



ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION No.10 AREA

Patron Her Majesty The Queen

www.rna-10-area.co.uk

MINUTES OF THE AUTUMN AREA CONFERENCE HELD AT NORTH MANCHESTER BRANCH ON OCTOBER 27th 2007

The Lord Mayor of Manchester officially opened the autumn 2007 Area conference at 1205 hosted by the North Manchester branch at their headquarters in the VASA club Blackley Manchester. The Lord Mayor gave an amusing and interesting account of his recent trip to sea in the city's adopted ship, *HMS Manchester*; stating although it was a reasonably calm day, he was no sailor.

The Area President thanking the Lord Mayor for finding time in his busy schedule to open the area conference presented him with the latest issue of the Area magazine *Vanguard*. The Lord Mayor then departed.

The Area Vice Chairman resuming, asked the meeting to observe the usual one minutes silence for the following shipmates who had crossed the bar since the last meeting.

S/m Bob Moses (Atherton Branch)

Mrs Barbara Williams (Capenhurst Branch)

S/m Alan Sandford (Fleetwood)

S/m Neville Garlick (Kendal)

S/m J Moar (Llangollen Branch)

John Jackson (Former Branch Secretary North Manchester)

Ray Bragg (Former Chairman and Standard Bearer Whitehaven)

Apologies had been received from the Crewe, Deeside Hazel Grove and Preston Branches.

The minutes of the Area conference hosted by the Bolton Branch on July 28th 2007 were taken as read.

Proposed by; S/m Cole (Wrexham) and seconded by S/m J Wood (North Manchester)

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

65/07 S/m J Thomas (Area Welfare Advisor) referring to minute 49/07 asked the DNCM what progress had been made at the recent meeting of the National Council with regard to his request for the National Council to follow the RBL's example in approaching HM government into the treatment and health care of Naval Personnel injured in action. This had been proposed, seconded and carried at the last Area conference.

S/m Fielding (DNCM) replying said matters such as this would be discussed with the Association's Welfare Advisor who was not a member of National Council.

S/m Thomas said surely the National Council could do more than discuss this amongst themselves.

S/m Fielding said he taken S/m Thomas point onboard, and he would raise the matter at the next meeting of Council. .

CORRESPONDENCE

66/07 The General Secretary has sent me the Royal Navy Presentation Team Tour programme covering the period from November to February 2008. Visits affecting towns in this area as follows: Holyhead January 22nd Whitehaven February 19th Barrow 20th February. Kendal 26th February and Skipton 28th February.

An application for Life membership has been received from the Morecambe branch for one of its members. After examination by members of the Area committee, it has been passed to the DNCM for approval and onward transmission to National Council

The Royal Maritime club, formerly known as the Royal Sailors Home club in Portsmouth, revoked the existing concessions to RNA members when the club was rebranded, despite reports in the Monthly Circular Letter to Branches from Headquarters that the concessions exist. The only special deals now open to RNA members are restricted to those RNA branches who have taken out Country Membership for their members.(currently £60 per branch) The RNA General Secretary has made representations to the Maritime club management concerning the situation; they have promised to look into the matter

CORRESPONDENCE (cont)

66/07 The National President has once more been in correspondence with the Wythenshawe branch following a report he commissioned into the affairs of the Wythenshawe club. He has raised several points into the conduct of this former RNA club, which at present is operating independently. He reminds the branch officials that as trustees, they have a duty under Charity law to safeguard the clubs assets. What he fails to point out, that at the end of the day these people are unpaid volunteers and can if they wish walk away from the situation whenever they want. A further point he fails to mention, is the club is a limited company and unlike the branch is not a charity.

The Secretary of the Congleton branch has written to the General Secretary expressing his branch disapproval on several issues concerning the operation of the Association. These include, the continued interference by the President who is unelected, into the affairs of the RNA also the decision not to circulate the minutes of National council meetings to the Areas. It would appear shipmates, having taken a rough look at how the delegates voted at the Torquay conference, the majority of the southern branches voted against the motion to circulate the minutes of the Council meetings.

The Not Forgotten Association have offered the area six places on a Christmas Boat trip on the River Mersey on December 10th The trip will include a buffet, refreshments and entertainment on board. Because of its proximity to the Christmas period, I have extended the invitation to three of the Merseyside Branches on this occasion.

Several applications for Life membership have been received from the various branches to date; these have been dealt with and passed to the NCM for endorsement.

Due to extensive reorganisation at the Vanguard Magazine's publishers – and especially in the advertising and layout sections, the autumn edition of the magazine only just made the deadline for this conference. If your contribution has failed to appear, please accept our apologies. It will hopefully be published in the spring issue

Better news on the Hotel booking form front. The booking forms are now available from me for the 2008 Area spring conference /reunion at the Savoy hotel Blackpool on April 25th -28th Accommodation is limited to 200 persons, so early booking is advisable.

I have been informed that the Runcorn branch club ceased trading as an RNA registered club on October 14th. The branch will continue to meet there for the present until a new meeting venue is decided.

I have been informed also, by the Kirkby Branch Secretary that their club has been experiencing financial difficulties and a meeting was held there on October 7th to decide on the options open to them. They have decided to invite a management consultancy to assume control of the club; repaying their debts (which are substantial) The branch will still meet on the premises, but will cease trading as an RNA registered club.

A further letter from Harry our Area President to the National President, General secretary Chairman of the SOC and copied to a number of branch Secretary's within our Area. In his letter he has brought to the attention of Headquarters the apparent dissatisfaction, and in many cases anger, of many of our branches in the North West at the apparent misleading actions by the officials at our last National Conference. Also a large section of our membership are disturbed; that whilst the Royal British Legion is engaged in a praiseworthy campaign in support of wounded servicemen, our powers that be, are engaged on a ludicrous pursuit of an NCM because he openly discussed with RNA members a subject that was already within the general public's domain.

Nominations for the various posts on the Area committee have now closed. In the case of the position of Area Chairman, and the vacant position on the Area committee, more than one nomination has been received for both posts. A ballot will therefore be necessary. Ballot forms giving the candidates names will be sent to all branches with the minutes of this meeting, with a closing date in mid December. The successful nominees will be announced at the AGM in January. There were no nominations for the position of Area PRO

Recent Branch Secretary Changes have taken place at Fleetwood Peel and Rochdale. Also, the Macclesfield branch Secretary's telephone and e-mail details have been revised.

There were no matters arising from the correspondence.

AREA TREASURER

67/07 S/m Brocking in presenting his report for the period July – September 2007 asked the meeting to refer to the entry under Presidents Appeal. This figure should read £75.00 and not £70.00 as shown on the statement.

AREA TREASURER(cont over0**AREA TREASURER(cont)**

67/07 He then proceeded to itemise the various entries on the current statement which had been circulated earlier to the delegates. Copies of this statement are available from the Area Treasurer or secretary. For the above period, there was an excess of expenditure over income of £728.09 which was mainly accounted for in the purchase of two rum tubs (for Area and Runcorn branch) and expenses incurred by the PRO for the Cartmel Race meeting in August.

NCM's REPORT

68/07 S/m Fielding referred to the recent meeting of the National Council which took place in London on September 8th 2007. "A great deal of time was taken up at that meeting" said S/m Fielding by what had been published on the RNA website of events that had occurred at National conference, which the Area secretary had referred to earlier. The relocation of Headquarters was discussed, and as you are probably aware the favoured location for this was on the site of the old Brickwoods Brewery opposite the Royal Sailors Home club in Portsmouth currently being redeveloped. However, because of the additional costs involved in renting this type of property, VAT costs alone, would probably cost the Association upwards of £250, 000. Also with leasehold properties the owners could increase the rent annually if they so wished. It has therefore been decided by council to ask the relocation working party to seek premises to buy or new build, which if acquired, would eventually become an asset to the RNA rather than a liability. The costs incurred so far by the relocation working group in legal fees amount to £10,000.

It is also most likely, that once the move is made to Portsmouth, it may be necessary to overlap the staffing arrangements at the new HQ's as the present London office staff will not be transferring to Portsmouth. This arrangement would continue for about six months or until the move is complete and the new staff are trained.

It was also decided at the meeting to refer the salaries of the present London Headquarters staff to the Finance and General Purpose's committee to consider options for future remuneration of these staff.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE NCM's REPORT)

69/07 S/m Halliday (Leyland) queried a statement made at National conference which said that any move to Portsmouth would be self financing. "We now hear that £10,000 has already been expended plus other expenses that may come along"
S/m Fielding replied that at the end of the day, this would hopefully be achieved. The £10,000 should be recouped by the sale of the lease on the London premises.

A further speaker from the floor questioned the need to relocate in the south there were plenty of brown field sites in the North West. He also raised several other points mainly relating to the relationship between the RNA and the RN

The DNCM said several of the matters raised by the speaker including the proposed move to Portsmouth had been approved by the branch delegates at the Torquay national conference.

69/07 S/m Tollerton (Crosby) enquired of the DNCM what actually transpires at the meetings of Council "It would appear" said shipmate Tollerton that the National President decides the agenda of these meetings. He was concerned that according to the last Circular Letter to Branches, Delegates were to become representatives. National Council members should be delegates for their Area, not representatives.

S/m Fielding said a delegate had a difficult job at conference when amendments were tabled to motions: he cited the recent national conference when one motion produced a crop of amendments Thedelegate had to listen to all sides of the debate and vote accordingly in the best interests of his branch. S/m Hunter NCM of No12 Area has defined the role of delegate as opposed to that of representative.

AREA TOTE DRAW

70/07 The winners of the Area Tote Draw for the month of August was Nos. 156 (**Runcorn**) for September No.68 (**Atherton**) and at this meeting No.11 (**Rhyl**).

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PRESIDENTS APPEAL

71/07 The Presidents appeal realised £85.00 donated by the following branches.

ATHERTON	£ 5.00	NORTH REDDISH	£ 5.00
CHESTER	£ 5.00	OLDHAM	£ 5.00
CROSBY	£ 5.00	PEEL	£ 5.00
DROYLSDEN	£ 5.00	RUNCORN	£ 5.00
LEYLAND	£10.00	SKIPTON	£ 5.00
LIVERPOOL	£ 5.00	TRAFFORD	£ 5.00
LLANGOLLEN	£ 5.00	WIGAN	£ 5.00
NORTH MANCHESTER	£ 5.00	WREXHAM	£ 5.00

Before the commencement of the PRO's report the Chairman, S/m Mrs B Jones asked the meeting to confine itself to delegates only to speak on this occasion only. As the host branch had hired outside caterers who were providing a hot meal, it was important therefore that the meetings end, coincided with the arrival of the refreshments.

PROs REPORT

72/07 S/m Caulfield commenced his report by explaining the reason why he had not volunteered as a candidate for Area PRO As he was already appointed the National PR and Communications advisor, he felt the Area would benefit by having its own PR delegate. If there were no nominations for the Area post, he would of course continue as at present.

The Cartmel Races event over the late August Bank holiday weekend although not very well supported on the Saturday, found better interest on the Bank Holiday Monday particularly from members of the Preston branch who turned out in good numbers.

In the case of Liverpool's City of Culture celebrations next year, he had approached via the Area President, HMS *Eaglet* what their plans were for this event. Unfortunately, not a great deal apart from an open day at HMS *Eaglet*, the tall ships race appears to be the big event with the possibility of the presence of several RN vessels. A Royal Marine band concert could take place on one of the RN ships. Although there have been some planning meetings, he was disappointed that the RNA has not been included in the discussions. This was despite an assurance made last year that the RNA would be invited to future meetings involving RN events.

On the positive side, during the tall ships race Liverpool city Council have invited the RNA marquee to be present during their visit. He would be grateful if anyone from the Merseyside branches that had information about Liverpool City of Culture news, if they could pass it on to him.

He had also heard rumours that the annual BOA service would be revived for 2008. But once again no confirmation of this has so far been forthcoming. Likewise, the plans by the Canadian High Commission to replace the Maple trees on Canada Boulevard mentioned some time ago by the Area Secretary appear to have come to nought.

73/07 S/m Tollerton (Crosby) reported that the Maple Trees would be replaces but not possibly, in 2008

AREA WELFARE ADVISOR

74/07 S/m Thomas reported that since the last conference, he had visited four shipmates to complete application forms to allow them to enter the Royal Clifton Hotel in Southport which is currently being used by the RBL as a convalescent centre whilst the nearby Byng House is refurbished.

He had also helped several other persons to obtain various home aids such as stair lifts, walk in showers etc, when sometimes Social Services cannot provide them.

Unfortunately, many of our members ask us for help as a last resort often to proud to ask for charity. S/m Thomas reminded the meeting "it was not charity, you are entitled to help" he said. "There are millions of pounds in welfare benefits gathering interest to which we are entitled. He cited the example of people who could only walk short distances: they should ask for an EPV (Electrically Powered Vehicle). "We have" he said the RNBT the RNA RBL and SSAFA Forces Help to assist we should use their expertise.

AREA WELFARE ADVISOR (cont)

74/07 S/m Thomas informed the meeting that earlier in the month, he had attended an RNA Welfare Advisors seminar at *HMS Nelson*. You should ask your Branch Secretary to let you read the October Circular Letter to Branches to find out what was discussed. It is far to long to discuss here. The General Secretary is anxious to improve welfare within the RNA having met the GS for the first time; he had found him very interesting and sincere with a lot of ideas as to how we can have a better system of welfare within our Association. The General Secretary said he hoped to liaise with the RBL to request that our welfare officers would be able to complete the two day Case Workers course which would enable them to become authorised caseworkers.

Before the next agenda item(AOB) The President thanked the host branch for providing the facilities for this conference. He was also pleased to present to the Chairman of the Runcorn Branch their 50 year certificate having been in continuous commission as a branch for that number of years. The Branch Chairman, S/m J Duckworth accepted the award on behalf of his branch members.

AREA PRESIDENT

75/07 The President resuming his address, said it was now clear that we have a crisis of confidence; "Following the Torquay and Aberystwyth conferences, in what can only be described as a 'carve up' complaints from shipmates in this area have increased in number. It has brought into question the quality of leadership exercised from the hierarchy of the RNA". "It is because of this," said the President, that prompted him to write the letter (mentioned earlier by the Area Secretary), to Headquarters, and copied to several branches within the area. He had brought to the attention of our governing body the credible campaign mounted by the RBL in respect of the treatment of our wounded servicemen, while all our National Officers could do was to set up a board of enquiry to examine why a member of the National council had supposedly brought the RNA into disrepute because he had taken the time to explain in detail to our overseas members how that shambles of an amended motion at Torquay had come about. The President then went on to provide examples of branches within this Area who had voiced concern about the current state of their Association.

He cited as an example a situation in the world of agriculture; If a similar geographical area suffered an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, the cause would have to be identified and a cull would take place. "Well the cause" said S/m Harley lies in London, and that is where the cull should take place. His letter written in September, to the President, deputy President General Secretary and the Chairman of the SOC has so far attracted not one reply.

He asked the meeting to recall not so long ago, those grinning politicians assuring us that the 2012 Olympic games was well under control and the cost would not be a problem for anybody. Some months later those same politicians looking very sheepish informed us that the costs would have to rise because they had forgotten to include VAT! So did our leaders in the Association; despite warnings when they were seeking to relocate Headquarters to Portsmouth. They did not bother themselves with trivialities such as VAT. The person voicing these warnings was none other than the NCM for No 12 Area – the very person who is subject to a pointless and petulant enquiry concerning who said what to whom? "At least shipmates I can now give you some good news" said the President. That pursuit of the NCM from No.12 Area has been dropped. because he fought back and he had friends particularly in this Area.

A further example of spending other peoples money was quoted by the President. This concerned the recent announcement from Headquarters floating the idea of supplying computers to the 400+ branches of the Association. They do not appear to have taken into account the cost of the hardware needed to support the operation; i.e., printers, modems etc, and not forgetting VAT! The President mentioned also, the lack of or scant information regarding the expenses of our national officers. These are just some of the questions our branches should be asking Headquarters to explain; letters should be poring into London seeking answers to the foregoing.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

.76/07 S/m Pickering (Area committee & Runcorn) voiced his concern on the decision on this occasion, to restrict contributions to the meeting to only the branch delegates.

VENUE FOR THE WINTER AREA CONFERENCE & AGM (January 26th 2008)

77/07 Two branches (Atherton & Skipton) bid to host the winter conference and AGM. The resultant ballot opted by 16 votes to 7 to nominate Atherton as the host branch. Therefore Atherton will be the venue for the winter conference & AGM on January 26th 2008

The Vice Chairman closed the meeting at 1405

BRANCH AND MISCELLANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Area Address List

Branch Secretary changes have taken place at the following;

Fleetwood (New Secretary) S/m L Wright 51 Mount Road FLEETWOOD Lanc's
FY7 6QZ Tele:01253 872848

Peel (New Secretary) S/m D Harrocks Keppel Gate 7. 1st Avenue Onchan
Isle of Man IM3 4LB Tele::01624 625 574

Rochdale (New Secretary) S/m Steve Law 30 West Hill Castle Avenue
ROCHDALE OL11 4LP Tele: 01706 675 974

Ellesmere Port (Temporary Secretary) All correspondence to S/m Mrs J Webber
5 Woodvale Road Little Sutton Ellesmere Port CH66 3QJ
Tele: 0151 339 1397

Election of Officers and Area committee members

Included with these minutes is a ballot form for the position of Area Chairman and a vacant position on the Area committee. There are three (3) candidates for the Area Chairman's post, and four (4) candidates for the vacant position on the Area committee

Only one vote is allowed for each position on the ballot paper. Completed ballot forms should be returned to the Area Secretary not later than January 5th 2008. .

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.

Visiting Ships

The latest information concerning ships expected to visit this region is awaited from the NRO

Vanguard Magazine

The closing date for contributions or letters for the spring 2008 edition of the Area magazine is February 1st 2008

Area Reunion

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The Area Reunion and spring conference weekend will take place at the Britannia Savoy Hotel Queens Promenade Blackpool FY2 9SJ from Friday April 25th until Monday April 28th 2008. Cost for the weekend is £99 per person. Booking forms for weekend are included with these minutes. Please return them direct to the hotel; not to the Area. Because of the delay in Britannia hotels producing the booking forms, and the popularity of this reunion venue, only limited accommodation remains in the hotel. Those wishing to attend the reunion, are advised to book as soon as possible.

Conference Refreshments

The present levy of £2.00 which was last increased several years ago is now inadequate for branches that cater for Area conference refreshments. The Area committee has therefore decided to increase the levy with immediate effect, to **£3.00** for each person who requires refreshments at Area conferences.