

The Live Bait Squadron Bulletin



Bulletin-15 Easter 2018

INTRODUCTION, BY YOUR VIRTUAL CHAIRMAN

Dear all,

This Bulletin-15 is dated 1st April 2018, Easter Sunday. It is the first Bulletin of this year. It is my intention to keep on writing Bulletins as long as new Members arrive, and as long as I trace interesting items for all my readers. I am certain this Bulletin will be closely read. Just keep on reading and turning the pages, and you will know why I dare say this.

Over here in Holland we suffered a bad winter, and I noticed Britannia got her part too. I cannot speak for all readers in the very far away parts of the world like Australia, United States, Africa, Canada, New Zealand etcetera. I hope you are all well, and are going to enjoy a fine Easter weekend.

In this Bulletin I welcome two new Members:

- Percy Chambers, HMS *Hogue*
- Edward Parsons, HMS *Aboukir*

This Bulletin is the first in 2018, and the publication of *The LBS Archives part 5*.
NOT TO MISS, THIS ONE IS VERY SPECIAL!!!

My best wishes to you all. And: as always looking forward to your reactions.
The next Bulletin-16 is scheduled 22 September 2018. If before that date something urgent pops up, I will let you know.

Henk H.M. van der Linden
Chairman

If you wish to unsubscribe, just let me know!

ABOUT THE MEN

About Percy Chambers (HMS Hogue)

Percy is presented by Mr Gary Delieu. He says: *'My great uncle Percy Chambers was serving as a stoker on HMS Hogue and died as a result of the tragedy'*

And this is all I can add: Percy was a Stoker 1st Class, SS/107623. (RFR/CH/B/10030. Royal Navy. Age 24, son of Mrs R.J. Chambers, of 454, High St. North Woolwich, London.

About Edward J. Parsons (HMS Aboukir)

Mr Peter Adams wrote me this , Monday 13 November 2017 about: PARSONS, Edward J, Able Seaman (RFR Ch B 3656), 201013.

What Mr Adams shares with us now is very interesting, and perhaps may be helpful for some of you. Just read what he writes. He has done quite an effort.

Dear Henk,

I am sure that I am not alone, when I say that I have put off writing to you as I have pondered many times over the years, whether to write to you or not. Having discussed my thoughts with my son Richard Adams, he has given me the encouragement to contact you.

The reason is quite simple in that my late maternal Grandfather was lost at sea with the sinking of HMS ABOUKIR.

According to the Royal Navy's records he served as a RNVR reservist and was based at Chatham. In his working life from what I have been able to deduce from my late mother's birth certificate, it describes his occupation as a platelayer employed by the London North Eastern Railway.

I have very little artefacts of his, apart from a copy of a document that is held within the records of the United Grand Lodge of England, London. According to my late father, my grandfather was party to the formation of three lodges within London and Kent provincial areas.

The attached Memoriam lists other masons who were lost at sea on the same ship. Maybe some descendents of the individuals named might find the information useful to help them learn more of their relations lives.

Thank you for keeping the memories alive and providing so much of your time to help those of our generation and our sons and daughters to learn of the horrible aspects that the Great War inflicted on many people doing their duty in the name of their countries. I have a copy of your book which I have found extremely enlightening which will be retained within our family for future generations to read.

With grateful thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Peter C. I. Adams. Chepstow. Monmouthshire.



**Able Seaman
Edward Joseph PARSONS**

**Royal Navy
Died: 22/09/1914 - Age:**



Military:

Unit : [HMS Aboukir](#)
Action: [Naval Campaign](#)
Buried : CHATHAM NAVAL MEMORIAL
Grave Location: 2
Awards :
Summary :

Masonic Career:

Mother Lodge: **HOME COUNTY No. 3451**
Province: **Surrey** Initiated:
Rank: Passed:
Raised:
Career Summary :

Legend:

Summary : PARSONS, Edward Joseph, Able Seaman, HMS Aboukir The Live Bait Squadron In the early weeks of the war, three elderly armoured cruisers - HMS Aboukir, HMS Hogue, HMS Cressy - were assigned to patrol an area off the Dutch coast . Because they were old, slow and generally under-gunned, these vessels were jocularly described as the 'Live Bait Squadron', and some in the Admiralty expressed doubts over the wisdom of assigning such ships to this duty. These fears were proved valid on 22 September 1914 when the three 'Live Bait' ships were sunk by torpedoes fired by the German U-boat U-9. A total of 1,459 British sailors, many of them cadets or reservists, died in this action. At around 6 am on 22 September the three cruisers were steaming at 10 knots (19 km/h) in line ahead and they were spotted by the U-9, commanded by Lt. Otto Weddigen. Although they were not zigzagging, all of the ships had lookouts posted to search for periscopes and one gun on each side of each ship was manned. Weddigen ordered his submarine to submerge and closed the range to the unsuspecting British ships. At close range, he fired a single torpedo at the Aboukir. The torpedo broke the back of the Aboukir and she sank within 20 minutes with the loss of 527 men. The captains of the Cressy and Hogue thought the Aboukir had struck a floating mine and came forward to assist her. They stood by and began to pick up survivors. At this point, Weddigen fired two torpedoes into the Hogue, mortally wounding that ship. As the Hogue sank, the captain of the Cressy realised that the squadron was being attacked by a submarine, and tried to flee. However, Weddigen fired two more torpedoes into the Cressy, and sank her as well. The entire battle had lasted less than two hours, and cost the British three warships, 62 officers and 1,397 ratings. Coming on the heels of the loss of the light cruiser HMS Pathfinder earlier to another submarine attack, this incident established the U-boat as a major weapon in the conduct of naval warfare. As Winston Churchill was first lord of the Admiralty at the time, these casualties became known as 'Winston's War Babies'. The loss of

these vessels, and the sinking of HMS Pathfinder on 5 September, prompted Admiral Jellicoe to withdraw his most valuable ships to ports outwith the U-boats' range. Otto Weddigen returned to Germany as the first naval hero of the war and received the Iron Cross, first class. His crew each received the Iron Cross, second class. Weddigen was himself killed in March 1915 during a raid in the Pentland Firth when his submarine was rammed by HMS Dreadnought. 11 Freemasons died on HMS Aboukir; Brothers ASSITER, COURT, HESTER, HEWLETT, LEATHWOOD, PARSONS, PLUME, SARGENT, STEVENS, WELSH & YOUNG. None of their bodies were recovered and they are all remembered on the CHATHAM NAVAL MEMORIAL. In this one action on 22nd September 1914, 32 freemasons lost their lives - one of the darkest days for the craft in the war. On this one day two lodges each lost 7 members: LORD CHARLES BERESFORD LODGE NO. 2404 and UNITED SERVICE LODGE No 1341, both based in the Province of East Kent. The 1921 Masonic Roll of Honour listed PARSONS as a Ship's Steward.

Other Data :

Family :

Source:

The project acknowledges the following as sources of information for research:

- [The Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#)
- [The National Archives](#)

Additional Source:

FROM HENK'S TREASURE CHEST



In Bulletin-11 I presented *The LBS Archives 1*, in Bulletin-12 *The LBS Archives 2*, in Bulletin-13 *The LBS Archives 3*, in Bulletin-14 *The LBS Archives 4*.

And now two items in *The LBS Archives 5* in this Bulletin-15. They are on our website!

What about?

First:

An article from *The Clock Tower*, Issue Number 49: February 2018. *The Clock Tower* is a magazine published by FOMA, The Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre. Chairman is Mrs Elaine Gardner emgardner@virginmedia.com. The Clocktower Editor and Publicist is Mrs Amanda Thomas amanda@ajthomas.com.

As Member of FOMA I am a close reader of *The Clock Tower*. In the February Magazine an article of Mrs Betty Cole (Membership Secretary of FOMA too) drew my attention: '*The Nore Orphanage*'. A lot of fatherless children went to Chatham orphanages after the 22 September 1914 disaster. And indeed.....

Just read Betty's story.

The Clock Tower says this about Betty:

She is interested in local and family history and holds a certificate in Theory and Practice of Local History with the University of Kent at Canterbury. Betty is a volunteer transcriber and checker for free-to-access internet sites for the researching of census and parish records.

Of course I contacted her, after reading the story, and this is what she wrote:

Hello Henk

How wonderful to hear from you that you enjoyed my article on The Nore Orphanage. One of my children did a school project on my mother's life so most of what I used was straight from her words. Her father, my grandfather, was killed in Arras in August 1917 and I was there last year on the 100th anniversary of the day he died.

My Cressy connection is through my ex-husband's family who are of course my children's ancestors. They were the two brothers named Hussey who both went down on the ship leaving large families.

I am happy for you to use the article on The Nore for any purpose to do with your Live Bait Society. I will send an e-mail to Amanda as she may have to give permission as it appeared in her journal but I am sure she will be happy to allow it.

There is an archive at Medway Archive Centre but it is now not available for viewing because of the 100 year rule. There are entries in the admission register that were written in in as late as 1925 so book is now embargoed. I looked at it a good few years ago when the rules must have been different and I still have names written down so I believe I can give them to you.

I would have liked to have rechecked my references but this isn't possible now but the names I am giving you I obtained perfectly legally at the time. I only found names of children whose fathers went down on the Cressy. The other two ships were not mentioned.

*I need to speak to Amanda before sending the names, hopefully I can do this tomorrow.
Best wishes Henk to you and your family
Betty*

Amanda did agree, so Betty's story is in *The LBS Archives 5*, including a photo of some interesting entries at The Archives.

Recently Betty Coles sent me an email with the names of children living at *The Nore*. See for yourself:

Hello Henk

These are the notes I made a few years ago about the children admitted:

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Father:</i>	<i>Ship:</i>	<i>date of</i>	
<i>birth:</i>	<i>admitted:</i>			
<i>Henrietta Lench</i>	<i>AB. RFR.</i>	<i>Cressy</i>		<i>7th Jun 1915</i>
<i>Evelyn Victoria Hancock</i>	<i>RMLI</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>16th Feb. 1905</i>	<i>1st Oct. 1915</i>
<i>Dorothy Ada Harrison</i>	<i>ERA</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>29th Aug. 1910</i>	<i>17th Jan. 1916</i>
<i>Doris Ruby Hancock</i>	<i>RMLI</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>29th Jan .1910</i>	<i>2nd Aug. 1916</i>
<i>Mary Edith Riordan</i>	<i>AB</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>29th Jul. 1907</i>	<i>27th Nov. 1916</i>
<i>Alice Hussey</i>	<i>Pte.RMLI</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>17th Nov. 1905</i>	<i>26th Jan. 1917</i>
<i>Mary Ann Hussey</i>	<i>Pte.RFR</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>24th Mar 1910</i>	<i>11th May 1920</i>
<i>Kathleen Hussey</i>	<i>Pte.RFR</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>11th Apr. 1912</i>	<i>11th May 1920</i>

I found a note about a few boys:

<i>Chas. Fdrk. Harrison</i>	<i>ERA 1</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>4th Jan.1914</i>	<i>15th Oct 1919</i>
<i>Herbt. Best</i>	<i>Leading Stkr</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>15th Aug.1913</i>	<i>4th Sep. 1922</i>
<i>Seymore Best</i>	<i>Leading Stkr</i>	<i>Cressy</i>	<i>29th Dec.1914</i>	<i>4th Sep. 1922</i>

The boys were not kept at The Nore. I think they were sent to the Swanley Homes.

I only found references to children whose fathers went down on the Cressy. I wonder if the orphans from the other ships were sent somewhere else.

It is plain to see from the dates of admission that some mothers struggled on for a while to keep the children at home.

My mother was friendly with the Hussey girls who she called Marian and Kitty. She said they ran away but were brought back to the home.

Best wishes

Betty from Chatham

My remark: does this ring a bell? Are some names familiar? Please contact Betty and have me in the cc!!

And there is more, far more, I can say:

The second item in *The IBS Archives 5*:

The story of Midshipsman John Duncan Stubbs 1899-1914, written by his grand-niece Mrs Alice Barrigan. Alice and family are since about 2011 great friends of mine. As a matter of fact: young Duncan Stubbs is the key person in the documentary, Alice features in the documentary too, and you see her son Duncan dive on the *Aboukir* and tell what he experienced. For each of you who has not yet seen the documentary, here is the link to it.

<http://onderwaterbeelden.nl/the-live-bait-squadron/>

Alice's introduction to Duncan's story:

Midshipman John Duncan Stubbs of HMS Aboukir died on 22 September 1914 aged fifteen. I am one of the grandchildren of his younger brother Hugh. This is an account of my great-uncle's short life, and the effect that his death had on the family he left behind.