

EXETER FLOTILLA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 12TH.MAY 2020

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Membership:

Over the last twelve months we have lost nearly fifty members, partially as a result of increasing our annual subscription. We will remember those who crossed the Bar at the start of our AGM.

We currently have 121 members. Over the last year, we have welcomed only one new member and I do, again, remind all to remember the need for recruiting. We are the last remaining Flotilla and we need to keep our numbers up to survive. We have advertised in the Globe and Laurel as well as applying to do so on the FAAOA website and hope this will bring in some recently retired new members.

The Committee:

A great deal of behind the scenes work is done by your Committee, without whom the Flotilla could not function. I am most appreciative of all their individual efforts and, also, for the contribution they make to the general running of the Flotilla. This year, following the untimely death of Andy Quick, there was a requirement to redistribute his various roles within the Committee on top of the need to start a new website since an interpretation of the Data Protection Act prevented us from acquiring the web site codes that Andy had left in an escrow account for use in the event of his incapacity. The law of unintended consequences struck once again. Thus, your Committee is currently as follows;-

Newsletter + Membership Secretary	Surg Cdr Mike Wilson
Website Secretary and SCC Liaison	Cdr Trevor Waddington
Visits Secretary	Capt Mike Croxford
CTCRM Camp Liaison	Major Ralph Howard Williams
Golf Secretary	Surg Cdre Robert Harland
Trafalgar Day Secretary (Co opted!)	Lt Cdr Peter Porteous
Lecture Secretary	2nd Officer Dita Dixon
Treasurer	Mr Ian Yule
General Secretary	Capt James Luard

The Lecture Programme:

The lecture evenings continue as the backbone of the Flotilla meetings each year. I believe that the subjects have provided lectures of interest to many. All have been reasonably well attended and they have been written up most ably by Mike Wilson in his Newsletters. Subjects covered were:

May.

“Annual Patron’s Lecture”

Lecturer, Commodore James Parkin RN

June.

“Countering the Caliphate”

Lecturer, Mr David Curran

September

“The V1 Commander: Colonel Max Wachtel 1897 – 1982”

Lecturer, Mr James Lander

Unfortunately, the Mess at CTCRM was not available so this event was held, most successfully, in the Wyvern Barracks by kind permission of Lieutenant Colonel Jon Penhale, Commanding Officer 6th Rifles.

October

“The Royal Navy Reserve – Operational Use of a Modern Reserve Force.”

Lecturer, Commander Chris Parry RN

November

“Deployment Update by Commander Littoral Strike Group (COMLSG)”

Lecturer, Commodore James Parkin RN

December

“Henry Harwood, Hero of the River Plate”

Lecturer, Captain Peter Hore RN

Again, the mess at CTCRM was not available so this event was held at Woodbury Park Golf Club. To keep the meal charge to £10 a head, the committee subsidised attendees out of reserves.

January

“Overview of The Trident Nuclear Deterrent System.”

Lecturer, Dr Steven Holley

February

Training the modern Royal Marine

Lecturer, Lieutenant Colonel Simon Dean RM

March

Cancelled because of Coronavirus

Despite the three lecture evenings when they were unable to host us, I am sure all Members would join me in expressing our appreciation to the Mess President and his Staff for all that they do for us by allowing us to meet at CTCRM Lympstone. I am equally sure that all Members appreciate the efforts made by Dita, our Lecture Secretary, who, despite a demanding day job in the Hydrographic office, still manages to find the Lecturers, sort out the inevitable logistics problems, and, turn up before each Lecturer at Lympstone to ensure the electronics are compatible with the memory stick to be used.

HMS Defender:

Our affiliate ship has been on patrol and in the news. We are kept updated on her tasking through her newsletter which is forwarded to all, electronically and posted on the website.

Annual Lunch:

Our principal guest was Rear Admiral Brian Perowne with his wife Maggie. The Flotilla Guest was Second Lieutenant Robin Geldard with his wife Sue. After lunch Admiral Perowne gave an excellent presentation on his life in the RN.

Visit to Lambeth Palace

This fascinating “one off” visit was much enjoyed by the 14 members who participated and has been written up, excellently, by Mike Croxford, the organiser, in the Newsletter!!

Annual Golf Competition and Summer Dinner:

This great fun event, at the East Devon Golf Club, was, as usual, well attended and much enjoyed by the four golfers and 32 diners. It too has been excellently written up by Robert Harland, the Organiser, in the newsletter. This year's golf match will be on Thursday 16th July.

Trafalgar Service:

This, the Flotilla's 46th Trafalgar Service and our main event of the year, was, once again and for the last time, excellently organised by Trevor Waddington.

Our official guests included the Deputy Lieutenant for Devon. Mr Brian Wills-Pope, the Lord Mayor of Exeter, Cllr Peter Holland, The High Sheriff of Devon, Captain Simon Martin, Rear Admiral Will Warrender, FOST, Colonel Simon Chapman, Commandant CTCRM and Inspector Steve Bradford, Exeter Police. The Very Reverend Jonathan Greener, Dean of Exeter, officiated.

The collection raised £300 for the RN&RM Charity, and the Service has been comprehensively written up in the newsletter by Trevor.

Exeter City:

At the invitation of the Lord Mayor, I again represented the Flotilla at the Guild Hall for Armed Forces Day on 1st July, as well as their Arnhem Memorial Day on 12th May, both accompanied by Dita, and at the invitation of their President, Commodore Michael Clapp, I again attended the White Ensign Club's Annual Carol Concert, accompanied by Sarah.

Annual Dinner

The Flotilla Annual Dinner at CTCRM was held at the end of November but without the traditional RM Band input. However, we were able to obtain drummers and a quartet from the Band of the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. They were outstanding! The Guest of Honour was Brigadier Charles Ritchie CBE, who spoke most entertainingly of his time in East Germany. This is a particularly nostalgic evening for those who remember the unobtrusive excellence of Naval Ladies' Nights but, sadly, only 43 members and their Guests attended. This year's dinner will be on Friday 13th November (Coronavirus permitting!)

Sea Cadets

We maintain our links with the Exmouth Sea Cadets. Trevor Waddington is our Liaison Officer and he presented the Parade Training Award to the winning cadets at TS Exmouth on 10th October.

Committee (again)

I have already mentioned Committee members who all do valuable work and without whom, the Flotilla could not exist. The absence of even one committee member hurts, as we realised when Andy Quick died and his jobs were shared around. We, your Committee, are particularly grateful to Peter Porteous for volunteering to relieve Trevor Waddington and we are conscious that Mike Croxford may be moving out of area at some time in the future so I appeal to all members not only to recruit more people, but also to volunteer for the Committee to take the load off those who currently wear more than one hat or who are ready for new challenges.

Conclusion:

2019 has been a full and interesting year, marred at its end by Coronavirus. We took the radical step of increasing our annual subscription by 150% at the end of last year and that has both reduced our membership and increased our income. We are again solvent but need more of a cushion against the unexpected for our Treasurer to feel comfortable. Recruiting new members is the answer and, as noted twice already, we all need to play a part in this activity. Your committee has advertised the Flotilla in the ARNO annual newsletter, applied to with the FAAOA and in the Globe and Laurel. However, I believe, personal contact is still the best method. Finally, I am most grateful to, and thank all the members of the Committee who have aided and guided me through my second year as Chairman.

James Luard
Chairman
April 2020.