



Amethyst Association Newsletter

Nov 2018

President's Letter

Dear Shipmates and Members of the Association

We have just completed a splendid Reunion in Bristol. Only a few of us were able to attend this year but we had two very friendly dinners each evening and a thoroughly enjoyable trip to SS Great Britain on Saturday. I was very pleased that Charles, my Son and Gillian, my Daughter, were able to join us; Charles had only flown in from New Zealand on the previous day, but managed to control his jet lag well and lasted out each evening.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the National Memorial Arboretum on Sunday 28 April next year for the 70th Anniversary Remembrance; I can strongly recommend joining the LONDON Association for Dinner on the Saturday evening.

Thanks to Trudi and Eric for organising everything.

Eve joins me in sending you all our Best Wishes.

Stewart Hett

Welfare Officer Report

It has been a great pleasure to continue to speak to shipmates, their families and friends throughout the year since our last reunion in 2017.

It is extremely rewarding and uplifting to know that my calls are welcome and looked upon fondly. I receive updates on the health and well-being of those I speak to as well as hearing about their life activities and other family members, often an addition to the family!

It is also lovely to be able to pass on good wishes and the latest news to the people I chat with, who have perhaps lost touch with each other: I know it is appreciated and I am always asked to send best regards to all those I call.

I have just returned from this year's reunion in Bristol, which although few in number, was most enjoyable. It is sad to think that next year, the 70th Anniversary, will be our last get together, but I'm sure channels of communication will remain firmly open for a long time to come!

I look forward to continuing my role as Welfare Officer and to speaking to those I feel I have built up such a good relationship with. Thank you all for your time and entertaining chats.

Sally Johnson (Welfare Officer)

Crossed the Bar

Arnold Sampson died on the 11th July 2018. Arnold was a Veteran onboard HMS AMETHYST during the 1949 Yangtze Incident and was onboard for the Ship's triumphant return to the UK in the autumn of 1949. He was a member of the AMETHYST Association and regularly attended the Annual Reunions. Arnold's funeral was in Warrington and was attended by Sally and Edna.



In May 2018, we learnt that **Robert Gibson** had died. Robert served onboard HMS AMETHYST as a Stoker Mechanic in April 1949 during the Yangtze Incident. He was a member of the AMETHYST Association.

George Dudley, died 20 July 2018. He was a Member of the AMETHYST Association and used to attend the Reunions regularly until his wife died. He served on board AMETHYST in 1947/48, but left the ship before the Yangtze Incident.

Amethyst Radio Call



celebrate the 70th anniversary with another call sign.

Geoffrey Powell, ex RAF 5131BOMB DISPOSAL SQN, remembers the Yangtze Incident as a boy, and as a radio amateur belonging to the Radio society of Great Britain, wanted to commemorate the 69th anniversary by transmitting a spec call sign allocated by Ofcom lasting 28 days. The radio call that was used was GB4AMT. An article was also published in the Sept issue of Practical wireless magazine. He presented a picture of the HMS Amethyst to Stewart Hett to celebrate the event (pictured below). He will

HMS London Association Reunion April 2018



Stewart Hett and Gillian and Keith attended the HMS London Gala Dinner and their memorial service at the NMA, at the Lea Marston Hotel on the 20th, 21st & 22nd of April. They had a wonderful time and many thanks to Donna and Ian Noakes for organising. HMS Amethyst members are invited to join them at all future reunions (always held at the same hotel in April).



HMS Amethyst Association Reunion Sept 2018



A small group reunited at the Premier Inn Bristol Cribbs Causeway for a very enjoyable weekend. Those attending were: Stewart Hett, and his family, Keith, Gilly and Charles; Eric and Trudy; Edna and Sally; Bill and Penny Evershed. We had two lovely meals on the Friday and Saturday nights and a day out to visit the SS Great Britain museum ship and former passenger steamship, designed by Brunel. We had a chance to discuss the 70th anniversary, and the future of the Association. We agreed that 2019 would be the last reunion and the Association would be wound down afterwards. Remaining funds will be used for the care of the Memorial at the NMA and wreath.



Four Ships 70th Anniversary April 2019

A gala dinner and a memorial service are planned to commemorate 70 years since the Yangtze incident. Details to follow shortly.

Gala Dinner

WHEN **Saturday 27th April 2019**

WHERE **Lea Marston Hotel, Sutton Coldfield B76 0BY**

Memorial Service and Lunch

A Memorial Church Service will be held at 11:30, followed by a ceremony at The Grove. A group lunch will be held after at the NMA for HMS Amethyst friends and association members.

WHEN **Sunday 28th April 2019**

WHERE **National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire**

HMS Amethyst Association Reunion Sept 2019

WHEN **Friday 13th — Sunday 15th September 2019 (Provisional - TBC)**

WHERE **Plymouth, venue TBC, more details nearer the time. Sadly this will be the last reunion.**

Cenotaph Parade 2018

This year the Royal British Legion Cenotaph parade was special as it commemorated the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War 1. The Fours Ships Contingent of 18 included Stewart Hett and Gillian O'Reilly from the AMETHYST Association. The rest of the team were LONDON Association Members. Stewart was the only Yangtze Veteran in the Contingent. This year our contingent was in the first column to march, so our waiting time was kept to a minimum. Our unit formed up beside the St John's Ambulance unit and it was a great temptation for Stewart to feel faint and use his age to beg a cup of tea and a sit down, whilst we were waiting for the chimes of Big Ben.

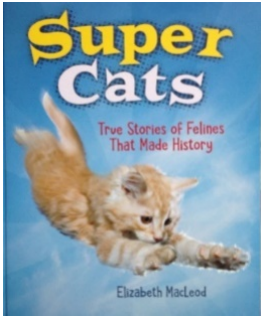
We were lucky despite the Met man forecasting the possibility of showers, the weather remained sunny for the whole morning. The Princess Royal took our salute. The BBC commented on our Contingent, but their brief mention of the Yangtze Incident was made about a minute before we actually appeared on the TV screen.

Bill Evershed's article about Amethyst

Bill has had an article published in the Naval Review in 2017, and had kindly shared it with the Association. If you would like a copy please contact Gilly or Stewart or Trudy.

New Book about Simon

A new book has been published which includes the story of Simon, condensed to about 3 pages. The book is published by Anneck Press in Toronto. The story has the errors of showing George



Hickingbottom in Amethyst in 1949, he left in 1948. That Simon was an abandoned stray found by George. That Simon comforted the wounded onboard, there were none onboard, they were all landed on 21 April.

Admiral Sir Patrick Brind's Visitors Book

By Stewart Hett

Trevor Baker has obtained The Commander in Chief Far East Station, Admiral Sir Patrick Brind's Visitors book and has kindly sent me the page covering the period after HMS AMETHYST escaped from the Yangtze River. AMETHYST arrived in Hong Kong on 3 August 1949; and the book is signed on that date by Lt Cdr Kerans, Lt Hett, Lt Cdr Strain and Flight Lieutenant Fearnley, who were all onboard the ship when she escaped. It is also signed by the AMETHYST Officers who re-joined AMETHYST after her escape, Lt Berger, Lt Wilkinson and Mr Monaghan.

H.M.S. BELFAST AT HONG KONG		
DATE	NAME	ADDRESS
29.7.49	Francis Lutting. Frank & Goldsmithy. R. ...	Hong Kong. Dail, ... London. Jardin, ...
30 July	Lieutenant-Commander <u>Abb. Moss</u> . Commander W. Handcock. Commander H.S. Barber	Greenville House. Lair "Macrity" - p.p.c. H.M.S. ALACRITY.
0600 31 st July	Captain G. James R.N.	Staff of FO 2 1/2.
1 August	Brigadier C.R. Hardy.	HQ 3 Commando Brigade.
2 Aug.	Flt. M.E. Fearnley	M.A.F. KAI TAK.
3 rd Aug.	T. Lenford. F.W.L.	No. 88 Squadron.
3 rd Aug.	Hett. Lt.	H.M.S. Amethyst.
3 rd Aug.	Strain. Lt Cdr (1)	H.M.S. Amethyst.
3 rd Aug.	Bo Berger. Lt.	H.M.S. Amethyst.
3 rd Aug.	Monaghan.	H.M.S. Amethyst.
3 rd Aug.	Wilkinson.	H.M.S. Amethyst.
3.8.49	H. Kerans. Lt Cdr R.N.	Hand. "Amethyst".

We all dined with the Commander in Chief on board his Flag Ship, HMS BELFAST soon after AMETHYST arrived in Hong Kong. If this was the occasion when we signed the Admiral's Visitors book, those of us who had spent 3 months trapped in the Yangtze must have moved fast to organise White Mess Undress Uniform so soon after arriving, but all things are possible in Hong Kong. Maybe



the Book was brought down to the ship and we signed the book on arrival in Hong Kong and the dinner was a few days later

It is interesting that Frank Goldsworthy also signed the book. He was the Express reporter in Hong Kong who wrote many of the press reports on AMETHYST's escape and also worked all night summarising Frank's Diaries. Frank Goldsworthy became a member of the AMETHYST Association.

The Frank Diaries

By Stewart Hett

Leading Seaman Leslie Frank kept his own diary of events onboard HMS AMETHYST during the summer of 1949 whilst the ship was trapped in the Yangtze River. The story of Frank's Diaries makes interesting reading. Other people involved in this story are myself, Stewart Hett, Second in Command of HMS AMETHYST whilst she was trapped in the Yangtze River. John Kerans, the Captain, and Frank Goldsworthy, the Daily Express Reporter in Hong Kong at the time when HMS AMETHYST returned to Hong Kong in August 1949.

Frank had been the Senior Rating, Coxswain, in a Naval Ship, but had been disgraced to Leading Hand for some misdemeanour and drafted to AMETHYST. He was a man with considerable experience in managing the ship's companies of warships. He provided a good point of contact with the Ship's company, even though he was only a Leading Seaman. After AMETHYST escaped he was promoted to Chief Petty Officer. I kept an official diary of significant events throughout the Incident to augment the information already entered in the Ship's Deck Log, which is the official record of the Ship's Activities.

After AMETHYST escaped Kerans collected in all the relevant papers to write his official Report of Proceedings, including my diary. I do not know if he used Frank's Diary.

Frank's Diary was obviously an attractive document for the press and I suspect Kerans helped Frank get a good price for the Diary. Goldsworthy has told us he spent all night working on the Diary to produce a piece that could be published in the Sunday Express of 7 August, 1949, four days after AMETHYST Arrived in Hong Kong.

There the matter rested until the 1980s., when a story circulated at the AMETHYST Reunions that Frank's Diary had now been published. I investigated and obtained a copy for myself. The document is a simple copy of the original document in Frank's handwriting. It transpired that a Canadian collector of Military items, Chuck Bainbridge, had obtained the Diary at an auction and had made copies of it, which he had put on the market. Chuck became a member of the AMETHYST Association and attended several reunions. When Frank Goldsworthy saw a copy of the Diary, he immediately said this was not the diary that he spent all night summarising; the Frank's diary that he used did not begin until several days after AMETHYST became trapped. This diary now starts from day one, all in Frank's handwriting.

I investigated further. The text on the first few pages of the diary were verbatim copies from my own diary. The next few days were a mixture of my diary and Frank's comments; thereafter the diary was all Frank's words. I assume Kerans had told Frank that he would get more for his diary if it started on day one and he had lent him my diary. My copy of the diary is all in Frank's handwriting with no suggestion that pages had been added. It is unlikely that Frank would have left the exact



amount of blank pages at the start of his diary, and I can only assumed that he rewrote the whole diary.

I have had no contact with Frank since 1949. He never became a Member of the AMETHYST Association

TS AMETHYST Inspection



Stewart, with Gillian and Keith attended the Biannual Inspection of the Sea Cadet unit and Stewart attended the AGM.

The Inspection went well. The cadets were all smartly turned out and looked fit and cheerful. The Royal Marine Contingent had a particularly polished looked to their appearance and their drill and the Cadet Hall resounded to the orders and stamping of feet. The evolutions were well done and



included knots and splices by the youngest, bivouacking by the Royal Marines, helped by a hidden Naval Cadet. The Battle to Trafalgar was simulated in good style.

The CO gave a good annual report on the Unit at the AGM. Unit numbers are down slightly but this is a normal ups and down that all units experience and steps are in hand to boost recruiting. The unit is well supported by the staff and training is well in hand. The Unit will be holding their annual training camp in Weymouth at the end of the month the camp provides plenty of training and naval experience for the cadets, but it is of note that one cadet's report on his experience at a previous camp was taken up almost entirely with his comments on the excellent Breakfasts that were served!! The food at the camp is reportedly very good.

The unit have been awarded a Burgee for the good performance during the past year.

Background to the Welwyn & Hatfield Sea Cadets

In the early part of 1942 the Welwyn & District Royal Naval Comrades Association made application to the Admiralty for a Unit of the Sea Cadet Corps to be established in the Garden City. After considerable correspondence with the Admiralty and the Navy League, permission was obtained from the local education authority to use Parkway School for Headquarters, and Lieutenant Commander Bell, RNVR came down to inspect the premises with regard to their suitability for the purpose. He was satisfied with them and permission was given to go ahead under the name of Welwyn Garden City Navy League cadets.

Posters were displayed in various parts of town & just on a hundred boys responded. Officers were appointed by the Admiralty and the Unit was established in April 1942. Instructional classes in seamanship, visual signals and wireless telegraphy were commenced and the Unit grew rapidly. Although this is an inland unit & is handicapped to a certain extent by the lack of open water for training, this difficulty was overcome with the help of Lord Salisbury, who granted permission for the Unit to use the Broadwater in Hatfield Park. Boats were obtained and practical instruction in boatwork was given.

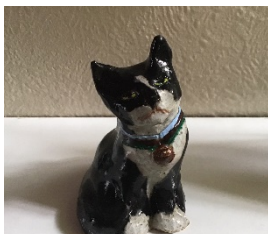
The unit was used in World War Two as a search light battery. The unit was on the site where the Gosling Stadium now stands.

The Unit moved into Lemsford Lane site in 1953/4 when Gosling Stadium started to be built & was given its new title of TS Amethyst by Commander Kerens and members of the ships company at its opening service.

This is when the Tread Plate from Amethyst was presented to the Unit. HMS AMETHYST's the Battle Ensign from the Yangtze Incident was presented to the unit By Telegraphist Jack French..

The Unit stayed at Lemsford Lane for 50 years until the council chose to redevelop the site in 2005 and we were re-housed in the old Ex-Serviceman's Trades & Labour club at our current base in Bridge Road East.

Pottery Figure of Simon the Cat



Valerie Roebuck, a potter, wanted Stewart to have a delightful pottery figure of Simon. It was on display at the reunion.

'My hobby is pottery, and I particularly enjoy modelling cats. Recently I made a portrait of Simon, based on the photos, wearing his Dickin Medal.'



Membership

Membership £7.00; Widows £4.00. Subs due in January.

Committee

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Sin Bosun	Raymond James		
Members	Andy Maynard John Roberts		