A MESSAGE FROM THE CAPTAIN

SOMERSET is fully back up and running after 8 weeks of intensive maintenance and looking mighty fine with a new coat of paint!

It has taken a fabulous effort from every member of the team, many of whom had the chance to take time for leave, sport and training courses, including our recently re-formed boarding party. I am very conscious that many of the ‘hotel’ facilities; galley, bathrooms and heads, suffered interruptions and am grateful for the patience and good cheer shown. Thanks above all to you, our families, for supporting us now through this uncertain period as the Ship resumes her duties at high readiness for activation.

SOMERSET RETURNS TO SEA

On Mon 29th Jun SOMERSET returned to sea for the first time in almost two months following a major maintenance period alongside in Devonport. The Ship’s Company and contractors worked extremely hard to achieve an incredible package of work including replacement of 3 main engines, two diesel generators and one gas turbine, and painting almost the entire superstructure of the Ship from bow to stern. Over 10 days of trials and testing the new machinery was proven and the Ship and her Crew completed sea safety and operational training. Throughout we all benefitted from fine weather and calm seas and for the first time since last year’s deployment the Ship’s company enjoyed a session of Flight Deck sports, more below. Since then the Ship has again returned to sea for more operational training and a short notice visit to Iceland.

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Ship’s Company Dance

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The diner and dance will include a 3 course sit down meal followed by live music by local band ‘THE SOUND’.

Other entertainment will include casino tables with a prize for the biggest winner, a dual racing simulator and a Photo booth including props.

Tickets are now on sale for the bargain price of £25!

The Holiday Inn is offering discounted rooms for anybody attending this event.

Armed Forces Day Cardiff

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Saturday 4th July 2015 saw the first opportunity for HMS Somerset’s Ships Company to take some well deserved downtime after a very busy programme and compete in their first Flight Deck Sports Competition. This saw 10 teams of eager Sailors battle it out to be crowned Mess Deck Champions in the popular Naval Sport of ‘Bucket Ball’. Teams from all of the Junior Rates messes had entered, the best dressed had come from the 30 Man Mess who were carbon copies of German Singing Sensations ‘Dos Sound Machine’ from the movie ‘Pitch Perfect 2’. Both the Petty Officers and Chief Petty Officers were keen to display their experience in Bucket Ball and got stuck in straight away while the Wardroom teams were tactfully trying to win each game, which they soon realised was not the way to approach this fast and furious event. There were some inspiring performances from the teams with a cheer coming from the crowd as the 26 Man Mess finally won their first game at their 7th attempt. Overall the afternoon was a success, over 60 people in all participated with all Ranks and Rates enjoying the event, the weather and a break from an arduous work schedule. Events such as these help to improve morale between the whole ships company and a bit of friendly competition goes a long way. The PO’S mess are the proud owners of the Trophy … until the next time when ‘Dodge Ball’ is the Sport of the day.

**Ide Rugby**

HMS Somerset RFC competed in the 2nd Alfred Cox Cup on 27th May 2015 against Ide RFC. Ide, an invitational team from the region had reformed in 2014 after more than 100 years out of the game to compete for the cup aptly named after an original Ide RFC player Chief Petty Officer Alfred Cox who passed away in WW1. Ide ran out comfortable winners of the fixture but the game was contested in a fair, well humoured and competitive manner with money being raised for the Royal British Legion. The match has helped to provide a lasting memorial to the original Ide RFC members who paid the ultimate sacrifice in WW1. Donations can be made to their cause by visiting: [https://www.justgiving.com/iderrfc](https://www.justgiving.com/iderrfc)

**Charity Coffee morning**

During May alongside in Devonport HMS Somerset took a break from a busy maintenance period to raise £500 for charity. The crew turned their attention from radar screens to oven timers to raise money for Macmillan Cancer, The British Heart Foundation and Royal Navy Charities. Leading Hand Hannah Nelder was the driving force behind the fundraising. She said “I’m really pleased with the number of people who baked cakes and the support and generosity from the Ship” With cake to spare, Hannah and a team doubled the amount of money raised by selling the cake to contractors and other fellow sailors across the dockyard.

HMS Somerset’s Commanding Officer Commander Michael Wood, added “In the Royal Navy we pride ourselves on a strong sense of community and I think that the money raised today and the enthusiasm of everyone involved shows that this remains as true as ever.”

**Reykjavik Visit**

Most recently HMS SOMERSET has enjoyed a short notice visit to Iceland 17-21 July. Although a relatively brief stay the Ship’s Company had some well deserved rest and recuperation time at what is probably the best time of the year to visit this unique and fascinating country. Many made use of the opportunities to visit the relaxing Blue Lagoon spa and witness the famed Geyser in action. For those adventurous enough there was also the local delicacies of Minke Whale steak and Puffin to sample. As with all good port visits there were a couple rugby fixtures that saw the Ship's team win victories on the first day against both the local Reykjavik Raiders and a visiting French Navy team before an excellent run ashore sampling the delights of Reykjavik.