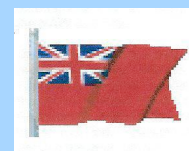




Merchant Navy Association (Wales)

# Newsletter



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2010

### Wednesday August 11th

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

### Wednesday Sept 8th

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

### Wednesday October 13th

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

### Saturday October 16th

Seafarers Service Llandaff  
Cathedral at 11.00 a.m.

### Saturday November 6th

Remembrance Service, and  
Muster, St David's Hall, Cardiff

### Sunday November 7th

Armistice Day Cathays Park  
Cardiff at 10.30. a.m.

### Wednesday Nov 10th

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

### Saturday Nov 13th

MNA (Wales) Remembrance  
Service, Cardiff Bay at 1100

### Thursday December 9th

Christmas Dinner Dance at  
RAFA Club at 7.30 p.m.

### Wednesday December 8th

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



## VISIT TO BLETCHLEY PARK & DUXFORD IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

In April a grant from "Awards for all Wales" was presented to a group of MNA (Wales) Members by the Presiding Officer of the Welsh Assembly, the Lord Elis-Thomas PC AM. It enabled members of MNA (Wales), many of whom took part in the "Battle of the Atlantic" and Russian convoys, in which the Enigma Machine and Bletchley Park played such a decisive part, to see for the first time, one of the best kept secrets of WW2. Many of them said that it was worth the Grant, just to visit Bletchley Park and could not understand why it had been kept so secret, until more than 45 years after the war. (We are pleased to note that the Big Lottery Fund has given great assistance to this now famous decoding centre). Emotions were quite charged at being taken back in time to what must have been for some, both a nostalgic and sometime traumatic experience. The visit was made all the more memorable by our tour conducted by Mr. Fris (a retired Danish member of MI6). So we were told? Anyway, thank you Mr. Fris for an exciting tale, which served to add that extra dimension to our tour which made it a "Day to Remember"



The second day was taken up with a visit to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.. Although Duxford is the largest Aircraft museum in the U.K. one might expect Merchant Seafarers to be less interested in this part of the tour. Quite the opposite. Members asked to go there and without exception the desire was unanimous. Of course the museum has sections devoted to Ships and the Sea and Land Forces. The museum also has a section on tracing records of those lost at sea in the Merchant Service.

Suffice to say the whole weekend was a roaring success and the members who went are most grateful to the Lottery for making this weekend possible.

Alf Thomas, Event Organiser

## Review of 2009/2010

It was another busy year with 36 events attended by our members and Standard Bearers Tony Meade and John Mumford, beginning with our Annual Service down Cardiff Bay. The Service was held in June for the first time. This was because the Youth Urdd Eisteddfod was held in Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay during the last week of May and this included the outside area, in the vicinity of the memorial. Other events included our regular visits to Remembrance Services in support of our shipmates at Swansea and Barry, the Seafarers Service at Llandaff Cathedral, Planting of crosses at St Johns Church, Cardiff, the parade and muster at St Davids Hall, the planting of crosses in the National Garden of Remembrance and the Armistice parade in Cardiff. We were also invited to attend the re-opening of the Pier Head Building following its extensive refurbishment. The opening coincided with the St Davids' Day parade so our forces were split between the events. Another event attended was the unavailing of the Seafarers Memorial in Butetown Community Centre.



As well as the trip to Bletchley Park another highlight of the year were the Re-enactment of the Freedom of the City of Cardiff. The Re-enactment date had to be changed a couple of times because of the difficulty in getting a band on a weekday, but we were finally able to exercise our right to march with the City of Cardiff Melingriffith band playing and banners flying through the City of Cardiff on Saturday 27th September.

The average attendance at the events was 16. Twelve regular meetings were held with an average attendance of 23. January was a particularly bad month for snow and this restricted attendance to just 9 members. Well done to those who fought the weather to make it through. One of those was Karl Clissett who was the only member of the Association to attend every meeting. Well done Karl.

Sue Robinson from Community Network joined us at our June 09 meeting to talk about Seafarers Link which is a free fortnightly telephone conference that links retired seafarers. As a result, a telephone conference social group has been established for members in the Barry area and according to the Organiser, Mr. Malcolm Mort, everything is going very well.

Thank you for your support during 2009/2010. We couldn't do it without you. We hope you will continue during 2010/2011.

## H.M.R.T. Frisky

During the Second World War, Colston Hicks served as a Radio Officer in the deep sea rescue tugs. Whatever the weather the little rescue tugs could always be relied upon to arrive on the scene when assistance was needed. Times were often hard and dangerous but there were also lighter moments as Colston now reflects.



*"In 2006 I had just come back from a Heroes Return visit to the Adriatic staying 14 days in Dubrovnik. It brought back memories of the day the crew of HMRT Frisky was asked to make up a football team to play the locals. We obliged and saw the opposing team marching down the road towards the football ground with a large brass band at*



*its head all in step and looking v e r y smart. I will not go into the f i n e r details of the game except to tell you that we lost*

*64 - 0! The victorious team marched back to town again with the band playing loudly. It only came to light the next day when a shopkeeper told us that the team we had played was a crack Yugoslavian army team, and being a Communist Country it must have been the National team as well. But, what the hell! How many crews of the Rescue Tugs boys do you know that have played international football. I can tell you that the boys of HMRT Frisky dined out on that story for a few years."*



## Re-Opening of the Pier Head Building By Ray Newbury

Pictures courtesy of National Assembly for Wales

The Pier Head Building, Cardiff, is very well known, not only to the citizens of Cardiff, but also to visiting seafarers from around the World. A visitor today, during the 21st Century, might ask what is its purpose in life.

On St. Davids Day 2010 this building was re-opened by the Lord Elis-Thomas PC AM, Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) as a unique Visitor Centre for events and a conference venue for the people of Wales.



The 19th Century saw completion of this iconic building at a time when Wales was forging its identity through fire and water; the production of coal and the establishment of shipping to transport it to every corner of the globe. The development of this important fuel, particularly in the Welsh Valleys, saw large numbers of immigrants, many of whom settled in Cardiff's Butetown area, where those who worked the ships and docks brought their families. During the early 20th Century there were in excess of 120 shipping companies in Cardiff alone, virtually all of whom were into the world wide coal trades, with coal as fuel perhaps at its peak. Since then the rapid development of oil, with its less labour intensive requirements for handling and transportation, has seen the demand for coal wane somewhat, whilst its cost has risen largely due to the problems of extraction and transportation.

The original purpose of this building, with the inscription over the entrance reading "Wrth Ddwr A Than" (Through Fire and Water) which has a steam engine and a ship outlined above the inscription, was to administer the day to day operation of the extensive rail fed docks and the movements and facilities of associated shipping. This vast undertaking which operated with the smoothness of clockwork throughout the twenty four hours, and had superimposed upon it the twice daily rise and fall of the highest tides in Europe. In this hustle and bustle of activity in the world of coal movement, it is perhaps not surprising that many readers will remember a notice near the door of the building that read "Please wipe your boots".

The actual opening was preceded by a children's choir from Butetown School, following which Lorraine Barrett AM, whose constituency embraces the area where the building stands, outlined the events of the morning. Next, Lord Elis-Thomas spoke, thanking all those who had contributed thoughts, deeds and proposals for the future of the building, and cut the ribbon declaring The Pier Head Building open for the use of citizens. As he spoke, a rolling display of pictures in and around the building, showed the matters to which he referred, clearly indicating how the Pier Head had assisted Wales to forge an identity "through fire and water" (as immortalized above the front entrance) during the 19th and 20th centuries. From today onwards in the 21st century, it's aim is to inform, involve and inspire the new generation to forge a Wales for the future. Following the re-opening ceremony visitors were invited to tour every part of the building, and to feel free to discuss their findings with the National Assembly for Wales representatives on hand. The invited guests included representatives of the Butetown History and Arts Centre, The Captain Scott Society, the Merchant Navy Association and the Royal Naval Association amongst many others.

To sailors, a particularly interesting item within the building is the binnacle from the ship "Terra Nova". This ship took Captain Robert Falcon Scott and his intrepid colleagues, from Cardiff 100 years ago this year, on their voyage of exploration to Antarctica, many on board never to return. This binnacle had been at H.M.S. Dryad the Royal Navy's specialist Navigation School near Portsmouth, and was obtained from them on extended loan by the good offices of the Captain Scott Society. Whilst at "Dryad" it has been quite splendidly modified to form a post box, without losing any of its original features.



The re-opening of the Pier Head means that it is within reach of us all to help fulfill the aims for the future of this iconic building, whose windows have for more than a century looked upon fire and water developments in Wales.

## CROSSED THE BAR

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

*Mr. J.F. Anthony, of Llantwit Major - Dec 09*

*Mr. C. J. Webber, of Rhoose - Jan 10*

*Mr. T.L. Ellis, of Barry - Jan 10*

It was also noted that Mr. H.P. Howell, of Pontyclun had crossed the Bar in 2006.

Their sailing hath ended

## NEW MEMBERS

The following new members have signed on:

*Councillor Janice Charles of Barry - Jan 10*

*Mr. David .L. James, of Aberaeron - Apr 10*

*Mr.A. Nicholls of Cardiff - June 10*

Councillor Charles is an Associate member of the Barry Branch.

Mr James is a former Silver Line Apprentice. He has sailed with British Dredging Shipping Ltd., British Dredging Aggregates Ltd. and Seaforth Maritime.

Mr Nicholls is rejoining after a long absence through illness.

Welcome aboard

## AGM - MAY 2010

### Appointment of Officers.

The entire committee was re-elected. Colston Hicks was appointed as a Members Representative. The following officers were appointed:

Chairman: Harry Parry.

Vice Chairman: Tony Meade.

Treasurer: Ray Newbury.

Secretary: Byron Jones

Membership Secretary: Byron Jones.

Minutes Secretary: Joe Norton.

Standard Bearers: Tony Meade and John Mumford

Members Representatives: Colston Hicks, Malcolm Mort, John Mumford, and Alf Thomas

Barry Branch Representatives were confirmed as Jim Greenway and Joe Norton

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Membership Secretary reminds all members that subscriptions for the year 2010/2011 are now due. The annual subscription for 2010/11 is **£8.00**. Please advise the Secretary of any sickness or bereavement which may come to your notice.