



### Captain David T Smith OBE RN FNI (42-44)



David was born in 1927. His father was an estate supervisor and they lived near Windsor, where David went to Windsor County School, before winning a scholarship from the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers to attend Conway, joining in September 1942. We first met in summer 1943 and were friends ever after. David was in his 3rd term, I in my 4th so he was technically my junior which I always pulled his leg about; he always took it in good faith.

In January 1944, David was made Senior Cadet Captain of Port Fore Top and clearly made a considerable success of his responsibilities. It is not surprising that he was chosen to be Chief Cadet Captain for his last Term, during which he won the Kings Gold Medal. About 60 Cadets from Conway, Worcester and Pangbourne sat the RNR exam that year; only David was successful and appointed Midshipman RNR.

After further training at Greenwich Naval College and Chatham, David joined HMS *Rodney*, then the light cruiser HMS *Bermuda*. I had been sent in May 1945 to join HMS *King George V* in Australia, as part of the British Pacific Fleet. David too was in the Far East in HMS *Bermuda*. After the war there ended, I flew from Sydney in December 1945 to join HMS *Ariadne*, a fast minelayer operating round Hong Kong, Shanghai and Japan. There was an extraordinary coincidence in the Yangtse River at Shanghai. *Ariadne* and *Bermuda* were moored on either side of a pontoon in the middle of the river, neither of us knowing we were within 25 yards of each other. After demob, we lost touch for a few years, though David was offered the chance to transfer to RN. A few years later, I saw David in a BBC film made on board the aircraft carrier HMS *Eagle* where he was Commander. The film showed him doing his evening rounds and presiding at dinner in the Wardroom.

Capt Eric Hewitt, then President of the Conway Club, invited David to join the Conway Club Committee. This he accepted and made a point of attending Committee meetings whenever his ship was in UK waters. When Eric retired, David was elected Club President. David and I were now back in touch, and I found myself one of his two Vice Presidents. Following David's devoted commitment, the Committee appointed him Patron.

In 1996, the new Conway Chapel at Birkenhead Priory was dedicated by the Bishop of Birkenhead, and the Memorial Window was unveiled by the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside. David was present as an Elder Brother of Trinity House, having been sworn in as such in 1976. David travelled up to attend many Remembrance Sunday services and other functions in the Conway Chapel, including the unveiling of further windows. David and Daphne always stayed with us. In 1995, we all celebrated the