



## THE H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

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

### Message from our Chairman

Shipmates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with much regret I have to report the sudden death on 12<sup>th</sup> January this year of Ernie McConnell at the age of 82. He was one of our longest serving members. Mac, as he was known, joined the Royal Navy in October 1936, undertaking his training at HMS St. Vincent. He served on *Hood* between 1938 and 1940. During his naval career, he also served on HMS's *Dunedin* and *Fury*, before leaving the Royal Navy in June 1951 as an able seaman. Whilst on board HMS *Fury*, the destroyer was mined and ended up on the rocks of the French coast.

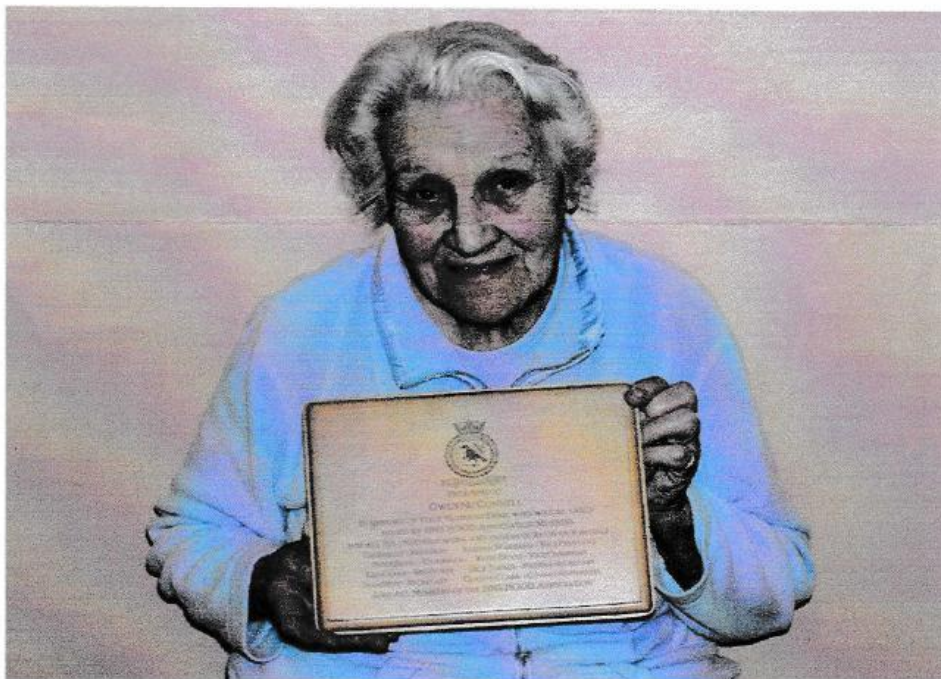
As we reported in the last Newsletter, Ernie had accepted the Committee's invitation to be our Guest of Honour at this year's Reunion Dinner. To mark our appreciation for Ernie's devoted service to the Association, Ted Briggs, Jim Taylor and I have presented his widow, Gwen, with an inscribed plaque. (Picture below)

Early in January, our Treasurer Ken Clark had a fire at his home in Winchester. Fortunately, Ken and his wife were uninjured and all the contents have been removed from the house awaiting repairs to the property. Ken, not only looked after the Association's finances, but also attended to all membership matters and requests for Reunion tickets. He also kept our stock of slops and provided facilities at his house to hold our monthly committee meetings. Needless to say, we do not have access to any of the slops items or his computer containing the Association's records. In the meantime, all postal membership renewals are to be handled by myself.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a request form for Reunion Dinner tickets. In spite of rising costs, we have kept the price the same as in the past few years by providing a large subsidy from the Association funds. Please make every effort to attend as the numbers have been falling in recent years. Recent new members will be most welcome and the occasion will give them the opportunity to chat with the veterans and other members.

God bless you all.

Peter Heys



Gwen McConnell with the plaque presented to her in honour of her late husband 'Little Mac'



### Membership Renewals

May we remind you that membership renewals are due on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Current members who have not renewed their membership by the end of May are automatically erased from the membership list by the records computer and consequently will not receive future communications. The membership fee remains at £5 per year for UK residents and £10 for members living abroad. When renewing, please do not forget to include your membership card for updating and a S.A.E. for its return. As mentioned above, for this year only, please send your renewals to Peter Heys, 'Toad Hall', 93A Kenilworth Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3AY.

### Boldre Church Service

The service this year will be held at 1100 on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May and NOT 23<sup>rd</sup> May as indicated at last year's service.

### 2004 AGM/Reunion Dinner/Memorial Service

- The AGM will commence at 1630 on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at the Royal Sailors Home Club, Portsmouth, followed by the Reunion Dinner at 1830 for 1900. Rev. Ron Paterson, our Chaplain, has accepted the Committee's invitation to be Guest of Honour at the Dinner.
- Our Memorial service will be held at St. George's Church, Portsmouth, on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May at 1130.

### Webmasters Report (from Paul Bevand)

Recent months have been quite busy on the website. Interest has been good with over 20,000 people visiting the site during February – nearly 700 a day. The appeal for crew photographs has benefited from this, with a number of new photographs added to the memorial in recent weeks. We now have over 460. I have started to write to local papers again with the aim of increasing the total on display in the Memorial Gallery at this year's Reunion. My hope is that we can reach the 500 mark by then. Frank has been working hard on a redesign of the site, which is now well under way. Again, we hope to have the new look in place across the whole site by the time of the Reunion. I visited the Public Records Office in February as part of our ongoing research into the Official records pertaining to 'Hood'. They now allow us to use a digital camera, which greatly increases the amount we can achieve on each visit when compared with the old pencil and notepad method. I took over 1,000 photos of documents so Frank and I will be busy typing for the next few months!

### HMS Collingwood

A new Manpower and Personnel Administration Centre to be named 'Hood Building' is being constructed at HMS Collingwood. Ted Briggs attended a ceremony there on 4<sup>th</sup> December last year and cut the first turfs to mark the start of construction. Ted and Peter Heys were invited to the site on 10<sup>th</sup> February to witness the steel structure being erected. The building is due for completion in September this year.



Ted Briggs digging the first turfs to mark the start of construction