



Minutes of
RNA Portland Branch General Meeting held at the Masonic Centre
Wednesday 3rd September 2025

The meeting was opened by Chairman S/M Dusty Miller at 20.04. 35 Members were present.

1. **Apologies:** were received from 7 Members.

2. **Chairman's Opening Comments:**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting on this stormy evening. He thanked those that attended S/M Pete Foster's funeral on Monday and supported S/M Gill. Thanks also to those who attended the Merchant Navy Day Service today at St George's Church. Also there was a nice write-up in the Free Portland News about the Branch stall at the Love Portland Festival.

He reminded everyone of the Avalanche Memorial Service which will be held on Sunday 14th September at St Andrew's Avalanche Church, Southwell, time TBC.

In 1939 war was declared today against Germany.

S/M Dusty asked if everyone had seen a copy of the Minutes of the August General Branch Meeting and the Monthly Newsletter.

3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting** were accepted.

Matters Arising: Nil

Proposed by S/M Doc Foster

Seconded by S/M Ginge Sarsfield

For: 29

Against: 0

Abstentions: 6

4. **Secretary's Remarks and Correspondence:**

Email from S/M Bill Oliphant, General Secretary RNA, ref A Special Request for Remembrance Sunday about any Members of the Branch who served during WWII. Portland does not have any.

Thank you card from S/M Gill Essom for support received from Branch Members and for attending S/M Pete Foster's funeral.

Matters Arising: Nil

5. Items discussed at Committee Meeting

Bank Branch Charges – S/M Pete Shoemsmith has had a letter from the Bank stating that the Branch account will change to a charity account, with bank charges when paying in cash. This was queried as S/M Pete has dealt with this situation before. The issue was discussed and it appears that cash and cheques can be paid into the Branch bank account via the Post Office and they do not charge.

Public Liability Insurance – S/M Pete Shoemsmith has received the new premium, which is the same as previous years, £109.76. It required a vote and was unanimously agreed.

Away Weekend Surcharge – S/M Dave Prowse. Due to injury, two Members have had to withdraw from the trip. This leaves us below the threshold for two free places and it will be reduced to one. This amounts to a deficit of £226. Should it be £7 extra per person or do we use Branch funds? After discussion and a vote it was decided to take it from Branch funds as part of Annie's legacy. This will be voted on later tonight by Branch Members.

Annual Dinner 2026, 70th Anniversary Portland Branch RNA – S/M Dusty Miller

Options:

- a) Have a Top Table of ex Chairmen who are still Branch Members.
- b) Invite 4 Sea Cadet Instructors and give them a trophy to present to an instructor every year. We already have the boxed tot measures.
- c) Invite someone from Central Office
- d) Captain of HMS Portland if available
- e) Something else

S/M Pete suggested RNA National Chairman, S/M Andy Christie who is known to several Members on the Committee. It was decided that Pete enquires if he is available in the first instance.

It was also discussed about a souvenir from the Annual Dinner for Members. This will be costed.

6. Reports:

- a. Standard Bearer's/Ceremonial Report – S/M Ben Cartwright reported:

S/M Ben thanked all Members who have attended events over the last few months.

S/M Ben reported that he is looking for someone to take over as Portland Branch Standard Bearer, after Remembrance Day events this year, as the task is proving more difficult for him. S/M Dusty thanked S/M Ben for his hard work over the years in this role.

Diary events include:

DAY	DATE	LOCATION	Time	EVENT
Sunday	9 November	Drill Hall Cenotaph	1000 1030 for 1100 1230	March to Cenotaph Remembrance Sunday US Memorial
Tuesday	11 November	Cenotaph	1045 for 1100	Armistice Day
				Illustrious

b. **Social Secretary's Report** – S/M Dave Prowse reported:

Away Weekend 2025 – Saturday 4th to Wednesday 8th October at the Imperial Hotel, Eastbourne. Unfortunately, two have had to drop out due to injury, so now we have only 33 going and have lost one of the free places. Payment of the outstanding balance and all forms have been sent to Daish's. There is now a discrepancy between the total amount collected and the total payments to Daish's, as discussed earlier.

Trafalgar Night Dinner 2025 - Saturday 18th October in the Masonic Centre Main Hall. Entertainment – Steve Williams Disco. Cost £27.50 per person to include choice of 3 starters, 3 main or vegetarian option, 3 sweet or cheese and biscuits, tea or coffee and a glass of port. The menu is on our Facebook page. Please enter your names on the list and let me have your payment and menu choices by the October meeting at the latest.

Christmas Social – Saturday 20th December in the Masonic Centre Main Hall. Entertainer is Georgy Broad.

Annual Dinner 2026 – Saturday 18th April in the Masonic Centre Main Hall. Does anyone have any recommendations for an entertainer?

c. **HMS Portland Liaison Officer Report** – S/M Nigel Rimell reported:

Nil report.

d. **Fundraising Report** - S/M Karen Miller reported:

Nil report.

e. **Membership Secretary's Report** – S/M Karen Miller reported:

Nil report.

f. **National Area/Conference Report** – S/M Pete Shoesmith reported:

S/M Pete has received a reply today from Andy Christie, RNA National Chairman, regarding the Annual Dinner 2026. He has accepted the invitation to be our Guest of Honour and will present our 70th Anniversary certificate.

The next Area Meeting is on 13th September in Saltash. Our own S/M David White will be standing down as Area President and will be a hard act to follow. S/M Dusty thanked S/M David for all his hard work within Area 4 over the years.

g. **Webmasters Report** – rnaportland.org S/M Bob Featherstone reported:

Following on from the previously reported (hacking) attack on the website, it was determined that the infiltration was by a Trojan through one of the plugins to the WordPress software which is used to update the website. Contact was made with RedRaw our web host in order to resolve the problem and all appeared to go well. Additionally, it was determined that the theme (look and feel) software was also broken so a new theme was introduced which embedded very quickly.

Unfortunately, this proved to have been a waste of time due to a renewed hacking attack by the Trojan; and contact with RedRaw again on Tuesday 26th August, advised that the website would have to be quarantined (to protect the Servers) and a static page set up advising that the website was in maintenance and normal service would be resumed as soon as possible.

This now meant that the Webmaster will have to rebuild the website on a local machine before uploading to RedRaw for publication which will take some time due to commitments.

Members will have access to Branch information through Facebook and the Chairman's Monthly Newsletter and it is requested that S/M Dave put all social event information on Facebook whilst the website is being rebuilt.

h. **Wellbeing Report** – S/M Lin MacCormack reported:

S/M Mike Jones from Bridport Crossed The Bar last weekend. S/M Gill has sent a card to Iris.

i. **Treasurer's Report** – S/M Pete Shoesmith reported:

S/M Pete explained the issues regarding the bank charges. He has been into the local Post Office and has checked that it will be free to pay money to the Branch Lloyds Bank account at the Post Office, where there will be no charges. He also explained that Annie's legacy has been incorporated into the Branch Account and it is easier if everything now comes out of one account.

The Branch Account stands at £4710.42

The Annual Charity Fund (Island Leg Club) stands at £298.35 (after 5 months)
Matters arising: Nil

Proposed by: S/M Dodge Howes Seconded by: S/M Doc Foster

For: 35 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

7. Any Other Voting Items :

The Branch to pay the surcharge of £226 for the Away weekend after one free place was lost due to reduced numbers.

Proposed by: S/M Nige Rimell Seconded by: S/M Ginge Sarsfield

For: 35 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

8. AOB

S/M Dusty said that S/M Dave McCaughey had informed him that the Portland Heights Hotel accepts the Veterans ID card or RNA Membership card to get a 20% discount.

S/M Jeff Jowett reported that S/M Len Christopher has not been well. He has had an operation, which has gone well. Additional news, however, has meant that further treatment may be necessary.

S/M Vaughan Nelson reported that the funeral for S/M Mike Jones will be on 18th September at 12.00 at Chideock Church. Standards have been requested and medals to be worn.

S/M Dave said that he has given out the luggage labels tonight for the Away Weekend. Please attach them securely to your luggage.

S/M Karen said that the Trafalgar Night Dinner Menu Choices could be attached to S/M Dusty's Monthly Newsletter.

9. Chairman's Closing Comments:

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending tonight's Meeting. We have covered an awful lot tonight.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**: - Wednesday 1st October 2025.

11. **Meeting Closed at**: 21.15

Chairman

Secretary