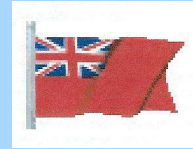


## Merchant Navy Association (Wales)



### *LIVING WITH CORONAVIRUS*

Hope you and your families are well. The Coronavirus is still with us and it has taken a toll on our activities/meetings yet again. So what I thought I'd do is fill you in on news/events that have taken place since the last Newsletter. Now those of you who have contact via email/internet will have already heard some of the news but please stay with me as there are more than 50% of members whose major source of our news is via the Newsletter. As you are aware our Service down Cardiff Bay in May had to be cancelled. I managed to get down there on the Saturday of the planned event (22nd May) to check on the condition of the memorial and wreaths etc.. I was concerned because if you remember back in April the Memorial had to be fenced off due to the despicable actions of the crowd that assembled down Cardiff Bay during the Easter weekend. Luckily no physical damage was done to the memorial but the



total disrespect shown by people urinating on it beggars belief. The actions of Mr. Bradley Jones, a tugboat Mate, in attempting to clear the mess shortly afterwards, were commendable. We were concerned that the fence didn't become a permanent barrier so we wrote to Cardiff Council and the Harbour

Authority asking for it to be removed as soon as possible as access would be required for members of the public to pay their respects to lost relatives, by placing crosses or flowers on the memorial. This assurance was given and there was no barrier in place at the time of my visit. One thing that was missing was the QR-Code Plaque from the top of the nearby bollard. A new one will be supplied by Historypoints who produced and installed the original. I added a new wreath and apart from some weather damage, the other wreaths on the memorial were intact. There were a couple of wreaths on the floor in front of the memorial. One had been laid there on behalf of the Royal Norwegian Embassy. I have since found out that May 17th is Norwegian

Constitutional Day so it was probably laid during the celebration of that event. We also wrote to the Western Mail pointing out the significance of the structure with the heading "What is this?" and a photograph of the memorial. Unfortunately when the letter was published in the Newspaper the heading and photograph were omitted so the first sentence didn't make sense but hopefully we got the message across. Things will get better and who knows maybe we can go ahead with our service in November which is scheduled for Saturday 6th November at 1100. There are a couple of other items of interest in the Dates for your Diary section.

## CAPTAIN JAN KRAMER

Captain Jan Kramer Crossed the Bar on 11th January 2021 at the age of 74.



Captain Kramer served at sea with the Dutch Merchant Navy between 1962 and 2003. His first ship was the S.S. Holdernith which he joined on the 1st July 1962 as a Assistant Volunteer Fireman. He had a change of career on the 2nd July 1964 when he joined the S.S. Egbert Wagenborg as an Ordinary Seaman later rising through the ranks to Captain/Master with his first command being S.S. Theodora on the 18th of October 1987. His funeral took place on 28th January 2021 at 1545 at Brinant Chapel, Thornhill Crematorium, Cardiff. Due to the current Coronavirus restrictions, attendance was limited to 15, but the Chairman and Standard Bearer along with three other members were able to attend to support the family and show our

respects. The service was streamed via the internet so that family members in Holland and Australia could view the event.

Jan was a regular attender at our meetings and events and will be sorely missed.

**We have a new member.** Mr Alan Speight from Newport joined us in February. Alan was at sea from 1969 to 2003 as an engineer. He started as a Junior Engineer on the MV Athel Laird in September 1969 and retired from MV Winamac as Chief Engineer in September 2001. He also sailed as Training C/E/O and Company Planned & Predictive Maintenance Co-ordinating/Development Engineer. Many of you will already know Alan as he is the Chairman of Newport MNA and has regularly attended our services down Cardiff Bay. Welcome aboard Alan.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - 2021



If you are interested in attending this event please let me know as soon as possible on

01443 815013 or email

[byron@blackranger.plus.com](mailto:byron@blackranger.plus.com)

as booking is essential.

## THE NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

If you are interested in attending the event in Wales at the Ewenny Priory, Bridgend on the 21st July 2021 please contact me as soon as possible and I will provide you with more information and an application form.



## ARMED FORCES DAY 2021

I have been in touch with Cardiff CC and there is nothing planned for Armed Forces Day on Saturday 26th June 2021



## MEMBERSHIP

When the Association was formed in the Spring of 1995 the membership was in the 100s. Five years ago (2016) our membership stood at 83. Today it is down to 42. We have lost many of our shipmates over the years and managed to sign on just 9 new members in the passed 5 years. Time is starting to take it's toll. I don't have the date of birth of every member, but based on those I have there are seven in their 90s, the eldest being 97, nine in their 80s and five in their 70s. Our youngest member is 30. Our average age overall is 80. In 2016 we were averaging 14 to a meeting and 9 to an event. In 2019 when we held our last meetings it was down to 6 to a meeting and 3 to an event. To make matters worse 3 of our regular attendees have recently undergone medical procedures that will take them time to recover. What does this say for the future of MNA (Wales)??? If indeed there is one??? Of course there is. It is staring us in the face. What we need to do is set up an internet/online **Zoom** meeting. It's the "in thing" these days and it is free. We have 23 members that I regularly communicate with via email/internet which is a big step up from the 6 that attended previous meetings. No more hanging around waiting for buses in all weathers or trying to find somewhere to park. We can all get together in the comfort of our homes, via the internet. I'm sure that many of you who are not on email/internet have family members who would be happy to help "get you connected". Alright it is not as good as having a good old chin wag over a couple of beers but at least it will keep us together until this dreadful pandemic is over and things get back to normal. If we continue as we are, we will almost certainly reach a time when we will have to consider laying up our Standard and closing the books on MNA (Wales). I have often said that Cardiff is loosing all it's maritime history and heritage. Soon there will be nothing left to remind us of the thousands of merchant seafarers who sailed these waters, some never to return. Don't let us loose MNA (Wales) as well.

**Please let me know if you are interested in a Zoom meeting or if you have any comments on the way forward for the Association. You can contact me by email [byron@blackranger.plus.com](mailto:byron@blackranger.plus.com) or telephone 01443 815013 or by post to 20, Beech Drive, HENGOED, CF82 7JP. We have been around for over 25 years, let's hope we can add a few more.**