

HMS Amethyst Association Newsletter



President's Letter

First of all let me wish you all a very happy 2017. Thanks to Trudy and Eric we had a very successful Reunion in Nottingham. I am particularly grateful to the Younger Generation who keep us old veterans going and makes sure the Association is in good health.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our next Reunion.

Good Luck and Best Wishes to you all

Stewart Hett

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2017 Reunion

We are pleased to announce that the 2017 reunion will be held on Friday 22nd — Sunday 24th September 2017 at The Toorak Hotel, Torquay. We will have a meal arranged for the Friday and our Gala meal on the Saturday.

Rooms can be booked by contacting Trudy (details below). Trudy is sending information by letter to members on her list. All welcome!

Membership

Membership £7.00 , Widows £4.00. Due in January. Please send to:

Trudy Sampson
1 Warton Lane,
Austrey
Atherstone CV9 3EJ
01827 830334
TrudyS@euroteck.co.uk

Crossed the Bar

Johnny Murphy past away peacefully in his nursing home on 3rd December 2016. Johnny Murphy was a 49er who was onboard whilst the ship was trapped in the Yangtze. He never joined the Association but he came over from Ireland to join us at the 50th Reunion in Plymouth.

Remembrance Sunday 2016



Once again the Four Ships, Yangtze Incident Group paraded a small contingent at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. Security has been tightened and we were all issued with named tickets. We feared there would be long queues with metal detectors and X ray machines to check us in, but it all worked smoothly. Our contingent was down to 17 people, so we formed a neat unit of 3 files of

6. Sadly John Dibden, a LONDON Yangtze Veteran had just been admitted to Hospital which meant that Stewart Hett was the only Yangtze Veteran on parade, though there were several Ex-servicemen in our contingent. We lacked John Parkers powerful

voice, but Mike Goddard agreed to take charge of the unit in his place. It was a sunny day though buildings kept the sun off us as we mustered on Horse Guards, so it was a bit chilly.



Several people came up to us as we

formed up. One was a Naval Nurse whose Father had been a Royal Marine in LONDON. Another was a chippy who remembers Bill Smith when they served together in Faslane. We had a charming lady who works at the National Archive in Kew as our custodian and controller and guided us through our march; we were the lead



group in the second half of our line. Once we advanced onto Whitehall the sun shone brilliantly and we all warmed up, helped no doubt by the odd flask. Unfortunately we were unable to see any of the large displays mounted on the roadside, so we could not follow visually the progress of the day. The bugles and band were well amplified and the Bishop of London could be easily heard as he conducted the Religious Service. The order of the columns are changed each year,

and this year our column was towards the end of the Ex Servicemen's lines. Once we started marching all went well. The usual large crowds on the pavements, all the way round the marching route, cheered and clapped as we went by. Our unit kept in step for almost all the way round!! Prince Charles took the salute at the saluting base and we the returned to Horse Guards to disperse.



Stewart Hett, at 90, has decided he could not be sure he would be able to make arrangements for the parade in future and Ian Noakes, LONDON Chairman, has agreed to organise the contingent next year.

Trudy laid a wreath at the NMA Yangtze Grove, and she made a visit to the newly opened visitor centre.

Reunion 2016



Twenty Six mustered at the Novotel Hotel in Nottingham during Friday afternoon before gathering at the bar for chinwags and drinks. The Suez Veteran Association were also holding their Reunion. & Stewart found them interesting as he was a Veteran of the 1956 Suez Action. Some remembered HMS AMETHYST steaming through the canal in October 1949.

We enjoyed a pleasant evening meal in the restaurant. On Saturday morning we had our Annual AGM & drove to the National Memorial Arboretum to pay our respects at the Yangtze Grove. The bushes representing our lost shipmates were all mustered and correct, though some had been replaced by new shrubs giving a touch of variety to our Grove. After the NMA, we visited the Alrewas RBL Club for refreshments and a drink. We enjoyed a fine meal and the evening ran smoothly on to the Loyal Toast. Stewart Hett said a few words before the Raffle. Over £100 was raised. Then as a surprise Birthday cake complete with candles showing 90 were brought in. For many years Stewart had kept quiet that his Birthday often occurred during the Annual Reunion. Last year Sally let the cat out of the bag and this year Trudy had decided to mark his approaching 90th Birthday at our Annual Dinner. Ray James brilliantly imitated his Father, Taff, and gave us some lovely Welsh singing. The evening proceeded with much talking and some drinking; many did not retire until after midnight.

The weekend ended with our usual church Service at which the Roll of Honour was read and each name highlighted by a stroke on the AMETHYST Bell made by Ray Kitto.

Committee and Officers

President: Stewart Hett

Chairman : Eric Mustoe

Secretary/Treasurer: Trudy Sampson

Sin Bosun: Raymond James

Welfare Officer: Sally Johnson

Newsletter: Gilly O'Reilly

Members Andy Maynard,

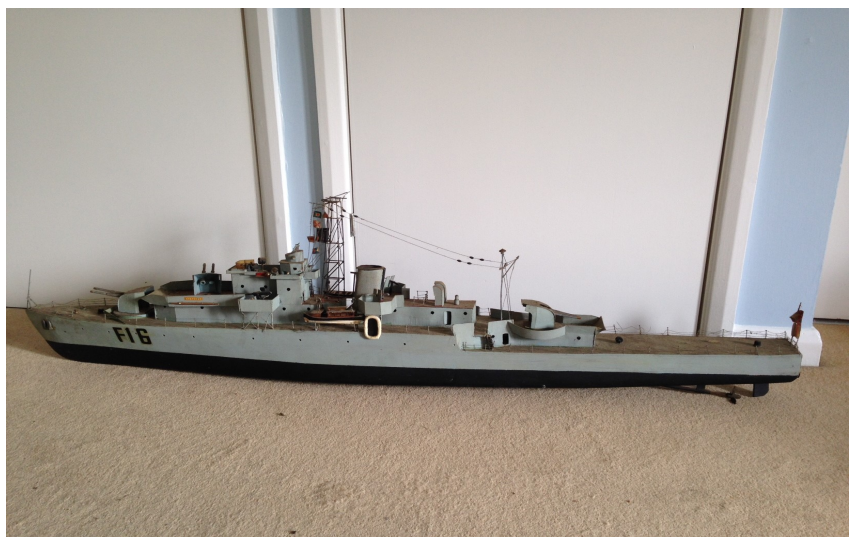
John Robers

Models

Ray Kitto obtained a working model of HMS AMETHYST just before he died. His widow Pat has given the model to the Association. Many thanks.



Gerry Bourne contacted the association with a model he had in his attic for 40 years, obtained by his brother from an 'Arms' factory worker on the Old Kent Road, who had served on Amethyst. Many thanks.



Cranky Old Man

When an old man died in the geriatric ward of a nursing home in an Australian country town, it was believed that he had nothing left of any value.

Later, when the nurses were going through his meagre possessions, They found this poem. Its quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital.

One nurse took her copy to Melbourne . The old man's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas editions of magazines around the country and appearing in mags for Mental Health. A slide presentation has also been made based on his simple, but eloquent, poem. And this old man, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this 'anonymous' poem winging across the Internet.

Thanks to Ray Hopkins who saw this on the internet.

*What do you see nurses?What do you see?
What are you thinking . . . when you're looking at me?
A cranky old man,not very wise,
Uncertain of habit with faraway eyes?*

*Who dribbles his food and makes no reply.
When you say in a loud voice . . 'I do wish you'd try!'
Who seems not to notice . . .the things that you do.
And forever is losing A sock or shoe?*

*Who, resisting or not lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feedingThe long day to fill?
Is that what you're thinking?. .Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse .you're not looking at me.*

*I'll tell you who I am As I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of Ten . .with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters who love one another*

*A young boy of Sixteen with wings on his feet
Dreaming that soon now a lover he'll meet.
A groom soon at Twentymy heart gives a leap.
Remembering, the vowsthat I promised to keep.*

*At Twenty-Five, nowI have young of my own.
Who need me to guide And a secure happy home.
A man of Thirty My young now grown fast,
Bound to each other With ties that should last.*

Thanks also to Ray for submitting the following 'A Bucketful of Admirals Story'. Coventry adopted HMS Diamond in Nov 2007 and the City remain in close contact with her ships company. They were given Freedom of the City in Feb 2016., with a ceremony that included dishing out 500 tots of Rum!

A BUCKETFUL OF ADMIRALS

27th November 2007 began at 0345, breakfast, and then on to Birmingham Airport, en route to Glasgow.

On arrival at Glasgow, Mick Kierans, who is Secretary of the Coventry branch, Royal Naval Association, and myself as Chairman, were met by representatives of BAE Systems. We were taken to the Crown Plaza Hotel, where a Hostess offered us a full breakfast, which we declined, knowing that there was a Champagne reception later. We went into another room and as soon as we entered, there were two civilians and two naval officers seated. A tall, immaculately dressed civilian came to us and introduced himself. "I'm Jonathan" he said "what's your name and where do you come from?" We introduced ourselves and he asked if we wanted anything to eat or drink. We said that a cup of coffee and a bacon butty would do nicely.

The Hostess said that we would meet in the foyer at 11.30 a.m. to board coaches to the Govan shipyard, but in the meantime we had quite a chat with Jonathan. At 10.45 he got up and said that he had better get changed and "try to make myself as smart as you two".

At 11.30 a Flag Officer appeared and shortly afterwards, Jonathan stood in front of us in full regalia and asked "how do I look now lads?" Mick quipped "I think you will pass muster Sir" - Jonathan being the First Sea Lord, Sir Jonathan Band. He introduced us to the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Adrian Johns and we introduced both of them to Coventry's Lord Mayor. We all then boarded the coaches to go to the reception at the Shipyard. Champagne was flowing like water (Incidentally I hate Champagne but beggars can't be choosers.

Vice Admiral Trevor Soar introduced himself and his wife Ann to us. Mrs. Soar was intrigued with my badges, one in particular. When I told her it was an Amethyst badge, she said "Amethyst, didn't they make a film of that?" When I said "yes", the next question was "were you there?". When I told her that I was indeed there, she excitedly called over her husband and told him "Trevor, this man was on Amethyst" Trevor called over the First Sea Lord and also the Second Sea Lord to tell them of my time with Amethyst, which caused a certain amount of interest.

After two hours of drinking and mingling, we started to proceed to the slipway. On our way out, I noticed a small Admiral struggling to put on his overcoat, so I held it for him. He thanked me and said "I've got to wear this because it's hissing down outside" (I think that's what he said) and "by the way, I'm Mark Stanhope". I believe he is the Second Senior Admiral in the Royal Navy.

Walking with the Admirals to the launch site, I was trying to take photos, with Jonathan's encouragement, but he asked us to keep up. The 13,000 crowd was cheering and 3,000 of them were children, obviously given the day off from school. The Guard of Honour came to the "present" and the two ringer who was in charge asked us who the Admiral was. He almost dropped his sword when we told him it was the First Sea Lord.

We were seated six rows from the front and HMS Diamond was launched by the wife of the Second Sea Lord, Mrs. Susie Johns. The Champagne bottle smashed against the ship, but nothing happened. Mrs. Johns decided to give her a helping hand and so she pushed, and she pushed again, and at her third attempt at pushing, she was helped by the Managing Director of BAE Systems. Still no movement, and all remained quiet, for a few more seconds until about two minutes later HMS Diamond slid slowly down the slipway and into the River to enormous cheering from all present. There followed fireworks from the deck until the tugboats moved into position to steer her to her berth.

We then boarded the coaches for the Scottish Science museum. More champagne and Canapés until it was time to be seated for the banquet, where we were presented with a Limited Edition bone china mug and a pair of silver cuff links, both with the Diamond Crest.

On leaving to board our coach for the Airport, the First Sea Lord came over to us and shook hands, saying the he hoped to see us again soon. I almost said “you don’s know how soon”.

I thought to myself that all the time I was in the navy, it was very rare to get close to an Admiral, and when I am coming close to the end of my life, I meet a bucketful of them. It looked as if we have more Admirals than ships.

WHAT AN EXPERIENCE.