

## **Cdr Ian Varley RN – CO 820 Naval Air Squadron**

Ian Varley joined the Royal Navy in 1988 as a General List Seaman Officer under the University Cadetship Entry scheme. In his first year as a Midshipman he deployed to West Africa onboard HMS Euryalus as part of the Dartmouth Training Squadron and undertook the first half of Fleet Time with HMS Lindisfarne of the Fishery Protection Squadron based in Rosyth. Diverting from naval life for 3 years, he successfully studied for a BEng honours degree in Aeronautics and Astronautics at Southampton University, whilst in holiday periods keeping his hair short and refreshing Bridge Watch keeping skills with the first of class Type 23 HMS Norfolk. Full time return to the RN after studies saw the now Sub Lieutenant Varley finish Fleet Time back with HMS Norfolk and in the Far East deployed as part of COMUKTG on Orient '92. Following X Branch specialist training and Minor War Vessel Navigator qualification, he returned to Rosyth in its final days as a HM Naval Base, serving as the Navigating Officer of HMS Brocklesby. It was during this appointment that he applied and was selected for Pilot sub specialisation transfer. A short complement assignment as Staff Officer to the Senior Officer Hong Kong Squadron onboard HMS Plover preceded commencement of Flying Training in 1995.

Fortunate to avoid any holdovers, Lieutenant Varley joined the Front Line as a Sea King Anti-Submarine Warfare Pilot of 814 Naval Air Squadron in mid-1997. Embarked as the CAG for HMS Invincible and RFA Fort Victoria for this and subsequently his 2<sup>nd</sup> tour as an AEW Pilot of 849 NAS A-Flight, he saw operational service in Kosovo, Arabian Gulf and the Horn of Africa, promoting to Lieutenant Commander in 2001. He attended CFS(H) in 2002 and served as a Qualified Helicopter Instructor of 660 Sqn DHFS on the Squirrel before converting to Merlin HM Mk1 in 2003. Front Line Merlin flying took him on a complete circumnavigation of the globe in 2007 as 829 NAS 02 Flt and HMS Monmouth Flight Commander, pushing visibility of the ASW Merlin to far flung nations. This FF/DD experience was exploited by further assignments to FOST SWO(AV) and returning as XO of 829 NAS and thereafter Navy Command HQ Flying Training Capability Manager. He converted to the Merlin Mk2 in 2013 and undertook roles as the Officer in Charge of the Merlin Training Facility and then the Deputy Force Commander.

On promotion to Commander in 2018, and after a short period as the International Visits Officer at the Defence and Security Organisation coordinating foreign delegates' programmes for Farnborough Airshow '18, Ian served in the Ministry of Defence as the Service Inquiries Staff Officer to the Director General Defence Safety Authority.

A return to flying as the Commanding Officer of 820 NAS is an exciting and challenging period that will see the Squadron deliver support and warfighting strength in both ASW and ASaC capabilities, deploying with HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister aircraft carrier HMS Prince Of Wales.