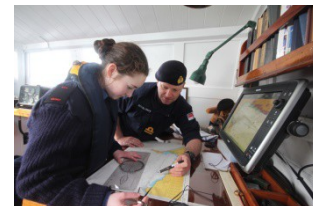




Christmas has come around again; I'm not entirely sure where 2016 went as it has passed in a flash. From the Medusa perspective it has been a good year in all respects. We have had a busy and successful programme, made some new friends and Medusa has behaved impeccably.

Our first trip was to Portland for an event hosted by the marina. Whenever we go to Portland the weather seems to turn against us and this time was no exception with the second day of the event "Fish and Ships" cancelled. On the way down we had a group from Warsash Sea Cadets on board doing some navigational training. The cadets found being at sea quite challenging especially going through the race off St Albans Head. We have wanted to get young folk involved for some time but have struggled; the Medusa bug must have bitten as they want to come again.

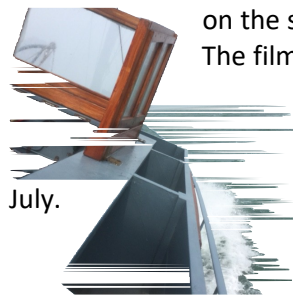
Next task was the Spring lift out and paint at Shamrock Quay. Medusa came out of the water on the Monday and was launched on the Friday with an amazing amount of work done between. The manager of Southampton Yacht services came over and offered us employment as he said we were twice as productive as his team even though most of us are on the adult side of 70.



On May 18 we had a day at sea in company with HMS Blazer. This marked the departure of the squadron c/o Pincher Martin. He had expressed a wish to come out on Medusa but did not know that it was to actually happen. Blazer came into our dock and Pincher plus two of his team came to Medusa and two of ours went to Blazer. It is great to see the relationship between Medusa and today's Royal Navy getting closer and Pincher's successor, Mark Hammon is keen to take that forward.

May 21 saw us at sea for a very different reason. We went out to scatter the ashes of John Lambert, one time crew member of Medusa and author of the definitive works on Coastal Forces vessels.

The highlight of the year has to be our trip to Dunkirk to take part in the upcoming Dunkirk film. Right until the last moment it was doubtful if we would go as the contract was initially less than satisfactory. We travelled over in two stages, overnighing in Eastbourne. The weather was unkind on the second leg and with a big beam sea, Medusa demonstrated how HDMLs roll.



July.

The filming involved some very long and tiring days but was an amazing experience. The first official trailer has just come out (link below) and it is just possible to see Medusa over the Admiral's shoulder. We had a significant role in the film and will be more visible in the final version which is due out in July. We also had a day filming for the History Channel as part of a series on warships, Medusa will be the star of the ball in this, more details to follow.

<https://youtu.be/F-eMt3SrfFU>

On the 1st July we had the company of HRH Prince Michael when we ferried him between engagements at Portsmouth and finally over to Cowes. He showed a keen interest in Medusa and clearly enjoyed his time on board.



This is just a flavour of the year; there were lots of other events and I think we clocked up a record number of operational days this year.

We watch with interest the fortunes of the other surviving HDML's; world-wide there are around 24 though we have not heard of some for a while. The number reduces each year and the next newsletter will feature a round-up of the few that are left. We had a visit in the Spring from Heather Nicholson who owns HDML Paea (ML1184) in New Zealand. Paea has been restored and is looking smart. More recently Scott Perry has contacted us. He has bought HDML Kuparu (ML1348) and is working on her. Sadly ML 1321, Rushcutter, sank in Australia but has been refloated and lifted out of the water, it remains to be seen what happens to her. Closer to home there are only five HDML hulls, apart from Medusa, in the UK (1085 Etive Shearwater; 1257, Marica; 1309, Morning Wings; 1379 Abri and 1392 Sarinda); none are presently seaworthy. 1085 has been up for sale with a very uncertain future. She has been purchased recently and her engines removed after which the hull has been sold on to Martin Weston, a frequent visitor to Medusa. Sir Humphrey would describe this as a brave decision but it seems the hull is in fair shape so there is hope for her. She is the second oldest surviving HDML. It's amazing that any have survived considering they were built 80 years ago for a five year operational life.

Next year is beginning to shape up. We have already had requests for some sea days with the Sea Cadets and will also be working with the Royal Navy Combined Cadet Forces. In April there is to be an exercise involving all 14 of the Royal Navy P2000 fast patrol boats and we are to join that. June may well see us across the Channel to take part in the D Day commemoration. On the social side, we plan to repeat the summer BBQ on Mary Mouse and the October Trafalgar Night dinner (October 14).

All in all it's been quite a year. None of this could have happened though without the hard work of the volunteers who have crewed and maintained Medusa. She looks the smartest I have ever seen her and is a huge credit to all involved. I would like to offer the sincere thanks of the Trustees to all who have played a part in keeping this fine vessel at sea.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Alan

