



## THE H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

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

### Message from your Chairman

December 2002

Shipmates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As my first Newsletter to you as your new Chairman it is with much sorrow and sadness that I have to report the death of John R. Williams at 20:05 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2002 in the Memorial Hospital, Gosport. As many of you will know, John had been in and out of hospital many times over the last twelve months and had been undergoing renal dialysis treatment twice each week for some time. He was cremated at Portchester Crematorium on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> of September where our Chaplain, the Reverend Ron Paterson, conducted the service. John's ashes were buried at sea on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2002. John had been the Association's longest serving Chairman, having held the post for seventeen years. His dedication to the task was without equal. He had a very friendly personality and will be sadly missed.

The following tributes to J R were given at his funeral service.

Dick Turner read the following poem which was kindly written by Nixie Taverner:

*Although sadly I only knew JR  
For three Hood-centred years,  
I realize his passing will cause much grief  
And the shedding of many tears.*

*He was a dedicated sailor  
Whether at work or play  
So now his shipmates gather  
To Honour him and pray...*

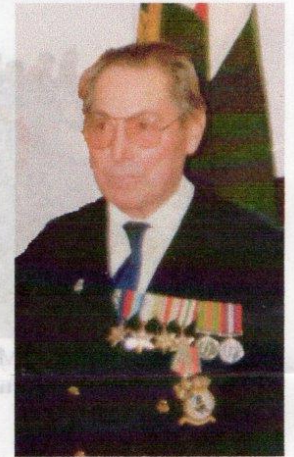
*J.R. continued at the helm  
For a most extended time  
As an outstanding Chairman  
But was never past his prime.*

*Always a gifted writer,  
He was even known to say  
In one of his regular News Sheets,  
'A tot will keep the doctor at bay'!*

*While never too pre-occupied  
For kind words or a laugh,  
Perhaps JR. should be described  
As 'Our former Chief of Staff'.*

*Even when assailed by ills  
That causes him some fragility  
JR kept his will to live,  
His humour and ability*

*Now we know he's left us  
And has truly 'crossed the bar',  
No doubt he rose in a cloud of smoke  
To a very special star...*



**J.R. Williams  
(1916 – 2002)**

And also this fond memory from our President, Mr. Ted Briggs:

“ JR. was the Association's fourth member to assume the mantle of Chairman of the HMS Hood Association. He took over on the sad death of Harry Purdue, and has the distinction of being the longest serving member in this post, just over seventeen years, seventeen years of unstinted loyalty and dedication which was only brought to a very reluctant close by illness after a long fight.

My earliest recollection of his undoubted suitability for the post of Chairman came after he had been in office only for a short while. It happened when the Association decided on a new Standard to replace the old one, which like him, and us, had seen better days.

TS Hood at St. Austell, Cornwall, was delighted to accept the old Standard to be laid up with them. A Parade was organised by TS Hood at St. Austell to dedicate the new Standard and to accept the old one. Unfortunately as soon as the Parade had assembled and was about to march off the heavens opened. Many, like me, were looking around for some shelter when a very quiet voice beside me came from JR “**Steady Hood's, get wet**”. We did, fortunately it was only a heavy shower but I know the Association members present who “stood fast” were very much appreciated by the officers and youngsters of TS Hood. This was typical of J.R., and I am sure that he is, even now, looking down and saying,

“Steady Hood's, carry on as before, I am very proud of you “.

“We, most certainly, are very proud of him”.



## The Hood Stones

As in previous years, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2002 students from Durness Primary School cleaned and repainted the Hood stones on the hillside above Laid overlooking Loch Eriboll. Sailors from Hood placed the stones there in 1937 when HMS Hood was anchored in the Loch for nine days. The letters spelling out 'HOOD' are some six feet high. This year the children were supported and assisted by crewmembers of HMS Sutherland. In addition, stones identifying 'SUTHERLAND' were added on a separate part of the hill.

A new activity was added to the local calendar this year. On the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> July, Laid, Polla and Port-Na-Con Residents' Association hosted a Clay Pigeon Shoot at Port-Na-Con for the HMS Hood Memorial Trophy between HMS Sutherland and a Durness/Laid team. The Durness/Laid team won the trophy, which had been specially hand crafted and designed by the Durness/Laid team. Each side had 5 teams of 3 guns and prizes were awarded to every member of each winning team. The competition, which started at 19:00 and ended at 23:00 due to slowly fading daylight, attracted some 70 spectators. The contest turned out to be the biggest event ever hosted in Laid. Port-Na-Con Guest House kindly provided refreshments. The Shoot will be an annual event and following its success this year, Cdr. Thomas, the Commanding Officer of HMS Sutherland, has extended an invitation to hold next year's competition on board HMS Sutherland when she visits Loch Eriboll, this possibly in February. I am sure any HMS Hood Association members who wish to attend will be made more than welcome. Reprinted below are photographs showing the Hood Stones and the crewmembers of HMS Sutherland, and students from Durness Primary School who maintained the Stones this year.



Crewmembers of HMS Sutherland, Children and Staff who maintain the Hood Stones



The Hood Stones

## Remembrance Day

On Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2002, a small group of Hood Association members attended the Naval War Memorial at Southsea. Mr. Ernie McConnell carried the Association Standard. The weather was fine but it was quite cold due to the breeze blowing off the Solent. The Reverend Ron Paterson invited onlookers to join us during his small service and Association President Ted Briggs laid a wreath on behalf of the Association.



Association members at Southsea. 11<sup>th</sup> September 2002



## Photo Mystery

The photograph reproduced below has recently been donated via the Hood web site by Mr. Paul Cheney. We know the names of the men but not, unfortunately, which name relates to which man pictured. Can you help?

If you can identify any of these men, please phone Paul Bevand on (01905 426505)



### **28 men lost with the ship:**

Bill Allcock, Les Bispham (2<sup>nd</sup> from right, front row), Sid Bond, Harold Borrer, Albert Chaplin, Tom Clements, Francis Dall, Ron Dennis, Alfred Edmonds, John Finch, Charlie Francis, Harry Gilbert, Jack Goff, Edward Hales, Arthur Hartley, Ron Henshaw, Bill Hickmott, Bob Jones, Ray Kerr, John Laughlin, John Martin, Ron Naylor, Owen O'Neil, Leonard Peckham, Cyril Porter, Peter Robinson, Fred Taylor, Joe Ward

### **Possibly lost:**

Vic Adams, Dave Miller, P. Randall, Jeff Snow.

### **Definitely not lost:**

Mick Ablett, Will Smedley

## In Conclusion

I would like to thank our President, Mr. Ted Briggs and all the members of the Committee for their support and assistance during my transition to the Chair. Also, I would like to thank all our shipmates and members for continuing their support for the Association thus keeping alive the memory of our lost shipmates and ensuring that they will never be forgotten.

Finally, I must apologise for the late publication of this latest Newsletter. It is entirely my fault and mainly caused by total failure of my computer system coupled with software failure followed by repeated computer viruses imported with my emails. This situation was further compounded by a serious illness in my family which necessitated my presence in Yorkshire.

The mention of emails brings me to my final point. The cost of postage in this day and age can be prohibitive and takes up a considerable amount of Association funds. In this computer literate age a great many people now have computers of their own.

Would it be more prudent if we could send emails containing Newsletters etc to Association members? **Your comments please !**

It only remains for me, your Chairman, and your Committee to wish to you all,

**A Very Merry Christmas and a prosperous, but more importantly, healthy, New Year.**

*Peter Heys*



## Web site update

The Hood Association web site [www.hmshood.com](http://www.hmshood.com) continues to generate much interest with over 14,000 different people visiting the web site each month. Ted Briggs has kindly agreed to let us reproduce his part of the book "Flagship Hood" on the site and we have added the first four chapters so far. The appeal for photos of crew lost with Hood still generates new finds each month bringing our current total to 393. Over the winter we will be adding a collection of memorabilia from the 1923/24 Empire Cruise donated by Hood Association member Jim Sikorski. We also hope to have our searchable database of former crew up and running. If you have not yet seen the website then try asking at your local library – they may be able to start you "surfing."

Paul Bevand and Frank Allen (web site coordinators)

## Forthcoming Events

- The Boldre Church service will be held at 11:00hrs on Sunday 18th May 2003.
- The Association AGM will be held at 16:30 on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2003 at the Royal Sailors Home Club, Portsmouth, followed by the Reunion Dinner at 18:30 for 19:00. Tickets for the Reunion Dinner will be available from March 2003.
- The Memorial service will be held at St Georges Church, Portsmouth, on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2003. Members and guests should assemble at the Royal Sailors Home Club at 10:30. As in previous years, the band of TS Tenacity will lead our march to St George's Church.

## Membership Renewals

Our Treasurer, Mr. Ken (Nobby) Clark wishes to remind members that their membership should be renewed on or before 1<sup>st</sup> May 2003, the commencement of our membership years. The fee for 2003/4 remains at £5.00 for members resident in the UK and £10.00 (to be paid in pounds sterling) for members who are resident abroad. When renewing your membership, please make your cheque payable to 'HMS Hood Association' and do not forget to enclose your membership card with your cheque and a S.A.E. for its return.

## Slops

The following items are now available from the Treasurer. All feature the HMS Hood crest. Prices include postage and packing for UK delivery addresses, but an additional charge of £2.00 is required for overseas addresses.

We regret that unfortunately no foreign currency cheques can be accepted.

<b>Blazer badges</b>	<b>£13.00</b>
<b>Ties</b>	<b>£10.00</b>
<b>Brooches</b>	<b>£ 3.50</b>
<b>Tie clips</b>	<b>£ 6.00</b>
<b>Sweatshirts (all sizes)</b>	<b>£13.50</b>
<b>T-Shirts</b>	<b>£ 7.00</b>
<b>Baseball caps</b>	<b>£ 4.00</b>
<b>Key rings</b>	<b>£ 2.50</b>
<b>Fridge magnets</b>	<b>£ 3.00</b>

Sweatshirts are available in S (36), M (38), L (40/42) and XL (44/46) and t-shirts in S (36), M (38), L (40) and XL (42/44).

**All orders should be sent to:**

**The Treasurer, HMS Hood Association, 57, Berewecke Avenue, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 6BL.  
Please make cheques payable to 'The HMS Hood Association'**