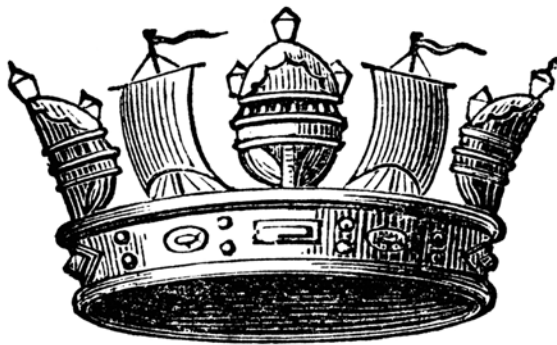


## Sweetheart Brooches of the Royal Navy – By Simon Wilson

Over the years I have collected a few Naval sweetheart brooches. They are less common and often more expensive than the Army and Air Force brooches and, unfortunately this means that I don't have as many as I would like to illustrate this article. You won't see any of the white enamel brooches here, although they did make them for ships and I only have one silver-rimmed tortoiseshell example, which were also done for individual ships. The price is governed by the numbers made, with crews varying in size and some ships staying in service longer than others. This does, however, make it easier to find details on specific ships, where an army unit, with numerous battalions or batteries, may have served anywhere in the world.



Just as RAF badges rely on wings, a lot of RN sweethearts rely on cap badges. The naval crown is also a popular motif (*left*), though not well represented in my collection as a brooch on its own. Several of the brooches such as *HMS Rodney*, *HMS Cornwall*, *L-71*, *HMS Loch Fyne* and the NID brooch all feature the Naval Crown as part of their design. It is used by a number of navies, and is a circlet made from ships and sails. It was originally a Roman

Military decoration or the first man to board an enemy ship. The Royal Navy version shows sterns of ships alternating with sails.

Naval heraldry developed slowly. Ships were originally decorated with gold leaf and ornate figureheads but this was eventually banned. Ships' badges originally appeared on letterheads in the 1850s and was developed over the next sixty years until a standardised system was developed in 1919. The badges of different classes of ship were identified by their shape - Circles for Battleships, Pentagons for Cruisers, U-Shaped shields for destroyers and Diamonds for all other types of vessels, including shore establishments. It seems a bit of a cock-eyed system where an aircraft carrier, a fishery protection vessel and a shore base all share the same badge shape, but that's how it was until 1940, when the circle was adopted for all ships.

It was easier in wartime conditions, and if a ship's name was reused for a ship of a different class there was no need for a new badge design. After the war the pentagon was used for vessels of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Diamonds for shore bases.



Many brooches modelled on naval cap badges, as can be seen from the first photograph (*left*). They were also available with horseshoes, as depicted, and in other forms, as with the brooches of other services.

The second photograph (*below*), shows a popular specialisation – the Royal Marines. The ones shown here include one mounted on an arrow, a type seen before in the Army article. It also shows, from left to right, a chromed badge (which may be



either a sweetheart or a man's lapel badge), a Royal Marine Artillery badge marked Sterling Silver. (The Royal Marine Light Infantry and the Royal Marine Artillery were amalgamated in 1923). The final badge, on the right, is a hollow silver brooch with a loop for a safety chain. It has a Victorian crown but the hallmarks show it have been made in 1913. It also has a set of initials engraved on the back and the jeweller's name *Delacourt, Chatham*. It is a good quality brooch and obviously has a story to tell.



The next photograph (*left*), also shows a popular specialisation – badges of the Royal Naval Division (RND). In 1914 there was a surplus of 20 – 30,000 sailors in the Reserves, and Winston Churchill, the 1<sup>st</sup> Lord of the Admiralty, came up with a plan to increase the land capabilities of the Navy by adding two brigades of sailors, organised as soldiers, to the already existing Royal Marine Brigade. After an unpromising, and badly equipped, start in Belgium they would go on to fight in Gallipoli and on the Western Front. The Naval battalions were named after famous naval figures – Drake, Hawke, Benbow, Collingwood, Nelson, Howe, Hood and Anson. There are three badges pictured. Top left is a silver-rimmed tortoiseshell badge with a generic RND badge. It is hallmarked for London 1915. Top right is another generic design for the RND, marked "Silver". The third badge is for the Anson battalion, also marked "Silver".

Collingwood, Nelson, Howe, Hood and Anson. There are three badges pictured. Top left is a silver-rimmed tortoiseshell badge with a generic RND badge. It is hallmarked for London 1915. Top right is another generic design for the RND, marked "Silver". The third badge is for the Anson battalion, also marked "Silver".



The next badge (*left*), is for *HMS Rodney*. The Coronation message in the circllet provides a date for the badge and shows the circular shape assigned to battleships, with a naval crown on top of the badge. Some of the crew went to London for the Coronation on 12 May and the ship took part in the Fleet Review at Spithead on 20 May. Her design was modified to align with the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922, which tried to prevent a Naval arms race. She and her sister ship *HMS Nelson* were known as the Cherry Trees, because they had been cut down by Washington. Built down to a weight to squeeze them under the Treaty limit and were not strong enough to

withstand the stresses of firing the main armament. This particularly affected *Rodney*, which was over-worked and under-maintained during the war and basically shook herself to pieces. She last saw active service in 1944 and was sold for scrap in 1948.



The next brooch (*above left*), is an unusual one, being for the Naval Intelligence Division. It was a small unit and, amongst other things, was responsible for code-breaking, including the Zimmerman telegram, which served as the spur to bring the USA into the war. The badge, is hallmarked Birmingham 1919 and comprises a winged heraldic seahorse with the letters NID. It is difficult to find details of the badge, but I suppose that's how it should be for a secretive organisation.

The next photograph (*above right*), contains three modern badges. *HMS Loch Fyne* was a Loch Class Frigate with a crew of 114 and three short commissions 1944-46, 1951-2 and 1956-63. The brooch is a tie-pin and called a “souvenir” on the card. It probably dates from the last commission, and is not a common badge.

The next badge is very different – the crest of the Royal Yacht *Britannia*. With a crew of around 250 and in service from 1954 to 1997, there are a lot of *HM/Y Britannia* brooches about and many people interested in them from the royalty point of view. This one is a plastic-backed brooch designed in the style of the old mother of pearl (MOP) brooches.

The third is a Naval Crown above the number L-71, mounted on a MOP disc. L-71 was the pennant number of *HMS Calpe*. Mons Calpe was an ancient name for Gibraltar. *Calpe*, has been the name of three RN “ships”. The first was a 14-gun sloop captured from the Spanish in 1800, the last was a stone frigate – HQ of the RNR at Gibraltar from 1965 until 1993.

The middle one, (*Calpe*), which had the pennant number L-71 (carried from 1940-48), was a Hunt Class Destroyer which served from 1941-52 before being sold to the Danish Navy in 1952 and being scrapped in 1966. She was adopted by Abingdon on Thames in 1942 as part of Warship Week and was responsible, along with two MGBs for sinking a German trawler working as a patrol boat/flak ship – the *Hermann Bösch* - in July 1942 (damaging a second one beyond economic repair.) In November 1942, with *HMS Aurora*, she attacked the French Destroyer *Tornado* as part of *Operation Torch* – forcing the French ship to run itself aground to prevent it sinking. Her final success was the sinking of the U-593 in December 1943, working with the *USS Wainwright* in a 32-hour pursuit.

The next photo (*below*), takes us back to some older designs. The lifebelt with crossed oars is a design that seems to crop up between the wars, possibly adapted from a civilian souvenir brooch. It has the



pentagonal shield of a Cruiser. The badge should be black enamel rather than red, but sweethearts often vary from official badges. Commissioned in 1928, *HMS Cornwall* had several successes – in 1940 denying important supplies to the Vichy French in Dakar and in 1941 tracking down and sinking the German commerce raider *Pinguin*. She was sunk by Japanese aircraft in 1942.

The button is a standard RN button with a tie-pin soldered to the reverse. A circlet has been fitted round the outside with a

shamrock at the top and engraved lettering “HMS DUBLIN DARDANELLES & ADRIATIC & JUTLAND”. It could be a commercial piece or possibly made by an artificer on board. *HMS Dublin* was a light cruiser, commissioned in 1913 and scrapped in 1924. She supported the Gallipoli landings and was later damaged by a torpedo in the Adriatic. After repair she served at Jutland, where she was damaged by shellfire, sustaining 3 fatal casualties and 24 wounded.

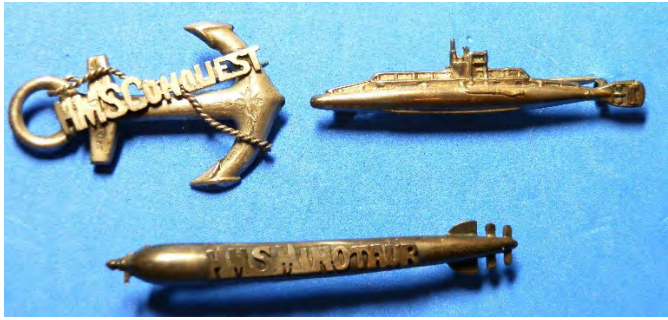
*HMS Celerol*, bottom left, was a *Belgol* Class tanker, carrying 2,000 tons of fuel oil for the use of the fleet, and with a crew of just over 60. The ships were all built in 1917 and the six that survived were scrapped in 1958. *Celerol* served with the Grand Fleet and in the Baltic until 1922.

The brooch is engraved “Well Done HMS Celerol”. I’m not sure what they did well, and can’t find any record of a particular event. They did run aground in the Baltic, but apart from the bare report, there was no follow-up to suggest anything newsworthy happened. It may well have been a gift, meant as thanks for general good work. It is hallmarked Birmingham 1915 and stamped with the mark of Frank H Manno and a registered Design Number. Taken together, these suggest that the badge was supplied to retailers with space left for a personal engraved message. I have seen several *Celerol* examples in old catalogues, (though it may just be the same badge at different times). I have yet to see an example of a badge to another ship, which may shed more light on the subject.

The final badge in this photograph is a tie pin for *HMS Marshal Soult*, (*pictured below*), a class of vessel known as a Monitor. As used by the RN in the Great War they were shallow draft vessels with big guns,



used variously for working in rivers, coastal bombardment and as guard ships. The *Marshal Soult* was equipped with two 15” guns, originally intended for use on a battleship (Monitors were often built around surplus guns) and used mainly for coastal bombardment of German positions in Flanders. Her guns would eventually be reused in *HMS Roberts*, a monitor completed in 1941. *Soult* herself, was used as a depot ship for trawlers at Portsmouth and scrapped in 1946.



Next, we move on to some popular types of Naval sweetheart. Anchors were a popular feature of religious-themed brooches so cannot always be linked to the Navy unless, as in this case (*left*), it is named. *HMS Conquest* was a C Class cruiser that was commissioned in 1915 and this brooch is hallmarked Birmingham 1916. After service

with the Harwich Squadron *Conquest* hit a mine in mid-1918 and did not see further service until after the war, eventually being scrapped in 1930.

The torpedo is for *HMS Minotaur* and is hallmarked Chester 1914. It is very unusual to see a sweetheart that wasn't made in Birmingham or London. The *Minotaur* was an armoured cruiser, launched in 1906, and first employed on the China Station, before serving with the Home Fleet, and finally with the Northern Patrol enforcing the blockade of Germany. After the war, and now being an obsolete class of ship, she was scrapped in 1920.

The submarine pictured is one of a number of designs showing ships, including destroyers and battleships. This particular one is marked Sterling Silver. Submarines are quiet sought after, though I have not yet seen one named to a particular vessel – something else I must look out for.



Finally, a pair of matching brooches – one as a tie pin and one as a brooch with a safety chain and the date “1944”. The configuration of the brooch, with the safety chain and dated top pin is American in style and the maker, Birks, is Canadian. They made a number of sweethearts as well as the RCAF Operational Wings and the WW2 Memorial Bar. They are still in business today.

*HMS Ranee* was an escort carrier taken on Lend-Lease from the USA in 1943. After modification in Vancouver, her first voyage was in early 1944 – ferrying aircraft to India. She then returned to Vancouver to complete the modifications. Her second voyage was to ferry aircraft to Cape Town and her third was to bring aircraft to the UK. She made two supply voyages in the Pacific before being converted to a troop ship, making more voyages to bring troops and their families back to the UK. *Ranee* may have missed the major battles, but she does provide an example of how much work needs doing to fight a war.