

# FLAG HOIST

*The Chatham Naval Officers' Association Newsletter*

Dear Members

You will have seen the sad loss of David Cross, he was an incredible 92 and as sharp as a razor when I last spoke to him. His daughter Val has now given details of The Wake after the service on 8<sup>th</sup> July at Birchwood Golf Club, Wilmington DA2 7HJ. This past month I have met with the new CO Lt Col John Newton RE, he is happy to continue the support the Sappers give us and I hope you will get to meet him at a future lecture night of as our Guest of honour at the Trafalgar dinner. Pictured below is the CO, I also took the opportunity to meet with Dan our contact regards security and Wendy Parnell the booking clerk, after many years of working with them it was a joy to put a face to the name. There is also a new mess manager Lynda Wood who I hope to meet soon, I completed my visit to RSME with Luke Kemp the Senior manager for Compass the catering team. He gave me a jar of RSME produced honey which they sell to raise money for charity. Donations are £5 or more, and you can get this honey by emailing Luke on [luke.kempcompass-group.co.uk](mailto:luke.kempcompass-group.co.uk). I highly recommend this honey which is now the main feature at Breakfast in the Vanns household.



We will soon start planning the Trafalgar dinner, so if you would like to see any changes now is the time to tell us.

Remember our July meeting is a week early, 5<sup>th</sup> July due to the 12<sup>th</sup> clashing with Royal Marines Beat Retreat, I am taking my 5 grandchildren, so if you see a party of children being marched from Charing Cross to Horse Guards that's me.

Lastly, apologies for the disappointment with the sandwiches at the last two meetings, Junes meeting we did get Sandwiches after the lovely lady at the bar got on the case, when they arrived just eight of us remained, but we managed to eat them all.

Thank you Alan Ridgers for the invite to the Armed forces event in Maidstone.

*Lt Cdr Jon Vanns RNR*



## Navy Goes Forward With new HMS Birmingham

*Type 26 frigate is laid down*

*On the fourth day of the fourth month the fourth Type 26 frigate – and the fourth ship to bear the name Birmingham – began to take shape on the Clyde.*

Work today got under way on the latest of the Royal Navy's next-generation submarine hunters, a £840m warship which will carry the name and motto – Forward – of England's second city around the globe for a quarter of a century.

Joined by VIPs from Birmingham, builders BAE and veterans of the most recent 'HMS Brum' – as the ships were nicknamed – Defence Procurement Minister Alex Chalk joined BAE shipwrights in cutting the first steel plate in Govan, Glasgow.

Commodore Steve Roberts, heading the Type 26 programme for the Royal Navy, said: "Seeing the next Type 26 start the construction journey is a tangible representation of the success of the programme, thanks to the hard work put in by the DE&S and BAE Systems teams."

Birmingham is the first of the second batch of five frigates which will complete the class – Sheffield, Newcastle, Edinburgh, London – to join the original trio of HMS Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast already under construction.

Identical to the first batch, but incorporating lessons learned in their construction the second batch represents a £4.2bn investment in the future of the Royal Navy and the shipbuilding industry.

She'll be the fourth Birmingham to serve under the White Ensign, building on foundations laid by ships whose service spanned the 20th Century.

The first two were cruisers which served through World War 1 and 2 respectively. No.1 fought at Heligoland, Dogger Bank and Jutland and served around the globe until the early 1930s.

The most recent Birmingham was a Type 42 destroyer which joined the Fleet in 1976. Unlike many of her class, she didn't serve in the Falklands conflict but was sent south as part of the security/peacekeeping operation around the islands afterwards.

Other peacekeeping duties included the Adriatic, protecting shipping in the Gulf during the 'tanker wars' and evacuating Britons and entitled civilians from Albania in 1997. She was paid off two years later and sold for breaking up in 2000.

The new Birmingham will be equipped with the Sea Ceptor missile defence system, a 5in medium calibre main gun, a Merlin or Wildcat helicopter, medium-range radar, powerful array sonars, a Mk41 vertical launch silo for missile systems, and a 'mission bay' allowing the ships to carry adaptable 'pods' for wide-ranging operations, such as disaster relief, drones, and mine warfare.

The eight 26s replace the eight dedicated Type 23 anti-submarine frigates currently in service (five new Type 31s will supplant the general duty 23s reaching the end of their lifespans) and are expected to serve for at least 25 years, taking the class into the 2060s.



Construction of the 26s will sustain around 1,700 jobs at BAE's yards in Govan and Scotstoun, plus 2,300 jobs across 120 suppliers and sub-contractors.

# A new chapter in the Troy story

THE sixth of the Royal Navy's leading-edge Astute-class hunter-killer submarines has been formally named – a key milestone on the road to front-line operations.

HMS Agamemnon will act as both sword and protector – able to strike at foes on land courtesy of her Tomahawk cruise missile – and fend off threats on and beneath the waves with Spearfish torpedoes.

Nearly 11 years after the first steel was cut on the 7,000-tonne Fleet submarine at BAE Systems' yard in Barrow-in-Furness, the state-of-the-art boat was unveiled to VIPs, led by the submarine's Sponsor Lady Sedwill, affiliates, friends and family and those who have toiled on 'Awesome Aggie' as she's known by crew, since 2013.

In a ceremony which mixed a hi-tech light show and displays with Royal Navy tradition inside the cavernous Devonshire Dock Hall which dominates the Barrow skyline, it fell to Lady Sedwill, who visited the boat late last year to catch up on progress with construction, to address the crew and then smash a bottle of locally brewed beer – in keeping with the yard's tradition – to bless Agamemnon and all who will serve aboard for the next 25-plus years.

"As Ship's Sponsor I am exceptionally honoured to be here to name the latest HMS Agamemnon. I thank all who have made this day possible and those involved in the build of this incredible submarine," she told all present.

"In the near future she will join her sisters at His Majesty's Naval Base Clyde where I am certain she will go on to great operational success."

Proceedings concluded with the cutting of the naming ceremony cake performed by Lady Sedwill and the youngest member of Agamemnon's 98-strong crew, Catering Services specialist 22-year-old Aydon Hogg.

For Commanding Officer Commander David 'Bing' Crosby, there was a sense of *déjà vu* about proceedings – having helped bring the fifth Astute-class submarine, HMS Anson, into service.



Her naming ceremony three and a half years ago was a low-key affair mid-pandemic, so Agamemnon's event was a welcome opportunity to truly show off the boat to all those who've supported the endeavour to date – an Astute-class submarine is described as a more complex machine than the Space Shuttle – such as affiliates, charities and families.

"It is a fantastic honour to be entrusted as the first Commanding Officer of the sixth Astute and the sixth HMS Agamemnon," he said.

"It is especially nice to be able to share this day with our enterprise partners, our affiliates, friends and families; after all they too will play a key part in delivery of this submarine into service and beyond."

The submarine is the sixth Agamemnon to fly the White Ensign, tracing a history back to 1781. The first ship to bear the name was captained by one Horatio Nelson.

It is where he earned his spurs as a leader and she became his favourite vessel thanks to her stealth, power and capabilities – characteristics her 21st Century successor shares "in abundance".

Commander Crosby continued: "The naming ceremony of our HMS Agamemnon is a significant milestone in her build and final preparation for launch.

"It is a very special day for me, my current ship's company and those previous Aggies that have moved on to new challenges.

"We're looking forward to getting 'Awesome Aggie' ready to join her sisters in the Royal Navy fleet."

Over the coming months, work will continue on Agamemnon ahead of her being rolled out of the dock hall and carefully lowered into the neighbouring basin for the first time.

That will be followed by a period of tests and commissioning of systems alongside, before her maiden dive in the basin followed by departure from Barrow for sea trials and joining the rest of the Astute class at HMNB Clyde.



'Go easy on those apples . . . they don't grow on trees, you know!'





## **The first fixed-wing UAV lands on a Royal Navy aircraft carrier**

In a pioneering flight a cargo drone flew from Cornwall out to HMS Prince of Wales, delivered supplies, took off again and returned to the airfield.

After preparations which included authorisation from the Civil Aviation Authority, the HCMC drone took off from Predannack, the satellite airfield of RNAS Culdrose.

After a flight lasting around 20 minutes, it touched down safely on the moving carrier.

A dummy payload of naval memorabilia was brought to the carrier by the aircraft and removed by the crew. For the return journey, an aviation fuel sample was loaded to be tested using facilities ashore.



## **Warships from four allied nations, including Ukraine, are arriving in Glasgow in preparation for Exercise Sea Breeze, a major NATO military exercise set to take place in Scottish waters.**

The ships and their crews will be stationed at Glasgow's King George V Docks before heading out to sea for the drills.

The arriving vessels include the German Elbe-class replenishment ship Donau, the flagship of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (SNMCMG1). Donau is accompanied by the Estonian Sandown-class minehunter Ugandi and the French Tripartite-class minehunter Céphée. Ukrainian ships Cherkasy and Chernihiv are expected to join as well.

Exercise Sea Breeze is an annual multinational maritime exercise traditionally held in the Black Sea, co-hosted by the United States and Ukraine.

Due to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the exercise has been relocated to Glasgow for the second year in a row.

The drills aim to enhance maritime security and stability operations, focusing on mine countermeasure and dive operation mission areas.

The exercise will run from June 24 to July 5, with most activities taking place near Arran, Campbeltown, and the Northern Minches.

This year's exercise will see participation from ships and personnel from Estonia, France, Germany, and Ukraine, with additional personnel from Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Japan, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The exercise provides an opportunity for these nations to work closely together, refining tactics and procedures over the next two weeks.

### **Shoreham and Grimsby**

The Ukrainian vessels Cherkasy and Chernihiv, formerly Royal Navy ships named Shoreham and Grimsby, were transferred to the Ukrainian navy in 2023.

Stationed at HM Naval Base Portsmouth, their crews have been training with Royal Navy instructors. These ships have previously participated in Exercise Joint Warrior 23 and will use Exercise Sea Breeze to further develop their operational capabilities.

The relocation of Exercise Sea Breeze to Glasgow comes after the closure of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits by Turkey, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has restricted military vessel passage into the Black Sea.

Despite these challenges, the exercise continues to ensure readiness and cooperation among NATO allies and partners.

Since the invasion in 2022, the UK has been a significant supporter of Ukraine, providing more than £7.6 billion in military aid.





### **Killing Submarines By Drone**

In the recent REPMUS exercise held in Portugal, a BAE Systems / Malloy Aeronautics T-600 unmanned aircraft system (UAS) was used to launch an inert training variant Sting Ray torpedo.

It would be inaccurate to describe the delivery of a torpedo by a UAS as something entirely new. As far back as the 1950s, the US Navy developed the Drone Anti-Submarine Helicopter (DASH). Built by the Gyrodyne Corporation, the DSN-3 could carry two Mk 44 homing torpedoes.

Powered by a small turboshaft engine and featuring twin vertical rotor blades the aircraft could carry out its intended role, although not a very reliable platform and was difficult to pilot. It required two controllers, one flight-deck controller for managing take-off and landing and an operator in the CIC to fly the DASH to the target and release weapons.

Guidance was rather haphazard using the ship's radar and FM radio for flight controls.

50 years of advances in computing power, battery and motor technology have made the DASH concept a much better proposition. The RN has been interested in logistic drones for some time and has

begun an industry competition for its UAS Heavy Lift Challenge (UASHLC) under its PANTHER program.

The Malloy quadcopters are clearly well suited to the ASW role, being able to operate from the decks of small ships and BAE Systems partnered with them to develop a torpedo delivery capability.

The UAS is clearly not a replacement for the highly capable Merlin, but rather a complementary system with potential to increase the fleet's ASW firepower and availability.

Operating alone, its biggest issue is the lack of means to localise a contact with dipping sonar or sonobuoys and its dependence on very accurate cueing from other platforms. ASW is increasingly conducted using active sonar as the stealth of modern submarines makes passive methods less reliable. Active and multi-static sonar generates more complete targeting data that can be fed to the UAS.

The ethical and safety issues around weaponised autonomous uncrewed systems can be avoided to a large extent in this case as the UAS can be remotely piloted and torpedo released only under human command.



## Programme for 2024

DATE	SPEAKER/ ACTIVITY	SUBJECT	COMMENT
12 January	Martin Watts	Otaki	Virtual meeting
9 February	AGM		
8 March	John de Rose	Merchant Ships of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	
12 April	Peter Gilbert	South Georgia	
10 May	James Morgan	Maintaining Historic Ships	James is the Ship Manager at Chatham Historic Dockyard
14 June	Matthew Scott	Policing in Kent	Matthew is the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner
12 July	Adam Taylor	The Defence of Sheppey	Note earlier date for meeting
August	No meeting. Summer Leave.		
13 September	Social evening		
25 October	Trafalgar Dinner, RSME		
8 November	Glen Jones	The Two Battles of El Teb 1884	
13 December	President's Christmas Social		



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Chatham Naval Officers' Association



## CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS



### Joining Fee and Annual Subscription

**With effect from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023, new members will be required to pay a joining fee of £30 by cheque or transfer to CNOA at the following bank:**

Metro Bank   Sort code 23 05 80   Account 50484076

Cost £20 PA payable to Chatham Naval Officers Association

Address if required   2 Calverly Road, Tunbridge Wells   Kent TN1 2TB

**On receipt of the joining fee new members will receive an Association tie or scarf and lapel badge. The Annual Subscription of £20 applies from the date of joining if this occurs before 1<sup>st</sup> July, and then will be renewed by Standing Order from the following 1<sup>st</sup> January.**

**New members who join after 1<sup>st</sup> July will be required to submit a Standing order from the following 1<sup>st</sup> January.**

### Annual Subscription – Current members

**The annual subscription remains at £20 and, with effect from 1 January 2024, the subscription will be payable annually on that date. In the first instance, and to allow members time to alter their current standing order dates, a transition period of 3 months, to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 will be in place, after which an audit and follow up process will be undertaken.**



**CHATHAM NAVAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL STANDING ORDER FORM**

Please complete this form and return it to the Hon Treasurer: Lieutenant Jan Dean RNR, 79A Cherry Avenue, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7OU, or, if you prefer, you can scan a copy and email it to [cnoauk@gmail.com](mailto:cnoauk@gmail.com). You can arrange a standing order electronically via your bank and, for those using traditional banking methods this form can be used to inform your bank of your instructions as below.

I wish to make my annual subscription payments by standing order to the Chatham Naval Officers' Association.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your Bank: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of your Bank: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Bank Sort Code: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Your Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

To my bank:

I request you to pay the regular sum of: £20 PA

Metro Bank sort code 23 05 80 account 50484076

Payable to Chatham Naval Officers Association

Address if required 2 Calverly Road, Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 2TB



**CNOA**  
Chatham Naval Officers' Association



If you enjoy the CNOA activities, why not extend an invitation to a like-minded serving or retired officer? Or ask them to look at [cnoa.org.uk](http://cnoa.org.uk)



### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

SURNAME		FORENAMES		DATE
HOME ADDRESS			BUSINESS ADDRESS	
Tel. No:			Tel. No:	
E Mail Address:			E Mail Address:	
RANK	TYPE OF COMMISSION	SPECIALISATION / AWARDS & QUALIFICATIONS		
BRIEF CAREER DETAILS				
<p><b>General Data Protection Regulation:</b> I agree that all the above details may be maintained and kept by the CNOA and RSME for the purposes of membership records and security. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to my details being published in a membership booklet.</p> <p><b>SIGNED</b>.....</p>				
PRESENT OCCUPATION				
PROPOSER'S NAME	PROPOSER'S SIGNATURE		HOW LONG KNOWN	
SECONDER'S NAME	SECONDER'S SIGNATURE		HOW LONG KNOWN	