



**ROYAL NAVAL  
ASSOCIATION**



# The Semaphore Circular

No 674

*The Beating Heart of the RNA*

November 2017



*Our three LIBOR busses in n Portsmouth with HMS Queen Elizabeth in the background before dedication at the Biennial and dispersing to their home ports*

*This edition is the on-line version of the Semaphore Circular, unless you have registered with Central Office, it will only be available on the RNA website in the 'Members Area' under 'downloads' at [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk) and will be emailed to the branch contact, usually the Hon Sec.*

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## Glossary of terms

<b>NCM</b>	National Council Member
<b>NC</b>	National Council
<b>AMC</b>	Association Management Committee
<b>FAC</b>	Finance Administration Committee
<b>NCh</b>	National Chairman
<b>NVCh</b>	National Vice Chairman
<b>NP</b>	National President
<b>DNP</b>	Deputy National President
<b>GS</b>	General Secretary
<b>DGS</b>	Deputy General Secretary
<b>AGS</b>	Assistant General Secretary
<b>CONA</b>	Conference of Naval Associations

Throughout ☆ indicates a new or substantially changed entry

## Contacts

Financial Controller	023 9272 3823	<a href="mailto:michelle@royalnavalassoc.com">michelle@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Digital Media Assistant		<a href="mailto:suzanne@royalnavalassoc.com">suzanne@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Deputy General Secretary	023 9272 0782	<a href="mailto:andy@royalnavalassoc.com">andy@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Assistant General Secretary (Membership & Slops)	023 9272 3747	<a href="mailto:nigel@royalnavalassoc.com">nigel@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
S&O Administrator	023 9272 0782	<a href="mailto:chrissie@royalnavalassoc.com">chrissie@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
General Secretary	023 9272 2983	<a href="mailto:paul@royalnavalassoc.com">paul@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Admin	023 92 72 3747	<a href="mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com">admin@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Project Semaphore Manager		<a href="mailto:Sarah@royalnavalassoc.com">Sarah@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Project Semaphore Deputy		<a href="mailto:Julie@royalnavalassoc.com">Julie@royalnavalassoc.com</a>
Branch Support Officer (North)	07964 721849	<a href="mailto:belfastblues_812@icloud.com">belfastblues_812@icloud.com</a>



Central Office Staff – (L to R) Nigel, Michelle, Paul, Chrissie and Andy

### Find Semaphore Circular On-line

<http://bit.ly/RNADownloads>

or

RNA Website / Members Area / Downloads /  
Circulars / Code (shipmate)

### Snail Trail Mail - Postal Address

RNA Central Office,  
Room 209, PP70,  
Semaphore Tower,  
HM Naval Base,  
Portsmouth  
Hants PO1 3LT

## Dear Shipmates

Welcome to the November Circular, this is a bumper edition – our biggest yet with lots of branch news, Central Office dits and preparation stuff for the End of Year and next Year's Conference. Now that Andy is back from leave the groan-worthy jokes are back!

First off, we are all getting used to Queen Elizabeth in the Dockyard – we had our last Open Day of the year and the Shipmates got a great view of the size and look of our biggest ever warship. She sails for the second phase of build sea trials very soon and is out until early December when she is back in to commission and become HMS Queen Elizabeth. So have a look for the Open Days next year – no guarantee of course that QEZ will be in – she has her first of class flying trials and meeting up with her F35 aircraft in the USA later in the year.

Most important of all may I ask that you **start to book your accommodation** for the Dublin Conference. The hotel will start the release of rooms we have reserved very soon, and you may miss out on being in the Conference Hotel and the great deal CONA travel has done. This is a very nice 4\* hotel and makes a nice 'treat' visit. If you would like details of B&B options that CONA Travel have arranged nearby then email [conatravelservices@justforgroups.co.uk](mailto:conatravelservices@justforgroups.co.uk) . Their great brochure also has details of ferries etc.



Taken by GS during our last Open Day

Can I ask you please to get cracking on other preps for Conference particularly:

- Delegate registration forms – attached
- Election forms for NCM/DNCM and SOC members – attached.

Remember the deadline for branch motions is 16 February 18.

A huge thank you to all the Shipmates who turned out for the **Biennial Parade**. A great day, I have written a report for you to see what happened. The higher levels of security did not get in the way too much, and the new arrangements means we can tighten the timings next time to reduce the 'standing time'. It was such a privilege to meet 3 highly decorated gallantry award holders for the dedication of our LIBOR buses. The buses are now in Base Port (like QEZ) so please book them and get them on the road – details in the circular. The National Chairman covers the CONA cruise, which I hear was made very special by a great comradely effort by Dublin Branch – BZ to them!!

As we approach the season of **Remembrance** there are some details to take account of please:

- Field of Remembrance tickets are being issued now.
- You must have a ticket for the Cenotaph to march – please talk to Nigel.
- Don't forget your RNA poppy pin – they have sold really well. Nigel will get them to you in time!
- Standard bearers should wear the cloth beret badge, other shipmates may wear either cloth or metal beret badges.
- Don't forget that this is a great time to be commemorating a shipmate with the Jutland Wood. Details at: <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/support-an-appeal/centenary-woods/jutland/>



Nigel is looking forward to your orders for our excellent QE **Christmas cards** and the **2018 diary** with the Royal Yacht featured.

**Project Semaphore** – bringing digitally isolated veterans into the wonderful on-line world is moving along very well and this month we have seen our 400<sup>th</sup> iPad go out. The Project Manager's report makes very encouraging reading. She is looking for dedicated volunteers for this important work to form part of her A-Team. Please give her an email if you are interested.

We don't need Computer geeks (not that anyone in the RNA can be a geek), since total experts can forget how hard it is to start, so a reasonable working knowledge of Google, emails and Skype/FaceTime is a great starter for 10. This is all about getting lonely and isolated people back in contact with friends and family and looking up old ships and shipmates. I was at a Conference this week and learned that being lonely has the same health effect as smoking 15 cigarettes a day!

Please see the article about Cdr Jane Allen who is walking around the UK for Naval Charities – she may be passing your branch – she needs parking for her motorhome – water (and I suspect a tot would go down well!!!) Please be in contact or through Central Office.

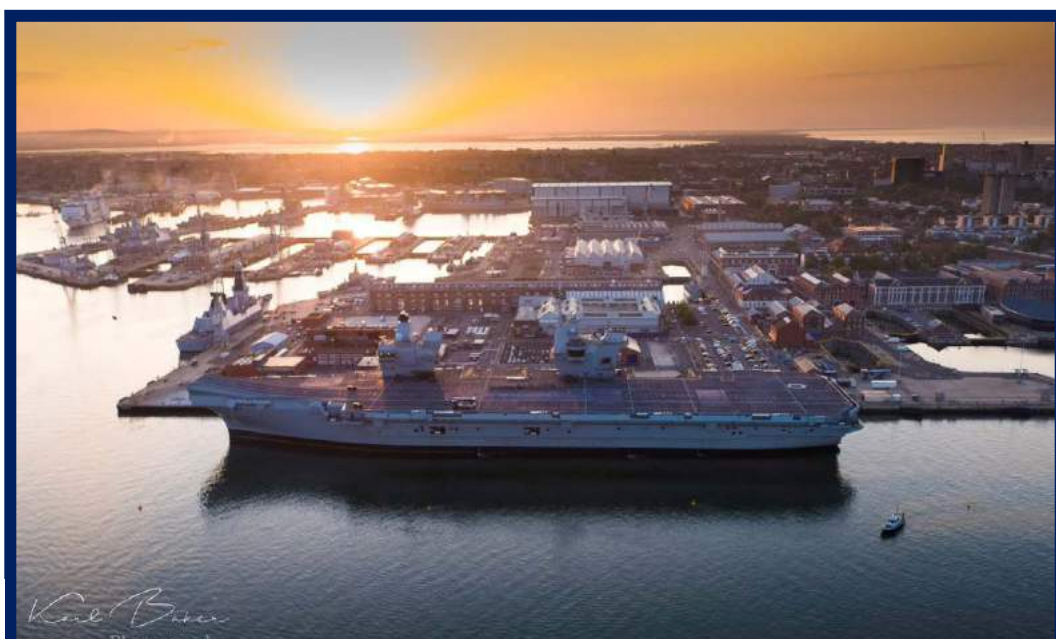
Our beloved **Hon Treasurer** S/M Ray Barraclough is standing down after 30 years service in that role at the Dublin Conference. The National Council will be looking to appoint a Hon Treasurer in his place. If you would like to learn more please give the GS a ring, or to put yourself forward please email GS with your CV and reasons for wanting to take on the role.

On that subject, I have informed the National Council that **I intend to retire** in September 18 after the post- Conference NC meeting. The search for a new GS will start in the New Year.

Finally, the National President and the Second Sea Lord signed our new Collaboration Agreement and Charter. The Charter is new and is a one-page summary of the relationship between the Royal Navy and the RNA and is available on the website. Feel free to print and have at your meeting venue.

*kindest regards from me and all at Central Office*

*Paul*



Credit Karl Baker

**Chairman S Chat**

As mentioned in my last Chat, sadly in July & August two former National Officers Crossed the Bar, S/M Paul Harries and S/M Dick Ascott, who were followed shortly after by S/M Nobby Clarke BEM. Pre-arranged leave prevented one or other senior RNA Officials attending all three funerals. In August our National President, General Secretary, Michelle Bainbridge and I attended the funeral of S/M Dick Ascott former NCM for No 5 Area. This was followed in September when I represented the Association at the funeral of S/M Nobby Clarke BEM, a National Life Vice President and long serving former NCM for No 6 Area. We also said goodbye to S/M Paul Harries former NCM for No 7 Area and the former National Clubs Advisor. All three Shipmates gave long and loyal service to our Association and were all given a good send off.



Late July my wife Maureen & I took to the sea again having picked up the cruising bug last year. Life afloat this time was 15 days cruising to Norway, Iceland, Faroes and the Shetlands. None too sure why those of you who have done fishery protection complained about roughers as the seas were like a mill pond!

This was followed up with the 4 day CONA/RNA cruise from Liverpool across to Dublin and Cobh (nr Cork) and into Avonmouth. Again the sea was unusually calm with a slight swell. I have often heard of the MV MARCO POLO and this was our first time on it. What a wonderfully kitted out ship and to a very good standard. Before we set sail, our Shipmates of RNA Dublin Branch



issued an invitation to us CONA/RNA Shipmates to join them at Ryan's Bar and to dispose of 100 pints of Guinness supplemented with a buffet. Approximately 30 of us from the cruise met up and the Dublin lads were intent on us drinking the Black Stuff which they kept feeding us. We did not disappoint them. To S/M Paul Stephenson and the Shipmates of Dublin Branch, on behalf of us who thoroughly enjoyed your hospitality, our sincere thanks for a great get together.

How delightful and informative it was to meet up on the cruise with S/M Andy Dodds, Chairman of RNA Hinckley Branch and his Mad Hatters on the cruise. The latter remark relates to the fact that they carry a whacky hat everywhere ready to wear when challenged. No hat, then you buy the round. A great bunch of younger Shipmates who fit the RNA's

Strategy of 45+ target group. Well done Andy, keep up the good work.

A recent visit to RNA Huntingdon Branch proved that the Online joining system works as I was delighted to meet one such new comer to his first meeting. Well done S/M Karl Webb and his crew. It is very important to follow up all such referrals from the Online joining system. The early arrival of HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH caused a major headache for many naval base staff, not least our own staff at Central Office. With summer leave in progress for CO staff, Andy Christie was run ragged sending out the invitations to those S/Ms who had requested tickets for the Friday arrival only for the Ship to slip in on the Wednesday. As you will have heard, the weather was more favourable for the Wednesday so many Shipmates who had made travel and accommodation arrangements were disappointed. Well done Andy, Chrissie Hughes and those who pitched in to help you. With regards HMS QE, it is BIG ! as depicted on the front page of the September Navy News.

September 10<sup>th</sup> saw the RNA, CONA, Belgium and Irish Naval Associations at the Cenotaph for the **Naval Associations Biennial Parade**. With some 700 on parade, the weather was kind to us. My thanks to the Massed Naval Bands from over the RN in England and Wales and the 2 marching Platoons from HMS COLLINGWOOD & HMS SULTAN. This major event showed that

Naval Associations and the Royal Navy can still put on a great parade. Well done all concerned especially our General Secretary, Paul Quinn who spent many hours in the planning along with his CO Team all of whom gave up yet another of their weekends for us. On display and dedicated to modern times Gallantry Award Recipients, mentioned elsewhere in the circular was the 3 New Minibuses. The three citations when read out, brought a tear to an eye, as did the poem read out by young Beth Molyneux.

After the Parade, retiring to the Civil Service Club I met up with two lads from HMS MERSEY, AB (WS) Ryan (Errol) Flynn and AB (SEA) Mel Wrightson. Their Ship which was moored in the Royal Docks at East London along with HM Ships ARGYLL, CATTISTOCK and two University patrol boats. The visit was in support of the Defence Exhibition taking place. I am most grateful to Errol & Mel for arranging not only a Ship's visit for me, but to be welcomed aboard by their Commanding Officer, Lt Commander George Storton who was waiting on the Brow to greet me. We had both met last October at HMS COLLINGWOOD when he was attending the Commanding Officers course. Interestingly, he had noted the information given to him at that time by our General Secretary regarding the Shipmates & Oppos Programme which he had passed on to two of his crew who were leaving the Navy. Well done Paul Quinn and Lt. Cdr Storton. Many thanks to Lt. Cdr Storton for allowing me onboard and to Mel for the tour of the Ship, and for the hospitality given by his Shipmates for being allowed onto their Messdeck. The RNA bookmarks and wrist bands that I took onboard disappeared like hot cakes, but not too sure about the RNA application joining forms.

**Where are all those digitally isolated naval veterans hiding is the question.** Please do your best to find them as Sarah Clewes is waiting to dispose of the iPads. Please note you do not have to be a member of the RNA to qualify for an iPad, simply a naval veteran 65+ who does not have access to a computer or the internet. This includes those who served in the Merchant Navy and are in receipt of a veteran's badge. If in doubt as to if someone qualifies, please contact CO. Keep up the good work Sarah. For those of you who surf the RNA Facebook pages and our national website, you will have noticed changes taking place with fast responses on Facebook. We have Suzanne Morris to thank for that. Suzanne joined us this year with responsibility for media and is doing a great job in keeping both areas tidied up and responding to any queries raised on Facebook. Well done Suzanne.

To our serving Shipmates in the Fleet, which includes the Royal Marines, and all Shore Establishment and Naval Units, please let Andy Christie at Central Office have any dits you have, and there must be plenty, or better still submit news from your Ship or Establishment for inclusion in the Association's Semaphore Circular as we want to hear from you. Remember, you are Serving Members of this Great Association and we want confirmation you are out there. To those on Deployment may you have safe passage and a safe return. To those of us on land, stay safe and healthy and go grab a new member.



*Yours aye*

*Keith Ridley*

## 1. ★ RNA and Naval Associations Biennial Parade – Whitehall 10 September 2017

The RNA and many sister Naval Associations mustered in Whitehall for the Biennial Parade on Sunday 10 September. I am delighted to report that 700+ members paraded with a strong turn out from the Type 42 and Ganges Associations and the Irish Naval Association. From the International Maritime Confederation we welcomed a full minibus from our Belgian friends, with Cdr Maryse Bussel leading. We had 60 standards on parade which was very pleasing,



with National Standards from: the RNA; Association of WRNS; the RMA; the Merchant Navy Association, Type 42; and INA; Ganges and Belgium. We were also joined by 80 Phase 2 sailors from HMS COLLINGWOOD and HMS SULTAN.

We were led by the massed band of the Royal Naval Volunteer band service with 80 parading from many bands including Drake, Culdrose, Yeovilton and the Portsmouth establishments. As a former Volunteer

band player myself (Tenor horn) – I thought they were brilliant.

40 Sea Cadets from various units, including our old friends from TS Tormentor (Netley), handed out orders of service and formed a platoon in the parade.



The major change this year was the much higher level of security, responding to the terrorist threats. This meant that we had to gather at King Charles Street (KCS) – a safer muster point, with drop offs from Horse Guards Road. It also meant that we carried out a 'loop parade' back into King Charles Street, which was very popular with attendees. The security was very tight with Whitehall fully closed from 0600 and the first UK deployment of 'Talon' a huge netted stinger to stop vehicles in their tracks. S/M Soapy Watson helped to accredit association members through the security barriers with the final ID question 'What are the ingredients of a Cheesy Hammy Egg?' Although the amount of barriers made it difficult to get to

the pub for a seaman like precaution, the understanding Met made allowances and adapted the security arrangements.



The National Ceremonial Advisor, Shipmate Mick Kieran, briefed the standard-bearers on the changed routine. The Deputy National President Shipmate Commodore Mark Slawson gave the usual pre-march briefing! The band moved off to take up position to play. Followed shortly after by the parade taking up



position around the Cenotaph. Once all was squared away, the VIPs marched on. We were very lucky indeed to have Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock OBE

the Second Sea Lord as the Reviewing Officer. We were joined by 3 holders of Gallantry awards for the occasion of the naming and dedication of our 3 LIBOR buses in their honour at the Service. They were Warrant Officer 1 (RSM) Matthew Tomlinson CGC, CPO Kate Middleton MC and Mrs Gillian Molyneux, wife of the late Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux GM, accompanied by her daughter, Bethany.



Other VIP guests were Captain and Mrs Philip Russell RN the Captain (Sea Cadets), The CO of HMS SULTAN, Captain Peter Towell and Lt Cdr Derby Allen RN representing the CO of HMS COLLINGWOOD and Mr Richard Tomlinson, Matt Tomlinson's Dad.

Our National President, Vice Admiral John McAnally welcomed everyone to the parade and thanked them for such a good turnout. The service of remembrance



was then led by the Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet, The Rev Scott Shackleton. Our first time with Scott, who is a green-beret Chaplain and a dit-spinning war veteran. There was a chance for anyone to lay a wreath on the Cenotaph after the VIP party, and the chance to sing lustily to the usual Naval hymns,



brilliantly played by the Volunteer bands. Bethany Molyneux read her poem 'Why do you wear a poppy Beth?' in honour of her father. All agreed that it was, by far, the most moving part of the service.



The naming and blessing of the buses was also a key part of the service. The GS read the citation for each of the gallantry awards with the recipient by the minibus named in their honour. Each citation got a wonderful round of applause.

The Second Sea Lord addressed the Parade and commented on the importance of the work of the RNA in helping digitally isolated naval veterans (Project Semaphore), mentoring Phase 1 and 2 sailors and those leaving the Navy with the Shipmates and Oppos programme. He reflected on the RN and the new carriers and the RN as a force for good in the world. He particularly mentioned the Cenotaph as a place to remember yesterday's heroes; the gallantry award holders as today's heroes and the trainee sailors and sea cadets as the heroes of the future. He expressed his pleasure at the recognition of Kate, Matt and Ian in this modern way by the veteran

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community.

The Parade Commander then arranged the Parade for the March past, band leading, with the Second Sea Lord and gallantry Award holders taking the review/salute, on the steps of the Cenotaph under the White Ensign.

The Parade looped around the Women at War Memorial and marched past the Cenotaph to return to KCS. The LIBOR buses joined the review with some shipmates enjoying the ride and the applause of the general public.



On arrival in KGS the Second Sea Lord and National President signed the new Charter and Collaboration agreement between the RN and the RNA, before the NP congratulated the parade on an excellent event.

Shipmates then took the chance to look at the buses and meet the gallantry award holders. Everyone made their way up to the Civil Service Club for chips and sandwiches and a refreshing glass of lemonade (trainees under 18) or something a tad stronger. The

Second Sea Lord met lots of shipmates and trainees. We had a marvellous scrum in the Club, who did a great job in keeping the sandwiches and chips coming. Standard-bearers got their tot of course.



I cannot speak too highly of the Met Police for this parade. There was a lot of behind the scenes planning beforehand with a big effort by the Met counter-terrorist teams to keep us safe. It was such a privilege to have Kate, Matt and Gill with us (not forgetting Bethany!) – lovely, modest people who completely personify our values of Unity, Loyalty, Comradeship and Patriotism. It was also great to give Kate a lift to Portsmouth in her own bus!!



So, in summary, we had a marvellous day with very good support from across the RNA and our sister associations and IMC members – and a very kind turnout from busy VIPs (who all really enjoyed their day); the Civil Service Club did us proud and our new friends Matt, Kate, Gill and Bethany had a great day!

Paul Quinn OBE  
General Secretary



\*\*\*\*\***Conference Count Down - 8 Months and counting**\*\*\*\*\*

The 2018 Conference will be held in Dun Laoghaire near Dublin (pronounced Dun Leary) in the Republic of Ireland. The Conference and Gala dinner will be held in the Royal Marine Hotel, which is a 4 star hotel.



As Shipmates can see above it is only just 8 months until the next Conference so if you are thinking of attending as a Delegate or an individual member you need to consider booking your accommodation in the next couple of months.

So.....

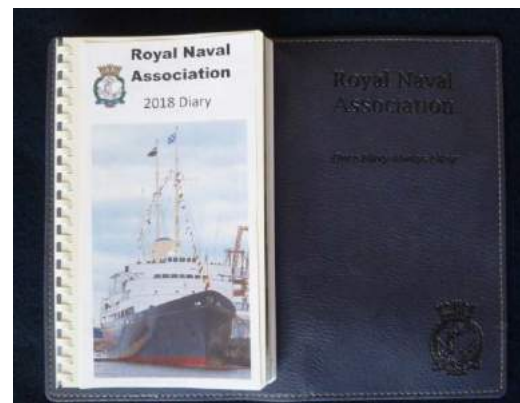
Shipmates are invited to familiarise themselves with the extremely comprehensive brief on travel to, and from Conference and the wide range of accommodation available which has been prepared by CONA Holidays UK.

It is attached at the rear of this edition of the Semaphore Circular. The brief also features a welcome to Ireland with stacks of ideas and what to do and where to go. The brief also contains the booking form and costs for accommodation and details of alternative hotels, Bed and breakfast options that cover a huge range of requirements. They even provide comprehensive insurance for a premium of £35 per person.

### 3. RNA Diaries 2018

2018 Diary order forms can be found at the rear of this edition. Due to a small 'hiccough' ( the printers in Italy forgot to attach the lovely photograph on the front page ).....Nigel promises the Diaries will be available from very early November.

As you can see in the photo the diaries this year will feature a lovely picture of the Royal Yacht taken by Nigel Huxtable personally in Leith Docks earlier this year. It brings back a few memories of what a beautiful ship she is. And a tear to the eye of the National Pres who used to be the Royal Yacht Baggage Officer Navigator – he has ordered 25 for his close friends.



(Note: Interesting chat DGS and GS about the spelling of hiccough – or hiccup. GS won this time!

### 4. Project Semaphore iPad Update

Project Semaphore is not just about providing an iPad to eligible Veterans, it is aimed at addressing issues of social isolation. Being able to keep in touch with family and friends using Skype and Facetime has proved most popular. Having a common interest with children and grandchildren also means that family visits are longer whilst our aged Veterans learn new tips and tricks from IT savvy youngsters!

Dorchester RNA has found that inviting those who have engaged with Project Semaphore to attend their Monthly meetings an hour earlier, allows time to get help with iPads, learn from each and has got Members talking to fellow Shipmates in the Branch. I have attended two of their iPad meetings, to explain the Project and gather Application Forms and then to deliver iPads and work with Volunteers to set up the devices...thereafter the Branch has become self-sufficient! The key to their



success has been inviting members from nearby Portland RNA and together forming a network of new iPad users and those familiar with the Internet, to work together. Families are interested in

this Project too and impressed how being online has given their loved ones a new interest, "Dad (in law) still amazed by it all ..but we're going to stick to a few basics for now! His eyes lit up when we got into the website for HMS Sheffield (pre Falklands)". One to one support for those who cannot attend the Branch meetings can now be shared among a number of local Dorchester RNA members, rather than a few Volunteers trying to reach everyone.



The other Project Semaphore team members, Julie in the South West and Alan in the North would be delighted to support groups; please get in touch if you

are able to find a good mix of IT savvy Volunteers and new users (must be aged over 65 and have served in the RN or RM). Meet the Project Team [at this link](#)

I would encourage groups coming together, I know that other Branches hold regular iPad meetings and are seeing really positive results, not only in terms of iPad knowledge but also looking out for fellow Shipmates who are lonely and need to share a laugh, a dit or just have some company for a while.

Sarah Clewes Project Manager

Sarah can be contacted by e-mailing [sarah@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:sarah@royalnavalassoc.com) or writing to Central Office, Rm 209, Semaphore Tower, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth Hants PO1 3LT

**5. ★ RNVC Series - Lieutenant Commander Edgar Christopher Cookson VC DSO Royal Navy**

Edgar Cookson was born on 13 December 1883 in Tranmere Cheshire and died aged 31 in Mesopotamia on 28 September 1915 during an action which saw him being awarded a Victoria Cross posthumously.

*(Mesopotamia was a historic region situated within the Tigris–Euphrates river system, in modern days roughly corresponding to most of Iraq plus Kuwait, the eastern parts of Syria, Southeastern Turkey, and regions along the Turkish-Syrian and Iran–Iraq borders)*

During the advance on Kut-el-Amara on the 28 September, 1915, the river gunboat "Comet" had been ordered with other gunboats to examine and, if possible, destroy an obstruction placed across the river by the Turks. When the gunboats were approaching the obstruction a very heavy rifle and machine gun fire was opened on them from both banks. An attempt to sink the centre dhow of the obstruction by gunfire having failed and Cookson ordered the "Comet"



to be placed alongside so that he could jump onto the dhow with an axe and cut the wire hawsers connecting it with the two other craft forming the obstruction. Very sadly he was immediately shot and died within a very few minutes.

He was awarded the VC posthumously for this courageous action. He was buried in the Amara War Cemetery in Iraq.

*Footnote;*

*Sadly the cemetery has been vandalised over recent years. In April 2016, Martin Fletcher of The Times, reporting from Amarah, wrote that the cemetery had seriously deteriorated, with plaques falling from the memorial wall and the Cross of Sacrifice smashed. The perimeter wall and other cemetery infrastructure are also damaged. A man who described himself as the caretaker reported the cross being blown up one night in 2006. The CWGC commented that they had not been able to work in Iraq since 1991, but the cemetery would be restored when conditions allowed.*

## 6. Finance Corner

Dear Shipmates,

### **Branch / Area Year End Returns & Officers Information forms -**

Shipmates will find the appropriate forms at the rear of this Circular, along with your Branch / Area Officers Information. Forms need to be completed, signed and sent to Central Office by the 30 April 2018, either by email to: [michelle@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:michelle@royalnavalassoc.com) or [rita@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:rita@royalnavalassoc.com) or by mail to RNA Finance Office, Room 209 PP70, Semaphore Tower, HM Naval Base Portsmouth Po1 3LT



**Pooled Fares**

Pooled Fares figures have now been authorised and will reflect in the next termly accounts, below are the breakdowns of the costs:

- Perth 2017 Conference
- 76 Delegates of 277 branches attended the Conference
- Total claims amounted to £9,895
- Divide £9,895 by 277 = £35.72 which is the average cost for a medium branch
- Large Branches pay a 1/3 more
- Small Branches pay a 1/3 less

(Large branch over 30, small fewer than 15, medium in the middle)

**Termly Accounts**

I have a temporary person starting in November to produce the entire Branch accounts, any queries please do not hesitate to contact me and I will be more than happy to resolve any issues.

*Yours Aye  
Michelle*

**7. Libor Minibuses are now available to borrow - Routine for borrowing**



The three Libor Minibuses are now alongside in their base ports; Portsmouth, Liskeard and Blackburn.

listed below are the points of contact for each bus sponsor are;

- Portsmouth;** e-mail [andy@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:andy@royalnavalassoc.com) phone 02392 720782
- Liskeard;** e-mail [warwickbelfitt@btconnect.com](mailto:warwickbelfitt@btconnect.com) phone 01579 346606
- Blackburn;** e-mail [belfastblues\\_812@icloud.com](mailto:belfastblues_812@icloud.com) phone 07964 721849

Central Office are very keen that the buses are loaned out and on the road rather than parked up in their base ports doing nothing so have deliberately tried to keep rules to a minimum So in no particular order .....

They are free to loan. Insurance, maintenance etc costs covered by Central Office.

The vehicle is supplied with a full tank of fuel and should be returned with a full tank of Diesel and AdBlue topped up if necessary and cleaned.

The loan is on a first come first served basis (Sponsor has final say!)

They are covered for insurance for drivers aged 30 to 70 (Insurance cover for over 70s can be purchased from the insurer dependent on personal circumstances. The Insurer will require two weeks notice for this to be arranged. Insurers contact details are available from Andy at Central Office). A very approximate cost for a weekend is £56 but very dependent on individual circumstance/health etc.

Only 8 passenger and the driver or up to three wheelchairs +3 carers +2 and one driver.

Roadside assistance is available.

## 8. RNA Poppy Badge

By popular demand and Available Now! The New **RNA Poppy**. Please note the 'safety' type pin so you don't lose it. The photo opposite shows the pin in all its glory and scale against a standard RNA badge.

Costing £1 each or 50 pence each if you are a Branch buying them in bulk orders of 30 or over. The prices include postage and are designed to allow you to make the profit from selling them on.

Orders with cheques etc to Nigel in Central Office as usual. Also if you don't do cheques and you want to pay by card just give Nigel on 02392 723747



## 9. ★ Free Taxi on Remembrance Sunday

London's taxis are once again providing a **FREE TAXI SERVICE**, operating from **0800 to 1000** from various locations with a return for all those going to and from the Remembrance Day Ceremony.

The service receives no subsidy or sponsorship from TfL, taxi trade suppliers or organisations. It is provided by working taxi drivers using their own vehicles, supported by those Knowledge Boys and Girls studying hard to become taxi drivers, plus non working taxi drivers and their families acting as marshals, all giving their time to help on this special day. This is the taxi trade's way of making a small payment for the sacrifices made by so many of our armed forces on our behalf.

Drivers are once again giving their whole hearted backing to providing this service. The following points have already been identified as hub pick ups

- Union Jack Club
- Victory Services Club
- Kings Cross (main line)
- Liverpool Street



Paddington (main line)  
Fenchurch Street  
London Bridge  
Victoria (main line)  
Victoria Coach Station  
Waterloo (main line)  
Euston  
Marylebone

With wheelchair accessibility and the ability to take up to 5 persons at a time, the service should cater for all needs.

## 10. ★ Navy Deferred Pensions

Did you serve after 6 April 1975 and leave before you had complete 22 years service or Officers after 16 years service? If so, you are reminded that you may be entitled to a preserved pension from age 60. Read on.....



Prior to 6 April 1975 there was no provision for a preservation of pension benefits and service personnel who left the armed forces had to have completed 16 years from age 21 (officers) or 22 years from age 18 (other ranks). Those who left before that date without completing the above criteria, lost all pension entitlement. (This is very unlikely to change despite appeals to the Govt)

The rules changed on 6 April 1975 to provide for pensions to be deferred for payment at age 60 for all those discharged over the age of 26 with a minimum of 5 years service. On 31 March 1978 the age criterion was dropped and on 6 April 1988, the qualifying period was reduced from 5 to 2 years. Deferred pensions can be claimed at age 60 or at age 65 if your service began after 5 April 2006 and after that point. However, you can claim your preserved pension sooner if you become permanently incapacitated.

Service pensions are administered by Veterans UK but pension payments are made by Paymaster (1836) Ltd, the paying authority for the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS).

For further information For help and information on your armed forces pension please ring the Veterans UK on 0800 085 3600 or write to:

Veterans UK Pension Division  
Mail Point 480  
Kentigern House  
65 Brown Street  
Glasgow, G2 8EX

The form is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/service-personnel-and-veterans-agency-spva-pensions-forms>

## 11 ★ Found on General Secretary's Desk.....



One of the Central Office did their best to Halloween Prank the General Secretary with this bite, do you get it!

The GS stated he was a Submariner and didn't scare easily!!



## 12.★ National Council representative for HQ Roll Members

The newly appointed RNA Roll Members representative, Shipmate Darby Allen (NCM2) has forwarded a letter of introduction for your information

Dear HQ Roll Members,

My name is Victor (Darby) Allen and at the recent September National Council Meeting I was appointed to represent all HQ Roll RNA Members at National Council Meetings. Therefore in order that I can do my job effectively for you, I think it is important that you know who I am and how I may be contacted.

I live near Rochester and have been a member of Chatham Branch RNA since 2003, I am a member of both the branch and No.2 Area Committees and have been Area 2 National Councillor since 2015. I served in the RN Weapons & Electrical Branch for 1959 - 1982.

As a SSAFA Forces Help Case Worker, I have experience with Welfare Issues. Therefore when you have a need to contact me be it an RNA or Welfare matter, then please do so on the following media: Telephone 01634 685482 e-mail, [gubbyallen@btinternet.com](mailto:gubbyallen@btinternet.com) and I will do my best to assist you. Within reason I am prepared to travel should a need arise.

With kind regards to all HQ Roll Shipmates

Darby Allen (NCM 2)

## 13.★ Joke Time - Laundry Name

Walking through Chinatown, a tourist is fascinated' with all the Chinese Restaurants, shops, signs and banners. He turns a corner and sees a building with the sign, 'Hans Olaffsen's Laundry'.

'Hans Olaffsen?', he muses. 'How in hell does that fit in here?'



He walks in to the shop and sees an old Chinese gentleman behind the counter.  
The tourist asks, "How did this place get a name like Hans Olaffsen's Laundry?"  
The old man answers, "Is name of owner".  
The tourist asks, "Well, who and where is the Owner?".  
"Me... is right here", replies the old man.  
"You? How did you ever get a name like Hans Olaffsen"?

"Is simple", says the old man. "Many, many years ago when come to this country, was stand in line at Documentation Centre".

The man in front was big blonde Swede. Lady look at him and go.  
"What your name? He say "Hans Olaffsen".  
"Then she look at me and go, What your name"?

Wait for it.....

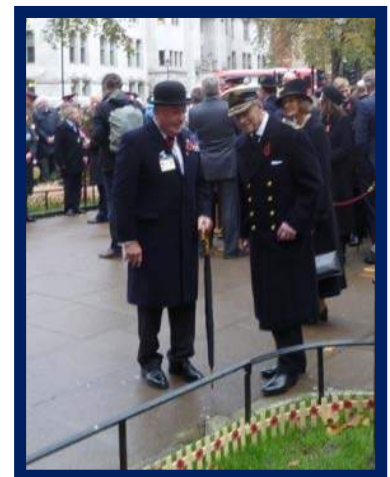
I say "Sem Ting".

#### 14. \*\*\*\*FINAL CALL\*\*\*\* Field of Remembrance - Wednesday 8 November 2017

Any Branches wishing to place a cross in the RNA Garden of Remembrance or Members who want to attend the Field of Remembrance **please forward your details and ticket requirements to Nigel in Central office.**

Crosses can be place in the plot on behalf of a Branch or individual. These can be purchased from Central Office and will be placed on the day by those representing the RNA. Crosses cost £5 each.

Shipmates attending are reminded to bring a form of ID with you, and that you need to be enter the garden gate by 1015 and muster at the RNA plot. The Chaplain of the Fleet will conduct a short memorial service and a potential visit from a VVIP. The National President and General Secretary will be in attendance and he can be contacted on his mobile – 07850 646755 (if required).



#### 15. ★ Guess Where? An Establishment

This month can you name this establishment?  
Remember no hovering or looking on Google or Wiki!!..... Good Luck

The answer will be in next month's edition.

And so to last month's 'Guess the Establishment'..... Our thanks go to Shipmate John E 'Bill' Bailey who wrote.....





*Here's one that I don't think will have many who know its location - the main gate for the Royal Naval Dockyard at Trincomalee. It's now the Naval Base for the Sri Lanka Navy.*

*It featured in 1942 when it was attacked by the Japanese; HMS Hermes, the first carrier to be sunk, was based in the Trincomalee harbour. The Brits left in 1948 / 49 and I don't think that many RN ships have*

*visited since.*

*Incidentally, the War Commission Cemetery at Uppuvali, about 3 miles up the road is stunning. It contains the remains of many nationalities who were assisting the allies, including a number of females who were in the nursing services. The cemetery is kept in impeccable condition.*

As A 'Brucie Bonus' this month there are two Guess the Establishments. Shipmate John Bailey also sent in another ex RN Dockyard entrance do you recognise it?

(Answer just before the Longcast)



## 16. ★ Naval Service Memorial Figurine

Graham Mitcheson, the sculpture of the Naval Service Memorial, has produced a miniature figurine of the Sailor (approx 9" high) who sits adjacent to the NSM. The figurine is now on sale at the National Arboretum, where it is on sale for £90. However Shipmates may purchase the figurine at a discounted cost of £75 (including Post) from Nigel at Central Office. Nigel can be contacted at [nigel@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:nigel@royalnavalassoc.com)  
Or by telephone on 02392 723747.



## 17. ★ Reunion Shortcast

Shipmates should be aware that the Semaphore Circular editorial team would be delighted to advertise details of any scheduled reunions.

If you would like your reunion advertised please forward the details to RNA Central Office by email to [admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com) or snail mail Semaphore Circular, Room 209, Semaphore Tower, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

## 18. ★ HMS Warspite Chapel Door



The chapel door of HMS Warspite which survived one of the greatest naval battles ever, Jutland, has been gifted to The National Museum of the Royal Navy where it is currently a centrepiece of a centenary exhibition about the battle that, for many, turned the tide of the First World War.

General Secretary of the Royal Naval Association (RNA), Paul Quinn OBE, generously donated the chapel door from HMS Warspite after he acquired it from a seaman's society hostel in Falmouth which was being demolished. The door is displayed alongside a holy bible, loaned by the Imperial War Museum to the National Museum for the duration of the exhibition, which is also from the chapel on board the ship.

Paul Quinn said: "I was very excited to save the door - it was such an amazing opportunity as HMS

Warspite was a particularly famous ship having seen so much action.

"I reflect how many sailors have gone through this door before they went into action and then once again after action thinking, I am still here."

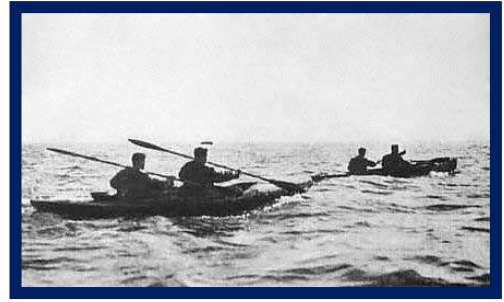
Rebecca Drummond, Curator of Artefacts at the National Museum commented: "We are delighted to accept the RNA's kind offer to donate the chapel door from HMS Warspite to the museum. HMS Warspite was an iconic ship having seen action in both World Wars and earning more battle honours than any other single ship in British naval history, including Jutland in 1916. It is therefore fantastic to have such a striking item in our collection that enables us to tell the story of the ship and those who served on her."

HMS Warspite was a famous battleship whose distinguished service spanned both World Wars. She saw extensive action at the Battle of Jutland in 1916 and was heavily damaged in the course of the battle with 14 of the ship's company killed. She even escaped encounters with German U-boats on her way home and made it back to Rosyth for repairs. HMS Warspite also saw action throughout the Second World War including at the Second Battle of Narvik and D-Day, as well as serving in the Mediterranean Fleet and the Eastern Fleet.

*(Picture Courtesy of The National Museum of the Royal Navy)*

## 19 ★ OP FRANKTON COCKLESHELL HEROES REVISITED CHALLENGE 2017 BY EX SERVICE VETERAN AMPUTEES IN MAY 2017

This year, on December the 9<sup>th</sup>, in France, at Le Pointe de Grave, at the mouth of the river Gironde, a ceremony will mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of one very special but small scale WW 2 operation, Operation Frankton. It was conducted under the Combined Operations Command of Admiral Lord Mountbatten. It involved 10 Royal Marines, specially selected, under Major Blondie Hasler. They were launched at sea 4 miles off the mouth of the river by the submarine HMS Tuna. They paddled by night, laying up concealed by day, the 70 miles to Bordeaux where the mission was to emplace limpet mines on shipping carrying stores for the German Occupation Forces. Only four men reached the target zone, six men died or were captured and executed, but the four who did reach the target succeeded in the tasks' mission. This single act proved a huge morale booster to the French people of Aquitaine, the first signal of a victory over their Germans. Only two made it back home, via escape lines into Spain, and Gibraltar and by air to England.



Mountbatten described it as *“The most courageous & imaginative of all the raids ever carried out by the men of Combined Operations. Winston Churchill is quoted to have commented “it probably shortened the war by 6 months.”*

Over the past 20 years a group of French Military Veterans, led by Francois Boisnier researched every aspect of the operation, the river and overland routes in, and out, where 2 of

the men drowned at sea, where others were captured, places and people who gave shelter & assisted the men. In 2002 Francois founded The Association Frankton Souvenir, a small but dedicated Franco British group which has since gone on to promote many activities, to keep alive memories of those brave young men of Op Frankton. In 2008-11 a British led project funded by public support, and created a fine permanent Frankton Memorial which stands at Le Pointe de Grave, the place closest to where the men, then at sea, were to be all together for the last time.

Op Frankton has also been remembered by many, over the more recent years by paddling, in groups, the 70 miles from the mouth of the Gironde to Bordeaux: Royal Naval & Marine cadets, Military officer cadets and youth organisations and by that, each learnt something more about Op Frankton, with that experience as a special memento.

In late May 2017, a small team of 12, 9 British men and 3 women (of whom nine were veterans of the Armed Forces) planned and undertook this Gironde Kayak expedition. Of special note of interest, three of the men were double amputees, one a single amputee and one with a broken back and nerve damage. To these guys it was another real and special challenge, on water, in canoes. To them just one more to try and to succeed, and succeed they did.



The team comprised: Steve Beard, Leader of The Challenge and CEO of The Pilgrim Bandits Charity; Craig Howorth Ex RN, single amputee; Ben Parkinson MBE, Ex Para double amputee; Glyn Brackenbury, CEO of Skern Lodge Activity Centre, and Navigator; James McMullen Ex RN, Ed McMahon Ex RN and Army, broken Back and damaged nerves; Vincent Manley Ex Royal Marine Double Amputee; Adam Elcock Ex-Army ; Tyler Christopher Ex-Army Double Amputee; Jane Athorn, partner of James McMullen, Josephine Bush, Charity Trustee, and Sarah Holmes, Ex WRNS, and on her 2<sup>nd</sup> Frankton Gironde run, niece of Cpl George Sheard, one of the 10 Cockleshell heroes.

This Team had one cause in common to promote, "The Pilgrim Bandit's Charity", founded in 2007 by Steve Beard & a small group of Special Forces veterans, with the sole aim of using their unique training & experiences to help & to inspire wounded soldiers to live life to the full. This Expedition was to bring awareness of Op Frankton & to raise funds for "The Pilgrim Bandits" Work Up and Training: The six canoes were purchased and donated to the Charity for the team by Duncan Bannatyne. The Training included a weekend of team building in both Devon and later



in Christchurch: stamina endurance, swimming, canoe drills, crew procedures including capsize and team recovery drills. Swimming with no feet is something quite different! This energy laden programme really built the team and ensured best two man crew selections.

Off to France at the end of May. They had a small Base camp and support team, bearing in mind the wellbeing of the amputees who so readily undertook these challenges and the risks with determination and zest. The team covered the 70 or so miles in 4 days, and without any serious capsize or other incidents

ever possible on water.

At the start of the expedition the team visited the Frankton Memorial and paid their tributes to 'The Cockleshell Heroes' as the men of Op Frankton became known and remembered to this day, & hopefully for another 75 years or more.

Sarah Holmes as the niece of one of the Cockleshell Heroes, and also the Hon Secretary of the Op Frankton Family's Group had brought pebbles from Southsea beach, where the 1942 team trained, and placed two each day in the waters, and spoke a few words about each of the 10 men.

One should never forget the role taken Op Frankton, by the RN Submarine Service and HMS Tuna and her crew, which safely delivered the men on that December night in 1942 in the launch of Op Frankton, and also, the French citizens who gave help, food & support to the team, notably M and Mme Armand and Amelie Dubreuille, who gave secret refuge and sustenance to Hasler and Sparks for 19 nights in their farm, ever at risk of exposure and summary execution by the Germans would follow.

The photos attached illustrate this team of 2017, past their youth but ever full of determination. I invite all who read this, to consider making a small donation, of say, a Fiver, or a Tenner between two mates: Officers, NCOs & especially Junior Ranks, to reward this special amputee endeavour, and to boost the funds of The Pilgrim Bandits Charity, to expand the work and training it provides for injured servicemen and women via their PILGRIM BANDITS website <http://pilgrimbandits.org>

A timely mention here too, of the Op Frankton 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremonies that are to take place in France this year between the Fri 8<sup>th</sup> and Sat 9<sup>th</sup> December in Bordeaux and Le Verdon sur Mer. If anyone is interested, they are invited to contact John Bell, who can give the details, at his base at RM Poole, via [Welfare@association1664.com](mailto:Welfare@association1664.com) –

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Author: Sarah Holmes on behalf of The Expedition.

## 20. HMS Caledonia – The Apprentices Story 1937 - 1985

At an Area 7 meeting recently NCM 7, Shipmate Gordon Williams (Newport Wales Branch) won a raffle prize of a book, called 'HMS Caledonia, The Apprentices Story 1937-1985' at an Area 7 meeting. As an ex CPO Seaman he has stated that the book is not of any interest to him. So.....

If any Shipmate especially Artificers (He chose the word Tiff) would like this book please email Gordon at [.williams8@gmail.com](mailto:williams8@gmail.com) and he will pay for post and package, providing that you make a small donation to the RNA Central Charity.

## 21. Can You or Your Branch help

To mark her close involvement with the WRNS100 Project Group, and her forthcoming retirement from the Royal Naval Reserve, Jane Allen has decided to raise money for two naval charities by setting out on an epic maritime walk entitled the '**Victory Walk**'. Her anti-clockwise route around the coastline of mainland Britain is estimated to take a year and cover at least 5,500 miles.

Jane will start from Admiral Nelson's flagship, HMS Victory, in Portsmouth, and finish there about a year later – hence the title Victory Walk. Her motivation for attempting this long trek is to raise money for two important charities close to her heart:

- The Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust (WRNS BT)
- The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC)

During the walk Jane will be happy to try and meet up with any former Wrens along her route. She would be very grateful for any offers of a place to park her motorhome overnight with access to fresh water. To check her progress, please visit the WRNS BT website or Facebook page.

You can sponsor Jane on her Victory Walk by donating through the RNRMC Virgin Money Giving page ([uk.virginmoneygiving.com/rnrmc](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/rnrmc)); all donations will be equally split between the two charities.

For further information please contact Sarah Ayton at the WRNS BT. Tel 02392 655301.

\*\*\*\*\* Answer to 'Brucie Bonus 'Guess the Establishment' in paragraph 11\*\*\*\*\*

**It is the Main Gate HM Naval Dockyard Bombay or Mumbai nowadays. For information Shipmate John took the photo 9 years ago in 2008.**

### RNA Longcast

2017	
04 Nov	Area 5 Quarterly - Harwich
08 Nov	Field of Remembrance
12 Nov	Remembrance Sunday – Cenotaph Parade



17 Nov	FAC
18 Nov	AMC
25 Nov	6 Area Meeting – 1300 Royston RNA (Eternit Sports & Social Club)
09 Dec	National Council Meeting
<b>2018</b>	
03 Feb	Area 5 AGM / Quarterly – Southend RNA Club
16 Feb	FAC
17 Feb	AMC
10 Mar	National Council Meeting
13 Apr	Open Day
20-22 Apr	Welfare Seminar – Stoke on Trent
05 May	Area 5 Quarterly – United Services Club Harwich
18/19/20 May	Londonderry Branch Battle of the Atlantic Commemoration 2018
12 May	National Standard Bearer Competition – HMS Collingwood
18 May	Open Day
08 Jun	NC/AMC/FAC/SOC Meetings
<b>8/9/10 June</b>	<b>RNA Conference - Dublin</b>
29 Jun	Open Day
04 Aug	Area 5 Quarterly – United Services Club Harwich
10 Aug	Open Day
17 Aug	FAC
18 Aug	AMC
08 Sep	National Council Meeting
06 Oct	Open Day
03 Nov	Area 5 Quarterly – RBL Club Rayleigh
16 Nov	FAC
17 Nov	AMC
08 Dec	National Council Meeting



## RNA Members Benefits

### UK Holiday Group /CONA Holiday Service

- Variety of special deals for both Groups and Individuals. 1% of turnover thorough CONA Holiday Service is returned to the RNA. <http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/news/323/members-holidays-service>

### Coleman/Ansvar Insurance

- Discounted Branch and House hold Insurance - 01323 744149  
<http://bit.ly/RNACona>

### Funeral Service

- Significant discount form Veterans UK [www.veteranfunerals.co.uk](http://www.veteranfunerals.co.uk) Tel 07889 009393

### Portsmouth Historic Dockyard



- RNA member entry just £10 plus four guest at £10 each provides access to the all attractions including the Submarine Museum, RM Museum and Explosion!.

### Legal Services



Free 30 minute legal advice with Coffin Mew.  
[armedforces@coffinmew.co.uk](mailto:armedforces@coffinmew.co.uk) 0800 827168

### Breakdown Service



- RAC Breakdown and recovery service  
[asec@arno.org.uk](mailto:asec@arno.org.uk) or 0207 4025231



*Organisers of Reunions should be aware the CONA Travel will match or better any other 'like for like' Reunion/Group Trips bookings so why not give them an opportunity to impress you. 0844 264 2122*

[conatravelservices@justforgroups.co.uk](mailto:conatravelservices@justforgroups.co.uk)



- Discounts on a large range of new Cars [www.motorfinity.uk/rna](http://www.motorfinity.uk/rna)

## 2018 Diaries

*The 2018 diary will be available as the diary part only, price - £5.*

**Diary with the NEW dark blue crested cover, price - £8**

**By popular demand the address book is also available too. - £1 each**

*Orders should be sent to the address below and accompanied either by a cheque or card details.*

**To:** Royal Naval Association, Room 209  
Semaphore Tower (PP70)  
HM Naval Base  
Portsmouth  
PO1 3LT

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### Order form

**From:** .....Branch/ Member

**Please provide** ..... **2018 RNA insert Diaries @ £5.00 each** £ .....

**Please provide** ..... **2018 Diaries with Cover @ £8.00 each** £ .....

**Please provide** ..... **Address Book inserts @ £1.00 each** £ .....

**TOTAL £.....**

Deliver the order to S/M.....

Address .....

.....

..... Post

Code:.....

Find enclosed a cheque to the value of - £ .....made out to The Royal Naval Association

**Or charge to my Credit Card/Debit Card;** the details of which are:

Card in the name of .....

Credit Card/Debit Card Number.....

Valid From: ..... Expires .....

Three Digit Security Code (where applicable) .....

Card holder's address of different from delivery address

Address .....

.....

..... Post

Code:.....



# The 2017 Christmas card

These are available with envelopes at **£5 for ten.**

Orders should be sent to HQ Semaphore Tower and be accompanied by a cheque or card details for the total value.

**From: .....Branch/Member**

Please provide .....Packs of ten **Queen Elizabeth** Christmas cards @ £5 per pack.

Deliver the order to

S/M.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

Post code.....

Find enclosed a cheque to the value of - £ ..... made out to The Royal Naval Association

**Or charge to my Credit Card/Debit Card;** the details of which are:

Credit Card/Debit Card No .....

Card in the name of :.....

Valid From: ..... Expires .....

Three Digit Security Code (where applicable) .....

Card holder's address if different from delivery address

Address .....

.....

Post Code:.....