

# Association Newsletter, December 2020

## EDITORIAL



Once again, may I wish you all a very Happy Christmas. A year beset with difficulties. The activities of our Association, along with many other organisations, have been severely disrupted as a result of Covid. With the introduction of the vaccine, let us all hope that we can soon return to some degree of normality in 2021.

The EC has recently met with a 'zoom' style meeting, but clearly we are not in a position at the moment to compile a series of events that you can put into your diaries. In the meantime, keep safe and let us look forward to a prosperous New Year.

### CHAIRMAN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Well, what to tell you this year? Apart from our combined meeting with URNU at the beginning of the year – not a lot! Your EC has managed to meet face-to-face a couple of times, both before and after the initial lockdown; in between and since, we have met virtually, using a variety of software, none of which has been excellent; they all have their advantages/disadvantages. However, they do sharpen the mind about meeting etiquette, and we are reminded about the Alice in Wonderland quote – 'Speak when spoken to'.

You will have read in a recent Newsletter that our Treasurer, Dusty Miller, has had to hand back the duty to Joe Kirk in light of his airy-fairy job change to shores across the pond. Joe in turn has handed over the Membership Sec duties to Ian Wright, in tandem with his Trophies duties. A relief for our Newsletter Editor is still wished for so, as last year, if you consider yourself a wordsmith and would enjoy writing short articles for your Newsletter – please step forward. And, again like last year, if you think you could, or would like to, help in any other way then, again, please step forward.

This year has seen a further drop in membership numbers – some resigning, more succumbing to anno domini. At this point, I would also normally ask for ideas for events and/or suggestions for speakers, but this year has wiped out the planned 2020 programme so we shall see if or what we can retrieve for next year.

So, to the message: the year before last I wrote that Brexit would resolve itself last year, which I got and am still getting quite wrong and, as I write, we still have not got there! Much, much more to the point this year (and next) is the greatly-anticipated arrival of a Covid-19 vaccine – let us hope that it is the Oxford one, which can be

stored in a refrigerator rather than the other two which, apparently, have to be stored in the cold of outer space.

I do hope that your permitted five-day festive season this year will bring you joy, happiness, good food and more wine. Please make sure you and yours follow the guidelines – whatever they may be – so that we are able to enjoy each other's company again in the New Year.

My very best wishes,

Richard Stanton, Chairman, Sussex Association of Naval Officers

### **HMS SHOREHAM**



Our Chairman recently received the latest correspondence from the Commanding Officer of HMS SHOREHAM, Lt Cdr Richard Kemp RN. An extract appears below:

*"I have assumed command at an exciting time for the ship and crew as she is scheduled to return home from her three year deployment in 2021. This will be an incredibly busy but exciting time for me and the Crew as we look to bring her home after more than three years deployed on operations.*

*Whilst she has been in the Arabian Gulf she has been essential in ensuring that merchant trade can safely transit through the many chokepoints and dangerous waters that lead from the Gulf to the UK, which is vital to the UK economy. This includes our unique ability to detect and destroy mines down to a depth of 200 metres".*

### **THE ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE**

You have no doubt read in the national press that that MOD is 'standing down' or 'pausing' the RNR. As Admiral Lord West said, those who have served in the RNR will draw their own conclusions. The announcement was made by the Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace (nothing to do with the fact that he is an ex-Army officer, of course!!). Lord West adds:

*"Now is a particularly poor time to make such changes. Reservists play a key part in helping the Border Force patrol; in the Channel, and given Brexit, there is yet a chance that they will be called upon to assist with boosting fishery protection, too."*

(cont.)

## **VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE OLD ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE GREENWICH**

A fascinating tour. Just click the link [here](#).

Best wishes,

Bob