



THE H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

(Official Website www.hmshood.com)

Message from our Chairman

Shipmates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, I wish to thank all the members and their guests who attended the Reunion Dinner in May. This year's attendance was slightly more than in recent years. More about the weekend's events later in this Newsletter.

I wish to welcome Derick Collins as the new Committee member. His contribution to the running of the Association since he joined the Committee is much appreciated.

I am pleased to inform members that Ken and Gladys Clark have at last been able to return to their home after many months of refurbishment resulting from fire damage and are trying to get back to normality. As from the beginning of next year, will you please address all your membership matters and slops requirements to him. His address is shown on the back of your membership card.

Many of you will be aware that Dick Turner had two heart attacks earlier this year and spent long periods in Salisbury Hospital culminating in a heart operation in Southampton. He is now well on the way to recovery and is eagerly looking forward to continued improvement in the future.

Finally, I would like to apologise for an error in some printed copies of the last Newsletter stating Ernie McConnell's rank as 'able seaman'. Of course, it should have been 'Petty Officer'. I am sorry for this mistake.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and continued good health in the New Year.

Peter Heys

Important Events for 2005

- **Boldre Church Service:** 1100 on 15 May.
- **AGM/Reunion Dinner:** 1600/1900 on 21 May at Royal Sailors Home Club, Portsmouth.
- **Memorial Service:** 1100 on 22 May at St George's Church, Portsmouth.
- **Remembrance Service:** 11 November at the Naval War Memorial, Southsea.

Highlights of the Reunion Weekend (from Nixie Taverner)

AGM It was interesting to hear the possible recovery of the Hood bell is still 'under consideration' and David Mearns is evidently hopeful that the Ministry of Defence may 'foot the bill'. We were also delighted to hear the new Hood building at Collingwood is being officially opened in September and that Ted Briggs will be present for the occasion (*more later - ed*). Later, we enjoyed hearing excerpts from Keith Evans diary written in 1938 when he was serving in Hood as a Paymaster Cadet (*see below - ed*). It was heartening to learn, despite the loss of so many Association records, our financial status shows a healthy balance.

Reunion Dinner As always, there was a good 'turn-out', but we missed the presence of Dick and Betty Turner, due to Dick's continuing ill health. However, Frank Pavey stepped in at the last minute to take over as Master of Ceremonies and performed his duties well. Our Chaplain, Ron Paterson, who has celebrated his 88th birthday, was Guest of Honour. During his eloquent and entertaining speech he spoke about his memorable time in Hood from 1933-36 as a Boy Sailor when my father Rory O'Connor was Executive Commander and whose book 'Running a Big Ship on Ten Commandments' encapsulates his Hood experiences.

Memorial Service Our march to St George's Church was led by the Parade Commander and Cadets from HMS Collingwood, accompanied by the band of TS Tenacity who played with their usual verve. Bill Stone took the salute from the steps of the Home Club. The Memorial Service followed its traditional structure but was further enhanced by our Chaplain's excellent address.

Extract from the 1938 Diary of Commander Keith Evans

- 26 September** International situation extremely critical, have the middle (ciphering) watch. Turn in at 0430.
- 27 September** Situation still critical. War seems inevitable. Listen to Chamberlain on the wireless.
- 28 September** Hood in company with Imogen, Icarus, Impulsive and Ivanhoe sail from Gibraltar.
- 29 September** Have morning watch. Now in the Atlantic. Intention is to rendezvous with Revenge at 1700 on Friday off Cape Finisterre to take over as escort of Aquitania who has over 1000 reservists on board for Gibraltar, Malta and Alexandria. Later rendezvous put off till Saturday. Meeting of Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini at Munich. Agreement finally reached over the Sudetan question.
- 30 September** Hood returns to Gibraltar, Aquitania continues her voyage unescorted.
- 1 October** Chamberlain acclaimed with terrific cheers on return to UK. General relief felt throughout Europe though we do not relax. Go ashore at 1600 with Sampson and Waterlow, walk up the Rock. Supper in the town. Go to the 'Royal' and 'Embassy'. All of us quite drunk on return to ship at 0230. Who cares? Peace for the moment anyhow.
- 14 October** The German pocket battleship Deutschland arrived at Gibraltar. On the following day at football Hood won 4 goals to 1 against the German ship.

New Publication

A book entitled '... and home there's no returning' by Association member Bee Kenchington has just been published. The book is a compilation of letters written by her brother, Lt. John Iago RNVR, to his mother whilst serving on Hood and is obtainable from the publisher, Arcturus Press, The Manse, Fleet Hargate, Lincs, PE12 8LL, priced at £13.95.

Clay Pigeon Shoot for the HMS Hood Memorial Trophy

The Association donated two prints of Hood together with a contribution towards their framing, to the Laid, Polla and Port-Na-Con Residents Association for presentation to the competing teams, HMS Sutherland and Durness/Laid.

Found

A red Parker ballpoint pen with stainless steel cap was left behind after the Reunion Dinner. If the owner would like to contact the Chairman by telephoning 01252 620235 he will be please to return it to you.

HMS Collingwood

The new Manpower and Personnel Administration Centre, named 'Hood Building', was officially opened on 21 September. Ted Briggs unveiled the building and Surgeon Rear Admiral Farquharson-Roberts, Medical Director Navy, cut the ribbon on entry and planted a ceremonial tree. Our Chaplain, Ron Paterson, conducted the Service of Dedication and a poem by Dixie Dean was recited by Medical Assistant J. Gray. Our Standard Bearer with the Standard and several of our members were invited to attend.



HMS Hood veterans at the opening of the 'Hood Building'