

Steam Pinnace 199 – Newsletter – June 2017



199 Update

On Thursday 25th April 199 set off under tow from Boathouse 4 to Haslar Marina for the Gosport Marine Festival. There is just one pipe to be fitted in the boiler room before the annual boiler test can be completed – but its nearly there!

Diggory Rose, the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust Boatkeeper, kindly arranged to give us the tow over. Interestingly this was to be behind MGB81 which has a minimum speed of 7 ½ knots once the clutches were engaged. We fitted a heavy synthetic bridle to take up the sudden shock of the tow - which was swift and successful. Photo by Sadie Snowdon (*above right*) shows 199 about to turn sharply to port at speed!



Photos – (*left by editor*) 199 under tow – (*above*) MGB81, as she should be seen. She is owned by the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust. Photo credit - the Coastal Motorboat Heritage Trust web site.

A very hot, Thursday afternoon saw a team of about six polishing brass and scrubbing the decks until she sparkled in a prime berth (*photo right - editor*). Sadly, the overnight thunderstorms left all the brass stained with watermarks the next day, so loads



more polishing before the festival opened. Although cloudy, the day of the Festival stayed dry and a team of 199ers in rig chatted with the crowds. (*Left*) Paul and Reg with visitors.

199 was visited by the Festival opener and Vendée Globe sailor, Alex Thomson, who liked what he saw. The 199 crew uniforms made them popular for photographers all day.

Right: Martin G., Steve, Reg and Paul



Left – Paul, Mayor’s consort, the Mayor of Gosport and Martin M.



Above – happy visitors to 199

Right – pensive Paul.

Below – Paul, Frank and Martin G.



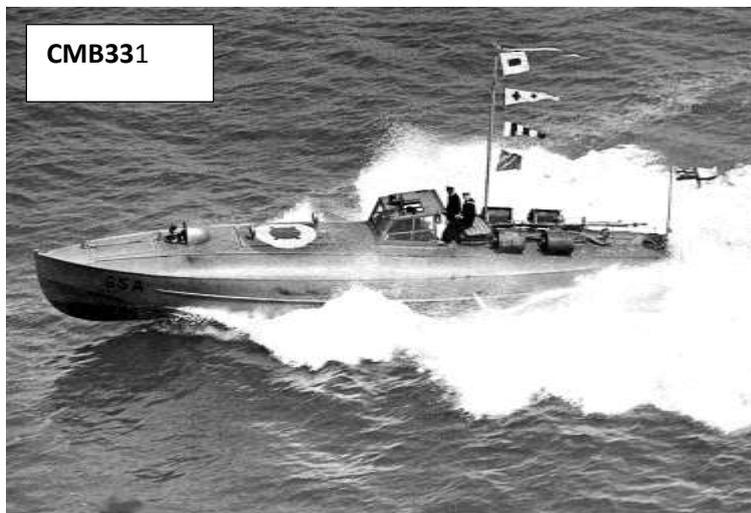
Most photos on this page courtesy of the Gosport Marine Festival/MAA Media Centre.



Below – the tow home – photo by Paul W.

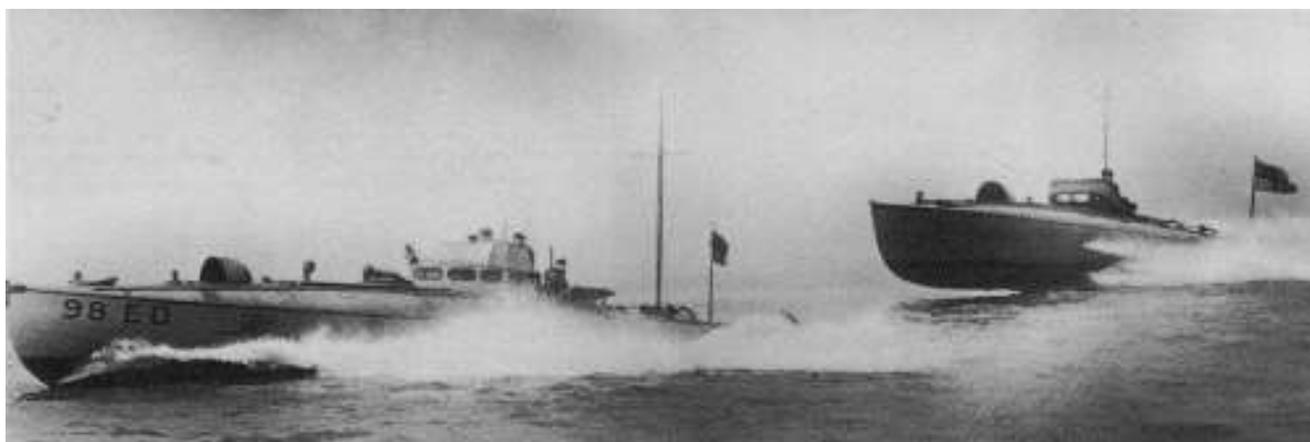


Coastal Motorboats – as many will be aware, the NMRN launched a crowd funding campaign to raise the remaining cash to transport the sole surviving Coastal Motor Boat, CMB 331, from her current home in Oxfordshire to a site alongside Explosion, The Museum of Naval Fire Power, where she will be conserved. CMB 331 is the last surviving Thornycroft 55 built in 1941. The campaign hoped to raise £6,000 and by 21st May it had exceeded its funding target.



The CMB story starts much earlier. They were originally designed during the First World War, following a suggestion that small, fast torpedo carrying craft might be able to pass over German minefields and attack the High Seas Fleet at its base in Wilhelmshaven. Designed by pioneering boat builder John Thornycroft and built at various locations, including Gosport's Camper and Nicholson's Yard, the first 40-foot boats (*photo left*, at Duxford) first saw action at the Zeebrugge Raid in April 1918. They could only carry one small

torpedo, so in 1916, Thornycroft designed a 55-ft model armed with two, while still capable of up to 41 knots. The larger boats saw action in the Baltic and Caspian Seas in 1919, during the 'secret war' to overturn the Russian Revolution. These remarkable boats remained current technology right up to the Second World War and hence the construction of CMB331 in 1941. (*Above* – CMB 98 and 112 – 55 ft Thornycroft designs)



At

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/m-t-b-on-thames-1939> there is a 4-minute piece of Pathé film of a 55-foot Thornycroft CMB on the Thames at high speeds, well above today's 8 and 12 knot speed limits! She is flying a "T" (for Thornycroft?) ensign so is probably conducting a sales demonstration. Many were sold overseas including to China.

Consuta - The Consuta Trust has been awarded £99,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for The Consuta Project, based at Beale Wildlife Park near Pangbourne.

The Trust maintains and operates the Steam Launch Consuta, a boat built in 1898 to carry umpires at Henley Royal Regatta. Restoration began in 2001 and it is still used at both Henley and Reading regattas and at other River Thames events. The lottery cash will be spent over the next 18 months installing a historically accurate steam boiler and a new superstructure to return Consuta to her original profile. The trust will also set up an exhibition to explain the restoration of



Consuta - the only working example of a steam umpire launch - to visitors to Beale Park.

The lightweight vessel was created by Sam Saunders at Goring-on-Thames using a revolutionary construction process which meant it was capable of up to speeds of 27 mph on the Thames, producing only minimal wash.

Consuta's hull is made from four mahogany wood veneers, three of 1/8" thick, the outer layer is 3/16" thick, stitched together with 16-gauge copper wire. The copper is a

continuous stitch, about 1½" long, looping in and out of the hull. The veneers were interleaved with calico (canvas soaked in linseed oil) to provide a watertight skin. The hull was stiffened by longitudinal stringers and by a light box type structure linked to the passenger seat, these seats ran the whole length of the hull. This construction gave a very light but very strong hull. There were no waterproof glues then. This form of sewn construction was patented by Saunders and was called Consuta plywood.

The steam engine in Consuta was built by G.F.G. DesVignes and is the original as fitted in 1898. The cylinder block is mounted on 6 turned columns, with a cast iron main bearing base plate. The engine has two cylinders, 6" bore × 6½" stroke, which are double acting. This means that steam is used to push the piston in both directions. The used steam exhausts at the end of each stroke through a nozzle at the base of the funnel, helping to draw more air through the damper door. The boiler is a locomotive type built by McEwan Ltd in 1985. Coal fired with a grate of 5 sq. ft., there are 43 fire tubes of 1½" diameter. Boiler is 7' long fitted with two safety valves.

Saunders had a range of different size launches, many of which were propelled by electric motors. The tunnel stern hull form has also been a great success, similar hulls were made in GRP for umpiring duties just 8 years ago. When Sam Saunders moved his boat building business to the Isle of Wight, he continued using the stitched hull construction method for some famous petrol engined racing motorboats. This type of hull construction was strong enough to withstand the heavy punishment of displacement hulls running at up to 50 mph. Consuta plywood was also used for many of the amphibious aircraft of the early part of

the 20th century. In 1929 the pioneering Alliott Verdon-Roe acquired an interest in the Saunders company and Saunders-Roe was born.

Thanks to: <http://www.consuta.org.uk/workshop/Home.html> for the details.

There is a video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuiwQHcTi4> showing her rapid acceleration at a race start.

For engineering enthusiasts, there is an "Engineer's Handbook for Consuta" which they are welcome to download for personal use: <http://www.consuta.org.uk/workshop/pdfs/Engineer's manual - single page.pdf>



King George V and Queen Mary in a steam pinnace. Estimated between 1919-36?

Continuing the training articles on tools.

Phillips Screwdriver A screwdriver having a cross-shaped tip rather than the rectangular tip of a standard (flat-blade) screwdriver. It has the ability to self-centre. Named after Henry F. Phillips of Portland, Oregon, the inventor of the tool and the screws that it is designed to work with (*left*).



He chose the X-shaped socket head screw for car makers who needed one that could be driven with more torque and that would hold more tightly than slotted screws. The invention was initially rejected, but eventually accepted by the American Screw Co., who in 1936 persuaded General Motors to use the Phillips head screw in



manufacturing Cadillacs. Phillips lost the patent to his invention in 1949.

Often used to stab the vacuum seals under lids; for opening old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splashing oil on your shirt; can also be used, as the name implies, to strip out Phillips screw heads!

Boathouse 4 Talk Outside our usual time frame but it may be of interest to some readers.

“Spitfires of the Sea: Coastal Forces of the Second World War and Hampshire's Contribution to Their Success” Sat 1 July 2017 - 11:00/13:00 BST, Boathouse 4, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

During the Second World War, the Motor Torpedo Boats, Motor Gun Boats and Motor Launches of Coastal Forces operated from numerous harbours and estuaries around Britain's coast. Striking at enemy shipping in the North Sea and Channel, it was their tireless efforts that helped clear the seas in advance of Operation Overlord. Many of the 2,000 small boats that served in the Royal Navy can trace their lineage back to the boatyards of Hampshire, and it was here that two of the most prolific builders – Vosper and British Power Boat – turned out the small craft that helped turn the tide in the Channel. This one-hour talk, by Steve Fisher, looks at the important contribution that Coastal Forces made to the war, the role of the Solent’s boatyards and the legacy of their work that can still be seen today. After the talk attendees may visit the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust's restored and seaworthy MGB81 on the pontoon next to Boathouse 4.

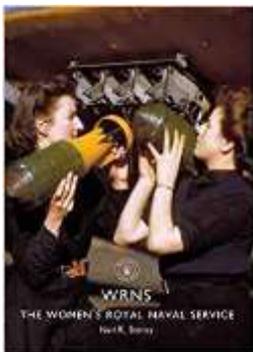
Tickets are free but please book here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spitfires-of-the-sea-coastal-forces-of-the-second-world-war-tickets-34720190023>

A 1938 cigarette card

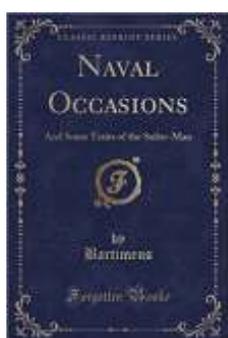


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WRNS The Women's Royal Naval Service Neil R. Storey; Bloomsbury Shire Publications 2017; 64 pages; **ISBN-10:** 1784420395 **ISBN-13:** 978-1784420390. This book focuses on the work and experiences of Wrens during the two world wars, introducing the kinds of jobs they performed and the places where they served. It contains poignant accounts from the women themselves, along with contemporary images of the Wrens in action and modern photographs of their uniforms, badges and insignia.

A History of the Royal Navy: Women and the Royal Navy Jo Stanley; I.B.Tauris 2017; 256 pages; ISBN-10: 1780767560 ISBN-13: 978-1780767567. 'Never at Sea was the motto of the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) in its two-stage life from 1917-1919 and 1939-1994. Yet most of its members commonly known as Wrens - wanted to serve on the ocean wave. This book considers the history and identity.



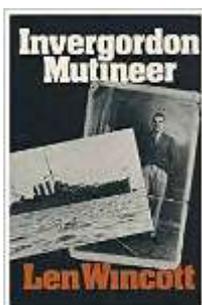
Naval Occasions and Some Traits of the Sailor-man Bartimeus;

Forgotten Books 2017; reprint 312 pages; ISBN-10: 1331403022

ISBN-13: 978-1331403029. The author was born Lewis Anselm da Costa Ricci in 1886.

While still young he the sight of one eye and damaged the other. Unable now to pursue a career at sea, he remained in the Navy, in the accounting branch, but began writing stories about naval life. He took his pen-name from the Bible, ironically hinting at his reason for leaving the career he loved by naming himself after Bartimeus. "It was 6 a.m.: the boat was returning from the early morning beef trip, and the midshipman in charge of her had seen fit to discuss with his coxswain the subject which at most hours, and particularly at this one, lay nearest to his heart - the subject of food."

Ford of HMS Valiant T T Jeans; Blackie & Son; ASIN: B00D9YC2SW. Staff Surgeon T.T. Jeans R.N wrote a range of tales of the Royal Navy prior to the First World War: "On Foreign Service", "A tale of the Atlantic fleet" and others listed previously.



Invergordon Mutineer – L Wincott; Littlehampton Book Services Ltd 1936;

ASIN: B01K3LT1CI. The Invergordon Mutiny was an industrial action by around 1,000 sailors in the British Atlantic Fleet that took place on 15–16 September 1931. Wincott was an ex-Royal Navy rating and Invergordon mutineer that became an active communist in the 1930's and moved to the Soviet Union

My Life Among the Blue Jackets – A Weston; Nisbet 1917. ASIN: B000RXZRBW. Dame Agnes Weston, GBE (26 March 1840 - 23 October 1918), popularly known as Aggie Weston or Ma Weston, was an English philanthropist noted for her work among sailors in the Royal Navy. Through beginning a correspondence with a seaman who asked her to write to him, she developed into the devoted friend of sailors, superintendent of the Royal Naval Temperance Society and co-founder of the Royal Sailors' Rests, or clubs for sailors, at Devonport and Portsmouth.



HMS Rodney at Sea CR Benstead; Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1932; ASIN: B0008C8U8E. Being the Story of the Second Commission of His Majesty's Battleship "Rodney", written that each rating of the ship's company should have a copy as a lasting memento of his participation in a period of time.