



SUMMER 2016

NEWSLETTER

LONDON BRANCH COASTAL FORCES VETERANS

Chairman's Report

As is usual, immediately prior to the recent Branch Meeting, members of the Branch Committee took advantage to hold a quick meeting to discuss 'urgent matters'. The first matter was easily dismissed: half of your Committee was absent; the other half, i.e. Ken and David could cope. (Such resolution is rarely found these days!)

Steve, our "hard working wage earner", is busily dealing with a crisis caused through management not managing, and Vera Mitchell was enjoying the nightlife of Edinburgh.

The second matter was more serious: Ted Else our Newsletter Editor, is taking leave for a couple of editions as he and his wife Joan are currently engaged in selling their home of umpteen years and will soon be settling in grander property, in keeping with their more mature years. Those members who are able to get to the Meetings are fully aware that the majority cannot. But through the Branch Newsletter, they are updated and retain that powerful Serviceman's feeling of camaraderie: Shipmates.

We have not the facilities nor the ability to produce 'Ted's' Newsletter, but Kevin Costello, our busy webmaster of the Coastal Forces Veterans website (www.cfv.org.uk) and David Carter, our Secretary/Treasurer have offered (been press-ganged) to produce their own version of our Newsletter. And you are now reading it.

I would like to tell you of Kevin's remarkable assistance he constantly gives us in memory of his father, who served in Coastal Forces, but I know Kevin would not include it in 'his' Newsletter. But I, as Chairman on behalf of all our members, thank him sincerely
Ken Gadsden

Meeting held 15th May on HMS Belfast

Wallis Randall's book collection – It has not yet been possible to list the books stored on Belfast – title, author and ISBN, but hoped to do this shortly. The meeting agreed the first option would be to transfer the collection to Kevin Costello as a data resource, if this were not practicable, the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust (CFHT) had expressed interest in retaining the books and would be willing to catalogue and make them available for research.

The Treasurer is preparing an update to the Members List. So if you have not yet renewed your membership, please send £8 to the Treasurer as soon as possible.

Boat trip – Only a few had expressed interest in the possible boat trip on the Thames for members and their families, so it would not be worthwhile hiring a large vessel. Treasurer is happy to arrange trips for small groups on ML Raven.

Captain Peter Dickens - The Branch had received letter of thanks from the Parochial Church Council of St Michael's Church, Withyham for the donation of £50 towards the replacement bench and plaque in his



memory.

The Branch has been invited to attend the Thames Traditional Boat Festival at Henley on 15 – 17 July. Peter Bickmore has provided some exhibits and reproductions of paintings for sale to raise funds for the Branch. The Medusa Trust has also promised exhibits. Unfortunately there is a clash of dates with the next meeting on HMS Belfast – 17 July

If you would like a full copy of the meeting notes and the 2016 accounts January – May, please contact the Secretary.

Vis Visit and Commemoration 2016

Peter Bickmore and two colleagues from the RAF are flying to Vis 26 May – 2 June to attend the commemorative services on the island of Vis on Tuesday 31st May, 2016. Their visit has been arranged with the support of the British Embassy in Zagreb.

In the meantime, Peter was taken by an RAF contact for a trip on the preserved HSL 102 in Portsmouth. He tells me that the trip was very exhilarating especially the view looking astern at the noise (purr) wake the engines produced. It was very reminiscent of his time on 70ft Vospers. He enjoyed the day together with his family and the crew of 102 were very hospitable.

The season opened with a trip to Lymington and Portland in early April. Later that month Medusa went to Saxon Wharf for her annual lift out and had her bottom cleaned. In May we had the honour of taking John Lambert's ashes to their final resting place. Medusa was borrowed back by the Royal Navy to assist with the training of the University Boat Squadron. In return our crew were able to use a modern patrol boat.



John Lambert

In our last newsletter we reported on the sad news of our member John's passing. We have since learned that there will be a third volume published in the series "Coastal Craft History" by Mark Smith. This will contain Fairmile D MGB, MTB and FPD. This volume is dedicated to John – I quote "This volume would have been impossible without the incredible generosity and kind assistance of John Lambert. Thank you. The profiles in this volume are based, with permission, on his original drawings. (c) John Lambert 2016"

Model Ships

Your secretary spent a very pleasant week in Spain as the guest of our member Hector Sheppard-Capurro. Hector has owned several former coastal forces craft, thereby preserving them, most notably ML 1301 and MASB 32, both of which I've had the pleasure of sailing. Hector has had to give up his sailing activities and now concentrates on his other hobby – collecting classic cars. However his house is like a coastal forces museum, as it is filled with beautiful model ships made by his son Christian, who is a regular contributor to our website. Christian credits John Lambert for the plans from which he built the models.



Note from Temporary Editor

I apologise that this edition is not up to our usual standard, this is due to circumstances beyond our control. We hope normal service will be resumed with the Autumn Edition. If you have items or photographs to be published in that edition, please send them to the Secretary at:
18 Surbiton Hill Park, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 8ET.

In the meantime, may I wish you a very enjoyable Summer. Our next meeting on HMS Belfast will be Sunday 17 July. We hope to see you there or at the Thames Traditional Boat Festival at Henley on the same weekend.