



**The Parachute Regimental Association**  
**Aldershot Branch**  
**Newsletter**



**02/2016**

**Charity Number 1125551**

**Feb 2016**

**Monthly Meeting**

The next monthly meeting which is the February meeting will take place in the **Conservative Club at 2000hrs on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016**. The meeting after this will be held on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

**Tom Lewis**

Tom has asked to rejoin the Branch at the last monthly meeting. Welcome back Tom.

**Peter Clare**

I am pleased to inform you that Pete was discharged from hospital on Wednesday the 30<sup>th</sup> December and is now recuperating at home. He would like to thank all of the members for their kind wishes and support after his accident.

**Aldershot Tabbers Walking Group**

Please bring waterproofs in a small back pack and a change of shoes/trainers at the end of the walk as we don't want to walk into the pub with muddy boots. This also helps when getting into the car for the ride home. The group will be meeting in the Garrison Church Car Park from 9am/9.15am next to the Wellington Statue. It is proposed that we car share to save taking empty cars.

Peter Richens has now organised the following walks for January and February. Short walk indicates 5/6 miles. Long walk indicates 10/12 miles.

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January long walk.  
Thursday 11th February short walk  
Thursday 25th February long walk

If you would like to attend any of the walks or require further information please contact the Secretary.

**The Trafalger Inn**

The work in the Traf started early on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January. Stace put out a DIY SOS on Facebook asking for ex Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces personnel who are now trained as carpenters, plasterers, plumbers and electricians. He received many calls offering their services and eight people turned up on the first day. After removing the photos the walls were stripped of the wallpaper, some of which were six sheets thick with paint in between each sheet. The wooden furniture holding the memorabilia behind the bar has been removed along with a few non load bearing structures. All of the walls and ceilings have now been re-plastered and have had their first undercoat. The gents and ladies toilets are taking shape and the disabled toilet is very impressive. New tiles from floor to ceiling are on the walls of all of the toilets. The glass bricks dividing the front bar and middle bar are in and the two fireplaces have been checked, ready to be used during the winter months. The tradesmen have come from all over the country. The plasterer came from Melton Mowbray and one of the plumbers came from Newcastle. The Grand Opening will be in the evening of Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January. If you are free please come along and I am sure you will be amazed at the transformation. The Traf will have had a major update, but it will still be the Traf. Before and after photos will be in the next newsletter.

**Branch Skiing Trip**

The first Branch skiing trip is taking place in Andorra in the Pyrenees from Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> till Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January. A total of 13 people are attending and hopefully this will be an annual event. We have beginners, intermediate and advanced skiers amongst our group. If you can ski or have never skied and would like to give it a go, please contact the secretary for information about next years trip.

## Monthly Newsletter

It has been brought to my attention that some members have not received the newsletter. This has happened by email and Royal Mail. If you do not receive the newsletter by the end of the month please contact the secretary and he will ensure that another copy is sent out.

## Members Stories

Some time ago I included a true story from Don MacNaughton about his time with the Red Devils. As this is not a busy month I am including this story from John Ross. John has always been very keen in sailing. We are not talking about cruise ships but sailing on the tall ships that cross the Pacific and Atlantic. When you read the story and see the photos on page 4, I am sure that you will only applaud John for volunteering to join the tall ship at his "young" age.

### **Rounding Cape Horn by John Ross**

Having served with John Ridgeway and Chat Blyth in the 60's, I was fortunate to sail with them later when they had both become Round the World Sailors. I sailed with Chay on his original "British Steel" yacht on which he became the first single handed sailor to sail around the world East to West. Apart from taking part in Marathons, Triathlons, Quadrathons, trekking in the Himalayas, dog sledging in the Arctic Circle etc, sailing has been my main interest.

At the age of 44, I came 11<sup>th</sup> in the Quadrathon billed in 1984 as "The Toughest Race in the World". After the Quadrathon, Everest the Ultimate Trek was next, but my dream to complete my bucket list was to sail around Cape Horn in a Tall Ship. This opportunity came when the Jubilee Sailing Trusts Tall Ship, Lord Nelson was to sail on a 2 year voyage around the world in 2013. I was again fortunate to be able to sign on a voyage crew for leg 6, Auckland to Ushuaia, Argentina around Cape Horn (The Holy Grail).

We set sail from Auckland on the 20<sup>th</sup> December for Napier in the South Island on the east coast. This was a shakedown voyage of 350 miles to spend Christmas before leaving for the Chatham Islands, which is an outpost of New Zealand some 568 miles to the east. The islands are an archipelago of 11 islands only inhabited by 600 people. From there we set sail to complete the remaining 4,783 miles. Our target, a way point 56° south & 63° west of Cape Horn around the southern ocean (roaring 40's and screaming 60's). The shortest track for this passage could take us to 65° latitude and risk meeting icebergs. Captain Chris' plan was to sail a little further north making best advantage of the deviating winds on our eastwards passage. One milestone was reached when we were at a point on the earth furthest away from any land.

Yes we had heavy weather, force 10-11's, 20 foot waves etc, but that is what I came for. A squall hit us one afternoon, being on watch I was at the helm. All hands were called to reduce sail and the ocean turned white within minutes. I was left totally alone and exposed. It was one of the highlights of my sailing experiences, I felt I was sailing a Tall ship single handed around the world. In the swell it was like sailing along a valley.

Our best noon-noon run was 204 miles, but at other times we were becalmed and we never saw another ship on our radar throughout the passage.

To hold our course with the wind veering to east-north east the help was ordered to sail "full-and-by", sailing as close to the wind as possible keeping the sails full. With our square rig sails set we can get no closer than about 70 degrees before she began losing speed (a sailing yacht can sail closer at about 45 degrees).

The 33 voyage crew are split into 4 watches, port and starboard, forward and aft. That defines yard bracing stations and carving out all other routines on board. Following the naval pattern of 4 hours on, 8 hours off with a 2 hour dog watch to break the routine.

Watch-keeping duties include helming, lookouts, met reports, logs, cleaning, maintenance work, going aloft to furl sails, bracing the yard, trimming and securing sails, mess duties and waking up the oncoming watch at 4am. Even when off watch the time is full of drills, lectures, all hands or sail changing, maintenance etc. Down time was restricted to 1½ hrs after lunch. The only full nights sleep was every 6th day when on mess duties, we arranged our own social activities in the mess bar.

Wind force and direction dictated our progress, generally sailing east or north east and on the 1st February we sighted land west of Cape Horn. We sailed on south easterly towards Cape Horn, it stood against a backdrop of dramatic clouds and a jagged line of snow covered mountains. We reached our way point south of the Horn at 23.48 hrs, fortunately the wind was moderate but I reflected with a prayer on the many tragedies that had gone before in the early days of sail. Those early sailors had none of the weather and navigation aids that we have today.

In order to comply with the International Association of Cape Horn requirements to become a member we needed to sail up the east coast of Argentina and in doing so crossed the 50° of latitude both east and west of Cape Horn. This added another 400 miles to our passage, thus becoming 1 of 372 members worldwide. Another requirement was to complete the total passage without the use of engines. On Feb 6<sup>th</sup> we turned back down the Beagle Channel where a pilot boarded the ship and eventually arriving in Ushuaia on Feb 10<sup>th</sup> 2014.

It was a milestone for sure under the domain of Neptune earning the privileges namely of wearing an earring in the port, sporting a tattoo of a full rigged ship and the legitimate right of placing of feet on the table.

It was my time in 3 Para that taught me to have discipline, tolerance, patience and understanding to live with a crew in very close confines of the ship for 24 hrs a day for 62 days covering 6,423 miles. We were a mixed crew with ages ranging from 24-75, myself being the oldest had the honour of ringing 8 bells on New Years eve.

I still cherish every moment with pride and sadness. Pride of what we had made happen and sadness that we will never be reunited again.

John Ross  
A Coy 3 Para

*Stuart*

## Rounding Cape Horn



**The Jubilee Sailing Trusts Tall Ship, Lord Nelson**



**I hope John had some sea sick tablets with him**



**Come on John, the Captain is on his way for the daily inspection**



**John, give us a wave  
And this is without a parachute**



**John ringing eight Bells at midnight  
on New Years Day**