



WSTG Reunion Newsletter



October 2004

www.tgef.demon.co.uk

Spring Reunion

A reunion was held on 31 March 2004 at the Alexandra Bowling and Social Club in Portsmouth. Much to the relief of the new WSTG reunion and archive committee this event was most successful both socially and financially; we remain solvent. Although the majority of those who attended are retired (some for many years) we were pleased to see a number of ex-members who are still working. Moreover we were assured that more of those working would have come had not an end of financial year meeting coincided with our function.

Organising Events

Planning organising and informing everyone of future events will continue **as long as the committee's** financial balance sheet remains in credit. And to give an example of our expenses it costs about

£20 to inform everyone of a forthcoming event by post. For this reason we took the risk of introducing a damp squib at our last event by way of a questionnaire. We wanted to know whether we had **"got it right" this time and to plan for the future.** After all, the reunion committee will not last long if we were to sustain an habitual financial loss!

Questionnaire

The response to our questionnaire was most favourable with about half of those attending leaving us with some answers. Others responded by post after the event.

A summary of answers to our questions follows:

Most thought the Alexandra Club a suitable venue, although two members appeared to have difficulty

getting there. Perhaps we could arrange pick-up next time.

The best time for our events were more or less split between Christmas or anytime, although a few preferred the Spring. So, we were about right with our timing!

The preferred days to hold a reunion seem to be Wednesdays or Thursdays.

The preferred time was overwhelmingly lunch time with a buffet.

A reunion once a year was preferred although quite a few would like a meeting twice a year.

There was a 2/3 majority who thought there should be other types of events although the remaining 1/3 was content with another similar function.

A very large majority were in favour of inviting partners and others.

Christmas Reunion

Following the success of the Spring event, we are planning another get together at the Alexandra Club on 16 December 2004. Details are included on the enclosed leaflet. There will be a buffet. We hope partners and others will be able to attend. Please support this event and return your completed slip to Ken Wingate as soon as possible.

WSTG web-site

Adrian Wright has developed a web-site which will be used to publish archive material, disseminate articles of interest (such as the Derrick Middleton piece) and publicise events. The address is www.tgef.demon.co.uk. Please contact Adrian with any contributions or com-

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Copies of the photograph taken at the Reunion in March can be obtained from Ken Wingate at £2.50 each



Derrick Middleton, BEM - A Lifetime with HM Ships

This is an abridged pen picture of Derrick's time in the Navy and WSTG. See our website for full and illustrated details.

The story starts in 1940 when Derrick was studying at the Battersea Polytechnic; he had just witnessed the Battle of Britain and the start of the blitz on London and had decided to join the Royal Navy but was turned down because his eyesight was not good enough. Not to be thwarted he then tried for the Army, however, as he was leaving to attend his Army interview a letter arrived saying that he could join the Navy after all. If he had left home slightly earlier he would almost certainly have joined the Army and had a different life.

So he mustered at Devonport, HMS Defiance, to join as an Electrical Artificer on the 24th November 1940. He started his naval life on motor gunboats at Ramsgate on the Kent coast, where the mess for the electrical artificers was in the fairground! His duties were the maintenance of the electricians on these powerful small boats. Derrick did point out that unlike the German E boats, which were diesel powered the British boats required high-octane petrol fuel and as he put it were "quite lethal"!

Derrick was later drafted to HMS Roebuck, a Rotham class destroyer, which was based at Trincomalee in Ceylon where rows and rows of warships were stretched across this huge natural harbour following the loss of Singapore and Hong Kong.

Again as an Electrical Artificer Derrick spent a further two years in the Roebuck. Throughout his career he always seemed to be involved with torpedoes and in spite of all his efforts to move on to a ship with AC supply machinery all of his ships throughout his 30 years in the navy were DC.

Derrick gave us some insight into his wartime career when he said that after firing a full load of torpedoes and missing, they sunk a German supply ship by gunfire from their 4.7-inch guns.

On his return to Britain he was "de-mobbed". His service record shows the medals received by Derrick: 1939-1945 Star, Burma star, and War Medal. Later in his career he was awarded the United Nations Service Medal and BEM.

As the Royal Navy was still keen to recruit people with his undoubted expertise, after one month outside, he rejoined the Navy and was sent on a main-tainer's course for the Enigma coding machine, which was fitted on some RN ships.

His next job as an Electrical Artificer 3 was more straightforward - standing by HMS Barrosa on the Clyde in Glasgow. By now Derrick had fulfilled the requirements for promotion to Chief Electrical Artificer and was posted to HMS Collingwood to take the CEA course.

Despite failing this course on the subject of analogue computation, he was selected to remain at Col-

lingwood in Fareham in the apprentice training section. Later, he repeated and passed the CEA course and was drafted to HMS Royalist, a marine training ship based at Portsmouth as Chief EA.

He then moved on to HMS Newfoundland, which was in refit at Devonport, and spent 3 years on this ship. He is still an active member of the Newfoundland Association.

rick said that the electricians were divided into 3 sections. This worked well apart from the fact that there was only one main switchboard for the whole ship - **in Derrick's section!** He told us that at commissioning all the lights went out; this was embarrassing, and also frightening for those without a torch inside the darkened ship. DMJ can well remember the time as duty EA being "descended upon" by Der-



Derrick's service decorations including his British Empire Medal

On completion of her refit (1952) and after work up she was deployed to the East Indies (1953-1954).

In April 1954, at the Cocos Islands, Newfoundland took over the escort of HM the Queen who was returning from a tour of Australia. But by June 1954 the ship was back in the Far East bombarding the Malayan terrorists north of Penang.

Derrick returned to a home posting standing by HMS Victorious as a key rating whilst she was in extended refit at Portsmouth Dockyard. This refit took from March 1950 until 1958.

Again this was a DC supplied ship with some complex electronic equipment, including the 984 3D radar. D M J White, who Derrick was to meet again in WSTG, maintained the cranes, catapults, mirror sights on this carrier. Der-

rick after putting the wardroom lights out during dinner.

After 3 years on the "Vic" he was posted to HMS Dolphin, for 18 months, at the submarine base in Gosport. Here Derrick was in charge of electrical maintenance on submarines undergoing repair work and for defects occurring on running submarines.

At that time the Royal Navy had a considerable fleet including A class, T class, the post war Porpoise class and the latest generation of Oberon class.

His equipment included Torpedoes, Torpedo control system 9 [TCS 9] and the massive job of Battery changes.

His Submarine experience was put to good use, as his last ship in the Navy was HMS Tyne a submarine depot ship which, unusually for this class, was also Flag-

Derrick Middleton continued

ship to C in C Home Fleet which entailed a bit of ceremony for Derrick.

After 18 months on the Tyne, Derrick returned to HMS Dolphin in charge of the periscope workshop and it was around this time that Derrick was awarded the BEM for a remarkable **service record**. Derrick's last five years in the Navy were spent at HMS Vernon working on again torpedo systems including Ship's Torpedo Weapon System and the anti submarine system MCS 10. In Vernon, Derrick became acquainted with WSTG through his involvement in the trials of equipments after WSTG had set them to work.

He met many future colleagues including Freddie Parkman, Jack Banfield, Bill Searle and Norman Hick-ey.

In 1970, after 30 years Derrick left the Navy and started a civilian career.

However, having seen WSTG in action, he decided to try and join a MOD (N) organisation, but although he obviously had the technical skills, he now had to run the interview gauntlet.

His first interview was at ASWE at Portsdown for entry as an Assistant Production Officer (APO) but he was given good advice there to go for yet another interview in London. He passed this interview, joining WSTG in September 1970 as a PTO IV.

The then WSTG headquarters were Milldam House in Burnaby Road, Portsmouth and it was here that he met his new boss Dave Burnett (another ex Navy man) who was head of the sonar section. Picking up where he had left off in the Navy, Derrick worked on the Mortar Mk 10, and Sonars 170 and 177. He said of his time at Vernon and WSTG he had worked on every Tribal and Leander built and also on many refits.

He then moved on to the Type 42s and 21s, which had the new torpedo launching system STWS1.

During his time in the Sonar section he had several heads of section including Sid Porter and Norman Gooch with Sid Strange, Bert Norris and John Mills his PTO2s.

The final years in WSTG were spent as a C group

co-ordinator at Milldam. He then moved to Vosper Thornycroft, Woolston, where they were building the Hunt class mine sweepers, taking over from **Harry Bednall**. Derrick's SPTO there was Gerry Green and his task was co-ordination between his base at Woolston and the Main WSTG office and also liaison between WSTG and the shipyard. He dealt with accommodation,

transmitting. Vosper was not the easiest yard to work with and Derrick often had to mediate to keep the work flowing.

Finally on 11th July 1985 after serving the Navy in one way or another for 45 years, Derrick retired. Retirement presented Derrick with a few problems and it was not always a happy time, but at 85 he still has the energy and motivation of a younger



Derrick & the crew of the Newfoundland escorting HMQ in 1954!

passes, handbooks and test equipment for WSTG and their contractors and ensured the equipment setting to work programmes were planned into the **overall ships' programmes**.

He also had to make the local airfields aware of when high power radar sets were transmitting and that no divers were in the water when Sonar 184 was

man. Recent journeys to the Panama Canal and Prague, which he visited by rail using several connecting trains followed by a holiday in Turkey, prove that he still has a zest for life.

<http://www.tgef.demon.co.uk/Members%20Page.htm>

Alan Cave & Mike Sims retire



As we were going to press we learnt of a double celebration at the Three Crowns. On 21st October, Alan Cave (above with his wife, Mary) and Mike Sims (right) held a joint retirement party at

the Three Crowns. Having previously worked alongside the WSTG team on the Trident and Upholder classes when project manager for periscopes, Alan took over from Ivan in March 1996 and ran the underwater section until the demise of WSTG. Upon leaving the RN and Ferranti, Mike joined WSTG in 1988 working on Radar systems. After time outside WSTG, he rejoined



in 1999 working on Comms systems. He also worked on the last Type 23 Frigates until WSTG was dissolved. Prior to his retirement he worked in the Weapons Trials Section. We wish them both well in their retirements.

WSTG Database

When the reunion committee took over the membership database, we promised WSTG members that it would be solely used for reunion business.

We intend to honour strictly this commitment and so, whilst we are happy to put members in touch with each other, we are unable to circulate the whole database to individual colleagues.

A Surprise Party—19 June 2004

Dennis Butler who looked after WSTG stores for many years was given quite a surprise by his daughter Carol and her two sisters. At the Royal Navy Old Comrades Club **Dennis' 80th** birthday was already being celebrated by family and friends, including some from WSTG when he was brought in to

the hall. There were lots of presents for Dennis and a very good buffet for his guests. Dennis may have looked surprised that evening, but he most certainly did not look 80 years old - see our photo taken on that evening. Congratulations to Dennis and his daughters for their planning of this party.



Dennis Butler (right) congratulated at his 80th birthday party by George Durant

Ken Voysey retires

Ken Voysey who spent a major part of his career working on Radar and EW will be remembered as the **"young lad" of that distinguished group of specialists** which included David Fiddian, Norman Dibley, Jim Stephens *et al.* Ken was respected for his grasp of the equipment technicalities and of the problems encountered. Ken joined WSTG in 1970 and worked on ship classes

from the DLGs to Type 23s, and anything you can think of both on and under the water during these productive years. On the 25th June 2004 colleagues **both "ancient and modern" celebrated Ken's retirement** at the Three Crown PH close to our old offices at Milldam. The very good quality buffet that was provided would have surprised the old WSTG regulars **who christened this pub'**

the **"BR Cupboard" many** years ago. Our photo shows Ken at his retirement party

with some of his older colleagues.



From the left:: George Durant, Brian Dubber, KEN VOYSEY, Bob Lasseter, John Farmer

Gerry Green - a colleague remembered

It was learnt with shock and great sadness that Gerry Green had unexpectedly died week ending 4th September 2004.

Gerry was one of the more colourful characters of WSTG and worked in the Computer Section for many years. Following promotion Gerry headed one of the Surface Specialist Sections dealing with Sea Wolf. He then moved to **'C' Group prior to promotion to Grade 7** and transferring to Portsdown, and finally Bath.

Gerry kept in touch with many of us after moving on from WSTG, and also during his retirement.

He finally moved to Grantham to look after his aged father but continued a very active life playing golf and helping with many charitable organisations.

It must be said Gerry always had a full life wherever he lived or worked.

His Christmas Newsletter will be very much missed by those who kept in touch. For example, in his 2003 letter, Gerry described one of his many golfing trips as follows:

"MARCH— a few days golf with the 'Tour of Gentlemen' in Wales & France with a group of Welsh fellows & with whom I

have been involved for a number of years. In fact I **am their 'Tour Director in Perpetuum'**. A singular honour for I have become an adopted Welshman, born of English stock, though having a Scottish grandmother & an Irish grandfather; truly a British mongrel! The holiday coinciding with the Wales/France rugby game on the **Saturday. Great few days!"**

His funeral was on Friday 10th September. Floral tributes were sent by some of his old WSTG colleagues and friends.

Peter Horrocks and Malcolm Eastcott attended **Gerry's Funeral.**



Gerry Green at Geoff White's retirement celebration on the Square Tower, Old Portsmouth