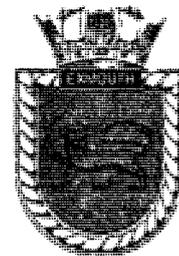


April 2003

Issue No 5



# The HMS Exmouth 1940 Association

Founded 2001

Dear Friends

A very warm welcome to you all, especially those of you reading your first newsletter from the association, we really have had a 'surge' of new contacts over these past few months which is great news for us all.

As I sit here and look out the window, the sun is shining on a very warm spring day on the south coast, however like you I am only too aware that the events taking place in the world today are akin to those faced by our own relatives over sixty years ago. My memory goes back to the service given by the Rev. Stevie Thompson at our memorial weekend in Wick nearly two years ago, where he graphically retold the story of the men of the Exmouth, and a world where you cannot 'buy' peace as if it were a commodity. I know I speak for us all when I say that our thoughts go out to those service men and women in danger today, and pray for their safe return.

## **Good news!**

As a result of some excellent research by Sue Eastwood, we are very pleased to announce that we have been able to trace the brother of Able Seaman 'Bonker' Edge. Who you may recall was the (best) shipmate of our own Leading Torpedoman Gordon 'Froggy' French. Bonker was lost aboard the Exmouth, and 'Froggy', who left the ship two weeks prior to her sinking, and now a sprightly 80 years young! Expressed a wish to Sue and I when we visited him, to contact any of his shipmates relatives. Frank Edge has been put in touch and we are pleased to report a friendship has been struck up over the phone that transcends the 60 years of the ship's loss. NB: Copies of 'Froggy's' book of verse which he wrote and dedicated to the officers and men of our ship are still available at £5.75 inc p&p (all proceeds to association funds-see reverse for details). Please send a cheque made payable to 'The HMS Exmouth 1940 Association' to me please.

NB: Sue is still searching for the relatives of Laurence Holliwel who took the place on board of our other only known surviving crewmember Frank Cornell. Despite an article in the local Stockport Express, there has been no contact as yet. Our best wishes go out to you Frank.

## **Good news!**

We have made contact with the '531<sup>st</sup> Tribute Fund', this is a group of enthusiasts based in the Devon town of Exmouth who arrange Anglo/American weekends to commemorate the part played by the town in the D-Day landings. As next year is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this momentous event, they are organizing with town officials a commemorative weekend over the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> June next year, 2004. By co-incidence, to the day, this will also be the anniversary of the visit made by our ship to the town in 1938, for which we have copies of the programme of events the crew undertook as guests of the town. We, as an association, have been invited to attend this event to represent our ship. Put a date in your diaries, as we would love to see as many members attend as possible as this will probably be the next 'official' get together for the association. We have been informed that a resident of Exmouth, a Mrs Margaret Macmillan, will be attending as she met her late husband during the ship's visit to the town in '38, and by coincidence, whose father also served aboard the Exmouth. The tribute fund and the town council have given an undertaking to raise funds on our behalf to go towards the memorial we propose to place in the Old Parish Church in Wick.

## **Good news!**

You will see from the statement of our account, that our fund is growing nicely, however we have yet to research the true cost of our proposed memorial. To this end I have put out a number of 'feelers' to contacts who may be able to help in this matter and will report back to the membership when more information is known. In the meantime, if you can help raise any funds for our campaign through any means whatsoever, or you feel inclined to make a donation at this stage, any monies received would be very welcome.

## **Good news!**

Well done Margaret Furmanek, daughter of A/B Andrews., who wrote an article published in the SAGA magazine, which without wishing to sound rude, is our target audience to find relatives. And what a rich vein she has struck, one lady in the midlands coming forward as a result, who in turn, wrote into her local paper as she was aware of three other men in her area who were lost aboard our ship, and I am pleased to say, she has been in contact with relatives of all three as a result – well done all.

Another remarkable 'find' is that another reader came forward who remembers our ship, and who as a young boy can remember his school adopting the Exmouth with the children in his class writing to the crew and knitting clothing to send off to them. He also remembers a visit by some of the crew to the school, that is on Merseyside, and we have been able to put another of his classmates in touch with the grandson of the crewmember she was writing to.....another friendship struck up after more than 60 years.

Sue Eastwood has been in touch with the school's current headmaster, as it appears that some artifacts may still be in existence from that association 60 years ago, more details to follow when known.

That's all for now shipmates!

Chairman: Mr David Ellis 54 Redhouse Park Gardens, Gosport, Hants PO12 3EQ

Secretary: Mrs Sue Eastwood 25 St Peters Court, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2UU

Treasurer: Mr Alex Morrison 6 Melbost Borve, Isle of Lewis HS2 0RR