

**50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
CLOSING OF
H.M.S.HARRIER /GOLDCREST,
KETE**

**COASTLANDS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP
Dale, Marloes, St Brides, St Ishmaels**

**WELCOMES YOU
to**

**AN EXHIBITION OF MEMOIRS,
PHOTOGRAPHS, REPORTS, DISPLAYS etc
APRIL 29TH - MAY 2ND 2011: 11am - 6pm**

**In
The Coronation Hall, Dale**

**And also to
A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING /
COMMEMORATION**

**at
DALE CHURCH
at 2.30pm**

on SATURDAY, APRIL 30TH 2011

**Arthur & Gill Charles as representatives of
Cloud Observers attended the four day exhibition.**

OUR MEMORIES OF HARRIER



General view of Kete c1947

These two photographs come courtesy of the
COASTLANDS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



Jean Moore (nee East).



1950: Wren Jean East

MEMORIES OF HARRIER

Edited from information supplied by

JEAN MOORE (nee EAST)

I joined the Wrens in 1950 and after a spell of square bashing etc. at Burghfield. I arrived at R.N.A.D.C. Kete together with the 1950 intake having waited up to three hours at Haverfordwest for transport to arrive.

Our class consisted of Jo Cross, Mo Brown, Margaret Palk, Cherry and Monica (cannot remember surnames) and of course Dunstan our only rating. Cicely Goodchild was leading Wren.

It was here that I was to meet my future husband for the first time - Dennis 'Pony' Moore. One of the things I remember was the patience shown by Dennis who spent half an hour of one class trying to get information into my thick skull.

Another memory that comes to mind happened on the night watch. I had been offered a cup of tea by Dennis. When I said I wanted a cup of coffee I was later presented with the most horrible tasting liquid, being young and new I drank some. It was only in later years that Dennis told me that it had been made with the water from the teapot; he related that story to me with great glee!

From Kete I was posted to HMS Gannet - R.N.A.S. Eglington, but later came a request for volunteers for Kete to plot an officers' course. My home town being Swansea in South Wales I volunteered and returned to Kete. I discovered that Dennis was still there and true to Kete's reputation we became good friends, also it was good to have someone pull me up the hill from the Griffin. The course was interesting but mostly I seem to remember the camp cinema, 'Tweety Pie' and the 'Headless Horseman' were all the rage!

We enjoyed our time at Kete, also visiting the Griffin and runs into 'Harry West' to the cinema.

© Jean Moore (nee East)



1

© Jean Moore (nee East)



2

© Jean Moore (nee East)



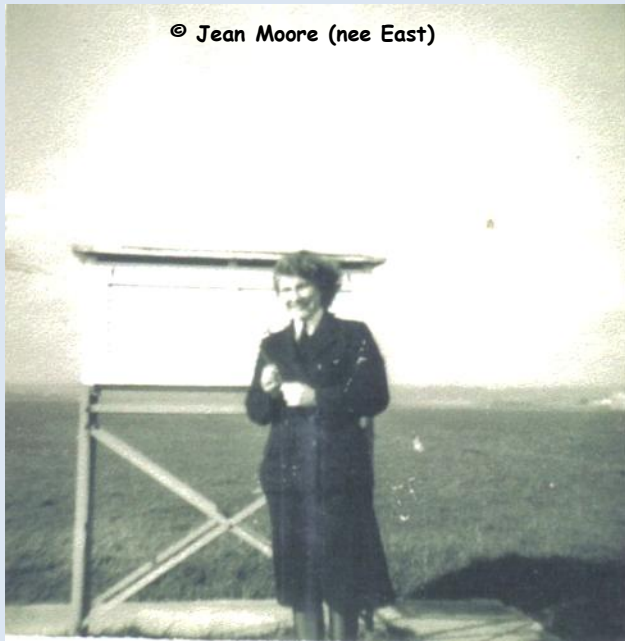
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*1950: Waiting for Transport at
Haverfordwest Station.*

1: 30 minutes after arrival

2: One and a half hours after arrival

3: Sighting the transport almost three hours after arrival.



1950: Stephenson's Screen



*c.1950: Met balloon ascent
"Pony" Moore with the clipboard*



© Jean Moore (nee East)

1950: Taken at one of the "Hops"

*1950: Happy days at the beach
and outside the Mess*

© Jean Moore (nee East)



© Jean Moore (nee East)

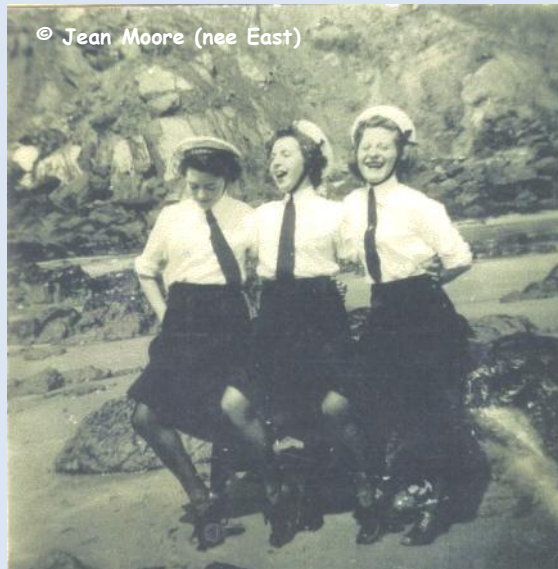


© Jean Moore (nee East)



© Jean Moore (nee East)

© Jean Moore (nee East)



© Jean Moore (nee East)



Margaret Tonge (nee Rowley)



*Nov./Dec. 1952: HMS Harrier
A "Sprog" or new entry.
Margaret Rowley soon after arrival at Harrier.*

MEMORIES OF HMS HARRIER

MARGARET TONGE

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1952

My memories of Kete are lost in the mists of time, but certain things do stand out. The first was the interminable rail journey from Reading to Haverfordwest (or Harry West in Naval terminology). I had had a tooth extracted the day before and was suffering from the handiwork of a ham fisted Naval dentist. Leaving the train, we found a bus waiting for us. This was a wartime utility bus with wooden slatted seats and if it lacked anything, it was comfort. We were, of course, total strangers to Pembrokeshire and had no idea of the distance to Kete. Believe me, by the time the bus had climbed the hill and entered HMS Harrier, certain parts of our anatomy were very numb.

We underwent a six weeks course to train us as Meteorological Observers, our main instructor being one Chief Petty Officer Greenstreet. On our first morning of instruction, as the morning break came round, we noticed a van pull up outside the classroom and we were told to go and take a tiffin. This was something new to us, but we soon realised it was a civilian version of a NAAFI van selling tea and cakes.

Weatherwise, the camp seemed to collect every scrap of wind coming from the Western approaches and destined for Wales. On occasions the walk across to the Met. Office was made almost impossible by the sheer strength of the wind. Even by leaning into it at quite a severe angle, it was a case of one step forward and two steps backwards. It was vicious. One weekend, Yvonne Clark (now living in the Isle of Wight) and I had bought mouth organs and were trying to get a tune out of them, much to the disgust of the other members of the mess who ordered us outside to practice. We went out onto the cliffs where we found that we did not need to blow into the instruments - all we had to do was to hold them up into the wind and adjust the airflow into them in order to get a tune out of them!

Shore leave was something of a marathon in that the long bus ride to H'west and back was not an attractive proposition. On the odd occasion that some of us tried it, we had some difficulty in occupying ourselves in town, so we did not persevere. We were only there for six weeks anyway and come Christmas 1952, I found myself going on leave with instruction to report to HMS Gannet, RNAS Eglinton, Co Londonderry in Northern Ireland. That, as they say, is another story!

Copied from the notes provided by (the late) Margaret Tonge.

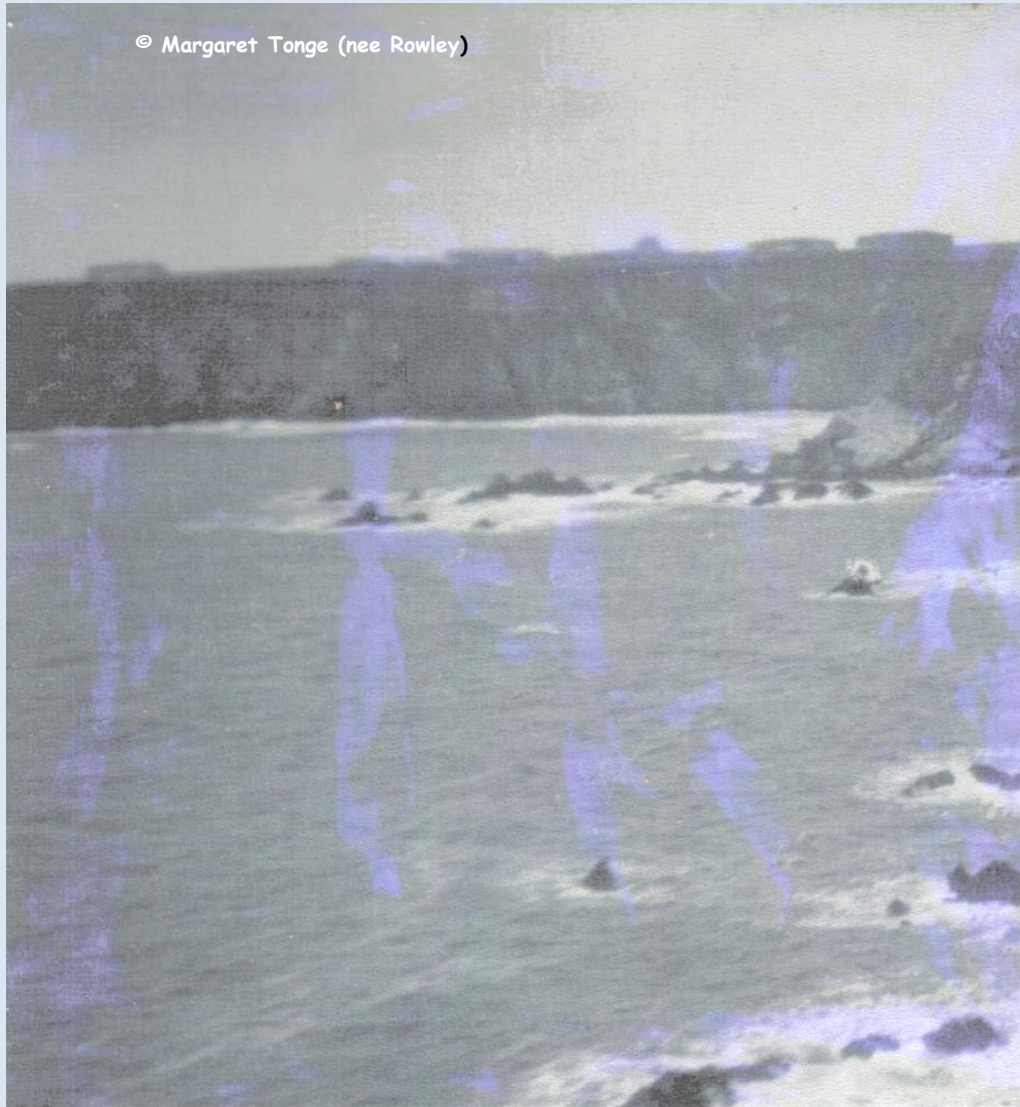
Extract from an email sent by Margaret Tonge to Margaret Copley

Coastlands Local History Group
(Pembrokeshire)

Now to names. Dennis Moore, was one of our instructors. I can't be sure of his rate at the time but he went on to become a CPO Met. He married Jean (nee East) in December 1953. Sadly, he died a few years ago. I remember Tony Berry - after I left Harrier he went out with Jean Heggie. The three of us met up again when the WRNS took over the Met. office at RNAS Bramcote (HMS Gamecock) in January 1955. By then I had met the love of my life (Golden Wedding on 24th December 2005) so the field was clear for Jean until Tony went to sea. After that I lost track of both of them.

Our Met Course was extended from the usual six weeks to bring us up to Christmas leave, 1952. The last two weeks were spent doing Met Office duties such as plotting charts, taking observations etc. for officer trainees. Very useful as it meant that when I went to RNAS Eglington in Northern Ireland (HMS Gannet) on draft after Christmas (where I met Jean Moore) I needed only one week's supervision before I took over watch keeping on my own. The course that followed needed at least four weeks supervision!

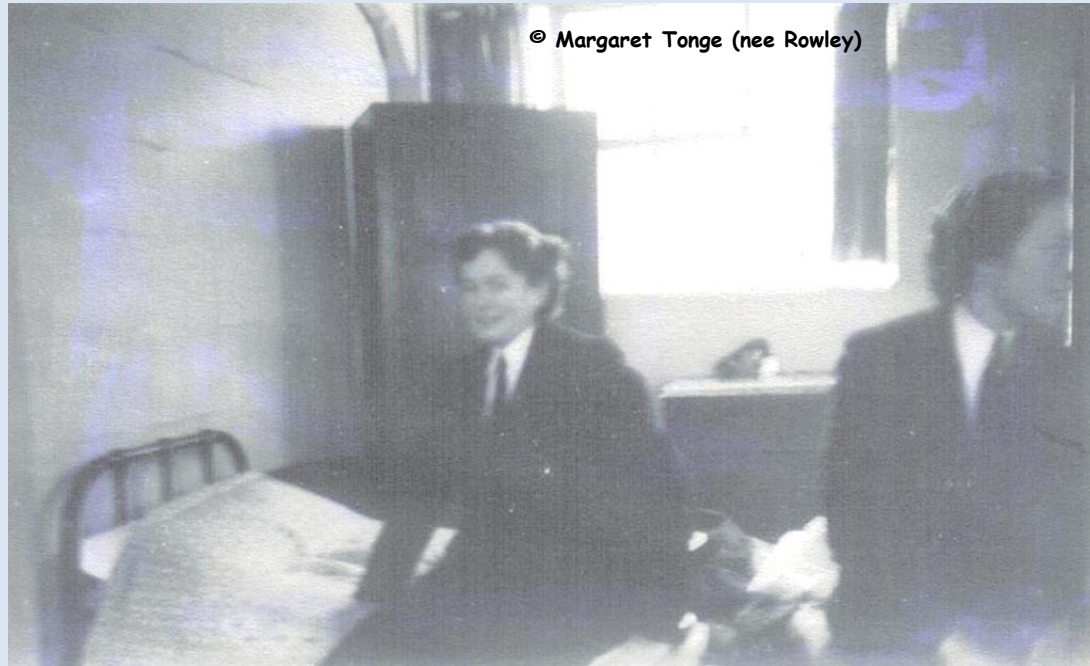
© Margaret Tonge (nee Rowley)



*NOV./Dec. 1952: HMS Harrier
Over the Boundary Fence - the cliffs*



*Nov/Dec. 1952: HMS Harrier
Trainee Meteorological Observers:
Shirley Newman, Margaret Rowley (now Tonge), Dorothy
Teesdale, newly arrived in November*



*Nov./Dec. 1952: HMS Harrier
Typical WRNS Accommodation Hut
Ann Mabbot(Trainee) and Jo Cross (Ships' Company)*

© Margaret Tonge (nee Rowley)



*Nov./Dec. 1952: HMS Harrier
L - R: Yvonne Clark, Eve Phillips, Anne Prosser*

© Margaret Tonge (nee Rowley)



*Dec. 1952: HMS Harrier
Members of 80 Mess, after the Christmas
Dinner*

© Margaret Tonge (nee Rowley)



NRNS Mess decorated for Christmas

MEMORIES OF HMS HARRIER

CHARLES SAGAR

4TH MARCH 1952 - 2ND FEBRUARY 1953

The bleakness of Kete was the first impression I had. Being shown around by the Met. Staff has always been a pleasant memory.

I remember N.A. Peter Rossington who was very confident, he was a part of the Met. Office - I think he was waiting for a draft to somewhere else. His brother was Norman Rossington, a budding actor, who became well-known in countless films. I can't remember the Mess Hall or how I spent my time after class at the beginning, also other ratings on my course. About May, two or three of us ran down to swim in the bay opposite the path to Dale. It seemed a lot further on the coast path today than it was then! We kept this routine up on good days throughout the summer.

A weekend pass was offered when the Met course finished, but it wasn't thinkable to get to Bolton, Lancs (home town), and back again via bus, train and 'thumbing it'. However, one Lt Cave had a motor bike and he offered anyone a lift as pillion rider to Warrington. I fell for it - no crash helmet - just scarf, gloves and greatcoat! At Friday teatime, after 5 - 7 hours clinging on (though I did momentarily drop off to sleep), we arrived at Warrington, where Lt Cave lived, I then thumbed the rest of the way to Edgworth, nr Bolton. It never crossed my mind about the return journey until then - a lift to Warrington on Sunday afternoon, then 5 - 7 hours back early Sunday evening. It was a hare-brained scheme from the beginning. I wished someone had offered to ride pillion before me. I don't know whether Lt Cave was a Met or RADAR brand - our paths never crossed again. However, he was only trying to do someone a good turn!

I had the odd game of cricket, visiting local villages on good Saturdays, weather permitting! I had a game of football once, away, St Davids in the Autumn of 1952. There were a few holes in the pitch and I twisted my right knee. I put up with the swelling on and off for months until June 1953 when I was sent to RN Hospital, Haslar, and had a cartilage removed. I remember being wheeled out on the lawn for a celebration on Coronation Day (Queen Elizabeth II).

July 19th 1952 was Navy Day and Annual Sports at Kete. (*Two photos towards the back*).

A 'Run Ashore' to Haverfordwest was always on the cards. I tried it once early on. I wasn't used to drink! It was a long wait to bus time for the trip back to camp.

Finally, a draft came through after January 1953 and on the 2nd February 1953 I went to HMS Blackcap, Stretton, nr Warrington. It looked like a good posting - only 35 miles from my home, but it was too near my home. I fell into the trap of having two homes - civilian and navy. On reflection it was a bad move.

Good luck to anyone I may have known and not remembered. (One name I do vaguely remember is 'Jo Cross'). The photo at HMS Daedalus was taken three days before we joined HMS Harrier. Perhaps someone may recognise a face. The trainees were the happiest bunch you would see anywhere on a service photo!

Copied from the notes provided by Charles Sagar.

© Charles Sagar



*HMS Gamecock - October 1951
N.A. Sagar - holding cup.*

© Charles Sagar



*HMS Daedalus - February 1952.
N.A. Sagar end left, front row.*



© Charles Sagar

Group Photo

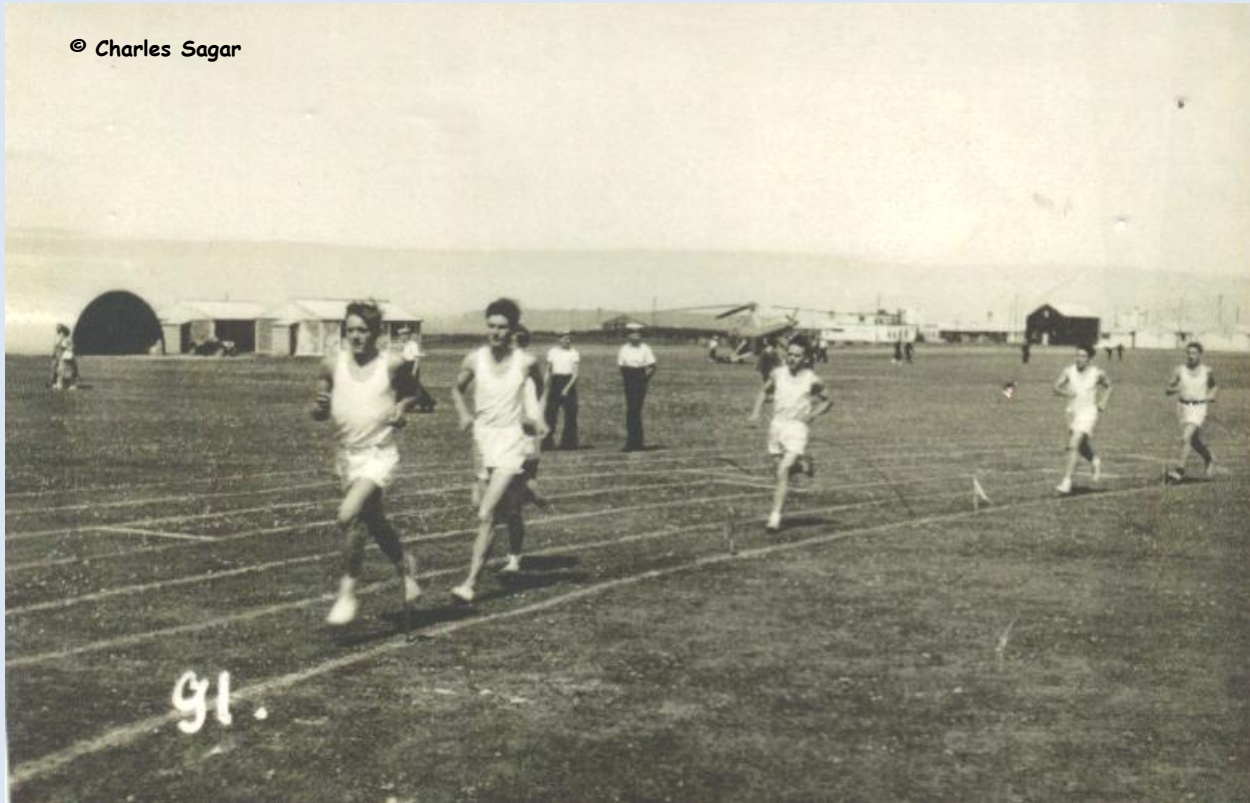
In the background: Wren Isabel Mitchell
Sitting L to R: Charles Sagar, Harry Mitchell? ?? ?? Carlos Alberto Trotman



Fancy Dress, Kete

Philip Squires

© Charles Sagar



*HMS Harrier NAVY DAY & ANNUAL
SPORTS*

*N.A. Sagar in lead in 220 yds race. (finished 2nd)
(Photographer "The New Studio", 8 Quay Street, Haverfordwest.)*

© Charles Sagar



*HMS Harrier NAVY DAY & ANNUAL
SPORTS*

N.A.Sagar winning High Jump - 5ft 4ins.

(Photographer "The New Studio" 8, Quay Street, Haverfordwest)



**Charles Sagar
1954/55.**

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTION



Harrier under snow.

These two photographs come courtesy of the
COASTLANDS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



AIR DIRECTION COURSE

HMS HARRIER,

*At Main entrance, photo taken a week
before closing - 1960 -*

L-R:

*Nick Poulter, Julian Lever, Mike Hegarty,
George Yeomans, David Parkes,
David Durnford-Slater*

From collection of George Yeomans (1)

The statue of Britannia in the background.

Three reports which sum up what was a successful weekend.

1 Closure of Harrier recalled

HOW many readers will remember attending the windswept divisions on the cliff-top at HMS Harrier (RN Air Direction School and Met Schools) at Kete, near Dale, Pembrokeshire, where once a wind speed of 106 mph had been recorded during a hurricane in 1954?

Some of those who had served there returned at the end of April for an RN-themed event commemorating the 50th anniversary of the closing of Harrier, which started life in 1943 as HMS Goldcrest before changing names in 1948.

The Coastlands Local History Group were hosts for the exhibition, and at the church service at St James Church, standards were paraded from the Association of Wrens (Cardigan and Pembrokeshire Branch) and the RNA (Aberporth, Haven, and Pembroke Dock branches).

A guard of honour was provided by the TS Harrier Sea Cadet unit, from Milford Haven.

On return from the church service visitors tucked into a very generous home-baked Welsh spread.

The celebration cake, iced with a replica of the Harrier crest, was cut by Julia Clark, Chairwoman of the Association of Wrens, with a Naval officer's sword.

The exhibition in the Coronation Hall, Dale, remained open for four days, and included veterans' uniforms, memorabilia, and stories from ex-RN and WRNS personnel, together with related accounts from village residents.

The Cloudobservers Association (for ex-RN and WRNS Met Observers) also provided an impressive display, with two souvenir booklets especially created for the occasion - *Life at Kete* and *The Royal Navy at Dale*.

Further details from www.cloudobservers.co.uk

2 The 50th anniversary of the closing of HMS HARRIER (Met School and RNADC) was marked by a church service with AOW Pembs & Cardigan & 3 local RNA Standards. paraded, and a 4 day exhibition attended by many ex-Wrens, local RNA members & the Cloudobservers Association. WRNS uniforms, service memorabilia were on display. The event was organised by the Coastlands Local History Group at the Coronation Hall Dale, Pembs.

3 A thoroughly enjoyable and worthwhile long weekend was had by the Chair and TSB when they went down to Dale.

Thanks to the endeavour of the Coastlands Local History Group, much of the history of Dale and the surrounding area has been preserved and archived for future generations.

We were made to feel very welcome and were able to exchange information and expand both our respective archives.

A most enjoyable weekend in a place with friendly locals, good food and some spectacular scenery; not forgetting a really village atmosphere in the pub and good ale. There may not be a lot left of the first proper Met School but there is still plenty to do and we both recommend you take a look if you like peace and the remoteness of environs.

1. A cutting from the Navy News, June edition which was probably penned by Celia Saywell of the Association of Wrens.

Navy News web address: <http://www.navynews.co.uk/>

2. A short report from the Association of Wrens website and penned by Celia Saywell.

Association of Wrens web address: <http://www.wrens.org.uk/>

3. Extracts from the original report submitted to the Cloud Observers website, penned by Gill Charles (TSB) on behalf of the Chair and the organisation.

Our grateful thanks to the
Coastlands Local History Group.



Material supplied by *GWC & AWC*

Presentation compiled by *MIS*

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