

ROYAL NAVY CLEARANCE DIVERS ASSOCIATION



News Letter ISSUE 02 | JUNE 2015

Maintaining contact between serving and former members of the Service and providing social gatherings for them; Fostering esprit de corps, comradeship and the welfare of the Service and perpetuating its deeds; Preserving the traditions of the Service including the practice of understatement, humility and modesty; Perpetuating the memory of those members of the Service who have died in the service of their country.

Welcome to the second instalment of the Royal Navy Clearance Divers Association 'News Letter'. So much has happened this year it is difficult to know where to start. At a recent Committee meeting the Secretary reported that the Association ranks have swelled to 318 which is fantastic as we are only just in our 4th year. The bank balance is looking extremely healthy, which, together with the numerous donations will go a long way towards our future projects (more later). We proudly announced late last year that we had successfully registered as a charity, more of which later. Last year's events have proven a great success and are covered in detail below. There has been some changes to the committee as some of you will already know: CDRE Paddy McAlpine has taken over as the President, I have assumed the Chairman's role and John Ravenhall is now the Secretary. It is at this point I will include a note from the previous chairman, Steve Fitzjohn. "The RNCDA has now been running for over 3-years and it is time for change to move the RNCDA forward; I am standing down as Chairman and WO1 (Diver) Steve 'Scouse' Vernon will pick up the reins. It has been an absolute privilege and honour to be one of the founding members of the Association and to serve as your Chairman for the past 3-years. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Steve Vernon, Lee Causer, Vic Anderton, Glyn Holgate and John Ravenhall, your Committee, for all their support and sterling efforts during my tenure. Along with Alan 'Nutt' Carr and Karl Roberts I will be working towards establishing the RNCDA Charity. As my final reiteration I would just echo my previous statement, for the RNCDA to be a success it relies on serving and former members of the Service to join and to fully support the objectives of the Association; I thank those of you that have joined and supported thus far, and ask that you continue to spread the word and encourage others to join.

Yours
Steve Vernon
Warrant Officer First Class (Diver)
Chairman

The RNCDA website is now up and running and is being managed by Glyn Holgate as the Association Media Committee members. <http://rncda.com> for login details please contact Glyn RNCDA@Hotmail.co.uk

Welcome to the Royal Navy Clearance Divers Association website.

Since the formation back in January 2012 the Association has seen its ranks swell to a healthy membership of more than 230.

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If members have any news or dits for inclusion on the site, these would be welcomed.

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The first social event of the year was the usual battle on the rugby pitch between the Navy and Army. After last year's successful day Vic and I reckoned we could fill a double deck bus, a gamble, which turned out better than we could have hoped for!! Not only did we have more than enough bums on seats but all the tickets had been sold 2 months before the event: unheard of in the previous 5 years we have been arranging it. The day started at 0700 with the first load of fancy dressers arriving promptly to show off this year's outfit and indulge in the bacon sandwich and champagne, big thanks to Yoyo and Bungy for opening the new mess bar. I swear the outfits are getting more and more risky every year, and that's the lads! The best costumes of the day must go to Vic Anderton and John Thomas. It wasn't so much the effort that went into their outfits, more the reaction they got from everyone when they realised: I reckon most of Twickers followed them up the stairs to their seats. (Photo below). At a guess I'd say 75% of the bus had opted for fancy dress and this went down a blinder when we arrived at Fleet Services. Our timing couldn't have been better and we took up a prime parking space, only to be beaten by the Booties from Poole. After saying hello to a few old shipmates and admiring their fancy dress (where did that hour go?) it was off to the stadium, the slightly earlier departure meant we would not only get a decent parking space but would even beat the Booties to the car park. Within 15 mins of arrival in West car park the beer was out and the Hogg roast arrived, success!! The next few hours just muddled into a frenzy of who you have met, where did I leave my beer and where is the toilet (erm bush) and most importantly, ensuring you don't miss kick off. Thankfully we all managed to find our seats ready for the game. The first half was very promising for the Navy and we all just hoped the second would go the same way. But alas! The dirty sneaky Pongo's brought on the Fijian Army on, who played with some excellent flair and kept the scoreboard ticking over. That said the Navy didn't let up and fought a valiant battle!! Oh well there is always next year, right where's the beer, the bus and the Hogg roast. For those who normally attend its situation normal, you see that many people you can't remember and drink that much beer you don't care. Everyone accounted for, we departed the hallowed ground at approximately 1800, waving (moon)ing to any unsuspecting poor sole that happened to be glancing our way. I have no idea where all the booze had been stored but there was no chance we would run out this year. The bus driver did a great job and appreciated the whip round we did for him. After a couple of drop offs the coach was finally empty, but it didn't stop there. Even though most went their different ways the theme was the same, where's the party. I know some hard-core drinkers went on until 4 am but this call sign was well and truly done before that hour. Don't miss out on great day! But be warned over half the tickets have been sold already.



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2014's Annual Diver Golf Championship was held at Crookhorn Park on the top of Portsdown Hill. The committee had made the decision some time earlier to attempt to run the event at a different location each year. The reason for this was twofold: firstly, any bandits playing at their own course would not benefit from knowing the course and secondly, to find a venue that is not only suitable but can provide the correct facilities at the right price. Crookhorn looked like it provided all of the above and all we had to hope for was good weather. The day started in the usual manner; meet, greet, spin dits, bit of banter over coffee and bacon roll then out on the course. Apart from one 20-minute period we were blessed with the weather. After the morning round was complete the usual golf complaints could be heard: haven't played for a while, not been to well, which really meant, either they had played crap or they were protecting a great scorecard? Only time would tell!!! With a slightly rushed lunch (lesson for next year) it was back out in the afternoon. As mentioned only a slight drop of rain through the afternoon but nothing to stop play. As the scorecards started to come in it became apparent that there had been some protecting going on. The places for the top spots changed with each 4 ball that came in but it wasn't until the penultimate 4 ball arrived in the clubhouse that it was clear there was only one winner. Proud to receive both his winners' trophy and the coveted Green jacket from John Dadd, Andy Newbon is the 2014 RNCDA Golf Champion. Div 1 winner – Tug Wilson, R/up – John Dadd, Div 2 winner – Kev Stockton, R/up – Vic Anderton, Over 50 winner – Sean Meleady, Duffer of the day – Mark Brenton. The luckiest person on the day with his amazing putting skills was Kev Stockton who once again won a holiday in Rhodes provided by Vic Anderton.

2015's event is at Crookhorn Park on 31 July, the applications are on the website.

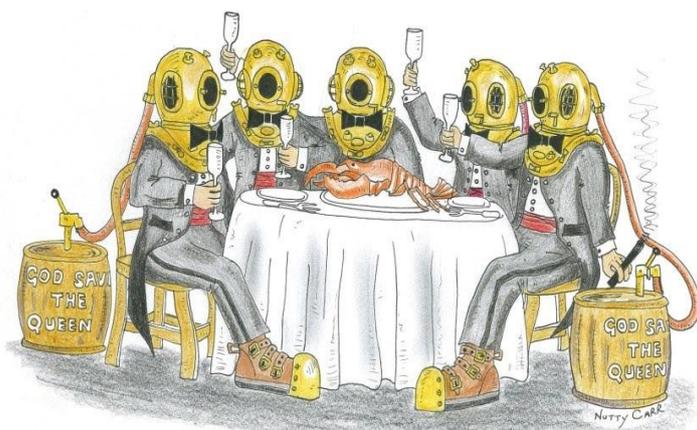
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RNCDA ANNUAL DINNER



The annual dinner for RNCDA members and their guests was held at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. The evening started with complimentary drinks on arrival and the usual dit spinning in the bar. The numbers attending are growing each year as this event becomes more popular; it was fantastic to see such a mix of ranks and rates, which is testament to the creation of an all ranks RNCDA. Without much ado (unlike previous years, trying to get people out of the bar area who hadn't seen each other since Nelson was a cabin boy) we all took our seats and enjoyed the exceptional food provided by the club. Food done it was time for the speeches! Oh no! Don't let Scouse on the mic!! It was my great pleasure to introduce the new president of the association CDRE Paddy McAlpine. Paddy took the floor and made a heartfelt speech about what it meant to be a Clearance Diver! He definitely struck a few cords with his chosen words: all the divers in the room inflated their chests while one or two of the women mopped away the tears. All the official pieces completed without much of a hiccup it was time to retire to the bar and spin some more dits. As mentioned previously, It was fantastic to see such a mix of all ranks coming together: former, serving, old and new divers all with one common interest: pride in being a 'Royal Navy Clearance Diver'. It won't be long before the new become the old so let's take the time to enjoy events like this to ensure no one gets forgotten. Looking forward to seeing you all at this year's event: Note the venue change, details below.

Venue: Plaza Suite the Pyramids Center Clarence Esplanade Southsea Portsmouth PO5 3ST
Date: Friday 9th Oct 2015 Time: 1900 until 0200

The Dinner is Open to all Serving and Retired Royal Naval Divers, Partners and Guests. The night will include pre dinner drinks in the VIP bar at 1900: Dinner commences 2000. On completion the usual Scouse speech and raffle, for the hard core and dit spinners, the bar remains open until 0200. Entertainment is provided by a local DJ and there is a NO cash mobile casino available.

Dress: Formal /Association Tie

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Huge thanks goes to Taff Weaver for organising the first Christmas bash. It proved a great success, watch the website for this year's venue. What started out to be just 10-15 of the local lads going for a quiet drink (NOT) turned out to be 60-70 divers from all corners of the country descending on Pete's 'English Tapas' bar in Southsea. And what a day!! It starting with a good old catch up, some serious black catting and elaborate dit spinning. Followed by the auction of some fantastic pictures donated by Nutty Carr. The hope was to raise funds for the start the memorial bell project but, in good Navy Diver tradition, the bottom of pockets were reached and the pot of money raised far exceeded any expectations with a grand total of £1975,00.



Thanks to generous bids of £700 from Dave Barraunders for Nutty's one off picture,



Another winner, (undisclosed bid so his other half doesn't find out) Kelvin Jess James for the second of Nutty's picture's.

This had had been put back in to auction from the raffle by Andy Howarth. A special thanks goes to our fine enforcer Andy Pearce, (not one to argue with when he has had a few shandys) who, was not only fining the lads but any civy that happened across the day's festivities: when they replied 'they weren't with us' Andy replied 'your own fault for walking through our door, now get your hand in your pocket'. Throughout the day Christmas hats had to be worn. They were relaxed for 25 mins but Angry Pearce decided that was too long and put his back on after 23 mins, fining everyone else for not paying attention. The night was topped off with Glyn Holgate taking his first dip in many years (someone get the S288) in the landlord's prize carp pond!! The final pub of choice for the remaining rabble was the Sirloin of beef.

If you didn't make this one DON'T miss the next.

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Charity

The announcement of the RNCDA becoming a charity couldn't have been better timed. It was an aspiration of the committee to develop this idea but we understood there are quite a few hurdles to achieve success. We had almost breached the financial hurdle when Tony Sexton approached us with the idea of the memorial bell. We had already approached the guys we wanted to act as trustees: Steve Fitzjohn, Karl Roberts and Alan Nutty Carr. With these guys on-board and Tony's idea the charity already had its first major project dropped in its lap. For those who have been following the bell progress this will not be new but for everyone else, the design has been agreed and the mould is well on its way, the final casting is a short time away and a rough idea of commissioning date is July, date to be confirmed via the website. We would like to make the commissioning ceremony a fitting event, therefore I urge you to make the effort and

let's make this extra special event.

WHERE DID YOU GET COINED?

Vic Anderton got Scouse Vernon at the bottom of a shark tank in a marina in Majorca



Scouse Vernon, Vic Anderton and Soapy Watson get Dean Simmo Simpson and Fat Tony Sexton
At the Hong Kong Sevens.

