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AUTUMN 2017 NEWSLETTER

The Very Reverend John Hall, Dean of Westminster Abbey, has very kindly given permission for us to hold our Remembrance Service at the abbey on Saturday 25th November. Survivors, members and guests are advised to enter the abbey by the west door no later than 1430 and proceed to the nave seating as directed by the abbey staff. I recommend coming slightly earlier to avoid the exodus of tourists leaving by 1430. Prior to Evensong the abbey staff will direct us to seats in the choir stalls for the service.

On completion of Evensong we will retire to the nave seating for our service in memory of all those who died in HMS BARHAM and we also remember all those survivors who have passed away during the year. The service includes the laying of our wreath which Pat Picket has again volunteered to make. If any member or members of the Association wish to lay the wreath please let me know. After the service the book of remembrance will be open for inspection. We may be hurried out of the abbey as there is to be a wedding in the abbey soon after.

Last year our service was held on the 26 November and was conducted by the Reverend Canon David Stanton. Survivors Jack Nealon and George Knott supported by his son Simon together laid the wreath for the 75th anniversary of the sinking of HMS BARHAM. As ever our beautiful wreath was made and donated by Patricia Picket assisted by her husband Alan who brought it to the Abbey. Many thanks yet again. I read the Tennyson poem "Crossing the bar". I also read out the names of the 26 killed and the two who died of wounds in HMS Barham during the battle of Jutland in this its centennial year.

Some members have planned to meet at the Methodist Central Hall restaurant for a light lunch and get together before the abbey services. An alternative is the Cellarium cafe just off the abbey cloisters (cellariumcafe.com). The Union Jack Club has increased security and non members will have to seek prior permission to use the club's bar and restaurant after the Remembrance service. The Union Jack Club is in Sandell Street on the east side of Waterloo railway station.

The guestbook on our website has a steady stream of entries from members of families of those who served in HMS Barham but for whom the Association had never before had any contacts. We would welcome any of them and any others who wished to come to the Remembrance service.

About 85 people attended our service last year and yet again some were there for the first time. This year I am hoping we can continue to have a good turn out to support our two valiant survivors who continue every year.

Survivor Archie Ross kindly wrote from Haliburton, Toronto wishing us a pleasant service as always. He regularly thanks me for the newsletters and was 98 last year. At the time of the sinking he was a Stoker 1st class. I have also had a letter from George Knott who warns all to keep out of nursing homes as his 3½ years has cost him £173,126.26.

Again this year I shall only be sending hard copies of this newsletter to our survivors. If you know of anyone without access to the internet who wishes to keep in touch about our activities please tell them about this year's service.

Michael K Stratton-Brown, Chairman