

# THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Incorporated by Royal Charter  
Patron: Her Majesty The Queen



Registered Charity No: 1068408  
**LISKEARD BRANCH**

Commissioned 20th April 1986  
*Full Recognition by The Royal Navy*

## The Bilge Rat

### March 2010



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Would all contributors please note that the easiest form of text for the Editor to handle and place in the Bilge Rat is text submitted in **ASC11 DOS Text {\*.txt}**.

Otherwise he finishes up having to type it out himself with his two fingers. This reduces the time allowed for drinking. Cheers.

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### Flag Kits.

Table Flags in kit form are available from Nancy or Gordon Strudwick 01579 346484. Flags available are:-

**Union Flag White Ensign RNA Crest.**  
**£3.00 for Ten.** Everything you need, just add your own 'Lick'

### PICKLE CARDS Shipmates.

Don't forget our specially commissioned cards depicting the Schooner Pickle in Falmouth after returning from Trafalgar. These cards are unique to the Liskeard branch. They are blank inside and can therefore be used for many occasions.. Much nicer to receive than an email.

Costs to you at a very special rate of 75p each or 6 for £4.00

### DISCLAIMER

Whilst The Bilge Rat is the magazine of the Liskeard branch of the Royal Naval Association, it should be clearly understood that the contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association, the branch members or the Editor and should not therefore be interpreted as such.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

### *Birthdays for April*

*3<sup>rd</sup> Warwick Belfitt 4<sup>th</sup> Trevor Newbury*

*11<sup>th</sup> Gordon Strudwick 19<sup>th</sup> John Lennon*

*24<sup>th</sup> Steve Roberts*

*29<sup>th</sup> Nancy Strudwick & Margaret Jolley*

### **Membership:**

*Members total 53 3 life, 34 full, 26associate 31 gift aid*

Forms are available if you wish to pay by Standing Order.

**Members are reminded that subs are due at the beginning of the year and the Members Sec should not have to chase you up.**

## Shipmate Frank Beer 1926 - 2010

Frank must have been known to everyone in this part of Cornwall and to many others farther afield. Born in Plymouth in the less than luxurious area of Stonehouse he lost his parents early and was brought up by his Aunt and Grandmother. He also survived the blitz on Plymouth, one 500 pounder coming through his bedroom roof but failing to explode. He says his salvation came from the open air school, (the dangers of TB were very real in those days), where he qualified for a Royal Naval Apprenticeship as a Shipwright in the Dockyard.

In August 1942 Frank endeavouring to stretch himself up to the minimum requirement of 5' 1" joined the Royal Navy. He says that the recruiting CPO asked him if he'd come to join the Sea cadets.

After many adventures, including drinking whisky with Admirals and hacking through the jungle with the Army, Frank left the Navy in 1966 to train as a special needs teacher. This career continued until his retirement when he then took up writing, poetry and Town Crying. Frank liked to look out the unsung heroes and bring them to our attention. To this end he published a book on the St Ives lady, Emily Hobhouse, who did so much for the people in British Concentration camps in South Africa. His latest book, still in rough handwritten form, I read just a few days before Frank died. It was about a fellow Plymothian who designed and convinced the Royal Navy to fit lightning conductors to their wooden hulled ships, thus saving many ships and lives. This man's home was thought lost but Frank found it. His grave had been destroyed during the war and Frank was hoping to raise awareness and funds to restore it.

In between all this Frank was Liskeard's Town Crier, a member of the Royal British Legion and the Royal Naval Association. Another of his priorities was as a Navy Veteran to the Fisgard Division of HMS Raleigh. Frank loved this and transmitted his enthusiasm to the New Entries who were fascinated by him. The Friday before his death he and I attended the Passing Out Parade of 'our' class. It was a lovely day and watching the extremely fine guard drill Frank loved every minute of it. As he told anyone he talked to, 'Once Navy always Navy'.

Frank was always giving me pieces for the Rat that he thought would interest people and I have enclosed his latest. One a poem remembering the blitz on Plymouth and the other an article on lightning conductors fitted to HMS Fisgard.

Ed

## Book and Plant Sale 15<sup>th</sup> May 2010

This is our next public event and as such will need participation from the members. We will need members to man the sale but just as important we need **PLANTS** and **BOOKS** to sell.

The more of each the better. Do not worry if you think your **BOOKS** will not sell. You'd be surprised but even if we cannot sell them the Charity shops will always use them and buy them off us. So get sorting out those **BOOKS** and bring them along to the next meeting (the only **ONE** more before the 18<sup>th</sup> May) or arrange to have them picked up. As for the **PLANTS** lets see who has the green fingers.

We need the merchandise to sell to raise money for our Association so please try and help.

Ed

Charley, a new retiree greeter at ASDA, just couldn't seem to get to work on time. Every day he was 5, 10 or 15 minutes late. But he was a good worker, really tidy, clean-shaven, sharp minded and a real credit to the company and obviously demonstrating their "Older-Person Friendly" policies...

One day the boss called him into the office for a talk. "Charley, I have to tell you, I like your work ethic, you do a bang up job, but your being late so often is quite bothersome."

"Yes, I know boss, and I am working on it."

"Well good, you are a team player. That's what I like to hear. It's odd though you're coming in late.

I know you're retired from the Armed Forces. What did they say if you came in late there?"

"They said, 'Good morning, Admiral, can I get you coffee, sir?'"

## Poetry By Moonlight, Plymouth Blitz 1941

The bombers came rendering our city red  
with crimson blood from the dismembered dead,  
the moonlit sky took on a ghostly hue  
as shot and shell into its bosom flew.

Those moonlight nights accompanied by cloud  
revealed our city as a tempting shroud,  
despite fierce scenes of burning down below  
the rain of death continued in its flow.

Explosions rocked the ground as bombs did fall  
the air was mantled with a lurid pall  
of smoke and dust, whence death had many claimed  
the lives of innocents, others sorely maimed.

We who remain are left to ponder and to rue  
those dreadful nights wherein those bombers flew,  
bringing forth those heinous acts of war  
destructively to our very own front door.

Hostile conflict peaceful persons spurn  
yet from such tragedies we seldom learn,  
does Satan's hand divide our human race?  
peace and goodwill-these acts do thus efface.

S/m Frank Beer (deceased)

This poem by S/m Frank Beer, won him a "Commended" with 86% in the Saltash Music Speech and Drama Festival on the 27<sup>th</sup> January this year.

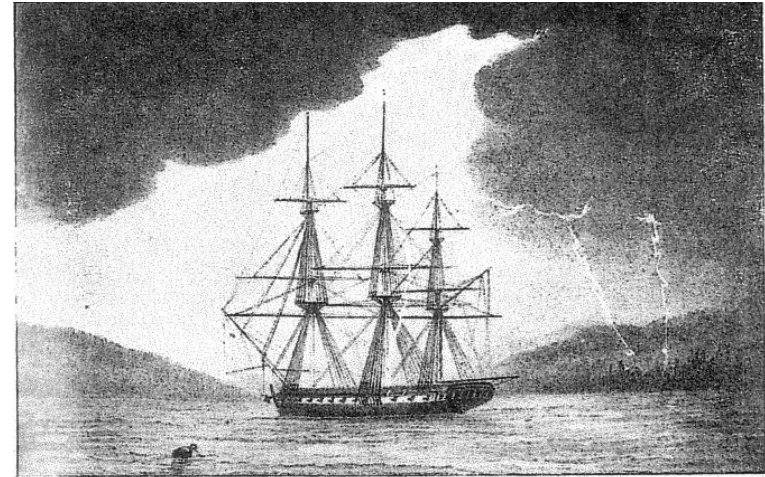
Yorkshireman takes his cat to the vet.

Yorkshireman: "Ayup, lad, I need to talk to thee about me cat."

Vet: "Is it a tom?"

Yorkshireman: "Nay, I've browt it wi' us."

## Lightening Conductors and HMS Fisgard



H.M. FRIGATE *Fisgard* struck 26 September, 1846

During Frank Beer's research for a book on the invention of lightening conductors by Plymothian Snow Harris, he came across this cutting and as our affiliated Division at HMS Raleigh is *Fisgard* and the fact that several of us are ex 'Tiffs, he thought we may be interested.

Before Snow Harris convinced the Admiralty to fit lightening conductors many ships were lost or had their masts 'shivered'.

"In 1847, Snow Harris had met and spoken to a Lieutenant Dyke, R.N., who had been Officer of the Watch in Her Majesty's frigate *Fisgard* (42 guns) when she was struck by lightning on the 26th of September, 1846. *Fisgard* was lying at anchor at the time, in the mouth of the Nisqually River on the Pacific coast of America. Lieutenant Dyke was more articulate than most sailors. "The lightning-crash was most awful," he told Snow Harris. "Just as if five hundred broadsides had all gone off together. We had been exercising great guns that day before the Indians and were already half-stunned by the repeated discharges; but it struck us all how

ineffectual had been our attempts to make a noise when Nature poured forth her dreadful artillery."

The *Fisgard's* log was less exuberant: "Ship at anchor; 7.45 p.m., the mainmast was struck by lightning, the electric fluid passing down the conductor and out at both sides of the ship, with a very loud explosion, but doing no injury."

*Fisgard* was wearing one of Snow Harris's conductors".

S/m Frank Beer (deceased)

### **A little known fact**

The first testicular guard was used in cricket in 1874 and the first helmet was used in 1974.

It took 100 years for men to realise that their brain could also be important.

All a question of priorities.  
Ed

Paddy & Mick stagger out of the zoo with blood pouring from them. "B\*\*\*\*r that" said Paddy "That's the last time I go lion dancing"

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NO JOB TOO SMALL

Still on the Wakeful. The Cox'n came up to me one day and said he had just read the latest A.F.O's. and we were both entitled to some salvage money. We were both on the Solebay on the way to the Far East and after going through the Suez canal into the Red Sea we came across a great lump of rust which had lost power and was floating aimlessly around. If memory serves me correctly it's name was Tse Fen. We towed it to Aden and forgot about it. Anyway our reward was £3/6/8. Not a lot but it would buy a few pints in those days, 1961. To put it in perspective when the annual Forces pay revue was announced that year it made front page news in the national papers. SENIOR N.C.O's. NOW ON £1,000 A YEAR. That's about two week's wages nowadays. Funny thing, the next time I went through Suez was on the Lion and we found another ship adrift in the Red Sea and towed that one to Aden. Never got anything for that though.

S/M Pat Vaughan

## Social Calendar 2010

- Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Apr Quiz Night & Supper  
Sat 8<sup>th</sup> May Quiz Night & Supper  
Sat 15<sup>th</sup> May Plant and Book Sale **More Books Req'd**  
Sun 30<sup>th</sup> May BBQ/Skittles/Games 1400 RBL Club  
Sat 26<sup>th</sup> Jun Quiz Night & Supper  
Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Jul Falmouth Sea Sunday  
Sat 25<sup>th</sup> July BBQ/Skittle/Games 1400 RBL Club  
Sat 28<sup>th</sup> Aug Hog Roast Barn Dance  
Sun 5<sup>th</sup> Sept BBQ Twelvewoods  
Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct Quiz Night & Supper  
**Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct Trafalgar Night Dinner**  
**Thur 11<sup>th</sup> Nov Remembrance Day**  
**Sun 14<sup>th</sup> Nov Remembrance Day Parade**  
Sat 20<sup>th</sup> Nov Christmas Bazaar  
Sat 27<sup>th</sup> Nov Quiz Night & Supper  
Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Dec Christmas Dinner. Looe Holiday Camp.  
Approx £25/head

Open from 1930 meeting starts at 2000. You do not have to be ex Royal Navy to join. All are welcome.- Bar Open

### Meeting Notes:-

Suggestions for additional or proposed changes to events are welcome.

Bilge Rat Hon Editor.

Cae Gwer, St. Ive Cross, Liskeard, Cornwall. PL14 3LZ.

## LISKEARD BRANCH RNA ACTIVITIES FOR 2010

DATES	EVENT
<b>TUESDAY EVENINGS</b> 12 JAN, 9 FEB, 9 MAR, 13 APR, 11 MAY, 8 JUNE, 13 JULY, 10 AUG, 14 SEP, 12 OCT, 9 NOV.	COMMITTEE MEETINGS
THU 28 JAN,	AGM AND MONTHLY MEETING
<b>THURSDAY EVENINGS</b> 25 FEB, 25, MAR, 29 APR, 27 MAY, 24 JUN, 29 JUL, 26 AUG, 30 SEP, 28 OCT, 25 NOV.	MONTHLY MEETINGS
<b>SATURDAY QUIZ</b> 6 MAR, 10 APR, 26 JUNE, 2 OCT, 27 NOV	SUPPER AND QUIZ
<b>SATURDAY 20 FEB</b>	BURNS NIGHT SUPPER
<b>SATURDAY 15 MAY</b> <b>SUNDAY 18 JULY</b>	PLANT AND BOOK SALE (RBL) FALMOUTH SEA SUNDAY
<b>SATURDAY 28 AUG</b>	HOG ROAST BARN DANCE
<b>SUNDAY 5 SEPT</b>	BBQ TWELVEWOODS
<b>SUNDAY AT 1400</b> <b>30 MAY, 25 JUL</b>	BBQ/SKITTLES/GAMES (RBL)
<b>SAT 23 OCT</b>	TRAF NIGHT DINNER (HFPH)
<b>SAT 20 NOV</b>	XMAS BAZAAR
<b>SAT 4 DEC</b>	XMAS DINNER (LOOE BAY HC)