



Unity - Loyalty
Patriotism & Comradeship

Up Spirits!

NORWICH BRANCH NEWS

**Branch Hon. Secretary
and Editor**

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Welcome to the latest edition of Up Spirits; the bi-monthly newsletter of the Royal Naval Association – Norwich Branch.

This month we have articles from S/M Alf Wiggins providing an article on the Branches 'stay away' visits in the past.

Articles from The Monthly Circular and Up Spirits are also available on the Branch Website along with postings on Naval History and Traditions.

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From the Quarterdeck – The President's Piece

Shipmate Mike Mizen

Here is what I wrote for last year's Up Spirits:

"It only seems a year ago when I wrote my last December President's Piece and here I am, a year later, doing the same thing!

Looking back over the last twelve months on the international stage, we have been dominated by Brexit; I wonder if next year's Presidents Piece will be saying the same thing."

Nothing has changed! Except of course that we have an election to worry about as well! At least by the time we get to Christmas we should know who will be running the country (I hope) although Brexit might still take some time. Watch this space; next year's Up Spirits may continue the saga!

There has been so much going on recently that I get the feeling that Christmas has sort of crept up on us and I should by now be getting into the Christmas mood. But I'm not. Not yet anyway, perhaps once the election is over there will be a sudden rush to get into the Christmas spirit and there will be a mad panic to try and get everything done in just two weeks. Life on the edge, you can't beat it!

The recent terrorist attack in London has focussed people's minds that although we are, compared to many, quite a safe country to live in there will always be an occasion when something goes wrong. I have every sympathy with the innocent parties involved, both family and friends, and to have something like this happen just before Christmas is especially

poignant. What struck me though was the 'have a go' attitude of the general public, and with such weapons – a fire extinguisher and a narwhal's tusk! Quick thinking on their part to use whatever was immediately available but I wonder how many others would have thought of that! Well done them!

Back to Christmas. I'm glad to see that Black Friday has been extended, in some stores right up to Christmas. I could never see the point of trying to do all of your shopping on one day in the hope of buying a bargain. My experience of shopping in the City would suggest that most of that Friday would have been spent in traffic queues, trying to get into a car park. I find the idea of having a (Black) Friday every day of the week quite appealing, by about 2 o'clock every day you would start to get that 'weekend' feeling and everyone would be happy! I am reminded of my time on HMS Messina in the Persian Gulf in 1963 when the Captain abolished the weekend in order to get more work out of us. The week consisted of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Day One and Day Two. Unfortunately by Friday we had lost that 'weekend' feeling as we were too knackered!

Whatever you are doing this Christmas I hope that you will have a peaceful and enjoyable time and that, after a tot or two you will be able to look forward to 2020 in a spirit of confidence with whatever the New Year brings.

Enjoy!!

Chairman's Report

Shipmate Nev Townsend

Welcome to another edition of Up Spirits. Our Branch continues with healthy attendance numbers for our monthly meetings and maintaining these numbers is down to the Branch Committee and members who help run the Branch throughout the year. BZ to you all!

On the social front, we had our Trafalgar night evening at Wensum Valley Golf and Country club on the 19th Oct, this event attracted another good turnout with 86 people enjoying the evening. Our guests of honour, who are both serving RN hailing from the RAF Marham Navy section, it was good to catch up with Anna and Martin again. We also had Ken Brown ex-Norwich City manager at his second Trafalgar Night; which he really enjoys. Thanks to all the members who played their part in staging another successful evening.

The branch held its Run Ashore / Pickle Night on 2 November at the Nelson Hotel in Norwich; sadly the turnout was low, so we will look at that for 2020 and how we attract more members.

Remembrance services took place up and down the country on Sunday 10 November and here in Norwich, we saw another good turnout from the Veteran community with around 20 members from our Branch alone. Year on year the general public turns out to pay their respects which is great to see.

Most of you will be aware we had 2 carriers at sea last month; with HMS Queen Elizabeth operating off America and HMS Prince of Wales carrying out trials before entering Portsmouth. The PoW will be commissioned before Christmas. It is well over 10 years since we had 2 carriers at sea and keeping one at sea or ready to sail, has to be the plan.

Jack Speak for this edition is

Father Famine.....

Traditional nickname for the Supply Officer in charge of catering.

Let me finish with wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a healthy happy new year. In the New Year, may your right hand be stretched out in friendship, never in want? And remember the New Year is the beginning of anything you want.

Membership Fees

It is requested that all Membership Subscriptions of £18 for 2020 are paid at the January Branch Meeting.

For all those wishing to set-up a Standing Order, please use the following details

Bank: NatWest
Acc No. 44648715
Sort Code: 52-41-29

Please use your surname as the reference

Secretary's Report

Shipmate Gus Honeywood

As it is the Season to be jolly, I thought I would provide a report for you to enjoy with a few mince pies and a glass of port (although I won't be supplying either of those!)

As we come to an end of another year, I would like to take a moment to reflect on what I think has been another poignant; but overall excellent 12 months for the Branch.

The Branch has lost a number of extremely well-respected Shipmates in the past year and we took the opportunity to remember them at our Rededication in November.

We have also hosted some extremely good events in this past twelve months. John Kett is to be congratulated on his first

Trafalgar Night, and I am sure all those that attended will agree that the high standards remain.

I would also like to thank Nev for organising our 40th Anniversary luncheon; although it would have been nice to see more members of the Branch at the event

Other social events and lunches have, I believe, provided plenty to keep Shipmates entertained and it has also been extremely encouraging to see the numbers that have attended community events and Remembrance and Memorial parades, and it is occasions such as these that keep our Branch in the public eye.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your support over the past 12 months, without your support the Branch activities would be mundane and uninspiring, and I hope you will continue to support us in 2020; I am sure there will be plenty to keep us all entertained and occupied. Merry Christmas to you all and may 2020 be prosperous and healthy for you, your family and friends.

Welfare Report

Shipmate Steve Phillips

A quiet month in the lead up to Christmas, no calls in and no calls out.

There is a campaign being run by Walking with the Wounded this Christmas period that might be of interest.

WALKING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

It's a fun, personal walking challenge anytime between Thurs 12 and Sun 22 December to raise vital funds for veterans and their families who are at risk, including those who are socially isolated, unemployed or struggling with mental health problems this Christmas.

Walk home, hand deliver a present, walk to a Christmas party... the more creative the better. The challenge is yours.

Call on friends, family or colleagues to join you or donate. Together we can make a real difference.

Walking Home for Christmas is Walking With The Wounded's annual walking challenge to raise funds for those who served.

Can you help to get more people walking and fundraising so we can support more veterans and their families?

By creating your own challenging walk and fundraising you can give hope to veterans who have little to look forward to this Christmas and have walked in far more dangerous places for us.

So, what better time to give something back to those who have given so much.

What could you do for #WalkingHomeForChristmas?

Thank you.

In Memoriam

Shipmate Allan Pearson

Life Member

Crossed the Bar: 6 October 2019

Allan joined Norwich Branch in March 2015; having transferred from Ely Branch where he served as Chairman and Vice President.

Allan left the Royal Navy as a CPO Gunlayer; having served between 1948 - 1970 onboard HMS Royal Arthur, HMS Duke of York, HMS Ceylon, HMS Dolphin, HMS/M Alderney, HMS/M Auriga, HMS/M Rorqual, HMS Neptune and HMS Mohawk

'May he have found a Safe Anchorage'

Shipmate Submissions

Branch Breakfast Club & Run Ashore

Shipmate Gus Honeywood

From effect, from the beginning of 2020 we will be moving the Breakfast Clubs and Branch Runs Ashore to the weekend after the Branch Meeting. Therefore; the next Branch Breakfast Club will take place on **Sunday 16 February 2020** at venue to be confirmed

The next Branch Run Ashore is organised for **Saturday 16 May 2020** at The Fat Cat, NORWICH, NR1 1DX.

Branch History

Shipmate Alf Wiggins

Over the years the Branch has organised a good number of 'stay away' events which gave shipmates the opportunity to get to know each other better. The most memorable was the two-week trip to Malta in November 2007. November was chosen so that we could take part in their Remembrance Day parade and service. Twenty-one members flew from Norwich and stayed in a hotel in Sliema. Most of the men in the party had served in Malta at some stage, and so there were old haunts to visit and memories to recall. I think the most depressing sight was 'Down the Gut'; locked doors and peeling paint. Oh! how it used to be!! Looking into the harbour there was a distinct lack of ships, naval ones anyway. The only one there was HMS Chatham paying a visit to take part in the parade. I was there in 1957-58 and I swear one thing which had not changed was the age of the buses! Ironically, Jan King the chairman of No. 5 Area had organised a visit for the whole Area at the same time and for the same reason. They were staying in the north of the island but one evening came down to our hotel for drinks and natter. So ended a pleasurable holiday with much reminiscing and 'lamp swinging'. If anyone has a December 2007 copy of the Newsletter you can see three pages of photos of the trip.

The last HMS Norfolk was first commissioned in Devonport dockyard on 1st. June 1990. By this time we had built up a close relationship with the ship, ten members of the crew under the command of a S/Lt. Wainwright had attended our 10th. Anniversary celebrations the previous October. We were extended an invitation to be present at the Commissioning and a large party went down by National Express, staying at the Sailors Club. However, there were only four tickets for seats in the stand. A ballot was held for them and I, together with Alan Driver, John Pye, and Ron Fitt were the lucky ones. In fact, secretary Esme Ketteridge also had a seat as guest of Subby Wainwright. The photo shows the ceremony in progress with Princess Margaret as guest of honour. Our seats are out of shot.

After the ceremony was over there was a reception on board for the guests which, of course, included we five. Two gangways had been provided, one for'ard and one aft. We sat opposite the one aft, so this was the way we boarded. Once on board we were conducted to the wardroom where the Princess was already installed and surrounded by more gold braid than you could shake a stick at. We suddenly had the feeling that perhaps we should not have been there. We learnt later that this was the case, our reception was being held in the Chiefs and PO's Mess. Never mind, nobody said anything, the stewards brought the drinks round and there was a large buffet laid out, so we took what was on offer. Later a member of the ships company gave us a tour of the ship. We never met Margaret but did speak to Chella Franklin, the first female officer to go to sea and a member of Norfolks wardroom. She was a weapons engineering specialist.



It was once the policy of the RNA to hold a bi-annual Reunion so that shipmates from all over the country could meet up for a long weekend. We went down to London twice, in 1995 it included celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the RNA, the gathering being held in the Royal Albert Hall. On one of the occasions an amusing incident befell me and Brian Butler. We decided to go aboard HMS Belfast. We were dressed in our blazers and badges and so asked if there was a discount for ex-sailors and RNA members. The answer was no. The couple who were standing behind us turned out to be Swiss. They overheard what had been said and the man then proceeded to tell them in no uncertain terms that we ought to

get a reduction. It made no difference, we had to pay in full.

One year the venue was Blackpool. We travelled by train to Manchester and then on a local for the rest of the way. Gwen Pye booked our seats on the train which were clearly marked with a label.

However, when we arrived some had been taken by other passengers. They were summarily removed. The weather was awful, cold, wet and windy. The parade had to be cancelled but the muster and entertainment in the Winter Gardens in the

Saturday evening was superb finishing with a Last Night of the Proms rendition. Our hotel was way out of town, it seemed almost to Fleetwood. The easiest way to get about was by using the trams.

The most convenient place we went to was Butlin's Holiday Camp at Bognor Regis. Everything was on site, although Pat and Gordon Dorrington and I did take the train to Portsmouth to see the Navy.

A visit to Scotland was made in August 1992, the main reason being to go and see the Edinburgh Tattoo. There were not enough passengers to have our own transport, so we booked seats on one of Sanders Coaches excursions. The accommodation was in the Black Lion in Stirling. A trip was made around the countryside ending at Loch Katrine. The weather was glorious, the surface any water feature was like glass. Unfortunately when we attended the Tattoo rain had arrived and we had to keep it out as best we could. By the time we arrived back at the hotel our clothes were steaming. Stirling Castle, perched high above the town, is very interesting as it was once the home of a Scottish Regiment. Consequently there are many items relating to their history. Once in medieval times someone jumped from the battlements thinking they could fly, but that's another story.

One of our regular outings was a four-day visit to Portsmouth staying at the Home Club. The adjoining photo shows the party way back in 1997. In addition to taking in all the Naval attractions, the coach was available for excursions around the area. Examples were a day in the cathedral city of Salisbury; out to the old ship building site of Bucklers Hard and a trip on river; an interesting look at the motor museum at Beaulieu and more.

Some of the more intrepid members used to join with shipmates from the Great Yarmouth Branch to go to Knokke Heist in Belgium for the annual Sea Festival. I never went, our only remaining member who did is President Mike Mizen, but I'm told that the weather there in February can be quite unpleasant not to mention the sea crossing! But I don't suppose this would affect old 'salts'.

All the forgoing activities certainly brought the Branch together and made membership more enjoyable. Recently the nearest we have come to replicate them was the visit to HMS Queen Elizabeth, and overnight stays in Yorkshire for Eden Camp and Staffordshire for the Arboretum. It would be nice to think that sometime in the future there would be sufficient support to do something again along these lines.

Burns Night 2020

S/M Stuart Fidler

Burns' Night will be held on Saturday 25th January 2020 with all profits going to SSAFA Norfolk.

Tickets are £37 per person and for your money you will get the traditional Burns' supper, piping in of the haggis escorted by claymore bearers, the symbolic address and a few very short speeches.

The meal is three courses with a starter of scoops of haggis, tatties and neaps. Whiskey and port are provided for the loyal toast and other drinks are available at a moderate price.

Following the after-dinner speeches there will be Highland dancing to a ceilidh band with a caller to guide you through the steps.

Start time is 18:00 for 18:25 with carriages at 23:59. Please note that the piper will pipe to dinner at 18:15 and guests are expected to be seated by 18:25.

Dress code: Highland dress, back tie or jacket and tie. Serving military personnel may wear evening uniform. Miniature medals are optional in all cases.

Seating is either tables for eight or ten.

Payment details will be issued later.



Calendar of Events – 2020

2020

January

7th Committee Meeting – 1930
 14th Branch Meeting – 1930
 25th Burns Night – Army Reserve Centre

February

1st Area Meeting – Harwich
 4th Committee Meeting – 1930
 11th Branch Meeting – 1930
 16th Breakfast Club – TBA – 1000

March

3rd Committee Meeting – 1930
 10th Branch Meeting – 1930
 DTBC HMS Invincible Memorial Service - Habbisburgh

April

7th Committee Meeting – 1930
 14th Branch Meeting – 1930
 18th Breakfast Club – TBA – 1000

May

2nd Area Meeting – Stowmarket
 5th Committee Meeting – 1930
 12th Branch Meeting – 1930
 16th Branch Run Ashore – 2000 – The Fat Cat, NR2 4NA

June

2nd Committee Meeting – 1930
 6th D-Day Service and Parade
 9th Branch Meeting – 1930 – RNPT
 27th National Armed Forces Day
 DTBC Armed Forces Week Flag Raising – City Hall – 1030
 DTBC Armed Forces and Dunkirk Service - St Andrew's Church NR9 5BT – 1030

July

1st-2nd Royal Norfolk Show

7th Committee Meeting – 1930
 14th Branch Meeting – 1930
 18th Branch Run Ashore – 2000 – The Champion, NR2 1SE

August

1st Area Meeting – Norwich
 4th Committee Meeting – 1930
 11th Branch Meeting – 1930
 22nd Bucket Collection - Hoveton

September

1st Committee Meeting – 1930
 8th Branch Meeting – 1930
 12th Branch Run Ashore – 2000 – The Lawyer, NR3 1HY

October

6th Committee Meeting – 1930
 13th Branch Meeting – 1930
 17th Trafalgar Night Dinner – Wensum Valley Golf Club – 1930
 31st Area Meeting – Harwich
 DTBC Edith Cavell Service
 DTBC El Alamein Service - St Andrew's Church NR9 5BT - 1030

November

3rd Committee Meeting – 1930
 10th Branch Meeting & Re-Dedication – 1930
 11th Armistice Day Parade – City Memorial – 1045
 14th Branch Run Ashore – Celebrating Pickle Night - The Coachmakers Arms, NR1 3SP
 DTBC Dunkirk Remembrance Service - St Paul's Chapel and War Memorial, NR9 5AP - 0930
 DTBC Remembrance Day Parade – City Memorial – 1000

December

1st Committee Meeting – 1930
 8th Branch Meeting – 1930
 12th Breakfast Club – TBA – 1000

Future Editions of Up Spirits

Shipmate Gus Honeywood

The next edition of Up Spirits will be published for the February Branch Meeting, and I would request that all submissions for that edition are forwarded to me by 3 February 2020.

If you have any submissions for Up Spirits, then you can email them to me at rna.norwich@gmail.com.

All submissions will be gratefully received.