



Winter Edition 2015

The Black Duke

HMS MONMOUTH's newsletter – *'Fear Nothing But God'*

From the Commanding Officer

Dear Families and Friends of The Black Duke,

I am delighted to write to you again with the latest edition of 'The Black Duke' Newsletter that aims to keep you abreast of activities on your Ship. When I last wrote to you we were well into our Sea Trials phase which evaluated the performance of every bit of equipment in their working environment from gas turbines through to the 3D radar system. These trials went exceptionally well, which is a testament to not only the quality of the equipment that we are now fitted with but, more importantly, all the hard work put in by everyone throughout both the preparation and execution phases. On 18 September we passed our Fleet Date inspection with flying colours to rejoin the Fleet, ready for tasking.



I was pleased to have the opportunity to get many of you onboard for either the Rededication or Families Day in October. These were hugely successful events and I plan to ensure that there continues to be plenty of opportunity for you to visit your ship in the future. For the last couple of months we have not rested, keeping ourselves trained while doing vital work. At sea we carried out maritime security tasks around the UK and supported aviator training for some 'deck pounding' with the Lynx, Sea King and Wildcat (Lynx replacement) helicopters, and alongside we contributed to Defence Engagement and helped to promote UK industry at the Dartmouth Regatta and in Hamburg. Next term we will continue to ramp up the tempo with a short trip around the UK and Northern Europe while we work towards our full Operational Sea Training package in June 2016.

Once again, thank you for all your fantastic support that spurs us on. I hope to see you all again soon, but until then I wish you a wonderful holiday season and joyous New Year.

Commander Philip J E Tilden Royal Navy

(Re)dedication is what you need.

On Thursday 28 October, HMS MONMOUTH formally celebrated our return to operational service. VIPs, families and friends of the Ship's Company, and many of the ship's affiliates were able to watch the Rededication Ceremony alongside in Devonport.



The ship entered refit at the beginning of 2014 and has had a significant amount of structural work done, which has included approximately 17 tonnes of new steel covering an area of 220 square metres and over 1km of welding. 29 different equipment updates were conducted including the new 3D air surveillance radar, the Sea Wolf point defence missile system mid-life update, new 30mm cannons and a new combat system. The crew mustered ashore close to the ship for a traditional parade overseen by the His Grace The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury, descendant of the Duke of Monmouth.

Commander Philip Tilden, read the Rededication Warrant after which the Divisions were inspected by the Lord Lieutenant of Gwent, Sir Simon Boyle; Mayor of Monmouth, Graham Pritchard; Vice Chairman Monmouthshire County Council, Jim Higginson; and Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Drapers, Nick Bence-Trower.

ET Dylan Anderson, the youngest crew member, cut the Rededication cake as part of the proceedings, said: *"HMS MONMOUTH is my first ship and I'm really enjoying being part of the team. I'm looking forward to the trips we've got coming up too."*

After the parade, a reception was held for all the visitors with champagne provided by Pernod Ricard, gin from Plymouth Gin, as well as a stand from Kingstone Brewery of Monmouthshire who supply some of the messes with "Black Duke" ale.



Lieutenant Commander Andrew Ainsley, the Executive Officer and Parade Commander said: *"Today is a fitting celebration of our progress and it is wonderful to be able to share it with all those who have played their own special part. Rededication is an important event and I am hopeful this one will linger in the memory of all those who attended."*

Sprechen Sie Monmouth?

Fresh from conducting helicopter deck landing training off the South coast of England with the new Wildcat aircraft, we visited Hamburg for a chance to take a break from training and do some work for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We were also able to enjoy the famous German Christmas markets that line the streets of Hamburg at this time of year.

The aim of the visit was to reinforce the already strong partnership between the United Kingdom and Germany, particularly in defence, and provide an opportunity to discuss industrial co-operation. While the Ship's Company are all too used to seeing German warships in our base port of Plymouth as the their navy likes to send ships through the UK's Operational Sea Training team here, this was the first time that we as a ship had visited Hamburg.

During the visit, a demonstration of the ships capabilities to local businessmen and military staff was held showing that while it may have been 24 years since HMS MONMOUTH was launched she remains versatile and capable as ever, especially after Her extensive upgrades last year.



Commander Phil Tilden impressed the Capability Demonstration guests by delivering a speech in their native tongue, many will not have known that in 2008, he held the role as Senior Naval Officer Germany, Staff Officer Expeditionary Warfare and lead for Counter-Piracy at the German Maritime Tactical Centre in Bremerhaven.



The guests were shown around the ship including a multi-threat demonstration in the Operations Room, which drew the visitors into a sense of what a warship does. The evening ended with the chance to witness the traditional ceremony of Sunset being specially delivered.

The Ships Company were able to find time to relax, having been invited to play football, take coach tours of the city, and attend a local indoor rock climbing wall.

The visit was supported by Jaguar Land Rover the UK's largest automotive manufacturing business who provided two vehicles on the Überseebrucke jetty as an example of British engineering.

Remembering the fallen

The ship was honoured to host family members descended from a Royal Navy Engine Room Artificer who served and lost his life with 1600 others at the Battle of Coronel on 1 November 1914. Those family members in attendance were grandchildren Richard Shaw Linda Robinson and Jean Moss; and great-grandchild Peter Moss all of whom were onboard to witness the unveiling of the portrait of Engine Room Artificer First Class William 'Billy' John Henry Blank in the 30 Man Marine Engineering Technicians' Mess.

The 6th HMS MONMOUTH was an armoured cruiser, lost with all during the First World War. Sunk off the coast of central Chile near the city of Coronel, it was the German Kaiserliche Marine forces led by Vice-Admiral Graf Maximilian von Spee who defeated the Royal Navy Squadron commanded by Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock.

Leading Engineering Technician Baz Everson said *"It's a great privilege to have Billy's portrait hanging in the mess as reminder of a sailor we will never meet, but who we have close connection with and fell in the service of his country. I'm proud that I could be a part of this day, to see the delight of the family as we unveiled his picture."*

Welcomed by seven mess members, Richard Shaw delivered a short speech detailing the events that took place on the fateful day of 1 November 1914 and how it had affected his family's life. The portrait was then unveiled and a traditional glass of port raised in honour and a toast made to the memory of Billy.



Ride the Rebellion

A team of cyclists from the ship retraced the route marched by his Rebellion 330 years ago. Beginning in Lyme Regis, the 'MONMOUTH Rebels with a cause', cycled a total of 212 miles over 3 days.

The route was cycled to raise money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, The Little Things, which supports those who have lost a baby in the Plymouth area, and The Mayor of Monmouth's Appeal. The MONMOUTH Rebels finished their journey in the town of Westonzoyland, at the Memorial to the Battle of Sedgemoor.



Petty Officer Glyn Kneebone said *"It's been hard work, but immensely fun both training for and completing this ride."*

Returning from his self-imposed exile in the Dutch Republic, James Scott, the 1st Duke of Monmouth and 1st Duke of Buccleuch, landed at Lyme Regis on 11 June 1685 in an attempt to overthrow James II who had become King upon the death of his elder brother Charles II. Scott was an illegitimate son of Charles II but claimed to be the rightful heir to the throne. On his march to take the throne, his growing army of nonconformists, artisans and farm workers fought a series of skirmishes with local militias and regular soldiers across Somerset. His freshly formed forces were unable to compete with the strength of Charles' regular army and so the rebellion ended with the defeat of Monmouth's army at the Battle of Sedgemoor on 6 July 1685.

The ship's Executive Warrant Officer 'Nat' Coles who acted as support team said, *"Amongst the hard exercise the team have put in it's been most interesting finding out a little more about the heritage of our ship's name while doing something for the benefit of others."*

So far over £500 has been raised for the three charities but donations are still being accepted at:
<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/RidetheRebellion>

Royal College of Defence Studies

The Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) is the senior college of the Defence Academy. 13 senior officers, mostly foreign from as diverse locations as Nigeria, Ukraine, Yemen, China and Norway, along with two members of RCDS staff were welcomed on board by Lt Cdr Andrew Ainsley. Whilst each of the visitors has risen through the ranks of their respective service, this was an opportunity for the ship to demonstrate the versatility and capabilities of a modern frigate, and give them a grounding in the tactical abilities of the units that will operate under their strategic direction.

Lt Cdr Andrew Ainsley said *"The Ship is rightly proud of the flexibility and capability we can offer to our commanders. It has been an honour to showcase not only MONMOUTH but also the Royal Navy and Defence to such an influential audience who one day may be making the strategic decisions that drive MONMOUTH's tactical employment."*



Families Day

Hot on the heels of the Rededication parade, the ship hosted families on board alongside in Devonport which provided an opportunity to show our loved ones around the ship where we live and work together.



Alongside face-painting, Mr Wacky set up in the Hangar and proved popular with both children and SLt Sam Jones, one of our Young Officers, who took part in his ventriloquism act.

Visitors also had a chance to see some of the Fire-fighting equipment we used on board in action on the Flight Deck and just a few learned a quick lesson to stand further back from the large disc of water produced by the "water wall" nozzle.

We hope to offer a Parents and Children at Sea in future so look out for details in due course.

Happy Birthday!

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With the average age of a Royal Navy sailor being around 23-24 years old it stood to reason that as we approached the 24th anniversary of the launch of the ship on 23 November there was at least a chance of one of the Ship's Company sharing the day. Indeed, Leading Seaman Matthew Barton was born on the same day that HMS MONMOUTH was launched back in 1991. Happy Birthday both.

SC Kevin Joseph scoops 'Black Duke' award.



The Duke of Buccleuch kindly presented the "Black Duke" award during the Rededication celebrations to Able Seaman Kevin Joseph for his proactive and whole ship performance including informally acting as the ship's photographer. Another willing volunteer (ET O'Shea) took this phot though!

Sports Update / News

HMS MONMOUTH has remained sporty despite a busy sea programme with LPT Johnny Stephen representing the Royal Navy Rugby Union in the International Defence Forces World Cup in October, and Lt Andy Sturman the RN on a cricket tour of duty in Australia. Only slightly less professionally the Ships Company also played football against local teams in Hamburg under the strong leadership of CPO Jason Bignell, while on board at sea the Marine Engineers mess narrowly beat the Weapon Engineers at Volleyball in our hangar.

In Adventurous Training, 10 climbers made use of a climbing wall in Hamburg and 12 of the Ships Company are about to head off to Bavaria to the Naval Outdoor Centre Germany to complete Ski Proficiency courses over the Winter.



HMS MONMOUTH is known informally as 'The Black Duke' after James Scott, the Duke of Monmouth who was beheaded at Tower Hill on 15 July 1685. In reference to this heritage the Ship is unique in the Royal Navy as the only ship to fly a black flag and have a black as opposed to red name plate. The Ship's crest contains the town's mediaeval stone gated bridge which is the only one of its type remaining in Britain.



HMS MONMOUTH has more Battle Honours than any other serving warship:

Sole Bay	1672
Texel	1673
Barfleur	1692
Vigo	1702
Gibraltar	1704
Velez Malaga	1704
Finisterre	1747
Ushant	1747
Foudroyant	1758
Belle Isle	1761
Sadras	1782
Providien	1782
Negapatam	1782
Trincomalee	1782
Camperdown	1797
Egypt	1801

Royal Navy Online Community (RNCOM).

All serving personnel and their friends or loved ones can register to become a member of the Royal Navy Online Community (RNCOM). By registering, you can keep up to date with the latest information on the RN, including a forum for HMS MONMOUTH where letters from the CO and items specific to MONMOUTH can be posted. There are links to registration via the Royal Navy Internet Site (<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/profile/register>) – please sign up and encourage your friends and family to do the same.

Key Contacts and Further Info

CO	Cdr Philip Tilden RN	XO	Lt Cdr Andrew Ainsley RN
MEO	Lt Cdr Mark Gibbs RN	WEO	Lt Cdr Adam Coates RN
LO	Lt Cdr Steve Plumer RN	SWO	Lt Dave Knowles RN
EWO	WO Adrian Coles		

For the latest info on the Ship visit the Royal Navy Website: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/hmsmonmouth

For any feedback on this newsletter please email the Public Relations Officer via HMSMONM-PRO@mod.uk