there was a 20 piece Canadian band playing in the Glen Miller style and a good gathering of some 300 persons, a great end to a long day.

On 27th it was first stop the Veterans Centre to register and meet 'old ships'. Then, the Battle of Atlantic Museum Gallery and British Shipping Exhibition. Then late afternoon, to the Parish Church for the dedication of the Maritime Chapel, followed by more heavy rain for the dedication of the future site of the Arctic Campaign/Royal Arthur Mast Memorial. Followed by a visit to the Sea Cadets Unit previously reported and where the Russian sailors sampled whisky for the first time but preferred "Wodka".

28th May was the day of Her Majesty's visit. First she went to Albert Dock (to meet Dick Squires and Tommy Adams), then to Anfield Football Club to unveil the Hillsborough Memorial before moving on to Bootle Town Hall. I had the honour, whilst not being presented but in the company during her visit with Prince Philip. The Duke asked all about the North Russia Club and I felt most capable and experienced to answer. Then back to the hotel for a quick change "Danny La Rue" style from suit to evening dress for dinner at Bootle Town Hall as guest of Dick and Peg at the C.W.O.B.A. dinner. There were several other N.R.C. members present. A taxi back to base ended a very exciting, honourable and enjoyable day. Tomorrow is the March, surely it wont still be raining!

NO, IT'S A BEAUTIFUL SUNNY MORNING! The Good Lord is with us!! Forming up at Mann Island under the guidance of a 3 Badge Petty Officer G.I. who was a laugh a minute. Rubbing his hands - "You lot are all mine", "Now have you all got good batteries in yer pacemakers?" "I've a few spare in my pocket". There were 30 NRC members together and I told the G.I. he said "I know, and you are leading the veterans columns behind the Royal Marine Band. Ted Billingham was our column leader. The sound of the other bands and the marching crews of the ships was magic, getting us in the marching mood and made us all proud and ready for the "Quick March" order from our platoon leader Ted Billingham. We felt that the cheering of the crowds and the flag waving was just for us alone, but of course it was for the hundreds of other veterans as well. I am sure that Dick too, with all the "big wigs" at the saluting base podium felt the same way too. The legs got weary, but the cheers kept us going. Then there were three lots of steps to climb before we entered St Georges Hall for a Civic Reception. Then followed a taxi ride to the waterfront for the Fly Past. Sea Harriers, Nimrods, Flying Fortress, Mosquito, Hurricanes, Spitfires, Swordfish, Sea Fury, Catalina, Lynx and Sea Kings - but not all at once!!! All viewed from the steps of our exclusive Veterans Club.

Continued over

HAVE YOU BOOKED FOR THE LONDON "A.G.M. WEEKEND YET ?
THERE IS STILL TIME TO DO SO!

See details on Page 7 the last edition of Northern Light

It was raining again by tea time and turned to drizzle later. The Massed Bands Charity Performance at Goodison Park was a most fantastic event to end a very emotional day. I noticed many tough bearded old salts, including ourselves with tears on their cheeks at the Sunset Ceremony by hundreds of musicians when Rule Britannia and Land of Hope and Glory echoed across Liverpool.

Sunday 30 May: The Cathedral was packed tight with reserved seats allocated in alphabetical order from the front. Squires and Iye near the back, "Wont see much I thought". But just a few yards behind me and with eyes in the back of my head, I had a great view of the dignitaries forming up. Prince Charles, Diana, John Major, David Shepherd, Admirals, Captains, Lord Lieutenants and many others.

Eventually, back to base and lunch. We had arranged to meet at a local restaurant and for Dick and Peg to join us. Arriving late for lunch, (unusual for me), another enjoyable surprise, alighting from the taxi, I found the assembled group lined up on the pavement to pipe "El Presidente" aboard. At 1700 a dozen of us boarded the narrowboat "Pride of Sefton" to view the ships in the docks. But a Force 8 blew up and the voyage had to be prematurely terminated and later voyages cancelled. The evening's "Nostalgia Evening" was good fun and the "Barrel was Rolled Out" several times and Vera Lynn's songs inspired us all.

On Bank Holiday Monday: N.R.Cs President, Chairman and Secretary had been invited to meet the Russian Admiral before Greymashchi sailed early that afternoon. We arrived aboard at 1015 and were immediately ushered to the admiral's quarters for a Champagne Breakfast - Champagne, Caviare, Cognac, Smoked Salmon, Vodka (Niet all gone!), Pickled Cucumber, etc. and that was after bacon, eggs and tomatoes earlier. Gifts were exchanged, speeches made and farewells said. Thank God for a "Make and Mend" today. But Magnificent May was not quite finished - we had been invited to Liverpool R.N.A. for a quiet drink. Peg very sensibly ushered us into the Trafalgar Room as it was quieter - it was and we welcomed it and it was also nice to finish up with plain "bangers and chips".

I have been asked by several people "what was the highlight?" If they expected me to say with The Queen and Prince, I'm sorry. It was the March Past, Civic Reception and Goodison Park"

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BA-93 QUOTES

Veteran, after the Fleet Review in a Force 9 gale: "That's the first time I've paid to be seasick and it cost me thirty nine quid!

Bouncer at The Grafton during Old Timer's Dance Night: "Dont want you lot back any more! We'll all be on the dole, there's only me on duty tonight, normally there are ten of us"

U.S.veterans wife: "I'm on cloud nine, this hand shook Princess Di's.
Oxford veteran's wife: "Watch me fly. This hand shook both Charles and Di's.

The Royal Marine parachutist who failed to land at Goodison but landed in a local pub's back yard: "I've heard of dropping in for a drink but this is bloody ridiculous!"

Un-named Dignitary: "I've just met two Russian Admirals, in completely different uniforms. I hope they are on the same side!"

The Archbishop on local radio, when asked for his most emotive memory of the week: "Standing in the pouring rain, watching an old veteran who had braved the Arctic and the enemy, firming the soil round a simple wooden cross at the Parish Church".

CAPTAIN DEREK WYBURD DSO, DSC, RN
By Bill Thomas (ex NP 200 and H.M.S. URSA.

Captain Derek Wyburd who recently passed away, was my Skipper both as SBNO at Archangel and aboard URSA in the Pacific. Out of information I write to tell you that on 27 May I went with three other lads and two wives to the "burying of Ashes at Sea" of our great Skipper. It is with pride that the reception given to us by C in C Portsmouth Staff exceeded beyond all expectations. We were met at Victory Gate and escorted to RFA DILIGENT by a Regulating Leading Hand, where we were piped aboard, met by the Commander and taken to the bridge and introduced to the Captain. Whilst we were on the bridge NOTTINGHAM slipped berth and we were taken to a selected spot to watch her pass. The "Still" was piped with all hands at attention. We could clearly see the Skipper's widow and son. Looking down on this sight was worthwhile and appreciated. But beyond all this, we had paid our last respects to an Officer a Gentleman whos crew were indeed just more than numbers and I personally felt very much at peace.

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S U B S !

First, thanks to the many members who took notice of my last mention in the previous magazine - your yardarms are now cleared for a further year!!

However, if you have not paid your 1993/94 subscription yet, I shall be pleased to receive them now.

xx
£7 Annually or £60 Life Membership
xx

All cheques/postal orders should be made out to "NORTH RUSSIA CLUB" and sen to Les Sullivan, 2 Broadlawn, Woolavington, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 8EP.

REMEMBER: IF IN DIFFICULTY PLEASE WRITE TO ME IN COMPLETE CONFIDENCE.

Please include membership number in all correspondence and a S.A.E. is also very welcome!

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A "ARCTIC BARRACK STANCHION" RE-UNION

Anyone from NP100, NP200, 151 WING RAF interested in a Re-union Week End?

As several members have suggest a re-union we have provisionally booked the "De Montfort Hotel, Kenilworth, Warwickshire for Saturday 29 January 1994. There are also special terms available for the Friday and Sunday nights, as follows:

SATURDAY 29 JANUARY:	Gala Dinner & Dance inclusive of	
	Bed and Full English Breakfast.	£38.00 per person
FRIDAY 28 JANUARY:) Dinner, Bed and Full English Breakfast	£35.00 " " "
SUNDAY 30 JANUARY:) Bed and Full English Breakfast only	£24.00 " " "
(Friday and Sunday bookings are optional)		

To assess the viability of this proposed function please be good enough to advise interest by writing to me;

C.B.Tye, 5 Begonia Avenue, Gillingham, Kent ME8 6YD.

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ODE TO THE CONVOY SIGNALMEN AND TELEGRAPHISTS
By 'Duke' Thomson

Heres' a toast to the convoy boys
We shared our sorrows we shared our joys

We came together from far and wide
Went down to the Mersey and sailed on the tide

Perhaps it would be a rusty old tramp
Creaking and groaning and quarters damp

Or maybe a liner now drab and grey
Loaded with troops for some land far away

Liver Buildings was our base
The Roebuck our main meeting place

Or perhaps the White Star Inn
With its genial guvnor Jimmy Quinn

For most of us Halifax was our trip
For some was the first time they'd been on a ship

We clamber aboard and are soon on our way
Steaming down river and into the bay

Next day we link up with the Scottish sections
Form into columns and signal directions

Fifty odd ships with their pennants on high
A bright splash of colour against a grey sky

The wind blows harder the glass still falling
Through the murk the escort is calling

The wind veers round increasing in force
Now the time has come to alter course

Ten columns of ships in widespread formation
All of them battling to keep proper station

Three days have passed without any action
The Commodore smiles with quiet satisfaction

The wind quietens down as the storm abates
But now the enemy awaits

Away to port a roar like thunder
A gallant ship is blown asunder

And then another thunderous roar
A burst of flame and then no more

A corvette wheels with black flag flying
Whilst way astern good men are dying

The other escorts join the fray
The depth charges erupt in spray

At last the sound of battle dies
A plume of smoke pollutes the skies

It seems the U-boat got away
Free to strike another day

The scattered ships resume their station
Roll slowly on to their destination

And then the fog banks swirl around
And all day long the sirens sound

We creep along for a day and a night
And when its clear theirs land in sight

A good night's sleep and a run ashore
Load up with cargo and head home once more

Another hazard joins the list
As a jagged ice-berg appears through the mist

We roll on slowly through the night
But with the dawn another fight

A stricken tanker starts to burn
Another settles by the stern

But then to lift us from our gloom
The guilty U-boat meets its doom

Now the journey nears its end
Theres Liverpool - just round the bend

A welcome sight worth more than words
To see those lovely Liver Birds

We travelled the oceans through fog ice and gale
Whatever the hazards we never did fail

We came together from far and wide
Went down the Mersey and sailed on the tide

The lucky ones lived but too many died
Let us always remember those days with pride.

16 UPPER ADDISON GARDENS
HOLLAND PARK
LONDON W14 8AP
071-371 4727

15th June 1993

S.O.S. CAN ANY N.P. 200; 151 WING R.A.F.
or COMBINED OPS (ARCHANGEL) MEMBER HELP?
Editor

Dear Mr Squires

As I mentioned on the phone this morning I am very keen to find film footage of the Arctic Convoys and Archangel filmed by British Servicemen during the second world war.

I would like to include it in a documentary programme that I am making for Channel Four about Russian girls who married British and American Servicemen during or shortly after the war. As you may know, many of these marriages ended tragically because Stalin would not allow the women to leave the Soviet Union to join their husbands in the West. We have managed to find some of the wives who remained trapped behind the iron curtain, and their stories and those of their former husbands, are very touching.

I am particularly interested in any film footage or photographs that any of your members may have of wartime Archangel and the Russian women that they may have become friendly with. Did they take some snap shots of any social events - dances, swimming parties or picnics, for instance?

I would also be interested to see home movies of the Dervish celebrations - film of the veterans arriving in Archangel and any street parades.

Finally, I have heard that a chap called Doctor Wright (I think he served on the Norfolk) had a cine camera with him and took a lot of film during the convoys and whilst ashore. Does anyone remember him or know how I could contact him or his family now?

Thanks for all your help.

Best wishes



Catherine Bailey

15 JUN 1993 15:55
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