



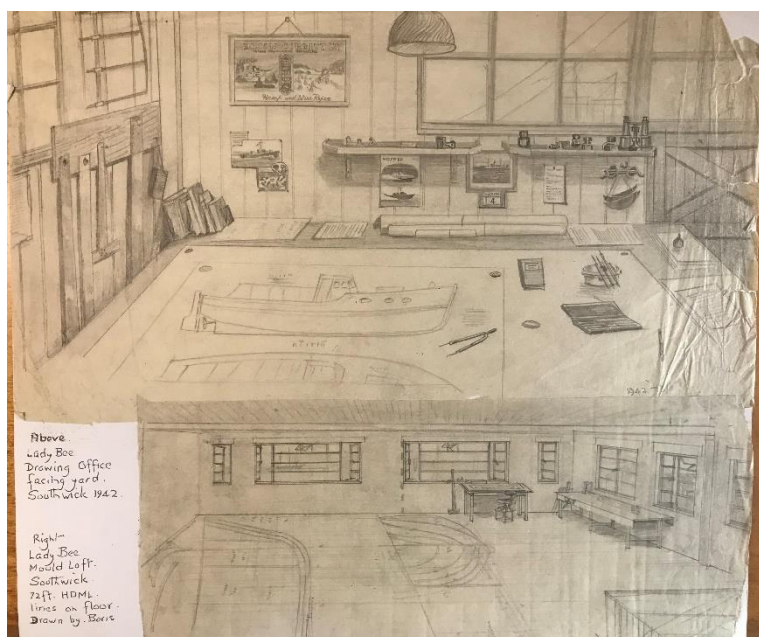
Medusa Autumn 2022 Newsletter.

I must start this newsletter with an apology. I had every good intention of writing a newsletter last Spring, but our season got off to a flying start and the time just seemed to evaporate. With a busy season drawing to a close, I can finally spend a couple of days in front of the screen.

Almost a year ago I was contacted by Dan Seymour who, for many years, had looked after an elderly gentleman by the name of Boris Mayfield. He invited me to visit, and I discovered that Boris, as a 17 year old draughtsman, had worked at Lady Bee shipyard at Shoreham and produced the detailed drawings for the very first HDML, ML1001. Boris did the lofting which is taking scale drawings and laying them out at full scale for templates to be made. His work was then used by the other yards making HDMLs. I took with me a large drawing of ML1001 (found on Sarinda ML1392 and donated to Medusa) which I thought would interest him. To my surprise he produced the original, drawn on linen, which he had drawn in in 1940. Boris presented this to Medusa along with some wonderful sketches of the Lady Bee yard and a model HDML he had made in 1940. Boris was then 100 years of age and knew he had months to live but wanted to visit an HDML again. It was a great honour to make this possible.



Boris Mayfield and Dan Seymour aboard Medusa.



Boris' sketch of his office and the lofting floor at Lady bee



Boris' sketch of the wardroom of ML1001.

Sadly, Boris passed away this summer, but he has become part of Medusa's story and we will remember him.

Our first engagement of the year was to go up to 2 Basin and board the outgoing commanding officer of HMS DRAGON and take him down to the jetty adjacent to Warrior. It turned out he was something of a history buff so was delighted to take a short passage in Medusa. Our arrival in 2 Basin was noted by the commanding officer of the Coastal Forces squadron.



Commander Jamie Wells RN @CdrJamieWells · 12/02/2022

Great to see Medusa in 2 Basin this week. Showing our new COs how to berth their ships.



A “tweet” by Commander Jamie Wells with a huge compliment, we were aware of the audience!



Passing close to HMS Dragon

The end of March saw us going round to Saxon Wharf for our annual lift out. As well as the usual jobs we replaced the mast. We believe the old one to be original (and have kept it) but it had quite a bit of rot and a split so was becoming risky to use. The new one is a single piece of Douglas Fir, kindly donated by the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson. After cutting the correct taper, the new mast was laid alongside the old and all the fittings transferred. The end result is very smart and should last many years.



New mast beside the old



New mast, fully rigged, going up.

Our keel coolers, to our surprise, were covered in large oysters. They were a challenge to remove, having grown in between the cooler elements, but Tim Hamlin persisted with a hammer and chisel and won. The engines ran considerably cooler on the way back.



Oysters in our keel coolers

As usual, our visit to Saxon Wharf was very brief and we were back at Haslar after only 4 days out of the water due to a huge effort by the volunteers.

On April 24 we did our first ashes scattering of the year. This one was for Alan Penny, a WW2 coastal forces captain of ML269 who I had met some years back before he emigrated to Canada. He had specified in his will that he wished to be scattered from Medusa. COVID delayed the service by a year but, in April, his family were able to bring his ashes over so that we could carry out his wishes. Some years back he had donated the ensign from ML269 to the Coastal Forces Trust; we located it and flew it for the service. The family made a very generous donation to Medusa for which we are very grateful after a couple of tough financial years.

At the beginning of May we set off for our long deployment. This year we went to the Channel Islands for the commemoration of the liberation on 9 May 1945. Our first stop was Weymouth and then down to St Peter Port. After a night on the pontoons in the outer harbour, we moved into Victoria Marina. They don't usually allow vessels of our size to come in, but the harbour master and his team could not have been more helpful. We were very popular and had hundreds of visitors over the period.



Medusa in Victoria marina St Peter Port sporting her white bow and stripe.



We attracted a lot of interest

From St Peter Port we made the short voyage to St Sampson to take on fuel. Rubis, the fuel company, discounted the fuel as a thank you for us coming. This sort of support is rare, and we are very grateful (at today's prices in the UK, a fill of fuel costs over £10K).

From there we went to Alderney. We have had two attempts over recent years to visit Alderney but both times found the swell coming into the harbour too uncomfortable to stay. Alderney is open to the North and North East plus Medusa will roll on wet grass so we have to pick our time. This time the weather cooperated, and we picked up a buoy on the eastern side of the harbour. There was a special reason for visiting; it was the 86th birthday of our cox'n, Barry Ford, and he was very keen to spend it in Alderney which was an old haunt from his days in the RNXS. We took Barry for a run ashore, visiting the Divers, where he spotted a plaque to his old command RNXS Portisham, and then on to The Moorings for dinner. Back on Medusa there was a birthday cake waiting.



Medusa in Braye harbour.



Birthday boy! Barry our cox'n celebrating his 86th birthday.

The deployment was a great success and will probably be repeated in 2023.



Deployment crew...up spirits!

This year we decided not to go to France for the D Day anniversary but to remain this side of the channel for the Jubilee celebration. We went to Bucklers Hard for the Jubilee and, as usual, were made very welcome. From there we went the heritage pontoon outside Boathouse 4 at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. On the 6th we commemorated D Day by sailing in company with MGB81, HSL102 and F8. We led the flotilla and had to be abeam the round tower at 1400 to the second for a flypast of a Hurricane. Sadly, the Hurricane did not make it due to the weather but our

coordinated exit was quite a spectacle complete with blue light escort from the police and all harbour traffic held for the event. Medusa's bridge was abeam round tower at 1400 to the second!

June was busy with a visit from Freshlinc who had sponsored our fuel for the Channel Islands trip, another scattering of ashes and a trip out for three gentlemen who are disabled and have been largely grounded through the COVID period. It was wonderful to take them and their carers for a trip round the harbour.

We are keen to exercise with the emergency services whenever we can. This year we did an exercise with the Coastguard helicopter with one of their crew winching down onto Medusa.



Winching exercise with the Coastguard helicopter.

Another day we did an exercise with the Gosport lifeboat where they practised transferring crew while under way and recovering a casualty from below deck. Richard Hobbs volunteered to be the casualty and pretended to be unconscious and injured in the galley, just about the most awkward place to extract a casualty from. He was strapped in a stretcher and lifted over the mess deck table, up the forward hatch and finally across to the lifeboat.



Richard Hobbs being evacuated from the galley

We have recently purchased a man-over-board recovery system and one of the Gosport team gamely leapt in the water for us to recover him. The MOB system can be used as a scrambling net or a casualty can be guided into it and then “swiss rolled” up the side of the vessel.

We rounded off our operational year with another visit to Bucklers Hard, a charter day and another scattering of ashes.

Some 30 years ago Joanna Deaville visited Medusa and brought with her a Medusa cap tally that was her father's when he served on board in 1961. It had been round her teddy bear ever since but she thought it should be on the ship and presented it. It has been framed and on display in the wardroom ever since. Joanna made contact again in July to tell us that her father Geoff (Sid) Pearson met his wife to be whilst in Medusa and they married in August 1962. She arranged a surprise visit back to Medusa on their wedding anniversary but sadly this did not happen as her mother had a fall and could not make the journey. I made contact with Geoff who has sent me a few dits from the 1960 and we have presented him with a print of the Mandy Shepherd painting of Medusa. They live in Ross-on-Wye and I plan to visit them over the winter.



Geoff Pearson's cap tally from 1961.



Geoff taking a swim from the stern in Bigbury bay 1961.

I was asked to write about Medusa for the pensioners magazine of the company I used to work for. It turned into a three part article with a potted history of Medusa. It's a bit big to attach to this newsletter but I will edit it a bit and put it out as a "special" as penance for not doing a Spring newsletter.

Our year is nearly done; last week we had our Trafalgar night dinner at Hornet in the WW2 Coastal Forces wardroom. It was a great evening for our team and our guests, sadly no photos though. Next week we have Remembrance at Hornet and then can turn our minds to the winter jobs list.

For some years now, we have rented a 20-foot container to house Medusa's spare parts and stores. Like all stores it has gradually filled up with "useful things" and needed a good sort out. We have been looking for somewhere more suitable that would also serve as a workshop and delighted to report that we have a lease on a building at Priddy's Hard that was part of the fire station for the

armaments depot. We have completed the move and relinquished the container. There is still a fair bit of sorting out to be done over the winter.



New stores and workshop, moving in day.

Maintenance is an ongoing task, most Saturdays there is a team on board and always things to do. Last winter we replaced the depth charges and racks; the depth charges have been painted and now have their correct markings and coloured bands to indicate their filling. They look so real that we have put “inert” on them in case one goes overboard and causes chaos.



New depth charges looking very real indeed.

The ammunition lockers have been overhauled and painted and the crucifix which holds our ceremonial life ring has been revarnished. Lots of other jobs done, too many to mention. The engineers have been busy too, the injectors have been away for overhaul and a blockage in the cooling system sorted plus many other things.

Without our volunteer group, Medusa would go downhill rapidly. With all the effort put in she looks pristine and is much admired. My sincere thanks and those of the trustees to all who contribute.

