



ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION No.10 AREA

Patron Her Majesty The Queen

www.rna-10-area.co.uk

MINUTES OF THE SPRING AREA CONFERENCE HELD AT THE SAVOY HOTEL BLACKPOOL ON APRIL 26th 2008

The Deputy President of the Association, Commodore Nance OBE BSc formally opened the Area spring conference at 1200.

The usual silent tribute was observed for the following shipmates who have crossed the bar since we last met in January.

S/m K Long (Blackpool) S/m Ron Hodgett (Buxton & High Peak) S/m Sprace (Chester)

S/ms James Cunnington (Founder member, Also Ernest Whitehouse (**Deeside**)
S/m Terry McCloughlin (President (**North Manchester**) S/m John Sayle Former
Chairman (**Peel**) S/ms Roy Fradley & Harold Worsley (**Trafford**) S/m F Short
(**Whitehaven**)

Our Area President, S/m H Harley tendered his apologies for being unable to attend the meeting, also the following branches were unable to attend; Buxton & High Peak Crewe Deeside and Rochdale.

S/m Nance in his opening address, recalled that every meeting he attends of the RNA when the names of the shipmates who have crossed the bar are remembered, the words; "they shall grow not old" those words remain in his mind.

He wished to thank the Area for inviting him to the conference. "It was surprising" he said how little the membership of the RNA wishes to engage by inviting us, "and I certainly know as Commander Sea Training having visited every ship in the RN as an unwelcome guest!" "While everyone smiled and said how nice to see you, it was the 'Bag meal' at the end of the inspection that you really got to know what they really thought about you". "What was in your sandwich really told you whether they liked you or not". He went on to describe what the contents of these 'sandwiches' could contain. So having been an unwelcome guest on many an occasion, he was grateful for our welcome here today. He apologised for not being able to meet as many shipmates as he would have liked at the get together the previous evening, he hoped to be able to meet more of us in the future.

S/m Nance then proceeded to outline the recent activities the Association was engaged in. Principal amongst these was the relocation of the Headquarters to Portsmouth and the sale of the existing premises in London. The sale of the lease should be completed this year, and a temporary HQ has been offered in the Semaphore tower in the dockyard until a permanent Portsmouth HQ can be secured: negotiations for this are at an advanced stage, the location of which, is in a prime position to attract both naval personnel and the many people who visit the historic dockyard.

The deputy President also went on to announce the need to recruit a replacement Assistant General Secretary as the present incumbent, S/m Tony Sattin would not be relocating to Portsmouth when the time came to move from London. The advertisement for this post has already been posted in the Circular Letter to Branches and elsewhere. As part of the relocation exercise, the General Secretary has agreed to stay in post until March 2009.

Further to the recent changes announced concerning Headquarters, proper contracts of employment will be introduced including grievance procedures health and safety, etc all of which did not exist until now. "In actual fact" said the President, the Association was in breach of employment law: - perhaps other laws.

Concluding his address, S/m Nance touched on the 'Strategic Review' he had launched more than two years ago. The replies he received nearly all echoed the same things that mattered to all who had replied. They were; the branch, comradeship etc. In fact said S/m Nance the way forward was communication via I.T.

"The RNA" he said, was trying to sort out 50 years of files and correspondence that had been stored in the basement of Chelsea Manor Street. The problem existed what to keep as archive material for the Association and what was just paper. This is proving to be quite a problem for the General Secretary who is spending quite a considerable amount of his working week on this task. As the General Secretary does not wish to continue in post beyond March next year, we do need to appoint someone with the necessary I.T. skills. The immediate task is to appoint a deputy General Secretary and this is already in motion. "Our present Assistant GS, S/m Tony Sattin has indicated he does not wish to relocate to Portsmouth, hence the need to recruit his relief as soon as possible; - indeed, the job vacancy appears in this month's Circular Letter. "Hopefully, the RNA is now pointing in the right direction and I know that is how you want it to be"

The deputy President then invited questions from the delegates attending the conference.

S/m Thomas (Llandudno) raised a question regarding a problem that had arisen concerning their club which had now closed. As this appeared to be a legal matter, the deputy President promised to refer this to Headquarters.

S/m Pickering (Runcorn) asked how the vacancies for the General Secretary and Assistant GS be advertised?

S/m Nance replying said they would be advertised in the Circular Letter to Branches, in Navy News, and elsewhere; but unlike previous vacancy adverts for these posts they would comply with current employment law. There would be proper job descriptions, and contracts of employment.

S/m F Martin (Leyland) questioned the decision to move into temporary accommodation in the Portsmouth dockyard.

S/m Nance answering the Leyland Chairman said unfortunately, the present location of Chelsea Manor Street attracted very few passers by: there were very little RN connections at our present HQ's unlike Portsmouth where the fleet is situated. "This is where the Navy is and this is where we need to be to raise our profile. The Semaphore Tower which has been offered as temporary accommodation will be rented to us at £7,000 PA which works out far cheaper than our outgoings at London HQ.

This provoked a series of questions concerning the relocation to Portsmouth. The

Commodore agreed there was a need for a 'shop window' somewhere in the Historic dockyard. Access to our temporary HQs in the Semaphore Tower was questioned regarding security issues.

A further question raised by the Chairman concerned the role of the national Chairman. S/m Nance said the Chairman has for the last few years been elected unanimously by the NC.

S/m Haliday (Leyland) commented that those branches with clubs appeared to be hindered rather than helped by HQ's. It should be remembered he said that the clubs were the best recruiters of associate members.

S/m Nance responding said the pressure to be legally compliant did not come from Headquarters but every Charity had to report its activities to the Charities Commission.

S/m Martin (Leyland) made the point that a club unlike its branch was not a charity but a business.

National conference issues were raised by S/m Pickering (Runcorn). He pointed out the difficulties encountered at Torquay where amendments to amendments caused confusion. S/m Nance in answer to this question recalled this had arisen due to a motion concerning representation of the overseas branches on the national Council. The National Council had wished to discuss this more fully, with a view to appoint a National Council Member with a title possibly Area 14 to represent these branches. Unfortunately, this was not to be. It was also pointed out by the Commodore that the proposer or seconder of the original motion; were not present to introduce it.

The deputy President made reference to his duties and that of the President to the Association. Both of us he said worked part time for the RNA and travelled accordingly. It was not his ideal way of spending a weekend travelling 500 miles or so attending meetings. But it is important and that is why we do it, and we try to keep everyone in the picture as to what is happening in your Association.

Concluding, Commodore Nance said he hoped his visit had helped to convey what the Association was trying to achieve.

The Chairman thanked S/m Nance for attending the conference, and hoped it would not be too long before his next visit to this Area.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Chairman then referred to the previously circulated minutes of the Winter Area conference held at the Atherton branch on January 26th 2008. He asked the meeting if these could be accepted as read. This was agreed. Proposed by S/m F Martin (Leyland) and Seconded by S/m C Fay (Chester) he asked the meeting He

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

18/08 The Secretary referred the delegates to minute 10/08 which can be found on page 5 of the minutes you have in front of you. If you scroll down to paragraph 7 with the sentence beginning "A motion of Confidence in the General Secretary"

He had been requested by the National Chairman to bring to your attention that as the motion of confidence was not formally put to the meeting of the National Council in December, or discussed, it should be discounted from the previous minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE

19/08 A letter from Lieutenant Commander Wyld of the NRO staff informs that due to a revision in Security procedures, the time frame for advising of ship visits has been reduced from two months to one. Also, they can no longer inform people of these visits by conventional mail. Although they quote an e-mail address, I understand they will only issue details of these visits on a 'need to know' basis; and to the people actually involved in the arrangements concerning these visits. I am not sure that the RNA qualifies on that score.

However, thanks to S/m Howard of the St Helens branch there is a web site which publishes all known ships visits throughout the UK. This Area will use this information in future to advise of ships visiting this region instead of relying on our Naval Regional Headquarters. If you wish to access this site, the web site address is;

<http://www.seawaves.com/navcall.htm>

Harry our President has written to me concerning the Wythenshawe club. He also enclosed a copy compiled by the Wythenshawe Chairman giving a sequence of events that led to the branch losing control of the club. Headquarters have become involved, and last year they appointed two members of No11 Area to make a report on the club. This was carried out without any reference to this Area committee. Headquarters arranged a further meeting at Wythenshawe in February chaired by the National Chairman and several members of the National Council. An invitation of sorts was extended to this committee to attend the meeting and Harry our President and the Area Chairman Dave Tollerton attended. One bit of good news is that the deeds of the club premises have been found.

The Area President also included in his letter to me, a copy of an e-mail sent by Ivan Hunter [NCM No12 Area] to the Association President requesting some urgency in the recruitment process of a new General Secretary. S/m Hunter is concerned, that although tacit agreement on this matter was given at the December meeting of Council, nothing further appears to have developed. The President replying to S/m Hunters e-mail states as this appointment is related to HQs relocation, the matter is complex. He goes on to say he is in discussion with his deputy, the National Chairman, the Accountant and the GS. However, he presented a plan to the National Council meeting on March 29th. I have now learned, that the General Secretary has been requested to stay in post until March 2009

The latest update on this is contained in a "Record of Decisions" taken at their meeting on

March 29th and can be found on the Area website. For those of you who do not have access to the website, I have several copies of the NC decisions with me today. Ron our NCM will be giving you further information in his report, later in the meeting.

I was in touch earlier this year with the Rhyl branch Chairman following the death late last year of their Secretary Mrs Margaret Weaver. He informs me that despite all efforts to appoint a new branch Secretary, they have failed. As Chairman, he proposed at their AGM on March 1st to de commission the branch. There are at present 10 members in the branch, most are life members, and they intend to join the HQ's roll, thereby maintaining their links with the RNA. The Branch formally called it a day following their meeting on March 1st.

The Hazel Grove Branch have experienced difficulties with their local council and to some extent the police over the arrangements for their annual parade which took place on February 24th. Having attended three meetings with the Council concerning the parade, it was not until several days before the event that the branch Secretary was given permission to proceed with the arrangements.. These difficulties have not been encountered in previous years and S/m Kelly the Branch Secretary felt obstacles were being placed on the branch by the authorities. I have spoken to the General Secretary about this, and he tells me local councils and the police in other parts of the country appear to be discouraging organisations such as the RNA RBL etc, from holding events such as the Hazel Grove parades.

Jan Thomas informs me that his branch (Bolton) will be changing its meeting venue from the Farnworth Veterans club very shortly; to the Bolton ward Labour Club Deane Road Bolton. Their branch also gave honorary membership recently to a local schoolgirl Rachel Flanders, aged 17 she was one of a four-woman crew - the Atlantic Angels - who rowed the 3,000-mile journey from La Gomorra in the Canary Islands to Antigua in the West Indies. The crew was taking part in the Woodvale Challenge Atlantic Rowing Race to raise cash for three cancer charities. You can read more about this on the Area website news page.

19/08 Letters have been sent to the Association's President, his deputy the National Chairman and General Secretary thanking them for the invitation to the Area committee to meet the members of National Council following their meeting in *HMS Eaglet* recently. Although many questions which have arisen between us and Headquarters of late remain unanswered- and several still need to be resolved, it was felt the exercise was worthwhile and should be repeated some time in the future.

The Capitation fees for the Area have finally arrived, they amount to £1,137.50 a decrease of £203.25 from last year's return of £1,340.75. I have passed the cheque to the Area Treasurer.

AREA TREASURER

20/08 S/m Brocking referred the delegates to his previously circulated report. He drew their attention to the continued loss in value from the annual capitation returns. Due to the continued loss of members, and despite the doubling of subscriptions over the last ten years the loss in capitation returns to this Area is approximately £1,000

The Area accounts for the current period are fairly stable, although a withdrawal of funds from the Income Bond was necessary to cover the Area Reunion expenses.

He had also received a cheque from the Crosby branch for the 'Help Heroes' appeal.

There were no matters arising from the Treasurers report.

NCM's REPORT

21/08 S/m Fielding gave an up to date account of the latest progress in the relocation of Headquarters to Portsmouth. He drew attention to the need to duplicate staff in London and Portsmouth until the move was completed. The new Deputy General Secretary would be in post hopefully, by late summer this year, and the General Secretary has agreed to stay on until March 2009 when his relief should by then, have been appointed.

The board to interview the candidates for the positions of the General and Assistant GS will comprise of; the President, Deputy President and three NCM's chosen by ballot.

The lease for Chelsea Manor Street is currently on offer at £400,000+ The sale of the lease should hopefully cover the cost of acquiring new premises in a commanding position in Portsmouth at present under negotiation with the current owners. For the present however, Headquarters will relocate to the Semaphore Tower in the dockyard on a temporary basis.

The National Council at its last meeting approved the accounts for the year ending December 31st 2007. Although there was an operating deficit of £38,000, interest from the Association's investments showed a surplus of £168,000 for the year on our total assets.

S/m Fielding said he had queried the figure of £1,723 which had been expended on the International Maritime Confederation (IMC) He had been informed this was the expenses incurred by four RNA delegates to attend an IMC conference on the continent.. This figure could increase this year as the RNA will be hosting the IMC Presidency. Although the deputy President had earlier attempted to explain the functions of the IMC, he was still unclear of its relevance to the RNA.

S/m Fielding also reported he was trying to gain information regarding the VAT on members subscriptions: so far with limited success, which currently appears to be in the region of £10,000

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE NCM's REPORT)

22/08 S/m Haliday (Leyland) made reference to the last conference in relation to voting in National Council now being queried by several NCM's

S/m Fielding replied that there were some dissenting votes at the last NC meeting but there did not appear to be anything malicious in this. It was more the way these meetings were conducted that caused problems.. What had caused upset at the meeting of the Area committee and the NC at *HMS Eaglet* recently, was the accusation that the members

of the NC were merely used as 'rubber stamps' to approve decisions made by the unelected members of Council.

AREA TOTE DRAW

23/08 The result of the Area Tote Draw was as follows; For the month of February **No.92** (Llandudno)

March; **No.10** (Chester) and at this meeting (April) **No.72** (Birkenhead)

PRESIDENTS APPEAL

24/08 The Presidents appeal realised £70.00 donated by the following branches.

| | | | |
|------------|-------|----------|--------|
| ATHERTON | £5.00 | PEEL | £5.00 |
| CHESTER | £5.00 | RAMSEY | £5.00 |
| KIRKBY | £5.00 | RUNCORN | £10.00 |
| LEYLAND | £5.00 | SKIPTON | £5.00 |
| LIVERPOOL | £5.00 | TRAFFORD | £5.00 |
| LLANDUDNO | £5.00 | WIGAN | £5.00 |
| LLANGOLLEN | £5.00 | | |

PROs REPORT

25/08 S/m Caulfield commenced his report by voicing his concern about the apparent conflict of interest between the roles of National PRO and the Area PR. However, having listened to the deputy President earlier, he was reminded of the fact that before an Area conference in other parts of the country their PRO usually contacts him to check what is happening nationally.

Following national conference last year it was agreed to draw up a 'Memorandum of Understanding' between the RNA and the RN. This has been done, and is at present with the RN for their consideration. Certain matters concerning this initiative will be put to conference in June at Dundee.

A suggestion from No.8 Area asks if the RNA could produce a DVD giving an idea what we as an Association actually do, and what we have to offer. Any suggestions on what the DVD should contain would be most welcome.

The RNA will be represented at several high profile events this year, unfortunately, many are in the south of England. Although veterans week is in Blackpool in June and the National Veterans Day will be hosted by the town, the Blackpool branch have informed him of their difficulties in gaining recognition with the local council.

Events to be covered this year include, Air Days at *HMS Seahawk* and *HMS Heron* the First Sea Lord's Garden Party and Portsmouth Naval Base ('Meet the Navy' a visit to the

RN Harrier squadrons at RAF Coltishall.

S/m Caulfield also mentioned the work done by the National Chairman S/m David White. Although he appears to be in the background, he has given valuable advice over the ten years he has known him. He is a point of contact for anyone seeking his help on Association matters.

He also hoped to visit the offices of *Navy News* shortly, he would be grateful for any comments about the paper he could pass to the editorial team. He also appealed to the delegates to submit their articles, stories etc to the paper for inclusion on the RNA pages.

Although the budget for the PR was overspent this year due to "one off" reasons, he was holding £5,000 worth of promotional stock. If any branch is considering having an RNA stall at a local event please let him know. These promotional items come free of charge to publicise the RNA.

S/m Caulfield concluded his report by mentioning the Cartmel Race meeting on July 17th. The RNA has been designated as the official charity at that meeting. The question of the hiring of coaches from say the Liverpool and Manchester areas to attend the event has yet to be discussed by the Area committee.

AREA WELFARE ADVISOR

26/08 S/m J Thomas advised the delegates that the refurbishment of the RBL's convalescent home, Byng House in Southport should be completed by October of this year. In the meantime the Royal Clifton Hotel a short distance away would continue to accommodate the residents from Byng House. S/m Thomas did emphasise that when Byng House finally reopens later this year, demand for places in the home are expected to be high. He urged all would be applicants contact their branch welfare officer sooner, rather than later if they wish to be considered for a place in the home. This could be done via their local RBL branch, or SSAFA who will pass on any requests to the RBL. He also reminded the meeting that wives and widows of our members are also entitled to make use of this facility. He also added, that he would appreciate any feedback from shipmates who had taken advantage of the facilities offered by Byng House.

S/m Thomas said this could help the RNA's recruiting efforts with the RN if the serving members knew that a welfare system was in place within the Association. The General Secretary is aware of this, and wishes to improve our image in this field, that is why there was a national RNA Welfare seminar held in HMS Nelson last October. He had attended a number of cases of recently discharged RN personnel and they had problems as much as anybody. With the right organisation in place, we could link up with the RN and advise them what we can offer.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

27/08 S/m Haliday (Leyland) informed the meeting his branch would be hosting a charity night in their club on June 13th in aid of the 'Heroes Return' initiative. All proceeds would go to

that charity. There would be a Hot Pot supper, raffle etc. Tickets are £2.50 and would be available at the club door on the night.

28/08 S/m Thomas (Llandudno) gave information regarding the new meeting venue for his branch. [see Branch & Miscellaneous Announcements]

VENUE FOR THE SUMMER AREA CONFERENCE (July 26th 2008)

29/08 Two branches (Bolton and Skipton) offered to host the summer Area conference. A vote therefore became necessary. The result of which, was as follows; Bolton 12 votes, and Skipton 13 votes. Skipton Branch would therefore host the summer Area conference at the Herriots Hotel Skipton BD23 1RT at 1200 on the above date.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 1425

BRANCH AND MISCELLANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Area Address List

Blaenau Ffestiniog Branch

Changes have taken place at the following;

New Secretary:

S/m P Smith

24 Church Street
Blaenau Ffestiniog
Gwynedd
LL41 3HB Tele: 01766 831111

Buxton & High Peak Branch

New Secretary:

S/m T Johnson

25 Birch Close
Cavendish Fields
BUXTON

SK17 6FE Tele: 01298 212 321

Deeside Branch

Now meet on 2nd Wednesday of month

Llandudno Branch

Venue change:

Branch now meet at the RAOB club Madoc Street.

Skelmersdale Branch

Secretary's telephone number is: 07891 186 570

Wythenshawe Branch

Now meet on last Wednesday of month.

No.10 Area Website Don't forget to visit your Area website; www.rna-10-area.co.uk for the latest news of the Area and national news. Keep up to date via the links pages with other areas, branches and ship associations etc.

Vanguard Magazine Contributions for possible inclusion in the autumn 2008 issue of the magazine should reach the Area Secretary not later than **August 30th 2008**

Area Standard Requests for the attendance of the Area Standard at Branch events, dedications parades etc should be made in the first instance to the **Area Secretary** preferably in writing or E-mail giving as much notice as possible.

Area Secretary May 2008