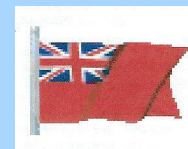




Merchant Navy Association (Wales) Newsletter



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2009

Wednesday August 12th

Regular meeting at RAFA Club,
Ely at 2.30 p.m.

Sunday September 6th

Swansea Remembrance Service
at 11.30 a.m.

Wednesday Sept 9th

Regular meeting at RAFA Club,
Ely at 2.30 p.m.

September 12 for 2 weeks

World War II exhibition at Barry
Library

Saturday September 19th

Barry Branch Remembrance
Service at 11.00 a.m.

Saturday October 10th

Annual Service for Seafarers,
Llandaff Cathedral at 11.00 a.m.

Wednesday October 14th

Regular meeting at RAFA Club,
Ely at 2.30 p.m.

Saturday October 31st

Planting of wooden crosses St
John's Church, Cardiff.

Saturday October 31st

TRBL Festival of Remembrance
St Davids Hall, Cardiff

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

At the AGM held on the 14th May with the President Oliver Lindsay in attendance, the entire committee was re-elected with the exception of the Minutes Secretary. Sadly Tim Carmichael crossed the bar in January and Mr. Joe Norton was elected to the position. The following officers were appointed:

Chairman: Harry Parry
18, Kilgetty Close
Caerau
Cardiff, CF5 5BQ
Tel: 02920 317799



Vice Chairman: Tony Meade
32 Apollo Way
Blackwood
Gwent, NP2 1WB
Tel No. 01495 225360



Treasurer: Ray Newbury
1, Broadway Green
St. Nicholas
Cardiff, CF5 6SP
Tel No. 01446 740476



Secretary/Mem. Sec. Byron Jones
20 Beech Drive
Hengoed, CF82 7JP
Tel No. 01443 815013



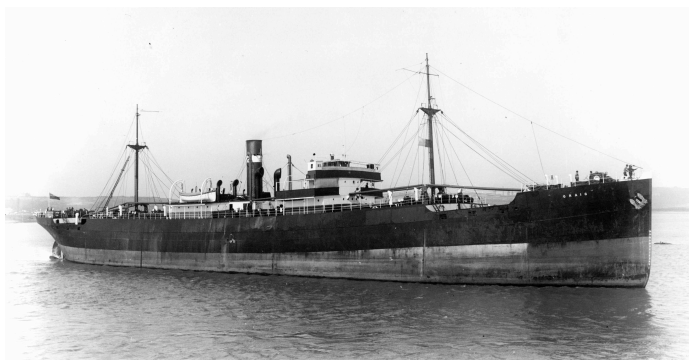
Minutes Secretary Joe Norton
19, Dyfnallt Road
Barry
CF63 1RL
Tel No: 01446 742943



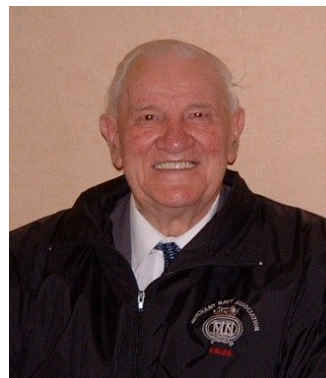
Standard Bearers: Tony Meade and John Mumford.

Members Representatives: John Mumford, Bernard Chancellor and Alf Thomas.

Representatives of the Barry Branch were confirmed as Jim Greenway and Joe Norton.



S.S. GRAIG 1924 - 1940



First Trip of Fredrick Norman Jenkins

On Tuesday June 6th 1939 Norman Jenkins was offered a berth as Cabin Boy on the S.S. Graig. The vessel was berthed at the coal hoist on the south side of Roath Dock Cardiff loading coal for Santa Fe, South America for the Argentina Railway Company. He reported to the Shipping Federation, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff for a medical and was passed fit by Dr Mitchell, and had a photograph taken for his Argentine passport. Later that day he went onboard the Graig to let the Chief Steward know he would be joining the ship the next day. On completion of loading the vessel was moved from the Roath Dock to the west end of Queen Alexandra Dock. These are his own words describing some of his experiences on his first trip to sea.

“On Saturday 10 June we sailed on the afternoon tide and my thoughts were of my chums going to the places we use to go after finishing work. So down we sailed not knowing what to expect. My first encounter with the Chief Officer Mr Owen Thomas from Cardigan, West Wales was when I was shaking the coconut runners of coal dust on the deck as the deck crew were washing down the coal dust off the deck and paintwork. I got a few words from him which was a telling off and I just looked at him in surprise as a few grains of coal dust from the runners was not going to make much difference to the washing down. The look of surprise must have come under the military law (silent contempt) which was not my intention only surprise. I was then told by Mr Thomas “Don’t you sulk at me”. I apologized and hung the runner over the side and all was well. Going down the channel was an eye opener to me seeing the Welsh coast, Somerset coast and Devon coast slipping by. By late evening I had my first feeling of what a ship does when it gets clear of land and starts to test my stomach. In the morning we were out in the Atlantic Ocean and I was settling into my new job. The Chief Steward was a nice person and I took to him right away as he was a human being and treated me as my first trip knowing shipboard life was new to me. Unfortunately he paid off in the Barry Roads and his replacement was not a nice person so I was sad to see the change and things were not so happy. But I was getting on with my job as best I could but a bit down in the dumps as the Chief Steward was forever finding jobs to do. No let up, no time off to do anything until the mess-room boy Les Davies said I should

have a few hours off until afternoon tea at 1500 hrs. When the Chief Steward got wind of this he spoke to me in front of the Second Officer Edwin Morgan from Penarth as if I was a dog. I then wished I was one with rabies I would have bitten him. So more downheartedness. Still some happiness was to come. One morning the Captain Jack Bowen from Victoria Park, Cardiff, informed me he was going down the stoke hold to do a bit of shoveling to keep fit and loose some weight and would not want any breakfast. But would like his bath ready when he came up after an hour or so stoking. Between making bunks, scrubbing cabin decks (as there were no carpets or polished decks in the Graig), polishing the panels in the saloon to make them shine “like silver dollars on a sweeps arse” as the Captain would say, there was not much free time. Anyway back to the Captains bath. No hot running water for baths. Water had to be carried up from the engine room in a bucket. So I had to go up from the engine room, along the deck, through the alleyway, through the saloon, down the other alleyway to the Captains bathroom then back to the engine room and the same journey until the bath was full. If the Captain had done this chore he would have been as fit as I was. So after his bath the buzzer went from his cabin. I answered the call and he asked me for his breakfast. I told him you told me you wanted no breakfast. He said he meant with the other officers. I told him you said you did not want any breakfast only a bath. He asked what had happened to his breakfast. I told him I did not want to waste it so I ate it. The air was not too blue when he said “I worked my way up from the focsle to the bridge and no one ever ate my breakfast”. I made my way to the cabin door and said there is always a first time and beat a hasty retreat off the lower bridge. I don’t know if any first trip cabin boy can boast of eating a Captains breakfast and still is on the planet. I’ve passed his last resting place at the Western Cemetery, Ely, Cardiff and pause for a few moments and think after doing another trip with Captain Jack Bowen OBE that he never had a repeat of the first trip as World War 2 had broken out after leaving Rio de Janeiro on Sunday September 3rd 1939 and he never went below again.”

On the 4th May 1940 the S.S. Graig went ashore on Flint Ledge Egg Island Nova Scotia in fog and was wrecked. All the crew survived with only one injury to the Royal Marine Gunner.

CROSSED THE BAR

Sadly the following members have crossed the bar since the last Newsletter

Mr. Tim Carmichael of Cowbridge - January 09

Mr. V.G. Worth of Cardiff - February 09

Mr. Tony David of Cardiff - April 09

Mr. Bill Marshall of Cardiff - April 09

Their sailing hath ended



Tim Carmichael,
Chief Engineer
23/7/39 - 14/1/09



Tony David,
Chief Steward
17/4/09

Heroes Return 2

The Heroes Return 2 Scheme will provide Lottery funding to help World War II veterans who saw active service overseas with or alongside the British and Allied Armed Forces and are resident in the U.K. or Republic of Ireland, to take part in Commemorative visits (within the U.K. or overseas) to mark the anniversary of events that lead to the end of World War II.

WWII veterans may be accompanied by a spouse and/or a carer. Widows and widowers of WWII veterans are also eligible, in most cases.

Applicants can apply for a fixed amount grant of between £150 and £5,500 depending on the number of people taking part and the destination. It is difficult to determine demand precisely, so it has been decided to focus on supporting each eligible application and meeting the demand as and when it occurs between 1 April 2009 and the deadline for applications, which is 31 January 2011.

Grants will be made to the cost of commemorative visits. A fixed amount of money will be available for each veteran and their spouse and/or carer towards the cost of their visit.

There will be five levels of funding according to the destination. These fixed amounts have been set so that there is enough money to cover the cost of travel and insurance.

If you have any general questions about the scheme and whether you are eligible, ring the application helpline 0845 0000 121.

Seafarers Link



Sue Robinson from Community Network joined us at our June meeting to talk about Seafarers Link which is a free fortnightly telephone conference that links retired seafarers.

If you have served in the Royal Navy, Merchant Navy or worked in the Fishing Fleets you are welcome to join.

Telephone conference social groups are a way to link people together so that they are able to talk to each other at the same time.

Every two weeks, at a set time, everyone in the local group receives a call which networks them to the others in their group, and they have up to an hour's conversation FREE OF CHARGE.

They are looking for eight people to set up a group in the Cardiff area, and an organiser to lead the group. They already have four people signed up and Mr Malcolm Mort has agreed to be the organiser. If you are interested in joining the group please contact MNA Wales Secretary.



Secretary's Report 2008/2009

Unfortunately the Secretary was not able to attend the AGM so a copy of his report follows:

Another busy year for the Association. Members attended 26 events, which includes our regular meetings, with an average attendance of 19 per event.

The year started with our Annual Parade and Service down Cardiff Bay in May 08 followed by the Veterans Day celebrations in Cardiff Castle in June.

In September we provided support to our Swansea and Barry shipmates at their respective Remembrance Services.

In October we attended the service for the laying up of the Russian Convoy Club Standard at St Mary's Church, Butetown, and the Seafarers Service in Llandaff Cathedral.

November was the usual busy month with John Mumford carrying the Standard at the Annual Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at St David's Hall ably supported by Brian Hammett and John Priddle who took part in the muster.

In March 09 twenty members made the long trip to Plymouth for the Presentation of the Freedom of the City to our Plymouth shipmates. The weather held fine and everyone spent a most enjoyable day in this maritime city.

Average attendance at our regular meetings was 27. Karl Clissett, Dave Cummins, and Joe Norton attended every meeting.

World War II Exhibition Barry

To remember the role that the people of Barry and the surrounding areas played in World War II, local military historian Dr. Jonathan Hicks will be staging an exhibition in the Arts Centre at Barry Library. The following themes will be displayed: The RAF, Army, Royal Navy, Merchant Navy, Women's Contribution, and the "Barry Blitz".

The exhibition will open on Saturday September 12, and will run for two weeks.

Fred Hortop Roll of Honour



One of our members Mr. Fred Hortop, carried out a very comprehensive investigation into the History of Barry and the ships and merchant seamen who sailed from the port. He spent more than five years compiling a Roll of Honour in memory of the Barry Merchant Seamen who perished during World War II. Sadly Fred crossed the bar in October 2005, but now The Imperial War Museum in London has officially registered his Roll of Honour in the UK National Inventory of War Memorials. Copies of the roll are held at the Memorial Hall, Barry, Barry Library and the Registry of Shipping in Cardiff

MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2009

Saturday Nov 7th

MNA (Wales) Remembrance Service Cardiff Bay at 1100

Sunday Nov 8th

Civic Remembrance Service Cathays Park, Cardiff at 1015

Wednesday Nov 11th

Regular meeting at RAFA Club, Ely at 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday Dec 9th

Regular meeting at RAFA Club, Ely at 2.30 p.m.

December

Christmas Dinner and Dance. To be determined.

Subscriptions

The Membership Secretary reminds all members that subscriptions for the year 2009/2010 are now due. The annual subscription for 2009/10 is £8.00

New Members

The following new members have signed on:

Mr. D.B. Evans of Barry - Aug 08
Mr. R Byard of Barry - Feb 09

Welcome aboard