



The Bulldog Bulletin



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

President: Priya Guha British Consul General

**The Newsletter of The Royal British Legion
California Branch No 1**

July 2012



West Riding



West Yorkshire



Surrey



Worcestershire



West Glamorgan

The Royal British Legion

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Warwickshire

RBL Chairman's July report,



For those members who are finding it difficult receiving the Legion Magazine, I thought it may be a useful link to access it.



<http://www.legion-magazine.co.uk/>



Left to Right

Sir Peter Westmacott : *The British Ambassador to the U.S.A.*

Patrick Sweetman M.B.E. : *Chairman of The Royal British Legion S.F.*

Pamela Sweetman : *Treasurer of the Royal British Legion S.F.*

Priya Guha : *The British Consul General & President of the Royal British Legion S.F.*



The above photograph was taken during a reception for the new British Ambassador Sir Peter Westmacott at the residence of The British Consul General Priya Guha.

London Olympics

Meet the Olympians of 1948



As the Olympic torch weaves across the country, the London 2012 Olympics draw ever closer. Yet, turn the clock the other way, keep going, and eventually you are back in 1948, the last time the Olympic circus came to town. But things were very different then, as the country was recovering from a world war and the Games were not as they are today.

Life for the athletes was very different too, as many were working full-time, or raising a family as they trained. They were unpaid, with limited funds, and sponsorship was not as we know it today. Yet the core principle was the same - to train hard, with total dedication to your chosen sport, and try to be the best. Photographer Katherine Green has spent six years tracking down some of those who took part in the 1948 Games, and recorded their stories. When she first approached them in 2007, the athletes were often quite bemused, she tells me. "They hadn't had any interest for many years, but I noticed, the last couple of years, many of them had become used to the media attention." Along the way, she has met many fascinating characters. Some of them went on to pursue a career in sport, while others moved to different things, either through choice or lack of funds. Yet there have been surprises too.

Denise St Aubyn Hubbard made an impression. A high diver in the '48 Games, she went on to be the only female skipper in the Royal Navy Auxiliary Service for eight years, and sailed single-handed across the Atlantic at the age of 64.

"What's been amazing is the modesty that everyone I have interviewed possess," says Green. "It's been really moving. Not only that, but also how many of them face the same frustrations and difficulties that any older people do."



Edwin Bowey, Freestyle wrestler, 1948



Sir Roger Bannister



In Oxford, England, 25-year-old medical student Roger Bannister cracks track and field's most notorious barrier: the four-minute mile. Bannister, who was running for the Amateur Athletic Association against his alma mater, Oxford University, won the mile race with a time of 3 minutes and 59.4 seconds.

For years, so many athletes had tried and failed to run a mile in less than four minutes that people made it out to be a physical impossibility. The world record for a mile was 4 minutes and 1.3 seconds, set by Gunder Hagg of Sweden in 1945. Despite, or perhaps because of, the psychological mystique surrounding the four-minute barrier, several runners in the early 1950s dedicated themselves to being the first to cross into the three-minute zone.

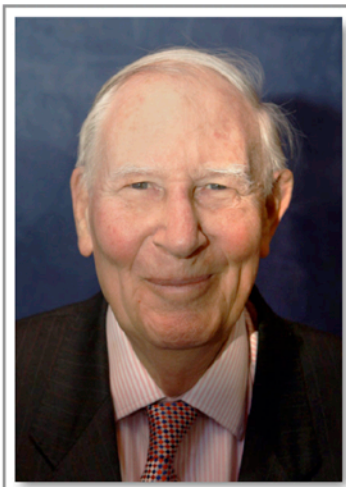
Roger Bannister, born in Harrow, England, in 1929, was a top mile-runner while a student at the University of Oxford and at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London. In 1951 and 1953, he won British championships in the mile run. As he prepared himself for his first competitive race of the 1954 season, Bannister researched the mechanics of running and trained using new scientific methods he developed. On May 6, 1954, he came to the Iffley Road track in Oxford for the annual match between the Amateur Athletic Association and Oxford University. Conditions were far from ideal; it had been windy and raining. A considerable crosswind was blowing across the track as the mile race was set to begin.

At 6 p.m., the starting gun was fired. In a carefully planned race, Bannister was aided by Chris Brasher, a former Cambridge runner who acted as a pacemaker. For the first half-mile, Brasher led the field, with Bannister close

behind, and then another runner took up the lead and reached the three-quarter-mile mark in 3 minutes 0.4 seconds, with Bannister at 3 minutes 0.7 seconds. Bannister took the lead with about 350 yards to go and passed an unofficial timekeeper at the 1,500-meter mark in 3 minutes 43 seconds, thus equaling the world's record for that distance. Thereafter, Bannister threw in all his reserves and broke the tape in 3 minutes 59.4 seconds. As soon as the first part of his score was announced--"three minutes..."--the crowd erupted in pandemonium.

Bannister went on to win British and Empire championships in the mile run, and the European title in the 1,500-meter event in 1954. At the end of the year, Bannister retired from athletic competition to pursue his medical career full time and in 1955 recounted his experiences in the book *The Four Minute Mile*. He later earned a medical degree from Oxford and became a neurologist. In 1975, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II.

His world record in the mile did not stand long, and the record continued to be lowered with increasingly controlled climatic and surface conditions, more accurate timing devices, and improvements in training and running techniques. A "sub-four" is still a notable time, but top international runners now routinely accomplish the feat. Because a mile is not a metric measurement, it is not a regular track event nor featured in the Olympics. It continues, however, to be run by many top runners as a glamour event.



"John Lewis Jones"

1921 ~ 1986

The so-called 'glamour' attached to shipboard life was certainly missing that day in April 1937, when I traveled from my home on the Llyn Peninsula to North Shields on Tyneside, a very 'green' sixteen-year-old ship apprentice with slightly apprehensive feelings about the career I was about to embark upon. The ship, a tanker called San Felix, lay in dry-dock where certainly no vessel ever looks her best! However, I was glad to stretch out in the upper bunk allotted to me that night, only to sit bolt upright with a bang on my head next morning when the vibrating sound of a hammer being used on the metal deck immediately above introduced me to shipboard life. Captain Goudie was the master under whom I first sailed, and I was fortunate that from him, and the officers on board at the time, I was given a good start to my training. The ship's company were entirely from Tyneside, and it must have been a month before I began to understand their version of English, and it probably took them longer to understand mine. It was hardly surprising if I was taken to be a Welsh-Geordie on leaving the ship in Birkenhead nine and a half months later. During that time I had visited Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, transporting oil from the Dutch East Indies. Whatever I thought I knew about the sea was very quickly and correctly dispelled when I joined my next ship "San Demetrio" and reported to the Master, who enquired as to the length of time I had been at sea, whereupon I replied: 'Nine and a half months, sir' he remarked: 'Well, you won't be quite useless, then.' The name of this ship was the San Demetrio, and I was to remain with her for one year and nine months. We made numerous voyages from the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico ports to the United Kingdom carrying petroleum.

My last voyage before hostilities commenced between Britain and Germany was to Baltic ports via the Kiel Canal. The hostile attitude of the young people on the canal bank as we passed through, seen shaking clenched fists at us, etc, was noted to be in contrast to the friendlier attitude of the older people there. Latvian and Estonian ports, which we called at, en route to Helsinki, now, of course belong to the U.S.S.R. It struck me as strange to see women performing heavy manual tasks such as discharging timber-laden ships and carrying out heavy road repairs at these ports. The public buildings and places of worship in the cities were particularly impressive. We were not to return through the Kiel Canal, as our instructions were to proceed to Falmouth via Skagerrak. Three days out of Falmouth we heard that hostilities were declared between Britain and Germany. As from this time, September 1939, life at sea took on a different aspect. My training was intensified, and like most young men of my age at that time, responsibilities had to be accepted earlier than before. During the first year of the war, the vessel made numerous voyages between the United Kingdom and the West Indies oil ports. Halifax, Nova Scotia, became our eastbound convoy assembly port, and as no cargo was carried out there, the few days at this port were always a much looked forward to event.

Those Atlantic crossings were not without incident; there were numerous attacks and alarms, but the San Demetrio avoided big trouble until November 1940, when we sailed in convoy from Halifax, Nova Scotia, escorted by H.M.S. Jervis Bay, an armed merchant cruiser. The fourth day after sailing, our engine broke down. It was sixteen anxious hours later before making an attempt to catch up the convoy. This we did on the evening of November 4th. In view of forthcoming events, it might well have been better not to have done so.



Click Below

http://www.rhiw.com/y_mor/capt_j_l_jones/san_demetrio/san_demetrio.htm

Ireland pardons soldiers who deserted to fight Hitler

DUBLIN | Tue Jun 12, 2012 3:06pm EDT

(Reuters) - The Irish government on Tuesday pardoned thousands of servicemen who deserted to fight for the Allied forces during World War Two after the Irish state decided to remain neutral in the war against Adolf Hitler's [Germany](#).

[Ireland](#) maintained its neutrality throughout the war, saying any other course would have threatened its independence, secured from Britain in 1921, and President Eamon DeValera signed a book of condolences on the death of Hitler in 1945.

About 60,000 people from the Irish state fought in the British Forces during the war, including some 7,000 servicemen who deserted from the Irish armed forces.

The Irish government summarily dismissed all of those who deserted and disqualified them from state employment for seven years. Relatives say the deserters were stigmatized for decades.

"The government apologizes for the manner in which those members of the defense forces who left to fight on the Allied side during World War Two were treated after the war by the state," Minister for Justice and Defense Alan Shatter said in an address to parliament.

"In the almost 73 years since the outbreak of World War II, our understanding of history has matured," he said.

"It is time for understanding and forgiveness."

Some former Irish officers have objected to the decision, saying pardoning deserters, whatever the circumstances, undermines the Irish armed forces.

But relatives, who have campaigned for years for a pardon, welcomed the move.

"It's not going to change the history, but it will remove the stigma," said Peter Mulvany, who led the campaign for the soldiers, in comments to state broadcaster RTE.

Ireland's relations with historic foe Britain are at their warmest for decades. The pardon comes year after a visit by Queen Elizabeth to Ireland, the first by the British sovereign since independence.

[Click Below](#)

<http://www.forthesakeofexample.com/>

The sheer nightgown

A husband walks into Victoria's Secret to purchase a sheer negligee for his wife. He is shown several possibilities that range from \$250 to \$500 in price -- the sheerer, the higher the price.

He opts for the sheerest item, pays the \$500, and takes it home.

He presents it to his wife and asks her to go upstairs, put it on, and model it for him.

Upstairs, the wife thinks (she's no dummy), "I have an idea ... it's so sheer that it might as well be nothing. I won't put it on, I'll do the modeling naked, return it tomorrow, and keep the \$500 refund for myself."

She appears naked and strikes a pose.

The husband says, "Good Grief! You'd think for \$500, they'd at least iron it!"

He never heard the shot. Funeral is on Thursday at noon. The coffin will be closed

Brave? They were scared witless. What made them heroes was defying that fear, raid after terrifying raid

Every night, just as the sun was setting and Allied airmen were waiting to board their bombers for yet another gut-wrenching raid on Hitler's Germany, a farmer would stand by the end of the runway at RAF East Kirkby in the Lincolnshire flatlands and wish them well.

Some of the boys — for, in truth, that was all many of them were — hummed and whistled, retreating into their own worlds in the calm before the storm. A few, for luck or out of sheer terror, relieved themselves against the undercarriage.

But 19-year-old Bob Pierson, a tail-gunner in a Lancaster, liked to share a cigarette with the farmer and his pretty daughter.

Iconic: The Avro Lancaster, Britain's four-engine bomber, pictured on a British airfield during the Second World War in 1942

'We'd talk about the weather, the harvest, normal things,' a white-haired Mr Pierson told me six decades later, 'anything but where I was going with my crew that night.'



'In some ways that was the hardest part. One minute you were leading an ordinary life. Then we were off to drop bombs on Berlin or the Ruhr valley in the middle of the night, and knowing we might never come back.'

'There must have been many times when that farmer chatted to men he never saw again. But he never asked what happened to them, never mentioned it. No one did.'

That was what it meant to fight in Bomber Command in the World War II. Very much alive one minute, in the prime of life; very dead the next, shot down, wiped out, obliterated. The courage needed was breath-taking.

'You came back from a raid,' Mr Pierson recalled, 'and seven beds in your hut were empty. Seven friends gone — an entire crew — men you had been laughing and joking with a few hours earlier.'

The unfinished game of Monopoly still lay on the table, but half the players had not returned.'

More...

- [Betrayal of a hero: He flew 92 missions as a rear gunner in the Second World War. So why won't bureaucrats let Freddie Johnson, 91, attend the unveiling of a memorial to his comrades in Bomber Command?](#)
- [Two airmen were shot down on the same mission. Only one's been invited to the Bomber Command memorial \(and he's Canadian\)](#)
- [Memories of true heroism: Medals and flying helmet of WWII flying ace who downed 22 Nazi fighters expected to fetch £50,000 at auction](#)

And yet if you were one of those who managed to survive your wind-buffed round-trip to the skies over the Third Reich, drop your seven tons of bombs and make it home through the flak and the enemy fighters, then there was tomorrow night — when you would have to do it all over again.

Thirty or 40 times, if you were lucky. Only with that number of missions under your belt — that number of brushes with death and destruction — would you be stood down.

Most did not make it that far. Between 1939 and 1945, the RAF's Bomber Command lost 55,573 airmen in battle, more than half its entire force. Its casualty rate was higher than any other section of the British armed services.

In one night alone, 670 Bomber Command aircrew died in a matter of hours, caught by a Luftwaffe ambush in

the glare of a full moon on their way to Nuremberg in southern Germany.

Of the close-on 800 aircraft that took off from 39 airfields in eastern England that night in 1944, nearly a hundred — 64 Lancasters and 31 Halifaxes — never came back. At some squadrons, those who did return were stunned to see the names of a quarter of their mates wiped off the operations blackboard.

There was an aching silence in the mess that night, one RAF pilot recalled. ‘We had lost so many good chaps, the cream of our youth.’

Killed in action: The crew of a Lancaster bomber shot down over Belgium on this very day - 16 June - in 1944

Such sacrifice will at long last receive the awe, gratitude and respect it deserves when later this month the Queen unveils the official memorial to the men of Bomber Command in London’s Green Park. An old debt will at least have been acknowledged. It can never be repaid.

Controversies over some former airmen not being invited to the ceremony should not overshadow the fact that what the pilots, navigators, wireless operators, bomb aimers and gunners went through to take the war to Hitler’s backyard was — to use a word much overused these days — epic.



From the retreat at Dunkirk in 1940 to the D-Day invasion of Normandy in 1944, their determined attacks on the German war machine and on the German people themselves were the nation’s sole hammer chipping away at the Nazi regime and its supporters.

When Europe lay at Hitler’s feet, Bomber Command’s was the single voice taking the defiant message of ‘no surrender’ to the Germans. Then, from 1944 to 1945, its pounding of the Fatherland played a huge part in forcing Germany to the point of defeat.

Though some historians and peace campaigners still question this, there is no doubt in my mind that the war could not have been won and the Nazi tyranny destroyed without the relentless bombing campaign masterminded by Bomber Command’s much-maligned commander-in-chief, Sir Arthur Harris.

His men flew a staggering 360,000 sorties to hundreds of targets, most of them protected by rings of anti-aircraft guns and squadrons of Messerschmitt fighters. More than 8,000 bombers were blown out of the sky or crash-landed.

And what every man jack of them knew as they soared off into the skies was that, if your plane was hit, your chances of survival ranged from slim to zero. For every man who was able to parachute to safety (and usually into captivity, in itself not a desirable state), four didn’t make it out of their stricken planes.

It took incredible guts for Bomber Command crews to keep going, time after time, when the odds were so heavily stacked against them. The stress it caused was hard to disguise.

[Click Below for the full story](#)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2159978/Brave-They-scared-witless-What-heroes-defying-fear-raid-terrifying-raid.html>