



RACP NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2019

ISSUE 17



Welcome to the Christmas newsletter

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News

Launch of our Wartime Trail Project



We are delighted to announce that RACP have been awarded £46,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Wartime Trail Project. See page 2 for more details.

the Wartime Trail Project. See page 2 for more details.

Merchant Navy Day



On 3rd September we flew the Red Ensign on one of our flagpoles outside our museum. This day remembers “the brave men and women who kept our ‘island nation’ afloat during both World Wars, and celebrated our dependence on modern day merchant seafarers who are responsible for 95% of the UK’s imports, including half the food we eat, plenty of the fuel we burn and virtually all the products and goods we take for granted!”

Given the monumental effort of the Merchant Navy to deliver supplies to Russia on Arctic Convoys we

were very keen to fly the flag and remember their contribution to this crucial campaign.

Tartan for sale

We are delighted to announce that the Arctic Convoy Tartan will be available to purchase from our gift shop next season. This special red, white, and blue tartan was commissioned by the Russian Consulate General in Edinburgh, Andrey



Pritsepov to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the commencement of the Russian Arctic Convoys. The colour white represents ice flows, wave tops, snow, and the white berets of the Arctic Convoy veterans. Grey is for the sea and sky, the battleships, and the u-boats. Black represents the Luftwaffe bombers and their devastating cargoes. Silver represents the chilling bubbles in the wake of an oncoming torpedo. Red represents the Ensign of the escorting Royal Naval vessels, the flag of the merchantmen, and that of the Soviet Union.

Victory Day Service May 2019

A brief ceremony was held at Cove on the morning of the 11th to mark the end of WWII and to remember



Dignitaries and veterans at Cove

all those who lost their lives in the conflict. About 150 people were present, including the Lord Lieutenant of Ross-Shire, Janet Bowen, Andrey Pritsepov, the

Russian Consul General and Peter Voss, the German Consul General. Four veterans of the Arctic convoy campaign were also present as well as representatives of the British Legion and the Coastguard and many others from the local communities. This was the first visit to Loch Ewe by a German diplomat and we were delighted to receive him and there was a touching moment during the ceremony when the German and Russian representative embraced after laying their wreaths at the Stone.



Dig for Victory Plot

In collaboration with GALE (Gairloch and Loch Ewe Action Forum) a vegetable plot for community use was established at our museum. The community growing bed was a huge success thanks to the generous public donations of brassicas, turnips, carrots, soft fruit, herbs, and flowers! We even coppiced the hazel sticks from local woodland!



The Dig for Victory plot

The plot saw it's first harvest at the end of August! There was a good crop of kale, chard and spinach. The chards and spinach were picked and made into a tasty Saag Aloo which was made available at the annual Gairloch and District show run by GALE. The tasty kale was harvested by our veg plot volunteers in return for some weeding.

Some of our veg plot produce also contributed to the outdoor soup cookout held at The GALE Centre. The vegetable soup on offer



Mr Bird with freshly harvested chard

was a product of several local veg plots, including: GALE, Good for Ewe, Gairloch High School, and The Spinney in Balnaluib. We're so delighted to be able to contribute to this community venture.

We must say a huge thank you to everyone who contributed time, plants, sand(bags), soil, and interest to this venture. We fully intend to continue this veg plot in the next season.

Remembrance Day

A service was held at the Arctic Convoy Memorial at Cove on the 11th of November to commemorate all those who lost their lives during the perilous Arctic Convoys, and all those who have lost their lives in conflict. We would like to say thank you to the

Minister Jerney Ross, the local Air Cadet Squadron for their assistance, and also to the piper, Fraser Wotherspoon. Thanks also to all the attendees. It was a lovely service.

RACP on the Small Screen

There have been no fewer than 3 film crews this year visiting us to speak to team members and film the beautiful area. We were visited by *Landward*, presented by Dougie Vipond. The crew were exploring the landscape around Loch Ewe and its place in the history of WWII and the Russian Arctic Convoys. The episode featured an interview with our co-chairman Francis Russell and we're happy to say they had glorious sunshine on the day of filming.



Francis and Dougie, filming at Cove

Our secretary, Liz, had her turn next as she spent the day with Kristin Scott Thomas filming for an episode of the channel 4 series *My Grandparents' War*. The final one is yet to air so keep an eye on our Facebook page for announcements.



RACM in Peter Irvine's Scotland

the Best

The latest edition of the best selling guidebook was published this year and we were delighted to be included in the History and Heritage section.



Upcoming 75th Anniversary Event

On the 15th of May 2020 RACP will be holding a memorial event in Loch Ewe, see page 12 for more details.

Reports

Blazing a Wartime Trail around Loch Ewe

RACP has an exciting new project pioneered by our Honorary-President George Milne, who secured funding from the Highland Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. 'Blazing a Trail around Loch Ewe' aims to bring generations together to create a new wartime trail around the loch. In September Helen Avenell joined RACP as project co-ordinator and is working with local community groups to create new interpretive panels for important sites around the loch and developing an accompanying guidebook.



Lots of work has been undertaken over the first two months of the project, including a free four-day photography workshop for local people, led by Adrian Hollister of The Perfume Studio at Mellon Charles. Participants have had the chance to learn new skills and brush up on photography techniques, with their images contributing to the new guidebook.

Local primary schools have been working with artists to create three new outdoor mosaic panels. More than twenty children have worked on the mosaics, using their newfound knowledge about the special WWII history surrounding them in the local landscape. Once completed, the three mosaics will be placed in prominent locations in



Participants in the photography workshop at Cove

Poolewe, Aultbea and Gairloch as a permanent legacy of the pupils' work. Third year English students from Gairloch High School have also visited RACM and will be working with Helen to contribute to the new outdoor trail interpretation.



Helen said, "We want the project to connect with the local communities around Loch Ewe, to highlight and commemorate the area's unique place in the history of World War Two. By creating a landscape trail we can give people a sense of just how important the area was to the Russian Arctic Convoys and the people who were part of this story."

If you have any photographs, memories or stories of life around Loch Ewe during World War Two that you would like to share, please contact Helen at: trail@theracmproject.org or 07909 913558



Balnaluib School

was compensated by better retail sales as a result of a wider range of items for sale in the shop. Overall, income from the EC operation was up 2.08% at £36,766. Since the EC opened in May 2017 we have had just under 18000 visitors, which is a creditable achievement given our remote location. To put it in perspective the visitor numbers equate to

approximately 30 times the combined populations of Aultbea and Laide; not bad going!

Various factors have helped us achieve this; increasingly active social media platforms, being recommended in the North 500 guide book and on Lonely Planet. Word of mouth has also proved to be very effective and our name has spread far and wide. This year, according to the comments in the Visitor Book, we have visitors from 21 countries, the most numerous being from Australia. The visitors' comments are uniformly favourable and, at times, touching.

My favourite comment this year was made by a lady from Nottingham who wrote "The best £4 I ever spent".

I would like to thank sincerely the volunteers and shop staff for their enthusiasm and hard work in helping to make the EC a continuing success.

Plans for the Future

The vast majority of the artefacts, paintings and memorabilia in the EC have been donated or loaned and we continue to receive regular additions. The net result is we have run out of room to display all of them and storage space is limited. The only way to solve this problem is to expand the site and we contracted architects from Edinburgh earlier this year to prepare some plans based on our needs.



Apart from more exhibition space we aim to include a research/education centre, more archive space and a coffee shop. To achieve all this we will need to show to grant



Poolewe school at the museum with George

funding bodies that the investment is not fanciful and will be self-sustaining, not only financially but also in manpower availability and succession terms. We are currently working on a business plan prior to beginning work on grant applications and, for the latter, we will be using the services of a professional fund raiser based in Inverness who also secured the funding to purchase our premises this year.

Any expansion will have to be undertaken in achievable chunks, because, whilst we would wish to get the full expansion completed in one go, we also have to raise match funding, which on its own is a considerable task. Watch our social media feeds and newsletters for progress updates.

Donations

As I mentioned earlier, we continue to receive donations/loans of artefacts and memorabilia, which is very gratifying. Sometimes it is just some documents and photographs or a diary discovered when a veteran has passed away and the new owners do not know what to do with them. Fortunately people come to us with their bits and pieces and we



accept them gratefully. Unfortunately other such discoveries end up in a skip and stories and memories are lost. Last year someone brought in an old suitcase, which amongst other things contained a pair of nail clippers but also some other material pertinent to the Arctic convoys and stories which could have been lost forever. This year we have been loaned an Albert Medal (later to become the George Cross) awarded to a RN sailor who risked his life to save a crew mate. We also received a George Medal from the mother of a merchant sailor aged 19 who saved five crew mates when their lifeboat overturned when it was being lowered from their sinking ship. He dived into the freezing water five times and brought them all out safely, something he was hesitant to tell his mother when he got home fearful of a scolding! Just after the museum closed this year we received 10 large framed photographs, mainly of ships, which had been in Bootle town hall in Liverpool and were produced for a visit by the Queen some years ago. As a result their quality is excellent and we will hang some of them next year once we find the space. The largest photograph measures 4ft by 3ft and is of the destroyer HMS Endeavour, which took part in the Arctic Convoy campaign.

The main objective of our museum is to preserve the story of the Arctic convoys from both sides and educate and entertain visitors in the process. One of the most important aspects of this is the preservation of the stories and memories of those who took part in the campaign. If you are related to a convoy veteran or have contact with a veteran, and have access to any stories concerning the convoys we would very much like to hear from you and you can contact us by e-mail at veterans@theracmproject.org initially to let us know what you have.

Stuart MacKenzie

Stuart recently stepped-down as Honorary Vice-President and archivist due his advancing years. Stuart, who is a goldmine of information concerning

the local communities and many other subjects, has made an enormous contribution to the museum project over the years and was instrumental in the design and layout of the museum, especially the story boards with their insight into how the Loch Ewe communities dealt with the war years. We are immensely grateful to him and wish all the best in the pursuit of his many other interests.

Moscow Victory Day

This year, 2 of the RACP team, Nicky and Natasha were invited to take part in the Victory Day March of the Immortal Regiment in Moscow. The March took place on Victory Day (9th May) and it truly was a spectacle to behold. The extraordinary effort of the Russian people to remember those lost in conflict is humbling. The day was an emotional one – while it was a day for reflecting on the sacrifices of extraordinary people in extraordinary times, it was also punctuated with cheering, singing, and the banners of victory can be seen everywhere. In truth a written description of the atmosphere does not really do it justice. It needs to be experienced. Children turn out in miniature wartime costumes, and the crowds



Nicky and Natasha with placards

proudly display their lost loved ones, friends, and relatives on placards. We thought it was fitting to display two of the founders of the RACP museum project on our own placards, so we marched through the city with Jack Harrison, who served on HMS Diadem, and Jimmy McHugh, who served on HMS Achates, HMS Nairana & HMS Zenith.

While we were in Moscow our Russian hosts took fantastic care of us. We were made very welcome and were taken to

various locations around the city to experience some Russian culture.

We were taken to see some breathtaking Russian masterpieces in the Государственная Третьяковская галерея (Tretyakov Gallery), many thanks to Natalia for her fascinating tour of the artworks. We were then treated to a trip to Gorky Park, which is simply beautiful.

A huge thank you to the Immortal Regiment for inviting us to be a part of the celebrations.



March of the Immortal Regiment

Feature Item: Bertie The NAAFI Van

In September 2018 we announced a new addition to our collection – our largest exhibit to date - Bertie the NAAFI Van. Bertie is believed to be the last remaining Austin 8 NAAFI Van in existence. He's in good condition for 78 years old and his top speed is 35 mph. Upon arrival he went to the local garage to make sure he was roadworthy and after receiving the all clear we made arrangements to have his NAAFI livery restored. We think you'll agree he looks rather splendid!

Bertie's own special NAAFI collection includes a Shell petrol canister, wartime NAAFI till, an original WWII water urn once used on an RAF airfield in Lincolnshire, and much more. It's definitely worthwhile visiting our museum next season to see this truly unique exhibit and interesting insight into wartime on the home front.



Shell Petrol Canister



Wartime Till



Bertie and Len overlooking Loch Ewe

Of course, what is extra special about Bertie is his ability to travel. In May 2019, he made his first big outing of the season to welcome Veterans, VIPs and guests back to Pool House for refreshments after the memorial service at Cove. With Dame Vera Lynn playing from his radio he was definitely a big hit!

The attendees had all travelled for the memorial service that was held at the Rubha Nan Sasan battery in Cove. A particularly lovely and touching part of the ceremony was seeing the Russian Consul General, Andrey Pritsepov and the German Consul General, Peter Voss lay their wreaths together and then shake hands before returning to the group.



Water Urn



Joy 1' pedal car of an original model Austin 8

Shortly after this Bertie made another outing, this time all the way to Worcestershire. Fortunately he didn't have to drive all those hundreds of miles himself and the project is hugely thankful to Bruce Hudson and Len Gruber for taking Bertie all the way there and back on a trailer. The occasion was the Austin 8 @ 80 International Rally, celebrating 80 years of the Austin 8. It took place on 22-23 June 2019 in Worcestershire. It included a week-end programme of social activities, showcasing many Austin 8 cars from around the UK and abroad, including; Saloons, Tourers, Vans and the unique Woody Estate from Germany, military Tourers, and of course Bertie!

For more information: www.austin-eight.com/80th-anniversary

Jon Miles, a RACP supporter and volunteer was a spectator at this event and he wrote the following:

"On Saturday 22nd June this year I was lucky enough to be able to attend a gathering of Austin 8 Motors at

Elmbridge near Droitwich Spa. I had gone along to see Bertie the NAAFI van along with his drivers Bruce and Len. They were taking part in a convoy driving from Elmbridge to Longbridge, the former factory site where the Austin 8s were built.



Guinness world record attempt at the Elmbridge site I was in for a pleasant surprise



Visit to Longbridge where the Austin 8 was originally built



2 ladies sampling Bertie's wares

because I found on my arrival at least 20 other Austin 8 vehicles in the field. They varied from shop vans to sedans, convertibles and shooting breaks to military staff cars. Bertie the NAAFI van stood out with his high sides and brand new sign writing. He was looking very smart inside and out, with period detailing and a photo of Winston Churchill to boot!



Arrival at Elmbridge

There was a lot of engineering talk amongst the owners about engine performance and maintenance along with bodywork, painting techniques and brightwork. Some exchange and purchase of spares. I was surprised to see engines, gearboxes, propshafts & steering columns, body and trim panels and lots of mechanical and electrical spares. I had no idea how many parts of these vehicles remained in circulation. We then had a picnic outside in the sun around the Austins. All very British.



Bertie and friends in Elmbridge



Ready to serve tea

Finally it was time to get lined up in the convoy and Bruce and Len mounted up in the cab. I wished them a safe journey and as Bertie's engine started first time and he drove off across the field to take his place looking very good indeed!

The line of vehicles was most impressive. I watched them disappear down the lane listening to the notes of the engines fade away into the distance down the A38. It was a unique sight and most enjoyable afternoon".



Bertie and friends in Elmbridge

The following September Bertie was again being transported down south, this time to Edinburgh (many thanks to Allan Kirk and his wife Anne Ella for undertaking this). The



Bertie wows the crowds with his ribbons on

Bertie had a starring role as their wedding car, naturally. He looked fabulous in his wedding ribbons and the photographer told Nicky and Natasha that Bertie was the most unique wedding car he'd ever photographed. Needless to say, Bertie turned many heads and it was all smiles as he arrived at the venue. Nicky and Natasha would like to say a huge thank you to RACP for allowing them to use Bertie on their special day.

occasion was the wedding of two of the RACP team: Nicky Ellakirk, who handles web admin, technical services, and compiles our newsletter for us; and Natasha Miles, who handles our social media channels, is in charge of adding veterans to Convoys Remembered, and who also helps with our newsletter.



Nicky and Natasha with Bertie

Reader Contributions

Memorial ceremony for the men of the Russian Convoys held on Cruise Ship

A short memorial ceremony for the men of the Russian Convoys was held on MV Boudicca on 25th July 2019. It came about as a result of a chance meeting between

two passengers on Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' voyage from Dover to Svalbard. John Dorning is an associate member of the Royal Naval Association, and Hamish Johnston is son of the late



The participants listen as Hamish tells the story of the convoys

Surgeon-Lieutenant Douglas Johnston, RNVR, veteran of nine convoys on board HM ships Bulldog and Offa between 1942 and 1945.

Prior to the cruise, John had prepared a small box filled with dried rose petals to scatter on the seas as a private tribute at some point on the cruise. For his part, Hamish, who had previously researched official records at the National Archives, had noted coordinates and plotted his father's convoy routes on small-scale maps. Having met by chance, John and Hamish decided to hold a

simple joint ceremony to anyone else on board. John contacted Captain Mikael Degerlund for permission. He readily agreed, and designated Alexandra Newton, Guest Relations Manager, to facilitate things. On the return journey Boudicca was to sail south from Svalbard, passing Bear Island out of sight to port. It was agreed that a spot between the 72nd and 73rd parallels would be suitable, and with the help of the bridge officer the time of 2000 hours on 25th July was selected.

On the day John and Hamish were joined by Ms Newton and several other passengers who had a connection with, or interest in, the convoys. The weather was grey with a moderate swell and breeze, and a few splashes of rain. Hamish gave a brief account explaining why the convoys had been established, their typical routes, the dangers they faced, and the number of vessels and men that sailed



Hamish (L) and John (R) casting the petals into the sea

and were lost. German sailors and airmen were also remembered, doing their duty notwithstanding the ignoble regime they served. After this, John and Hamish scattered the rose petals into the wind and John read the famous verse of Binyon's poem 'For the Fallen' – 'We will remember them'. As the ceremony took place Boudicca was sailing south through the very waters where, some 75 years ago, the convoys had passed on their passage eastwards to Russia and westwards to home. It was an appropriate and moving event.

Full text of Hamish Johnston's address
"We are here to remember the crews of the British merchant navy and Royal Navy, and of the navies of allied countries, who served on the Russian Convoys. Also the German sailors and airmen who fought them honourably, if for what we know was an ignoble regime.

In 1941 Germany turned on Russia and declared war. Stalin appealed to Churchill for help. Recognising the need for Russia to fight strongly on the Eastern Front, he instituted the Convoys to supply Russia with tanks, aircraft, munitions and other materials.

78 Convoys sailed between August 1941 and May 1945, involving a total of some 1400 vessels. Ships of a typical outward Convoy loaded at Liverpool and the Clyde and joined up at Loch Ewe in NW Scotland. Their route took them to Iceland and then, escorted mainly by the Royal Navy, eastwards between North Cape and Svalbard to Murmansk and Archangel. Then the return convoys had to get back again.

Waiting for them were packs of German U-Boats, and aircraft and warships based on the Norwegian coast. In summer the convoys could sail north of Bear Island, but they were naked in the 24 hour daylight. In winter the sea ice forced them to



Mike Lucas, Fred Lee and Hamish look on as John recites 'We will remember them'.

Those present at the ceremony were (L to R) Jill Johnston, Mike Lucas, John Dorning, Ken Scott, Hazel Taylor, Hamish Johnston and Alexandra Newton. (Fred Lee absent).



Those present at the ceremony were (L to R) Jill Johnston, Mike Lucas, John Dorning, Ken Scott, Hazel Taylor, Hamish Johnston and Alexandra Newton. (Fred Lee absent).

sail much further south. While darkness gave some protection, it added the dangers of storms, and ice that formed on the ships, threatening capsizing unless it was hacked off with axes. Most of the ships got through, but 85 merchant ships and 16 warships were sunk. For its part, Germany lost 30 submarines, 4 warships and many aircraft.

We ourselves are now sailing through the very same waters where the Convoys passed on their eastward and westward journeys. As we do so, it is right that we should think of all the men involved, and the thousands who lost their lives."

Full text of John Dorning's oration:

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old; Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them."

-Hamish Johnston

In Memory of Thomas Bartholomew

We were contacted by Ann Deaves about her Dad's service on HMS Westcott during the Convoys.

"To celebrate his 92 second birthday we arranged lunch at Chatham Historic Dockyard and a visit to HMS Cavalier, a similar destroyer to HMS Westcott. On the day he just thought he was going to have lunch there but we got a wonderful surprise as the dockyard had sorted the local newspaper to take some photographs



Thomas and Tim Stopford arrive at the ship

and the RBL supplied two standard bearers. A lovely ex RN man, Tim Stopford, piped Dad aboard. It was all very emotional for him and for all of us! Tim took him around the ship and Dad really relived his time aboard the Westcott, it was a really lovely day, followed by lunch at the restaurant there."

Sadly Thomas passed away in February this year and Ann has sent us an extract from his eulogy telling of his experience during the convoys.

"When he reached 18 he signed up to join the Royal Navy to do his bit for his country. He was in a reserved occupation at the Blue Circle, he could



A young Thomas during his service days HMS Westcott on 20th

November 1943 in Londonderry. Then it was off to Scotland and up to the Arctic Circle on the Russian convoys. Apparently Dad's Navy nickname was "Spotlight" because he could always find the way! Churchill described the Arctic as the worst journey in the world. Freezing conditions, mountainous seas and the constant threat of being torpedoed by German U-boats, it must have been absolutely terrifying.

Dad sometimes spoke of the dreadful things he experienced: men from sunken ships floundering in the freezing sea calling for help from the rest of the passing



Group shot with the ship's bell

convoy as they sailed on, they couldn't stop for fear of being sitting ducks themselves so had to leave the poor wretches to their fate. The horror of it all is unimaginable. No ability to phone home, no contact with loved ones save for the odd telegram, often bearing bad news such as the one from his mother in 1943... "Try to get home, bombed out love Mum" and a further one in November 1944 "Try and get leave blasted out again Love Mum" Terrible news to receive from loved ones. Hard times.

The Jack of Clubs played a very special part in Dad's life. In early 1945 the HMS Bluebell, a Flower Class Corvette, requested an Able Seaman to be winched across to their ship from HMS Westcott. Dad and two other young men were in this category so lots were drawn, three cards in a hat. One of the two other men was a 19 year old, married with a child on the way. The cards were drawn, Dad drew the Jack of Clubs. The young married man drew



Thomas and Ann on the Cavalier

the lowest card and was transferred to the Bluebell. Just a few days later on 17th February the Bluebell was torpedoed by U-boat U-711. 90 officers and men perished. Only one man survived, Dad always hoped it was his pal, how he must have felt doesn't bear thinking about. It could so easily have been him. A sobering thought and a tale Dad told me only around 5 years ago.

Dad was demobbed in December 1946 and got a job at Everard's Shipyard in Greenhithe. He later worked at the Empire Paper Mills in Greenhithe and eventually worked as a fitter's mate at Northfleet Power Station until he retired."

-Ann Deaves

Tracing Relatives

We were recently contacted by the Grandson of veteran Arfan Ullah while he was researching his Grandfather's wartime service. He had found out that his Grandfather was aboard Lancaster Castle when it was bombed in Murmansk harbour in April 1942 having completed the journey in convoy PQ12 in that March. Afran and 8 others were killed when a bomb

hit the engine room, 7 were Muslims from what is now Bangladesh. The family knew he had been killed but thought he was buried at sea. RACP were able to confirm he



The headstones near Murmansk

and the others were buried in a cemetery just outside Murmansk, and subsequently all provided with Commonwealth War Grave Commission head stones in 1952. The family are now hoping to visit Murmansk in the future.

Collection update

The Goad family have loaned us the Albert Medal (which became the George Medal) awarded to William 'Lofty' Goad for rescuing Lt.Cdr. Maud of HMS Somali when she sank on 24th September 1942 during towing following action.



We are truly honoured to include the medals of Able Seaman William Thomson in our collection. This remarkable man dived down into the freezing waters five times to free men trapped when their lifeboat

overturned. His ship, the SS Empire Purcell was torpedoed in May 1942. It was transporting cargo to Russia as part of convoy PQ16. For his efforts, Mr Thomson was awarded the George Medal for bravery.



This lead plaque was found near the water tower at Tornaig. We are trying to trace its origins.



Signal flag from the u-boat U-255. This was a number pennant that would have been used to signal the number 3 as part of the International Code of Signals. U-255 played a big role in the destruction of convoy PQ-17, sinking three American ships, the John Witherspoon, the Alcoa Ranger, and the Olopana, and also the Dutch ship Paulus Potter. It was commanded by Reinhart Reche, one of the top U-boat aces of the war.



Two very special additions to our collection are these marvellous sculptures of Arctic Convoy veterans,

Victor Walker and Vadim Shamritsky which were presented to our museum on 11th May this year. They were made by a famous sculptor from Tomsk, Leonty Usov, who wanted to create the busts as a symbol of the joint contribution of Soviet and British sailors to the war effort. Made from Siberian Cedar, these two veterans will now stand shoulder to shoulder - 'Allies Forever'.



Vadim Shamritsky served from 1941 to 1944 on the "Grozny" torpedo vessel of the Northern Fleet. Then he served on the cruiser "Murmansk". Victor Walker joined the Royal Navy in 1943, at the age of 17. He was sent to HMS Ganges for 3 months of training before joining HMS Versatile in Grangemouth, Scotland.



This wonderful model of HMS Ashanti and a replica Ashanti JuJu figurine have been loaned to RACP by Tim Lewin son of Lord Lewin, then a midshipman.



The JuJu was attached to the ships superstructure as a good luck charm and comes from the tribe who's

name the ship bears.

The final item is this carved wooden horse which was made in Russia and traded for supplies.



Convoys Remembered

New veteran stories added to our 'Convoys Remembered' Archive To Read their stories and more visit [our new website](#).



Alexander Prosser



Rodney Davies



John Meldrum



Patrick Kelly



Richard Carson



Allan Leigh

Get Involved

How else can I help?

Spread the word. Tell people about our project and help us find more people with stories to share. We are always looking for new stories, accounts and anecdotes to put on the “Convoys Remembered” page of our website, which you can see here: <http://racmp.co.uk/veterans.php>

Volunteer

We welcome any offers of help, particularly from those able to offer the odd afternoon in the summer to man our Exhibition Centre.

If you would like to be involved in our project in any way, no matter how small, please contact Elizabeth Miles at info@theracmproject.org

Donate/loan an item to the collection

Many fascinating items in our collection have been donated by veterans or their relatives. If you have an item relating to the convoys that you think may be of interest to us, then please contact Bruce Hudson at vicechair@theracmproject.org

Make a donation

Help us make the project a reality. You can find our Just Giving page here: <https://www.justgiving.com/russianarcticconvoymuseum/Donate/>

or, if you prefer to donate by cheque, please make it out to: “Russian Arctic Convoy Project”

Address:

RACP

C/O Pool House

Poolewe

Wester Ross

IV22 2LD

Don't forget you can gift aid it too.

Follow us online

RACP often post updates, news stories and event details on social networks. If you want to keep up to date with our progress then you can follow us on the following sites:

 [Russian Arctic Convoy Museum](#)

 [Arctic Convoy Museum @InfoRACM](#)

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Photos and articles contributed by Nicky Ellakirk, Natasha Ellakirk, Hamish Johnston, George Milne, Bruce Hudson, Francis Russell, Helen Avenell, Kyle Mathieson, Elizabeth Miles, John Casson, Hamish Johnston, Ann Deaves and Jon Miles.

If you would like to contribute to future newsletters (or find any errors or omissions) please contact us at admin@theracmproject.org

'One for the diary' – Friday 15 May 2020

RACP are celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War Two and the last Russian Arctic Convoy

On Friday 15 May 2020, John Casson, Co-Chairman of the Russian Arctic Convoy Project is organising what may be the last opportunity to commemorate with surviving veterans the sacrifice made by those who were involved in the Russian Arctic Convoys during World War Two.

John and his team will be contacting all the surviving veterans that are known to the Russian Arctic Convoy Project and tracing others throughout the UK and overseas through the Royal British Legion, Royal British Legion (Scotland), veterans associations and the media.

'We will make every attempt to trace as many Arctic Convoy veterans as possible' John said 'If any of them would like to attend I have secured funding to help them join us with two members of their family or carers'.

The event will take place in a large marquee, sides off if the weather is kind, on the edge of Loch Ewe where up to 750 ships were at anchor during the war before setting off on their dangerous journey.

Around five hundred people including veterans and their families, families of those whose loved ones were involved, dignitaries and Ambassadors are expected to attend with the principle guest no less than Celia Sandys, Granddaughter of Sir Winston Churchill.

If you know of a veteran who would be interested in attending or you would like to attend please contact John Casson (johncasson@johncasson.com) for further details.

A time for this event has still to be advised.





“Winter Convoy assembling at Aultbea”

Painting by Jim Rae - Maritime Artist

*Remembrance
and all good wishes
for Christmas
and the New Year*



*From all at the
Russian Arctic Convoy Project*

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