



# ARCHER'S POINT



Edinburgh Universities' Royal Navy Unit  
Newsletter

Easter '17

Editor: O/Cdt W Mathewson

Email: [unit@eurnu.org.uk](mailto:unit@eurnu.org.uk)

[www.eurnu.org.uk](http://www.eurnu.org.uk)

Tweet us @EdinburghURNU

## Easter 2017

With another stellar term at the unit, it means time for an update on what we've been up to over the past 4 months! Highlights from this term include Burns Night, Sports Weekend, Adventurous Training and Easter Deployment.

O/Cdt W Mathewson, I/C Media

## Burns Night

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February, we had our annual Burns night to celebrate the famous works of Scottish poet, Robert Burns. This year it was held in The Caves, a stunning venue which happens to have been one of Robert's favourite haunts, and now is one of mine. Once all the guests had arrived and we were seated at our tables, our CO, Captain Sutton, welcomed our guests and briefly talked about EURNU. Following the starter, O/Cdt Matt Asbridge piped in the haggis. O/Cdt Peter Reid addressed the haggis brilliantly but sometimes incoherently due to his particularly strong Scottish accent. After our main course, O/Cdt Matt Asbridge read 'To a Mouse' in his best attempt at a Jamaican Scottish accent. Following the much-needed Ease Springs, O/Cdt Jack Wilby gave a toast to the lassies and O/Cdt Helen Montgomery replied, toasting the lads. Both toasts focused on each individual of EURNU and their respective qualities. The night didn't end there. We then went back to the unit for a ceilidh. Everyone enjoyed this as we all love a good dance and we all love a good drink and there was plenty of both going around. We all danced ourselves into the early hours of the next morning which didn't make clean up at 10 easy.



By O/Cdt L Barr

# Sports Weekend

On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the 15 University Royal Naval Units (URNUs) gathered in Portsmouth for their annual Sports Weekend; a tournament to decide who is the best sporting URNU (spoiler alert: likely Southampton.) As ever, there was a good showing of mascots assembled in the hall, awaiting instruction for the start of the contests. Edinburgh had made an attempt at a 'Tennants' keg. Wales had yet again dug out their dragon onesie, but this time adorned it with a high-vis jacket and a police helmet. Wales had also managed to find their godforsaken drums, an addition not welcomed by many others. Bristol resurrected their pantomime horse (which had been hard fought over the year before). Liverpool's yellow submarine surfaced once more. Cambridge remembered their elephant costume to represent their ship, HMS Trumpeter - apparently, a Heinz Baked Beans tin wasn't fitting. Manchester had managed to wrangle a shark costume to represent their ship, HMS Biter. Northumbria followed Edinburgh's lead with a mascot in the form of a bottle of Newcastle Brown Ale. With face paint and flags galore, the games began.

Saturday kicked off with rugby, hockey and the swimming heats. With the most hotly contested sport of all, rugby, under way, the matches were fierce. There was all to play for in each match, lest a team travel a long way for one, sole game. Much talk, as ever, surrounded the supposedly best rugby team, Wales, with Edinburgh (arguably the second best) due to be their first challenger. Edinburgh put up a stiff fight, but were unfortunately not victorious, narrowly losing 3 tries to 2. In the end, after a solid showing from all teams, Southampton came away as rugby champions.

Meanwhile, the hockey raged on. An odd scheduling choice left Glasgow and Edinburgh battling it out to see who would remain to represent Scotland in the hockey; Edinburgh emerged triumphant on penalties. In a trend that became worryingly apparent as the weekend wore on, Southampton ended up also winning the hockey. In the swimming, with questionable strokes from some members of certain units, Glasgow rose to the top.

After a long, hard day of sport, what better than a social? Glasgow had organised the social for this year and had selected the theme of 'Myths and Legends', which led to a fantastic array of costumes. There were many wearing togas from both Yorkshire and Southampton; another unit was dressed as devils and fairies. Bristol were apparently 'aliens', although many deemed just wearing colanders riddled with pipe-cleaners on their heads not up to scratch. One can only hope they'll put in more effort next year. As per usual, Edinburgh won the social with their fantastic mermaid costumes, resplendent with shiny tails, garish wigs and sea shell bras. Meanwhile, the girls of the Edinburgh URNU were dressed as pirates.

With many sore heads on Sunday morning, more sport was designated as the hangover cure. (Although, The Sportsman's Arms seemed the more popular choice amongst the students.) On the cards for Sunday's sports were netball, bucketball and the relay race. In the bucketball, as you might by now have guessed, Southampton won overall. However, they seemed to have let down their guard in the netball, where Liverpool managed to snatch up the trophy. The relay race, being an 8x400m dash, held much excitement, with a fantastic spirit filling the seating as many URNUs came together to cheer and jeer one another on. In the first heat, Edinburgh set an incredible pace which kept them in first place in the runnings for the first and second heats. Unfortunately, Bristol managed to run away with first place in the end, leaving Edinburgh third by a narrow 6 seconds.

Overall, it was yet again a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. Many thanks to Manchester & Salford URNU for their great work in organising the event, as well as Glasgow & Strathclyde URNU for organising the social. Roll on next year!

By O/Cdt W Mathewson

# Sea Weekend 17-19<sup>th</sup> APR

Between the 17th and 19th of April HMS Archer and a group of students were to be travelling to Stonehaven (a small seaside town, south of Aberdeen). However, due to the predictable unpredictability of Scottish spring-time weather this trip was changed to manoeuvres in the Firth of Forth. While disappointing for some, the training provided on this trip was valuable and gave us a chance to welcome our new CO aboard, Lt Charles Stevenson along with several new entries, myself included.

After a Friday night spent preparing charts, we left Leith early on the Saturday morning and began heading towards the Isle of May. This trip, both there and back was an excellent exercise for all roles involved. Charts was a particularly intensive role as we were encouraged to visually fix off various objects and locations within the Firth of Forth which led to some rushing and shouting, but a distinctly rewarding feeling when one managed to finally report a good fix! Upon our return from the Isle of May, HMS Archer headed towards Port Edgar where we would come alongside for the evening.

The following morning, we set off from Port Edgar and headed further up the Forth where we past a couple of points of naval interest. The first was the location at which the HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales are being fitted out/built, respectively. Even from a distance, both warships are incredibly impressive and serve as a testament to British engineering. Secondly, we passed Crombie Jetty, a military munitions depot. The jetty commenced operations in 1916 and played a significant role in resupply during the Second World War. It is now used primarily by the RAF.

Our training continued through the Sunday with charts continuing to be an up-tempo role. Though the role was afforded a break as we attempted some perry buoy manoeuvres. This exercise gave us a chance to test our abilities as Officer of the Watch in ordering the Helmsman to pilot the ship to a location where we could retrieve a perry buoy. While I personally did not get a chance at this, I did observe O/Cdt E Muir successfully retrieve the buoy, which I'm sure he was chuffed about.

We returned to Leith during the early afternoon, and once we had come alongside and cleaning was done we were debriefed and the final sea weekend of the semester came to a close. This sea weekend, along with the previous one has provided us with an essential base knowledge for our upcoming deployments over both Easter and summer. Roll on the 3rd of April!



By O/Cdt A Cronan

# AT Weekend

The AT (adventure training) weekend, 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March, took us to Onich, a small village near Glencoe where we stayed at the Inchree Chalet & Rooms. We arrived in the dark so we didn't have the opportunity to appreciate the stunning views that greeted us on Saturday morning as we prepared for our first activity: canyoning.



On Saturday morning, we took a short ride to our first activity, organised by the Vertical Descents Company. After almost an hour of briefing and getting into our hilariously awkward wet suits, we took the trek up to the top of Inchree waterfalls. In single file, we all followed a series of slides, jumps and slippery descents down the waterfalls which finished with an impressive 8m jump into a plunge pool below.



The second activity of the day was the Via Ferrata, a climbing experience accessible to anyone at any level of experience. The site was Grey Mare's Tail waterfall in Kinlochleven, 70m tall in total with a taller gorge surrounding it, nestled almost secretly in a steep-walled valley. Steel rebar steps following a safety cable mapped the route up the side of the cliff face and the heights offered an awesome view over the valley and a terrifying view below made all the more exciting by the ever-present torrent of water.



That evening we had our 'board game' social which despite everyone being keen to play, was forgotten for simple drinking games. Even though we were fairly tired from the day's activities, it didn't stop us from drinking till the very last call, a decision many of us regretted in the morning.

Our final activity – white water rafting – took place on Sunday morning in Kinlochleven, after we all finally managed to drag ourselves out of bed. We were split between fun-yaks (inflatable canoe's), bugs (a half floating chair) and rubber rings. Those of us lucky enough to have a bug or a rubber ring had the privilege of hand paddling our way down the freezing river (not that I'm bitter or anything). We went over 2 rapids the last one we repeated as many times as we were able before our energy ran out in whatever craft was available.

We finished our weekend with a barbecue, courtesy of the Vertical Descents team that guided us through our activities, and this gave us an opportunity to reflect on our weekend. The canyoning was the most exciting and challenging activity and didn't set off my fear of heights, unlike the Via Ferrata. I immensely enjoyed my weekend as a whole and I look forward to future AT weekends!

By O/Cdt H Mills

# Easter Deployment

Leg one of Easter Deployment 2017 began with a visit from the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and his wife. During a sunny but windy voyage to Port Edgar, the Lord Provost conversed with the students and ships company about the URNU. The exciting day ended upon arrival at Eyemouth, following the first perry-buoy manoeuvres of deployment. After a busy second day at sea, HMS Archer arrived at HMS Calliope in Newcastle. The students then sailed to Whitby – where they took part in a ‘squad run’ up the 199 Whitby Abbey steps. Next, they travelled up the river Humber to Grimsby.

After stops in Lowestoft and Ramsgate, HMS Archer travelled across to Dunkirk, France. During this adventure, the students visited the site of the famous Operation Dynamo – the evacuation of Allied soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk from May - June 1940. The students also visited the Dunkirk memorial, where they gave presentations on the key role that Dunkirk played in our military history.

The first leg of deployment culminated with a handover in London at HMS President. During this several day period, the students of both legs one and two came together to visit the Imperial War Museum, The Old Royal Naval College, The National Maritime Museum and the British clipper ship – the Cutty Sark.

Leg 2 of Easter Deployment picked up in London, joining the students on leg 1 to tour London, as aforementioned. After spending a day in HMS President sorting out charts and moving aboard, HMS Archer moved south to Ramsgate with several visitors also embarked. Being the first day at sea for the majority of the students, it gave both them and visitors alike a chance to learn how the ship operates on a daily basis. Having met up with HMS Trumpeter, Cambridge URNU’s ship, in Ramsgate, both ships headed round the south coast to Cowes. Plans to head on to Poole were scuppered when an electrical fault developed in one of the engines, so Archer made a hop to HMNB Portsmouth to get herself fixed.

With everything right once more, Archer headed west to the bright lights of Weymouth. Meeting up with Trumpeter once more, students enjoyed a night out on the town in ‘Weybiza’ making new friends in the Cambridge URNU. As Archer and Trumpeter headed east again to Portsmouth, they met up with HMS Biter, Manchester & Salford URNU’s ship, performing Officer of the Watch manoeuvres en route.

After a day of rehearsals, all 14 Archer-class P2000s of 1 Patrol Boat Squadron proceeded out into the Solent for a Squadron Exercise (SQUADEX). It was the first time in at least a decade that all P2000s were in the same place, let alone in formation. Among the crowd were MGDB81 and HMS Medusa – wartime vintage gunboats, used in WWII to protect harbours and the D-Day landings from U-boat attacks. The three hours of intense manoeuvres produced some fantastic photos and was an incredible experience for all, probably the likes of which shall not be seen again for far too long.

Falling out from SQUADEX, Archer made a move on the long trek home, heading first to Ramsgate. She then made a long, 200-mile sail through particularly rough seas to Grimsby, before making the final push to Newcastle.

By O/Cdts M Singleton & W Mathewson

# Sports Weekend & Deployment Photos

