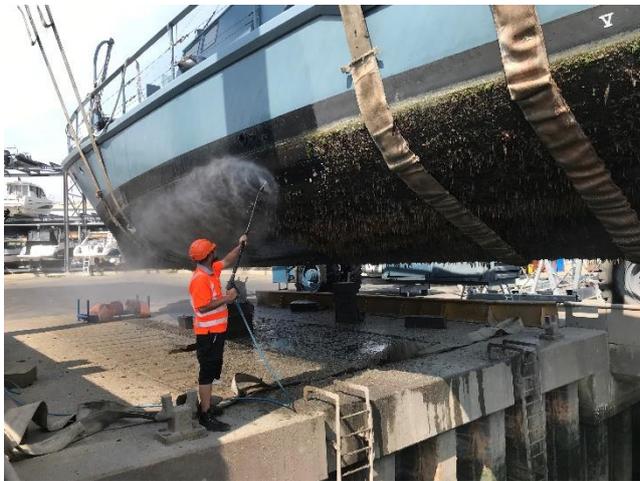




## Christmas 2020 Update

I'm not sure any of us will be sorry to see the last of 2020 other than we are all a year older and time is one thing you cannot get a refund on. It certainly was not the year we were planning for Medusa. One of my winter tasks is doing the accounts for submission to Companies House and the Charity Commission; I have not done the sums yet but our income for the year is around £2k and outgoings about £14K. Not pretty, but, fortunately, we have a bit in the kitty from our Dunkirk filming to see us through. In my nearly 25 years with Medusa this is the first year when we have not covered our costs.

Our trip to Saxon Wharf was delayed until August this year but that gave us the advantage of good weather. Medusa lifted out on Monday 10 August; the yard pressure-washed her and we had access mid-afternoon. By 1730 half the anti-fouling was done. By the Tuesday evening we were pretty much finished apart from painting in the draft marks. We launched on the Thursday and had a pleasant run back to Haslar.



A very weedy bottom, Monday at midday.



Monday 1700 and antifouling well under way.



Tuesday and port side antifouling nearly done and grey topsides well under way.



Wednesday, all done and ready to launch.

On the way back down the Itchen we spotted RAF1387 at Smiths Quay. An amazing coincidence that both have survived, as have MTB102 and RAF HSL102.



RAF Pinnace 1387.

In my last update the diary for the rest of the year looked like this:

- September 4-7            Bucklers Hard
- September 11-13        Gosport Heritage Open Days.
- October 17                Trafalgar Night dinner.
- November 7/8            Remembrance weekend.

It was not to be. The September training weekend was cancelled in its original form as Bucklers Hard was shut and we could not sleep on board. Instead, we did day runs and some alongside training. Haslar marina kindly kept a hammerhead berth free which meant we could do some practice alongsides. Mark Fowler, Robin Hooper and Mark Shelley all did a great job in parking Medusa, completely ruining my line that it is not easy.



Robin Hooper bringing Medusa alongside.



Chris Harman on the controls in the engine room.

We have been documenting methods of doing things and past experience in the form of "aide memoire" action cards to cover such things as steering failure, man overboard etc. We used the days to try out some of these in as near real situation as we could make. In the past we have done MOB by throwing a life ring over and recovering it by boathook sometimes "en passant". The Royal Navy P2000 patrol boats used to do it the same way until there was a real MOB and the poor soul in the water found himself looking at the point of a boathook. We took this experience on board and spent some time considering how we would get somebody back on board, how long it would take to react and prepare and tried it out. A successful MOB exercise was redefined as having Medusa stopped with the MOB (now two red buoys with a weighted line) at the foot of the accommodation ladder.



Testing the recovery slings.

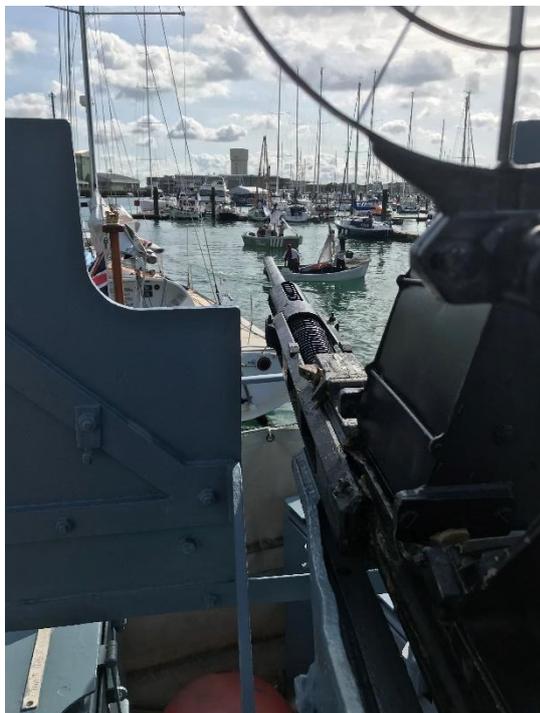


MOB without the boathook.

There is still a lot we can learn and improve but it is great, from my point of view, to see the standard of our operations continually improving.

Some of the heritage open events still took place but we decided the risk of having public and ourselves in a confined space was just too great and cancelled. Trafalgar Night dinner was also cancelled. The restaurant was open but our numbers would have been depleted severely and we would have had to sit in groups of six divided by plastic screens. On balance we felt it better to leave it and have a proper event next year.

The marina had organised a social event for berth-holders on 12 September with a pirates theme. It went ahead but, due to continuing worries about the virus, it was a very muted affair. The “pirates” came our way briefly but the after 20mm Oerlikon discouraged them.



How lucky do you feel?

The annual Remembrance service was scheduled for 8 November at Hornet and Medusa plus crew normally attend. By early November it was looking doubtful and Hornet decided initially to have a service with restricted numbers and then decided to cancel. There was, however, a service on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> with a small number of people. The representatives of overseas navies were not present and the wreaths were laid on their behalf.



Alan laying a wreath at the Coastal Forces cenotaph.

To end the season we had an unexpected trip out. The national Museum of the Royal Navy asked if we would take two sound engineers (audio that is, all engineers are sound!) to sea to record Medusa to be used as a “soundscape” on the Landing Craft at Southsea. The script was a bit alarming with things like “waves crashing against the hull” and “wind whistling through gaps in the hull”. As it happened it was blowing a bit on the day we went out and we found some waves for them east of the Isle of Wight. The engineers came back from the foredeck soaked and the woolly affair that covers the microphone looked very bedraggled. Apart from sea sounds, they recorded the engines, Morse in the wireless office and conning orders on the bridge. I am due to visit the LCT on 15 December and will be interested to hear the end result.

In the last newsletter, I was delighted to welcome the Lord Lieutenant, Nigel Atkinson as our new patron. In this I am similarly delighted to welcome Julian James as a new trustee.

In our governing document, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, we are obliged to have a minimum of two trustees; presently we have three (Guil Strathalmond, Laurie Hopkins and me). The duties of a trustee include ensuring we operate according to our Mem and Arts and various legislation, keeping accounts and reporting to the Charity commission and Companies House, fund raising, long term strategy and most importantly being an ambassador for Medusa.

Last year the present trustees decided that we must seek some new trustees; we did not know of the impending global pandemic, but, had we known, it would have been more urgent. We each set off to find someone who had the necessary skills to be a trustee, had contacts that would help us

and had a real passion for Medusa. Guil introduced Julian, I have another in mind but that must wait for another time.

Julian has been out with us on Medusa and the Medusa bug had bitten. He is around 60 (that counts as young on Medusa) and holds a senior position in the maritime insurance world as well as serving on the Council of Lloyds of London until recently. He has homes in London and Cowes and is a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron. He has an Oyster 575, currently berthed in Cowes.



Julian James.

My thoughts are turning to 2021. The trip to Guernsey that was cancelled this year is on for next so pencil in the first two weeks in May. Similarly, the trip to Normandy should take place the first two weeks of June.

In January/February we will have a day out filming a night action sequence for the Priddy's Hard Museum and another short trip for Dr Sam Willis to do a filmed interview with Hannah Cunliffe of National Historic Ships.

On Saturday September 4, the marina is having a festival and would like us to take part. I have also just had an enquiry for a charter day in July. I will put these together as a draft schedule shortly.

The one positive that has come out of this year is that lots of jobs have been done on board and Medusa is looking smart rather than "end of season". This year Richard Hobbs has joined us and brought with him a wealth of experience from his career in the Royal Navy. He has taken on the task of documenting the routine maintenance work on the deck side (we are trying to catch up with the engineers who are already organised!). This is already bearing fruit and making it easier to allocate tasks and keep a record of when completed.

The next few months will be mainly maintenance but we can look forward to the 2021 season when we can get out and about again and show the world a beautiful little ship that we can all be justifiably proud of. Until then, thank you for all your work this year and for sticking with it through the pandemic. Have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

***Alan***