

# *HMS Phoebe Association*



## *Newsletter*

*February 2003*

Secretary's Report:- Good-day to you all, there has not been any items from any one since the last newsletter, I am hoping for something to arrive before we go to print. (Nothing came in hence a short newsletter).

Some of you have tried to book into the hotel at Bournemouth by phoning for a reservation, and have been told that the hotel is fully booked; this is not so at the moment, there were rooms to be had. The reason for telling you that the hotel is fully booked is because they are not taking reservations by phone; only by sending in the booking form can a reservation be made. I reserved the whole hotel from Friday to Sunday, and paid a deposit on it, no one else other than HMS Phoebe Association can book in during those days. In the past only a few members have wanted to stay for the Sunday night, usually no more than fifteen, because of this I took it for granted that that would happen this time, so I only reserved twenty (20) rooms for the Sunday night, not expecting them all to be taken. Sunday night is extra which we do not cater for, although those staying the extra night usually get a discount. I understand that the twenty rooms for Sunday night have now been allocated. But we negotiated with the manager to have another hotel for any overflow, this hotel is situated next door to our hotel, just a few yards away, it is called the Grove Hotel, where you can stay the extra night, (or for the whole weekend). I hope the charges for staying there would be the same. The facilities at the Russell Court Hotel are open for you to use as well.

There has been a slight 'hiccup' in the purchasing of the Commemorative Seats, which I am hoping will be resolved in the next couple of weeks. When I checked up with the Council officer dealing with the purchase I was astonished to find they had reneged on the agreement we had verbally come to last year. He stated that we had to have new seats as apposed to the refurbished ones we had agreed on, the cost of each of these new seats would be £875, I almost told him where to stick them, I argued a bit then told him I would come back to him. The first person I phoned was Mike Fox, but as he was on the verge of leaving for Italy, he could only make a quick phone call to Emily Cross, a council member, then pass her number onto me. I phoned this good lady later in the evening, and told her what had happened, she was, like me, disgusted, she said she would look into it, in fact she did so straight away, phoning the Mayor, who unfortunately was not available, then the Deputy Mayor, he too was of the same opinion, our good lady was persuaded to let him do the negotiating with the officer concerned, (Emily was liable to belt him) We will know in a couple of weeks what the outcome is.

In the meantime we are about to arrange a meeting with Mike and others in Bournemouth, regarding the Sunday morning dedication, so far only the start time (1030) has been arranged. I am also in the process of hiring the Town Halls 101 Club room for after the parade, just for light refreshments and the bar. The hire of the club may be sponsored, we hope the refreshments will be too! But as we have been sponsored for nearly all the expenses of this event, it would not hurt our funds if we had to pay for something. I expect to go to Bournemouth soon to sort out some of the arrangements.

Some time ago I received some information from one of our members of an Ships Association receiving from the Lottery £4000 to help their members attend a reunion. I was intrigued by this and wondered if we could avail ourselves of this grant. It comes from a Lottery fund which, I think, is little known of called "Awards For All" I dully phoned to find out, and was told our reunion event comes within their criteria, so I sent off for an application form, it arrived just before Christmas, loads of bumff to fill in which took quite a time to do, I had to change our account from one signatory to two, to apply for the award, the Vice-Chairman, Peter Potts, being the other signatory. I also had to get him to fill in some of the application; it was easier for us to take a trip to Peter's place than use the post. We had a spot of bother getting the account changed, which is nothing unusual with a TSB account, (and is another tale on its own, and is still ongoing).

We have had to find a referee, someone who knew what the association stood for, and what it was about, but someone who had no connection with it, now that is not an easy person to find, there was one person who came to mind, and that is John Peskett, an ex Royal Marine and JP who we meet often in Bournemouth at the TS events, when I phoned him with my request he agreed to sign the application and be our referee. The application is now winging its way to the Commission, it takes about three months to be processed, so if we do get an award it will arrive just in time for the reunion, I had better tell you a bit

about the award. It could be any amount between £500 and £5000, and must be spent on the elderly (65+) attending the reunion, to help with their costs. There is one clause; the whole amount must be used for this purpose? I assume receipts must be signed. Let's hope the application is successful.

No 186, S/m Eugene McCarthy wrote to say that: "As I do not know anyone in the association, I may as well resign my membership". Not much answer to that, except to say, "new friends are easily made"

Jim Hutchinson was taken into Guys Hospital 6th Dec, and operated on, the tumour was found to be benign, after a few days, Jim was returned home and signed off from his G.P. He must now rest for a few weeks. I see on the Simon Cussons (Malta) "Pedestal" web site that Jim will be joining other association members for a day in London meeting other veterans of this Convoy. Hope you have a good day ship-mates, at least the hotel is well situated for a visit to Marble Arch and Oxford Street.

S/m Eddie Gilbert has been in hospital for a hip replacement, he is

home now and able to get about slowly.

Sid Hall is improving as each day passes, watch-out Moreen!!

Another member followed my advice and is now in receipt of Attendance Allowance. That is four members now. "Go for it".

Sid Hesse, a First World War Veteran was born in Bermondsey, South London, on December 15th, 1899. He died in Auckland, NZ, on November 20th, 2002, aged 102. "So what!" you say, "What's that to do with me"? Well, Sid, aged seventeen, was studying art at a London County Council night school, it was the fourth year of WWI (1917). One of his tutors, hearing that Sid was about to volunteer for the Army, persuaded him to join the Royal Naval Air Service where a good deal of work was being done on smoke-making devices, a principal method of concealing naval forces in the pre-radar era. Sid Hesse did so, and after training at Stratford, East London, he was based as an Air-mechanic 2nd class at Dover, where he undertook patrols in destroyers testing the latest smoke-making device. To alleviate the tedium of these practice tests, Sid volunteered for the raid on Zebrugge.

From the outset the 'Top Brass' were frank about the likely scale of casualties from a sea borne assault on a heavily defended harbour. As the operation drew near, they gave the minority of volunteers in the force the opportunity to pull out. For the raid, which took place in the small hours of April 23rd 1918, Hesse was embarked in the destroyer *HMS Phoebe* whose role was to provide covering smoke for the ageing cruiser *Vindictive* which was to land a party of Royal Marines on the Mole. The smoke failed to provide the hoped-for cover and *Vindictive* took a tremendous battering.

Issued with a cutlass, in the use of which he had received no instructions, Hesse stayed on deck, ready, according to his orders, to repel any Germans who might attempt to board?

When the destroyer *North Star* was sunk close off-shore *Phoebe* went alongside her and Hesse took part in the rescue of 75 of her crew under heavy shell and machinegun fire. Shortly afterwards a shell hit *Phoebe's* funnel, knocking Hesse unconscious. He later came too and was one of the lucky 300 out of an assaulting force of more than twice that number who made it back from Zebrugge to Dover.

From S/m John Vickers

*Sid must have been the oldest Phoebe veteran we now know of.*

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The following ditty came from our old friend Jimmy Dunlop, Yes! he is up and at it again after so many ills and treatments, it is always a pleasure to hear from Jim and Jean, one of his favourite sayings is to call Lil "THE BOSS", it always makes her chuckle when we get a letter from them, and I am sure she agrees that she is?

**St Mary's Dockyard:-**

My ship she was a cruiser,  
Sleek and fast was she  
And she was a lovely sight,  
Cutting through the sea.

She was at many a landing,  
And on convoy's far and wide  
But the time just had to come,  
When she couldn't fight the tide.

What she needed was a rest,  
And her boilers cleaning too  
Her tubes were now all furred up,  
Cleaned out she'd be like new.

Now I am like my war-time ship,  
No longer sleek and fast  
I have put on a lot of weight,  
And my youth is in the past

My tubes now too are all furred up,  
Which makes my heart work harder  
This not only slows me down  
But dampens too my ardour

A By-Pass you will need to have,  
Mr Stanbridge said to me.  
Your youth then it should return  
And you can go back to sea.

We'll cut a vein from out your leg,  
And round your heart we'll graft it.  
Your blood will then pump round fall bore  
And that should end your re-fit.

So to St Mary's I have sailed,  
For you to work on my ticker  
And when its time for me to leave  
I hope I'll sail much quicker.

To all the nurses at St Mary's  
You are a happy band.  
You had your wicked way with me  
I was putty in your hand

Jimmy Dunlop

It is with great regret I learnt only a couple of weeks ago that our S/m Don Rogers crossed the bar suddenly five months ago, we believe that to be in August. On behalf of all shipmates in the association we sent Heather, Don's wife, our much belated sympathy and condolences.

We welcome a New Member to the Association. Please add these details into your members List:-

Chris STONEHOUSE. (Address removed for security reasons – Webmaster)

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S/m Ron Gill has gone into hospital for his by-pass operation, we hope everything has gone well, and he will soon be home again.

Did you see the bit about the armed bank robber who, when the teller refused to hand over any money, phoned the police and complained?

Or the armed robber, who, when the clerk sobbed she would be in trouble if she did not get the money signed for, not only signed his real name on the form she gave him but filled the entire form in with his address, Phone No, and Date of Birth?

Shipmates, Lil and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the many cards we received at Christmas, there were so many we would need to a fortune in stamps to reply. This small paragraph is to say :-

**a big THANK YOU**

**Late Extra:-**

I managed to get through to Ron Gill today and spoke to his wife Nancy, Ron has had his operation and after three weeks in hospital he is now at home and well on his way to recovery, he has to take things easy for 3 months.

At the moment he is able walk about the house, but due to the cold weather he has not been outside yet. I know Ron does not like to be away from Nancy, so being at home now will help him to recover more quickly.

It is also their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 10th Feb, which they are both looking forward to.

Don't overdo it Ron, Lil and I will see you again later this year.

Another birthday in the pipeline is a wonderful old lady who often sends me things for the newsletter.

Her husband was POME aboard in 1941, (now sadly deceased), she will be celebrating her **91st birthday on Feb 28th** If anyone feels like sending her a card I am sure she would be thrilled and give her much pleasure.

Although not an associated member we do however send her the newsletter which she looks forward to receiving. Her address is:-

**Mrs Doris Vye.** (Address removed for security reasons – Webmaster)

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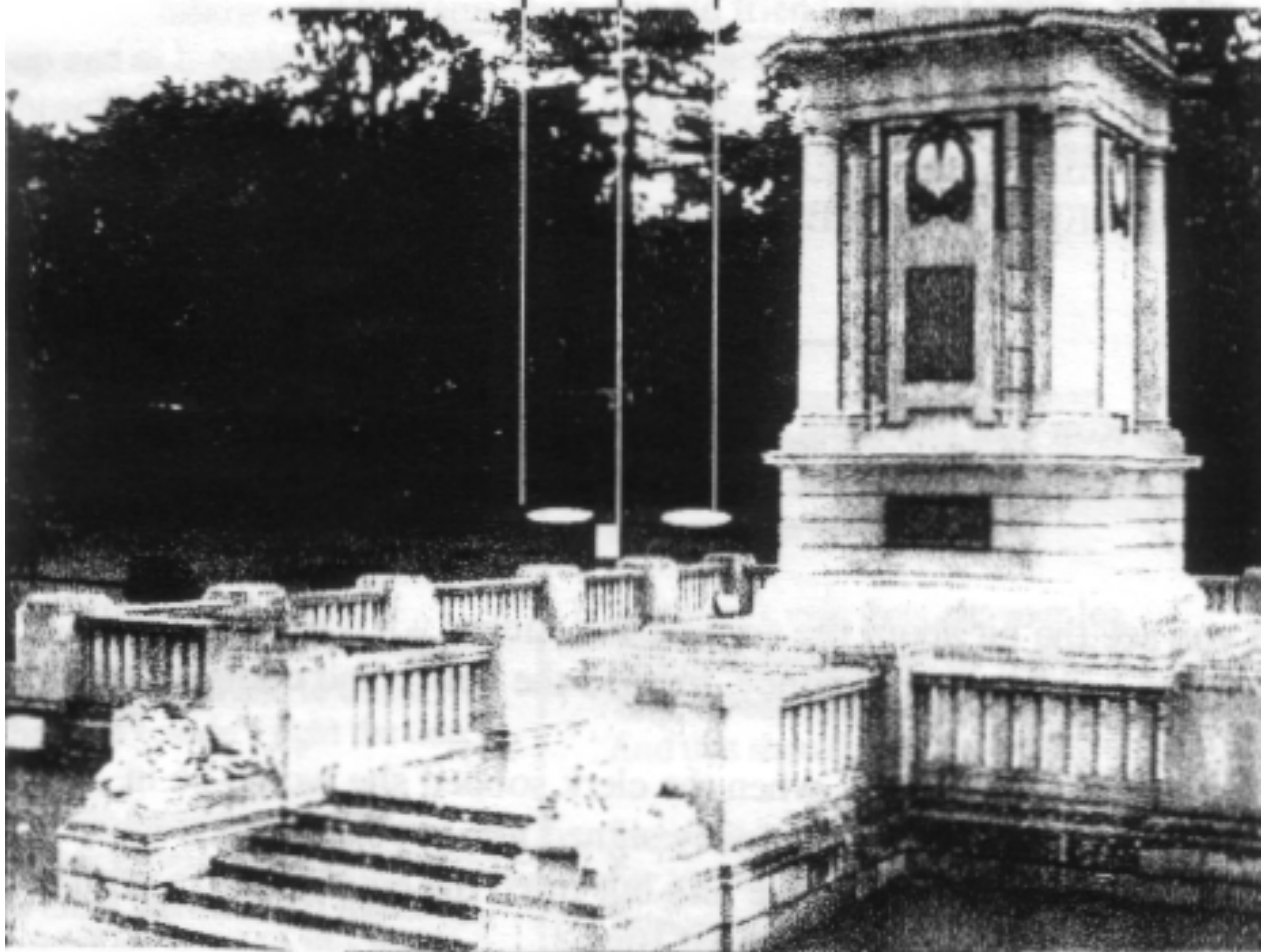
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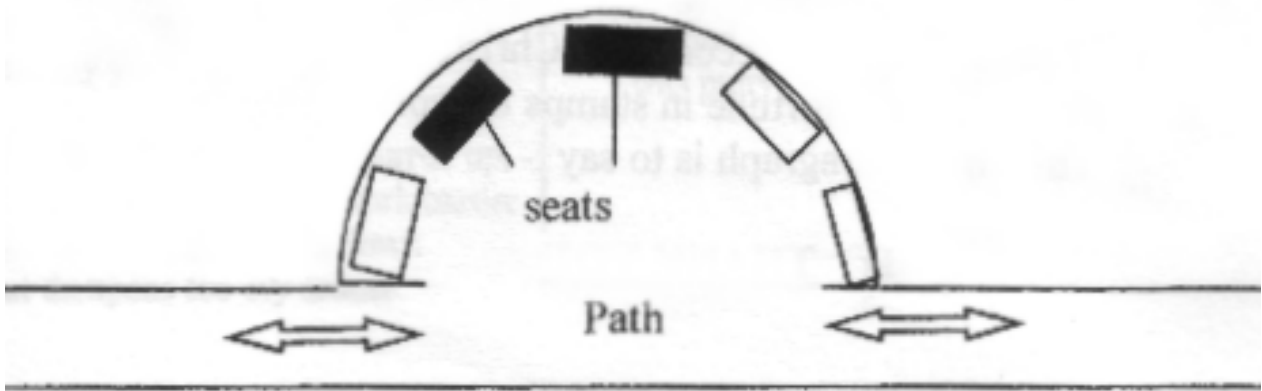
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Thank you shipmates. Roy.

The two seats will be placed here, the stone will set into the grassed area in front of them.



Bournemouth War Memorial



■ Stone ■