



## Merchant Navy Association (Wales)



### *OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY*

2020 marks the 25th Anniversary of the formation of The Merchant Navy Association (Wales). The Association was formed in Cardiff in the Spring of 1995 by Bill Henke and friends. The first meeting was held on the 7th June 1995 at County Hall, Cardiff. The second meeting was held on the 5th July 1995, again at County Hall, Cardiff when the following committee members were appointed: Chairman Oliver Lindsay (Membership Number 4), Vice Chairman Ken Homes (3), Secretary Bill Henke (1), Treasurer Tony Roach (23), Membership Secretary Ron Powell (2) and members Bert Ivins (75), Peter O'Brian (97), Pat Sullivan (8), Bill Rees (105), Ray Newbury (6) and Bill Walker (7). 65 members attended the meeting. By September 1995 the number of members had risen to 128. Initially applications came from seafarers in the Cardiff area and local valley towns, but soon applications for membership were being received from seafarers all over Wales such as Aberystwyth, Milford Haven, Haverfordwest, Llanelli, Swansea, Pwllheli and Holyhead as well as Kinsale in Ireland, Ontario Canada, Finland and England. Membership reached its peak in 1997 when there were 325 members "on the Books". Sadly age and health issues have taken their toll and after a steady decline over the years, current membership is now only 49, which includes 17 from our Barry Branch which was formed in 1996/7 by the Late Jim Greenway. In January 1996 after lengthy discussions, the venue for meetings was moved to the R.A.F.A. Club, Ely. The photograph above was taken in March 1997. We stayed at Ely until January 2013. There was talk of the R.A.F.A club closing so it was decided to move to the Canton Liberal Club, which is our current meeting place.

Bill Henke was appointed President of the Association in April 1996 and Oliver Lindsay remained Chairman until he stood down in May 1999. Oliver was appointment President on

the death of Bill Henke in 2000. Harry Parry, who had been Vice Chairman since 1997, was appointed Chairman when Oliver stood down. A position he held until he stood down in May 2017. Tony Meade who was Harry's Vice Chairman, was appointed Chairman. In 2005 the Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas P.C. A.M., the then Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales, was invited to be our Patron which he graciously accepted.

One of the first tasks of the Association was to get a Merchant Navy Memorial erected in Cardiff Bay. So Bill Henke and the members started lobbying the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation, amongst others. A location was approved and an award winning design agreed. The location is on the waterfront in front of what is now the Senedd Building. The Memorial was unveiled and dedicated at a service held on the 24th May 1997. It was agreed that this would be an annual event hence the reason for our May service. At the time of installation the Senedd building didn't exist. So when construction started in March 2001 there were concerns that the Memorial may have to be moved, but lobbying from members determined that the Memorial would stay in its location and would never be moved. The Memorial was protected from damage throughout the construction of the Senedd. In 2003 a plaque was attached to an adjacent bollard identifying the Memorial and in 2015 a QR Plaque was attached to the top of the bollard by Historypoints.org which enables the public to view the list of casualties of both Wars on their phones etc..

In September 2001 the Association was awarded the Freedom of the City and County of Cardiff resulting in a march through Cardiff and the unveiling of a plaque in City Hall by the Lord Mayor, Cllr Russell Goodway, and our Chairman Harry Parry. In April 2005 the Association was awarded the Freedom of the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough thanks to the efforts of the late Jim Greenway, Chairman of our Barry Branch and his committee.

Members were also interested in maintaining the Merchant Navy heritage in Cardiff and suggested various memorials be considered. One was a plaque to commemorate the Seaman's Pool at the Exchange Building. This was approved in 1996/7 but unfortunately due to the current state of the building it is not possible to determine if the plaque is still there. In 1999 we arranged to have an oak tree planted, and a plaque installed at the base, in The Gorsedd Gardens opposite the National Library in Cardiff to commemorate Seafarers who were lost during WW1 and WW2. The tree and the plaque are still there and the inscription on the plaque reads "Merchant Navy Association (Wales) In Memory of All Seafarers who gave their all". A seat with a plaque was also provided in the Merchant Navy section when the National Arboretum in Staffordshire was opened in 2001.



Most of the information above I have gained from the minutes of past meetings, some of which were quite difficult to read. If you have anything you would like to add to this summary please let me know and I will include it when I publish it on our website.

## MEMBERS WHO HAVE CROSSED THE BAR SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER

**Mr. David Simpson of Barry Branch**, who was a lapsed member, crossed the bar on 29th February 2019.

### TERENCE (CON) CONNELLY 1927 - 2019

Terence (Con) Connelly crossed the bar on Tuesday 16th July 2019 at the age of 92. Con went to sea in the Catering Department in 1942, his first ship being the S.S. Llandaff. He spent 8 years at sea before signing off his last ship, the S.S. Llanishen, in 1950. Con was also a member of the Russian Convoy Club and he received the Ushakov Medal in December 2014. He was present with the medal by a Representative of the Russian Embassy at a ceremony in City Hall, Cardiff. He joined the Association in April 2008.



### WILLIAM (BILL) SIDNEY TUCK 1924 - 2019



Bill Tuck crossed the bar on the 4th November 2019 at the age of 95. Bill joined his first ship the S.S. Peterston, in May 1942 and served on the Llandaff, Dunkeld, Sam Skern and Port Dunedin during World War Two, which included time on the Russian Convoys. He was a member of the Russian Convoy Club. Having survived WW2 he remained at sea and in 1982 he found himself involved in the Falklands Campaign serving as Chief Cook on the Atlantic Conveyor. On the 25th May 1982 the Atlantic Conveyor was hit by two missiles, killing 12 sailors, and finally sunk whilst under tow. Needless to say Bill survived the attack and four months later signed on his next ship the Act 2. His last ship was the Act 3 which he paid off in November 1987 having served on 28 different ships, some of them more than once, and 45 years at sea. Bill was one of the early members of MNA (Wales) his Membership Number being 42 and was a regular attendee at meetings and events until failing health prevented him down so.



*Happy New Year Shipmates.  
Best wishes and plain sailing to you  
and yours for 2020*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Regular meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month at the Canton Liberal Club, Cowbridge Road East, Cardiff, commencing at 14.30.

The Holocaust Memorial Day event will be held at 1100 on Monday 27 January 2020 at City Hall, Cardiff.

Merchant Navy Association (Wales) Annual Service will be held at 1100 on Saturday 23rd May 2020

Merchant Navy Association (Wales) Remembrance Service will be held at 1100 on Saturday 7th November 2020

***Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th May 2020 at the Canton Liberal Club, Cardiff, commencing at 14.30. This is an opportunity for those wishing to serve on the Committee to put their names forward.***

***Nominations should reach the Secretary on or before the 22nd April, 3 weeks prior to the AGM.***

You will be notified of other events as dates and times become available. Notification will be provide at our regular meetings, via email (if you are on line) and via our web site below, or you can contact me on 01443 815013 for further information.

[www.mnawales.org.uk](http://www.mnawales.org.uk)

**PLEASE NOTE: SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2019 ARE NOW DUE.**

***She Said "You're drunk"***

As I was getting into bed, she said ***"You're drunk"***

I said, ***"How do you know?"***

She said, ***"You live next door"***

