



Paris Branch

Newsletter

N° 47 – May 2026



CONTENTS

Page

- 2 Introduction**
- 3 May Quiz**
- 4 Correspondance and Events**
- 5. The Cod War and APOLLO**
- 9 A Word in Your Ear...**
- 9 The Last Laugh**
- 10 Quiz answers**

Chairman's introduction 15 May.

Dear members,

Since the last newsletter we have been invited to attend numerous ceremonies in and around the Ile de France. VE day, the eighth of May is, of course, much celebrated in France and a public holiday and the RBL Paris branch was concerned with several events in the region.

On 26 th April the branch was invited to attend the ceremony at the RAF Memorial in the Park at Maisons Laffitte. This was attended by our Standard Bearers, Janet Warby and Robin Sweeney. Cecile Coolen was there, as was Roy and Janet Mitchell and David Bean, our former Chairman, who laid a wreath on behalf of the branch.

Another was at the Arc de Triomphe for the Polish National Day Ceremony in the presence of the Polish Ambassador to France, along with our Military attaché. Robin Sweeney attended as our standard bearer.

Janet and Roger were, as always on the eighth May, at their local annual ceremony at Verneuil sur Seine.

Our member Rosemary Rutland, who lives in the Normandy area, has attended a number of ceremonies too, and on ANZAC day laid an RBL wreath for Canada at a Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery (more below).

As you know last month's lunch was a big success and this month's will take place on Thursday 21st, once again thanks to the good offices of our new member Ifekoya Arinola. Details below.

Our first film evening was also well attended; thanks must go to Julien Sabouret and Robin Sweeney for organising the event. Our next film evening will be held on Tuesday 26th May. We hope to see many of you at the Clubhouse.

Regards to all

Richard

May QUIZ



1. What is the birthstone of May – it represents love and success?
2. Which tennis Open Championship normally begins in the last week of May?
3. What are the two zodiac signs for the month of May?
4. May in the Northern Hemisphere is similar to which month in the Southern Hemisphere?
5. Which sweetly scented, highly poisonous woodland flowering plant is the birth flower of May?
6. Historically what sort of dancing has been linked to May Day celebrations?
7. 'The Third of May 1808', is a painting completed in 1814 by which Spanish painter?
8. How long is the lifespan for the adult female Mayfly, *Dolania americana*: 5 mins, 5 hours or 5 days?
9. According to a 1732 traditional saying, what should you never cast till May be out?
10. What is the more common name for the Mayflower shrub?
11. Theresa May was born in which town?
12. Victory in Europe Day, generally known as VE Day, was celebrated on which day in May 1945?
13. In the nursery rhyme 'Nuts in May', on what sort of morning are the nuts gathered?
14. Which American federal holiday, sometimes called Decoration Day, is observed every year on the last Monday in May?
15. The Mayflower left England for the Virginia Colony with which other ship on the 15th August, 1620?

Janet Warby

Events

ANZAC Day, 25th April 2026,

Rosemary Rudland a member of the Royal British Legion Paris Branch laid an RBL wreath at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Saint-Sever (in Petit-Quevilly, Rouen) to honour the memory of Australian and New Zealand soldiers from the First World War. The ceremony was organised by ONACVG 76



More ceremonies – 26 April - 8 May



This year our Branch was invited to attend ceremonies in both Maisons Laffitte, and Verneuil sur Seine in the Ile de France region

Maisons Laffitte was attended by our former Chairman, David Bean. He laid a wreath with a young man who looked delighted to help David. The wreath was laid at the RAF Memorial in the Park.



Verneuil sur Seine was attended by Janet & Roger Warby. Roger laid a wreath with a couple of the local young people from the Conseil Municipal Youth Association. There was a party of school children from Morocco with parents this year. They brought with them a very large flag which as you would imagine was colourful.

April Lunch



Rosemary Rudland came to our last lunch with her husband Yvan Barbieri. Yvan is a sculptor and, among his many works is an interesting assemblage of parts from one of the Allied planes which crashed during the Battle of Normandy in the area of Fierville-les-Parcs, Calvados.

Unveiled on 29 July 2023, the sculpture titled 'MEMORY' stands outside the village town hall as a tribute to two fallen pilots. Weighing 150kg, the piece incorporates salvaged parts from an American P-47 aircraft that crashed in the village on 7 June 1944. The monument honours the American pilot, Captain Clough Farrar

GEE III, and the Rhodesian RAF pilot, John Cheshire HARROLD, who was shot down in his Typhoon on 19 July 1944 and interred in the local cemetery. The inauguration was a deeply moving occasion, attended by the pilots' families who had travelled from the United States and Great Britain to take part in this moment of reflection.



Photos sculpture and grave of Rhodesian pilot: Cyril and Sylvie Gaucher ©

Events Coming Up

The May lunch will be on Thursday 21st
Thank you once again Ifekoya for your efforts.

 <p>Don't forget to book in for this month's lunch.</p> <p>Thursday 21 May 1215 for 1230 Only €20 - Pay on the day (in cash please)</p> <p>Contact Richard at 06 45 10 47 70 or richard.neave05@gmail.com <i>Reserve early to be sure of a place.</i> <i>(Cancellations up to 48h before)</i></p>	 <p>LUNCH MENU <i>Thursday 21 May</i></p> <p>STARTER- <i>cucumber and tomato salad with olive oil, lemon, and mint or basil-</i></p> <p>MAIN COURSE- <i>Salmon Pizza</i></p> <p>DESSERT- <i>watermelon with yoghurt</i></p> <p><i>Wine served with the meal</i></p> <p><i>Coffee or tea</i></p>
---	--

(N.B. - TBC = To be confirmed)

Date	Month	Venue	Time
Thursday 21	May	Lunch at Clubhouse	12h15 for 12h30
Tuesday 26	May	Film evening	18h00 - 21h30
Thursday 18 tbc	June	Lunch at Clubhouse	12h15 for 12h30
Thursday 16 tbc	July	Lunch at Clubhouse	12h15 for 12h30

at the moment. You will be notified of others as information becomes available.

For a fuller account of the year's events click [here](#)

These are the Ceremonies and Events we know of at the moment. You will be notified of others as information becomes available.

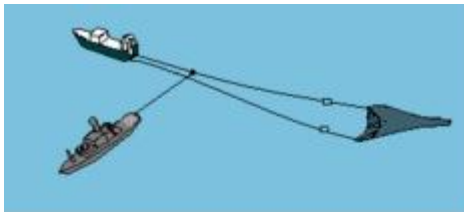
Apollo and the Cod war

It seems that several members were not aware of the "Cod War" mentioned briefly in the April edition. The conflict was, of course, a very minor affair in the history of Europe but, if only in its eccentricity, memorable.

Stewart, following up last month's account of the ship Apollo, has been kind enough to provide some information on the context of the affair.

The issue which led to the "Cod War" was the unilateral declaration of Iceland to extend their restricted fishing zone, an understandable move given the limited resources of that country. The UK, however had heavily invested in a fleet of modern and efficient trawlers, known as Stern Freezers, based in Fleetwood, Scottish and UK eastern ports. These vessels were able to process and freeze their catch, remain at sea for up to four weeks, refit, and then redeploy in a highly profitable and efficient process.

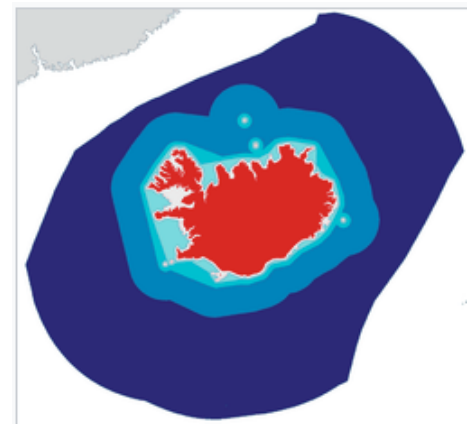
The Iceland government viewed this well-structured business with a jaundiced eye. The high-quality fish product of the Icelandic Ridge was the sole substance of its national income, and all this fishing in what they saw as their waters was a menace to a huge part of their economy. Successive extensions of the restricted zone, from four nautical miles in 1952 to 200 nautical miles in 1975 represented an unacceptable restriction for British fishermen. There followed an intermittent dispute which can be summarised as the First Cod War: 1958-1961 the Second Cod War: 1972-1973 and the Third Cod War: 1975-1976



A net cutter, first used in the Second Cod War

Denmark, and indeed all Scandinavia, supported the Iceland cause. Fast and maneuverable light craft were used to tow a net-cutting wire designed to cut the trawl nets by passing close astern of "foreign" trawlers. This tactic proved to be efficient and extremely costly for the trawlers.

At this point the Icelandic government had declared their National territorial waters as 15 miles from shore. No foreign trawlers were to enter this zone.



Expansion of the Icelandic exclusive economic zone (EEZ).
■ Iceland
■ Internal waters
■ 4 nmi expansion 1952
■ 12 nmi expansion (current extent of territorial waters) 1958
■ 50 nmi expansion 1972
■ 200 nmi expansion (current extent of EEZ) 1975

Britain and other fishing nationalities chose, with government support, to ignore this declaration and carried on as before. Problems were foreseen.

My ship, the Apollo, was now, in 1972 Homeport based and was, with other similar units, assigned under Flag Officer Scotland to take an active role in protecting the British fishing fleet in what became the third episode of the Cod War.

Having undergone maintenance in Plymouth - modernising ops room manning, radar and listening equipment, and communication for helicopter operations - the ships set off to relieve the Leander frigates already on site and assume Area Command over the existing Designated Fishing Areas (DFA). Personnel were designated into three watches, helicopter operations - the launching and recovery of a Westland Wasp both in daylight and at night was assured. We had also embarked a navy doctor and a male nurse (Sick Berth Attendant) with a full range of medical equipment in the sick bay.

To secure and control the fishing area, a DFA (Designated Fishing Area) was created in which the trawlers could fish under the protection of the Leanders. Apollo embarked an advising fishery expert. He was a one-time trawler captain called George and a hefty, no nonsense, but interesting man from Fleetwood who assisted the Command, providing his professional advice in defining the DFA's. The DFA would be moved to a new sector when the advisor declared that the plankton level had become too low in the current area. Apollo then had to define the new DFA in terms of latitude, longitude and timing. When a new DFA was signaled the trawlers would move as one into the new zone and commence fishing. Not all trawler captains agreed, of course, and it was with much cursing and blinding in plain



A British trawler rams an Icelandic frigate.

language on HF radio for all to hear. I was a target, frequently termed a 'toffee-nosed Ba__rd' and 'right up your HMS ___'.

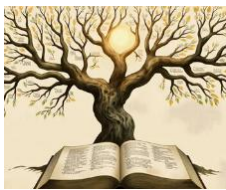
Common sense eventually prevailed, with Iceland offering safe conduct to trawlers in exchange for their unloading their catch in Icelandic ports, allowing Iceland to sell the fish on from there to other national markets. Ultimately, all eight Leanders rejoined the fleet and, having had structural/ scraping damage repaired, departed Rosyth for further live firing weapon training at Portland and more NATO exercising.

We, in Apollo, were rewarded with a five-day visit to Hamburg, which was most enjoyable and provided an opportunity for me to lead a group of sailors on a military train through East Germany into West Berlin as guests of the 1st Battalion Coldstream

Guards at Spandau barracks. Our visit was a memorable success. I eventually left Apollo to take up an operational training role in Southwick Park, close to Portsmouth. I was well pleased with this appointment, as was Valerie, my wife, for it gave us some time together after my long absences.

Apollo served for an additional 10 years in the Royal Navy Fleet and was eventually sold to the Pakistani navy.

Stewart Miller



A Word in your Ear – Nice

This word has had an interesting and much-branched journey through time.

Originally It came from the Latin *nescius* (“ignorant”), but subsequent meanings included “foolish,” “fussy,” “precise,” “refined,” and eventually “pleasant”, rather a strange contradiction with its root.

The word didn’t take on its present meaning until the end of the 18th century.

It is still occasionally seen in its “precise” meaning in sentences like

“There is a **nice** distinction between the two far left parties.”



The Last Laugh – Suing for damages

Lawyer - I understand you want to bring an action Madam. Can you please explain?

Client - I want to sue the hospital for damages.

Lawyer - Ah yes. A popular pastime these days. What happened?

Client - The operation was three months ago.

Lawyer - An operation, eh? And it didn't go as planned?

Client - Oh yes. It seemed to work all right.

Lawyer - So what were you operated on for?

Client - It wasn't me. It was an operation on my husband.

Lawyer - On your husband! I don't follow. If he had the operation, why isn't he here complaining?

Client - He's quite happy about it. It's me who's bringing the action.

Lawyer - But you just said the operation worked! Why on earth sue the hospital?

Client - Alienation of affection. My husband doesn't love me any more

Lawyer - This is getting beyond me! What's it got to do with a hospital.

Client - My husband's behaviour has completely changed. He used to be such a loving person.

Lawyer - And you think the operation has changed him?

Client - Absolutely. He changed as soon as he came out of hospital. He can hardly bear to see me these days.

Lawyer - But surely there must be something else. Ah. Maybe he met a nurse or something.

Client - No. It was the operation. I know it was. He won't even look at me, and the hospital is responsible and they should pay for it!

Lawyer - Well I really don't understand. What sort of operation was it anyway?

Client - He had a cataract removed.

M.Y.(77)

May quiz: Answers:

1. Emerald	9. A clout (an old word for a piece of clothing)
2. French Open	
3. Taurus (until May 20) and Gemini (May 21 onwards)	
4. November	10. Hawthorn
5. Lily of the Valley	11. Eastbourne
6. Morris Dancing	12. 8 th May
7. Francisco Goya	13. On a cold and frosty morning
8. 5 minutes	14. Memorial Day
	15. Speedwell



*Comments & contributions to mfyates@gmail.com
Back numbers: rblfrance.org/ then "Paris Branch Newsletters"*

