



"TEAMWORK WORKS"

# Marine Support & Training Service

## "Scuttlebutt"

Celebrating 10 years of Serving the Community

Vol. 9 Issue 1  
2012

### Editorial

Welcome our first issue of Scuttlebutt for 2012, featuring a review of our past year. Just for a change our display, stocks and Splat-the-rat were busy as we took part in various community events. This year we will be reducing the number of events so that we can concentrate more on our training, as it has had to take second place for too long! If any of you readers out there have an article, joke, advert or announcement for your organisation, please feel free to send them to us by email [scuttlebutt@mstsblyth.org.uk](mailto:scuttlebutt@mstsblyth.org.uk)

#### 2011 Remembered

#### 2011 Remembered (cont'd)

Unfortunately, since Vol 8 Issue 3, we have suffered from a virus or some kind of worm which, as it was flagged up, it was 'cleaned' by an anti-virus program and totally wrecked Issue 4 making it totally unrecoverable! We have now reverted back to the very trusty AVG system, which has not let us down in years!

Since our last publication way back in August last year, we took a lively part at Astley Fair, and had the pleasure of putting Mr 007 in our stocks shortly after he had opened the event! Is anyone safe from experiencing our stocks??



We also took part for the first time with the Annual Gloucester Lodge Farm Horse Show and Gymkhana, which was a slightly different venue from our normal community events!

For our last Community event of the year we set up our stuff to help Bailey's Bike Ride, an annual fun race to raise funds for the intensive care of babies. Although it is not billed as a race, we are pleased to say that John finished first with Craig in second place!



It has been quite an eventful and fun year, and looking back on

our many achievements, we have taken part in Community Events all over South-East Northumberland.

We have also had the pleasure of enjoying the generous hospitality of our lovely Lord Lieutenant, Her Grace, the Duchess of Northumberland at her Garden Party, and had the honour to be amongst the guests who gave a very warm welcome to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.



The Old Man has been featured on the wireless, thanks to Becca and the team at Lionheart Radio in Morpeth. The programme was listened to by our friends all over the world, thanks to the Lionheart Radio 'listen again' facility.

We are happy to say that our Trafalgar Day Toast to Collingwood is going from strength to strength thanks to Capt. Steve Healy, Master of Newcastle Trinity House and North Tyneside Council.

The Old Man has represented us on board a number of visiting warships throughout the year ... As he says, "Someone has to do it!"

John and Lance are thoroughly enjoying their careers with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary or 'The Fleet' as it is better known. At the time of writing, John is on board an 'oiler' or Fleet Tanker, just off the south coast, getting the full icy blasts off the North Atlantic, whilst Lance is having to suffer from the heat, great food and the hospitality of the islanders of Grenada in the West Indies!

In other news, we have gained the respect and friendship of another organisation in Scotland with whom we are developing a working partnership. They are known as the Southern Uplands Roving Archers or SURA for short. Since early last year they have been following our progress, and then decided that we could possibly work together within the community. The full details of how we can achieve a working partnership are still to be worked out and finalised.

Hopefully Vol 9 Issue 2 will not take as long to assemble as this one, so watch this space!!

**View from the Crow's Nest**

Please note that the content of this section are the personal ramblings of an Oldseadog, and are probably not the views or policies of the Marine Support & Training Service, or anyone else! Any comments which may not be politically correct, or might cause offence to anyone for any reason - **tough!** Also take note that the truth is not allowed to get in the way of a good dit! **Oldseadog**

**Royal Navy - A Vision For The Future**

Recently, at a grand ceremony at Portsmouth dockyard HMS Indefensible was commissioned into the Royal Navy. Described as the most stealthy warship in the world, she is now the only vessel in the Royal Navy and replaces 2 mothballed aircraft carriers, 6 destroyers and 4 submarines. Responding to criticism about the shrinking fleet, the MoD spokesperson stated "It's not about numbers, it's about quality and no longer about quantity. HMS Indefensible represents a revolution in naval procurement, stealthy, light and agile she will provide a highly flexible platform. She is invisible to radar and almost immune to torpedo or missile attack. Her shallow draft makes her ideal for work in the littoral (coastal) areas. She is also highly efficient with virtually zero carbon emissions and zero fuel consumption."

Admiral Sir James Bland added "She is ready to respond instantly to events and can be deployed to trouble spots anywhere in the world. The RAF have promised to fly her to wherever she's needed provided (1)They are not busy (2)The weather is OK (3)There is a large airfield provided by a friendly foreign nation close by".

Constructed by Britain's only ship builder BVATe Systems in Birmingham, taking 8 years to build, and costing just £1.5 Billion she is a triumph of British engineering. Her forward section was built in China in 2 weeks and then shipped to the UK. The forward section was then joined to the stern built in Birmingham and the complex technical systems installed. However the programme was not all plain sailing and has not been without its problems "The original design included an outboard motor but early in the building process the Treasury insisted cost savings had to be made so out went the motor. After some time spent on computer-modelling and research we selected oars" said a BVATe spokesperson.

Although £1.2 Billion over-budget and 3 years late, Secretary of State for Defence, William Bragg says we can all be proud, "The Type 48 programme has sustained 10,000 British manufacturing jobs in addition to 30,000 civil servants in the MoD project team. She will represent the leading edge of British manufacturing wherever she goes and is worth every penny."

Bragg also states that he is hoping to see the export orders on

the increase soon - although as yet there has been little interest. Some observers have commented that with her lack of any armaments it could present a slight problem. However, the MoD answered robustly "The Foreign Office advised us that carrying weapons can be seen as provocative and that actually firing a weapon at someone would definitely infringe their human rights. We considered this advice at an early stage in the design process and together with the fabulous cost-savings, the case for having no armament was overwhelming". Her commanding officer, Commander Rupert Tubworthy-Pollock said "To have been selected from the 1,200 officers still serving in the RN for the only remaining seagoing command available is a great privilege. Bringing her out of build and into commission has been a huge challenge but I'm confident she will prove to be a great asset". With a crew of just 2, she is a fine example of lean-manning, reducing running costs and lessening the RN's recruitment headaches. Her crew, AB "soapy" Watson said "On my last ship I had to share the mess with 40 other men, but on the new Type 48 sharing is far a less of a problem. As I'm now the only rating in the Royal Navy I have a lot of responsibility". HMS Indefensible is expected to complete sea trials shortly, go to Plymouth for Operational Sea Training, have a short refit in Rosyth and then and be deployed as part of the new Euro-Navy task force.



(Many thanks to RumRat for this article)

See you next time.

'Aye

**OSD**

**What's In The Pipeline?**

We will continue to support some of the local Community Events throughout the next year, although the numbers are to be limited slightly, so log in to our website News pages for dates and details.

The GRP hull of Blyth Venture has hopefully now been fully repaired. However, she is still out of the water until the resins used on the repairs have fully cured.

We still have not launched our donated 4-man life-raft, as the weather hasn't been favourable enough, and we look forward to combining some of our training with the crews of the Blyth All Weather Lifeboat.

**Welcome Aboard**

We would like to welcome on board our latest potential recruit, Miss Catherine (Kat) Thompson, who has so far shown that she has the tenacity and determination to learn how to work with ropes! Within her first couple of weeks she had mastered most of the knots, hitches and bends required by our syllabus! Well done! Her positive mental attitude is exactly what we are looking for in all of our volunteers! Unfortunately, many of those who come along and show an initial interest are not able to meet and more importantly, maintain our standards of excellence. As far as this young lady is concerned, the sky's the limit ... If you'll pardon the expression!

**Remember**

***All courses are free to MSTS members***

***We are an extremely professional voluntary organisation.***

***We are not amateurs!***

***Always remember that everything we do reflects upon the MSTS.***

***"TEAMWORK WORKS"***

***For further details:-***

***Tel: 0786 603 9753***

***Fax: 0871 813 2853***

***(e-mail) [info@mstsblyth.org.uk](mailto:info@mstsblyth.org.uk)***