



## THE HMS HOOD ASSOCIATION

(Official Website [www.hmshood.com](http://www.hmshood.com))

*A Special Message from our Chairman,*

*December 2001*

### **Shipmates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This will be my last Newsletter to you as Chairman. It is with much regret after so many years as your Chairman I find that owing to ill health I cannot fulfil my obligations and I intend to retire at the next AGM. Meanwhile the Vice Chairman, Mr. Peter Heys, will temporarily take over my duties as Chairman. A new Chairman will be elected at the next AGM. Peter is a very good man for this job, and I know that he will maintain the high standards that the position and the Association demands. I would like to remain on the Committee to help as and when needed. In the mean time, would you kindly send all Chairman correspondence to our Vice Chairman:

**Mr. Peter Heys,  
'Toad Hall',  
93A Kenilworth Road,  
FLEET,  
Hampshire, GU51 3AY.**

The Treasurer (Mr. Ken Clark) and myself have worked together for many years and I know I will miss his willingness to help me at all times. He does an excellent job, I thank you Ken. I would like to thank all the members of the Committee for their work and the support they have given me over the years. Particularly, I thank Mrs. Heys, our Secretary, for all the work she does for us, also Mr. Dick Turner for writing the meeting minutes and being our M.C. at the Reunions, and Mrs. Clark for allowing us to use her home for Committee meeting and providing refreshments. Our new Standard Bearer, Mr. Tony Middleton, is a welcome addition to the fold and I thank him for the excellent job he has done since his appointment last year. Also, I would like to thank all our shipmates and members for the part they play in keeping the Association alive and remembering our lost shipmates, of whom we will never forget.

As we have all seen on TV, Mr. Ted Briggs, our President, has had a very busy year, being involved heavily with the media in the preparation of the TV programmes and visiting the site of our sunken lady.

Finally, our Treasurer tells me there are some members who have still not paid their dues yet. Come on Shipmates. Support YOUR Association.

Also, would all members who actually served in 'Hood' **PLEASE** let the Treasurer know and also **PLEASE** state at what rank you served..



So for now, I graciously thank you all and I hope all those of you who are not well make a speedy recovery.

On behalf of the committee, and all associated with the HMS Hood Association, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. Up Spirits!!

*God bless you all*

**John Russell Williams**

## Remembrance Day

On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November, a group of about a dozen HMS Hood Association members attended the Naval War Memorial at Southsea. The weather was kind to us this year, being sunny with little wind. Unfortunately, several of our regular participants were unable to attend because of illness. Mr. Ted Briggs laid a wreath on behalf of the Association and said the following prayer:

*'Dear Gracious Lord we are gathered together yet again in remembrance of the sad loss of so many of our shipmates in HMS Hood in this the 60<sup>th</sup> year of her loss. On this occasion however we are very proud and gratified that due to modern technology and the determined effort of a few too young to personally recall the tragic event but who nevertheless have thankfully given us the satisfaction and pride to know that a Roll of Honour has been laid on their final resting place so very deep but so very peaceful and now suitably remembered by all. Amen.'*

## Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance

The Association Standard was taken to the Festival at the Royal Albert Hall in London this year by Mr. Tony Middleton and featured in the parade along with other military association Standards.

## Forthcoming Broadcasts

The following programmes are to be broadcast during December 2001:

- **Friday 14 December at 0900**  
**Radio 5 Live**

*Nicky Campbell interviews Mr. David Mearns and Mr. Ted Briggs followed by questions and answer session (general).*

- **Week preceding Christmas (tentatively scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> December)**  
**ITN (Factual)**

*HMS Hood documentary on Channel 4 (90 minutes).*

- **Week preceding Christmas (tentatively scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> December)**  
**ITN (Factual)**

*Bismarck documentary on Channel 4 (90 minutes).*

## Association Events Reminder

- *The Boldre Church service will be held at 1100 on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2002.*
- *The AGM and Reunion Dinner on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2002 at the Royal Sailors Home Club, Portsmouth. Tickets for the Reunion are priced at £18 each in advance.*
- *The Memorial service will be held at St. Georges Church, Portsmouth, on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2002.*

## Protection of Military Remains Act 1986

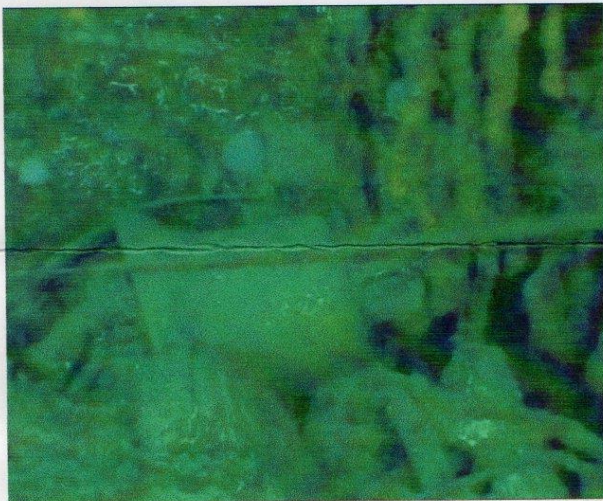
Hitherto, no wrecks have been granted Controlled or Protected status under the auspices of this Act. This issue has been under review since June 2000 culminating in the publication of a consultation paper in February this year. Recently on behalf of the Association, our Chairman has written to the Secretary of State for Defence, Geoffrey Hoon MP, requesting that the wreck of our great ship is considered for designation as a Controlled Site under the Act.

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> of November, the Under-Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veteran Affairs, Dr. Lewis Moonie MP, announced to Parliament that greater protection would be given to military wrecks and maritime graves. Initially sixteen wrecks, in waters under UK jurisdiction, will be designated **Controlled Sites**. In addition, five wrecks which lie in international waters and are deemed at immediate and significant risk will be designated as **Protected Places**. This latter group is to include HMS Hood.

What does this mean? All designated vessels will be protected from unauthorised disturbance. For **Controlled Sites** diving will be prohibited without a specific licence, but in the case of **Protected Places**, diving will be permitted on a strict 'Do Not Touch' basis. It will be an offence to disturb or remove items from or in any way tamper or remove artefacts from a **Controlled Site** or **Protected Place**. However, for wrecks lying in international waters, such as HMS Hood, the UK cannot restrict or limit the activities of other nationals.

The MOD website at [www.news.mod.uk/stories/2001/nov/011109b1.htm](http://www.news.mod.uk/stories/2001/nov/011109b1.htm) can be consulted for more information.

The Committee wish to thank Mr. Frank Allen for his research and proposal for the application and Messrs Rob White and David Mearns for their discussions on this subject with MOD (Navy)



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### The Bell of HMS Hood

Since the Channel 4 TV broadcasts of the expedition to find HMS Hood, there have been many suggestions that the Hood's bell should be recovered and placed in a suitable location, such as Westminster Abbey, as a memorial to those who lost their lives on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1941. The MOD (Navy) sanctioned the search for the remains of Hood on the explicit basis of 'look, but do not touch' leaving her completely undisturbed (see item above). David Mearns, the expedition leader, has always intended this to be the case and made it clear to the Association from the outset when he opened discussions with us in 1995 about his proposed search. Additionally, Ted Briggs, our President and sole remaining survivor, together with the entire Committee feel quite strongly that nothing should be removed from the wreck to respect the sensitivity we all have about War Graves.

### New book about HMS Hood and the search for her final resting place

The book chronicling the ITN/ Channel 4 sponsored expedition to find the last resting place of HMS Hood was published in November 2001. Entitled '*Hood, and Bismarck*' it was co-written by the expedition leader Mr. David Mearns and ITN's Mr. Rob White (both HMS Hood Association members). The book tells the stories of the two mightiest warships of their respective generations, their cataclysmic meeting in the Denmark Strait, their sinking, and the ultimate discovery and filming of their final resting places on the seabed in the North Atlantic. Published by Pan Macmillan Ltd and costing £20.00, it is available at all good bookshops.

Mr. Ted Briggs, our President, has received a letter from a Mr. D. Kent of Boston, Lincs. After the sinking of HMS Hood, his mother wrote the following poem for the survivors and for those who died in HMS Hood. The poem was printed locally and sold for one old penny per copy in aid of the Local Comforts Fund. Sadly, Mrs. Kent died four years ago. We reproduce the poem here by kind permission of Mr. Kent.

## H.M.S. "HOOD."

*Dedicated to the Officers and Men of H.M.S. "Hood."*

The big guns roared,  
A battle raged at sea,  
For the freedom of Old England,  
Our boys fought bravely,  
They toiled with all their might,  
For to be in action was their delight.

A sudden flash, a deafening roar,  
The gallant ship was seen no more,  
Her name is known in every land  
As H.M.S. the "Hood."  
And all her gallant sailors,  
Who at their post still stood.

The news was flashed from shore to shore,  
How the enemies shell had hit her ammunition store.  
The Hun was known to gloat and boast  
Of the mighty Bismarck still afloat.  
They little knew what fate had in store,  
"Avenge the Hood" was the cry from our shores.

Her sister ships began the chase,  
The sailors very grim of face,  
An eye for an eye was all they could say,  
No rest, no sleep until our task is done,  
For who dare to kill old England's sons.

Again the news was flashed,  
Ere many hours had passed,  
The "Hood" had been avenged,  
Nelson stirred and whispered:  
"All is well my friends"  
As the "Bismarck" sank to her fated end

*Mary Kent, Boston.*

### And finally, a Photograph Appeal

Does anyone have an undamaged copy of this photograph of HMS Hood's football team and can anyone identify the players?

Unfortunately, the only person we know of, Mr. Arthur Gunter, is part missing from the torn right hand side.

