



## **Branch Reports for Liverpool AGM 2007-07-07**

### **Sunderland**

Since we last met in Glasgow, Sunderland Branch have met monthly apart from the summer break. As well as our Bring and Buy sales and beetle evenings, which we now have in each others homes, we have enjoyed going to the theatre, Elizabeth's dress shop and our Christmas party and New Year dinner. Four of us also meet for coffee to have committee meeting. Due to our fundraising and the legacy money, we were able to give substantial amounts to three local seafaring charities, Seaham Seafarers Centre, South Shield Seamens Mission and Aged Seamans Homes. Wherever possible we attend the Port Welfare meetings arranged by the MNWB for our area.

Finally I would just like to add that Elizabeth and myself are delighted to meet up with our member Joan from Thirsk who is unable to attend our meetings as often as she would like, we look forward to seeing everyone in Sunderland in 2008!

A postscript we would also like to say a happy birthday to Joan Gould.

### **Humber**

When Jean sent out details of our meeting here in Liverpool, it seemed like yesterday we were enjoying ourselves in Glasgow, the seasons came and went and next thing, here we are April and our AGM in Liverpool.

What have we been up to in Humber? Plenty

Now settled back into our syllabus after our enjoyable trip to Glasgow for the Triennial attended by several of our members, thank you again Glasgow for your hospitality.

We have had speakers on varied and topical subjects, our footslogging Treasure Hunt arranged by Lillian and Neil Clifton. Neil really makes our brains work, the clues are often under your nose, you fail to recognise them, a fun night full of rivalry, a bit of cheating followed by a fish and chip supper.

June brought two special events, an 80<sup>th</sup> birthday for Brenda Dobson and a celebration at the home of Pat and Janet Taylor a surprise for Pam and Bob Dennison they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. Knowing Pam and Bob and the people they are made it doubly pleasurable. Janet and Pat live in a village where Guy Fawkes along with the Wright Bros plotted to blow up Parliament – a bit of history there.

Evenings out and a coffee night at Jill Rutter's ended the first half of our year.



After the summer break, speakers covering subjects as diverse as Amy Johnson, a local heroine, beautiful Yorkshire buildings, look up ladies into the sky along roof tops beautiful architecture is missed when our eyes are down. We experience the world of Beetles better know to Rita and myself as a Beetle Drive, women are dreadful playing this game, one day I shall video this form of friendly entertainment! Finding out about the Red Cross, a very interesting talk. Our celebrated Pie and Pea night always popular at the home of Margaret Frankish and her lovely dog, who sits and looks at you with big brown eyes in the hope of a morsel or two. A coffee night at Brenda Rawdings, lots of chattering as always. A night out at our local famous Hull Truck theatre, an excellent funny play based on Ladies Day at the races. How often a glimpse of your own character or someone who you knew raised its little head. We have an excellent Social Secretary in Olga Moore who arranges our evenings for us, not an easy task.

Our year finished with a very enjoyable Christmas Party, catering unsurpassed provided by our ladies. Exchange of cards, a quiz poetry reading by Jill and Judy which was very amusing and gave us all a good laugh. 2007 started well as it has become traditional to hold our Christmas Dinner then, this time at Crofters one of our local restaurants, excellent food and wine and company. Our annual auction a fund raising event and proves to be profitable and fun. Our AGM was held with members retiring from the committee, their hard work as always appreciated and they were thanked with gifts. Our Chairman Liz Robinson welcomed our new committee members.

The cold winds of February brought us to a coffee evening at Judy's with her cream and jam scones, her scones are simply delicious. Speakers on Hull 's historic City Centre by Paul Schofield. History of the railways around our area, World Travel a very amusing talk of the life of a courier for Saga, had us in fits of laughter a very amusing lady. A talk on Osteoperosis which was very informative for our ladies and good points on health care. Films on Scandinavia. We have had excellent speakers on a variety of varied subjects over the year. We have to congratulate Jean Ashbridge on becoming a Great Grandma and Linda Watts and Ann Twidle joining the club of Grandma's.

Our legacy money has been banked towards the Triennial 60 years ago we were formed as a branch of The Watch Ashore and in April we celebrated our anniversary with a dinner at the Lodge Restaurant. We shared our evening in the company of our National Chairman Sue Vickery who cut our celebration cake and proposed the toast with sparkling wine. Our guest speaker Mrs Christine Barker for our local Radio Stn spoke on the "Making Waves" appeal on behalf of the Lifeboats. A donation was made to the lifeboats fund. Other donations were made to the Sea Cadets, KGFS and Trinity House School.

60 years ago, life would have been so very different, we were recovering after a war. Rationing, buildings torn down, cities being rebuilt and we as a branch formed from loyalty and friendship, hard work, dedication and in the words of Frank Sinatra – We did it our way – celebrating as we know best, amongst our husbands and friends. When we invited Sue (National Chair) we also invited her sister Teddy to join us also our thanks to them both for travelling the distance it was lovely to see you both. Looking back over the 60 years our



predecessors are to be congratulated, without their vision, strength and character we would not be where we are today.

Lastly on your behalf I would like to thank Sue and the Executive Committee for their hard work in making this weekend so successful.

## **GLASGOW**

Before I give Glasgow Report, I would like to put on record my regret at being unable to be with you at the Triennial last year. My sincere thanks to The Vice Chairman, Office Bearers, Committee Members and all the ladies in the branch for the hard work done in the run up to the Triennial. A Special thanks to Ina Bruce for standing in for me – I know you all enjoyed the event and I can assure you that the weather in my home town isn't always so good -usually rain and wind!

We have had a rather quieter journey this year, the usual mix of interesting speakers on a variety of subjects which included – Working with Royals, Glasgow Ghost Walks, Music, Famous Queens Parkers (an area of Glasgow) and a very funny Beetle Drive.

December saw us depart from the usual Christmas Dinner in favour of a lunch which was well attended and enjoyed by everyone. This will probably be the format for the future. Again we were delighted to welcome our Hon Chairman Mrs Allan and her daughter to the event. Mrs Allen looked wonderful as always but unfortunately isn't so well at present. A number of husbands attended and Caroline and Bill McCarthy travelled from Kingussie to be with us. January saw our popular Burns Supper – hard work but well worth the effort resulting in a very successful evening. The legacy money was used to swell the Triennial Coffers. On average 20 lades attend most meetings but unfortunately in spite of trying very hard we have been unable to attract new members.

My term in office ends next month when Ina Bruce takes the helm. I wish her every success and I know she will receive the same wonderful support from the Branch as I have had. This concludes the Glasgow Report.

Meetings held twice monthly in the Glasgow college of Nautical Studies 1915 hours.

## **CARDIFF BRANCH**

Cardiff continues in much the same way still with our nine members having monthly peripatetic evening meetings at each other's houses. However, changes are on the way. Because we are all getting to an age when going out on a cold winter's night does not appeal, from September we are going to change to a daytime meeting by starting with a coffee morning "in house" and moving on to a local hostelry for lunch. This way we will still be able to have our Table of donations to help maintain our fundraising for MN charities.



As regards our fundraising we were dismayed when the fete where we had been organising a stall for some years, was discontinued. So we decided to take a stall at an Open Day organised by Care Cymru and originally for disabled charities but now extended to others, held in our local Roath Park – a much larger event. Despite what was possibly our most disorganised organisation for such an occasion, everything came together magnificently on the day and we were able to raise our largest sum ever. Possibly that was because we now run a stall of Objets d’art rather than a White Elephant who knows. Anyway we were very pleased with our efforts and will be running a stall this July hoping to repeat our success.

Another change we’ve made this year. At our AGM we appointed an Archive Officer. We have so many photos taken over the years and some interesting historical paperwork that we thought it would be a good idea if a nominated person could collate all the information rather than have it in various places. Wendy has the honour of being our first holder of this post and has started with great enthusiasm.

Unfortunately there was no rep from our branch at the Annual Seafarers Service in Llandaff Cathedral, both Pat the chairman and myself turned up with our respective spouses, but due to a misunderstanding of the timing we were rather too late. Apparently the organisers changed the previously advertised start of the service from 4pm to 11am – I did attend the Remembrance Service in Cardiff Bay, afterwards we were all invited **again** for refreshments this time in the new Sennedd building of the Welsh National Assembly. The refreshments were very nice.

On the social scene, we were invited to Margaret’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration at the Marriott Hotel last May which we all thoroughly enjoyed. We also held our Christmas lunch there too. Our summer lunch was held at the Foresters Oaks near Chepstow. This year we should be returning to Pat’s bungalow at Porthcawl, which has been extended and we are looking forward to seeing all the new arrangements. The acting career of one of our member’s Pru’s grandson seems to be taking off in a big way. He is at present appearing in 3 episodes of Dr Who – last week unrecognisable as a pig, tonight’s episode and soldier and will also be in episode 9. He has also been filming in Eastern Europe taking part in a film called Nightwatching, so look out for young Harry Ferrier.

The eight of us from Cardiff always look forward to meeting up with old friends at these reunions and hope to improve on our success in Glasgow when our yearly flutter on the Lottery resulted in us coming up with 4 numbers our first ever win!

## **PLYMOUTH**

Being Plymouth Chairman this year has been a pleasant experience and learning curve from which I have benefited. It was a great pleasure to welcome Helen Rendle as my Vice chairman she has done a great job covering



for me during my absences, also thanks to all our other committee members, each one of them brings a different and welcome dimension to the Plymouth branch.

After our sad start at losing two founder members Paula Harper and Marie Sherlock, it was a pleasure to welcome Marie Strick a country member back into the fold and our new member Sheila Edwards. We have had our share of illness with Beth Proudlock, BarbaraEverett to name a few and my own for which everyone's support and friendship helped me to make a more rapid recovery. Several members have had new grandchildren and also one great grandchild.

My first duty was to lay a wreath on the Plymouth Barbican for Atlantic day in May.

We were blessed with lovely weather at most of our summer events – a trip to RHS Rosemoor, a visit to TR2 a most interesting tour where many national shows produce costumes and rehearse, strawberry tea, summer meal at Whitsand Bay and coffee patio morning.

Autumn proceeded with a Sea Tea to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Mission to Seafarers, a chocolate morning, coffee and cooking morning and a harvest supper.

Then winter our main charity event a Cheese and Wine evening which was well supported followed by a retail therapy trip to Truro and Mince Pie and Sherry morning, Christmas lunch at the Moorland Links Hotel. 2007 started with a Bingo evening, a Burns Lunch, a book and coffee morning. Moving to this Spring a hot cross bun morning.

Quite a few members have been on their travels and we frequently benefit from recipes/food ideas they bring back with them at subsequent social events.

We have had many varied speakers at our monthly meetings thanks to our Social sec Anne for organising these and the trips which were so pleasant for those who attended.

We also accepted a challenge from the SWC to a skittle Match which we won a return challenge is awaited.

Lunch with the Lady Mayoress of Plymouth in October was a pleasant affair together with our 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner in February.

The Watch Ashore has recently been given some money towards setting up a National Web site, from which we hope to possibly obtain some new members and reach many more people interested in the MN. Plymouth member Chris Rankin, together with Sally Ellam's daughter are in the process of setting this up. Plymouth branch is very aware of the proposed closure of two of our major commercial ports, Par and Fowey in Cornwall and possibly cutbacks in the RN and Dockyard with subsequent reductions to follow in the RFA. I approached Brian Orrell OBE Gen Sec of Nautilus (formerly Numast) who provided the following information regarding the current status of our MN.

“According to information highlighted by Maurice Storey in his speech to the Chamber of Shipping's annual dinner 2007. Since 2000 the recovery of the



UK owned fleet means that the present fleet's capacity is now roughly equivalent to that of 1982. Shipping has overtaken air transport as an earner for the economy for the first time in 15 years. In a time when people are worried about transport emissions, it should be noted that shipping is much better for the environment than air freight. The Stern Report placed the carbon emissions of shipping and rail combined at less than 2% of the total world emissions.

In the UK the recruitment of trainees has increased by a third and we are now consistently seeing over 600 new officer trainees recruited each year. This is gradually leading to an increase in the employment of newly qualified officers. The recovery of the shipping industry hasn't just been good for seafarers it also means the creation of more shore based jobs in the maritime sector. The UK continues to have Europe's largest maritime cluster with an annual turnover in excess of £40bn.

According to the Ass Gen Sec of Nautilus Mark Dickinson, potentially the shipping industry has a great story to tell. The industry therefore needs to embrace and find new ways of working and recognise that investment in skilled seafarers really can and does pay. Hopefully this will happen and the UK MN will ultimately benefit. This is why our new National Web site will be so important to link to other like minded organisations and possibly obtain new members.

National legacy money this was used to set up an afternoon Sea Tea for the Missions to Seafarers 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which was a very successful event and raised £330 for the Fowey Branch funds together with a further sum of £131 for Missions goods sold.