



# Member's



# Profiles

## Syd Pawley

Just after the start of WW2 I came into the world, on **5<sup>th</sup> October in Greenwich Hospital**, London. Later on I went on my travels as an evacuee - *this is me arriving in Shirley, Derbyshire; I think I am wearing a sailor suit!*



We came back to Charlton, South East London and lived close to the Thames and the docks with regular visits from Adolf's bombers. The 'crump' of their bombs, the drone of their engines and the searchlights probing the skies were regular features of our lives.

Our house was full of uniforms, the 'live for the day' attitude meant that parties occurred often and I saw many Navy uniforms, which may have influenced me in years to come.

Later although Grammar School was not an entirely wasted venture, I did not make full use of it and left to join the ranks of the workers.

One **Sunday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 1956**, wages in pocket (about 12s/6d) I happened across a church hall where there was a 'Ceilidh' dance and I decided to have a look. It was here that I met Anne - *just over 3 years later on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1959 we married.*

In **1957** joined the **Territorial Army (Parachute Regiment)** and completed 72 parachute jumps, got my 'wings', and was promoted to **L/Corporal** in charge of a Wombat Anti-tank gun.

In **1959** decided that I needed a career and so off to the recruiting office in Charing Cross Road. There was a tug-of-war over me between a Sergeant Royal Marines and a Chief Stoker because I was a qualified parachutist – the Chief Stoker told the best 'ditty' and so that was it, Anne signed the form to agree to the deal.

**HMS Collingwood** was my first base. My first ship was **HMS Sheffield** 'The Shiny Shef' tied up at Whale Island.

In **January 1961** I got my 'sea legs' aboard **HMS Crossbow** in the first Cod War! First port of call was where I 'lost my legs' courtesy of the 'Winter Gardens' in Gib and the 'wine shops' of La Linea. Visits to Malta, Venice, Cyprus, Nice, and Toulon - followed by a compassionate trip across France back to UK where I stayed and did the **Killick's Course**.

**March 1963** - **HMS Lynx** a good commission to St. Helena, Capetown, Durban, Mombasa and then across to South America, through the Panama Canal, down to the Falklands, up to Montevideo, across to Dakar (where I picked up my PO's uniform) and home for Christmas in Clanfield in Dec 1964.

**Now a PO** with two young daughters (Karen & Maria) I settled down once again in HMS Collingwood for PO's course, and PJT's.

On Saturday November 12<sup>th</sup> 1966 I set out to play football in Collingwood, our third child was due at any time, but Anne insisted



it would be OK. I was in goal and saw a young sailor racing towards us – he was the ‘mess-man’. “You are wanted at home” he was yelling”!

I left my goal unattended and managed to cadge a lift home, picked up Anne and raced to St. Mary’s Hospital, Pompey. I didn’t stay, not being ‘dressed’ for the occasion. Our son, Vincent, had arrived only a short while after.

In **June 1967** I joined **HMS Caprice** (of which some of the stories are yet to be told!)



**At Kyoto in 1968**

**1969** - back to **HMS Collingwood** for a year.

In **1970-1972** we had a great two years in **Hong Kong** where our youngest daughter, Samantha, was born. We experienced the wrath of Typhoon Rose and witnessed the burning of the QE1.

**1972** - now a **Chief Electrician**, I joined **HMS Sirius** on her West Indian cruise and re-visited many places that I had gone to with the Caprice.

**1974 – 1976** - **HMS Collingwood**, this time as Camp Buffer. I sang with the Gosport Amateur Operatic Society, which performed

mainly Gilbert & Sullivan operettas *This is me on the right in Yeoman of the Guard at Porchester Castle.* (Love the sign! - Ed.)

**1976-1977** - **HMS Glamorgan**. Plenty of Scandinavian trips, one to Norway, which resulted in a quick journey, back to England with a broken ankle, after foolishly thinking I could play football on the frozen pitches of Oslo.

**1978-1979** – in Wallsend standing by the build of **HMS Glasgow**. I joined the Backworth Male Voice Choir to keep my musical interest going.

**1980-1983** I was promoted to **Fleet Chief** and took up an appointment in C School, **HMS Collingwood**. This was extended to Whitehall.

My last Naval job was as President of the Senior Rates Mess, **HMS Drake**. On **November 10<sup>th</sup> 1986** I said farewell to the ‘Andrew’ after 27 years service.

After a couple of years of casual employment, joined the **Prison Service** at Dartmoor, in a counselling type role. This was convenient as we lived near Tavistock. However, this wasn’t for me and I was not sorry when I was told that for medical reasons I could no longer work there.

Since then I have been involved with singing groups, in Tavistock and Plymouth. I also got involved in Genealogy and it has proved an absorbing hobby and put me in touch on the Internet with family members in far-flung places.



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## **Profile - continued**

We moved to Rye from Cornwall in **2004** to be nearer to our children and grandchildren, but as they have all now relocated back to the South West as a lifestyle choice, we are looking at doing the same.

### **Likes**

The company of good friends - Planning holidays - My small granddaughter throwing a book onto my lap and climbing up behind it.

### **Dislikes**

Political Correctness gone mad - Bad language in young people - Being late (ask Phil Evans!)