



Association Newsletter Dec 2019/Jan 2020

EDITORIAL

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and all the very best for 2020. My thanks also to those members who have contributed to our Newsletter throughout the year. Please remember, contributions are always welcome and I look forward to many more next year. Below you will find the Chairman's Christmas message which summarises our activities over the past twelve months and our aspirations for 2020. You will see towards the end of the full version of this Newsletter a **provisional programme** of our next year's events which will be confirmed in due course.



SANO CHAIRMAN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

You will know that your Executive Committee holds a strategy meeting towards the end of November when we set out the lecture/lunch and dinner dates for the coming year together with ideas for visits. We endeavour too to take time out from the business of our normal EC meetings to consider the wider picture, look ahead and sideways. Details of our provisional programme are elsewhere in this Newsletter. At the same time, I am reminded by both the Secretary and Newsletter Editor that I need to draft out this message in order that it does actually get to you before Christmas.

This year has seen our former Treasurer, Joe Kirk, step sideways to the role of Webmaster and for Dusty Miller to step up into the Treasurer billet – we welcome him and are grateful that he (was) volunteered! It is unlikely that you will have noticed a major change to the visible presentation of the SANO website but I can assure you that there has been a lot of change behind the scenery! When Pat Saunders stood down from the position, his since year dot, we found it difficult to interact with the existing website management program due mainly to it not working well with current hardware and no longer supported by its providers. Because of this we decided to grasp the bullet and move to an up-to-date program (WordPress for those who have read this far). In this we enlisted the help of a fellow repair café volunteer. After a few teething issues the website finally metamorphosed in the middle of the year. There is now a regular diet of SANO and RN news, expanded Contacts and Links pages and one for members' contributions. We can also now update the site in the absence of the Webmaster. For the future we are looking into online booking for events, incorporating payment by BACS, but rest assured existing methods will remain.

We are still looking for a relief for our Newsletter Editor who stated last year that he wished to stand down and give someone else the chance so, if you consider yourself a wordsmith and would enjoy writing short articles for your Newsletter – please step forward. And, if you think you could, or would like to, help in any other way then, again, please step forward.

Each year I pass comment about membership numbers and I have to report that this year has seen a reverse of last year's slight upward trend and that attendance at events has also dropped off. If you have ideas for events and/or suggestions for speakers (preferably on a maritime theme) then do please let us know – contact details at the end of the Newsletter.

Our Mess Guest Night in May was a joint dinner with ARNO and we had hoped for a rather larger number than actually turned up – from either association. We enjoyed a different approach to the topic by our main guest at our traditional Trafalgar Night Dinner and we have already engaged a new SANO member to sing for his supper next year. During the MGN, the ARNO Chairman gave me the contact details of the Portsmouth Royal Naval Officers Association (PRNOA), a similar organisation to ours but combining both serving and recent retirees; their events are generally held in HMS Nelson Wardroom and there is a possibility we may have joint events with them in the future.

We maintain our links with the Sussex URNU and, having just recently met him, the new CO is equally keen for this to continue with our annual joint evening in February and invitations to the YOs to our dinners. In the summer we lunched at a Shoreham pub but the visit to the Damage Control Trainer at HMS Excellent had to be cancelled due to last minute security considerations.

So, to the message: last year I wrote that Brexit would resolve itself which I got quite wrong! But I do hope that your festive season this year will bring you joy and happiness, friends and families and good food and wine. And, that the New Year will bring sufficient income to join the Fitness Centre to reduce (in my case) that ever-expanding girth.

My very best wishes,

Richard Stanton, Chairman Sussex Association of Naval Officers

THE LECTURE/LUNCH on SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER



This was given by Capt Chris Page RN. Chris served for 37 years in the RN, 11 of which were as Head of the Naval Historical Branch. He gave detailed account of Hitler's invasion plan, 'Operation Sea Lion. This was to be an amphibious offensive on the south coast of England from North Foreland to Weymouth. It was pretty clear from the outset that it would be an unmitigated failure. As a logistics exercise it was doomed to disaster. Consider the following:

Operation Sea Lion called for more than 250,000 German troops, 60,000 horses, and nearly 35,000 vehicles to embark from ports in occupied France and Belgium and land in three waves on a 200-mile front. Moreover, suitable landing craft simply did not exist. Over 2,000 Rhine River barges, tugs, and other vessels were assembled for the operation and most of these had to be modified with steel and concrete reinforcement and landing ramps. It was envisaged that the Rhine barges would be towed line astern, each carrying 500 men. Capt Page

pointed out that one destroyer travelling at 30 knots could swamp and sink the three at a stroke. Furthermore, at this period during the war the Luftwaffe was virtually non-existent. The whole operation was not helped by the major disagreements between Gross Admiral Raeder and Gross Admiral Doenitz. But perhaps the final humiliation would be a confrontation with Captain Mainwaring!!

This was, by far, the best attended lecture of the year.



Lecture/Lunch Photographs

QUIZ

Last Month's solutions of 'Which Navy' were: (a) Irish; (b) Italian; (c) Indian

We hope to introduce further quiz questions next year. All compilers will be welcome.

TAILPIECE

Paddy charges into the benefit office; "I've been ringing 0800 1730 for two days now, why can't anyone be bothered to answer?"

The assistant replied; "how many times have we told you Paddy that these are our opening hours!?"

Best wishes, Bob