



# DocRN

Issue 82 - August 2021



Newsletter of the Royal Naval Medical Branch Ratings and Sick  
Berth Staff Association



**Following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, the National Executive Committee had its first face to face meeting since September 2019 in July 2021.**

**Front Cover**— Following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, and after over a year of meetings by zoom, and copious emails, the National Executive Committee was able to meet face to face for the first time in July 2021. Grateful thanks to the Institute of Naval Medicine for hosting us.

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**ASSOCIATION PATRON**

**Surgeon Commodore Fleur Marshall  
MRCGP MA QHP Royal Navy  
Head of Navy Healthcare**



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Articles published in this magazine express the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editor, National Executive Committee or The Association.

## President's Address



Hello to you all once again, I seems quite some time now that I last wrote to you

At this time, as we go to press there is unfortunately not a lot going on. All I can say is that after 18 months we are finally holding our long awaited AGM and Reunion weekend at Derby in September.

Our Acting Chairman, Ray, has done a brilliant job organising the event, and as your President I am sure you will join me in giving Ray a BZ.

I have not heard of any member of our association succumbing to COVID which I am very pleased about, but no doubt for some of you these past 18 months have been very hard and difficult. I

know that a considerable number of you have had to self isolate, and I am sure that those of you who are attending the AGM will have a Great Weekend and a thoroughly enjoyable time. I look forward to meeting you all at last.

**B M Todd**

President

RNMBR and SBS Association

## THE ASSOCIATION PATRON

### **SURGEON COMMODORE FLEUR MARSHALL MRCGP MA QHP Royal Navy**

Fleur Marshall joined the Royal Navy as a medical cadet in 1992 and has served in a variety of ships (incl HMS NORFOLK, HMS BOXER, HMS ARK ROYAL), experiencing deployments ranging from the South Atlantic and Antarctica to the Middle East and Far East. Since qualifying as a GP she has worked for Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST), deployed at sea and in several Royal Navy Establishment in healthcare delivery roles.

A graduate of the Advanced Command and Staff Course she completed a MA in Defence Studies; her dissertation looked at the changing role of the War Correspondent.

Since promotion to Surgeon Captain she has been the Regional Clinical Director (South) in the Defence Primary Healthcare organisation, served as Medical Officer in Charge of the Institute of Naval Medicine, Gosport, and was appointed as the Assistant Head, Medical Defence Engagement in the MOD, overseeing international healthcare engagement and collaboration with other Government departments and NHS bodies. She is also a Member of Royal College of Defence Studies having completed the course in 2016.

In Feb 19 and on promotion to Surg Cdre, Marshall took over as Head of Healthcare Plans, within the HQ Defence Medical Group. On returning back to Navy Command Headquarters in Apr 21, Surg Cdre Marshall is now the Head of Healthcare for the Royal Navy. On 24th May 2021 Surg Cdre Marshall was appointed Honorary Physician to HM The QUEEN

The Association is grateful that Surg. Cdre Marshall has agreed to be our Patron, and wish her well in her role as Head of Navy Healthcare.

## CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS



Summertime is here, Covid Restrictions are being lifted and our reunion looms forth (spaces still available so please contact me if you wish to attend) - so much to look forward to.

Firstly I must state how delighted I am to be your current Acting Chairman - a significant honour and privilege. John Wiggan has safely manoeuvred The Association for the past few years and can now take a well earned respite - thank you John.

Despite the restrictions, your NEC has been far from inactive and I am particularly delighted in the fortitude and activity of all NEC Members. It was brilliant to meet up in INM recently with them, from all over the country (Plymouth, Doncaster, Sompting, Portsmouth and Harwich) and have a very active meeting.

The front cover photograph shows a resilient group determined to do the very best for The Association and we are always willing to receive your ideas and suggestions.

## FROM THE TREASURER



The Association continues to enjoy rude health. From a strong position at the end of 2020, accounts for the first half of this year showed a surplus of £1,132, bank balances of £27.7k and net assets of £25.5k.

Our subscription income is holding up well, so I anticipate a final subs figure for the year slightly up on 2020, at c£3.4k.

Allowing for the subsidy planned for the upcoming AGM and Reunion, together with other expected income and expenditure, I anticipate finishing the year with some £24k in the bank.

We are therefore well-placed to return some of our funds to members as surplus to requirements, as set out in the previous magazine. NEC is seeking members' views, at the AGM and/or to me meanwhile, on whether and how they would like this done. In the meantime, we are offering members the opportunity to buy Slops items currently in stock at half-price - details on Slops page.

I look forward to seeing some of you, albeit via screens, at the AGM.

**Joe Kirk**

Acting Treasurer

This magazine is only as good as the articles that are sent in. Please send your dits, stories, recollections, historical articles, thoughts and comments into the Editor, details on the back page.

# **NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**PRESIDENT: redacted**

**NATIONAL CHAIRMAN (Acting): redacted**

**NATIONAL VICE-CHAIRMAN (Acting): redacted**

**HONORARY TREASURER (Acting): redacted**

**HONORARY SECRETARY: redacted**

**HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (Acting): redacted**

**QARNNS, NNAS, WRNS SBA & VAD REPRESENTATIVE (Acting): redacted**

**CEREMONIALS OFFICER: redacted**

**SLOPS BOSUN: redacted**

**DocRN EDITOR (Acting): redacted**

## **36<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **AGENDA**

**Meeting to be held at Mickleover Court Hotel, Derby  
Saturday 25 September at 1600**

1. Welcome
2. Presidential address
3. Apologies
4. Crossed the Bar
5. Previous minutes
6. Matters arising
7. Reports
  - a. National Chairman
  - b. Honorary Secretary
  - c. Honorary Treasurer
  - d. Membership Secretary
  - e. Editor Doc RN
  - f. Slops Bosun
  - g. Ceremonials Officer
  - h. QARNNS, NN Aux, WSBA & VAD Representative
  - i. Regional Chairs
8. Election of Officials
9. Date & venue 2022 Reunion weekend
10. Closing remarks
11. Agenda will be available on the website with details/updates from 21 August.

### **Memorial Service for Ian Wattley**

Friends and colleagues of Ian are cordially invited to attend a memorial service, which will be held at Kingsdown Crematorium, Swindon, Wiltshire, at 1500hrs, on Monday 6th September 2021.

Refreshments and social gathering on completion at nearby local hostelry.

All are welcome, but to help facilitate catering requirements, Ian's brother Paul, has requested you let him know of your intentions to attend.

**Please contact redacted**

Please respond as soon as possible as numbers are needed to plan the refreshments.

## **VETERANS IN CRISIS—URGENT HELP ADVICE**

### **Medical Assistance (NHS)**

For Veterans **in England**: NHS 111 service – NHS Choices. Call 111 when you need medical help fast but it is not a 999 emergency, or visit the website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

For veterans **in Scotland**: [www.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.scot.nhs.uk) or call 111

For Veterans **in Wales**: [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk) or call 0845 46 47 (hard of hearing), 111 may be available but limited in Wales.

For Veterans **in Northern Ireland**: [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk). Telephone contact details are available from the website.

### **Veterans' Gateway**

For any ex-service personnel and families looking for advice or support.

[www.veteransgateway.org.uk](http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk) or call 0808 802 1212

### **The Royal British Legion**

Information, advice and support for Armed Forces Community and Families.

Helpline 0808 802 8080 or [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)

### **SSAFA**

All members of the Armed Forces Community Confidential Forces Line

0800 731 1619 or 01980 630 854 or [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk)

### **Combat Stress**

Mental Health Helpline - benefits, housing & welfare 0800 138 1619 or

[www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk)

### **Togetherall**

Early intervention service for those in psychological distress. Free to veterans

Online service at [www.togetherall.com](http://www.togetherall.com)

### **The Veterans UK Help Line**

The Ministry of Defence's Veterans UK helpline provides assistance on many issues including benefits, housing and welfare.

08081 914 218 (Mon – Fri 09.00 – 17.00)

## REGIONAL GROUPS

### WEST COUNTRY:

redacted

### PORTSMOUTH:

redacted

### EAST ANGLIA:

redacted

### LONDON & SOUTH EAST:

redacted

## PORTSMOUTH REGIONAL REPORT

Portsmouth region - once again its been very quite in the region due to the current restrictions. As we have now passed "Freedom day" I would like to still be cautious before arranging a get together.

If you have any suggestions on what you would like to do please drop me a line and I will try my best to assist in getting us together be it an early evening meet up, quiz etc.

After I returned back from Vaccinating just under 3,000 people, I went under the knife and as medics being on the other side of the knife is never anything we like. I am now almost back to full health and have been back at work which is as busy as ever.

HMS Queen Elizabeth sailed out of Portsmouth back in May 2021 on a 28 week deployment. After Exercise Strike Warrior she headed off to visit 40 nations including India, Japan, the Republic of Korea & Singapore over the next seven and a half months.

Transformation is ongoing in the Royal Navy and in the next edition I will be able to update you with where the Medical Branch currently sits and our way forward.

The former head of RN Medical Services Commodore Inga Kennedy has this week had the honour of naming the cruise ship "Spirit of Adventure" in her role as the ships "godmother". I was thrilled to be asked to become Spirit of Adventure's godmother and feel I'm accepting this on behalf of the wider medical community who have worked so tirelessly throughout this pandemic and will continue to do so long after this crisis period fades," said Cdre Kennedy.

I have tried to contact all the members in the Portsmouth region regarding requiring transport to the AGM in Derby Sept 24th-26th. If you haven't contacted me and would like to come then please get in touch ASAP please.

Stay safe and keep in touch. Elaine.

**Elaine Grist**

Portsmouth Regional Representative

## **LONDON REGIONAL REPORT**

We continue to have the problem of falling numbers. Slowly but surely our numbers have dwindled away due to failing health and mobility difficulties

We will see if the relaxing of Covid-19 measure improves things

**Roger Ide**

London Regional Representative

## **SOUTH WEST REGIONAL REPORT**

Due to covid still being around since the last report, there remains no change. Hopefully as the virus become under control and restrictions ease more and more, we can begin to get back to as we were.

**Terry Williams**

South West Region Representative

## **EAST ANGLIA REGIONAL REPORT**

Nothing to report due to the effect of Covid-19, we are hoping to get back to normal in October.

**Brian Todd**

East Anglia Region Representative

For more information on local events, please contact the Regional Representative for your area. For areas not listed, please contact the Honorary Secretary.

## **SLOPS UPDATE**

We're having a sale of items we hold in stock, and so Blazer Badges, Ties and Lapel Pins are now half price until the AGM in September.

**Visit the Slops on page 23** and get your order in for the Reunion Weekend.



## **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY UPDATE**

### **Cenotaph Parade 14 November 2021**

The RBL are working towards business as usual for the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday and The Association has 14 volunteers to date for the march-past.



Editor contact details are on page 6 and the back cover.

### **Memorial Service for Ian Wattle**

Friends and colleagues of Ian are cordially invited to attend a memorial service, which will be held at Kingsdown Crematorium, Swindon, Wiltshire, at 1500hrs, on Monday 6th September 2021.

Refreshments and social gathering on completion at nearby local hostelry.

All are welcome, but to help facilitate catering requirements, Ian's brother Paul, has requested you let him know of your intentions to attend.

Please contact Paul on Tel.No. 07968-631779.

Please respond as soon as possible as numbers are needed to plan the refreshments.

**PS.** Paul is particularly interested in contacting ex medic Dave Mincher (sic), apparently a close friend of Ian's. Any information on Dave, please let Paul know on the above number.

### **A message from John Pettman -**

It is sad news that Prince Phillip passed away.

In 1960 I trained with Chatham Field Guns Crew and unfortunately I was not good enough to run, but became an Arena Rigger.

Arena Rigger sets up the equipment required for the run, ramps cables spars and every thing else. When it is completed I stood with some of the riggers with our backs to the Royal Box, and other riggers stood a few yards away facing the Royal Box.

On the night Her Majesty and Prince Phillip attended, we had finished and awaiting orders to disperse standing together, someone passed wind from the group facing me, it was so loud I unfortunately burst out laughing and the riggers opposite started to laugh also. The riggers with the back to the Royal Box saw the laughing and started laughing as well.

Apparently Prince Phillip stood up and pointed to the giggling lot. I did not see this as I was with my back to them.

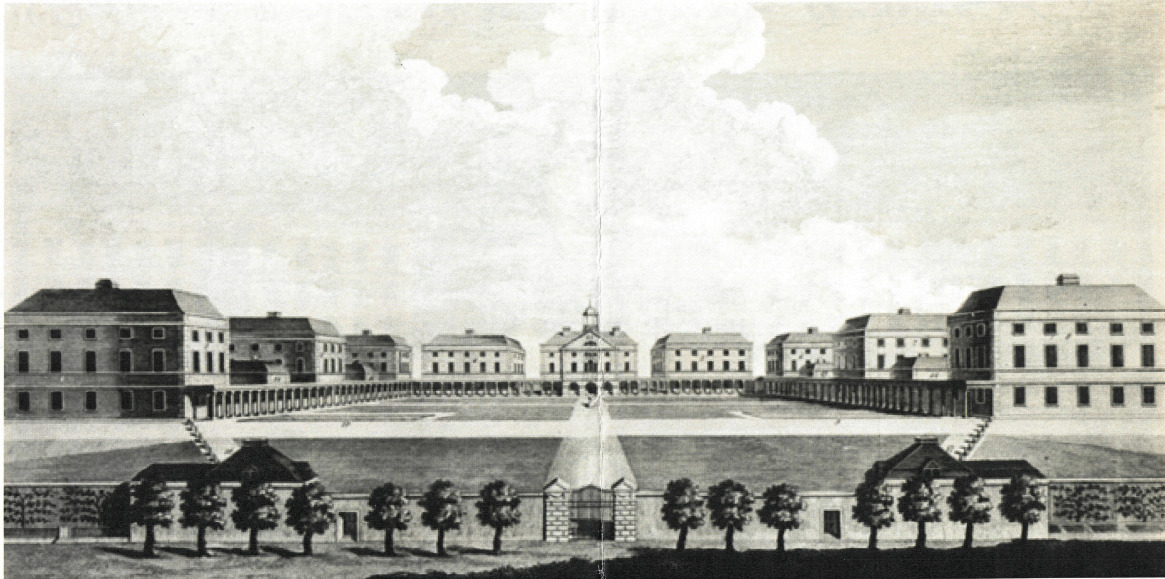
We had a big telling off afterwards from the Field Gun Officer.

I still find this amusing to this day and have a chuckle.

The Lord said to the Chatham Field Guns Crew come forth.

We came fourth!

## ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL PLYMOUTH — HISTORY



NAVAL HOSPITAL FROM THE SOUTH WEST, LATE 18th CENTURY

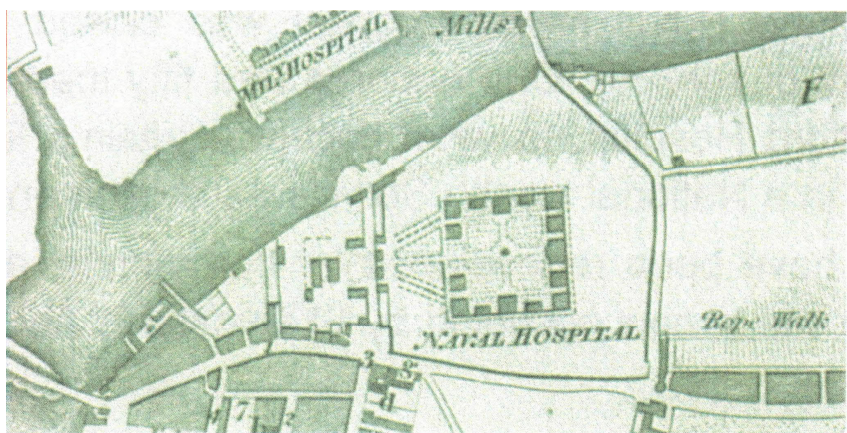
Before the Royal Naval Hospital was built at Stonehouse, the only medical provision available in the area for sick or wounded seamen was in one hospital ship - the Canterbury - and any empty maltheuses or sheds which could be found. The proposal to build naval hospitals in Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham was introduced by the Navy Board in 1744, and work in Portsmouth began almost immediately. Nothing was done in Plymouth, though, until 1758 as the planners were waiting to learn from Portsmouth's experience.

Plymouth's Royal Naval Hospital was built on land purchased from the Edgcumbe family. It was completed in 1762, although it had started receiving patients two years earlier. It was the earliest example in England of a hospital built on the block system. Originally it consisted of eleven large blocks and four smaller ones arranged around an open square, and connected by a colonnade. The purpose of this was to allow the circulation of fresh air and to limit the spread of contagious diseases. It proved so successful that the plan was copied in hospitals in France throughout the 19th century.

In the early days of the hospital, conditions were far from perfect. The design was effective, but the doctors preferred to treat wealthy civilians rather than the seamen for whom the hospital had been built, and the nurses were poorly paid, untrained and incompetent.

As a result of a Board of

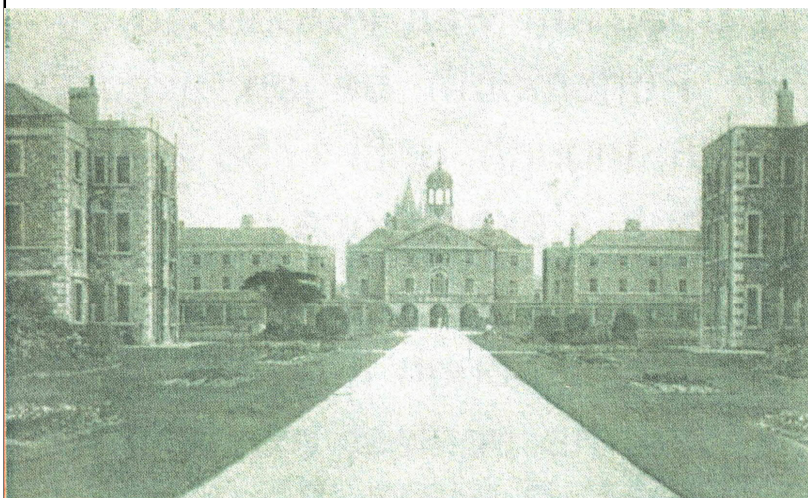
Inquiry into these problems, Captain Richard Creyke was appointed governor of the hospital in 1795, and given the task of improving conditions. This he achieved with great success during the 31 years he held the post. A report of 1843 found that "between January 1 1800 and December 31 1815, no fewer than 48,452 seamen and marines were received in the hospital, a very great proportion of whom was returned to the Service as effective men."



Royal Naval Hospital site and environs, c1825

Contd.

In 1824 No Place Field was brought into use as a burial ground for those who died in the hospital. Over three thousand people were buried there before it was closed in 1897. Only Mrs Moore, wife of Staff Captain Moore, was allowed to be buried there later, in 1912, in the grave of her husband.



*The central Trafalgar Block, flanked by Dominican, Johannesburg, Nile & San Domingo Wards, c1905*

A church, dedicated to the Good Shepherd, was built in the grounds in 1883 but, so far as is known, it has never been consecrated.

The hospital was enlarged and refurbished in 1898. At that time a steam laundry was added, together with accommodation for people with infectious diseases and two new blocks for the treatment of officers.

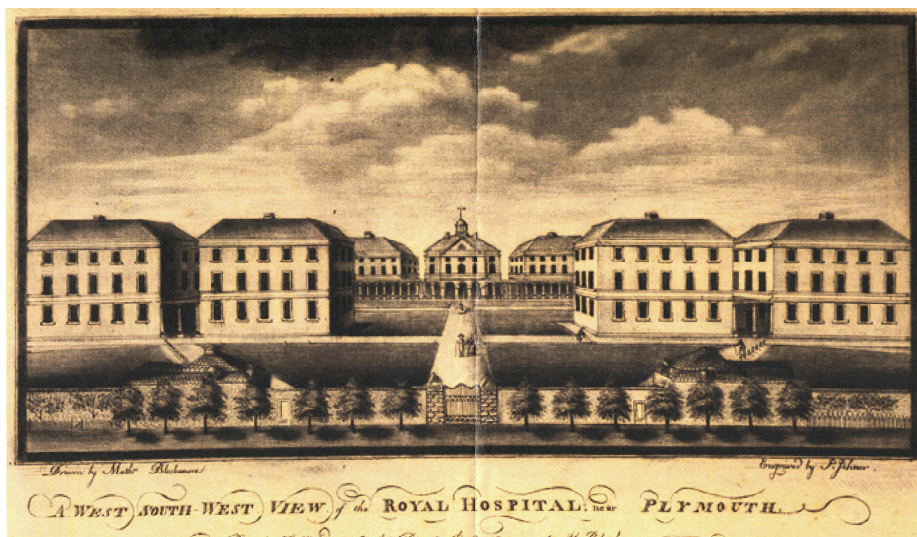
The hospital was very busy during both World Wars. During the Blitz, the decision was taken that it would be too dangerous to keep a large number of patients there. For this reason it was reduced to being a casualty clearing station, from where non-emergency cases were discharged twice a week to other hospitals. Twenty four high-explosive bombs and scores of incendiaries fell on the hospital and its grounds. In one incident two people were killed and two injured, gas and electricity were cut off and the windows blown out, but the hospital continued to care for 1,400 Service casualties, and civilians from the neighbourhood including a ward-full of mothers and newly-born babies evacuated from a nearby maternity home.

As a result of Defence cuts, the Royal Naval Hospital was closed on 31 March 1995, after 235 years of service. One hundred and fifty medical staff were

transferred to Derriford Hospital, to what became Britain's first military unit to be incorporated in a National Health Service establishment.

Since that date, the buildings have been redeveloped for commercial and residential use, and part of the site is now occupied by St Dunstan's Abbey Girls' School.

**Text by Joyce Brown, 2003, provided by John Ball.**



## BARROW GURNEY HOSPITAL—THE WAR YEARS 1940-46

### Requisitioned by the Royal Navy

Following the requisition of Barrow Hospital by the Admiralty, it became known as The Royal Naval Auxiliary Hospital Barrow Gurney. In the view of all the men and officers who were either patients or staff during the war years, it was regarded as a superb hospital and is recalled with great affection.

The hospital served the Home Fleet and all naval establishments in the South West. It was under the command of a Surgeon Rear Admiral RN and had three Divisions. The Surgical Division included the Naval Neurosurgical Centre and was headed by a Surgeon Captain Lambert Rogers RNVR who was Consultant and Neuro Surgeon to the Navy and later became Professor of Surgery in Cardiff. The Consultant Neurologist to the Navy in this same unit was Surgeon Captain MacDonald Critchley who also became a famous and celebrated Neurologist in London. The Medical Division was headed by Surgeon Captain V.D. Allison who subsequently became a Consultant Physician in Belfast with a special interest in the elderly and also the author of one of the most lucid and helpful books on the Ageing Brain.

The Psychiatric Division was headed by Surgeon Captain Desmond Curran who was Consultant Psychiatrist to the Navy and subsequently became Professor Sir Desmond Curran of the Department of Psychiatry in St. George's Hospital and author of a text book which helped

Generations of medical students to pass their examinations in Psychiatry. The hospital was staffed by specialists in all departments who were mainly RNVR officers and many of whom were consultants from London Hospitals supported by their junior medical staff. These young doctors themselves were later to become Consultant Psychiatrists scattered throughout the country.



The nursing staff consisted of Sisters (Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service), Sick Berth Attendants and VADs. WRENS were employed in clerical and domestic duties and as car drivers. Non naval personnel, most from Long Ashton, were employed mostly in domestic duties. Most of the staff were resident in the hospital with doctors being housed in hospital cottages and the nursing staff in the nurses' home. Many of the doctors took over houses in Long Ashton which had been vacated by families away in the Services. The standard of work at the hospital was high, and a full range of first class medical services was provided. Some of the first penicillin available in this country was used on patients in the hospital, being produced at the war time naval laboratory in Clevedon. Hospital trains brought many patients weekly from the naval establishments at Plymouth and Portsmouth to Temple Meads Station. Others were brought, by ambulance, from all over the West Country.

The medical staff had good liaison with staff of the Bristol Hospitals including Frenchay Hospital, then a U.S. Army hospital and the Burden Institute. Barrow Court was used as a convalescent Home for officers. Medical Boards were conducted weekly by the medical staff when patients at the end of their treatment would either return to duty or be boarded out of the Service "their services no longer required".



Shipspace and Bristol fashion - the Royal Navy moves in

A very full social life was enjoyed by the staff, particularly in Bristol. The hospital bus provided transport to and from Bristol via Long Ashton. Regular dances took place in the recreation hall and ENSA concerts were frequent. Jack Watson, then a well known entertainer and now a character actor on screen and television was physical training instructor at the Hospital and organised a full programme of sport, of which the mixed hockey matches were memorable.

The Ich Dien (Princes motto) Public House Barrow Gurney presided

over by a memorable landlady was the social centre for all the evenings and at weekends. Everyone, doctors, nurses. VADs, sick berth staff and patients. regularly gathered there and were befriended by the landlady who was a good friend to all and would organise accommodation at the Pub or in nearby homes for the relatives of staff and patients. To those who recall the Ich Dien of those days, very little seems to have changed.

Apart from the "permanent staff" a large number of naval personnel, medical and nursing, passed through the hospital for short periods of training, before posting to naval establishments at home and abroad. For many years thereafter it was very common for someone working at Barrow Hospital, but visiting elsewhere, to be met with tales and reminiscences of those who had once served in the Royal Naval Auxiliary Hospital Barrow Gurney. One surgeon lieutenant named Dr. Russell Dixon became so attached to the area that he decided to settle in Long Ashton and setup in practice there. Although retired, he is still to be seen tramping up Wild Country Lane with his dog and is responsible for the recollections of this period of the hospital's history.



Wartime activity at the stores

The navy ceased occupation of Barrow Hospital at the end of 1946 when the hospital was de-requisitioned by the Admiralty. At the beginning of 1947 the hospital was reopened and patients were once more transferred from Fishponds to Barrow.

Author Unknown, provided by John Ball

## HUMOUR AMIDST ETHNIC CLEANSING 2

As a well know comic used to say – “I wanna tell you a funny story”.

Prior to the withdrawal from “Operation Safe Haven” in Northern Iraq, there were occasions when the Kurdish refugees made it very clear that our departure was not going to go down very well, as they feared further attention from the Iraqi forces.

45 Cdo had a location further up in the mountains where many of the refugees were being cared for. One day at the Medical Squadron location in Sersenk there was a bit of a commotion outside of the camp, and it soon became clear that a group of refugees were demonstrating against our withdrawal.



It became very obvious that they had received some help from the boys of 45 Cdo in setting up the demonstration – the banner you can't see is the one that says – **“Down with the Poll Tax”**

I just had to include a photo of my two Iraqi minders Alem and Alim – you are all probably thinking they were twins but I'm afraid not they all looked the same.



**Sent in by Mel White**

**This is a collection of funny one-liners, exactly as typed by medical secretaries:**

- Patient has left her white blood cells at another hospital.
- Patient has chest pain if she lies on her left side for over a year.
- On the second day the knee was better and on the third day it disappeared.
- The patient has been depressed since she began seeing me in 1993.
- Discharge status: Alive, but without my permission.
- Patient had waffles for breakfast and anorexia for lunch.
- While in ER, Eva was examined, x-rated and sent home.
- Skin: somewhat pale, but present.
- Patient has two teenage children, but no other abnormalities.
- The patient was in his usual state of good health until his airplane ran out of fuel and crashed.



RNH Stonehouse cricket team for 1979 Tony Horsley was lucky enough to win 'Man of Match' and still have the ball used for the game.



RNH Bighi winners of Malta table tennis competition 1966

## THE FORMER HEAD OF THE ROYAL NAVY MEDICAL SERVICE HAS NAMED A NEW CRUISE SHIP

Saga Cruises selected Commodore Inga Kennedy for the honour of 'godmother' and naming the Spirit of Adventure in a nod to the medical profession's work during the pandemic. Cdre Kennedy follows in the footsteps of the Duchess of Cornwall, who is godmother to sister ship Spirit of Discovery and who is Commodore-in-chief of the RN Medical Service.

"I was thrilled to be asked to become Spirit of Adventure's godmother and feel I'm accepting this on behalf of the wider medical community who have worked so tirelessly throughout this pandemic and will continue to do so long after this crisis period fades," said Cdre Kennedy.



Cdre Kennedy, who trained as a registered nurse, midwife and lecturer, worked for the NHS before joining the Royal Navy Reserve in 1987. She worked as a senior midwife at the Royal Navy Hospital Gibraltar before joining Queen Alexandra's Royal Navy Nursing Service in 2000. She was promoted to commander in 2005 and served in Afghanistan in 2011 and was made captain that year. She was promoted to commodore in 2015 and two years later was appointed head of the RN Medical Service, a position she relinquished recently.

From Admiralty Fleet Orders 1945;

### **4108. Service-Trained Male Nurse—Eligibility of Sick Berth Ratings (M.D.G. 35593/45.-26 Jul. 1945.)**

*The Ministry of Health have issued a Statutory Rule and Order 1945, No. 638, which states inter alia, that a person who has, while serving in H.M. Naval Forces, passed for Leading Sick Berth Attendant, and is no longer serving in H.M. Forces (otherwise than as a member of a Naval Reserve Force not for the time being called out for service or called into actual service) may use the name or title of "Service - trained Male Nurse"*

*2. All ratings in the Sick Berth Branch, therefore, who have passed for the leading rate are entitled in future to use the title "Nurse" in conjunction with the special name of "Service-trained Male Nurse" The order applies to all Sick Berth Ratings who may have qualified for advancement in the past, as well as those who will pass for the leading rate in the future.*

*3. Steps are being taken to provide for particulars of entitlement to the special use of the word "Nurse", as legislated for the Nursing Profession by the Nurses' Act, 1943, to be included in future on Form S.1246L—History Sheet of Sick Berth Ratings.*

*4. Form S.1246L in respect of the ratings at present serving who qualify, or who have already qualified for such entitlement, should be annotated in the following manner. This certificate is to be added to the First Aid Nursing, etc., certificate on page 4 of the History Sheet; and is to be signed by the man's Commanding Officer :—*

*"It is certified that this man is entitled on leaving Active Service to name or title of 'Service-trained Male Nurse'."*

*5. Form S.1246L will be amended accordingly when reprinted.*

## **A BRIDGE TOO FAR - An Amalgam of Dental Memories**

### **Part 1 Dental School – HMS GANGES**

My first introduction to the world of the fang farrier occurred when I was drafted to the Dental School at HMS Ganges at the beginning of 1964. The six-week course was a precursor to a foreign draft to Singapore and also afforded successful candidates the additional qualification of SBA (Dental). The course was both interesting and varied - especially to one who had previously only ever viewed teeth as useful for extracting recalcitrant corks, something immediately available to help untie tight knots in shoe laces or as a part of the anatomy that annoyingly required cleaning first thing in the morning and last thing at night (and of course before a run ashore).

I was somewhat relieved to discover on the first day, that my footballing buddy from RNH Plymouth days, George Storey, was also required to complete the course prior to his draft to Malta. George was an interesting character in that he had originally joined the Seaman Branch of the RN as a national serviceman. During the course of this period of service he then transferred to the Sick Berth Branch before returning to civilian life. Remarkably, after completing an engineering apprenticeship he then married, and after consultation with his new First Lieutenant, re-joined as a volunteer. Oh, the allure of the Sick Berth Branch!

Another 'interesting character' who crossed my radar at that particular time, was one Christopher (Horse) Radford. Chris could only be described as a six foot four 'presence'. The nickname 'Horse' was derived from the largest of three brothers featuring in the TV 's popular western series of the time - "Bonanza". Chris was a larger-than-life character who was hugely generous, enjoyed a 'bevy' (or two) and enjoyed the odd affray. In the short time I spent at Ganges, we enjoyed many a memorable run ashore to Ipswich - notably the Corn Exchange and Portland Road (the home of Ipswich Town FC) - and to the not so tantalizing delights of Harwich (an instantly forgettable place made bearable on a blank week by the purchase of decidedly awful bottles of VP wine for the princely sum of five and sixpence a bottle). However, one run ashore surpassed all others, is still vivid in my mind and causes me still to wake in a cold sweat. It was a combined Sick Bay and Dental School 'rig run' to Lowestoft.

It was during the course of this evening's revelry that I owe Chris and the others a debt of gratitude. Whilst ensconced in a local hostelry, I embarked upon a friendly conversation with a very attractive and affable local girl. During the course of this encouraging liaison, Chris and several others came over, stated they were moving on and asked earnestly if I was going to join them. Already in a state of hormonal excitement I politely declined. It wasn't until they had left that the young lady, obviously concerned for my well-being, observed that her ex boy friend was at the bar with his two friends, and then cheered me enormously by informing me that he was both possessive and extremely jealous. On receipt of that most unwelcomed news, I decided that direct eye-contact was not the best tactic and I became acutely aware of Part 2 training and the revelation that adrenaline accompanies flight, fight and another necessary bodily function.

At this juncture I thought it prudent to look up and assess what was fast becoming a serious situation, only to witness her obviously psychotic ex. punching the palm of one hand with the fist of the other. Then, as if to confirm the hopelessness of my position, she uttered in an almost apologetic way "oh no they're coming over". Of course, not being Anthony Joshua (or rather Henry Cooper in those far off days) I reflected on my ever-worsening situation and concluded almost immediately that they were not approaching me to ask for a donation towards the Salvation Army!

Contd.

But then amazingly, as if the Gods had intervened, the door of the bar was violently thrown open, and there outlined against the chill Suffolk night was Horse, a transmutation between 'the Milky Bar kid' and the 'Incredible Hulk. Followed by the others, he made straight for my table, grabbed me by an unresisting arm and dragged me out, explaining triumphantly that they had located the whereabouts of the local dance. During the course of this unexpected turn of events, the would-be aggressors returned hurriedly to the bar; both cowed and I'm sure inwardly grateful that their dastardly intentions had not been fulfilled.

Fortunately, I completed the course successfully and without further mishap. I was then qualified to proceed on draft to Singapore; my first ever excursion beyond the shores of the UK. In the next edition of Doc RN, and with a fair wind from the editor, I hope to relate in Part 2 how I spent my next 20 months in the Far East during the times of confrontation with Indonesia; the wonderful runs ashore; and my experiences with a unique rugby playing Welsh dentist who always made every day unforgettable and out of the ordinary.

**Part 2 in the next edition.**

**By Rick Pollard**

### **RIGHT OF PASSAGE ( a Poem)**

In days of yore and back-along when Plymouth was a garrison,  
the runs-ashore back then and now would never stand comparison,  
Large numbers of Army and RAF personnel swelled the military presence,  
but the Royal Navy remained the dominant force, always proud and ever-present.

On a Saturday night the town was alight with all of the various factions,  
the Argyll and Sutherland's from Seaton and those in grey from Mountbatten,  
Add to this mix the boys in blue along with their Royal Marine brothers  
and the scene was set for rivalry and the involvement of civilian others.

In the late fifties and early sixties, when the field gunners went on a spree,  
the Camels Head in St. Budeaux was used and the Three Crowns on Barbican quay,  
But regardless of where one started, all servicemen were destined to meet,  
in the bars and the dens of iniquity, to be found on Union Street.

There were bars and pubs on each side of the street full of revelry and song,  
there were strip clubs where women took off their clothes, urged by Jack to put them  
back on,  
No fast food, as such then existed, only fish and chip shops so to speak,  
Where, whilst waiting for your order you could witness fight of the week.

There were of course places less lively, often visited by our typical sailor,  
there were tattoo parlours and taxi booths and visits to the naval tailor,  
But a foray to Alvin's Antique Shop, a well known Aladdin's cave,  
was openly encouraged by Alvin and friends, as it allowed them to misbehave.

Contd.

But not far from all of this decadence, just one street removed and well placed,  
was the Royal Naval Hospital Stonehouse - known to most as just plain RNH,  
The A&E Department was busy and always ready to receive,  
trauma, illness and walk-in's and some cases you'd never believe.

It is one such case, hardly commonplace, that proved difficult to redress,  
one of Alvin's friends walked in off the street who was obviously in distress,  
The young out-of-the-box Nursing Officer, urged him, in her to confide,  
unabashed he confessed, you would never have guessed, I've a sex toy embedded  
inside.

The poor lass flushed red, and said lay on that bed, I will have to call the doctor,  
she was more shocked than he, thought how can this be, and asked how long he'd been  
blocked for,

When given the time, she got on the line and spoke in a most concerned state,  
I need a doctor this minute, or we'll both be dropped in it, this patient could well perforate

The duty surgeon that night, was somewhat up-tight, and not in good humour at all,  
His plan was to eat, then take up a seat, and watch the day's latest football,  
Now needless to say, it was Match of the Day, so rather than treat the brain-dead,  
He made a conscious decision, not to make an incision, but to stay and watch football  
instead.

As an end result, she had to consult, and tell the patient the unwelcomed news,  
the inalienable fact, he was not coming back, the foreign body would not be removed,  
On hearing this, Alvin's friend saw red mist and suddenly became quite deranged,  
shouting - I never ever wanted the thing taken out, I only want the batteries changed!

### **Sent in By Doc Pollard**

Ps. It was later confirmed by the police that the object had been recovered but there was  
no charge.

### **MEDICAL HUMOUR—OF A SORT**

Lady to the doctor over the phone.

"Doctor, I beg of you, please prescribe me something immediately to reduce my weight.  
My husband has given me a wonderful birthday present, and I can't get into it."

Doctor: Just come over here tomorrow, and I shall give you a prescription, then you will  
soon be able to wear your wonderful new dress."

Lady: "Who said anything about a dress? I am talking about my new car."

## SLOPS BOSUN

Various items of Association clothing and apparel are available to purchase from John Wiggin: - contact details on page 6.

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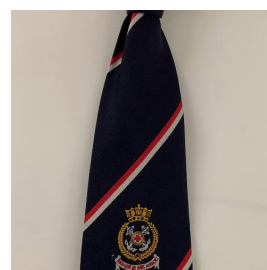


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## CONTACT THE EDITOR

Have you got a dit to spin, do you know some interesting facts, or maybe even a joke to tell (clean only)?

Or maybe you want to try and reach an old comrade, or just make a comment about something?

Then send it into the Editor so that we can all know what you have to say.

E-mail in the first instance to;

**redacted**

or write to;

**redacted**



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