



THE H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

(Official Website www.hmshood.com)

Message from the Chairman

Shipmates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with regret I have to report the passing of our oldest member and veteran Bill Stone on 10th January. Bill was 108 years old having been born on 23rd September 1900. The funeral service was held at St Leonard's Parish Church, Watlington in Oxfordshire on 29th January and was attended by past and present members of the armed forces and representatives of the various Naval associations he had been a member. Simon Sillence carried our Standard. Bill's death was widely reported in the national media and the funeral service featured in TV news programmes that evening. We will all miss him and remember his smiling face and the songs he used to sing for us at our functions.

I also have to report the death on 17th January of Clare Briggs, Ted's widow. Clare was 88 years old and had been in failing health for some time. After Ted's death last year she had asked me to keep her informed about the Association and send her the Newsletters. I last spoke with her on 12th January when she appeared in very good spirits. Two days later she was taken into hospital and never recovered consciousness. Clare was cremated at Portchester Crematorium on 10th February. Derick Collins, Alec Kellaway and myself attended the service on behalf of our Association.

Ted's naval memorabilia has been given to HMS Collingwood. All items associated with Hood including his medal ribbons are to be exhibited in the display cabinet in the entrance to the Hood Building. Other items, which include copies of the crests of ships he served in and photographs of him at the time, will be displayed in their museum.

Whilst on the subject of memorabilia, we are attempting to find a suitable permanent home for all the items currently held by various members on behalf of our Association. The aim is not to have the items just put into storage but to have them on display or easily available for viewing by the public. Keith Evans kindly offered to undertake this task, which is proving more difficult than originally thought. More on this when we have identified a suitable location. This, of course, does not affect the photographs and service history etc. of veterans which Paul Bevand has collected for display on our website.

We are looking for a volunteer to take over the Treasurer's responsibilities and become a member of the Committee. Committee meetings are currently held in Winchester four to five times each year on Fridays at 1030. If any member would like to volunteer for this position please contact me at the address on the back of your membership card. You must of course be available at these times and be able to easily travel to Winchester. A computer loaded with the necessary software for record keeping and reporting will be provided.

This year's AGM and Reunion will take place at the Royal Maritime Club on Saturday 23rd May. If you plan to attend and require accommodation at the club I suggest you book this fairly soon. The telephone number for accommodation bookings is **02392 824231**. As usual the AGM will take place at 1600 in Brocks Bar. Please make every effort to attend. An application form for tickets is included with this newsletter.

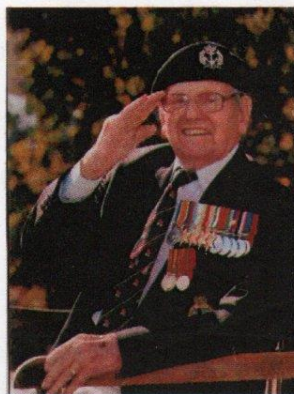
At the last count we had 230 members, of which 17 live abroad. Thirty-five new members have joined in this membership year.

God bless you all,
Peter Heys

Important Events

- **2009 Boldre Church Service:** 1100 on Sunday 17th May
- **2009 AGM/Reunion Dinner:** 1600/1830 on Saturday 23rd May at Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth.
- **2009 Memorial Service:** 1145 on Sunday 24th May at St George's Church, Portsmouth.
- **2009 Remembrance Service:** 1045 on Wednesday 11th November at Portsmouth Naval War Memorial

Memorial William Frederick Stone
September 23rd 1900 –January 10th 2009



After 108 years and a short period of poor health William peacefully crossed the Bar on 10th January 2009. His funeral took place at St Leonard's Church, Watlington, Oxfordshire on 29th January 2009 at 1430Hrs. The church was full to capacity with the many organizations represented with which he was associated. Standard bearers from many organizations lined the route as he was carried into the church by naval ratings from the Marine Engineering department (stokers). His Son-in-Law Michael Davidson gave a personal tribute for the family, an extract follows:-

"William would have been absolutely delighted and overwhelmed to see so many gathered here today to celebrate his life. He would have been especially pleased to see so many from Watlington and the surrounding area, where he spent 20 very happy years of his life. He would equally have been pleased to see so many organizations and associations, whose meetings and reunions he loved to attend. He would also have thoroughly appreciated knowing he was being carried into the church in the arms of a bunch of stokers, I know that they now have a much fancier title but, as we know, still a body of men renowned for their gentle and sensitive natures! But of course, always professional in whatever they are asked to do! We all know William loved singing, indeed he was in good voice right up to the last few weeks of his life. He particularly loved hymns and knew most of them by heart-certainly the ones being sung today. I like to think he is listening to this service with a critical ear, and hope that he approves. On behalf of the family I would like to acknowledge all the hundreds of cards, letters, E Mails and phone calls expressing sympathy. Not just from those who knew him, but also from people who didn't but felt they did. So to you all we say "thank you".

William had a truly wonderful life. He was born during Queen Victoria's reign, in quite humble circumstances in the hamlet of Ledstone, near Kingsbridge, Devon. His subsequent entry to the Armed Forces was hastened by WW1, although in my mind I am sure he would have enlisted anyway, since his family had a tradition of sending its sons in particular to the Royal Navy. His first days at Devonport were rather inauspicious, since he very quickly succumbed to the Flu pandemic sweeping the world, but he survived unlike millions who didn't. This early sign of a strong constitution was something that would continue to dominate the rest of his life. How exciting it must have been for a young man of 23, who had spent his early years in a quiet farming community, to find himself on the icon of the Royal Navy – the Battle Cruiser HMS HOOD – inching her way through the Panama canal whilst leading a squadron of ships as part of the 11 month world cruise. Whilst on Hood he developed the off-duty skill in cutting hair which led to him being called to other ships. Amongst his customers were Admiral Evans – known for his exploits as 'Evans of the Broke' in 1917, and General Franco's brother who was rescued from the sea after his plane ditched. Haircutting was lucrative for in 1927 he bought a car whilst stationed at Portland, Dorset so he could get home to Devon. He had a cheeky side to his nature. Once being part of a squad of sailors being drilled he called "Halt!" which they did. He was soon before the ships commander to explain his action. William replied, surprisingly with some honesty, I thought "It was a joke Sir". To which the commander replied, "Well Stone, you've had your little joke, so now I'll have mine. 7 days pay stopped."

In 1938 William settled down and married his long time, and I suspect long suffering girl friend Lily, and in 1939 their only child, daughter Anne was born.

In 1940, having completed 22 years service, he should have left the navy but as WW2 had commenced he had to stay on. He did however have the consolation of being able to start drawing his pension, something he liked reminding every Admiral he saw in later years. As one remarked, "No wonder the Navy's finances are in the state they are today!" As a Chief Stoker on board minesweeper HMS Salamander he was involved in many trips to Dunkirk rescuing hundreds of soldiers off the beaches. Later he was on Russian convoy duties and was drafted off to HMS Newfoundland, against his wishes, but it was a lucky escape as Salamander was severely damaged shortly after. He also survived a torpedo attack whilst serving in HMS Newfoundland and was Mentioned in Dispatches for his actions.

After the war he settled down into civilian life running his hairdressing and tobacconists business in Paighton, Devon, and retired in 1968 to nearby Churston enjoying his garden. In 1986 he and Lily moved to Watlington to be nearer our family at Beaconsfield. It was not surprising that in a short time they were involved in the local community. Around the time of the Poppy Appeal, he would accompany his British Legion friends to the schools to talk to the pupils about the war and the importance of remembering the sacrifices made by so many. He would have been especially pleased to see the schools represented here today and the children taking a role in the service.

He was often asked for the recipe for life. As we all know his reply would be, Clean Living – Contented Mind – and Trust in God”.

After the service a shrub was planted and dedicated in his memory. The children of the school presented his daughter Anne with an album of their memory of him.

Association members will remember William (Bill) for many reasons but him singing All the Nice Girls Love a Sailor will always be remembered.

Remembrance Day Service November 2008

On Remembrance Day, Tuesday 11th November 2008, members of the H.M.S.Hood Association gathered at the Portsmouth Naval War Memorial on Southsea Common. They were there to remember their comrades, family members and friends lost in the sinking of H M S Hood on 24th May 1941 and all other servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice. The service commenced at 1030, Chaplain Bernard Clarke took the service as our Chaplain John Green was unable to attend due to sickness. Association Vice Chairman Keith Evans laid a wreath on behalf of the Association and at 1100 a 2 minutes silence was observed. Afterwards members retired to The Royal Maritime Club (Home Club) for refreshments.

Editor

Anyone who wishes to forward items for the newsletter please send to Derick Collins, 12 Coghlan Close, Fareham, PO16 7YF. All contributions will be greatly appreciated.