

SEPTEMBER IN THE SOUTH WEST

The Plymouth and District Branch of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Association has taken part in several activities in September.

The 3rd of September was Merchant Navy Day in Plymouth and this took place as usual on the Barbican and the service was conducted by the Rev. Joe Dent, Chaplain to the MNA in Plymouth. It was attended by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth Councillor Pauline Murphy and her consort, Vivien Foster the President of the MNA and many others representing local Maritime organisations.

Wreaths were laid at the memorial on the hill above the Barbican by the Lord Mayor, Vivien Foster and representatives of local Maritime organisations including the Watch Ashore the Federation of Plymouth and District Ex-Services Associations and the RFA Association. The RFA Association wreath was laid by Robert "Darby" Allen who is one of the PDB committee members. Unfortunately the Branch Standard could not be paraded as both Standard Bearers were engaged in other activities, Ray Jago was away at RAF Camp and Richard Walker was helping with the MN Monument fund. Steven Tang a branch member did carry the Merchant Navy Associations local standard at the event.



The RFA Association wreath at the Memorial

After the wreath laying the parade moved down to the Mayflower steps where a wreath was cast on the water.



Steven Tang at the front of the Parade with the MNA Standard

The day was also an opportunity for **The Plymouth Merchant Navy Monument Fund** to launch their appeal in the City Centre to build a new Merchant Navy Monument on the Hoe to the West of the Drake Statue. Richard Walker the Branch Secretary is also a member of the committee. They managed to collect the sum of £455 which was very good considering that it rained in biblical proportions after 1400 and they had to retire very wet but happy at the result. You will all soon be hearing from the MN Monument committee.

On Tuesday the 6th September at 1400 the Lord Mayor of Plymouth Councillor Pauline Murphy and her consort Brian Murphy kindly invited the Committee and Standard Bearers of the Federation of Plymouth and District Ex-Services Associations to Elliot Terrace, the Lord Mayors Residence on the Hoe, to thank them for their work they do in supporting the various ceremonies and events that they attend when parading their Association Standards. It was a very relaxed and pleasant reception with tea and bickies, where the Standard Bearers and committee introduced themselves and chatted informally with the Lord Mayor and her consort. This was attended by Ray Jago and Richard Walker the two Standard Bearers for the PDB and also Stephen Tang who is the MNA Standard Bearer.



Steve Tang, the Lord Mayor and Ray Jago

The occasion was finished off with a group photograph and Pauline thanked everyone as they left. Many also thanked Pauline and Brian for their dedication to the city as they have both been Lord Mayors before and are very active on the council.



Richard Walker is five from left standing front row and Ray Jago is second from right standing

The 23rd of September saw the bi monthly meeting of the Plymouth and District Branch which is held at the Raffles Club in Mutley. It was attended by 24 branch members and everyone enjoyed the meeting which was chaired by John Halford.

The usual business was transacted in about 30 minutes and then most enjoyed something to eat a drink and chat with their colleagues.



From left to right unknown, Alex Redpath, John Redhead, Keith Escott and David Smith, a regular visitor from London.



Left to right Peter Lannin, Martin Sprague and Geraldine Sinclair sitting at the back, Louis Bonnici, Jan Reid and Anne Cleife

The month was finished off with the Autumn Lunch at Lostwithiel on Saturday the 1st October when many Branch members and their wives enjoyed a lunch and chat to catch up with what they had been doing. Many members brought prizes and there was a good raffle officiated over by Jan Reid and Maurice Mann helped by Richard Walker and Keith Escott who has a particular skill for calling out the draw numbers.



Peter Bryant and his wife, Mike and Maryon Farley and John Redhead and his wife.



Maurice and Jan, John Halford and his wife and Peter Lannin and Jenny.



Alec Redpath and Anne Cleife, Sue Roach and Keith Escott, Philip Rogers and Keith's wife and Martin Sprage and Geraldine Sinclair on the right

There are more photographs of the Lunch on the Plymouth Website. Everyone enjoyed themselves and Geoff Wilson was telling me that the New Tide Class tankers are not now expected in the UK until sometime in the New Year.

I hope to bring you some more news before the end of the year covering the Remembrance period in Plymouth and the local area. I hope you find this informative.

Richard Walker

Branch Secretary