

# THE CITY ROYAL

The Newsletter of the City of London



Per Mare

Branch Royal Marines Association

Per Terram

## Branch Officers

President

Lt General Sir Robert Fulton KBE

Chairman: Graeme Golightly - Secretary: Tony Luckens BEM -

Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Stephen Gilkes - Welfare Representative: Norman Saints  
City Royal Editor and Globe & Laurel Correspondent: David Harris

## A WORD FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Friends,

The current pandemic situation is most certainly curtailing both branch and national activities. All branch events are cancelled and as I write the much reduced Cenotaph ceremony is still going ahead, although this could change over the next few hours. You will recall that a few days ago we circulated an RMA-TRMC appeal in support of the Heroes at Home Project 'Raise-a-Glass' which aimed



to raise £100,000 by the 28th October. I am pleased to report that the objective was achieved - well done to all those who contributed to this worthy cause. It was very good news to read in Repnet that a new RMA Branch has been established at Eastbourne, East Sussex, we wish them every success.

I am be able to report that, as far as we are aware, our membership is in good good health despite the present conditions under which we are all obliged to live. Norman Saints, our Welfare Officer, is progressing well with his 'problems' and another member, who is shown in a disguise made for him by his grand daughter [we all know who you are Archie] despite being in and out of hospital is 'doing well'. The City Royal is despatched to 143 recipients via email and to six by 'snail mail' as a practical way of keeping in touch and informed of what is and what is not going on.



Please let us know if you know any of our number that are are 'out of sorts' or in need of assistance or just a friendly chat. Despite not being able to celebrate our 356th Birthday in the accustomed manner, I'm sure you all did your level best. Please continue to stay alert and safe.

With very best wishes,

*Graeme Golightly*

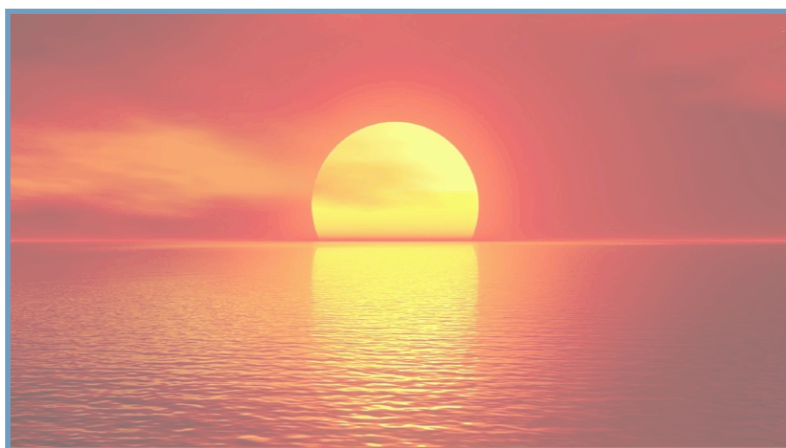
Branch Chairman

[www.rmacol.co.uk](http://www.rmacol.co.uk)

## REMEMBRANCE 2020



As you will all know, the traditional Cenotaph Parade will not take place this year. Originally the RBL reduced the RMA contingent, in common with other organisations, to 8 - this was subsequently reduced to just 2. Chairman Graeme will be there on behalf of us all. Also, Graeme, together with Tony Luckens, Chas Timms, Stephen Gilkes, Don and David Mott will attend the Graspan Memorial to lay a Royal Marines wreath - they will not be forgotten. At the time of writing, Chas is still to carry the Branch Standard at St Pauls on Remembrance Sunday and will be present at Westminster Field on the 5th December. The situation continues to be fluid but we will endeavour to keep you up to date.

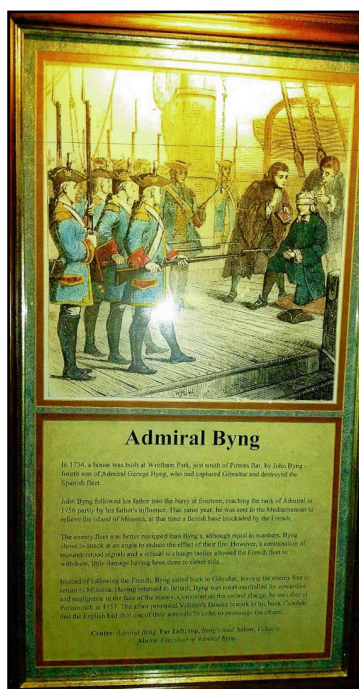
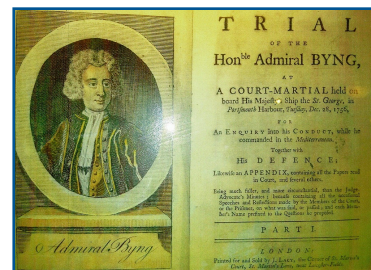


**The bugle call “Sunset”**, also known as the “Retreat Call”, is a bugle call played in the United Kingdom [and elsewhere] to signal the end of the official military day. The call is regularly heard performed in an arrangement for full military band by Captain A.C. Green (1888 - 1974), who was Director of the Royal Naval School of Music’s Junior Wing on the Isle of Man. The arrangement was composed aboard *HMS Queen Elizabeth* in response to Admiral Fisher’s desire for a “spectacular show” and was first performed by the Massed Bands and Bugles of the Mediterranean Fleet. The “Sunset Call” is now a regular part of the Royal Marines “Beat the Retreat” ceremony, the call’s melody also gives its name to “Sunset Parades” given to commemorate former military conflicts.

## ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER

**David Harris writes:** One of the features in the August edition of the City Royal was about *Corps Insignia*, particularly the *Laurels*, thought to have been awarded to the Royal Marines following the Battle of Belle Isle fought in 1761. A footnote to that story made reference to the the Treaty of Paris 1763 at which the island of Minorca was returned to Britain having been lost to the French in 1756, the blame for which had been attributed to Admiral John Byng’s inadequate command. The Admiral was subsequently Court marshalled and shot in 1757.

Now it just happens that one of our members, namely Don Chester, lives not far away from “*The Admiral Byng*” a Weatherspoon watering hole which features one or two pictures of the Admiral within its walls, so I thought it might be a good idea to pursue the Admiral’s story.



John Byng was born at Southill, Bedfordshire, the fourth son of Rear-Admiral George Byng, 1st Viscount Torrington, later to be Admiral of the Fleet. Young John was baptised on the 29th October 1704 at Southill and joined the Royal Navy in March 1718 at the tender age of thirteen. At the age of nineteen he was promoted Lieutenant and at twenty-three rose to become captain of *HMS Gibraltar* serving mainly in the Mediterranean.

Early in his career he had been assigned to a series of Mediterranean postings and had built up a reputation as a solid, reliable naval officer and received promotion to the rank of Vice-Admiral in 1747. He had previously served as Commodore-Governor of Newfoundland Colony in 1742, Commander-in-Chief, Leith, 1745 - 1746 and had been a member of parliament from 1751 until his death at the age of fifty-two in 1747. He had fought in the *Seven Years War* and specifically at the *Battle of Minorca* thereat lies the rub! The island of Minorca had been a British possession since 1708 when it was captured during the *War of the Spanish Succession*. On the approach to the *Seven Year's War*, British diplomats based in the Mediterranean area had raised the alarm, Minorca was threatened by a French naval attack from Toulon. Since 1748, British downsizing of the Royal Navy (nothing changes) meant that in 1755 only three Ships of the Line (Men-of-War), were

assigned to protect trading interests in the area. The *London Evening Post* had reported as far back as April 1755 that the French were outfitting twelve brand new “men of war,” but *Lord George Anson*, head of the Admiralty, chose to focus instead on preventing a French invasion by keeping warships close to Britain.

The upshot was that eventually, on the 11th March 1756, Admiral Byng was ordered to raise a fleet with only six of ten assigned ships present in Portsmouth all of which were severely undermanned. The Admiral’s orders were complex, his first target being the alleged new French fleet at Toulon, the British Garrison fort of Fort St Phillip at Port Mahon was of secondary concern. Despite his protestations he was given insufficient funds and not enough time to prepare the expedition properly. His fleet was delayed in Portsmouth for over a month and he was ordered by the Admiralty Office to outfit other channel ships ahead of his own. Additionally, half of his assigned ships were in disrepair or missing. For example, when the *Defiance* came into Portsmouth, the warship was missing its fore and topmast. By the 6th April, still short of over 800 men, Admiral Byng set sail from Portsmouth using *Colonel Bertie's Fusiliers*\* in place of sailors. While all this was going on, on the 17th April 1756 the French Toulon Fleet escorted over 1000 tartans (sic) and transport ships landing 15,000 troops on the far west end of Minorca under the command of *General Richelieu*.





Arriving at Gibraltar Admiral Byng was told of the French landing. *General Thomas Fowke*, then in command of Gibraltar, and despite orders from the War Office, subsequently refused to supply the Admiral with a regiment of marines. Naval facilities at Gibraltar were dilapidated which prompted Byng to write to the Admiralty Office explaining the situation as dire and he did not believe that the garrison (*Fort St Philip*) could hold out against the French force. Without marines to land, and with only fusiliers to lend the garrison, which would again render his fleet severely undermanned, he nonetheless steered his fleet towards Minorca to assess the situation for himself. The fleet sailed on 8th May 1756 and on the 19th May appeared off Port Mahon where he endeavoured to make contact with the fort. However, the French squadron appeared before any form of communication could be established.

*The Battle of Minorca* was fought on the following day and there is no doubt that the British fleet failed to gain the initiative. Admiral Byng had gained the weather gage and called for a *lasking manoeuvre* i.e. that all his ships would turn in unison with the wind behind them and sail bow first straight towards the enemy. The British fleet's lead ship *Defiance* commanded by Captain Thomas Andrews, did not, however, steer for the first French ship due to his angled approach, but steered a parallel course followed by the *Portland*, *Buckingham* and *Lancaster* following the example of the lead ship. The *Ramillies*, Admiral Byng's flagship, fired two cannon shots to re-direct the *lasking* and it took ten to fifteen minutes to achieve this by which time the French pulled more sail and 'sailed away'. The element of surprise was lost and in the ensuing running battle, the leading van taking the brunt of the damage. The last ship of that squadron, the *Intrepid*, was heavily damaged, losing three of its masts including the main. The *Revenge*, *Princess Louisa* and *Trident* did not pass the *Intrepid*, to keep the integrity of the battle line and collided with one another with Captain Frederick Cornwall of the *Revenge* eventually navigating his ship between *Intrepid* and the enemy. Admiral Byng's battle line was broken. It took twenty to thirty minutes to re-form following which the French expediently sailed away. His Flag Captain told him that he could set full sail for the enemy thus providing an example to the three 'bottled up' ships of what to do. Byng declined recalling that Admiral Thomas Matthews had been dismissed for doing so at the Battle of Toulon in 1744. Neither side had lost a ship in the four to four and a half engagement and the casualties were roughly even with forty-three British sailors killed and one hundred and sixty-eight wounded, against the French losses of thirty-eight killed and one hundred and seventy-five wounded.

The British fleet remained near Minorca for four days without establishing communication with the fort or sighting the French. On 24th May, he called a War Council of his own, where by unanimous voting, Byng's fleet would return to Gibraltar for rest, repairs, sailors and more marines for the garrison. The fleet arrived at Gibraltar on the 19th June, where it was reinforced with four more ships of the line and a 50 gun frigate. Repairs were effected to the damaged vessels and additional water and provision were loaded. But, before his fleet could return to sea, another ship arrived from England with further instructions, relieving Byng, Fowke and several others of their command and ordering them to return home. On arrival in England, Byng was placed in custody. The garrison resisted the siege of Fort St Philip until 29th June, when it was forced to capitulate.

**What followed** will be told in the next issue of the City Royal .....

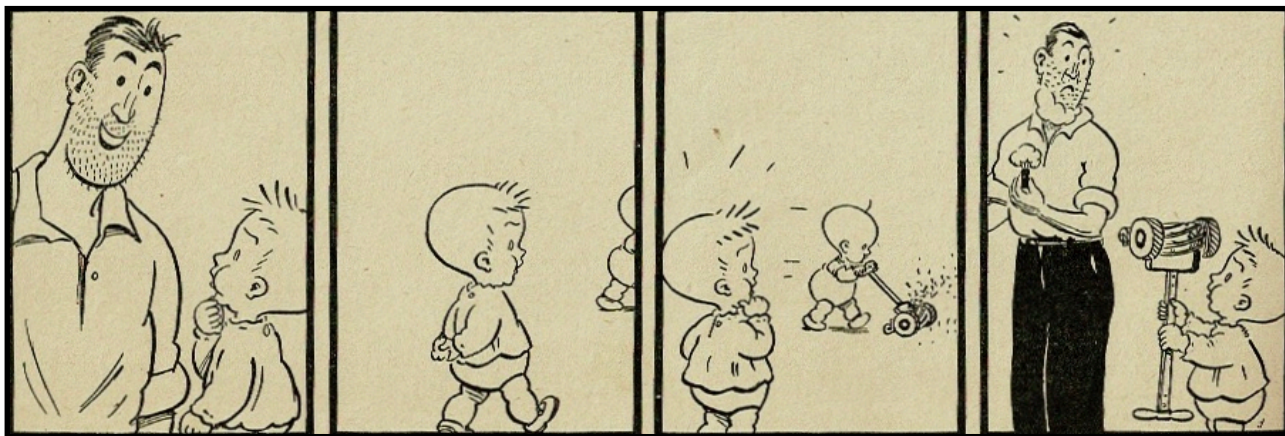
\* General Lord Robert Bertie was the Colonel of the 7th Royal Fusiliers 1754 - 1776

### Church Magazine advert

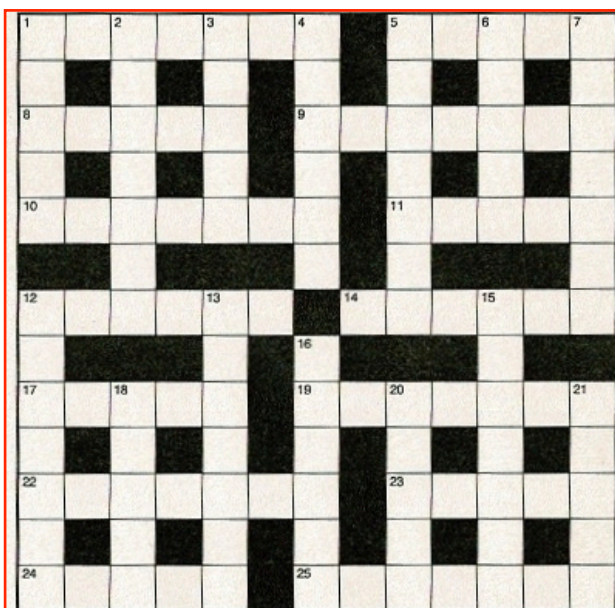
The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday  
**"I upped my pledge, up yours"**



### THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BABY BOOTIE



### 167 Crossword by Beachcomber Magazine - solution on page 8



#### Across

1. Someone who fights (7)
5. River in France (5)
8. Insect grub (5)
9. Detectives (7)
10. Dappled (7)
11. Tine of a fork (5)
12. Unfasten (6)
14. Counts on (6)
17. Woman (5)
19. Prognosis (7)
22. Percussion instrument (7)
23. Corn (5)
24. Room under a church (5)
25. Automobile shelters (7)

#### Down

1. Thick wooden beams (5)
2. Attendance (7)
3. Minimum (5)
4. Dwell (6)
5. Spire (7)
6. Maxim (5)
7. Flags (7)
12. Informal (7)
13. Condensed (7)
15. Pressing (7)
16. Top row of bricks on a wall (6)
18. Faintly (5)
20. Sports official (5)
21. Boat spines (5)

**Transported by faith** - One doesn't associate the royals with public transport, or wit, but I read in Andrew Lownie's *The Mountbattens* that Prince Philip's uncle liked to amuse his daughters with what he called *The London Bus Drivers' Prayer*. "Our Father which art in Hendon, Harrow be thy name. Thy Kingston come, Thy Wimbledon, in Erith as it is in Hendon. Give us this day our Leatherhead and forgive us our bypasses as we forgive bypass against us. Lead us into Thames, Ditton but deliver us from Ewell. For thine is the Kingston, the Purley and the Crawley, for Esher and Esher. Crouch End."

#### It might not be 'Pussers' but

'Why let your standards slacken  
When your mood begins to blacken?

One shot is all you got  
So go release the 'Kraken'."

*John Cooper Clarke*

For those in the know, Kraken  
is a black spiced rum - it aint half bad Mum!

**BRANCH INFORMATION****BRANCH MEETINGS**

All branch meetings are cancelled until further notice.

Branch website [www.rmacol.co.uk](http://www.rmacol.co.uk)

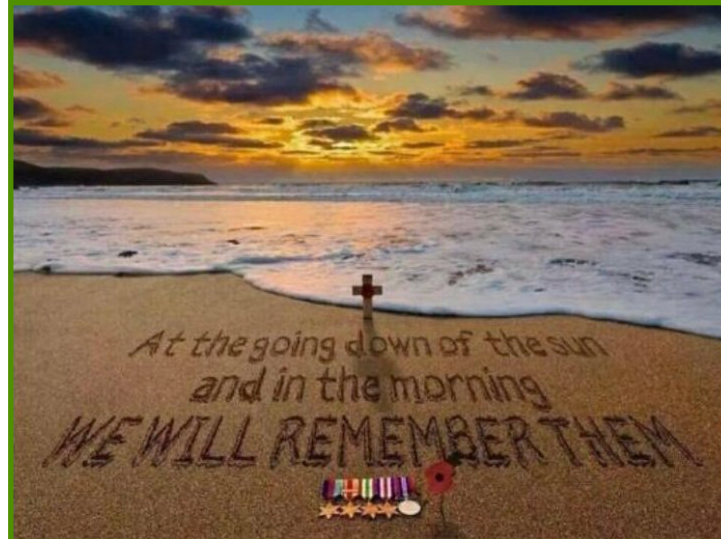
For any queries contact Branch Secretary Tony Luckens BEM

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**NHS Information**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

**KEEP SAFE - BE ALERT****11TH NOVEMBER****PER MARE PER TERRAM**

We are all familiar with words of remembrance e.g. 'The Exhortation', 'The Kohima Epitaph' and 'In Flanders Fields' etc and I was very impressed upon reading a poem written by a fourteen year old who was recently tasked to write a poem for Remembrance which, within an hour and without any help, produced the following:-



**ONE THOUSAND MEN ARE WALKING**

One thousand men are walking  
Walking side by side  
Singing songs from home  
The spirit as their guide.

They walk towards the light milord  
They walk towards the sun  
They smoke and laugh and smile together  
No foes to outrun.

These men live on for ever  
In the hearts of those they saved  
A nation truly thankful  
For the path of peace they paved.

They march as friends and comrades  
But they do not march for war  
Step closer to salvation  
A tranquil steady corps.

The meadows lit with golden beams  
A beacon for the brave  
The emerald grass untrampled  
A reward for what they gave.

They dream of those they left behind  
And know they dream of them  
Forever in those poppy fields  
There walks one thousand men.

**Lest we forget**

**FRIENDSHIP**

Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain,  
It's not something you learn in school,  
But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship,  
You really haven't learned anything.

*Muhammad Ali*

**BRAVO ZULU  
par excellence**

"I never knew an appeal made to them for honour, courage or loyalty  
that they did not more than realise my highest expectations.  
If ever the hour of real danger should come to England,  
they will be found the Country's Sheet Anchor."

*Admiral Lord Vincent of the Royal Marines*

**DID YOU KNOW**

Admiral Lord Vincent served in the Royal Navy between 1749 and 1807.

He was responsible for the division of marines from seamen, berthing them separately between the ships's officers aft and the seamen forward. This created an effective barrier between the officers and potentially unruly crews. Also, marine detachments had to parade each morning, remained fully armed at all times and were excused from duties in regard to the general running of the ship.

The Admiral introduced these changes to mitigate the incidence of mutiny.



**NEW LOCKDOWN MEASURES ANNOUNCED THIS EVENING**

**STAY SAFE FELLOW ROYALS**



**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF LONDON BRANCH ROYAL MARINES ASSOCIATION**