

HMS Dreadnought Association  
Minutes of the Bi-Annual General Meeting  
Held at the Citrus Hotel, Coventry on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Present: Robin Whiteside                      Chairman vice Paddy O’Riordan  
          John Havis                                Administrator vice Florrie Ford  
          Jimmi Bond                                Secretary  
          Some 30 members of the Association.

Apologies: Alan Kennedy, Paddy O’Riordan, Chris Field, Chris Lowther, Vic Richards, Florrie Ford, Barry Seager, Jan Harvey, Alex Webb, Andrew Morey, Warren Raynham, Andy Robshaw, John Gowns, Dave Croft, Bill Till.

1. The Chairman opened the meeting at 1610 and said how good it was to see so many members present.
2. Minutes of the last meeting and financial report, having been circulated beforehand, were taken as read, confirmed as a true record, proposed by Dennis Pipe, seconded by Tim Holtom and signed.
3. Matters arising.
  - a. The Chairman pointed out that Barry Downer had been misinformed before he told Florrie Ford that BAE were not expecting any naval personnel to join before 2026. In fact Commander E Chris “Titch’ Evans had joined as SNO in May of this year and we would be meeting and hearing from him at dinner later.
  - b. The Chairman stated that Morecombe as a venue for this meeting had turned out to be a ‘busted flush’.
  - c. The last minutes had recorded that we surfaced at the North Pole on 11 March 1971. It was in fact at 1718 on Wednesday 3 March.
4. Financial Report.
  - a. The accounts had been circulated with the agenda. They showed that in the period from April 2019 to September of this year the funds have grown by £445 to £2003.27, thanks largely to a donation of £365 from Mrs. Val Rapps in memory of her husband Peter who died in March this year.
  - b. The Chairman said that now was the time for a huge vote of thanks to Florrie Ford for all his hard work for the Association – running the slops and the accounts and particularly the reunions. It was a crying shame that he and Pat could not be at the reunion as they were in Covid lockdown.
5. Any Other Business.
  - a. Had he been present, Florrie would have raised a discussion on what to do with

Val Rapps' generous donation. The Submariner Memorial Appeal having reached its target, after discussion and at Dennis Pipe's suggestion, it was agreed that a donation should be made to the We Remember Submariners charity.

b. It was agreed that, before she goes for scrap, a last visit to the boat at Rosyth should be organized for May next year liaising with Ed Wilson.

c. It was suggested that some form of memorabilia might be made from a part of the boat – a deck plate or a bow cap - to give sufficient material for an artefact to be placed in some communal area of the new Dreadnought and medallions for individuals. This suggestion to be pursued with Ed Wilson.

d. Rob Manson said he had laid out various memorabilia on a table in the foyer - Photographs, a copy of Charles Swinthinbank's book, All Round Look etc.

6. Date of next meeting.

As 2023 will be the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the boat's commissioning, Florrie had suggested that the next reunion should be in the middle weekend of April at Barrow and that it should include a visit to the yard to be arranged with Ivan Thompson.

7. The meeting closed at 1630.

8. Act of remembrance. After the meeting Robin Whiteside read out the names of 27 members of the ship's company who had crossed the bar since the last meeting (at David Pulvertafts suggestion listed at para 13 below). Robin then called for all to stand for a minute's silence in their memory.

9. "Breaking Through". Robin Whiteside promoted this book about the North Pole patrol: he would be selling it at £10 a copy immediately after the meeting. John Havis suggested that, as entry to the AGM had been free, maybe there should be a charge of £10 to leave?

10. David Pulvertaft thanked Robin Whiteside for chairing the meeting.

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11. At the beginning of dinner in the evening, David Pulvertaft read the welcome address that the President would have delivered had sickness overnight not prevented him from attending. This was Paddy O'Riordan's message:

"Welcome. Cast your minds back to our being in Barrow to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our Dreadnought's launch by Her Majesty the Queen on Trafalgar Day 1960. We planted a tree in the National Memorial Arboretum. Is it still alive and kicking? Tomorrow you will find out.

It is so sad not to see 'Florrie' and Pat here this evening, but he has told me that he is already planning the 60th Anniversary of the boat being commissioned - that means April 2023. Florrie is very much the lifeblood of our Association, so we miss him. Let's

give Florrie a chuck up (all together .....) We are fortunate though, in that 'back aftie' John Havis volunteered to run this weekend's events in Florrie's place.

It is great to still see so many of you here tonight and wives and girlfriends. There is something very special about Submarine ladies. Aren't we lucky?

Commodore Perks (COMSUBFLOT), the FOSM of today, has given us a bit of an update on the Flotilla:

\* He said that he was very proud of the way in which the Submarine Service has responded to the pandemic.

\*Mentioned that CASD has clocked up 50 years.

\*Our newest SSN Audacious has joined the Flotilla.

\*That one of our SSNs has deployed as part of the 'Global Reach' Task Group. Recall that Dreadnought did this in 1973. (40,000 miles in six months, but home just in time for Christmas) Who of you took part in this?) (Hands up)

\*Finally he mentioned that the new Submarine Memorial is due to be officially opened by Prince William (Commodore in Chief of the Submarine Service) in May next year.

Sadly, in January 2020 our very first nuclear submarine Engineer, 'Spam' Hammersley died; his last words on earth were: 'Game over. Game over.'

The 9th Dreadnought ran out of juice in 1980, so those of us who served in her are, to say the least, getting on a bit. Look around you and you'll see a young chap who is now the Senior Officer of the 10th Dreadnought presently being built at Barrow. She is to be a 17,200 ton SSBN (we were only 3,500 tons). He is Commander Chris, but known as 'Titch', Evans and I have asked him to say a few words after dinner. It is great that the name and traditions will carry on: to think that the Armada and Trafalgar are among her Battle Honours,

So, let 'Titch' hear our motto: Fear God and Dread Nought' let's hear it..... (louder)....." Paddy

12. After grace had been said, Robin Whiteside read out the following message from Alan Kennedy, our CO on the North Pole patrol:

"I am really sorry that BJ and I cannot be with you tonight, but Anno Domini has finally caught up with me and I now have severely limited mobility.

I think tonight's gathering is particularly appropriate as you are celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the North Pole patrol and you have the pleasure of the company of Commander Titch Evans, the Senior (and only) Naval Officer, HMS Dreadnought, who was appointed in May. He will be with the project until the first members of the ship's company arrive in 2026, so he sadly won't be getting his feet wet. He's going to say a few words about the new Dreadnought later on.

I hope those of you who get a copy of the book about the Arctic venture will enjoy it.

The Submarine Service could not function without every member of each ship's company playing his part. This is evidenced by the various associations that have been formed over time by different crews. They represent the teamwork that makes for a

happy and efficient boat and gives everyone involved a sense of confidence which stands them in good stead long after they have left the Navy.

Enjoy tonight, I am confident that Arrigoni tomatoes will not be on the menu!

I am very sorry that Florrie and Pat can't be with you this evening. Florrie has been a tower of strength for our association; we owe him a tremendous vote of thanks and we all wish him and Pat a speedy exit from their Covid isolation.

I send you all my very best wishes and hope you and your families continue to have a well-earned and happy retirement.”

Alan

13. At the end of the dinner, Commander Titch Evans spoke briefly about the new Dreadnought. He was very well qualified to do so having served in all four of the Vanguard class. He was delighted to have been welcomed into the Association; he looked forward to welcoming us all to the next reunion at Barrow in April 2023 and to carrying on the Association with the new ship's company when they started to arrive.

14. This is the list of members who crossed the bar between April 2019 and September this year:

David Barraclough Apr 19; Dave Beck May 20; Mick Blyth Aug 20; Bill Bowyer Mar 21; Willie Clelland Dec 20; Brian/Dixie Dix Jul 19; Tom Driver Oct 21; Ray Edwards Jan 20; Dennis Fluck Apr 20; Barry Grace Jul 20; Michael Hamawi Jan 20; Michael Hannah Aug 21; Ken Hardcastle Apr 20; Bill Hyde Mar 21; Tom Jones Mar 20; Wayne Lurcock May 21; Cedric Madin Jul 21; \*Geoff Marshall, (Cox'n on the North Pole patrol) Sep 21; Tony Mayley Oct 20; Bob Phillips Jan 20; Peter/Jan Rapps Mar 21; Mick/Shag Sharratt Nov 20; John Taylor Sep 19; Peter Tilly Jun 19; Stephen Vidak Mar 20; Sid Waller Sep 21; Les West Apr 20.

\*The following note from Alan Kennedy was read out at Geoff Marshall's funeral service on 20 October:

"Cox'n Marshall. A simple title which disguises the profound effect the senior Chief Petty Officers can have in binding a crew together. I tended to interact with Geoff at Diving Stations, when I knew he would radiate an aura of calm and collected ability. However, I knew that below this calmness, he was like a stately swan, working hard, to communicate with the remainder of the crew our feelings and intentions. In this, he and the other senior rates were successful. I have no doubt this success was largely due to his personal efforts, and as you, his family, will miss him, so will we."