



# WSTG Reunion Newsletter



May 2011

www.wstg.co.uk

## Our Christmas Reunion 2010



**Dennis Butler (far R), our oldest WSTG colleague at the Party enjoys a drink with friends**

By the time you read this you will probably have forgotten that for the second time in the same year the Portsmouth area had a substantial fall of snow. On 2<sup>nd</sup> December the day started with between 3 to 4 inches of fresh snow; thoughts immediately turned to the forthcoming reunion exactly one week away. Could we be heading for a complete flop? Earlier in the year a similar fall of snow had disrupted travelling even the shortest distances, for well over a week! For our party, however, it was a fine dry day and almost everyone who had planned to come duly arrived.

Although our regular Christmas gathering was largely unaffected by the snow it did cause our caterer, Sally Gissing, some problems. Due to transportation problems in the North whole fresh salmon, one of which usually appears cooked and garnished on our buffet table, had become as scarce as the "proverbial rocking-horse droppings". There

were, nevertheless, tempting substitutes and it was still a pretty good seasonal spread.

What was notable about this event was that for the first time since we started organising these reunions, back in 2004, our numbers have started to decrease. Some of our regular supporters were missing and in many cases there has been no word on the "grapevine" as to their well-being. We are, indeed, keen to know how our colleagues are faring.

Ron White had heard that Joe Cleall had been poorly and had to "take it steady" for a while. We do hope he gets well soon and is able to come along to the June meeting.

One of our Trials and Ranges colleagues, Bob Lindsay, who has tried on a couple of occasions get to the Christmas party, but has been prevented by illness and tragic circumstances made it this time and we hope he

enjoyed it, as many old colleagues were surprised to see him.

Tony Morriss managed to make it too this year despite an aching back brought on by a new hobby – (hard) landscape gardening, at his home in the New Forest!

Our formula for the Christmas party remains very much unchanged with only a raffle that helps with our underlying expenses, a caption competition, the Ladies Free Draw and a display of some photos from the past to interrupt the eating, drinking and chatter.

Our photo-display featured the Trials and Ranges Group where many original WSTG colleagues finished their careers in the MoD(N).

We continue to provide quality raffle prizes which we hope the lucky recipients find seasonally useful. As for the caption competition, it had few entries on this occasion, but won Kath Daubney a bottle of wine with her witty comment.

Ann Marie Winter won the ladies free draw comprising some chocolates - a safe



**Fran Hughes chatting to Lou- is Figeuras**

option!

The caption photo for the Christmas 2011 event appears here, in our Spring Newsletter, but there is no prize for guessing which one it will be!

Come along to our Spring event on 9<sup>th</sup> June - same place and time.



**Mandy with her prize of Spring tulips . It's DIY though, Ray Callaghan "doesn't do gardening!"**

**If you have any news about any of our WSTG colleagues do tell us.**

## Remember the Tribals?

Asks Ivan Winter

Designed in the 1950s the seven Type 81 or Tribal class general-purpose frigates were commissioned from November 1961 to April 1964. With WSTG being set up in June 1959 the group had the task of setting to work the sensors and armaments etc.

They did look a bit different from the Type 14s and Leanders. With two 4.5 inch exposed and manually loaded guns salvaged from scrapped WW2 destroyers, an anglicised long range radar of American origin, a gunnery fire control radar, type 903, also of American origin and two large funnels, they did look like a frigate designed by a committee.

They did however introduce two firsts in the RN, a helicopter landing pad and hangar were squeezed between the aft gun and the Limbo for the Westland



Wasp helicopter and the COSAG [combined steam and gas turbine] propulsion system was half a County Class fit.

The thinking behind their design was to get away from increasingly expensive single role warships and build general purpose vessels that could cover various

engagements. However the original projected build of twenty three was cut to seven

Norman Hickey, Jack Banfield and Freddie Parkman with Don Warren as the Portsmouth team leader. Ray Rawlinson and Les Thomas are



because of escalating costs. The build was spread amongst various shipyards giving the recruit to WSTG a taste of private yards from Sammy Whites at Cowes, Thornycrofts at Southampton, Yarrows, Vickers at Barrow and not for the faint hearted when the wind was in the wrong direction Stephens of Linthouse Glasgow. Some of these yards were soon to disappear.

The weapon and sensor fit reflected the tasks expected of the class and provided a variety of work for the Surface, Underwater and Radio groups of WSTG. The surface section headed by Les Marks set to work Radars 965,293 or 993, 974 or 978 navigation radar, 262 fire control with the Seacat fit and 903 gunnery fire control for the forward 4.5 inch gun.

The sonar section had the 177 search, 170 attack, 162 bottom profiling and echo sounder and the Mark 10 Limbo ASW mortar.

With the help of an early family tree we can add some names of STW staff. Jim Stephens and Eric Shoemith on radar262 ably assisted by Vickers on the oily side of the CRBFD (close range blind fire director).

The sonar and mortar Mark 10 team included

remembered working on the Seacat launcher. Gun direction systems, TI radars and compasses had a team of twenty ranging from Louis Peretz (AEE) to Len Brenchley (PTO 3).

The Radio group were kept busy with their COMIST [*Communications in the short term*], this before the days of integrated communications consisted of B40, B41 and 62B receivers the Marconi 640 MF/HF transmitter Creed teleprinters and FM12 for DF. The detailed info on comms is from Adrian Wright who added that in the 1960s an update to the Comms was carried out to several warships including the Tribals by WSTG staff. A team headed by Ken Rust assisted by Ken Bevis, Pete Spreadbury, Tug Wilson, Graham Stanning and others was dispatched to Singapore, Hong-Kong, Gibraltar and other nice places to work on ships in refit; a last look around the Empire before it disappeared!

The Type 81s shortcomings included poor manoeuvrability with a single shaft and being too small for modernisation, but the Indonesians thought well enough of them to buy three in 1984.

## Reducing our Expenses

If you have a personal computer and an e-mail/hot-mail address you could help the WSTG Reunion and Archive Committee reduce its expenses on postage. The recent increase has put our postage-stamp bill to over £40.

We can send you both our Reunion Invitation Flyer and Newsletter as PDF files if we have your correct online mailing address. You will then have the option of posting us the usual cheque for the forthcoming event and printing or just reading the Newsletter.

An added bonus - we also save printer wear and ink-cartridges!

See our website, [wstg.co.uk](http://wstg.co.uk) for details.

## A communications innovation: ICS I

*Continuing our recording of WSTG's involvement with ships and systems, now part of our defence history, Adrian Wright introduces us to Integrated Communications.*

Before and during WW2 the Medium and High Frequency communications fits on RN ships consisted of a mix of stand alone transmitters and receivers. There were many different types and ages of equipment in service. All required individual tuning and constant manning by skilled operators as frequency accuracy was poor. One of the major drawbacks of these fits was that each transmitter and receiver had its own dedicated aerial. The separate transmitting and receiving aerials, both wires and whips, were usually poorly sited causing many mutual interference problems. Morse, continuous wave (CW) and voice, modulated continuous wave (MCW) were the main forms of communication used. Radio Automatic Tele-Type (RATT) was still in its infancy. By the fifties some improvements had been made. Common Aerial Working (CAW) and a Transmitter remote operation system (KH) was introduced. With the large post war RN ship building programme already underway, there was an urgent need to provide a modern, flexible, user friendly and reliable communications system for the fleet. After a long look at what was required for the sixties and for future expansion, the

Integrated Communications System 1 (ICS1) was heralded into service around 1961. It was first fitted to the early Leander Class frigates and later to



**Control and Monitoring Desk**

larger ships such as HMS Fearless and Intrepid and the County class destroyers.

WSTG personnel were very much involved in the setting to work of ICS1 on all of these ships. In the 1960s Communications was headed up by Micky Lawson and the various section leaders, initially as Grade B's and later at SPTO level were Cyril Butler, Freddy Lovegrove and Ken Rust.

Out of all the individual equipments that made up the system, the one that can be deemed its heart was the Frequency Standard (FSA). This was a very accurate Crystal Oscillator from which all other frequencies generated in the system derive their accuracy. This together with the introduction of Frequency Synthesis gave the system its extreme accuracy. The focal point of the system, however, was the Control and Monitoring Desk (C&M Desk). From this desk one operator could select any transmitter, tune it into dummy load

or aerial, set the power output and monitor the modulation of the signal.

Once the transmitter was tuned and ready for use control could be passed to any remote radio operator's position. This was achieved via the Control Communications Exchange (CCX). The CCX consisted of upper and lower sections connected by flexible multi pin connectors, providing a very adaptable system for the remote control of any Transmitter/Receiver combination. The Transmit aerial system was made up of two base tuned HF whips and one HF filter tuned wire and one MF base tuned wire. These could be used by any transmitter via a



**Control Communications Exchange**

Transmitter Aerial Exchange (EY). The HF tuneable filters enabled several transmitters to be used on different frequencies on the same aerial; this was called Common Aerial Working (CAW).

The Receive aerials consisted of three 30 foot whips for HF and a wire for LF/MF reception. All receive aerials were distributed to the receivers via a Receiver Aerial Exchange (EZ). This also contained tuneable rejection filters to remove any interference



**Transmitter Aerial Exchange EY**

from the ships own transmissions.

ICS1 was principally the responsibility of Cyril Butler and his staff with Norman Cochran and Len Flack (TG1's) as team leaders. Names of those involved with the commissioning of many of the early ICS1 fits were George Scutt, Pat Horne, Louis Figueras, and Mike Butler (TG2's), assisted by Bill Merewood, Dave Morgan Harry Woodman Rupert Bennett and yours truly, who at TG3 level specialized in various component parts of the system.

With most of the problems that existed prior to the introduction of ICS1 overcome, the system proved to be



**Receiver Aerial Exchange EZ**

extremely successful, By only changing some of the valve equipment for transistorised equivalents the system

is still surviving today as ICS2 on the remaining Type 42 destroyers. This is surely testament to the designers of the system back in the fifties.



Cyril Butler

## The WSTG Website continues to create interest for "Googlers"

Quite recently Adrian, who designed and continues to manage our website, was contacted by a gentleman from Australia. He had "happened upon the website" while researching Michael Arthur Lawson on the internet. It would appear that Micky's mother could possibly have been this gentleman's grandfather's guardian!

He, like many people, is trying to put together his family history from fairly sketchy details left behind by relatives.

Regrettably we could not be of much help but were able to confirm that Micky's father was a vicar. This information, at the least, corroborated one fact of his story: the guardian's husband was a priest!

It would have been some use if we could have put our Australian contact in touch with Micky Lawson's children, but those WSTG colleagues who attended Micky's funeral service were not present at the

interment or the reception, and never renewed links with his children at that time.

His daughter Melanie was known to many of us as she often helped her father at the WSTG social functions that were held regularly in Milldam House so many years ago now. We believe neither Melanie or her brother now live locally and so we have failed to make any further progress.

There is a chance we could still be of some help in this matter however, and that is if any of our readers (and there may be only a few who ever reach the back page of our NLS) know more about Micky than we do!

If you think you can help in bringing this bit of family history to a conclusion, please contact us.

A final piece of information: Micky

Lawson was a prominent member of the Portsmouth Lions.



Dorothy and Micky Lawson pictured at our first Christmas Party

## Help

We need a few items to keep this Newsletter interesting

Some, however, may think we need much more!

### Contact Information:

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Please note: **Adrian's email address has changed**



Danger, man at work! Pat Cross at the HMS Collingwood Museum