



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 President, Ted Briggs. He died peacefully in hospital, on 4th October after suffering pneumonia and was cremated at Portchester Crematorium on 14th October following a service of thanksgiving and commendation held at St George's Church, HMS Collingwood conducted by Archdeacon John Green. Over 100 people attended the service. His death was widely reported in the national media and the service featured on Meridian TV news that evening. Ted was 85 and the last of the three survivors. He had been our President since 1995 and had contributed significantly to the running of the Association since its early days. We will all miss him. His obituary is posted on our website. Clare, his widow, wishes to thank all who sent sympathy and condolences to her.

I also have to report that veterans Fred White and Percy Price, and Betty Turner have crossed the bar. As many of our long standing members will know, Fred was the founder member of the Association back in 1975. He died in Weymouth in September. Percy had been a member for many years and always joined us at the Reunions. Betty was the widow of veteran and Committee member Dick Turner. Dick had served the Association since its inception.

The HMS Hood memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire was finally completed in September. On 25th October our Chaplain, Archdeacon John Green, conducted the dedication ceremony and Rear Admiral Wilcocks unveiled the memorial. During the ceremony eleven wreaths were laid. Ninety three of our members, their friends and other interested parties attended the dedication which was followed by a finger lunch and an iced cake decorated with the Hood crest in colour moulded with icing sugar. The Polish Embassy and the New Zealand and Australian High Commissions were represented. Also represented were the Royal Marines, HMS Collingwood, National Maritime Museum and South West London Hood Memorial Group. Comments I have received from members confirm the event was very successful and the memorial stone is a fitting memorial to the 1415 men who gave their lives on that fateful day in 1941. Those who have never visited the National Memorial Arboretum, it is well worth making the effort and is close to the A38 at Alrewas between Litchfield and Burton on Trent.

The Royal Maritime Club is currently relocating the board room to another part of the building. The new room is to be called the *Hood Room* and its bar will be named *Briggs' Bar* in memory of Ted. The bar will feature photographs of Ted at various functions. Whilst on the subject of the Royal Maritime Club, David Watts is to retire as its manager in January. We have always had an excellent relationship with David during his time at the Club. We wish him a long, healthy and purposeful retirement.

Next 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.

At the end of the 2007/8 membership year, we had 234 members. At the time of writing we have 210 current members, of which 16 live abroad.

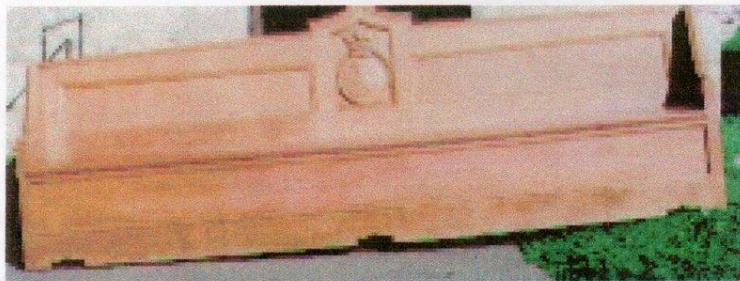
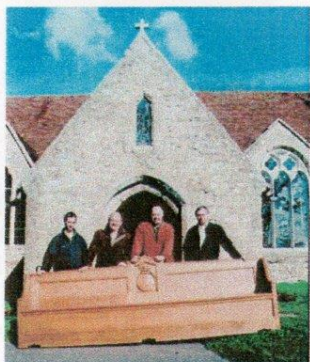
God bless you all,
Peter Heys

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

Boldre Church – H M S Hood Memorial Oak Benches.

There are two oak benches each 10 feet long either side of the entrance of Boldre church which were donated by Vice Admiral Holland's wife Phyllis some 60 years ago. In recent years they have shown their age but they have now been beautifully restored to their former standard. This has been achieved with the co-operation of a surviving nephew of Vice Admiral Holland, Patrick Wales-Smith and a leading furniture restorer from Lymington, Peter Cooper. The benches were returned after restoration on 19 March 2008.



The restoration Team of John Bolson, Peter Cooper, William Russell and Andrew Gates.

Service of Commemoration at St John the Baptist Church, Boldre, 1st June 2008

The annual service of Commemoration was held on Sunday 1st June which was a glorious June morning, and saw St John's at Boldre packed yet again, for the service to remember the 1,415 crew who lost their lives 67 years ago, when their ship was sunk by the Bismarck. Although much of the service followed the well-loved format of previous years, this particular morning saw a noteworthy change in that Cmdr. Tony Pearce, who read one of the lessons, had handed over the reins to Nigel Henly. The changes were imperceptible such is the magnetism of all that is said and done in a most moving hour.

Cdr Keith Evans, who gave the sad news that the last survivor of that fateful morning, Ted Briggs, was unable to be present through ill health, welcomed everyone as always. The procession of standards followed and, this year, a white ensign was dedicated by the officiate, Canon Clifford Wright. Many of those present had lost a relative or friend and the singing was loud and joyous and the silences profound. The choir sang Anton Bruchner's 'Locus Iste' (This place was made by God: A priceless statement beyond reproach) and prayers were said by members of the Hood Association, who had held their reunion in Portsmouth the previous week-end

It is not often a sermon receives an audible response from the congregation but the Rev. Phillip Elston RNR certainly knew he was preaching to the converted. His exhortation for the government to direct more money towards the Navy was certainly a popular message and well received, not least by the local MP, Dr Julian Lewis who is Shadow Secretary for Defence.

We thank Cdr Tony Pearce for organizing the service over many years and wish Nigel Henley every success for the future.

The service next year will be held on Sunday 17th May 2009 at 1100.

AGM – Reunion Week end 24th – 26th May 2008

The Association members gathered at 1600 hours in the Royal Maritime Club "Brocks Bar" for the Annual General Meeting. The usual Association business was discussed and committee elections were held. Two particularly notable topics came up during the AGM. First was the unveiling of the final design of the Hood memorial to be placed at the National Memorial Arboretum. The memorial will be considerably larger than previously envisaged due to an increase in funds available following a generous bequest. The other was the presentation of a gift to Reverend Ron Patterson. Ron, now 91 served as the chaplain of the association for many years but poor health has forced him to stand down. Chaplain of the Fleet, Archdeacon John Green is taking over as the Association Chaplain with Ron's blessing.

The Association presented Ron with an engraved Darlington glass tankard to express our thanks for the wonderful job he has done. Though frail, Ron is still in good cheer and his response on receiving the gift made us all laugh.

Members gathered for dinner in the ball room and as always the web staff presented their display of photographs of 677 Hood crew together with the Role of Honour and also three actual Hood flags provided by Jim Sikorski. There were 92 people who attended including Surgeon Rear Admiral Curr, Cornwall District Officer Lt Cdr Truiscott and a

contingent from TS Hood, Sea Cadet Corps from St Austell. Also present were our new Association Chaplain Archdeacon Green and his wife and from the Royal Maritime Club were Manager David Watts, his wife and Administration Manager Vivien Wood. Our guest of honour this year was Rear Admiral Wilcocks who proudly displayed a silver candle stand from HMS Hood's silverware, which was found in a store room and now stands in pride of place on his office desk. During his speech he gave an overview of the future of the Royal Navy and the introduction of future new ships into the fleet including the two new carriers.



Ron receiving a Glass tankard from Peter Heys



Rear Admiral P Wilcocks Showing the Hood Candlestick

After the speeches and presentations, the annual raffle took place, conducted by Jack Moulden and his lovely wife. Unfortunately this was their last time as they are moving away from the Portsmouth area. The association presented Jack with a special edition bottle of 'Hood whisky' in thanks for all their hard work over the years.

Sunday 25th May The St George's Church Service.

People gathered outside the Royal Maritime Club at 1100hours, the band of TS Tenacity leading with a contingent from TS Hood and HMS Collingwood Cadet Corps followed by members who then marched to the church. Due to road construction and security constraints we were not permitted to march our usual way along the main road passed The Hard but we did march through the back streets. The cadets from TS Tenacity and HMS Collingwood led the way, followed by an impressive colour from TS Hood St Austell. At the church, standards and wreaths were placed on the altar before the service commenced. The service was led by our Chaplain Archdeacon John Green and St George's vicar Canon Karina Green. The sermon was both humorous and entertaining but also very clear, poignant and inspiring, stressing the sacrifices made during the war and the benefits which we now enjoy. Following the service we marched back to the club then dispersed home.

Dedication of the H.M.S. Hood Memorial Stone

As you will all be aware, a Memorial Service was held to dedicate the Hood memorial stone at the National Memorial Arboretum on Saturday 25th October 2008 for the 1415 men who lost their lives on 24th May 1941. The service was conducted by our Chaplain John Green – Chaplain of the Fleet, and the unveiling by Rear Admiral P. Wilcocks CB DSC who lost his uncle on Hood. There was representation from the navies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Poland, also Royal Marines, HMS Collingwood and the Hood Group of Southeast London. Although, at the commencement of the service, it rained slightly it was mainly dry but bitterly cold. Wreaths were laid by the naval representatives, family members and friends. After the service we all retired to the warmth of the conference room where a buffet lunch was available with wine and coffee. In all 93 people attended coming from across the country. A iced cake decorated with the HMS Hood's ships crest, was ceremonially cut by Vice Chairman Cdr Keith Evans and Ann Davidson, daughter of Bill Stone our oldest veteran member at 108. Bill sadly was not fit enough to attend. It was a sad day in many ways but it was a fitting tribute to honour these men with a lasting memorial of their sacrifice. Our late President Ted Briggs who had crossed the bar 3 weeks previously was remembered with affection.



Naval representatives



Standard Bearers



Fleet Chaplain Rev John Green
Act of Dedication



Memorial unveiled by
Rear Admiral Wilcocks



Chairman Peter Heys
Laying Wreath



Veterans L to R Keith Evans
Nobby Clark & Alec Kellaway



Mr. MacDonald Heaney on behalf of
Hood Southeast London Group



Ceremony Complete



Members viewing the Memorial Stone



Keith Evans & Ann Davidson



Rear Admiral Wilcocks after the Dedication Ceremony

H.M.S. HOOD
SUNK IN ACTION WITH THE GERMAN
BATTLESHIP BISMARCK IN THE
DENMARK STRAIT OFF GREENLAND
ON 24TH MAY 1941

IN MEMORY OF THE 1415 OFFICERS AND RATINGS
WHO DIED INCLUDING 24 COMMONWEALTH,
4 POLISH MIDSHIPMEN AND 5 FREE FRENCH SAILORS.

OF THE SHIP'S COMPANY ONLY 3 SURVIVED.

DEDICATED IN 2008 BY H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

The inscription in gilt on the sloping top surface