

Lieutenant Commander Mark Headley Royal Navy

Commanding Officer **HMS ATHERSTONE** and **MCM2 Crew 4**



Born in Fareham in 1975, Mark Headley was educated in Hong Kong and Surrey prior to reading for a BSc(Econ) in Development Studies at the University of Wales Swansea. After a highly enjoyable time on the rugby pitches and beaches of the Gower Peninsula, he joined the Royal Navy in 1999.

After training appointments in the Minesweeper HMS CHIDDINGFOLD and Destroyer HMS MANCHESTER, covering areas as diverse as the Baltic and the Caribbean, he went to HMS DRYAD for Junior Warfare Officers' Course in December 2000. On completion of professional training, he joined the Island Class Fishery Protection Vessel HMS LINDISFARNE in March 2001 as Correspondence Officer.

In July 2002, he joined HMS LANCASTER as the senior Officer of the Watch. The National Fire Strike altered a pre-deployment programme and a challenging five months was spent attached to the 1st Royal Anglian Regiment in Pirbright Surrey as Commander of the Naval Contingent.

A period of Operational Sea Training and an Atlantic Patrol Task (South) deployment to West Africa and the Falklands followed - highlights included visits to St Helena and South Georgia coupled with being the first deployed Type 23 Frigate with the Merlin Helicopter.

Qualifying as a Frigate Navigating Officer in March 2004, he was appointed to HMS SOMERSET conducting both OP TELIC in the Northern Arabian Gulf and a period on NATO Deployment to the Mediterranean as part of the NATO Ready Reaction Force.

Selected for command on his return, he undertook the twin roles of Commanding Officer HMS RAIDER and Officer in Charge Cambridge University Royal Naval Unit from 2006-2008.

Successful completion of both the Initial Command and Staff Course(Maritime) at JSCSC Shrivenham and of the Principal Warfare Officers' (PWO) Course at MWS Collingwood, saw a return to sea in 2009 as Principal Warfare Officer (Above Water) and Operations Officer of HMS MONMOUTH, deploying to the Middle East on consecutive occasions during a two-year period conducting OPs TELIC, CALASH and KIPION.

2011 marked a return to the UK and MWS Collingwood after qualification as an Air Warfare Officer and winning the BAE Prize as AWO Student of the year 2011, he joined HMS DIAMOND in late 2011 ready for one of the first Type 45 deployments to the Gulf on OP KIPION.

2013 saw time in HMS DRAGON East of Suez to aid in passing Type 45 lessons identified and assist in rapidly assimilating Type 45 into the USN/USAF Gulf Air Defence architecture with CSG 8 and USS DWIGHT D EISENHOWER.

Initially taking command of HMS CATTISTOCK and MCM2 Crew 4 in Jan 2014, he then had the privilege of commanding HMS LEDBURY, HMS MIDDLETON and HMS BROCKLESBY over an eighteen month period. All four ships conducting busy UK running periods. In Jul 2015 he and his Crew deployed on OP KIPION, East of Suez assuming command of HMS ATHERSTONE.

He is a keen skier, sailor and beginner windsurfer. An avid supporter and semi retired player of rugby, he can occasionally be seen at the Stoop Memorial Ground watching in amazement as Harlequins continue their resurgence.