

Scuttlebutt

Crow's Nest Officers' Club

October 2005

Return of the North Atlantic Convoy Bell

by John Moyes

When the cruise ship *Seabourn Pride* sailed into St. John's harbour on the evening of September 9th, twelve hours ahead of schedule, onboard was a very important piece of history: the North Atlantic Convoy Bell. This historic bell was handed over to Captain Tonis T. Sorenson in Londonderry five days earlier, by Cmdr. Peter Campbell, President of the Royal Navy Association for Ireland, asking that he return it safely to its final destination.

According to Frank Brown of the Londonderry Royal Navy Association, Cmdr. Campbell gave an excellent speech on the history of the involvement of the RCN Escort Groups and the feelings that the Canadians, especially the Newfoundlanders, have for the city and people of Londonderry.

Derry's own Tour Director, Aideen Corr, accompanied the bell. It was her first sea crossing of the Atlantic, a challenge Aideen enjoyed very much. During the voyage, Aideen talked to the 204 passengers on board about 'the Bell' and its significance to the three prime ports on the western approaches of the Battle of The Atlantic - Derry, St. John's and Halifax.

The bell had been renovated by the Canadian Memorial Trust and brought to Derry by the Trust and the Crow's Nest Officer's Club of St. John's. Earlier this year, Dick Hyslop, Bill Conway, John Moyes, Gareth Cook, Capt. Jack Strong and guests, along with Crow's Nest members David and Pamela Welsh who now live in Cornwall, travelled to the



Clockwise from left: Gareth Cook, Dick Hyslop, Bill Conway, John Moyes, Dennis O'Keefe, Aideen Corr, LCdr Margaret Morris, Capt. Jack Strong.

historic walled city of Derry to attend a special 60th Anniversary event honouring the Veterans of the Battle of the Atlantic and Canada's Year of The Veteran.

Our weekend in Derry was organised by the Combined Naval Associations, the Derry City Council and Londonderry Port. As part of the official ceremony, a special service took place in St. Colomb's Cathedral, where the North Atlantic Convoy Bell was dedicated as a memorial to those who lost their lives.

Capt. Jack Strong, representing the Merchant Marine and the Crow's Nest, took part in the parade, laid the wreath to the fallen, and participated in the 'Atlantic Bell' dedication in St. Colomb's Cathedral in Derry. Well done Jack! For those of us who attended the parade and service, it was a very moving experience and only the beginning of a wonderful and cool but

sunny Sunday in one of the most historic places one could wish to visit and one with a strong connection to the people of Newfoundland.

On September 10th, a special lunch, delicious soup and sandwich, was organised by Red Oak to thank the *Seabourn Pride's* Captain and Aideen Corr for bringing back the bell, together with the return from Derry of our painting of the corvette "Sackville" by Ossie Jones, and the Derry Punt, a wonderful model presented to the Crow's Nest in honour of our visit and eloquently accepted by Dick Hyslop on our behalf. Now we have to find a fitting place to display it.

At 3:30 pm, our party was given a tour of the *Seabourn Pride*, after which a ceremony had been organised on board by the City of St. John's Tourism Manager Kevin

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Message from the President

The July first ceremony at the War Memorial adjacent to the Crow's Nest was well attended by appropriate dignitaries and the public. It is a special year of commemoration, being sixty years since the end of the Second World War and being nationally designated as the Year Of The Veteran. As well, of course, it marked eighty-nine years since the July Drive in the Battle of the Somme and the Newfoundland Regiment's contribution at Beaumont Hamel.

Particularly pleasing was the number of youth present at the ceremony. Simon Andrews, the son of Past President John Andrews, laid a wreath on behalf of the Boy Scouts of Canada.

After the ceremony the Nest entertained a number of special guests. We were pleased that Bill Graham, Minister of National Defense, and

Albina Guarnieri, Minister of Veterans Affairs, dropped in to have a look around and greet members. Representatives from the French and Belgian Embassies in Ottawa also came along.

Many of the guests were first-time visitors to the Club and were quite interested in our presentation of the Crow's Nest history. Some of the guests noted that much of the gun shield graffiti displayed in a naval officers' club seemed to represent the prairies rather than the coastal regions of Canada. There were some humorous comments as well about the travels of our 1990's vintage piano which had made its way to Murmansk, Normandy and Gibraltar during the fiftieth anniversary of the completion of the Second World War in 1995, only to be returned to the

Club subsequent to some banking irregularities of some sort.

The Ministers were intrigued by the story of the U 190, a second hand "war prize" U boat being commissioned into the Canadian Navy as a familiarization and training submarine as Canada had no submarines during the Second World War. As the visit was ending Bob Innes played a few appropriate tunes on the aforementioned piano.

The visit was arranged through the Artifacts Committee and the Crow's Nest is indebted to Capt. Mike Pretty of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment who ably handled the logistics of the occasion.

Dick Hyslop
President

Report from the Treasurer

I'm delighted to be back in the saddle as the Club's Treasurer. We are in the process of transferring our financial records into a computer program that will make my "handraulic" methods of the past be part of the Club's history.

The process of entering all is data is very tiresome. However, once done, the maintenance of the books should be easy. In the mean time, if a mistake has been made, please do not hesitate to contact me. Some dues are paid in cash & the bar staff do not record the member's name correctly (easily done during a busy event).

Also, some dues are paid by a member's business and the business name has no relation to the member's name. Occasionally some detective work is required to sort things out. Some lucky members submit their dues with a cheque written on their spouse's (or someone else's) account. That is fine except when there is a different surname. It's all part of the fun of being the Treasurer! The good

news is that none of your cheques are bouncing. I only hope we credit the right members with their dues!

LCdr Margaret Morris
Treasurer



Welcome to New Members

In Town:

Jim Flynn, Gerry Carr, Jacquey Ryan

Out of Town:

Thomas Poynter, Allan Graham, John Hamilton, John T. Band, William Boulton, Ross Munn, Ian Wilson, Fred Stagg, Peter Matthews, Capt. Michel Cliché, Dr. Donald Sichel

Members' Accomplishments:

Congratulations to Kathleen LeGrow on her recent appointment to the Order of Canada. Also, congratu-

lations to Dr. Maxwell House on his promotion within the Order of Canada from Member to Officer.

Belated congratulations to Miller Ayre on also being awarded the Order of Canada back in October 2003.

Don't Forget...

Club sweaters, ties and books are available for purchase at the bar.

Crow's Nest Military Artifacts Association Approves New Crest

by Greg Twining

Early this summer the CNMAA approved an official crest for our organization. This project lasted over a year and had many hands participating. Thanks to all involved. As a result of this we now have a crest that will be applied to our letter head, acknowledgement certificates, business cards and CNMAA items.

We ordered and have received our first stock of pins, ball caps and golf shirts, each proudly displaying our new crest. These items will not be sold to the public and will only be available to CNOC and CNMAA members. The prices are as follows;

Golf Shirts (navy blue)	\$30.00
Ball caps (navy blue)	\$20.00

CNMAA pins \$5.00

Greg Twining is holding the stock and can be reached at 772-4368 or by email at TwiningDG@DFO-MPO.GC.CA.

Sales are moving well and there is a limited number of golf shirts left at present.



Convoy Bell Returns to Crow's Nest

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Gushue and Deborah Cook, and the City ably represented by Councillor Dennis O'Keefe (now the new Deputy Mayor), who welcomed the passengers to the City of St. John's. John Moyes hosted the hour-long event and introduced the speakers, including the Norwegian Captain Sorenson who made a very gracious speech thanking the Crow's Nest for our hospitality and said how pleased he was to carry the "Atlantic Bell" on its return journey across the Atlantic Ocean.

The ship's theatre was filled with passengers and media, including the Telegram's Shirley Newhook, who were royally entertained by the fife and drum band of the Signal Hill Tattoo. Dressed in their colourful uniforms, they played for about 10 minutes a medley of folk tunes and military airs, with a rousing rendition of "The British Grenadier". Everyone enjoyed their performance.

The Captain then presented the Bell to Captain Jack Strong and Lt. Commander Margaret Morris, who thanked the Captain on behalf of the Naval Association. Then Capt. Jack Strong spoke of his part in dedicating the bell in St., Colomb's Cathedral, and the symbolic journey the bell took in travelling across the Atlantic to Derry with *HMCS Goose Bay* and

HMCS Shawinigan, then back aboard the *Seabourn Pride* on the convoy route to St. John's and then Halifax. A fitting journey in 2005, our Year of The Veteran.

Chris Justice and David Baird will be pleased to hear that the Pusser's Rum Barrel also returned from Derry, and was given to us for safe-keeping. We were expecting a tot of 'Nelson's Blood' but the Captain poured everyone a fine glass of aquavit, and even presented a bottle to the Club, which Bill Conway graciously accepted. The hour-long ceremony was over too soon. We wished godspeed to our new friends on board, many of whom were veterans themselves and were visibly moved by the ceremony.

The Crow's Nest party waited in the rain until the *Seabourn Pride* pulled away from the wharf, then with a big cheer and waving enthusiastically we watched the ship sail through the Narrows. Then, carrying our gifts, we happily walked back to the Crow's Nest. After unpacking and checking our prizes, we decided to drink a toast to the Bell, the *Seabourn Pride* and the day, and it seemed only fitting to open the Captain's gift of Norwegian aquavit. Delicious!

Trafalgar Remembered

October 21 marked the 200th anniversary of what may have been the greatest naval victory (and defeat) in history. On that date in 1805 Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson defeated the combined French and Spanish fleets to ensure British dominion of the seas for the next century.

A commemorative black-tie event was held at Admiralty House in Mount Pearl.

Crow's Nest Takes Part in City's "Doors Open" Event

by Cdr Gary Reddy

On Saturday and Sunday, the 10 and 11 September respectively, the Crow's Nest opened its doors to the public and tourists of St. John's. To be part of the city wide "Doors Open" initiative demonstrated the Club's desire to be proactive in supporting the City of St. John's while at the same time displaying our Military history.

Our message to all visitors was come see our Naval and Military history, the Club is open to new members (No, you don't have to be in the military - all we ask that you have an interest in the Club's history) and that the club does cater to private events.

Although the weather produced rain for both days, we still enjoyed a turnout of up to 700 people, a very respectable crowd considering the weather. Those who ventured out included local citizens and tourists who came from as far afield as the UK and the United States.

The predominant statement we all heard was, "I knew this place existed and I always wanted to visit". This was normally followed by, "I understand the Crow's Nest is not open to the public, and where is the U190 periscope?"

All visitors were very impressed with the Club and its history. The periscope was the big attraction, although as each host pointed out more items their interest was piqued and people realized what the Crow's Nest was "really" all about.

Although a little wet from the outside weather, all felt the warmth and Safe Haven that our predecessors experienced after a patrol on the North. Atlantic. Doors Open is an annual must for the Crow's Nest.



Guests relax and view the artifacts in the comfortable setting of the Crow's Nest Officers' Club. Up to 700 people turned out to see what the Club was all about - some from as far away as the United Kingdom and the United States. Many thanks to the members who volunteered as "guides" on September 10 and 11.



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Comforts to the Scapa Minesweeping Force 1940

by Jack Moore

During August 1940 I left a minesweeping trawler based at Sheerness and took the long journey to Scapa Flow to join a similar ship of the Scapa force. The Sheerness ship had been operating in E-Boat Alley when the fall of France was only weeks past, so there were no dull moments there.

Scapa was just the opposite, little or no chance to get ashore as the ships were tied up to the mooring buoys in Longhope Sound, well offshore but in a great state of readiness to sweep the Home Fleet out if invasion started. Life aboard was pretty grim and the only real pleasure was the arrival of the mail-boat with hopefully a letter from home. The only outside news was via Nuffield radio, and that had to be sparingly used.

To avoid any stampede when the mail-boat arrived the skipper had ordered that the coxswain, a large Aberdonian, would carry out the distribution on deck. He seemed to take a sadistic delight in doing this, taking as long as possible and fetching just one letter at a time out of the bag, handing over each letter personally to the addressee.

I usually had a good mail and therefore noticed the sad look on the faces of those that missed out. When, on one occasion, my name was not called out I felt rather sickened and somewhat angry about it all. This day I had, however, noticed a large bag of what was known as "ship's comforts" had been passed inboard by the mail-boat. These comforts were mostly knitted garments sent by those wonderful ladies to H.M. ships.

The skipper had ordered that the leading seaman and one other should decide who got what, and as these garments had the name and address of the sender pinned to each one, a letter of thanks must be sent.

Here an amusing racket got underway, by sorting out the names with the prefix "Miss" and the married ladies. The married ladies' gifts were given to the officers and senior ratings, and the single girls' presents to the sailors. One wonders how many blushes or laughter arose when replies were received.

During the evening I was, therefore, not surprised to be presented with a scarf from a married lady with a rather posh address in Esher, Surrey. With no letters to reply to, I decided to have a change from sending the lady a stuffy formal letter of thanks, in the hope it might raise a smile on the lady's face amidst the aerial warfare happening in her vicinity. I gave a full account of the racket that took place over the distribution of "comforts" and that I, an eligible bachelor, was denied the chance of any romance. I then went on to tell her that when the leading seaman handed me the scarf I told him how I was fully aware of what went on, and why I had received the name of a married lady, but perhaps he was not that smart. It might



Illustration by Jack Moore

just be possible that he had given me the name and address of a wealthy widow and thus provided the solution to my post-war future. I thanked her for the scarf and wished her well.

Some weeks later, when the mail-boat arrived, a tea chest arrived inboard. My name was called out, but I had no idea who could have sent it, other than the company where I worked. After reading my mail I took it below and opened it. It contained a fruit cake, some pastries, apples, several pieces of knitwear, a bottle of wine and numerous books. At the bottom and pinned there was a pink deckled envelope with my name upon it. When I took it out, it was giving out an aroma of a very beautiful perfume.

Yes, it was the lady from Esher! She wrote that she was highly amused at my letter as she was indeed a widow, not perhaps wealthy but not badly off. She had shown my letter to the other members of her group and they too were very amused. They gave her a lot of romantic advice into the bargain. The perfume had been sprayed on the letter by a "Miss" of the group, which was perhaps a little naughty.

The contents of the chest were a collective effort by all. She hoped I would find my wealthy widow, but felt she must excuse herself as she had a son who would be about my age, also in the navy. We exchanged several other letters until I left on foreign service.

Thirty-five years later I visited Orkney and took a ferry to Hoy, hired a car and journeyed to Longhope. As I looked over the Sound and closed my eyes I saw the vision of the old *Iron Duke*, hospital ship *Amapoora* and *Dunluce* of long ago, and remembered the widow from Esher.

CLUB DINNER SCHEDULE

October 05 - January 06

Saturday, October 22nd, 2005

Oktoberfest

An all-time favorite, German cuisine served buffet style

Friday, October 28th, 2005

Weepers

Complimentary hors d'oeuvres

Friday, November 11th, 2005

Remembrance Day

Enjoy a hearty bowl of soup and homemade bread rolls @ 12:00 pm

(Pub Lunch will not be offered today)

Saturday, November 12th, 2005

Club Dinner

Appetizer - Winter Green Salad
Main Course - Blackened Cod, Chicken Breast with a Maple Cream Sauce, or London Broil
Dessert - Bavarian Cream with a Newfoundland Berry Compote

Friday, November 25th, 2005

Weepers

Complimentary hors d'oeuvres

Friday, November 25th, 2005

Club Dinner

Appetizer - Mulligatawny Soup
Main Course - Maple Mustard Salmon, Chicken Breast with an Orange Sauce, or Roasted Pork Chop
Dessert - Vanilla Ice cream with Bing Cherries

Friday, December 16th, 2005

Christmas Dinner

Appetizer - Smoked Salmon Rosette with Honey Infused Cream Cheese

Main Course - Roasted Turkey Dinner

Traditional dinner with all the trimmings

Dessert - Chocolate Parfait

Thursday, December 22nd, 2005

Christmas Weepers

Get away from all of the Christmas hustle. Toast the Holiday Season with friends, a few pints and complimentary hors d'oeuvres

Sunday, January 1, 2006

Happy New Year

The Crow's Nest will be open for a New Year's Levee @ 4: 00 PM on New Years Day

*All Club Dinners, are \$ 18.95 plus HST.
Gratuity is at your Discretion*

**Pub Lunches are served every Friday from
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

**Private Bookings can be made through
Red Oak Catering at 368-6808 or
johnr@redoaknf.com**

Jack Moore, the author at the article on the reverse of this insert, was present at the Crow's Nest on opening night in 1942. He was also the man who, while in his eighties, painted the picture of *Spikenard* that hangs in the dining room. Sadly, he passed away recently.