

CFVA. LONDON NEWSLETTER August '07.

Thanks are due to all members who were able to attend our July meeting. Another good turn out, particularly so since our catchment area is fairly large and members travel in from Beds. Berks. Herts. Kent. Middlesex. Essex., to swell the number of stalwart 'locals' coming from the London area.

We were without our Chairman, Ken Gadsdon who had to respond to a draft chit made out some time ago, requiring Doreen and himself to board a (river) Cruiser for several days on the Danube. We are not sure whether he enjoyed as much rain as we did. In Ken's absence our Vice Chairman did the honours.

On the welfare front we are pleased to report that Howard Spencer has left hospital after undergoing a major op. and is back home taking things easy and is on the road to recovery.

Terry Barclay, after many weeks of illness sounded very chirpy on the phone and said he would be back on the 'Belfast to resume his old duties with the Sea Cadets.

As Branch members will know, our Chairman has, and is, suffering badly with a back condition that is now increasingly affecting his quality of life. Rather than continue to wait seemingly indefinitely on NHS waiting lists in much pain, Ken has now arranged for a private operation on the 18th August. Our good wishes go with him – by the time this newsletter reaches we shall know how things developed.

The Minutes of our last meeting, under AOB, made reference to to an article in the "Britain at War" magazine. It may be of interest to other members and is repeated here. One of our members, Peter Bickmore said that he had exchanged correspondence with the Editor of "Britain at War" following publication of an article in the magazine entitled 'Hornets of the Fleet' which included coverage of our de-commissioning. In replying to Peter's correspondence, the Editor said that the article had created a great deal of interest, to such a degree that they were planning further features on a Coastal Forces theme, The magazine may not be generally at all newsagents but can be ordered on line at www.britain-at-war-magazine.com or from Green Arbor Publishing, Green Arbor, Rector Road, Storrington West Sussex. RH20 4EF.

Members who obtained the BBC. DVD, of the Hornet de-commissioning have been closely scanning their copies for familiar faces (or their own) with mixed results. Some were lucky, some not, which is understandable under the circumstances. Had it been possible to widen the general coverage then perhaps MTB 102 would have been on screen. She was the first boat to be based at HMS Hornet in 1940 and special efforts had been made for her to be present at the de-commissioning ceremony. She had left Oulton Broad on the 15th, where some current restoration work had taken place and after an over night stay in Dover, made for Hasler and tied up alongside her old home, possibly for the first time since 1942. MTB 102 is managed by the MTB 102 Trust – www.mtb102.com or e-mail mtb102@ukonline.co.uk The Trust is a registered charity, No 1114950.

As the time approaches, a party of CFVA veterans (including the London Group) who served in the 'Sunshine Flotilla's' in the Med and were based in Malta are to attend an unveiling ceremony in Malta, of a memorial dedicated to members of Coastal Forces who operated from there in WW2. We hope to report on how the unveiling went some time after the event.

Our temporary space on the British Military Powerboat web site continues to grow. We have received several enquiries (including one from Australia, one from New Zealand). Also our own 'home' website run by Wallis is still in the course of development. Both can be reached by searching the internet under 'BMPT Website' or 'Royal Navy Coastal Forces'.

Also in a bid to reach Non Branch members who have been left in limbo following the closure of the Association, a batch of letters have been distributed to the addresses of CFVA Non Branch members in our catchment area inviting membership to the London Branch, irrespective of whether they can attend meetings or not. This is in keeping with our previously stated policy of trying to keep in touch. Very soon, unless we are careful, even the demise of Branches will take place without anybody knowing. So please give us some feedback, Branches. Let every one know you are here. We can pass on messages, bits of info etc. We distribute also this newsletter to Branches and would welcome any contacts. ED.

And now an urgent message from Ken, our Chairman-

To Shipmates and Friends.

Warners must be getting desperate. Despite their previous experience with us, I have just received a proposal from them offering a 25% reduction on their new rates if I can raise 40 customers and get their deposits in by 1st September. That even applies to the exceptional cheap deal that we made for Bembridge last January.

Details as follows:-

Bembridge I of W. Monday 7th January 2008 till Friday Breakfast 11th January. Total Cost £108. Please note – we cannot apply for Lottery Money for this one'.

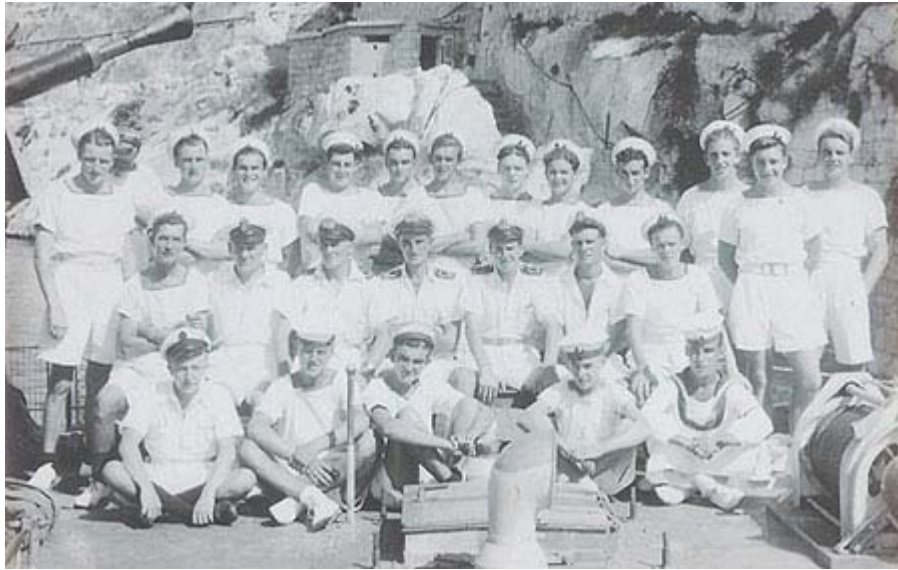
The usual conditions apply – make your own transport arrangements. We can discuss this at our meetings. Free car ferry if four in a car. 'Sippers' to Committee members. Members must promise to stay alive until the 12th Jan.

As I have been frequently asked by several members to 'do a repeat for next year' I have persuaded Messrs Warners to put a temporary reserve on 'up to 40 places' until the 1st September, by which time they require £30 deposit per person attending. So time is short!

If you are interested, I ask you please to get your deposits sent IMMEDIATELY to John Williamson at 7 Old Downs, Hartley, Kent. DA3 7AA. Cheques payable to CFVA London. Questions or queries can be addressed to any one of your hard working, longsuffering, underpaid Committee. Ken.



Chairman Ken Gadsdon reminds us of the unveiling of the commemorative plaque at the former Coastal Forces base - HMS Gregale - in Malta during September. To add a little flavour to this reminder, here is a picture taken at Malta during a lull in the hostilities (1943). The crew of Fairmile "D" - MTB 651 – Ken's boat, have been ordered to dress 'in full white number 1's', so in spite of all the smiling faces, this would not have been a very happy moment. Can you spot Ken – or ID anyone else here?



Ken writes "I was knocked out of the war on 26th Dec 43 in an argument with a mix of E- boats and British destroyers around Korcula and, after offloading me and other casualties to Bari hospital the boat collected replacements, rearmed and went straight back across the Adriatic to continue assisting the Partisans in their part of the war.

I lost contact with my shipmates for many years but by pure chance I learned of CFVA fifteen years ago and regained contact with shipmates 'Sparks' Hislop, 'Nellie' Nellthorpe, Pete Smith and, through them, also found Jan Roberts and 'Torps' Kendall. Today's survivors to my knowledge are shipmates John Hislop and Bill Roberts.

I know that Skipper Ken Horlock, Jim Mortimer, 'Percy' Nuttall, Fred Nellthorpe, and Jos Kendall all now 'rest in calmer waters'.

I understand that 651, with others, were to be given to Egypt at the end of hostilities but 651 foundered on its way to Alex.

Any other news, to or from me, please phone -01474 703013"