



# The AnyFace Association Newsletter October 2021

## **Election of AnyFace Association Officials.**

Having asked for volunteers to help formalise the Association I'm pleased to report that the Committee has been elected and is fully functioning! The Committee are pleased to announce that the Association also has its first President.

Bio profiles of Committee members can be found on the website [here](#).

We held our first meeting in early October with the next planned for early December. If any member would like us to discuss or consider any business then please drop me a line at [anyfaceassociation@hotmail.com](mailto:anyfaceassociation@hotmail.com)

**President** - Cdre Michael Clapp CB RN (Rtd).

**Chairperson** - Mike Rawlinson.

**Members** - Ronald Scott, Ronnie Biggs, Dicky Lewis, Tank Murray.

**Treasurer** - John Saunders.

**Admin Director/Secretary** - Serena Brotherton.

## **Cooking with Heroes: The RBL Centenary Cookbook.**

AnyFace members Tank Murray and Dicky Lewis both feature in it and Dicky recently attended the launch of the cookbook at Claridge's - he and wife Jan had a very enjoyable time! A

great Christmas stocking filler; it is available in high street bookshops, Amazon and the official RBL shop [here](#).



## **Red Rat Bench.**

We're pleased to report that refurbishment to the Red Rat bench is complete and it is now back in its position by the FAA Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum. Following the many donations for this cause, we have a surplus of £270 in the bank which will be used for future refurbishments. Thanks again to Mike Yeates for the initial report and John Saunders for raising the funds.



### Life on the Front Line.

Thanks to Lt TJ Walters for his update on what 820 NAS have been up to. Following a ten-day stop in Guam, 820 NAS have had some time to revitalise. The port visit enabled down-time for 1600 Ship's Company and Embarked Forces, along with key maintenance and stores uplift for the journey home. All personnel were afforded a minimum of four days' leave and this was spent enjoying the Pacific Island's nightlife, snorkelling the tropical reefs or relaxing in hotels along the coast of Tumon Bay. As so often happens, *Force Majeure* played a part with a tropical storm requiring most to be recalled for HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH to set sail for two days to avoid damage. The ship duly returned to Guam to collect some final stores and personnel before heading West. Upon sailing from Guam, the Strike Group switched to what would be a more focused and direct transit through the South China Sea in consort with not one but two American Aircraft Carriers. These took the form of the USS CARL VINSON and USS RONALD REAGAN with their escorts of Arleigh Burke Destroyers and Ticonderoga Class Cruisers. The integration of the three Strike Groups included a 17 ship photex led by F18s and F35s from both US and UK units. For five days, 820 NAS ASW-fitted helicopters held Alert and were actioned for ASW Force Protection, with the ASaC cabs contributing to a sustained long range Recognised Surface Picture as well as a C2 link with the US ships over 100 miles ahead.





On completion of the successful period in the South China Sea, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH had an opportunity to conduct a 'Crossing the Line' ceremony. This was perhaps the most memorable day of the deployment so far; over 800 UK and US personnel visited the court of King Neptune. The line-crossing ceremony is an initiation rite that commemorates a person's first crossing of the Equator by sea.

HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH and her Strike Group came alongside in Singapore for a 24 hour stop to collect vital stores for some of the aircraft from 820 NAS, VMFA-211 USMC and 617 Sqn. A reduced Defence Engagement day was conducted owing to the ever-present Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. With all personnel, again, not being eligible for gangway, Singapore provided each sailor with a goodie bag containing magnets, postcards and Tiger Balm, not to mention one or two bottles of the famous Singapore Sling. After this brief stop, the ship focused on the upcoming visit to India, whilst Embarked Squadrons

conducted internal training ahead of a busy programme off the coast of Mumbai.

Once close to India, the Strike Group welcomed visits from many distinguished visitors, journalists, the Indian Navy and their Air Force. Once again 820 NAS stood up to the task, turning from tactical asset to taxi with the help of 845 NAS and their Merlin MK4s (embarked in RFA Fort Victoria.) Some 200 guests were flown on and off over a very successful three day period. Guests included our own Foreign Secretary, Chief of Defence Staff and First Sealord, along with the Chief Naval Officer of the Indian Navy.

820 Naval Air Squadron now look forward to a few stops en route home, hoping for the freedom to run ashore once in the Mediterranean before returning home for Christmas with their families and friends who have supported them so strongly from the UK.

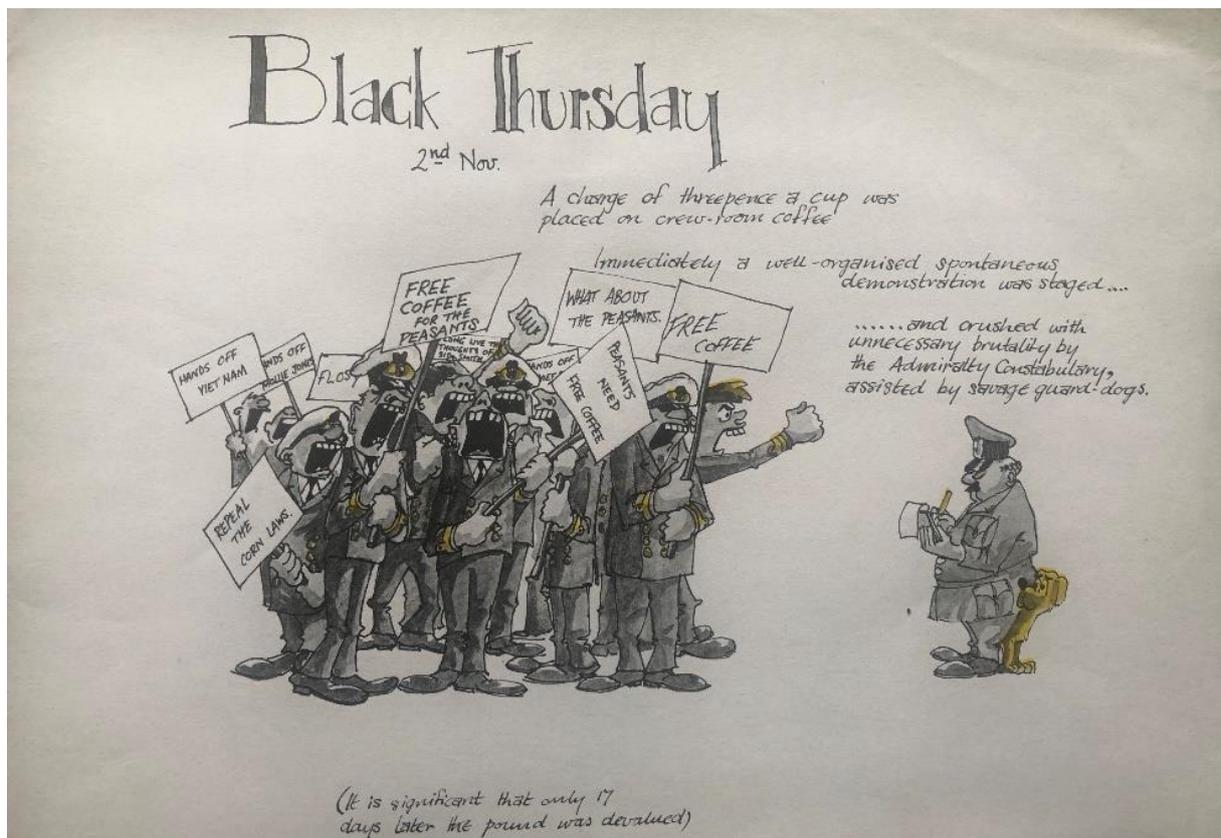


## Ronnie hangs up his flying boots!



Having joined the RN in 1985 and the RNR Air Branch in 2018, Lt Cdr Ronnie Biggs has departed the Culdrose MATZ for the final time. His last duty was 'driving' a sortie in the ASaC Full Mission Trainer. Over the years Ronnie has amassed 4424 flying hours and many many hours instructing sorties in the simulator. I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing Ronnie well in his retirement!

**Down Memory Lane....** Just a reminder that it's the anniversary of Black Thursday on 2 November. If anyone was serving on 849 at the time (1965/66?) and remembers that dreadful day then please drop me a line.



## Future Newsletters.

We'd love your input so if you would like anything included in the monthly Newsletter then please email [anyfaceassociation@hotmail.com](mailto:anyfaceassociation@hotmail.com)

Admin Director

