



Peter White  
Chairman  
Anti Submarine Warfare Instructors Association

## 'Forward March'

Committee and Members of the ASWI Association

12<sup>th</sup> August 2013

Dear Members,

It is with sad regret but with absolute conviction that I must announce my resignation from the post of Chairman to the ASWI association.

Since retaking the reins in 2006, I strongly believe the association has gone from strength to strength and has the resolve and support of its current committee and members to have a long and happy future - in whatever format that I'm sure it will evolve into.

With guidance and direction from the 'President', I believe support and membership from current serving members of the UW branch is essential, being lead by CPO(UW) Gary Crouchman and CPO(UW) Tanzy Lee (FOST Staff) - who has recently agreed to be the association West Country Serving representative on the committee (also willing to become Chairman in the near future) - will transform the association into a thriving, forward looking adventure, rather than pausing on the past, which must never be forgotten, but I feel my resignation is a vital step for regeneration.

Changing personal circumstances, decreasing regular support from serving members and ever changing operational and social climate are the main reasons behind my resignation.

I will of course continue to be a full member of the association for many years to come and hope to attend as many official functions that are hopefully planned. I will, unless taken over before hand, be remaining as Chairman until completion of this year's Dinner & Dance, and will also be offering to become the Portsmouth area Social Secretary, to continue with the monthly social programme, currently running from the club house in Whale Island - should of course the committee and members agree.

I believe the ASWI association has a strong identity within the Warfare branch, particularly with the combined occupancy of the GI's association club house on Whale Island, and dare I say the subordinate ASW Association, which is essential for rejuvenation, with the prospect of the enthusiasm from the afore mentioned serving members to take us into the next era.



I have of course been in contact with the current committee on various issues and would not want to leave the position without carefully and thoroughly ensuring that the next incumbent is well placed to carry on, and perhaps enhance all the association's aims.

I have always maintained the attitude that I would never give up the Chairmanship 'on my watch' unless a willing volunteer came along to take the reins.

The past 3-4 years as a civilian Chairman have been particularly challenging on a personal basis as well as trying to maintain the aims of the association. I cannot thank the regular members and supporters enough for the monthly attendance at the socials in the Portsmouth area, and just as importantly the enthusiasm that is shown by those who make the annual homage to our AGM & Dinner and Dances, particularly with the increasing costs that the event incurs.

One could argue that the Dinner and Dance is self funding; for only those who want to be there, pay the cost involved and enjoy what the Reunion has stood for, for many years. However, consideration must be given towards ensuring the next generation of UW Ratings attend the official functions, which has always been one of my main aims.

It is noticeable however, that numbers are in an ever decreasing circle to the D&D which makes the whole effort of organising, and to a certain degree funding the event, a worrying challenge.

As everyone knows, I have had failing hearing since my time in service. Even though the hearing aids I wear provide me with adequate assisted hearing for general day to day needs, I feel it increasingly difficult to maintain the level of concentration and hearing required to function to the standards I try and set myself at work at home and just as importantly in all social and domestic surroundings. I miss a great deal in general conversation - put me in a crowd and I may as well sometimes not be there! One can only smile so many times so others think you understood what was said!

It is my belief and realisation that the association is now a dwarf of its former self; obviously time has, and will further dictate that with changes in social, domestic and operational attitudes towards what is generally now considered to be an 'Old Boys Club' that there has to be change; therefore, consideration and action has to be given to what you, the members of this historic association, really want to happen in the long term, *as well as considering whether the Serving fraternity in the UW branch wish to be associated with this association.*

I'd like to thank CPO (UW)'s Gary Crouchman and Tanzy Lee (more on Tanzy later) for their personal enthusiasm over the past few months.

Since taking over in 2006 from Sterling Moss who did a tremendous job of ensuring the ASWI's had a strong identity within the branch by firstly hosting the 2005 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AGM, Reunion Dinner and Dance, but probably more importantly, establishing the link between the ASWI's and the GIs Association, so that we have the use of, and to some



degree our own Club House, which is something the ASWI's haven't had since Vernon and some would argue Dryad days (PRI's Association club house)

One could summarise and perhaps highlight the annual events over the past few years by mentioning the main attractions which keeps them coming through the doors.

- Regular strong support from long well established Members, wife's and guests (Annual D&D, Monthly socials)
- Extraordinary social event such as American Supper nights, Quiz Nights, Bowling and don't forget the Raffles
- Very recent honor of being hosted by CPO (UW) Gary Crouchman for a day at Sea on HMS Westminster.

However, I feel that, up to very recently, there have only been a few (less than 5) members of the Serving UW branch who have kept in touch - albeit from 'long Range' probably due to operational commitments.

Until last year there were no Uniform Members on the committee, to promote association aims – however, our recent appointments:

2012 – President – Commanding Officer – HMS Westminster

2012 – CPO (UW) G Crouchman – Serving Members Representative – HMS Westminster

2013 – CPO (UW) Lee – West Country Representative – FOST

These appointments will, I'm sure, be the rejuvenation factors that will ensure the ASWI's have a long and prosperous future.

However, I believe there remains an un-measurable amount of interest and or support from serving members; probably at all time low, due to lack of new membership from UW Senior Rates.

### **The Future**

For the past 12 months or so the ASW Association which was initiated by current ASWI Web Master and former Sonar ratings, is gaining strong support and membership from all rates within UW branch, with the aims of ASW association being similar to that of ASWI, but one must say that it is perhaps seen as threat by members of ASWI members. *More on this issue later.*

I had to ask the question - Relevance of current committee

Chairman – (current Chairman 1999 – 2006-Present)

- Head of ASWI Association
- Direct link with President however since contact established little or no direct support.



- Chairs annual AGM and Figure head at D&D
- Organises monthly (if held) Portsmouth area Social Programme including Christmas Supper
- Authorises Association Fund expenditure and auditing.
- No direct link with UW training organisation to promote association
- Current Chairman – Personal issue with failing hearing

Vice Chairman – (current Vice Chairman in post since 2006)

- Assist's Chairman with all Official and unofficial social programme
- Current Vice Chairman – Fleet ASW staff author – regular contact with UW training organisation
- *Current Vice Chairman has recently resigned from the post*

Web Master – (current Web Master since 1999) (West Country Rep 1995-1997 / 1999-2009 - 2013)

- Author and master of ASWI Association Web site – Main Promotion Tool for ASWI
- Direct link with all current ex-serving members (email, Website and FB)
- Reasonable contact with Serving UW members (committee)
- ASW association founder member
- Annual D&D main organiser for 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013
- Organises ASWI memorabilia; including SLOPS, historical documentation (Seamaster, Course Photographs database 1935-present with gaps (over 11000 names))

Treasurer – (current Treasurer since 2004)

- Maintains Association Current and Business account on annual basis
- Prepares funds for audit on annual basis – Presented to Serving members representative for review by the 'President' – official standing for funds
- Maintains records of paid up membership
- Supports D&D organisation

Portsmouth Area Ex-Serving Representative – (Longest committee members – Secretary 1992-1993, Vice Chairman 1996, Ex-Serving Rep 1998 – present day)

- Direct support to Chairman in Portsmouth area
- Main communication link to all Portsmouth area ex-serving members
- Main support at monthly socials
- Organises American Supper Evening Menu
- Organises Monthly Raffle (when held) and hold Raffle Fund
- Organises membership whale Island Pass



### Serving Members Representative – (current since 2012)

- Initial support on election
- Organised Day at Sea on HMS Westminster
- Busy Sea going programme resulted in regular support to be tested

### West Country Representative (current since 2013)

- Realised 2 Royal navy Temporary memorandums promoting the ASWI's
- Organizes regular social events in Plymouth – attendance growing
- Promoting interaction with the ASWI and ASW Associations by use of social media sites encouraging serving UW Senior rates to contribute to the ASWI association website.
- Strong candidate to become future Chairman

### **Forward Thinking Issues – Q&A**

- Maintain Status Quo – do nothing and 'Carry on Regardless' – *Investigate Serving members proposals – CPO(UW) Tanzy Lee – more later*
- Maintain membership in regional areas – primary areas; Portsmouth, Plymouth and all other areas - *Would this mean local committees, would annual fees be collected in local areas well, with them being used as decided by local committee or still collected centrally?*
- Dilute committee:
  - Chairman – becomes – Master of Ceremonial duties (D&D) Rotate through committee/ Senior members on annual volunteer basis
  - Current Chairman becomes Social Secretary (Portsmouth) maintain monthly/bi monthly social programme as required.
  - Vice Chairman – either becomes – Social Secretary – Elect New (serving) Vice Chairman and/or disbands. Difficult issue with Serving Vice Chairman and Ex-Serving Chairman perhaps
  - Propose two (2) social Sec's Portsmouth and Plymouth reps
  - Web Master – unchanged – However; support to ASWI Web primary function to promote ASWI business; recommend annual nominal fee to maintain service. *(Bob highlighted in his response to my paper draft that he doesn't pay subs as agreed in the 2004 AGM)*
  - Other interests – (ASW Association) (or evolution) secondary
  - Treasurer – unchanged – recommend annual nominal fee to maintain service. *Has declined annual fee for his continued service*



- Portsmouth Area Ex-Serving Representative – Unchanged – Continued support volunteered at Meeting/Social 30/07/2013
- Serving Members Representative - Too early assess any impact on relevance
- West Country Representative – *See note above*
  
- Amalgamate with ASW association:
  - Perhaps established Senior ASWI members against amalgamation; ASWI association History main issue – *ASW association considered modern virtual organisation. CPO(UW) Tanzy Lee keen for this approach and possibly the way forward*
  - Committee of amalgamated ASWI/ASW associations – *Committee members from both ASWI and ASW work closely together and probably will be the same people*
  - Funding/issues – ASWI members primary concern; ASWI funds relatively well established and stable annually. ASW association funds un-established??
  
- ASWI Amalgamate with GI Association – recommended and thought of many times; no action taken to date (Interestingly GI association having similar issues with membership). Maintain strong liaison with GI's and use of the Club house on Whale Island. Naming issue perhaps? *Amalgamation with GI's could lose ASWI identity*
- Consider Annual subscription increase to £15. Generate additional income to support subscriptions primary purpose – Annual AGM and D&D
- Promote ASWI Members Wives to full membership – Annual Fee - £10 (If they wish to pay to become a full member - Deserved status for long term supporters of members of official and social functions. Fee to cover annual individual presentation of appreciation for support. Referring to Honorary members widows or partners can become and likewise so can anyone who is proposed at an AGM
- Dinner and Dance frequency. *Annual v Bi-annual???*
- Location of D&D – *Portland very successful and central location for most that attend. Suggest rotation, Portsmouth is always the best attended; propose 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is in the Maritime club Portsmouth 2015; D&D committee to be volunteers on rotational basis – it is hard work!.*

## **Recommendations - Highlights**

In my draft paper, which went to the committee, I laid out pretty much what you have just read and asked for their comment and recommendation. I have to some degree



incorporated their responses in the chapters and paragraphs above, but I did say I would give CPO (UW) Tanzy Lee's proposal further mention.

Tanzy has been the most pro-active serving member for many a year. For that I congratulate him and thank him for his enthusiasm.

I will summarise Tanzy's proposals, but hope to convey his thoughts and visions for the ASWI's for the next 3-4 years.

Tanzy is currently serving as a Sea-Rider at FOST. He is in regular contact with other UW senior rates that are keen and wish to continue and rejuvenate the ASWI's; namely CPO (UW) George Emmerton (who I believe is also at FOST)

Operational and domestic commitments highlight that the the modern 'Sonarman' is extremely busy; please see an extract from an email from Tanzy;

- 13 Type 23 ASW capable Frigates with either both Towed Array and Hull mounted Sonars and/or Hull mounted only
- 3 Type 45 ASW capable Destroyers with hull Mounted Sonars
- No Capital Ships have UW Departments
- 45% gapping at Leading hand Level in the UW department
- 33% gapping at AB level in the UW Department.
- Small % of gapping at PO and CPO (UW) level – encouraging
- There are only 7 Warrant Officer 1 (UW) – 2 of which are end dating soon.
- 90 Senior Sonar Rating across the 3 Rates.
- Operational Tempo
  - 2 Ships in the Gulf
  - 2 ships in Indian Ocean (anti piracy)
  - 3 in refit
  - 2 ships Atlantic (North and South – old school Falklands Guard ship)
  - 1 Fleet Ready Escort
  - 1 Duty TAPS
  - 1 unit in the Med
  - Remainder BOST – training pipe line
  - Only 2 PO(UW) Qualifying Course per annum

From the responses (either positive or negative) that I've had from the committee, an amalgamation between the ASWI's and ASW Associations must be given every consideration; this will be a major stepping stone and will be at the top of the agenda at the AGM in Oct. I must ask members not to prejudge the word 'amalgamation' until all the positives and negatives have been thoroughly considered. The AGM this year will be planned, to ensure enough time is given to fully investigate and promote the answers. The AGM Agenda will be published soon.



There are some really encouraging initiatives (primarily from Tanzy Lee) being proposed, which will be real positives to the rejuvenation and require hard work and dedication to ensure they work.

These are:

- Amalgamation of ASWI and ASW Associations. This initiative will require a great deal of work for consideration outside of this news letter, but should not be dismissed or welcomed without the full support of the majority of both associations. I believe it has strong potential and await formal proposals from the ASW Association's committee to discuss and formalise.
- Re-instigation of:
  - Leading Hands who qualify professional and complete LRLC are offered full membership of the ASWI's (TASI's LH form yesteryear had this honor)
  - ASWI's Cup awarded to annual Top Student completing ST2087 Controllers Course
  - Top Student from AB(UW) foundation Course awarded annual Cup
  - ASWIs' approach Civilian Companies that supply ASW equipment to seek sponsor ship for trophies and perhaps advertising on ASWI Website
  - **SeaMaster** – This once popular monthly Branch magazine is brought back to life. 1<sup>st</sup> edition by the AGM this year; with the following articles
    - Forward from President
    - Chairman letter
    - Rockys Corner (Best practice/Common short comings at FOST),
    - HMV "His Montys Voice" (An article on ASW policy, procurement and manning from NCHQ),
    - Escape from Collingrad (An article on training courses at MWS)
    - Only a Game (piece by Mick Preece or Bill Bailey about MCTS in Devonport Dockyard)
    - Born in the USA (piece by Stu Black at DAM NECK in the states)
    - Spotlight on.....(a light hearted interview with a PO UW or LS UW at sea)
    - Spooof letters section
    - Dits and Stitch up page
    - Social Calendar (Club house, Collingwood UW Section, FOST UW office, Runs ashore in Pompey/Guzz before Christmas)
    - Slops page (could get a young girl in our office to model stuff if possible)
    - Page three/centre pages section(aka gronk board)
    - Gash tats section
    - Letter from a TAS APEs wife
    - Where's your oppo section



- Post card from the front line

Members, I believe the foundation work to the future has been laid out in this paper and request it is read with understanding and would ask for as much feedback prior to the AGM as possible. It's your Association for you to protect.

I make no apologies for the length of this news letter and commend you all read it more than once, to try to understand that I'm trying to do the best for the ASWIs' association, along with the remaining and probably the future members of the committee, to ensure the ASWI's heritage lives long into the future.

Yours Aye

*Peter J White*