



# PUSSEY'S® Scuttlebutt



WRY NEWS & AMUSING RUM GOSSIP

NO.2 / VOL.3

**SPECIAL 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLACK TOT DAY EDITION!**

## Pusser's Rum a main attraction at Portsmouth Navy Days



### Mourned by many

The loss of their daily tot was mourned by many and as sailors always have done they put a name to this black occasion calling it Black Tot Day.

On each anniversary of Black Tot Day, those in naval service when rum was issued and those ex navy who remember the tradition, raise a glass to the toast "Up spirits" and down their Pusser's Rum. This scene was repeated in bars and taverns, sailing clubs and naval service clubs at home and abroad where toasts were drunk in Pusser's Rum.

This 40th anniversary is special because there are smaller numbers each year who experienced the tradition, and by the 50th Anniversary in 2020 there will be even fewer.

These naval stalwarts have passed on their love of rum to a new generation who include rum in their cocktails.



*Revival of the Royal Navy's longest tradition – the daily issue of Pusser's rum*



**At precisely 12.30pm visitors to the first day of Navy Days in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard were stopped in their tracks by the amplified singing of old sea shanties. It came from the quay alongside HMS Victory.**

It was the Exmouth Shanty Men, a famed crew of singers dressed in period naval costume of Vice Admiral Lord Nelson's day. They travelled from Devon to support the re-enactment of the Royal Navy's longest lasting tradition, the issue of the daily rum tot, on the 40th anniversary of the infamous Black Tot Day.

On the 31st July 1970 the last rum tot ever was issued to serving sailors of the Royal Navy around the world.

The Admiralty decided it was no longer appropriate to issue rum to a modern, high technology navy, in an age where wrong decisions or incorrect push-button actions could have disastrous results. Clear heads, clear thinking were even more important in the modern navy where there was no room for error.



SPECIAL 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLACK TOT DAY EDITION!



# PUSSER'S PUTS ON A SHOW



*Life at sea in Vice Admiral Lord Nelson's day was tough, brutal, and hard but made tolerable by the daily issue of half a pint of Pusser's rum at the Scuttlebutt. Here the issue of Pusser's brings a smile to the faces of the Pusser's Re-enactment team and the Exmouth Shanty Men*

**As the original, authentic rum of the Royal Navy for more than 300 years, blended to the Admiralty's specification, it was logical for Pusser's to bring Black Tot Day to public attention.**

The Pusser's Re-enactment team led by Ian Whitewood, dressed in period naval costume, clutching their special Pusser's enamel mugs lined up to the Scuttlebutt to receive their tots. Leader of the Exmouth Shanty Men, Martin Nicholls in the guise of Seymour Cleavage, related the story behind rum and the Royal Navy, interspersed with many a round of sea shanties. They kept the audience entertained while passing on this important piece of naval history.





# MEDIA LOVED IT

This was a colourful spectacle made for the media and it was covered by Meridian TV, ITV West Late News and its West Country Tonight programme, Portsmouth News TV, the BBC Radio 4 Today programme, the British Forces Radio Service - who gave a live broadcast on their world network, BBC Radio Solent, and BBC South TV.

"What did they do with the drunken sailor?" was the headline on BBC's

Today programme. "It was a sea change", said Commander David Allsop in the broadcast interview. He enjoyed the tot as a junior rating after joining the navy in 1955. "It was badly received. There was a lot of muttering below the decks."

"Black arm bands were worn as the Queen was toasted; tots were buried at sea; sailors paraded a black coffin flanked by drummers and a piper", said BBC News.

Feature in The News, Portsmouth

BBC Today Programme online



Watch Portsmouth News TV coverage by [clicking here](#)

# THE DAILY RUM ISSUE DID YOU KNOW...

Extracts from Nelson's Blood – The Story of Naval Rum by Captain James Pack OBE RN:

- Rum was first issued unofficially on board ships of the Royal Navy at Jamaica in 1655
- Rum ration was originally half a pint a day, increased at times to one pint to encourage the men to work harder
- From 1740 the rum ration was mixed with a quart of water to every half pint of rum under General Order from Vice Admiral Vernon
- In the same year the daily rum issue was split into two servings, one between 10.00 -12.00noon and 4.00 – 6.00pm
- Rum could only be served by daylight since the use of candles in the dark could set fire to the rum
- A north wester was another term for a glass of grog – half water half rum; a due north was a glass of neat rum and due west a glass of water alone
- Penalty for drunkenness ashore or onboard was on becoming sober to drink a pint of salt water in the presence of the commanding officer and ship's company

## SIR ROBIN KNOX-JOHNSTON WORLD FAMOUS MARINER

Sir Robin interviews Ben Pick for The Forces Worldwide Radio Network

That notorious Pusser's Rum lover pirate Ben Pick, who is also the Pusser's UK brand manager, was singled out and interviewed by Sir Robin Knox- Johnston in a live broadcast for the British Forces Broadcasting Service, Ben gave a good account of the history behind Pusser's Rum and its naval heritage and ensured Sir Robin got his due tot.

Print media took to Black Tot Day putting the spotlight on Pusser's, many doing their own research into the

daily rum issue tradition and producing large space features. "The navy always considers it to be one of their darkest anniversaries" said The Times. "It may be 40 years since the death of the tot but its legacy lives on" said the Portsmouth News. "Sailors emblazoned their T-shirts with Save our Tot" reports Warships International Fleet Review.

"Up spirits', the issue of the daily rum tot, was one order all Royal Navy sailors were keen to obey" said the Southampton Southern Daily Echo. Coverage is still coming in and any reader of Scuttlebutt is invited to report further sightings in the media.



## EDITORS USE BLACK TOT DAY FOR READER GAIN

Magazines and newspapers marked the occasion by giving away bottles of Pusser's Rum and ceramic decanters filled with Pusser's to lucky readers through their editorial competitions. Black Tot Day was one news event where the media approached Pusser's for product for their reader competitions.





# OTHER ANNIVERSARIES NOT TO MISS!

## TRAFALGAR DAY 21 OCTOBER 1805

This is a very special event in the navy calendar when sailors everywhere celebrate the astounding victory of Vice Admiral Lord Nelson over the combined fleets of France and Spain in 1805.

The British fleet consisted of 27 Men of War ships and 4 frigates against the 33 French and Spanish large ships and 7 frigates. Admirals Nelson and Collingwood used the unusual and dangerous tactic of cutting through the enemy's line of ships and raking them with cannon fire from stem to stern or vice versa, rather than engaging



them broadside to broadside. It was a winning ploy and apart from smashing the combined enemy fleet it stopped the ambition of Napoleon Bonaparte to invade England and made the British navy master of the seas.

Sadly Lord Nelson died in action from a musket bullet but his memory lives on and the anniversary of his great victory will be toasted in the traditional way with Pusser's Rum and "Up spirits".

## PICKLE NIGHT 4 NOVEMBER 1805

Following the death of Lord Nelson it fell to Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood to inform the Admiralty.



He selected HMS Pickle, a fast schooner, to take the news back to Britain. It anchored in Falmouth Bay at 9.45am on 4th November 1805 and her commander Lieutenant John Richards Lapenotiere took a coach to London to bring the news to the Admiralty. Normally the journey would have taken a week but with 19 changes of horses he arrived within 37 hours at 1.00am on 6th November. The Prime Minister William Pitt heard the news at 3.00am and King George III heard it at 7.00 am. Lieutenant Lapenotiere was promoted to Commander. The Committee of the Patriotic Society gave him a sword costing 100 guineas.

The journey of HMS Pickle and the bearing of the news from Trafalgar is marked each year by Royal Navy petty officers who hold an annual Pickle Night dinner, as do many private clubs and individuals within the Commonwealth, to celebrate the event and to drink a toast in 'Nelson's Blood'. It is a similar celebration to that of Trafalgar Night which is commemorated by Commissioned Officers.



## EXTRACT FROM THE DAILY TELEGRAPH "LETTERS TO THE EDITOR"

Some elements of the farming industry think people will be OK with putting cows at the heart of an industrial process? Cows of the Holstein breed used throughout the dairy industry are - through

SIR - Every potato is a clone. Does one need a certificate of safety to sell them?  
Peter Breuer  
Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex

SA  
system that won't mess of 2009. But by elementary own admission system costs much to vicious system, while security. discipline routinely minutes for an information bulletins it has announced e having to fund is or loans the offices because he expenses go on indefinitely. from IPSA gives no comments are being recently, its staff to advise them; vice go unanswered. 15 minutes has to MPs to provide the due to its clumsy ve pay MPs for? haste as a "bright vn. For now, IPSA MPs" card, but if it reality the electorate his costly mistake. P (Con)

the most courteous A officials. But I also unds of unpaid bills w system simply c) outfit expects its stationery lighting

Sailors toast the birth of the Queen's first child, Prince Charles, with glasses of rum, 1948

### Navy rum continues to benefit serving sailors

SIR - Your report (July 29) on the sale of the last remaining stocks of original Navy rum from 1870 states that some 6,000 bottles of Black Tot rum will be sold for an estimated £600 a bottle.  
Royal Navy rum has been on sale to the public since 1980, when the Admiralty approved the reblending of Pusser's Rum to its original specification. A royalty on worldwide sales accrues to the Royal Navy Sailors' Fund, also known as the Tot Fund, which provides amenities for serving personnel. To date, Tot Fund royalties have exceeded £750,000.  
Michael Fogg  
Chesham, Buckinghamshire

skinned people who, such an edge. Their experience, which it much to foster, is th many top Hollywood make films here in I The UKFC has als helping put together writers and director made. Among those has been vital are *Dr Beckham, This is En, and The Constant G* entertained audience They have also mad money for the Exch Everyone, includi industry, knows th the Government has the UKFC doesn't w it. For every pound I gets £5 back. Thank industry - worth £4. UK - has rarely bee successful.  
We can't afford to granted. Canada, Ne and other countries benefits in jobs and thriving film industr increasing their sup from Britain. By scra risk is that their job We should think I getting rid of one of behind a great Britis  
James McAvo  
Emily Blunt  
Dominic Cooper  
Ben Whishaw  
Bill Nighy  
Noel Clarke  
Ben Barnes  
Peter Postlethwaite  
Peter Mullan  
Damian Lewis  
Timothy Spall  
Sir Ian Holm  
Ruth Wilson  
Ken Cranham  
Kellie Bell



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