

## Our Sponsors



Web Hosting

<http://www.btmp.co.uk/>

COUNTY GUARD DOGS Ltd

<http://www.countyguarddogs.co.uk/>



National Training Inspectorate for Professional Dog Users

<http://www.ntipdu.org>



Avon~Boating Limited

<http://www.avon-boating.co.uk/htmlpages/>



# HMS DIDO Association

## Newsletter number 6

Summer 2011

### Committee Members

President Mike England

Chairman Ralph Price

Secretary/Treasurer Colin Bates

Membership Sec John Bouchier

Editor Bill Matthews

Welfare Dave Eivers

### STEADFAST

(Not fickle or wavering; constant; firm; resolute; unswerving; steady)

## BOLTON 2011

### 50 AND 75 YEARS



The Mayor of Bolton presenting the Pingat medal for service in the Malayan Confrontation to Dido members

Another memorable year has passed for our Association and its members. May saw the annual reunion held in Bolton, our adopted city, which included a wonderful lunch reception in the Town Hall, the presentation of the Pingat medal to members who served in Malaya and a strengthening of our links with the city which made the completion of the second world war cruiser possible.

Good news for those who enjoyed Torbay in 2010 and can remember it—we doing it again in 2012!

I was born on the 2nd of February 1943 in Glasgow where I lived in a council house in the shadow of the Yarrow shipyard, at Scotstoun West on the River Clyde. I attended Hyndland Senior Secondary School and left with mediocre academic results aged 15 and a quarter.



HMS Jutland—a Battle class destroyer

I joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Telegraphist in June 1958 and trained at HMS Ganges, Shotley, Suffolk. I learned the skills of a radio operator, was taught to type, and to study military and international radio procedures and regulations. On leaving Ganges my chest size had increased by three inches.

I was drafted to my first ship, HMS Jutland, as Radio Operator 3rd Class, at Rosyth (a Battle Class destroyer fresh from a Cod War) in November 1959. There I learned to put my training into practice. That was in the days of low power transmitters, difficulties in finding shore stations to take your signals, the constant need to change frequency as the ionospheric conditions altered through the day and night, and laborious cryptographic procedures and techniques. The Wireless Office was fitted with two American teleprinters but they were rarely used. Signal traffic levels were not high except in exercises. This was just as well as it often took many hours to transmit them. Communicating in close company with other warships was still being carried out using the VHF band using equipment developed 15 years earlier. Overall, communications were very much in the immediate post-war era with new equipments and methods in the pipeline but not yet introduced into the Fleet.

Between 1959 and 1969 I sailed to the Mediterranean, Suez, Aden, the Persian Gulf, South Africa, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Borneo, Singapore, Malaya/Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands, Panama and the USA – their islands and coasts. I also served in shore radio stations in London, Gibraltar, Malta, and Singapore. Qualifying as a Radio Operator 2nd Class in 1961 I worked through the

## 2011 Reviewed

During the AGM at Bolton, Dave Salisbury decided it was time for him to stand down from the Committee, although, and David and Sandra, said they would continue with the fund raising by way of the Summer Draw and Reunion raffle. The Summer draw took place in the Bourne Lodge hotel at Chester. The prizes went to Gary Smith, (a friend of one of our members), Tina Beach and Ken Rigden.

A member raised a point during A.O.B. about publishing members contact details to members. This item was discussed in depth, and was decided by a unanimous vote, to publish members details. This will make them available only to fully paid up members who have been granted the rights to access this area. The venue of our 2012 reunion was also discussed, it was decided, once again unanimously that we would return to Torbay.

When planning began for Torbay, the committee agreed that Britannia Naval College would be contacted to arrange a tour for the reunion excursion.

Bolton Council once again invited us to take part in their Remembrance Day parade. Keith Blackburn offered to lay the wreath at the Cenotaph, and our Chairman Ralph Price, Keith Blackburn and Tony Brady followed Alan Pickthorne (who carried our standard) during the parade.

Sally Hayes has decided it is time for her to leave her position at Bolton Town hall. Sally has been extremely helpful to us since the Association's first reunion in 2005, she has been instrumental in solidifying our relationship with Bolton and in the transfer of many artefacts from Bolton Museum to us. Sally was given honorary membership of the Association because of all her help. It is hoped that she will remain as a member and hopefully to attend future reunions.

## DIDO Snippet

The fifth HMS Dido was built in London and Glasgow, being launched on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1896 and completed for service on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1898. She was a twin-screw cruiser with a top speed of almost 20 knots, five 6" guns and a crew of 450. An unusual event occurred during her launch — as she was going down the slipway the ground subsided and Dido was left listing over half in and half out of the water for three days until she could be floated.



In 1907 HMS Dido joined the Channel Fleet, then in 1909 the Home Fleet at the Nore, and then in 1910 went to Chatham for refit. In September 1911 she joined the Home fleet at the Nore again. During the First World War she acted as a depot ship in Harwich to submarines and destroyers patrolling the North Sea against raiders. She was finally sold for scrap in 1926.

Anyone who is interested in knowing more about my visit and the history of the dockyard should contact me and I can give them access to my personal website which has the full story.

**Bill Matthews,**  
(bill\_matthews@tiscali.co.uk)



ranks to become a Radio Supervisor in 1967 when I volunteered for Officer Training. Oh, at about the same time I got married to my wife Clare, an ex-Wren, with whom, between 1969 and 1980, we had four children — all now flown the coop.

In 1970 I was drafted to HMS St George, an officer's training school, at Southsea. I was a diligent student and won five of the six prizes, and the Sword of Honour. Promoted to Acting Sub-Lieutenant on the Special Duties List, on 2nd May 1971, I was appointed to HMS Glamorgan at Hong Kong as an Officer Under Training. De



HMS Berwick F115, Type 12 frigate, 1961-86

facto, because of my background I was made Assistant Signal Communication Office and Divisional Officer to the Communications Division of 60 men. I gained the necessary experience to pass the basic task of a Seaman Officer — being the Officer of the Watch on the Bridge. This showed competence in being responsible for the safe navigation of a warship in all conditions. I also studied for and obtained an Ocean Navigation Certificate. As the officer responsible for handling 'Captains Eyes Only' signals I decrypted such a signal from the MOD to Glamorgan whilst in refit in Mombasa to immediately 'make best speed south'! This was not the first time I was to be in a ship in bits that had to be put back together again very quickly for a special operation. In this case it was to sail all the way down the coast of Africa via Simonstown, across the Atlantic to refuel in Venezuela, before setting course for Bermuda where the ship hosted the Heath-Nixon Talks of 1971. We now know that the subject of their discussions was the war between India and Pakistan that eventually resulted in



Visit our Slops Shop at [www.hms-dido.com](http://www.hms-dido.com)

Caps, Polo Shirts, Lapel pins, and Association ties, all unique with our crest



the creation of Bangladesh.

In 1973, in HMS Dido, I toured the world in the company of two Dutch warships and was amazed to learn that wherever we visited where the British had been, the Dutch appeared to have been there too! Standing on the Quarterdeck it was possible to see the Queen formally opening the Sydney Opera House on 20th October 1973. In 1976 I was transferred to the General List then trained as a Warfare Officer before being appointed to HMS Berwick. There, I was, in turn, responsible for anti-submarine operations, gunnery, and operations planning before ending up, briefly, as First Lieutenant. In 1978 I was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. After eighteen months as a junior staff officer in the Naval Air Command I was sent, in 1980 to attend the Royal Naval Staff College, Greenwich from where I graduated 'within the top third' of my Course. From there I was appointed to the aircraft carrier HMS Hermes as of 17th February 1981 and as the ship's Signal Communications Officer.

In the period between joining HMS Jutland in 1959 and completing the Staff Course in 1981 communications at sea, for me, had moved from being done as fast as Morse would allow (22 wpm) using low power wide-band transmitters. Then, change came with the introduction of teletype which allowed for speeds of around 50 wpm using medium powered transmitter narrower band transmitters. Line of site radios also improved in number and flexibility. The Cold War was on and exercising in it, as part of NATO, caused an ever increasing number of signals to be circulated. British commitments abroad, or 'out of area' operations also necessitated more circuits to carry more signal traffic. Automation of message handling was developed ashore thereby reducing delays by allowing for 100 wpm channels to be utilised in some areas. Whilst these improvements took place the age old problem of maintaining radio links subject to ionospheric conditions remained. That is, until the advent of the British Skynet Communications programme. The first satellite was launch in 1974, and, significantly located above the India Ocean for strategic military requirements of the time. There were many important features of this system not least in that it allowed for interference free communications at any time. Also, its pathways were digital and at very high speeds and thus providing for 'packaging' of large amounts of information over narrow bandwidths. And lastly, it was secure from interception. Whilst the RAF set up the shore receiving stations, the Navy embarked

## A Visit To Sheerness Royal Dockyard



Some of our older members may have visited Sheerness when it was open as a frigate/minesweeper refitting centre, but the younger ones will not be familiar with as it closed in 1960 after nearly 300 years of service to the Navy. Located on the northern tip of the Isle of Sheppey and at the mouth of the River Medway, Didos will have passed by the dockyard every time they called at

Chatham. The 4th HMS Dido was in fact part of the Torpedo School at Sheerness after retirement from active service in 1914, so an Association we have a definite link.

Founded in 1667 by Samuel Pepys of the Diary fame, over 130 ships were built and even more were repaired and refitted there. It wasn't until the dockyard was modernised in 1823 that it had proper basins and dry docks. There was Captain in charge and the Commander-in-Chief, The Nore, who was a Vice-Admiral was based in the yard as well. There were 4,000 dockies during war-time and many beautiful Georgian buildings. I have had a close interest in the dockyard for over two years now and I am fascinated by its independence, the historical buildings and the great events that happened there. The yard has been owned by Medway Ports since it closed, the same firm which owns Chatham, and because of that it has been closed to the public, but thanks to a lady called Carly Somerset who works there, I was allowed to spend a Saturday morning touring the yard with my camera.



Some of the gate-crashers before they were asked to leave!



Left - members standing on the Town Hall steps to watch the ceremony.

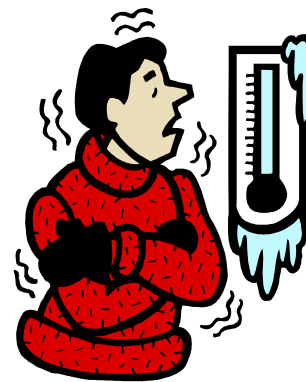
Below- the crushers taking charge of the proceedings!



on fitting Satellite Communication Terminals ((SCOT) in 'new build' and retrospectively in capital ships such as Hermes. By 1981 the system was set up and operating, from my point of view, with limitations based on an incomplete understanding of exactly how it would work in 'action'. Between February 1981 and March 1982 I and Barry Howard, who had helped introduce the system to the Fleet, set about using it. That said, it was tried and tested in 'peacetime' conditions when there was time to sort out any problems and no demanding Admiral's Staff onboard. The ship was also fitted with American satellite communications equipment, UHFLTSATCOM, to enable it to control NATO anti-submarine forces. Again, whilst the equipment had been trialled, it had not been tested in action. All in all, Hermes was in all respects the best ship to carry the Task Group Commander but it would, undoubtedly, be a first. It was with that state of mind that I looked forward to Easter Leave on 2nd April 1982 but leave was cancelled in favour of orders for a trip to the Falklands on that very day.

The stories of the Falklands War has been told but suffice to say that as a bridge watchkeeper and communicator it was the most important and worthwhile naval job I have ever done. The whole venture showed off the Royal Navy's way of determination and improvisation to achieve success

## WINTER IS COMING! WATCH OUT FOR THIS!



Winter fuel payments for 2011 / 2012 will drop back to their original levels, as the temporary increase from 2008 is now stopped. The maximum payment for those reaching female state pension age is £200. Those aged 80 or over the maximum will be £300.



in the environment for which we were bred – the sea.

I left Hermes in July 1982 and was appointed to the MOD in Whitehall as desk officer for RN shore wireless stations equipment and performance now and in the future. It was 'one of the busiest desks in the Division'. I worked in an office adjacent to Commander Longhurst who was preparing to become the Navy's first astronaut payload specialist until Her Lords Commissioners cancelled the replacement Skynet programme in the mid-1980s! One of my first tasks was to lead the design and delivery of a transportable RN communications centre for the Falkland Islands. The job included liaising with Army and RAF communicators in 'kilohertz corridor', other government departments, the Post Office, and Cable and Wireless. In short, I was the spokesman for Royal Naval land based communications. On one occasion when one of the naval transmitters went off the air in error, a government scientific department that used the signal as a measuring source complained that their work had been spoilt by this failure. I investigated and found that it was a mistake by the transmitting station and drafted an apologetic letter for the head of my department to sign. It was returned unsigned with a note to redraft it to the effect that the cause was unknown and later, told me that 'government departments never admit to mistakes'.

After the MOD, I was, in 1984, appointed to a sea-going staff as Staff Communications Officer. The task was to plan and work with NATO authorities, particularly the US Navy, on communications aspects for the protection of American warships and supplies crossing the Atlantic to support land operations in Europe against the Soviets. A thrilling appointment.

On the 26th August 1989 I left the Royal Navy thereby ending a 31 year career in radio communications. It had started with Morse code at 22 words per minute over noisy radio circuits and ended with multi-package digital information at 9.8 kilobits per second over interference-free satellite communications circuits.

Civvy Street started off badly. I ran my own heavy haulage company – into the ground as it happened – during the height of the early 90s re-



The Association Standard is dedicated by the Vicar of Bolton



Some of the boarding party before they cleared the town hall buffet bar!



Lieutenant Ralph Price RNR receives his medal from the Mayor

### Pingat Jasa Malaysia

The Pingat Jasa Malaysia is a commemorative medal which the Government of Malaysia awards to eligible British citizens, for their service in Malaya or Malaysia between 31 August 1957 and 12 August 1966.

The Confrontation, as it was called, was an attempt by Indonesia to prevent Borneo being amalgamated into the new Malaysia. British forces included Marines, frigates, Ton class minesweepers, fast patrol boats, hovercraft, RAF helicopters and heavy lift aircraft, as well as British, New Zealand, Australian and Gurkha army units. The SAS were also heavily involved.

The war ended with the British forces successfully uniting the new Malaysia. The Commonwealth lost 114 killed and 181 wounded; the Indonesians lost 590 killed, 220 wounded and 772 captured.



cession. For about two years I did odd jobs before starting as a School Budget Clerk in a Primary school in Wiltshire for 7 hours a week – part-time and pro-rata! This was at the beginning of Local Management of Schools and I was soon able to put my practical and managerial experience to good use and ‘help’ the school adopt and develop the new devolved responsibilities. The three years of this learning process helped me then obtain a Bursars post in an large independent school in Bath which was the second best job I ever had. In 2006 I was able to retire and do what I had always wanted to do – become a historian. I read for a First in Modern History at Bath Spa University and am now, contentedly, studying for a Masters in History at the University of Exeter.

Late last year I stumbled across the HMS Dido website where I was very efficiently recruited by Colin Bates, and now have a new beginning reliving happy days in the Andrew with honest-to-goodness shipmates from the best commission I ever had!

Dick Hulley

### Asbestos - Update

SAGA magazine of Nov 2011 ( Money news section, pp. 103-104) makes brief reference to the difficulties a mate-lot called Chris White, who joined in 1952, had in gaining compensation for a condition called “**bronchiectasis**” caused by being in the proximity of asbestos during his 12 years. He eventually got £9,000 and will get more if his illness gets worse. The articles recommends, simplistically (!), that anyone who served in the Royal Navy AND has a persistent cough should first on consult their GP, then take the findings to the Veterans UK on 0800 169 2277 and/or contact Chris White for advice on [chris@handmadebooks.co.uk](mailto:chris@handmadebooks.co.uk).



## TESTIMONIALS FROM HAPPY SHIPMATES ON AN EXCEPTIONALLY GREAT REUNION

Thanks again for a great re-union. A few of us from the 1967 commission were able to meet up for the first time since we left the ship.

*Brian Thompson*

Must be one of the best reunions ever, we were made to feel so special and very welcomed by all, its great to catch up with every-one....SLINGER WOODS please get in touch mate, hopefully Torquay 2012 will be something approaching as good as Bolton was.. we need some of the 80's commission to join us cumon lads me and spider can't be the only ones around.

*Kev (MO) Morris 81-83*

Congratulations to all the committee and everyone involved for making the Bolton reunion a really memorable weekend. We really appreciate your hard work and look forward to seeing everyone next year in Torquay.

*Ian & Anne Butcher*

Just a short email to say thanks for organising yet another lovely reunion, we really enjoyed it.

*Clive & Monica Salisbury*

Well you sure did pull it off again Colin, what a wonderful piece of organisation. It was the best yet and was greatly appreciated. It was great to meet Norrie Brammer and George Gradon, had not met since 1973, also great meeting Mike Street again he has some great stories. Shep Woolley fabulous his cd had me rolling in laughter. Have next year pencilled in already. Gold suit







The heroes of Malaya lined up to receive their medals

arrived and is going on tour to Spain on 8th May . UHUH!!

Kindest Regards *Stan Coleville*

---

Great weekend again, trouble is they are not long enough.  
Well done all the organisers

*Roy Baylis*

---

Both Sandra and I thoroughly enjoyed the Bolton Reunion as usual superbly organised (even the weather). It was great meeting up with Stan as usual and many of the others, but it was particularly good to meet up with Norrie after about 40-ish years. I would have known him anywhere. He hasn't changed that much just like you. All these 3 course dinners Sandra has got to go on a diet again just to get the pounds off from this week-end. No-one could complain that there was any danger of them starving to death, just the opposite. Well Colin wonderful job excellently done as always looking forward to next year. Let me have the date a.s.a.p. so that I can book it in my diary. I don't want to miss it by booking something else in for then.  
Thanks

*Bernard Visgandis*

---

Just want to say I had a fantastic time over the weekend away in Bolton, enjoyed all of it, nothing to disappoint.

So with that I'd like to say thank-you to Deanna and yourself once again for your massive effort in bringing all this together, and the rest of the committee for making this happen.

Roll on Torbay and the best of luck to you both and all our shipmates.

Cheers for now

*Mike Mundell*

Thanks Colin

You and the team did a magnificent job.

I know we had our ups and downs but there were far more ups than downs.

Hope we get a few at Torbay ( On the Boat again).

I am happy to work with you on the seating plan and anything else that I can help with. I cannot give a long term commitment but can run up and down if needed.

All the best and enjoy the rest

Best wishes

*Keith Blackburn and Rosemary Kitchen*

---

What a great job done by the committee again for the reunion in Bolton, well done to you all, My wife and I had a great time, food was fantastic, now on a diet, hotel and staff great, now looking forward to next years in Torquay. Colin a big thank you to you for all your hard work, it is appreciated.

*Roger and Liz Carash.*

---

Dear Colin and Deanna,

Many thanks for yet another superbly organised Reunion with ever more of the shipmates gathered together to enjoy each other's company and reflect on old times as well as current events. The dates 4-6 May 2012 are in the diary!

Enjoy your very well deserved break.

Very Best Wishes,

*Angela and Richard Smallwood*

---

Colin,

Thanks again for a wonderful weekend. Rena and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, and I agree that Sally had laid on a wonderful occasion at the Town Hall, I enjoyed the Houghton Weavers. The

---

Hi Colin

Sorry we didn't see you before we left this morning - just wanted to say thank you for a great weekend we had a fab time and really enjoyed ourselves (as we always do). We really appreciate all the hard work and effort you put in to make the reunions such a success.

We are all looking forward to Torbay next year but hope to meet up with you and Deanne before then.

Thanks again

*San and Dave Salisbury*



spared no effort in adding to our enjoyment of the occasion.  
Best wishes....and I very much look forward to seeing you again  
next year.

*Dick Hulley*

---

Many thanks for yet another Great Do. Have a recommend for a  
make & mend.  
Cheers

*Bob Seaman*

---

Hi Colin, Sorry we missed you at breakfast on Sunday morning but  
we had to visit a cousin in Wakefield. What a great weekend it was,  
I honestly think this was the best so far, every thing went like clock-  
work thanks to you and the committee. I know how much work goes  
into these things to make sure everyone has a good time and you did  
us proud. Could you convey my thanks to the committee also as  
they do a fantastic job running around looking after people and  
making sure the weekend goes smoothly.  
Looking forward to the next one.

All the very best,

*Des and Chris Cage*

---

Thanks once again Colin and Ralph for a great weekend at Bolton. I  
am involved with three Naval associations and this one is the most  
enjoyable and professionally run by far.  
Look forward to Torbay next year.

*Bryan and Sandra Magnus.*

whole weekend was superb. If I have a complaint, the only one is,  
being a Diabetic, is that we were overfed. But then again that choice  
was in my own hands.

Thanks again Colin.

*Richard & Rena Brooking*

---

"Well Colin you've done it yet again BRILL WEEK END !!!! thank  
you so much xx"

*Patricia Williams*

---

Thank you Colin for all your hard and dedicated work. But it was  
worth it, what a good weekend and yes the Town hall did us proud.  
Louise and I, plus Tony and Karen, Nick and Sarah, Kevin and  
Lorraine had a fantastic time and we hope to meet up with them again  
in Torbay around October time. It was great to see old shipmates  
again the likes of Mick Spencer and the chap in the kilt who I still  
cant remember his name.

Don't be put off by the odd complaint.

I was going to suggest a trip to Liverpool until Torbay was men-  
tioned, it would be a great run ashore. Historic port, Mersey ferry  
(with lunch, Maritime Museum, HMS Eaglet and plenty of hotels to  
choose from.

Anyway forget that. Have a great rest and again a big thank you for  
everything.

Kindest regards and best wishes

*Steve and Louise Hawkshaw*

---

Dear Colin and Deanne,

Good, take a well deserved rest - you both certainly have earned it. I  
am writing to the Mayor, have got the Town Hall address. I hoped  
Ralph or Colin could drop a line to Sally in due course, if this is too  
difficult reply to this and I will do, assume the Mayor's office will  
get it to her.

Thank you Colin for another outstanding effort.  
Yours aye,

*Mike England*

---

Hi Colin,  
Just a quick note to say many thanks for all your hard work for this year's reunion. Bonny and myself enjoyed it very much. I know it was a packed programme of events, but that made it all the better. Also, congratulations on the table plan for the Saturday evening dinner. It was great to have all the messmates on the one table.  
It was also nice to meet up with Norrie Brammer again after 38 years. He hasn't changed much apart from getting a bit greyer, which seems to have come to us all. I really enjoyed his and his wife's company with so much to talk about.  
Once again, well done Colin and look forward to Torbay next year.  
Regards

*Roy Raines*

---

Colin. Many thanks for a great weekend, can you pass on our congratulations to all involved in the organisation of the event, We had a great time and looking forward to next year.

*Richard & Sue Williams*

---

What an amazing weekend, big thanks to all the Dido guys and gals, all the staff of Bolton Council, and the staff of the hotel that worked so hard to make the weekend so good. I must go on a diet now, sure I've put at least 2 stone on after all the food on Saturday.  
*Alan Pickthorne*

Please accept our congratulations on the weekend both Tina and myself really enjoyed it. Though two three course meals in one day is getting a bit beyond me these days, clothes don't seem to stretch as much as they used to.....

Once again thanks for the great way everything was organised and enjoy your break.

*Tony Brady and Tina Beach*

---

Colin, thank you so much for all your hard work. This was a truly great weekend  
Thank you

*Brian Thompson*

---

"What an amazing weekend in Sunny yes..... sunny Bolton, so many good memories.

*David Lack*

---

Dear Colin,  
Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the way in which you, and your organisation, put together the HMS Dido Association Reunion in Bolton 2011. It was masterful and seamless in its conception and execution, and worthy of the many expressions of appreciation and thanks you received during the weekend celebrations. As it was my first visit you can only imagine my delight at meeting up with five shipmates as soon as I walked through the door on Friday night. Such a welcome.....which will linger for many a year.  
I would be most grateful if you would pass on my thanks to your team, and, of course, to all those in the City of Bolton who clearly