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# All Guns Blazing!

## Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

### No. 238 – August 2014

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#### EDITORIAL

The words 'Lest We Forget' come from the poem, 'Recessional', written by Rudyard Kipling, who lost his only son John at Loos in 1915. Kipling was a founder member of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Now, on the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of war, the words 'Lest We Forget' have been chosen once again to encompass feelings of remembrance. The words are to be engraved on a series of memorial stones being placed at some of the CWGC sites across the Western Front.

The CWGC maintains Cemeteries to an impeccable standard around the World. Also even 100 years on, the Commission is identifying bodies using DNA from descendants before re-burials with full military honours.

#### **Lights Out**

“The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.” These were the words spoken by Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary, on the eve Britain entered the First World War.

100 years later, people across the UK were invited to turn off their lights between 10pm and 11pm on Monday 4 August and leave only a single light or candle on for this national moment of reflection.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/first-world-war-centenary>

Norman Bell

#### VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

August 2014

Chairman: Stuart Barnes-Watson

Stuart Barnes-Watson Chairman

Simon Stokes Membership Secretary & Treasurer

Norman Bell Editor 'All Guns Blazing'

Dave Manley Editor 'Battlefleet'

When I first started wargaming back in the early 80's, you never knew what period/wargame would be covered next by the mainstream magazines, plus models were available by Fleetline, Clydeside, Ensign, Superior, Navwar in 1/1200, Skytrex, SDD in 1/600, Davco and Navwar in 1/3000. Today, there are far more models to choose from, covering every period, yet no representation in mainstream magazines.

All the more reason to support your NWS with articles. If you think it is interesting, the chances are so will the membership.

Stuart

Thanks to Jeff Crane for this article on Italian midget subs in WWII.



Here we see one of the plucky little Italian-made coastal submarines of the *CB*-class. Ordered from the *Società Caproni e Comitti* in Milan, the company specialized in production of military aircraft, not ships, but they did a great job on these tiny u-boats. Capable of spending a couple of days at sea and carrying a pair of 17.7-inch torpedoes (externally), these boats were capable of sending a decent sized ship to the bottom and, if there had been enough of them, would have made any amphibious assault of the Italian coastline very dangerous as these ships could submerge in waters as shallow as twenty feet of sea. The *Regina Marina* ordered 72 of these plucky 50-foot long boats in 1941, but only 20 or so were completed due to Allied invasions and blockades. Of those ships, about half served the Axis forces, with the others being completed after Italy switched sides in 1943.

The first six ships completed, *CB-1* through *CB-6*, were shipped to the Black Sea along with a group of some 40 Italian submariners where they quickly set up camp in captured Soviet digs and went looking for Russkies. About the only victory chalked up by these Italian midget subs was sending Soviet Black Sea Fleet *Shchuka*-class submarine *SHCH-208* to the bottom by torpedo attack on June 18, 1942, just weeks after they arrived at Yalta. As a *Shchuka* was some 187-feet long and 700-tons load, that was a true David and Goliath victory for the Italians. This was something of a bit of payback for the Italians as one of the boats; (*CB-5*) was bombed and sunk by Red bombers near Yalta, 13 June 1942.

Once Italy switched sides, these five remaining Black Sea boats were transferred to Romania in 1943. With the advance of the Red Army, the Romanians and Germans scuttled these in Constancia harbour in August 1944. The Russians, never one to let a piece of kit go bad, promptly raised them and put them in local service until the end of the war.

Other craft were captured by the British or Germans in the Adriatic and were in turn sunk or scrapped around the end of the conflict. One boat, *CB-20*, fell into the hands of Tito's Partisans and was soon pressed into service with the new Yugoslav navy (as pennant *P-901*). The Yugos loved the little craft so much that they kept it in service for nearly two decades and even then kept it as a museum and trials ship.

It should therefore surprise no one that the Yugoslav navy built its own class of homemade midgets, the *Una*-class, in the 1970s. These half-dozen craft were very similar in size (61-foot long, 70-tons) as the old Italian *CB* craft they still had in storage. The Italians, likewise, spent several decades making their own improved midgets from *COSMOS* and others which have a direct lineage to these humble WWII-era boats.

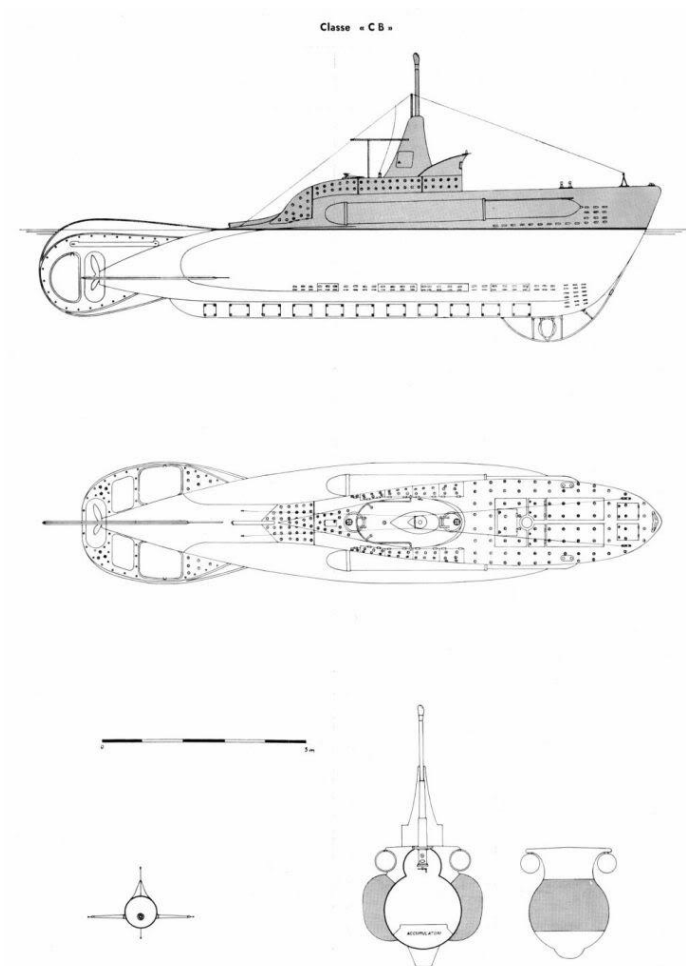
*CB-20/P-901* still exists by the way.



April 7, 2010: The unveiling ceremony of the newly rebuilt CB-20 at the Teknicki Muzej (Technical Museum), Zagreb, Croatia. The boat has been completely restored inside and out to the original specifications and paint scheme she had when launched. (Photo courtesy of Vladimir Tarnovski)

An excellent reference is at Maritime Quest on the CB20, including more than [9 pages of in-depth images](#) on CB-20

### Specs:



Displacement: 35.4 tons surfaced, 44.3 tons submerged  
 Length: 14.99 m (49.2 ft)  
 Beam: 3.00 m (9.84 ft)  
 Draught: 2.05 m (6 ft 9 in)  
 Propulsion: 1 shaft diesel-electric,

1 - 80 hp Isotta Fraschini diesel, 1 - 50 hp Brown Boveri electric motor  
Speed: 7.5 knots (13.9 km/h) surfaced, 7 knots (13 km/h) submerged  
Complement: 4  
Armament: 2 externally mounted 450mm torpedoes or two mines

If you liked this article, please consider joining the International Naval Research Organization (INRO), Publishers of Warship International. They are possibly one of the best sources of naval study, images, and fellowship you can find <http://www.warship.org/>

The International Naval Research Organization is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the encouragement of the study of naval vessels and their histories, principally in the era of iron and steel warships (about 1860 to date). Its purpose is to provide information and a means of contact for those interested in warships.

Nearing the 50th Anniversary, Warship International, the written tome of the INRO has published hundreds of articles, most of which are unique in their sweep and subject.

As usual each month, Rob Morgan supplies the quiz from the 1950s. Kudos to you, if you can answer any.

Sea Quiz 34 answers....

Here we go.....The first question was simply one part of a very serious and wide ranging argument on the vulnerability of the British Isles ports and seaways to mines which might be laid by Soviet forces. 'The Navy' seems to have aired as many of the naval community's concerns as the letters page of 'The Times.'  
The answer to question 3 demanded clarification too, I'm not sure if it was ever settled.

1. It was the Royal Naval Mine Watching Service.
2. Not surprisingly, 'The Navy's Home Guard!'
3. It was the wreck of the 'Gniesenau', sunk there as a block ship in March 1945.
4. Incredibly ( at least I thought so) it was 260,000+!!!
5. The CinC Med was Lord Louis Mountbatten.
6. The two US ships the Battleship New Jersey, and carrier Princeton.

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### SEA QUIZ 35.

Rather like 'Navy News' these days, the Navy League publication tended to include snippets of information about 'foreign' and NATO navies as mere appendages to the operations of the world's finest, but declining fleet....

1. Which three French Cruisers were 're-modelled' as a/a Cruisers in 1952?
2. In which allied navy did Duque de Caixas serve as a naval transport?
3. The last of which US Warship type decommissioned in June 1926?
4. What was HMS Frobisher's role in 1946?
5. In 1946, which lately allied Navy acquired 4 motor m/s, 8 motor launches, and 3 Boom Defence Vessels from the Royal Navy?
6. Where were Magpie, Pirate and Pledge ( minesweepers) lost?



Somehow this picture from the Daily Mail, of HMS ILLUSTRIOUS sailing into Portsmouth for the last time, is so much better than my photo below.



**Sailing into retirement: HMS Illustrious was greeted by thousands of well-wishers when she docked for the final time, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014, after 32 years of service and almost 900,000 miles at sea**

- She will be replaced as Fleet Flag Ship by HMS Ocean, which has received a £65m refit, until the next generation of aircraft carriers are in service
- Illustrious was rushed into service for the Falklands War, commissioning at sea on Her way Portsmouth, then on to the South Atlantic. She has served in Bosnia, Sierra Leone and Lebanon. Last year She provided assistance in the Philippines after the hurricane
- 685ft-long vessel Illustrious could be turned into floating museum. A tribute to a decommissioned class of warship. The Government is trying to find a charity or private buyer so that She avoids the fate of HMS INVINCIBLE and HMS ARK ROYAL. Without enough money from investors, charities or trusts, however, there are fears she could eventually embark on the solemn, 3,500-mile trip to that Turkish graveyard and be turned into razor blades.

On August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1914, the destroyer HMS Lance fired the first naval shot in anger in the First World War, sinking the German auxiliary minelayer Königin Luise, which was laying mines off the Suffolk coast.

It came just a day after the United Kingdom entered the Great War.

The gun that fired the first shot from HMS Lance is now on display at the “HMS – Hear My Story” gallery at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

On August 6<sup>th</sup> the Royal Navy suffered its first loss of the Great War – just hours after its first triumph. More than two weeks before the British Expeditionary Force lost its first soldier on the Western Front some 130 souls were killed when HMS Amphion sank in the North Sea with the war barely 30 hours old. Amphion left Harwich on August 5<sup>th</sup> to sweep the North Sea with a



destroyer flotilla and was in the vicinity when HMS Lance fired on the former North Sea ferry, Königin Luise, as she laid mines to block British shipping lanes. Shortly after 7am on August 6, as Amphion returned to Harwich, she sailed across the line of mines laid by the Königin Luise. The blast tore apart Amphion's forward section – every man save one on the forecastle guns was killed.

If the centenary of the Great War gets you thinking about dreadnoughts on your game table, then you may like to check out Navwar's 1:3000 metal models. Their website could do with updating – it can not be described as a twenty first century experience but don't let that put you off. They have "starter" Fleet Packs at £12.50 for 18 Ships. Vessels vary, so they are not suitable for collectors looking for a specific vessel but individual Ships can be purchased for (at the time of writing) £1.25 to £1.75. If you want to take the plunge you could always buy the Battle of Jutland Set. £125 for 248 models plus Ship Tables for use with General Quarters. Postage is extra. Navwar's 25 page catalogue covers other time periods also.  
<http://www.navwar.co.uk>

Norman Bell

"Captain's Edition Harpoon" from GDW, is a "cold war goes hot" beginner's level game. You get a paper map of the Greenland/Iceland/UK Gap to manoeuvre your Naval Task Forces, both real and decoys. Being "American" the only non US NATO playing piece is RAF Tornado aircraft but with a little effort, additional "Cards" can be made and incorporated into the many war situations supplied with the game or in your own scenarios. One criticism is that the anti missile defences of ships seem to be rated too high. One surface to surface missile has next to no chance of getting through (unless fired at an unarmed unescorted merchantman) and even a many ship salvo is very likely to be totally wiped out. Still, as with any rule set, if there is something that you don't like or does not seem to work – have a house rule to change it.



An anti-submarine sweep ahead of a CTF has five possible contacts. But which is spurious, which is a school of whales and which, if any, is a silent Akula Submarine hoping to avoid detection, get past the screen and put a spread of torpedoes into CVN USS NIMITZ?

Many of you will have seen Simon Stoke's participation game based on the "Yangtze Incident", at "Salute" or onboard HMS BELFAST. You may find the following of minor interest.

### Schoolgirl's Poem for 'Simon the Cat' Unveiled at HMS Collingwood

29/07/2014

A school girl from Dulwich had a very special day when she visited HMS Collingwood to see the new home of the poem she wrote as part of a WWII project about Simon the cat who was awarded the Dickin medal.



*The photograph shows Captain Dainton (left) with Ria and Stewart Hett and 'Simon' and the poem in the background.*

[Picture: Keith Woodland, Crown Copyright]

Shore Base HMS Collingwood has a foyer dedicated to the Yangtze Incident, of which Simon was part.

Visiting HMS Collingwood with her parents, Ria was very happy to see the poem "Simon" taking pride of place. She said "I wrote the poem as part of a school project, I enjoyed researching Simon and writing it. I can't believe it's here on the wall!" Welcoming Ria and her family to HMS Collingwood Captain Dainton said "I've been coming in to this building for many years and I can tell you that every ship's Captain also comes through this building and will read your poem. Well done you, I think this is a wonderful story."

Lieutenant Commander Hett, who also attended the event, was serving on the Amethyst as a young Lieutenant at the time of the Yangtze Incident, and was subsequently appointed Cat Officer dealing with all the letters Simon received when news broke of his Peoples' Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) Dickin Medal award. "I remember Simon well," he recalled, "he began his time on Amethyst as the Captain's cat but soon became a companion to everyone. Simon was a comforting reminder of home when home seemed so very far away."

Simon was badly injured when HMS Amethyst came under fire from the Chinese Communist Forces as the Ship made her way up the Yangtze River in April 1949. She was on a peaceful mission to relieve HMS Consort as guard ship at the British Embassy in Nanking when she was shelled and shot at leaving her damaged on the River bank. Held captive for 101 days, the ship's rations soon became overrun with rats and Simon's prowess as a rat catcher helped protect the food. It was for this and his devoted companionship that PDSA awarded Simon the PDSA Dickin Medal in November 1949. When the ship made its historic escape down river in July 1949 and docked in her home port of Plymouth on 1 November, Simon was taken into quarantine in Surrey. Sadly he died before he could be presented with the Medal in 'person'.

In addition to witnessing the 'inauguration' of the poem Ria and her family were also given the VIP treatment in the Navigation Training Unit's Bridge Simulator, learning how to navigate warships into harbour in all kinds of weather and sea conditions.



Does size matter?



The above shows the Type 45 Destroyer, the Invincible Class and the new Queen Elizabeth Class overlaid.

### **HMS ARGYLL re-joins fight against Caribbean drugs trade**

PLYMOUTH-based warship HMS ARGYLL has re-joined battle against Caribbean drug traffickers – exactly 12 months after she last tackled the evil scourge.

The frigate has left Key West to begin her patrols of the Caribbean after intense preparations for the mission – Operation Martillo – alongside 14 other nations and navies, led by the United States. On her previous patrol in the region, ARGYLL seized nearly £75m of drugs in the Pacific then captured three traffickers in the Caribbean – the latter were recently sentenced to four decades behind bars collectively. Operations in the Caribbean are overseen from Key West at the southernmost tip of the USA, home to the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force (South). It was there that ARGYLL received briefings and updates on the latest developments in the ongoing efforts to strangle the illegal drugs trade.

Over the next six months, HMS ARGYLL will conduct a wide range of operations in the Caribbean including working with the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force during counter-narcotics operations.

As well as entering the fray in the fight to stop drugs from the Americas reaching the West, ARGYLL is trained and on stand-by for providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief to the UK's Overseas Territories in the region with the hurricane season now open.

She is due home in Plymouth at the end of the year.

### What Ship is This?

No this isn't a quiz question, but simply a photo of a model I've had for about twenty years, maybe more. One of a group I use with the old Welsh Maritime Association Medieval Naval Rules, largely with beginners or youngsters- sometimes as a quick game to fill an hour.

But... what ship is this? It's a little over three inches about 8cm, long and stands about the same height off the table. There are components from two fairly well known plastic model kits. Can anyone recognise them?

Rob Morgan



Well, it's an old small scale, roughly 1/300<sup>th</sup> or 1/350<sup>th</sup> Airfix 'Santa Maria' hull. Cheap enough in the 80's and early 90's but vanished from the list about then. I've still got a couple of dozen of them. Probably, well, certainly, the quickest and cheapest way to build a Wars of the Roses or late 1400's European fleet for a wargame. The foremast and hefty lateen are omitted of course, and the main sail? Well that's from a Heller Viking Longship, again about 1/350<sup>th</sup>, and I think still available intermittently. The dragon and squares are moulded into the sail by the way. The big anvil banner's from 'Games Workshop' and is supposed to fly over an army of ( I think!) dwarves. If you've got keen eyes you'll notice the red ship's boat on the deck, that's from an old Airfix 'Mayflower', another sadly missed kit, useful for the late 1500's, 80YW and 30YW too!

What ship is this?



### What do you do with it?

You'll recognise the model of course, even though I've only painted, or part-painted the port side of her. The paddle steamer is of course *USS Black Hawk*, Admiral Porter's flagship on the Mississippi. A very big boat, and Tony Gibbons in 'Warships and Naval Battles of the Civil War' calls her 'well appointed', but that's Admirals for you. Porter apparently kept two horses aboard for exercise when he got the chance! She served at Vicksburg, Hains Bluff and on the Red River Campaign, and burned accidentally in early 1865 at Cairo ( in the USA not Egypt). It appears from Gibbons account, that *Black Hawk* was well armed, with light guns and a couple of automatic weapons-enough to defend herself from shore attack, but this isn't a 'warship' to risk against a Confederate ram, or even a Tinclad with a decent gun or two. I suppose she'd make a good target for a Confederate attack, if it proved possible to slip past her escorting vessels and board and burn her.

The model incidentally, comes from the 'Peter Pig', 1/600<sup>th</sup> scale "Hammerin' Iron" range, it's number 50, and priced at around £5 ( check that though!); well over five inches long and almost two inches to the funnel tops. It really is a beauty, neatly moulded and attractive, but....what do you do with it?

I decided that, though the paint scheme of black and white with light teak decks shown in Gibbon's drawings makes her stand out, I won't add any super detail. In fact, looking at her she has a Napoleonic ship-of-the-line look with her checks and squares. I think she'd make a good nineteenth century SF warship, like that in Philip Jose Farmer's 'The Fabulous Riverboat', perhaps? She had a draught of only six feet which makes her useful and she could be a one-off or a small class of them could be handy in fantasy colonial conflicts. The big



rounded stern looks significantly vulnerable. All of the black squares *could* be gunports, or a slightly different weapon could be added at the bow; there's not a great deal of potential for super-detailing, other than a paint job, as the upper deck's so far above the waterline. Gibbons shows a ship's boat on davits (?) just aft of the paddle wheel housing, and some light masts and jack staff. I drilled a hole for a long flagstaff between the paddle boxes, just in front of the after deck house. It occurs to me that you could use this in conjunction with a small airship or early float plane maybe?

Before I forget, the *Black Hawk* began life as a respectable riverboat called *Uncle Sam*, and if the Hollywood films are anything to go by, some of these boats could steam pretty fast. Does anyone know what this one could achieve?

Rob Morgan.

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#### Warships in Another Journal.

I often think how important it is that we, as like-minded naval wargamers in this instance, let each other know what we've stumbled upon in print, or in model ships, or games or rules; if only to spread and encourage the broadest possible knowledge of wargaming and naval history generally. We can't all examine, read or acquire everything, after all.

Take this. I was shown a pile of journals in the Archaeology Faculty the other day.... '*The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*' is, I'm told a leading world wide publication, though I must admit it has tended to pass me by! In Vol 41 No 1, March 2012, there's a superb, well-illustrated and detailed account of '*The Armoured Cruiser HMS Defence*', a case study in the shipwrecks of the Battle of Jutland. Pages 56-66, by Innes McCarthy. It gives valuable information on the loss of the cruiser, and assesses its archaeological and historical importance. Worth reading. 10/10.

A second article I was led to appears in Vol 40, No 2, September 2011. On *HMQS Mosquito*, pages 374-386, by J.W.Hunter. It deals with the re-discovery of Queensland's first waship, a torpedo boat from the 1880's. With ample photographs, a good line drawing or two, and the writer provides a very interesting, arguably wargamable, short section entitled '*Australia's Russian Scare*'.!!!

Now I know it exists, I'll keep an eye open for it.

Rob Morgan.

## **SIGNAL PAD!**

Rob Morgan brought to my attention the publication Seabreezes. July's edition includes an article on the memorial to the victims of the sinking of HMS Birkenhead. Built by the apprentices of Cammell Laird, the memorial unveiled at Birkenhead, is dedicated to the victims of the worst maritime disaster of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. HMS Birkenhead sank off the coast of South Africa in February 1852. Many of the survivors of the sinking were eaten by sharks. Also covered is the \$796.2m cost of the midlife overhaul and refuelling of USS George Washington. [www.seabreezes.co.im](http://www.seabreezes.co.im)

Coming in September's AGB:- Catapults at Sea. USS Fuchsia – model of the month.

### **JOINING THE NAVAL WARGAMES SOCIETY**

If you have been lent this newsletter and would like to join the Naval Wargames Society, please follow this link to join our Society:

[www.navalwargamessociety.org](http://www.navalwargamessociety.org).

Membership secretary: [simonjohnstokes@aol.com](mailto:simonjohnstokes@aol.com)

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## **NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2014**

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### **NWS Northern Fleet – Falkirk East Central Scotland**

Kenny Thomson, 12 Craigs Way, Rumford Grange, Rumford, Stirlingshire, FK2 0EU

Tel: 01324 714248

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Falkirk Wargames Club meets each Monday night at 7pm with a variety of games running each evening. Naval games are popular with 2 or 3 run each month. Campaign games sometimes feature in our monthly weekend sessions. Games tend to be organised week to week making a 3-month forecast here a waste of time. Please get in touch if you'd like to come along.

- Popular periods – Modern (Shipwreck), WW1 and 2 (GQ), WW2 Coastal (Action Stations), and Pre-dreadnought (P Dunn's rules)

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### **NWS North Hants [Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday]**

Jeff Crane 31 Park Gardens, Black Dam, Basingstoke, Hants, 01256 427906

e-mail: [gf.crane@ntlworld.com](mailto:gf.crane@ntlworld.com)

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### **Devon and the West Country**

Naval Wargames afternoon/evening/all day on a regular basis.

Contact Stuart Barnes Watson to arrange the details.

[stuart\\_barnes\\_watson@hotmail.com](mailto:stuart_barnes_watson@hotmail.com)

3 Clovelly Apartments, Oxford Park, Ilfracombe, DEVON, EX34 9JS

Tel: 01271 866637

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