



ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

A Times columnist, Jeremy Clarkson, will be known to motor pundits for his very popular TV show; he now writes on agricultural matters. Sacked by the B.B.C. he became a farmer in the Cotswolds.

Farming, as reported by J.C. is crystal clear, educational, informative and frequently very funny; I raise my hand to becoming a 'farming follower'.

That bit of blether gets me to an out of character column, Sunday 28th June, on our Royal Navy. (See magazine index "Hold the Wrecking Ball" or click [HERE](#) to read - Ed)

To me it stands as a TV documentary masterpiece, not a word too many or any silly hype to insult ones intelligence.

I would have it screened for all the 6th formers during geography lessons, an age when gravity of events and their tribulation would best be absorbed. I would recommend the R.N. dispense with its P.R. department as 'unfit for purpose', hand it over to J.C., then witness the nation's current 'sea blindness' get a deserved shake up. Mr. Clarkson had an earlier TV show when telling the moving story of Convoy P.Q.17 and, specifically, an armed trawler of its escort.

When last in an operating Chatham dockyard I don't think you envisioned the day 'minarets' would be visible from Gillingham Gate; even more remote would be the loudspeaker call to prayer from theses towers. Press reports permission for 'the call' is now sanctioned by local councils. It is pretty certain a decibel limit will be placed like other noise-makers, car exhaust for example.

Soon it may be part of 'Old England's' background sounds. I do wonder how that is squared with the 'townie influx' to villages, who then petition for Norman era church bells to be silenced; perhaps the influx is not C of E and its tradition for religious factions to fall out.

A discordant jangle is not uncommon in my village; I've never heard a complaint as most know it's the youngsters learning to hang on to ropes in correct sequence. Adults who give free time and their skills are our silver lining.

I do smile at the latest pronouncement by Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, a calamity for nearly ninety years of belief, talk about mounting a band wagon, he postulates Jesus was maybe a black man; wow, that's a rewrite of the King James as a starter, altered on a whim minus evidence, indicates possible lack of homework, but he does sit on the front bench in the House of Lords, with seven others in their Sunday best; ankle length embroidered frocks.

Not had a religious section in the news letter before, but a highlight is shipmate Frank Nunn off ashore in Bermuda, cornet under arm, to play with local Salvation Army band, pity they could not have come aboard for an hour.

A late brother was talking of arrival with Ulster Rifles at Pusan, South Korea in the 50's; the troop ship journey out was long and dire, rough in the extreme, a darkening evening in heavy rain a fitting, depressing conclusion as they stumbled down too steep a gangway with sixty pounds of kit. On entering an adjacent warehouse they were met by a couple of Salvation Army caravans, ladies ready with their legendary hot, strong tea and ubiquitous current bun. Fairy godmothers they all agreed, with their power to change mood and outlook at a stroke. Sally Ann ever seems to be like that; religion at ground level.



Is my memory sound in saying an oil drum steel band was on board in Jamaica; could have been a wardroom function, lovely sound!

I relish a little more freedom promised for the 4th July, auspicious date for some. Public loos must stay closed, that should generate anti-social behaviour, freedom with distancing to be observed.

Puts one in mind of an observation by

President Regan who said, "Nine most horrifying words in the English language were; 'I am from the government, and here to help' ".

Under the 'Corona virus business interruption loan scheme' 25% are already acknowledged to be fraudulent... Blind Pugh could have told the chancellor - that's a minimum - sure sign Pugh never went to Eton.

AN INTERNATIONAL LAUGHING STOCK ?

I am unsure how many, if any, agree that our navy has devolved into an international laughing stock. 'Navy Blue' contingent of the joint chiefs, led by First Sea Lord Tony Radakin, Grand Poobah of things naval have, following deep deliberations, thinking outside the box and getting focused, stumble upon a panacea for the service. Shortage of ships, shortage of crews, shortage of fleet auxiliaries, shortage of aircraft and all that boring stuff cured by issue of K.R & AI last month.

The titles Seaman, Able Seaman, Manpower and Unmanned will be abolished so females do not feel excluded - what now - Sea Person or Mariner perhaps.

I heave a sigh of relief and gratitude as tensions eased, sleep patterns returned to normal - I feared they'd declared war on the Isle of Man.

Aircraft carriers

SIR - The Royal Navy's aircraft carriers (report, July 13) are defence assets of great importance to Britain.

It was reported that the Prime Minister's chief aide Dominic Cummings claimed the carriers "cannot be sent to a serious war against a serious enemy".

This may or may not be his view, but I have no doubt that, as he addresses the issue of defence more closely, he will realise their importance. They are already capable of humanitarian operations. When they have their full air group and task force (which can already be formed), they will be, along with our deterrent and nuclear attack submarines, the only British defence capabilities that can, in fact, take part in a serious war against a serious enemy.

This capability makes it less likely that we will have a war, but also means that, in a confrontation with Russian, Chinese or another nation's naval power, the result would be, to quote *Blackadder*, "victory and home in time for tea and medals".

Admiral Lord West of Spithead
London SW1

Admiral Lord West of Spithead assured the House that naval defence assets are of great importance - for what I wonder has the delusional admiral got in mind. So called Super Carriers are helicopter carriers at best, suitable for humanitarian missions. Designated, but not embarked fixed wing aircraft are the least capable model of 5th generation F35, short range! Proper strike squadrons are out, no arrestor gear, no catapults, no airborne early warning and, crucially, no air to air tanking. Should you be one of those sea persons we saw on TV assembled for the Captain's opening utterance "You guys"! I would avoid being considered a sissy by wearing my life belt out of sight under the new (being designed) uniform shirt at all times. Every Chinese submarine captain (at last count 74, yup, seventy four) will vie for one of those so named super carriers on his C.V.

How many submarines president Putin possesses is a grey area, but I wager enough to block exits from the U.K. Should the balloon ascend we will have no carrier battle group to

provide adequate protection, trained in that skill. If you assumed we had the measure of submarines when the Battle of Atlantic counter measures bore such fruit up to late 1944 to early 1945, you must think again.

A learned technical tome, tiresome in the extreme, called the Snorkel Evolution and Asdic Sonar 'counter measures', must be a severe jolt to the anti-submarine fraternity, along with radical change of tactics; we can be thankful the struggle ceased when it did. Donitz U-boats with a coating they called Alberich started the revolution, know today as Anechoic Tiles.

Massive investments by the Soviets, along with captured German scientists from Kiel, pushed technology in the sphere at breakneck pace.

A Naval Proceeding's article in 1988 forecast the Soviets would overtake the U.S.A. in advanced design by 2000.

I once wrote to the late Fred Kinsey about Soviet submarine *Kursk*, I actually got to see a section of the conning tower in Murmansk. You may recall Oscar 2 nuclear engine missile carrier - massive creation of tonnage? It also carried hydrogen peroxide fuelled torpedoes.



One exploded whilst out on exercises (a fuel abandoned by the U.S. and the U.K. as too volatile) three bow compartments collapsed and she sank in 380 feet. Recovery aid by Norway and British experts offered and rejected as not required! Eventually unrest in Russia pressured them to accept. Given 'exact coordinates' by the Soviets they began sweeps with state of the art R.O.V.; R.O.V. crew could not find it, cutting edge sonar received absolutely no echoes back and was not in the location stated, according to the crew, vanished, confusion reigned on the 'mother' ship.

Numerous search passes were made over the site until a faint ping returned. The massive seven-bladed twin propellers of bronze, standing high from the sea floor were the only components to indicate the *Kursk's* location. The R.O.V. crew was amazed on realisation, acoustic tiles inside and out of the hull were so effective they 'absorbed' active sonar signals at virtually zero range. A long blurb only of interest to \$'s rates I suspect.

If your interest is with our super carriers, deployment looks dubious for lack of a fleet train. Three are lying idle, R.F.A. tanker Wave Runner in Mersey for several years, R.F.A. Fort Rosalie and R.F.A. Fort Austin, both more than 40 years mothballed in Birkenhead; the R.F.A. cannot recruit crews for them. Who will the nation be scrounging the odd tank of diesel from to keep carrier lights on?

As an example to avoid the above, one only needs to look over the channel to Chantiers shipyard at St. Nazaire, France. Forward thinking on replacement of their current nuclear engine carrier *Charles de Gaulle*, they first initiated the build programme of four next generation Fleet Auxillaries - they started to build last month - all double-hulled. One awaits the new carrier design with great interest.

I read that France is already talking to General Atomics U.S.A. about E.M.A.L.'s launch on catapults, and recovery on landing, Embarked aircraft to be proper strike models of new advanced design in France; French built of course to be flown by 'Maritime National pilots (sailors), not airforce. Pictures one sees, occasionally, of carrier *Charles de Gaulle* doing its thing around the world are a source of massive pride to France.

Signal example of how to equip and run a navy, also, crucially, how to forward plan it.

Another Atlantic coast yard at Brest is earmarked to build the new carrier. The French navy has a nuclear bombing contingent of, at least, one squadron of Rapales at present which can be flown onboard at short notice, thus France relies not only on its S.S.B.N.'s. Bombs in their DYAD have yields of 300 kilotons that dropped on Hiroshima by *Enola Gay* had a yield of 20 kilotons.

Enough of that eh, and I have not had my grog yet.

Keep your muzzle on Shipmates and save on lipstick.

Notes:

1 *The first stealth submarine, was equipped with a special rubber coating (codenamed Alberich, after the German mythological character who had the ability to become invisible), that made it difficult to detect with British ASDIC (sonar).*

2 *Anechoic tiles are rubber or synthetic polymer tiles containing thousands of tiny voids, applied to the outer hulls of military ships and submarines, as well as anechoic chambers. Their function is twofold: (1) To absorb the sound waves of active sonar, reducing and distorting the return signal, thereby reducing its effective range and (2) To attenuate the sounds emitted from the vessel, typically its engines, to reduce the range at which it can be detected by passive sonar.*

Best regards to all y'all,



Andy sent me this photo
- can anyone explain the
circumstances?

