**MINUTES of the HMS BULWARK, ALBION & CENTAUR ASSOCIATION**

**AGM 2004**

**Held on Saturday 17th April in The Brocks Bar, Royal Sailors Home Club**

Those present

Vice-Admiral Sir Patrick Symons - President

Mike Noonan - Chairman/Editor

Mike Bridges - Vice Chairman/Historian

John Truscott - Secretary

Robbie Cowan - Treasurer

Leigh Easton - Membership Sec.

Jackie Truscott (Assoc) - Record Keeper

John Finlay - Committee Member

Denis Askham - Scotland Area Rep

Bob Styants - Midlands Area Rep

Alan Yeomans - Kent & E Sussex Area Rep

Les Hutchins - Cambridgeshire

With 30 members and guests attending.

Apologies received:

Capt Winstanley (HMS Bulwark) - Vice President

Capt Hudson (HMS Albion) - Vice President

Mike Meachin (HMS Albion) - Hon Padre

Chris Connelly (SNO HMS Bulwark)

Bill Martin (1501) Peter Ames (649) Ron Tigwell (1644)

George Sexton (1604) Don Lord (1680) Jim Ure (461)

Peter Dear (209) Wally Barker (1429) Keith Holt (1347)

Jim & Gill Payne (1113, 1694)

**Dedication of Association Standard**

Prior to the AGM being opened a short service was held to dedicate the Association’s newly acquired standard officiated by Reverend Ronald Paterson MBE. The Standard was marched in by Mike Bridges with John Truscott and Mike Noonan as escorts.

During the service those present held a 2-minute silence in memory of members no longer with us.

Jim and June Ure’s son who is unwell following an accident was wished a speedy recovery.

The meeting was opened at 12:40hrs, with the following items under discussion:

The Chairman welcomed the President, Committee, members and guests present including Aiden Cowan, HMS Albion and Duncan Fogg, HMS Bulwark.

Mike Noonan thanked Reverend Paterson for a memorable dedication of the standard. All present agreed it was fitting and the Standard is a credit to the Association.

The minutes of the AGM 2003 were read and agreed by those present.

Proposed by – Mick Dunnington (692) Seconded by – Bob Styants (1533)

**Treasurer’s Report**

Robbie Cowan presented the financial report for 2003/2004. The report was printed on the back page of the Spring RO8. The accounts have been audited by John Truscott (1176) and Jackie Truscott (1474) and found to be correct.

Robbie reported that the Assoc. accounts are in good shape, slops are going well with members purchasing ties and badges etc. Some members continue to pay their subscriptions well ahead, whist others need reminding! The Socials are self supporting apart from payment for invited guests.

Robbie wished all members to be reminded that the Account name for cheques and standing orders is “HMS Bulwark Albion and Centaur Association”.

The accounts were passed by those present.

Proposed by - Les Hutchin (1791) Seconded by – Mick Axford(1142)

**Membership Sec Report**

Leigh Easton reported that although 77 new members have joined from AGM 03 – AGM 04, there is a slight reduction in membership mainly due to non payment of subscriptions. Local newspapers continue to be a good source of recruitment, which is ongoing. Leigh thanked Colin Taylor, Jackie Truscott, Navy News and Warship World again for their assistance over the past year.

The Assoc. website goes from strength to strength and some new members have joined from there.

**Editor’s Report**

Mike Noonan said he felt the articles appearing in the RO8 continue to be excellent; occasionally he gets e-mails and letters attesting to this and is always on the look out for new dits and articles. The Summer issue of the RO8 will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Association.

**Secretary’s Report**

John said this is his 4th AGM report and with all the Associations members belong to it can be hard to keep membership going, but he felt our Assoc. seems to improve year by year.

Sec went on to talk about the commissioning of HMS Albion which was held on 19th June in Devonport, a week later she was docked alongside in Portsmouth so a larger delegation of members and guests were able to go aboard and enjoyed a full tour of the ship taking lots of photos in the process. A set of commissioning books was presented to HMS Albion organised by Mike Bridges during this visit to Portsmouth. They in turn gave us a very nice print of HMS Albion during sea trials which will be archived.

HMS Bulwark is still alongside at Barrow and hopefully commences sea trials at the end of May. It is hoped that the commissioning will now take place in Plymouth April 2005, hopefully not during the Malta trip.

JT reported that there had been no adverse comments from members to buying the Assoc. standard to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the inguration of the Association. The dedication service took some planning and JT thanked Mike Noonan, Mike Bridges and Reverend Paterson for making it such a success.

**Vice Chairman/Historian’s Report**

Mike reported that it has been another busy year with lots of correspondence from all over the world.

MB wished to congratulate Bob Styants for being awarded the MBE for 26yrs service those present agreed this is quite an achievement.

Melika – Mike reported he has finished the serialisation of the Melika Incident which will be published in the RO8.

MB wished to send thanks to Ned Parkinson for passing on a set of ships plans and lots of items of interest to be archived for the Assoc.

Commissioning Books a complete set was presented to HMS Albion and the same as far as possible will be given to HMS Bulwark when she is commissioned in 2005. MB said thanks to all who have lent or given books to the Assoc. some are a bit frayed around the edges, so have to be used carefully.

**Area Reps**

Bob Styants Bob said he feels all the info really comes from the committee and his area does not appear to be very active, he is Sec to another Assoc and they are the same. As local rep he said the National Arboretum will be a good event and he looked forward to seeing members there.

Les Hutchins felt his area is rather big, Mike said this could be looked into.

Denis Askham said he enjoys being area rep and how nice it was to be able to put names to faces at the AGM. He has sent out a newsletter and had good response from members, Denis felt that regional contact is a good thing as some members feel Portsmouth is a long way and we do have members all over the world who may like a regional contact. Denis offered to be standard bearer for Chatham and other events should he be required.

Alan Yeomans reported that he has not had much response to letters he has sent out to local members, but hopes this will pick up. He said he relishes his role and will report back at AGM 2005.

As co-ordinator for the area reps Mike thanked them and said what a good job they are doing. Some areas are still not completely covered so volunteers are always welcome.

**Committee Elections**

* **Secretary –**John Truscott was the only nomination so remains in post.
* **Treasurer –**Robbie Cowan was the only nomination so remains in post.
* **Editor of RO8 –**Mike Noonan was the only nomination so remains in post.
* **Social Secretary -** this position remains vacant, the committee will continue to arrange AGM’s and socials
* **Committee Member –** no nominations.

**Social Events 2004/2005**

National Memorial Arboretum This event will take place on 22nd May at which a tree will be planted in memory of past members who have served on any of the Assoc. ships. The standard will be paraded.

HMS Bulwark (5) This promises to be a big event and will take place at in the Chatham area in November to commemorate the sinking of HMS Bulwark in 1914. Mike Bridges has done a lot of research into this “accident” as his Grandfather used to talk about the sinking and intends to write a book about it. A local competition is to be organised for Sea Cadets with prizes given for best entry. Civic heads are to be invited and a boat will be organised to lay a wreath on the buoy over HMS Bulwark (5). MB reported that he has had interest from aboard with a relative coming over from Australia interested in attending. The committee is in the process of applying to Heritage Lottery Awards For All towards paying for this event, although the event will have already happened they will report back at the AGM 2005.

Malta 2005 the list is now full with 24 people going.

**Ships Reports**

HMS Bulwark - Duncan Fogg, WEO, reported that the ship will leave the dockside on 31st May on the first phase of contractor sea trials. This will be followed by 5 weeks back in dry dock to clear launch debris from the bottom of the ship. Bulwark will then be making her way to Devonport via Portsmouth arriving sometime in July. The rest of the ships company will then be joining the ship and the rest of the year will be spent testing ships systems.

HMS Albion – Aiden Cowan, PWO(C), reported that the year had been very busy so far after the commissioning in June. The exercise in Norway went extremely well and the communications systems were now performing well. HMS Albion is now looking forward to going to the USA to take part in Exercise Rapid Alliance, this will involve working alongside the American and NATO forces and he felt Albion would perform her very best.

**Any Other Business**

As it was Mike Bridges 70th birthday he was presented with two helium balloons that had been floating around for much of the meeting, he thanked those present for their good wishes.

Festival of the Sea 2005 there is a possibility of chartering a boat to have a trip out to see the fleet, numbers would need to be known before this could be looked into.

HMS Albion Sea Day 5th May the Assoc. had been given 10 places so those present were requested to give their names to Sec if they wished to attend

Asbestosis Respite Caravan Steve Foster asked about the possibility of giving a donation from the Assoc. Bungy Williams suggested that a donation from the Assoc. funds would be fairer rather than those that attended the AGM be asked to donate then the donation would be from all. Bob requested more information be sought to how a donation would be used before committing funds.

Temporary Members Bungy Williams requested clarification about temporary members and how it would affect other members. JT said the temporary members rule is to allow for non members to attend one off functions such as the coming 25th/50th celebrations. The ships company of HMS Bulwark and Albion are automatically temporary members in accordance with the constitution.

Keith Ridley has been written to several times as Area Rep and to request names for the 25th/50th Anniversary as he had indicated at AGM 2003 that he would be able to bring 62/64 Albion Group’s members to increase venue numbers, the venue was booked on the strength of this undertaking. On all counts he has failed to respond so the Committee felt they had no choice but to suspend his area rep status and wished to report this to the AGM.

* **Date and Venue of next AGM**

Those present agreed Saturday 7th May 2005 in the same venue.

**President’s Closing Remarks**

Sir Patrick Symons congratulated the committee on revitalising the Association over the last few years. Sir Patrick said how nice it is to see serving members from HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion and requested them to pass on the word to Ships Company about the Assoc. and looked forward to welcoming new members from the two ships. He said he is delighted about news of progress of the two ships although unfortunately HMS Bulwark is lagging behind. Sir Patrick agreed that the new Association standard is a tribute to the 25th Anniversary of the Association and thanked Reverend Ron for a memorable dedication service.

Chairman closed the meeting at 14:21hrs.