



**ROYAL NAVAL
ASSOCIATION**



The Semaphore Circular

No 706

The Beating Heart of the RNA

February 2021



Times are Changing..... and 2021 see's the beginning of a new exciting RNA era 'out' with Subscriptions and 'in' with Free Membership and Donations and a brand spanking new membership Card to go with it. All the specific detail can be found inside this edition.

Shipmates Please Stay Safe

If you need assistance call the RNA Helpline on 07542 680082

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 and will be emailed to the branch contact, usually the Hon Sec

	Central Office Contacts	
General Secretary	023 9272 2983	Bill@royalnavalassoc.com
Financial Manager	023 9272 3823	Michelle@royalnavalassoc.com
Finance Assistant	023 9272 3823	Kathryn@royalnavalassoc.com
Communications Manager	07860 705712	comms@royalnavalassoc.com
Digital Communications		Mike@royalnavalassoc.com
Membership Support Manager	07542 680082	Nigel@royalnavalassoc.com
Membership Support Assistant	023 92723747	Sara@royalnavalassoc.com
Welfare Programme Manager	07591 829416	Lynda@royalnavalassoc.com
Project Semaphore		Julie@royalnavalassoc.com
Operations Officer	07889 761934	Andy@royalnavalassoc.com
Admin	023 9272 3747	Admin@royalnavalassoc.com
	National Advisors	
National Branch Retention and Recruiting Advisor		Rna.brra@outlook.com
National Welfare Advisor		Geoff@royalnavalassoc.com
National Rules and Bye-Laws Advisor		nipurkis@hotmail.com
National Ceremonial Advisor		Robertcoburn001@btinternet.com

PLEASE NOTE DURING THE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS CENTRAL OFFICE IS CLOSED. PLEASE USE EMAIL OR, IF THE MATTER IS URGENT, THE HELPLINE ON 07542 680082.



Staff photo (L – R) Bill Oliphant, Nigel Huxtable, Kathryn Brindley, Michelle Bainbridge, National President Vice Admiral John McAnally, Mike Gray, Charlie Darlington, Andy Christie. We'll update this photo with new joiners Lynda Pearson and Sara Field as soon as circumstances allow.

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Glossary of terms

NCM	National Council Member
NC	National Council
AMC	Association Management Committee
FAC	Finance Administration Committee
NCh	National Chairman
NVCh	National Vice Chairman
NP	National President
DNP	Deputy National President
GS	General Secretary
CONA	Conference of Naval Associations
NCBA	National Charter, Rules and Byelaws Advisor

ind Semaphore Circular On-line

<http://bit.ly/RNADownloads>

or

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

Snail Mail - Postal Address

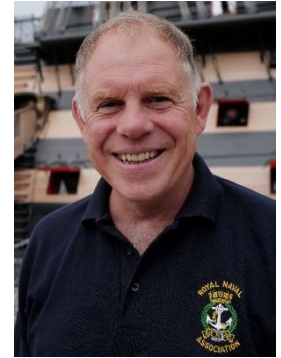
RNA Central Office,
Building 1/087,
Scott Road,
HM Naval Base,
Portsmouth
Hants PO1 3LT

From the General Secretary

Dear Shipmates,

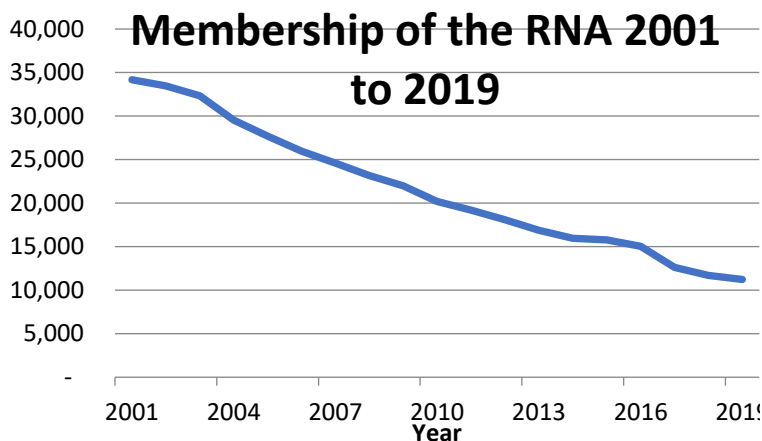
I hope it's not too late to wish shipmates very Happy New Year in this first edition of the Semaphore Circular of 2021.

I write in the midst of another lockdown but nevertheless I am enthused about the prospects for our Association in the coming year. Just before Christmas, a Special National Conference decided that we would change our financial model and do away with subscriptions in favour of donations. Clearly, this is not without risk but gives us an opportunity to expand the

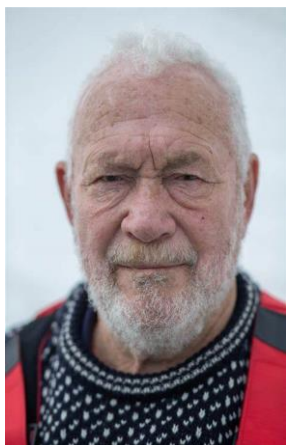


Bill Oliphant

Association which has not happened in decades. Indeed, as the graph opposite so starkly shows, the Association has lost approx 1000 members per year for the last 20 years and, despite many valiant attempts to arrest this decline, this has not been achieved. I am determined therefore, along with the support of National Council, to change the shape of this graph and I firmly believe that this opens the door to allow us to achieve this.



What with the wonders of this new technology, which we have all recently had to learn to master, it was great to be able to hold a mass Zoom briefing for members who wished to connect prior to the Special Conference and it was great to see that nearly 200 shipmates came online that evening to listen to the argument for change and to contribute to the discussion.



Sir Robin Knox-Johnston

But, if we are to attract new members, we need to make the Association more attractive as well as more accessible. The change in financial model certainly allows better accessibility so the challenge now is to improve the offer. It's hard to foster camaraderie during a lockdown but nevertheless Branches are doing a great job of keeping in touch with their more isolated shipmates – keep it up! And the initiatives around the country with branches meeting on Zoom doing various activities is both creative and welcome. On a national level we've been busy too.

The Fireside Chats on a Monday evening at 1800 continue to be popular and are open to all. The list of topics is published later in this Circular and includes an evening with the sailor Sir Robin Knox-Johnston on 8th Feb whom many of us will remember when, in 1969, he became the first person to make a solo non-stop circumnavigation of the globe. Just click here to join <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2888305105?pwd=TmtwempUWGwwUEtOcY4ZU15RU5FZz09>

We are freshening up our Comms outputs and, for those who have their email address submitted to Central Office on the new database, you will have received a short newsletter at the start of this week which is readable on your iPads and handheld devices as well as desk top computers and laptops. This edition of the Semaphore Circular also has details of a new special

interest group – The Modelmakers – and I hope to follow this announcement shortly with several more special interest groups being formed. Watch this space!

As you can imagine, it's been a busy month behind the scenes changing the financial model and making this work and I am extremely thankful to all my team who have been at the forefront of that: Michelle, Kathryn, Nigel and Sara. Which leads me on to welcoming both Sara Field and Lynda Pearson into the Central Office team – please see further details later in this Circular – it's great to have you both on the Staff. We are nearly there with the new Database too with only a few Branches remaining to submit their details. New Membership numbers have been allocated and the print off of the new Membership Cards is planned for 19 February so Branches who have yet to submit their details are encouraged to submit them prior to that date or your shipmates will not receive their new membership card. Please also see the new donation form which is also reproduced later in this edition.

We've been pushing the buttons on improving our diversity and inclusivity as well and on 12th January, in celebration of the 21st anniversary of the lifting of the 'gay ban', the Head Office team raised a glass in celebration with the Joint Chief Executives of Fighting With Pride (FWP), the LGBT+ Military Charity. Royal Navy Veteran, Craig Jones MBE joined us with RAF Veteran, Caroline Paige to tell us about their service and remind us about the years of the ban.

For many, time will have faded the history of the 'gay ban' however LGBT+ service personnel lived their lives in the shadows, trying to stay beyond the reach of the Special Investigation Branch. We remember with sadness shipmates, those who were caught, tried by Court Martial imprisoned or dismissed. We also took a moment to celebrate LGBT+ members of our Royal Navy and Royal Marines, who do a brilliant job today and who are supported and welcomed by all with whom they serve. Fighting with Pride is working with Ministers in Westminster, the devolved Governments, the NHS, Veterans charities and the LGBT+ Veterans community to help ensure that our LGBT+ Veterans feel welcome and a warm welcome exists here at the RNA. We would love to hear from Members affected by the 'gay ban' so please tell us about careers lost careers saved and whether yours or your shipmates.

If you, your family and friends, or those you support, were affected by the ban, Fighting With Pride will also be pleased to hear from you. There is a lot of information about them on their website and a contact form. FWP would be particularly pleased to hear from Veterans who had medals confiscated at the time of being dismissed from the Armed Forces and may be contacted through their website. www.fightingwithpride.org.uk



Fleet Commander, VAdml Jerry Kyd presents QUEEN ELIZABETH's CO, Capt Angus Essenhigh, with the Fleet Flagship Crucifix on the flight deck of the carrier

2021 also sees new beginnings for the Royal Navy, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH has now been officially designated as the Fleet Flagship and Ratings new entry training has started at COLLINGWOOD to compliment new entry training both at HMS RALEIGH and BRNC Dartmouth. We wish the new recruits well.

Finally, please note the postponement of our National Conference/AGM which will now be held in the same venue in **Nottingham on Saturday 4th Sept 2021.**

As ever, Bill Oliphant

Chairman's chat

Although a little late, a Happy New Year to all Shipmates. Let us hope that 2021 gives us the opportunity to start up the physical meetings which we all miss after such a long time at Action Stations/Defence Watch. Top of the hoist is the passing of the Special Conference Motion to move from a Subscription based Association to a Donation (With Gift Aid) based Association. Although mention is made elsewhere in this circular, we are indebted to the RNRMC for its generous financial support for which we thank them. I wish to thank both Bill & Nigel for turning too



after the Special National Conference held 21st December, during the CO closed period to circulate information on Zero Subs to Donations to some 1100 HQ Roll Members. Throughout January our CO team have worked extremely hard to administer the changes going through and continue to do so. Please be patient if you are waiting on a response to an enquiry, normal service will be resumed as soon as possible.

On behalf of us all I offer congratulations to S/m's Karen Elliot BEM, and Edna Clarke BEM for being awarded the BEM in the New Year Honours. Karen is Hon Sec of Edinburgh Branch & the Scottish Area Secretary and is also heavily involved with the WRNS Association and various veterans' organisations in Scotland. 86-year-young S/M Eda Clarke BEM of Douglas Branch I.O.M. whose work includes RNA Branch Secretary and outstanding work to the RBL including the Poppy Appeal. Well done both ladies.

A big welcome is extended to the two new faces at CO; Lynda Pearson who joins us as Welfare Programme Manager, and Sara Field who joins us as Deputy Members Support, Nigel's understudy pending his retirement later this year. Both are mentioned elsewhere in this circular.

High on my list of priorities is still Covid-19 and the need for us all to maintain safety precautions, observing the guidance we have and are being given. If 2020 was not bad enough, we are now experiencing other variants of the dreaded Covid-19. It goes without saying, always exercise extreme safety precautions especially when visiting a petrol station at which I advise you to WEAR PLASTIC GLOVES, the same goes if you venture into a supermarket handling a trolley and the tin cans on the shelf. This dreaded virus is an invisible enemy. Play safe, Stay safe. If you are feeling lonely, in need of cheering up, simply curious, just want to listen, or take part in some good humorous banter, then the Saturday evening virtual Tot nights are for you. The evening continues to attract new faces and never-ending banter. You will be amazed how many new Oppos you will make. The downside is you must provide your own Tot, Dram, or can/bottle (we do have some uncouth Shipmates). Checkout the Royal Naval Association-Community Facebook page on a Thursday or Friday for Zoom access details under Events. The Access ID & Password change weekly. Interested? then sign on from 1830 for the 1900 toasts and stay on until the Sun sets.

Last month I made a personal offer to the Fleet which I am convinced comprises solely of Submarines 'Gone Deep', because as members of this Association we never hear any news or Dits from them. **The Offer** - At the time of writing, word from Andy Christie's man cave is that nobody from the Fleet came forward to claim the bottle of Gunpowder I offered last month for a dit to be submitted from a serving Shipmate. How sad is that. If it is not claimed by 28th February,

I will simply have to drink it myself! If a serving member is reading this, PLEASE send something into Andy Christie's man cave at andy@royalnavalassoc.com to arrive no later than the 22nd of each month. The first serving Shipmate who sends in a sensible & reasonable dit will receive a bottle of PUSSER'S Gunpowder 54.5% Rum personally donated by me. So now is the time to get scribing.

That said, I have noted with interest the Fleet's activity over the festive season, none more so when 4 OPV's put to sea from Devonport on New Year's Eve along with activity by some of our Type 23s. Despite what we think about our shrunken fleet, the lads and lasses have been out and about whilst we have been at home in front of the fire with our feet up. My thanks go to all RN Personal assisting at the various inoculation hubs/sites around the country. You are all doing a great job and putting the RN on the land map.

Over the past 2 months it the Association has been pleased to send birthday wishes to several younger members on attaining their 100th & 102nd Birthdays. BZ you youngsters. CO are keen to hear of **any** Naval Veterans reaching such a grand age so we can send our heartiest congratulations.

At no cost thanks to Zoom, I thank Edinburgh, Falmouth, Norwich, Salisbury & the Riders Branches for inviting me to their meetings. Well done RNA Edinburgh for all the input to celebrate Burn's Night. I have never drunk so much whisky as I did over the Burn's weekend and have learnt so much about him. I very much look forward to the next 25th January Run Ashore! I would encourage as many Branches as possible to take advantage of Zoom to hold meetings and keep in touch with your S/m's. Thank you to all those Branches who have so far responded to pleas from CO to input their Branch members details onto the new Database. If you require assistance, please contact Nigel or Sara at CO. If I have failed to mention certain matters it will be because Bill has mentioned them on his Radar. I now need to replenish my Whisky stock (click & Collect). Rum I have plenty of.

To all our serving Shipmates including reservists, who continue to support the frontline against Covid-19, keep up the good work, to Shipmates and your families in the UK and throughout the world keep safe. For those at sea, a safe return. Stay safe everyone, we will overcome Covid, and we will all emerge to share dits and a Tot together.

Yours aye

Keith Ridley

nationalchairman@royalnavalassoc.com

1. ★ Subscriptions have ceased - What Next?

The General Secretary wrote to all Branch Secretaries in January to explain the new process for donations from Branches and Individuals, please see below;

Guidance for Branches in the collection of Donations

Firstly, despite entering another national lockdown, please allow me to wish you a better 2021 where we will see the back of Coronavirus and, hopefully, we will get the opportunity to resume Branch meetings and open our RNA Clubs once again.

At a Special Conference held on 21st December, Branch Delegates unanimously supported the Motion to reduce subscriptions to zero opening the door for our Association to shift to a donation-based income model. This is undoubtedly a major decision, not without risk, and it is a very special day in our history. The willingness of Shipmates to embrace significant change was not surprising but it was heartening.

The mechanics of how this will work is vital to the success of the organisation and depends on us being able to collect donations efficiently and easily. As important is the use of Gift Aid which is free Government grant of 25% of all donations from UK taxpayers. This is a key factor in the modelling and for a little bit of admin (filling out a form) it would make a significant difference to the running costs of the Association. The new Standing Order donation form therefore includes a section on Gift Aid which I would encourage you to ask your Shipmates to complete and return to Central Office please.

While there is no pressure on anyone to donate a specific amount, it was my hope that Shipmates might be able to afford say £1/month as a Standing Order. Over the year that works out at £2 less than the subscription was but of course with the Government's contribution through Gift Aid that means that we would receive £15/year. Clearly, we would be delighted and extremely grateful if shipmates felt that they could afford more but, as I said previously, that is entirely a personal decision.

Donations can be made by Shipmates in one of two ways, either:

- Direct to Central Office. A donation/Gift Aid form has been enclosed or shipmates can donate through the website.
- Or, through your Branch as you would have previously done with subscriptions. Standing Orders are encouraged.

For Secretaries and Treasurers, it will mean a slight amendment to admin procedures and details of how to achieve this on the new Database will be forwarded under separate cover along with the details on the management of the Database.

For those branches that have completed the membership information requested last year we shall be sending out emails in batches to Branch Secretaries over the course of this week with the information we hold at Central Office on your members. This will include a link and instructions on how to make any amendments required and submit any information on donations made via your branch to Central Office. It will also include a form for the Gift Aid declaration which we realise will be difficult to complete under the current climate but would appreciate this doing once face to face contact can resume. We will shortly also begin sending out the new membership cards to the Branches which have input their data. Each member will have a new RNA number which will be useful for references in bank transactions.

Our Tax Specialist states that we have a legitimate right to claim Gift Aid and they have confirmed that, under the Income Tax Act 2007 section 416, any donations paid to the Branches as an intermediary for the Central Office (and the donations are passed on to the Central Office in their entirety) then the Central Office are able to claim the Gift Aid on these donations. Attached an excerpt of the Legislation that confirms this.

Any branches who have yet to complete the initial data collection form it would be appreciated if you could do this asap via this link <https://branchreturn.royalnavalassoc.com> If you should require any assistance whatsoever, Kathryn (07542 682117) and Sara (02392 723747) stand ready to assist should you need it.

Very best wishes and please stay safe,

Bill Oliphant

STOP PRESS..... Please find **New Donation Form** at rear of this Circular or on the Website at this link [Downloads | Royal Naval Association \(royal-naval-association.co.uk\)](https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/downloads)

2. ★ New Membership Cards – A Gentle Nudge.....



Shipmate Branch Secretaries are requested to ensure they have annotated details of all their membership in the new database.

Then Central Office can order the new style membership cards, which features on the front page and in the photo opposite, by **Friday 19 February 2020**.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

3. ★ Change of National Conference Date to Saturday 04 September 2021

In light of the ongoing Covid crisis and the restrictions this poses on gatherings of any kind, the decision has been made to push the date of the 2021 National Conference to **Saturday 4th September**, in the hope that there is a much better chance of it taking place. The venue remains the same as originally planned for 2021 - The Crowne Plaza, Wollaton Street, Nottingham.

The new Conference booking form has been distributed with the February Issue of this Circular. Prices range from £106.50 pp for a 1 day stay to 4 nights £224 these prices include the cost of the Gala night dinner. It can also be found on the website at <https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/members/downloads/conference>



We understand that many Shipmates will be disappointed that we have had to reschedule the conference once again, but we hope you all understand the reason behind this decision. We are really looking forward to coming together once again and celebrating the end of such a difficult period, in true RNA fashion.

4. ★ Shipmate Karen Elliot BEM

Shipmate Karen Elliot the Scottish Area Hon Secretary has been recognised for her work with Naval veterans being awarded with a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the 2021 New Year Honours list. S/M Karen has been described by senior officers in the RNA as a powerhouse of energy and a model of dedication – but Karen has not confined her efforts to the RNA alone.



Karen has been an active member of the RNA since she retired from the Royal Navy in 1989, having served almost five years as a Wren radar specialist. Although her Naval career was brief, Karen said she “gained so much from my short Service, which is why I volunteer now. I love what I do and I do what I love – I’m very privileged.”

Karen has a day job – she is the Business Compliance and Contracts Manager for a private firm, Singula Decisions Ltd, and she also has family commitments. “I am a wife to my soulmate Stephen – we met at the age of 14! – a mum (to Stephanie, 31, and Victoria, 30 in March) and Nan (to Eva, 7, and Harrison, 6),” said Karen.

That hasn’t prevented her from stepping up her contribution to veterans causes and wider society over the past five years, taking on the role of Scottish Area Secretary of the RNA, volunteering much of her time for the benefit of others. And in her spare time? What spare time, you might ask...

Well, Karen is also Chair of the Edinburgh and District branch of the Association of Wrens (AOW) and..... a trustee of that organisation... And.... Social Secretary of both the RNA City of Edinburgh Branch and.... the Royal British Legion Scotland Livingston branch... And.... founder, Secretary and.... Treasurer of the West Lothian Armed Forces Day (a Scottish Charitable Organisation)... And.... a Congregational Board Member and Treasurer of her church, West Kirk of Calder. On top of all that, Karen tirelessly represents both the RNA and the AOW in Scotland on several veterans organisations, including in recent times the WW100 Scotland Commemoration, the Naval Regional Forum and the Cross-Party Veterans Forum.

She also serves on the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Veterans Group, influencing and promoting policy between inter-Service organisations, allowing the RNA to become much more involved in tri-Service life in Scotland.

Karen’s work for veterans ranges from engaging with politicians and regional government to arranging social events and one-to-one support. Her extensive contacts across a number of groups means that events can be organised where the numbers from individual Service charities might not be enough to justify the event taking place.

Karen was one of the leading lights in the organisation of the RNA National Conference in Perth in 2017. She was deeply involved in the detailed planning and execution of all aspects of the successful event – and that success was all the more easy to replicate in following years because Karen, with her studious attention to detail, developed a template covering the multitude of items and considerations that need to be addressed, and this template has since been adopted by RNA Central Office as their blueprint for National Conference organisation.

BZ Karen thoroughly deserved. (*Editor’s Note – I was exhausted just reading about what you have been involved in!*)

5. ★ Welfare Spotlight Column – Good and Bad News on Covid.

Welcome shipmates to the latest edition of Welfare Spotlight. I hope that all shipmates are well. **The bad news** is that we are yet again all coping with lockdown and the pressures that “Stay At Home” entails plus the impact on schools, employment and the economy This has been much explored and explained. It is uncertain when they can be lifted. The UK Devolved Administrations are taking slightly different approaches on these restrictions and details are set out at:

England - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

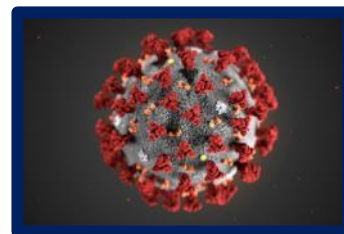
Scotland - <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Wales - <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Northern Ireland - <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

At this time, we must not forget those of our shipmates who again find themselves in isolation. Some possibly have never left it! We must continue our efforts at local level to support each other by a phone call, text, email or virtually through Zoom and Facetime. Isolation and the loneliness that it brings can be crippling to mental health. I am encouraged by reports of the efforts in RNA Branches across the UK to reach out and keep that “arm around the shoulder” that makes such a difference. BZs to all of you. We must not forget too our hidden, lost and lonely shipmates and make efforts to support them as well.

However, what is clear that *everyone* needs to exercise individual responsibility here and comply with the rules where they live and limit travel to essential purposes. It is clear doing this will limit the spread of the virus and protect our lives, those of our family, shipmates and friends, particularly if they are clinically vulnerable. Following the rules really can save lives! Sadly, you will have seen that over 100,000 people have now died from Covid and it continues to claim 100s every day with many of our hospitals under extreme pressure providing intensive care. The advent of mutant strains has added to the pressures and worries on us all. This is not helped by the fake news being circulated on social media by covid and vaccine deniers. Please ensure you check your facts before re-posting anything.



So, what's the good news? Firstly, there has been a significant downturn at the time of writing in total and infection rates (R; cases per 100,000) and daily deaths across the UK. Sadly, deaths lag behind infections and whilst each death is an individual tragedy many more people recover. So, Lockdown 3 is working. **Secondly**, no-one can have missed the fact that the NHS is currently offering a COVID-19 vaccine to people most at risk from coronavirus and then eventually everyone. Due to massive efforts by scientists, human volunteers and regulators supported by government we now have two vaccines widely available in the UK with an ongoing massive vaccination programme to reach everyone that is unmatched in Europe. These coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines are safe and effective and give you the best protection against coronavirus. If you have an NHS invitation letter, I urge you to make your appointment as soon as possible.

However, some questions remain that you may want to be reassured about:

Who can get the vaccine? Based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent body, it's being given to those registered with a GP Surgery in the current order of priority of:

- 1 Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- 2 All those 80 years of age and over Frontline health and social care workers
- 3 All those 75 years of age and over

- 4 All those 70 years of age and over and Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
- 5 All those 65 years of age and over
- 6 All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which puts them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
- 7 All those 60 years of age and over
- 8 All those 55 years of age and over
- 9 All those 50 years of age and over

Source - *Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation: advice on priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination 30 December 2020*

All four nations of the UK follow these priorities but decisions on the roll-out vary between England, **Scotland**, **Wales** and **Northern Ireland**. Following on from these groups the government's aim in England the aim is to vaccinate all adults by the autumn. Currently at the time of writing more than 7m adults have had their first jab.

Who cannot have the vaccine? The vaccines do not contain living organisms so are safe for people with disorders of the immune system. However, these people may not respond so well to the vaccine. A very small number of people who are at risk of COVID-19 cannot have the vaccine which includes people who have severe allergies.

In addition, women of childbearing age, those who are pregnant or breastfeeding should read the detailed information on www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination. There's no evidence the COVID-19 vaccine is unsafe if you're pregnant but more evidence is needed before you can be routinely offered the vaccine. You can have the COVID-19 vaccine if you're breastfeeding

The JCVI recently updated its advice to recommend having the vaccine if you're pregnant and at high risk of getting coronavirus because of where you work **or** have a health condition that means you're at high risk of serious complications of coronavirus. **But please do speak to a healthcare professional before you have the vaccination** to discuss the benefits and risks of the COVID-19 vaccine with you.

Will the vaccine protect me? The COVID-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of suffering from COVID-19 disease. It may take a week or more for your body to build up some protection from the first dose of vaccine. However, as with all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective and some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but the symptoms should be less severe. The second dose gives longer lasting protection. Overall, so far fewer than 1 in 100 people who are infected die from COVID-19, but in those over 75 years of age this rises to 1 in 10 so good reasons to get the jab for our more senior shipmates.

Can I catch Covid 19 from the vaccines? No, you cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccines as they are not live vaccines. It is possible to have caught COVID-19 before and not realise you have the symptoms until after your vaccination appointment though. Remember the most important symptoms of having COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following viz. a new continuous cough **or** a high temperature **or** a loss of, **or** change in your normal sense of taste or smell. If you have these symptoms, do stay at home and arrange to have a test.

What about after my first jab? After you have had the first dose in your upper arm, you need to plan to attend your second appointment. You should be given a record card and your next appointment should be between 3 and 12 weeks later with that last being the maximum. There is some debate on whether the second dose should be given earlier than 12 weeks but the aim has been to offer as much protection to as many as possible quickly by extending the interval between first and second doses to a maximum of 12 weeks. Second dose will often be sooner but you will still have protection in that period.

Are they safe? The vaccines have been shown to be effective and no safety concerns were seen in studies of more than 20,000 people. The evidence for those in use has been reviewed and the vaccines, as with all medical products, approved by the UK Medicines Health Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for use. Like all medicines, vaccines can though cause side effects which are usually mild and short-term, and not everyone gets them. Even if you do have symptoms after the first dose, you still need to have the second dose. The first dose of either vaccine should give

good protection but having the second dose should give you longer lasting protection against Covid 19.

What are the vaccine types in the UK? There are three types of COVID-19 vaccine currently approved in the UK and two available for use. Other types of vaccine are expected to be approved during 2021. The UK approved vaccines are:

Oxford University-AstraZeneca (viral vector derived). The vaccine was shown to be, on average, 70 - 90 per cent effective in trials depending on dosage administered. This requires refrigerator storage only so has less rigorous storage requirements than the Pfizer vaccine and can be more widely used.

Pfizer-BioNTech (mRNA derived) with a declared more than 94 per cent effectiveness in over 65s from the final efficacy analysis of trials in a global study of 41,000 participants. This needs storage at -70C so it's more suitable for administration in specialist vaccination centres or hubs.

Moderna (mRNA derived). Shown to be nearly 95 per cent effective in a trial of more than 30,000 Americans and has been approved for use in the UK

How is vaccination being rolled out? As soon as possible in a variety of ways. In England, the vaccine is being offered in some hospital hubs and pharmacies, at hundreds of local vaccination centres run by GPs and at large mass vaccination centres such as sports halls, leisure centres and NHS Nightingale Hospitals. More centres are opening all the time. When you receive an invitation to attend you can make an appointment online and your vaccination centre will be advised. The devolved administrations have similar arrangements.

When will I get my vaccination? You must wait to be contacted. The NHS is working as quickly as it can to deliver the agreed priorities and then extend to the wider population. The NHS will let you know when it's your turn to have the vaccine. It's important not to contact the NHS for a vaccination before then. Invitation letters are being sent out every week and it's just a case of waiting whilst staying at home.

Can I get them privately? No. In the UK you can **only** obtain these through the NHS. Beware and do not deal with anyone who offers jabs or access to vaccine. There are scammers about sadly seeking to profit from the pandemic in any way they can.

Is there a risk to supplies of vaccine to UK? You may have read about the EU threatening restrictions but the UK government ordered its doses early in approval stage and the supply chains are holding up with ongoing deliveries from pharmaceutical production factories in UK and Europe.

Are the three new strains a bigger Covid risk? The concerns here are two-fold. One is increased transmissibility and the other is increased severity of disease and risk of death. Transmissibility has been shown to be higher for the newer strains and in that sense a higher risk. The evidence is not clear as to whether severity or death are higher with the new strains. In any event the precautions and treatment remain the same for all strains.

Are the existing vaccines as effective against the new strains? The evidence so far is yes, they are effective but work is ongoing as to their effectiveness. Whether they are as totally effective as against the original strain is yet to be determined. However, the science suggests that even if less effective new vaccines can be produced relatively quickly against these strains.

So, I think good news for all of us. I hope all shipmates get their jabs soon but don't forget you will still need to take care after having your jab and obey the rules for other's sake

Stay safe, stay well shipmates

Geoff Apperley Deputy National Welfare Advisor

geoff@royalnavalassoc.com

6. ★ National Vacancy - National Welfare Advisor

Our National Welfare Advisor (NWA), Rita Lock, has indicated her intention to stand down from the role. Shipmate Rita is well known to members from her loyal and dedicated service for many years in this role. Many shipmates will know her from direct contact for welfare help and advice and meeting her at the Welfare Seminars. She has been a mainstay of RNA welfare support to all of us. We all express our grateful thanks to her for this exemplary service.

Rita's standing down means that there will be a vacancy for this important volunteer role. Our rules require that we open up this role to all our members so if you are active in RNA welfare locally and interested in getting more involved in contributing to shipmate's welfare needs this is an exciting opportunity. Please read on for details of the role and how to apply.

What does the NWA do? The NWA contributes to shipmates' welfare through the developing Welfare strategy of RNA in a number of ways by providing:

- Advice to the RNA National Council on welfare matters through reports.
- Support and assistance to development of the Royal Naval Association's Welfare Strategy and the wellbeing of shipmates.
- Support and encouragement to Branch Welfare Officers and Area Welfare Officers.
- Responses to welfare queries from shipmates in confidence.
- Maintaining a record of welfare needs as identified from queries to support identifying areas of need.
- Working in partnership with the volunteer Deputy National Welfare Advisor and the dedicated full time Welfare Programme Manager to support effective RNA welfare outreach through the Welfare Strategy and partner organisations.
- Participation in work with partner organisations as required.
- Organisation and delivery of a biennial Welfare Seminar.
- Updates to the RNA Welfare reference guides so that they are current and appropriate.
- Participation and speaking in the RNA Associated Management Committee (AMC) on welfare matters with recommendations made to National Council (NC).
- Support bringing veterans together including working age veterans and provide effective and sustainable welfare support to improve social interaction, combat loneliness and facilitate a stronger and more resilient ex-RN membership in RNA.
- Collaborative work with the Central Office Team to ensure Welfare is promoted effectively and has a central role in the RNA.
- Participation in Central Office meetings as agreed/necessary.
- Written articles and advice on Welfare for Circular or other RNA platforms.
- Analysis/evaluation of welfare information from other organisations and supplying internal reports and recommendations as required.

The role requirements for NWA are:

- RNA member
- Experience/knowledge in Welfare work in RNA or other area.
- Commitment to meeting the welfare needs of RNA shipmates at all levels.
- Have good and effective interpersonal and communication skills.
- Being flexible and able to balance different tasks to meet deadlines.
- Ability to remain positive and sustain a professional reputation for the RNA.
- Willingness to work together to the benefit of shipmates.
- IT skills.

How do I apply? Send applications in confidence with supporting letter and/or cv should be sent

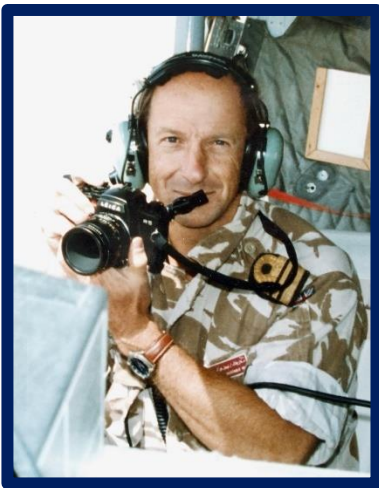
to the General Secretary, Bill Oliphant at bill@royalnavalassoc.com. Any questions can be sent to the same address. The closing date for applications is **26 February 2021**. Interviews will be conducted via Zoom and a recommendation made to National Council for approval.

7. ★ Anniversary of Gulf War 1 – War Correspondent

This will age a few Shipmates.....

It is the 30th Anniversary of the 1st Gulf War (Operation Granby) and Central Office's very own War Correspondent Shipmate Nigel Huxtable has forwarded a very informative and interesting article of his experiences during this period.

As an Instructor officer who passed out of Dartmouth in Dec 1979, and having 'enjoyed' a rather idiosyncratic career, I felt somewhat at a loss when asked to write this article around my career and its highlights. Not so much in describing my time in the Education Centre HMS Drake or the various jobs I had in RNSETT, but the jobs I had which were rather less run of the mill.



Teaching GCSEs and advising on resettlement matters, then the various aspects of training and instructing using CBT and Video in small units kept me on the delivery side of the branch rather than the management of larger departments. Not good if you wanted to make a name for yourself and get promoted, but good if you wanted to be known as a specialist deliverer of novel solutions. Leading expeds to Scotland or Corsica as a joint Service Mountain Expedition Leader apart, perhaps the ten hours I spent cramped in the forward compartment of LR5 to film a sequence of underwater mating and retrieval for a nuclear submarine rescue exercise I filmed and edited aboard Challenger might qualify as one such highlight.

But then after returning from Scotland in the New Year of 90/91 I was 'invited' to join Force Information (FINFO). A new concept created at the behest of General Peter de la Billiere to provide all British troops in theatre with updates on what was happening and entrusted to set up and provide force communications mediums. Radio was provided by BFBS (SSVC); Video was shot and edited in theatre by another Instructor officer Lt Cdr Campbell Christie and made good use of American 'Combat camera' footage.

To keep the troops on the ground and aboard ship up to date, a newspaper was created Initially an A4 sized production the 'Sandy Times' eventually evolved as a news magazine printed in Riyadh and distributed to all service units. One Army and one RAF officer edited material from the British broadsheets and collated articles about who was doing what and roughly where. Its aim was to keep morale buoyant during the long months of preparation, training and international 'politiking' with Iraq, whilst quashing rumours and answering letters from the servicemen and women in theatre. Something done without advice or interference from 'on high'. Lt Col Jones providing the hand on the tiller whilst Sq Ldr Mackinley provided the replies.

Photographs were a rarity, so having brought my own R5 Leica camera kit with me I offered my support to 'The Sandy Times' team (Squadron Leader Pat Mackinley).

Thereafter I enjoyed the freedom not only to move about the deployed British army and RAF bases on the ground but to process my work in Riyadh before having it published weekly in support of articles and then a series of centre spreads reflecting the life and times of the ordinary serviceman in theatre.

Because of the editor's honest and sometimes pithy responses in answering reader's letters, questions were inevitably raised in the House (of Commons). That and the religious/political ramifications and the cost of getting it printed in Riyadh were also dealt with in the support the team received from MPs. Having built up a reputation with the troops for honesty and lack of obvious 'message' I was made very welcome wherever I pitched up.

As the days passed the editor and I decided that when the coalition troops were to invade Iraq/Kuwait then it was only honest for us to be there to record the event as eyewitnesses.



Once again, the Sandy Times' reputation as a trusted in theatre publication saw Sq Ldr Pat Mackinley embarked with Patrick Cordingley's 7 Brigade desert rats and me with Major General Rupert Smith's 1Div HQ team. Having settled into our new locations, been issued with our morphine ampoules and attended the briefings, international negotiations called a halt to the countdown.



Returning to Riyadh we remained on call to return to the front but having been briefed we were unable to contribute anything new to the latest edition, or even share what we knew in HQ. Once the word came down that 'the clock was ticking again' we hastened back Northwards. Luckily I had been able to talk my way to accompanying a Royal Signals team setting up 'ptarmigan' radio nodes in advance of the ground troops and so was in one of the first vehicles into Iraq at the head of the British army.

There then followed 100 hours of modern fluid tank warfare with access to the Headquarters in the field and even on to the front line itself. Typical of the support I received was to be told that there was a Navy Seaking due in as it dropped off teams and did I need a lift? So I left the forward POW collection team I was with at the time and ended up next day returning to the very front line in a Puma doing casevac work. The Navy pilot needed little persuasion to exceed his safe fly zone to go right forward to 7 Brigade HQ area to collect blue on blue casualties. Coalition forces had advanced so fast that safe fly zones were not keeping up with the front line. Foolhardy perhaps, but speed was of the essence in supporting the wounded.

Having eventually run out of film, I returned to Riyadh only to hear at the airport that a ceasefire had been called and was I going to cover the ceasefire negotiations at Safwan? Sadly, not as I had all my film to see safely printed up as well as restock for whatever came next. Back in the office Charlie Lowndes the principal BFBS journalist recorded my



impressions of what I had witnessed. As the ceasefire came into effect at 0800, my words were being transmitted unchecked and uncensored by anyone other than our own FINFO team.



Even more challenging was my getting all the images from the war processed and back in HQ before midday. This I managed through a 'one hour' processing shop in the city. Only later did I discover that behind the scenes I had been permitted to use this facility. Not everyone in Saudi was in favour of the coalition and my photographs would have provided perfect access to military intelligence material. Standing watching everything being processed and printed was always a small period of calm amidst extremely busy times for the small sandy times team.

Eventually Pat Mackinley returned from Kuwait City where he had ended up with the desert rats and out two eyewitness articles were written up. Together we put together a Sandy Times edition and I had the privilege of flying copies of it back into Kuwait City only days after the fighting stopped. Only when I returned to Kuwait with UNIKOM did I fully see what had been done to the city and could watch and once again record the return of the desert battlefields to their previous state.

My own images were a highlight of this time and along with those I took in the liberated Kuwait City formed the basis of an exhibition in the MOD and later used by the Central Office of Information's history of the war 'The Shield and the Sabre'.

Photos – Top to Bottom

- *Nigel in a Helicopter*
- *Briefing before battle*
- *IR lit vehicles going through the breach into Iraq*
- *Prisoner searching*
- *Return of our war dead*

(Photos courtesy Nigel@royalnavalassoc.com)

8. ★ Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsey KCB, KBE, MVO

Ask most sailors to name the Navy's greatest 20th Century commander and names such as Cunningham, Fraser, Keyes, Beatty, maybe Pound or Chatfield might be offered. However.....

Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, who died on 2nd January 1945, was a leader more in the Eisenhower vein: a supreme organiser rather than a seagoing commander, directing operations from a headquarters rather than an admiral's bridge, and the man behind not one but two of the greatest naval operations ever mounted.

A quiet, modest figure, demanding of his staff and himself, he bore tremendous burden stoically, invariably confiding only in his wife. Thoroughness was his trademark – as was his willingness to delegate to the junior officers around him, a characteristic which led to a pre-war clash with the

old guard in the Admiralty. That clash led to his resignation as Chief-of-Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet – a move which would have ended his career, had not war engulfed Europe.

Assigned the post of Vice Admiral, Dover, fate would see to it that he was thrust into the crucible of war in May and June 1940.

Ramsay's diligence and ability to delegate were key to the improvised evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from the Continent.

Despite the severe strain which the ten days of Dunkirk placed on Ramsay – the operation stretched “everyone to the limit,” he wrote to his wife – the results of the evacuation were “beyond belief”, thanks largely to the Navy running like “a perfect machine.”

Operation Dynamo earned Ramsay plaudits from ordinary soldiers, colonels and generals, and George VI, who knighted him three days after the evacuation ended.

He would go on to be the architect of the amphibious landings in North Africa (Operation Torch), Sicily (Husky) and finally Normandy (Neptune).

The image of ‘Ramsay the staff officer’ rather obscures ‘Ramsay the sailor’. For much of his career, he was a seagoing officer. He served in the first commission of the revolutionary Dreadnought, commanded the cruisers Weymouth and Kent and the ‘Tiddly Quid’, battleship HMS Royal Sovereign.

Ramsay's formative years in command, however, came with the Dover Patrol – protecting the passage of men and material to France and preventing German forces slipping through the Channel on or below the surface.

After commanding the floating gun platform HMS M25, a monitor used to pummel the German lines, in late 1917 he was appointed commanding officer of the legendary destroyer HMS Broke which had charged at the High Seas Fleet at Jutland and subsequently careered out of control. In the second week of May 1918, Broke was one of eight destroyers assigned to a daring – and often overlooked – raid to keep German submarines bottled up in their Flanders base.

The Zeebrugge Raid on St George's Day had partially blocked the exit from that port. A similar attempt along the coast at Ostend had failed wretchedly.

On May 9, the Royal Navy returned – determined to scuttle HMS Vindictive in the narrow channel leading to the harbour and beyond to Bruges.

Broke led three other destroyers west of Ostend, sending star shells into the night sky to light the way for the blocking force: Zeebrugge veteran HMS Vindictive, protected by a cluster of motor boats.

As they neared their final destination, the launches peeled away to cause havoc. HMS CMB 26 fired a torpedo at

Ostend pier from very close range – too close, for the shallow water carried the reverberations from the blast and shook the launch so violently that her engines were damaged and seams parted, causing her to take on water.

The boat's mechanic succeeded in stopping the ingress of the North Sea – and in restarting the engines, enough to limp to Broke who took her in tow.

The 35-year-old Commander Ramsay received a Mention in Despatches and was named *chevalier* (knight) of the *Légion d'honneur* by the French.



In time, he would earn the Republic's second highest honour, named a *grand officier* of the *Légion d'honneur*.

That distinction, however, was awarded posthumously. Ramsay was killed on the second day of January 1945 when his Fleet Air Arm Hudson crashed on take-off at Toussus-le-Noble, a village four miles south of Versailles; the admiral had been due to confer with Montgomery in Brussels.

Half a century later, villagers erected a memorial to Ramsay – and the four other sailors killed in the accident – outside the town hall, where the Union Flag is flown.



(Crown Copyright – “Courtesy: Royal Navy”)

9. ★ Monday Evening Fireside Chats

For Shipmates who are unaware, a series of 'Fireside Chats' featuring some fascinating subjects including; Battle of Jutland, Operation Paraquet (Re-capture of South Georgia 1982), Naval Recruiting in 2020 to name but a few. The presentations are held on Monday evenings commencing at 1800 using 'Zoom'. All are welcome.

Meeting ID - 288 830 5105 Password – Shipmate (case sensitive) Or, click on the link [here](#)

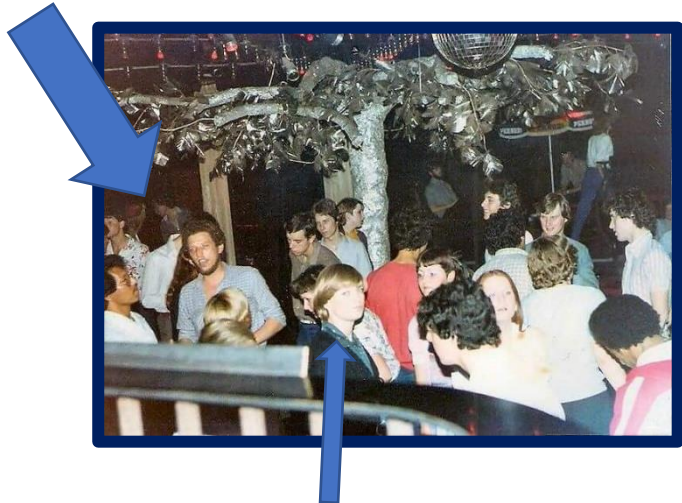
Date	Presenter	Subject
Monday 01 Feb	Capt Roger Readwin RN	CO BRNC Dartmouth – The challenges of Training in the Covid environment.
Monday 08 Feb	Sir Robin Knox- Johnson	An evening with Sir Robin – in 1969, he became the first person to sail solo non-stop around the world
Monday 15 Feb	Alex Sharpe	China Fleet Club
Monday 22 Feb	Mike Milne	Scapa Flow
Monday 01 Mar	Dr Jan Witt	Mutiny and Piracy
Monday 08 Mar	Ian Cameron	Vaccines and The Immune System-A Layman's guide
Monday 15 Mar	Craig Jones	Fighting with Pride
Monday 22 Mar	Bill Oliphant	The Naval attack on the Dardanelles 1915
Monday 29 Mar	Terry Corner	Submarine Cables
Easter Monday		
Monday 12 Apr	Janet Daykin	Prostate Cancer Briefing
Monday 19 Apr	Terry Corner	The Zeebrugge Raid
Monday 26 Apr	Bill Oliphant	Gallipoli Campaign
Monday 03 May	Jon Pearson	BAE Systems Support to the RN
Monday 10 May	Paul Godfrey	The Story of HMS Ark Royal IV - 1955 to 1978

Monday 17 May	Ralph Dodds	Norway 1940 - War in the Fjords
Monday 24 May	TBC (HOOD Assoc)	The sinking of HMS HOOD
Monday 31 May	Terry Corner	Dunkirk

10. ★ Respectful Covid Humour.....



Below are some Shipmate punters relaxing and enjoying the party atmosphere. Are you one of them?



By GS – I need to ask my Mrs what she was doing there. Anne?!!!

11. ★ Standard Bearers – Attendance at Funerals

Central Office have received a number of queries concerning attendance at funerals by RNA Standard Bearers. After consultation with the National Ceremonial Advisor, National Chairman and Deputy National Welfare Officer it was agreed that some guidance for the current lockdown should be published and can be found below.

RNA Standard Bearers may attend Shipmates funerals as a mark of respect, when invited to do so by the immediate family and with the following caveats;

- They must ensure that all current Covid 19 regulations are strictly adhered too (Face, Space, Hands)
- Standard Bearers should not attend if they are classed as vulnerable.
- Wear masks at all times and keep socially distanced.
- No travel outside area allowed.
- Church and graveyard funerals - graveyard only.
- Crematoriums - No mixing before or after, and wear mask at all times.

12. ★ New Year – New Members of Staff at Central Office

The team in Central Office have welcomed two new faces this month and we'd like to introduce you to them...

First up is Sara Field, who joins us as the new Deputy Members Support (eventually taking over from Nigel Huxtable). Sara served for 25 years in the Royal Navy, leaving in 2014 as a Chief Writer. During her time in the RN, Sara served in several Ships and establishments including HMS Liverpool and HMS Illustrious.

Having come from a professional background of logistics and personnel matters, Sara is now proud to be working for the RNA; "My Naval career gave me a strong sense of duty and responsibility and I very much see the values that are important to me evident in the core values of the RNA".

Sara grew up in a Naval family and lives in Hampshire with her husband Bob (ex RN) and her two Jack Russell terriers.



We'd also like to introduce Lynda Pearson, who joins us as the Welfare Programme Manager.



Lynda has joined us at the RNA after working for the Royal Navy Family & People Support organisation (probably most remembered as NPFS) for over 17 years as a Youth & Community Development Worker, responsible for deployment support, volunteers and the development of support groups within the community centres. She is delighted now to have the opportunity to work alongside the entire Naval family, reaching out to create positive opportunities and support for all.

Lynda hails from Loughborough, but, as a Naval veteran spouse, moved to Portsmouth many years ago and now lives over on Hayling Island so gets to see homeward bound ships first, which she says she draws a breath of relief and pride in every time.

Her husband (Sam to Shipmates, Lance at home) served as a Gunner for 23 years and naval service family life has provided many memories of standing on the Round Tower on deployment day and South Railway Jetty for homecomings and everything in between and she wonders where her LSGC medal is!

13. ★ Operation 'A Thousand Good Deeds'

Shipmates will probably recall that last year Shipmates Lynne and Jerry Fleming from Liskeard Branch over the Christmas period offered days out to Naval personnel who were accommodated in HMS Darke and couldn't make home for you reason or another. Well Lynne has written a brilliant follow-up article.....

Last year, Jerry and I, with the loan of the RNA minibus and funding from the RNA and RNRM Benevolent Funds offered days out to Naval personnel being accommodated in HMS Drake for

Christmas Leave. Several were still in Phase One Training at HMS Raleigh, mainly from the Caribbean but also Foreign and Commonwealth and unable or unwilling to go home. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with them and have kept in touch with several of them during the past year.

Our "troublesome puppy" from Kenya, shorter even than me and sporting a woolly hat to fend off the cold caused us concern the very first day when he wandered off from the group in a very busy Plymouth City centre. Always late, always with a tendency to stray but convinced he was going to make the best of a career in the Royal Navy. We attended his passing out parade in February for which he still thanks us for being there for him on his special day.



He started his part 2 training as a Marine Engineering Technician in Portsmouth and reported loving it although added that the navy has "its good days and shitty days". He reported finding Portsmouth "amazing" and the "people and environment more conducive". He was disappointed that the course took 10 months to complete rather than the anticipated 6 - 7 months. I suspect this was due to Covid and having to adjust to social distancing rules. Although he was successful in getting the draft of his choice, he is now quite downhearted. He is working most of the time or on duty and has very little time to himself. He is missing his social life and friends and is unable to go home to Kenya for Christmas. He finds he doesn't understand a lot of what the rest of the crew are saying. The anticipated trip to America has been cancelled and he is having serious doubts about whether he was right to join the Navy at all. He is currently being supported on board by 2 senior members of staff who are considering arranging an alternative draft for him. I have given emotional support and Jerry has been mentoring him via WhatsApp.



He previously said he was in touch "almost daily" with one of the other recruits who he met at HMS Drake during last year's Christmas leave which shows how well these two bonded. These two lads were from different divisions and branches at HMS Raleigh and from different countries but still hit it off.

Which brings me "our poster boy", his mother's pride and joy and deservedly so. Son of a pastor, raised in the upper, more salubrious area of St Vincent he was the one who stood out. Always polite, totally trustworthy, considerate, an easy companion and eager to experience everything new so when he was older, he could tell his grandchildren "of all my adventures".

He eventually started his Phase 2 at Worthy Down to train as a writer. This Tri-service establishment has taken over logistics training from HMS Raleigh. He stated he was "sooo excited" to be starting his training at last. He studied hard, aiming for top marks as he has ambitions to one day become an officer. His regularly updated photos on WhatsApp shows the physical changes over the year when he has grown from a slender 19 year old to a muscular young man, easily demonstrating his dedication to improving his physical fitness as well as his

educational development. When I was last in touch a few days ago he was en route to St. Vincent to spend this Christmas with his family.

Another one of our young men was much quieter but reached out to us in March when his study group were tasked to look into the history of HMS Raleigh. We were able to guide him to Bob, retired Chief chipper, who works in the pass office and is a font of knowledge. Not cheating but using your contacts to guide you to the right resource. Smart guy, I say. A recent communication with this young man has reported the past 12 months as a "crazy year" "that's been good for the most part" and he is already on his second training unit. Surprisingly, this young man had never previously travelled, other than coming to the UK and has never been to sea. When I asked why he chose to join the Royal Navy he said, "I honestly wanted to do something good with my life. We only have 90 years or so in the world, why not do something meaningful. That was always my sole reason for joining.... I just want to help in any way I can until my time is up."

I look forward to hearing about his first experience of sea time.



Despite reaching out a couple of times to another young recruit from St Vincent, he has not replied. This troubled soul joined the Royal Navy to escape a life of drugs and violence into which he felt he was being drawn. Always hungry, seemingly moody he did thank us both and hugged us goodbye last Christmas which was a huge step for someone with deep seated trust issues having also been mistreated by his British sponsors whilst waiting to join the RN. We were both delighted that he felt able to trust us and really appreciated our kindness to him and thought we treated him "like a son". I intend to try again in a few months to see if he wishes to communicate but don't hold out much hope. We have no way of knowing what has happened to him or even if he is still serving, which saddens me.

Finally, I have been in touch with a couple of the girls and had a promise of a fuller update to follow. This bright young thing, with an enormous smile and delightful Caribbean laugh is now serving on HMS Diamond having completed her phase 2 chef training. She states she is thoroughly enjoying her Naval career and is doing very well. She too was heading home to St Vincent for Christmas leave and looking forward to meeting family and friends after a 2 year separation.

I never thought, when Jerry and I came up with the idea that we would gain so much from the experience. But it brought genuine joy, then and ongoing. And I think had we not had the current pandemic, we may even have offered something similar this year.

Shipmate Lynne Fleming

By GS: BZ Jerry and Lynne, that's a fabulous thing you have been doing there.

14. ★ Bad Joke time!

Wait For it

Don't blame me.....

They sing cause they

CAN !!

Boom Boom!!



15. ★ 2021 World Uckers Championship – Update

Allowing for C19 restrictions, the plans are coming together for the competition which we hope we will be able to stage this year. More details will be promulgated shortly but in outline, will follow the following programme;

- Commence late May/Early June
- Semi-Final day on 31 Jul (Black Tot Day) 64 Contestants (Whereabouts /Number of venues still TBD)
- Grand Final to be held in Portsmouth on 25 October 2021 with 32 pairs of contestants.

16. ★ Assistance from Shipmates Please

'Assistance One'

CO received a request for assistance from David Fleming, see below. Are there any Shipmates who could assist? If so please contact David at - 5 David Street, Stonehaven AB39 2AJ or Phone: 01569 767200 / Mob: 07733 361 755.

Dear Shipmates,

I was wondering whether you might be able to help, either through a member of your organisation, or by referring me elsewhere.

I am building a finescale model of the HMS Brave Borderer (or Swordsman) fast patrol boats. I have some documentation, but I still have a variety of queries that I would like to resolve. Do you know of anyone who served on either boat, (they were in commission from about 1959 to 1970) or who has an interest in or information about their construction and operation, and would be willing to share their knowledge? If so, I would appreciate hearing from them.

Kind regards

David Fleming

'Assistance Two'

Shipmate Roy Elwood emailed Nigel at Central Office seeking information concerning the Soroya (Kola Inlet) Evacuation. If anyone can assist please email Roy at roy.elwood@btinternet.com

Dear Nigel

Your name has been given to me by Tim Kundu who was instrumental in gaining a Norwegian Government Commemorative Medal 1939 - 1945 for myself and another survivor who served on HMS Zambesi.

In February 1945 HMS Zambesi, Capt.J H (Teak) Allison DSO, RN, led four ship HMS Zest, HMS Zealous and HMCS Sioux on operation 'Open Door'. We were in the Kola Inlet in Russia having escorted convoy JW64 and waiting while the merchant ships discharged their cargo in Murmansk. We were ordered to sail to the Island of Soroya near Hammerfest in north Norway. Arrangements had been made between the British Government and Norwegian authorities for an evacuation of people caught up in a scorched earth policy being adopted by the enemy.

In broad daylight we evacuated just over 500 people and returned to Murmansk overnight. We then distributed them among the merchantmen for passage to the UK on convoy RA64. One of the ships carrying them had to be abandoned and the SS Henry Bacon was sunk, but all the Norwegians made it safely.

The help I am seeking is that there would be over 1,000 men on the four ships so among them there may be a few more survivors. If so, they will probably be entitled to a Norwegian Commemoration Medal. I have posted on the Arctic Convoys facebook page and a Canadian naval organisation agreed to circulate it hoping to pick any survivors from HMCS Sioux. Mr Kunda thought that you may be able to secure a mention in the Semaphore in case any of your readers know of anyone who served on the ships. Thank you very much for any help you can give.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Elwood

'Assistance Three'

S/M Derby (Cheap as Chips) Allen, Chatham Branch has an offer that can't be ignored.....By the way, he tried Antiques Roadshow first when it was at Rochester Castle, just to check if it was valuable.....Surprisingly it wasn't.....

Shipmates you may remember the 1977 Jubilee Fleet Review, when some enterprising Pottery produced souvenir mugs for each ship that was in attendance.

It was by chance when on holiday last September, I happened to see an HMS Hecla Souvenir Mug in a charity shop window and thought there may be an RNA Member who was present on the ship, that may like the mug, so I purchased it. At present I do not have the facility to enclose a photo and assume you are familiar with the mugs.

I would be grateful if you could include my offer in a future edition of the RNA Circular. If anyone who was on the Hecla at the time would like it, then if they contact me @ gubbyallen@btinternet.com I will send it to them for the cost of the postage.

17. ★ Official RNA Clothing / Slops – RLP Embroidery



WWW.RNASLOPS.CLOTHING

The RNA Officially Licensed supplier of embroidered garments.

Polo Shirts, Hoodies, Sweatshirts, Fleece, Jackets, Knitwear, Blouses, Pilot Shirts, Softshell, Headwear,

The RNA Logo is included in your garment price. All you have to do is select New or Blazer Style badge and add your Branch Name, of which is optional.

RNA Slops is owned by RLP Embroidery and we pay Royalties to the RNA

Tel: 07983 151011 E Mail: ray@rnaslops.clothing

18. ★ Branches – Importance of contact

With all of us in Lockdown 3 it is once again essential that as an organisation we take responsibility and 'look-out' and assist isolated shipmates. Central Office will act for HQ Role members, but it is imperative that Branches keep in contact and meeting up when the opportunity presents itself ... Secretaries are encouraged to write or email each individual member, it will do wonders for their morale. The General Secretary is happy to assist with the cost of stationery and a stamp as he is aware that not all Shipmates are on the 'Tinternet' or worldwide 'thing-a-me'.....

Very poignantly Shipmate Roger Rea (Gloucester Branch) emailed Central Office to remind Shipmates and reiterate the requirement to keep in contact;

Good Morning Andy,

May I please request in the next addition of the Semaphore Circular that you please ask that all members keep contacting either by telephone or social distancing visiting, that we keep an eye out for our messmates.

Not just the elderly, there are quite a few of the younger generation, (well younger than me) that are feeling the pinch of isolating or even isolation if single or suffering a bereavement.

With my welfare hat on, I have come across three this month alone, in my area and a greater amount in the wider community. All RN veterans.

Getting shipmates to telephone them is not rocket science, eventually that person might be getting too many calls and tell you to Foxtrot Oscar as he/she wants some time alone - I wish!

For two, I have had to request ambulance/police and social services to call, and it worries me with the isolation now, Civvies have said to me, "Ah, but you are used to it, being at sea for long periods." True, but with another 15,000 ish in the same ship, it's not quite the same.

Thank you. Take care and Stay Safe.

Regrettably, we are still currently unable to have Central Office full manned due to C19 restrictions so consequently, not everyone is working in the office at any one time. So, during Office Hours please contact the Central Office team on the email addresses and mobile numbers listed at the start of this Circular.

If you need any assistance, then please give the HELPLINE a call on 07542 680082.

19. ★ RNA Special Interest Group - Blessed are the 'Modelmakers'



For Modelmaking and Model Makers. Any discipline, any scale, any materials, any subject!

Static or powered, architecture, sea/air/road-going, military or civilian subjects, diorama or individual display, scratch-built or from a kit, plastic, wood or any construction material. If it's a commissioned item sale, for the collector, for a museum or for individual pleasure and personal interest, we've got you covered! Find us and 'Like' us on Facebook. Just search for **RNA SIG**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/434544820928061>



The Facebook page is a closed (Private) Group and will need your RNA Membership Number to join.

Collaborate, Communicate and Create!



20. ★ 2021 National Census

The census is coming, and it makes a difference to everyone. By taking part and telling the Office for National Statistics (ONS) about yourself, you will help make sure we all get the services and support we need. It's important you fill in your census questionnaire because the information you share affects the life of every single person living in England and Wales.

Why should members of RNA be especially interested in the census?

Every census, and they happen once every ten years, there are new questions. These reflect some of the ways in which society has changed over time. One recent change is that the country has woken up to the needs of those of us who have served in the Royal Navy and other armed services.

So long as you're aged 16 years or above, you can record if you have served in the UK Armed Forces. The information you share will help ONS understand the numbers, locations and ages of our armed forces community. This will show where resources and services are needed to make sure those who have served, and their families are treated fairly.

Census Day is Sunday 21 March. You can fill yours in online as soon as you get your access code in the post. If you prefer, you will be shown how to ask for a paper copy. Remember, it's up to you to decide how you would like to answer each question. Do it in the way that you feel best represents you. If you, or anyone you know, needs help or advice, visit www.census.gov.uk

21. ★ The Forgotten Fleet of.....1066!

Shipmate Ian Cameron from St Neots Branch has forwarded this interesting article.



It tends to be forgotten that the Anglo Saxons kings of England could assemble fleets under the banner of Ship Fyrd in the same manner as Thegns and warriors could be called up to give military service. The Fyrd, both warrior and ship, was very necessary to counter the Scandinavian seaborne threat.

Edward the Confessor was the King whom Harald Godwinson, who fought at the Battle of Hastings succeeded. (The battle was not actually fought at Hastings but at the village of Battle in East Sussex). The jury is still out on who the English crown

was promised to - Harald or William!

The early years of Edward the Confessor's reign saw a series of large naval operations under the king's own command, including in 1045 the deployment at Sandwich of a particularly big fleet to guard against an expected invasion from Norway, and a blockade of Flanders in 1049, in support of a land campaign by the German Emperor Henry III. In 1050 Edward reduced the standing force, then numbering 14 ships, to five, *sound familiar!*



In 1066, following Edward's death and his own election as king, Harold assembled a powerful army and fleet in the Solent to guard against the invasion being prepared by William of Normandy.

The fleet would have been a significant threat to the Norman transports. (See pic above) However, having waited all summer without the Normans appearing, their provisions were exhausted (see *Logistic issues even in 1066, who would have believed it!*) and Harold was forced to dismiss them. William was then able to cross unopposed. One of the ironies was that the prevailing wind which initially stopped William sailing, enabled the Norwegian King, who also claimed the English throne, to land in the North of England and force Harold and his army to move North, thus leaving the South Coast unprotected from the land.

22. The RN Benevolent Trust – Update

Dear Friends

28 Jan 21



I hope that you managed to enjoy some peace and tranquillity with family during the Christmas period. In Portsmouth we found ourselves in Tier 4 for the festive period, and so reverted to working from home for the third time in the week before Christmas. National lockdown swiftly followed in the New Year.

I am sad to have to tell you that we suffered a Covid-19 outbreak at Pembroke House on 24th December. I suppose that this was inevitable in view of the fact that the Home is situated in the epicentre of the outbreak of the new variant of the virus. Sadly four of our lovely residents died. The outbreak is now over, and vaccinations have been provided, tragically just too late to prevent the sad deaths. The staff at Pembroke House worked miracles over the Christmas and New Year period, working very long hours with great resolve and their unfailing cheerfulness, covering for a large number of staff who were ill or isolating.

Work on Admiral Jellicoe House, our centenary care home project, started on time on 4th January. This is the unspectacular phase of groundworks and other preparations before the building starts to emerge. If all goes to plan it should be ready for occupation in May next year, which exactly fits the centenary of the granting of our Royal Charter by King George V on 2nd May 1922.

Very best wishes for your safety and wellbeing during this difficult time.

Rob Bosshardt

CEO RNBT

23. ★ HMS Belfast Pocket Manual - John Blake

Shipmates may be interested in the HMS Belfast Pocket Manual written by Lt Cdr (Rtd) John Blake, FRIN which describes the compelling story of the ship including, first hand accounts of her time spent at war and in peacetime.

It is published by www.ospreypublishing.com ISBN 9781472827821

24. ★ Wrens and Elephants Never Forgets.....

I thought many male Shipmates would recognise this character flaw in the fairer sex.....

Whilst producing this months' Circular..... My beautiful wife appeared like a vision of gorgeousness in my 'Man Cave' to announce, "Did I know that it was 44 years to the day since she joined the WRNS." " Is it my sweet" I replied ...

And just like an elephant never forgets.....The only reason for this annual statement is that she joined the Naval Service (Note not the Royal Navy!) 6 days before me on 26 Jan 1976 and me on 02 Feb 1976..... Doh!

RNA Longcast

2021	
12 Feb	FAC/AMC – Zoom
05 Mar	National Council - Zoom
02 – 05 Apr	Easter Bank Holiday
16 Apr	Open Day - Cancelled
03 May	May Bank Holiday
14 May	Open Day
14-16 May	Battle of the Atlantic Commemorations – Londonderry
21 May	AMC/FAC – Zoom
May TBC	Inter Services T20 Cricket - Lords
31 May	Late May Bank Holiday
04 Jun	National Council (Collingwood)
05 Jun	HMS Collingwood Open/Field Gun Day
18 Jun	IMC
25 Jun	Branch Motions for Conference – Deadline/SOC
25 Jun	Open Day
26 Jun	Armed Forces Day - Scarborough
08 Jul	Staff Day – Office Closed
23 Jul	Open Day
30 Jul	AMC / FAC - Zoom
30 Aug	August Bank Holiday
03 Sep	National Council - Nottingham
03 Sep	NC Dines Out National President (VA McAnally)
04 Sep	AGM/National Conference - Nottingham
12 Sep	Naval Associations Biennial Parade - Whitehall
23 Oct	World Uckers Championships Finals - Portsmouth
05 Nov	Budget Meeting
11 Nov	Field of Remembrance
12 Nov	FAC/AMC
14 Nov	Remembrance Sunday
09 Dec	National Council Dines-In National President (VA Potts)
10 Dec	National Council
23 Dec-4 Jan	Central Office Closed

25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	Boxing Day

2022	
11 Feb	AMC/FAC – Zoom
04 Mar	National Council Meeting - Zoom
15 Apr	Easter Monday
May	National Standard Bearers' Competition (Collingwood)
May	AMC/FAC (Collingwood)
Jun TBC	HMS Collingwood Field Gun Day
17 Jun	NC meetings
18 Jun	AG/National Conference
19 Jun	Falklands 40 th Anniversary Parade
Jul – tbc	Covid Commemoration Service - NMA
29 Jul	AMC / FAC – Zoom
10 Sep	National Council Meeting
10 Nov	Garden of Remembrance
11 Nov (pm)	Budget Meeting
13 Nov	Remembrance Sunday
19 Nov	AMC / FAC – Zoom
03 Dec	National Council Meeting
21 Dec – 03 Jan	Central Office Closed for Christmas

D'ye hear there'.....

News from around the Areas and Branches.....

This Month Featuring.....

[RNA Spalding](#)

[RNA Chard](#)

[RNA Wallasey](#)

[RNA City of Edinburgh](#)

[RNA Riders](#)

[RNA Peterborough](#)

RNA Spalding Branch



In recognition of services and support given to the Branch it was agreed that two Certificates of Appreciation and a Life Membership be given to three S/M's from the Branch. It was planned that the presentation would take place at Trafalgar Night Celebrations, however, thwarted by Covid, plans had to be changed.

It was agreed to hold the presentation on Remembrance Day, sadly due to a bereavement in the recipient's family again those plans were

scuppered. Finally, arrangements were made to hold the presentation in the front garden of a Veteran.

With all precautions in place the Branch President S/M. Terry Carter presented the Certificates.

- *A Life Membership* was awarded to S/M Terry Day in recognition of his work in the Branch particularly during lockdown 'one', and as Secretary for a period of 10 years.
- *A Certificate of Appreciation* was presented to Jan Whitbourne an Honorary Member for her unflinching efforts in securing, packing, and distributing Food Parcels to Local Veterans and notably to Members of the Branch.
- *A Certificate of Appreciation* to S/M Shirley Day an Associate Member for all the help and assistance given to Jan in the packing and delivery of Food Parcels.

A unique and possibly a first occasion where three different Membership categories received awards at the same event. The Branch congratulate you all on these magnificent achievements...

"Bravo Zulu" The Tots are on you at the next Branch Meeting!!!!

RNA Chard Branch

Shipmates from Chard Branch wanted to wish all RNA Shipmates the very best for 2021



RNA Wallasey Branch

Shipmate John Williams who is the PRO at RNA Wallasey has kindly forwarded the article below;

Despite Covid, Lockdowns and all the restrictions that they have generated Wallasey RNA have remained dedicated to helping people in the community.

At a committee meeting {social distancing was in force at the meeting} it was decided that we would donate to a few local charities on the 'Wirral' (Home of Tranmere Rovers) and also this would be an ongoing project.

This is the list that we donated to.

- Newlands sheltered accommodation: we have bought them three benches which will be put together by ourselves and secured to there building
- Radio City cash for kids who also cover the Wirral: £250.00
- Poulton Athletic U11s £250.00 this will be ongoing each year



- Action for Children they do a lot of work for children who are unable to speak to someone Mentoring, Counselling, and other helpful projects: £250.00
- Gary Pink £250.00 who is the Wallasey RNA branch treasurer he is doing the Western Trek-50 miles in three days for the RBL on the late Bank Holiday in May 2021 he is still looking for sponsors, he was an ex Chief and we all think the walk will do him good but having said that he is doing a tremendous job.

So, as you can see, we have been quite busy and looking forward to new challenges next year we have a dedicated group of members at the Wallasey RNA who are proud to help anyone.

Below is one of the staff from action for Children receiving the cheque for £250.00 off myself.

RNA City of Edinburgh Branch



The President, Chairman and members of the City of Edinburgh Branch were pleased to hear that one of our shipmates, Michael (Mike) Kazsuba has been bestowed the Citizen Award for 2020 by Dunbar Community Council for the contributions that he has made to his community. Michael has been an inspiration to the youngsters within his community, devoting most of his free time, giving them his support and helping to ensure that there were opportunities and adventure available to them all. He has been

the driving force and powerhouse behind his local Sea Cadet Unit. For a decade Mike ran the Unit and through his effort and dedication the Dunbar Sea Cadet Unit has become to the Unit that it is today. Michael has dedicated over 10 years of his time supporting and inspiring youngster within his community and continues to dedicate time to further their development. BZ Mike, you are an inspiration to your local community and a credit to the Royal Naval Association



RNA Riders Branch

53 Riders from both the Royal Navy Riders Association and the Royal Marine Riders Association are undertaking a 2 week riding trip to Bavaria, which is being organised by former Wren, Fiona Laing (RNA Riders Welfare and Scottish Rep), where they will meet up with Riders from the US Garrison at Garmisch Partenkirchen. Two groups will leave from the UK – North from Newcastle to Ijmuiden, On 28th July 2022 for overnight ferry, then the Southern contingent will leave from Dover on the 29th where they will RV with the Northern Group at Maasmechelen, Belgium.

All 35 bikes will head in staggered convoy another 3 hours down to a transit stop where they will stay overnight before riding another 5 hours down to Oberstufen area where they will undertake various rides and activities organised by Joint service adventure training in Garmisch. They will have the opportunity to white water raft and paraglide from the Zugspitze. A trip to a winery is also proposed for the wives and partners as well as a day trip to the Eagles Nest at Berchtesgaden and also to visit Dachau memorial camp.

This trip is open to FULL members of the RNA and RMA riders branch with full motorcycle licence and access to a motorbike. If you wish to be included in any future trips please contact David Ives, or Fiona Laing on rnarbscotland@gmail.com where details to join this ever growing branch will be made available. Or send a message to their Facebook page. [\(1\) RNA Riders Branch Members Group | Facebook](#) or if you are a Royal Marine then contact Norman Wareing via [\(1\) RMA-Riders Branch \(RMA Members Only Group\) | Facebook](#). Throughout the year there are many local trips organised and despite the pandemic a good social scene including tot time and fireside chats etc are happening.

RNA Peterborough and District Branch

Shipmate Dave Clements (PRO Peterborough and District Branch) reports that Peterborough Branch has two WW2 Veterans and wanted us to know their stories.....

S/M George Hockney (ex Chief ERA)

George celebrated his 102nd birthday on January 3rd.

His career in the Royal Navy started on 2nd October 1939 when George signed up as an Engine Room Artificer (ERA) on a 12-year engagement. War service saw him involved in the North Sea convoys, the Norway campaign, the Malta convoys and U Boat hunting in the Atlantic among other little 'jollies'. His ships included the Auckland (sloop), Caledon (cruiser) Easton (destroyer) among others. Later in the war George found himself in Benghazi as Chief base engineer. What with being heavily involved in setting up the base, and his service to date, he must have done a remarkable job because in August 1944 George received notification that he had been awarded the British Empire Medal (Military), and as his citation read, 'for zeal and wholehearted devotion to duty'. During his time in Benghazi George also became involved with the salvage of the SS Samsylarna..... but then that's another story in the life of this remarkable man. On 10th July 2019, George was the subject of a very special presentation, held by Defence Attaché Colonel John Andreas Olsen from the Norwegian Embassy, when he received the Norwegian Government's Commemorative Medal for service. As the 80th anniversary of the Norway Campaign approaches, the presentation recognises the service George and his comrades provided whilst on board HMS Auckland.

S/M Ken Tinkler

Born 30th September 1926 - 95 this year

Ken served in the Pacific Fleet in HMS Quadrant and was involved in conflict with the Japanese along with units of the US Navy.

The Quadrant was in Tokyo Bay on 2nd September 1945 when the formal signing of Japan's surrender was held aboard the battleship USS Missouri.

[Ted Cockrill](#)

[John Soanes](#)

[Gary Pennells](#)

[William Arthur Frazier](#)

[George Blackborow](#)

[William Charles Richard Hawkes](#)

Ted Cockrill - Norwich Branch

Norwich Branch are sad to announce that Shipmate Ted Cockrill crossed the bar on 4th January 2021 aged 93.

Ted Cockrill left the Royal Navy as a Leading Writer; having served between 1945 - 1948 onboard HMS Royal Arthur, HMS Duke, HMS Demetrius, HMS Drake and HMS Implacable.

Ted joined the Branch in 1996, and subsequently served as Branch Hon. Treasurer.

John Soanes - Torbay Branch and Ton Class Association

A founder member of TCA, John served the Association, initially as Vice Chairman then, from April 1995 - April 2018, as Chairman He was Coxswain of PENSTON 1964-66, nominally in Hong Kong, but mainly on patrols off Borneo during Confrontation. John subsequently had a second career in Essex Constabulary. He Crossed the Bar on 30th December 2020 after a long illness, bravely endured. John's funeral was held on 20th January at Torquay Crematorium. TCA was represented by Commander Rory Jackson and Derek Potter. Torbay RNA Branch, of which John was also Chairman, paraded their standard and a Guard of Honour.



John joined the RN in 1953. He specialised in Underwater Weapons, becoming a Petty Officer UW1. He served in HM Ships IMPLACABLE, CYGNET, SAVAGE, URSA, ROTHSAY and PENSTON. In addition to courses at VERNON, John was Ships Company and had two periods as an instructor at GANGES.

On leaving the RN in 1967, John joined Essex Constabulary, serving for more than twice as long as the 14 years he spent in the RN, in Harlow, Saffron Walden, Southend on Sea and Chelmsford. A CID officer, John became Acting Detective Superintendent and Head of Special Branch. These duties brought him in contact with many VIPs visiting the County.

John and wife Ann both come from Beccles in Suffolk and were at school together. They married in 1955 and have two daughters and two adult grandchildren.

John's tenure as TCA Chairman was distinguished by his unfailing courtesy and diplomacy. He presided over the considerable expansion of our membership, progression into publications and

adoption of e-mail to speed up our admin. John had a remarkable range of contacts of all ranks throughout the Navy and beyond, which he gently used to advance awareness of TCA.

We have lost a good friend and one of nature's gentlemen. John will be long remembered with affection.

Gary Pennells – RNA Chard

It is with a sad heart that RNA Chard Branch have to report the crossing of the bar of Branch Secretary S/m Gary Pennells after a short illness of just a year (not Covid) on 23 January.

Gary served full time in the service leaving as a Chief Stoker, having left the RN he worked in the Far East for many years working for various companies in the region.

On return to the UK he eventually set up home in Crewkerne with his wife Daisy and it was whilst living there that he offered his services to SSAFA and became a well-respected Case Worker for them for many years. During this time, he then joined the Chard Branch RNA and became an active member of the association. For the past 5 years he was the branch secretary and remained a fully active member who had a great feeling of compassion, loyalty and respect for all those serving and former members of his past service.

Gary leaves wife Daisy, son and daughter.

(Submission and image courtesy S/m Dick Moon)



William Frazier - St Austell Branch

It is with great sadness that S/m Mark Bardsley (Hon Sec) has to report that Shipmate William Arthur Frazier (Arthur) of St Austell Royal Naval Association crossed the bar in the early hours of Thursday 14th January 2021 aged 100 years.

Prior to crossing the bar Arthur was awarded life membership of the RNA. He will be sadly missed at St Austell, as the telling of his service career always enthralled his audience. Please see obituary below.

Arthur Frazier was born on the 29th June 1920. He is the last living descendant of the Frazier's, a boat building family from Mevagissey. Arthur was a very happy and contented child and spent most of his spare time around the harbour watching large sailing vessels delivering cargoes of salt for the fish merchants. He well remembers cars being a luxury, televisions being unheard of and Wireless (Radios) and Telephones still in their infancy. The family were great supporters of the local Wesleyan Chapel in Mevagissey, which was built in 1612, and demolished in 1967. Arthur took part in many



concerts and was always concerned when seeing the oil lamps hanging from the ceiling for fear of safety. Every Wednesday afternoon excited children from the village went to the pictures in the Town Hall which were Black and White pictures with no sound and an admission fee of 2d. Water was collected from the village pump and he still vividly remembers when electricity and water arrived in their home. This was simply real progress.

Arthur's Grandfather purchased the Mevagissey boat Yard in 1880. His father joined the boatyard in 1900. One vessel built in 1904 at the boatyard is reportedly still operational and working in Looe. Arthur joined the family business at the age of 14 in 1934 where he served and completed his apprenticeship in 1939 just as the clouds of war were gathering over Europe.

In 1940 Arthur received his papers and a rail warrant to report to HMS Drake and serve in the Royal Navy; he was now aged 20. It was a real wrench for him to say his goodbyes to his family. By late February 1941, Plymouth was suffering heavy bombing raids by the Germans and he spent most of his nights on duty around HMS Drake. At the end of March that year Arthur boarded a train to join a new Aircraft Carrier HMS Victorious, this great ship was to be Arthur's for the next 5 years. During 1941-1942 the Victorious escorted 16 convoys in temperatures of -20 to -40 degrees in the mountainous seas of the Arctic Ocean. Throughout this period of time the loss of lives and destruction of ships was heavy. Arthur looks back over the years of 1941-1942 and says that it was obvious convoys played a vital role in the war effort. Yet to him they became a nightmare with constant attacks from U-Boats and Aircraft. Arthur said "I just thank the Good Lord my life was spared."

Arthur managed to return home to Cornwall on just 2 occasions during the five years he spent onboard HMS Victorious. In late 1942 HMS Victorious embarked on a journey from the Clyde through the Panama Canal to the Hawaiian Islands. These temperatures reached around 110 degrees Fahrenheit which was a far cry from the temperatures endured in the Arctic Ocean. Eventually they docked in Pearl Harbour where they spent several weeks under repair. 1943 was spent serving with the US Third Fleet in the South Pacific, along with a return service to the UK, Scapa Flow, The Mediterranean, before finally joining with the British East Indies Fleet.



In early 1945 being part of the British Pacific Fleet they were assigned to carry out attacks on Japanese Airfields. The Victorious received an unsuccessful Kamikaze attack in April 1945, although some were successful in causing damage to her. Arthur recalled, "these attacks were frightening and made me feel very uncomfortable." Early August found the fleet ready to attack the mainland of Japan, but before doing so the Americans dropped the first atomic bomb "Little Boy" on Hiroshima, followed three days later by "Fat Boy" on Nagasaki. This brought about the Japanese surrender. For Arthur this meant the war was over and so he returned home to the United Kingdom. Arthur said, "that despite the storms, the bombs and the Kamikaze attacks, I still fondly remember my days in the Royal Navy." He also missed the friendship of his comrades. He feels extremely proud to have

served onboard the aircraft carrier HMS Victorious which was his home for many years. HMS Victorious was later decommissioned before finally being sent to the breakers yard on the 13th July 1969. It was not a fitting tribute to such a fine ship.

During Arthur's time on board HMS Victorious he sailed tens of thousands of nautical miles covering oceans and seas from the North Sea to the Arctic, The Caribbean, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, Atlantic and Pacific to mention but a few.

Arthur and Audrey

After spending most of 1943 serving with the US Third Fleet, Arthur and HMS Victorious returned to Liverpool for a refit which lasted several months. During this period Arthur received 14 days leave, so he returned home to Mevagissey where he married Audrey. They were married on a Thursday and they returned to Liverpool on the Saturday, where they lived together in a flat for a short while. Arthur then returned to HMS Victorious to join the home fleet at Scapa Flow and then back to the Arctic Circle.

After the war, Arthur and Audrey returned to Mevagissey, where he continued running the family boat yard. This lasted for 35 years with between 35 to 40 vessels being built, one of which "Queen of the Fal" now called "Coronation Belle" still operated out of Belfast. In 1951 Audrey gave up her job in Law and took over the administration at the boat yard. Arthur stated, "She ran it, and together we made a perfect and successful team." During 1962 Arthur and Audrey moved to St Austell from Mevagissey. In 1981 Arthur retired, the boatyard closed after being in continual operation for 100 years. He kindly offered to sell the building at a reduced cost to the Mevagissey Museum and thanks to a local benefactor the trustees were able to acquire the building for future generations. The Museum is now very successful and well-run which Arthur is very proud of. He has been instrumental in making sure that the building is retained as a Museum.

Despite living in St Austell for the last 50 years Arthur still maintains a love for his home village of Mevagissey. Sadly Audrey passed away in 2013.

George Blackborow – City of Newport (Gwent) Branch

It is with the greatest sadness that the City of Newport, Royal Naval Association announce that their much-respected President and former long-serving Chairman, George Blackborow, Crossed-the-Bar on 14th January on his 94th birthday.



Marine Blackborow, PO/X122539, was called up in February 1945 and was posted to the Middle East in the July of that year. Prior to August 1945, the Royal Marines were anticipating redeployment to the Far East for operations against the Japanese but, after the nuclear bombs were dropped; his unit subsequently remained on general security duties in Egypt and Palestine. He was posted to HMS Nile at Ras el-Tin Point and HMS Sphinx at Sidi Bishr.

During 1946, Marine Blackborow acted as driver and armed escort for the Senior Naval Intelligence Officer, Middle East, and undertook two tours of Palestine. Marine Blackborow was deployed to the base at Haifa Dockyards (NOIC, Palestinian Ports) and military establishments in Jerusalem. The first photograph shows him outside the King David Hotel shortly before the Irgun terrorist bombing of 22nd July 1946.

Marine Blackborow's father died while he was stationed in the Middle East and he was drafted back to Eastney Barracks. As the only son (his elder brother, Ernest, had been killed in 1943 while

on a bombing raid over Germany), a discharge was arranged on compassionate grounds to allow him to assume responsibility for the family business and he was demobbed in February 1947.

He ran the family transport firm until his retirement but always remained active. Together with S/M Doug Piddington (the Navy's last Chief Sailmaker) he was one of the founder members of the Branch. He occupied the post of Chairman for twenty years until 2017 when he was promoted to Honorary President. He never failed to attend a Remembrance Day parade or social event and was always at the forefront of fundraising activities. He will be greatly missed by his family and shipmates.



The photograph above shows George giving the First Sea Lord a gentle ticking off during the Biennial Parade in 2015.

Bill Hawkes - Dorchester Branch

William Charles Richard Hawkes 1923-2020 D/MX 95224 - CPO (MM) "Bill" Hawkes served in the Royal Navy during the Second World War in the Far East and in Europe. He enlisted at HMS Victory as a Motor Mechanician (D) in 1942; initial training was at HMS PEMBROKE. That year he joined HMS CALPE, a type 2 Hunt class destroyer, and then HMS MINER IV, a type M Minelayer, based at Lochinvar. He received a knee injury during an aircraft attack whilst on the MINER IV and was sent to the Isle of Man to recover.



He was on board HMS CALPE several times including Operation Torch and the Dieppe raid. Operation Torch was the Allied invasion of French North Africa during the Second World War in November 1942. During this time, he was landed in Gibraltar to repair engines. In 1943 he was drafted to HMS DRAKE and then to HMS PEMBROKE where he qualified as a diesel engineer.

In 1944 Bill attended a Marine Engineering course at Cleckheaton (West Yorkshire) and then joined Combined Ops and was sent to HMS COPRA, the Combined Ops Pay Records and Accounts base and depot for Minor War Vessels, at Largs, Scotland. The depot supplied personnel at short notice for emergency repair parties or short trips. He was at D Day 0 to 4, running out of Portsmouth on a "Landing Craft Infantry Flak". He met his father in a pub during this time. Bill didn't know that his father had joined up again - he had been in the RN from 1911 to 1919. He had joined the Met Police on leaving the RN, rejoined in 1943, and was the RPO i/c of the new arrivals in D/Qs Portsmouth.

The day after meeting his father, Bill got a "Pier Head Jump" to Liverpool to pick up a troop ship to Chinkara and Cochin. At this time Bill was promoted to A/CH (MM) at the age of 23 and was one of the youngest, if not the youngest, to achieve that rate. He then served in South India,

Arakan, Sumatra and Burma. After VJ day, he spent time transporting POWs, Japanese, English, French, New Zealanders, Australian and Dutch (also civilians) in and out of Burma. They picked up Japanese prisoners once. Bill was the MEO of MTB 61 out in India and was selected for a Commission but failed the medical because of the injuries he had received. In 1945 he was seconded to the Bombay Police. Whilst on this secondment he was stabbed in the hip during riots.

During 1945/46 Bill was lent to the Army to repair tank engines. (The tanks had AEC engines and Bill had been an apprentice at AEC Southall before he enlisted. The Associated Equipment Company (AEC) was a British vehicle manufacturer that built buses.) Bill went to HMS Drake in 1946 for release as category A. (Category 'A' personnel were demobilised first because their skills were urgently needed post war.)

On returning to "Civvie Street", he joined the Palestine Police for 2 years and then the Metropolitan Police, reaching the rank of Acting Station Sergeant. He retired in 1974. When in the Palestine Police, he was rapidly promoted to 2nd British Sergeant and towards the end of the Mandate was escorting a convoy of British, Arabic and Jewish wives of British service men. Bill was I/C of an armoured car and when it ran over a mine, he was blown through the hatch and lay in a ditch for 3 days until a Scottish Regiment picked him up; the driver and gunner were both killed. Sent home, he was on a fracture board for 6 weeks with a fractured his spine.

When in the Met police service, he was soon promoted. He received several commendations for application and zeal. Bill was first on site at the Southall air crash. Also, he was the interpreter for Leila Khalid when she was arrested at Heathrow Airport in 1970; she had hijacked two international flights for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

On retirement Bill and his wife, Jean, took over a Chinchilla Farm and turned it into, and ran, a market garden at Membury, Devon. Bill's medals include the Burma, France and Germany Stars, the Defence Medal, the War Service Medal, the Naval General Service Medal and the Military General Service Medal. Further, he was awarded the Exemplary Police Service Medal. Bill was also 'Mentioned in Despatches' on 1/11/45 for 'zeal and devotion of your duty'; what he did and how it was awarded is a secret that he took with him.

However, the family believe that it was awarded after a Court of Enquiry, where he carried out a mechanical inspection of a Landing Craft, delivered from America, that had caught fire, which resulted in the deaths of some of the crew and some of the depot for Minor War Vessels ships company. On his own initiative, he carried out further investigations on other craft newly arrived and found the same defect.

Bill will be missed by all his Dorchester shipmates.

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The ‘Shortcast’ Editors Note

Due to the current Coronavirus situation Shipmates should contact the individual Association to ensure that the reunion is still going ahead.

Please forward any reunions for 2021 and I will publish them here

Note from the CONA (Conference of Naval Associations) Secretary -

I would be very grateful if organisers of reunions would oblige me by obtaining a quote from the CONA Travel Service, who will not be beaten on like for like price. CONA Travel Service donate 1% of their CONA business back into the Conference totalling to date £2,700 which provides funds to assist members Associations. Oh, and by the way, their service is first class as well.

	Please check go to link for RN Shipmates.co.uk for a comprehensive list of further reunions. www.rnshipmates.co.uk	
2021		
7/10 May	The HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association will hold their 42nd Annual Reunion & AGM at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea from 7th to 10th May 2021. Please contact Secretary Denis Askham for more details. askhamd3@gmail.com	Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association

Swinging the Lamp – February 2021

The RNA is grateful to the Author, Lt Cdr Lawrie Phillips TD, RD, RNR for allowing us to publish a selection from the RN Day by Day. If you would like to read more it can be purchased from - The History Press and is priced £60 ISBN 978 0 7509 8266 5



Date	Year	Entry
1st	1942	Fourth wheel added to U-boat Enigma. Vital U-boat key Triton lost to Bletchley Park until December after addition of a fifth wheel to the German Enigma machine.
2 nd	1842	‘The rating of “Leading Stoker”, having been added to the establishments of her Majesty’s steam-vessels, by Order in Council of the 2 nd of February, 1842; the commanding officers off all such vessels are hereby acquainted, that the object of this rating is to improve the practice of “stoking”, to which too little importance has hitherto been attached . . . By Command of their Lordships.’ (<i>Especially for Shipmates Ridley and Tollerton</i>)
3rd	2009	Trident submarine <i>Vanguard</i> and French SSBN <i>Le Triomphant</i> , ‘while on separate routine patrols’, collided under the Atlantic. No casualties. Boats returned to their respective bases at Faslane and Brest.

4 th	1997	Able Seaman Jack Gearing, the then oldest surviving naval rating and the last survivor of naval operations in the 1915 Gallipoli campaign (cruiser <i>Theseus</i>), died aged 102. Left the Service in 1919. Trained as a lighterman in the family sailing barge <i>Mayflower</i> on the Thames, Gearing was turned down by the RN in 1939 due to age but accepted by the Royal Engineers. Sgt Gearing, aged nearly 50, towed a crane to Normandy in 1944 with the orders 'follow that destroyer'.
5 th	1836	<i>Pike</i> , schooner, wrecked on the Pelican reef off Jamaica through the negligence of the Commanding Officer. But her Mate was also dismissed the Service for having torn a page from her log, which earned him three months in the Marshalsea Prison.
6 th	1912	Submarine A 3 lost in collision with <i>Hazard</i> off Bembridge, IoW.
7 th	1941	W. Approaches command shifted from Plymouth to Liverpool.
8 th	1919	All cruisers on East Indies station to be painted white.
9 th	1825	First operational use of steam vessel: <i>Diana</i> , built at Kidderpore Dockyard, 1823, and bought into the Service on advice of Capt F. Marryat in 1824, engaged a 36-gun stockade with her rockets, receiving 160 shots. First Burmese War.
10 th	1947	Battleship <i>Vanguard</i> , carrying the King, Queen and two Princesses to South Africa, crossed the line. 'The King had begun the proceedings by halting between two ends of a massive 28-in hawser on the foredeck which Capt W.G. Agnew told him was the main-brace. "Well, it's in a sorry state. You had better splice it", said the King, and all hands cheered when the bo'sun, obeying the royal orders, piped "Splice the main-brace", meaning a double issue of rum for all on board as a celebration tonight'
11 th	1964	GC: CPO Jonathan Rogers DSM, RAN, posthumously, for gallantry in the sinking of the Daring-class destroyer HMAS <i>Voyager</i> in collision with the carrier HMAS <i>Melbourne</i> , 11 February 1964. He helped fifty to sixty men escape from the ship's sinking forward section and stayed below leading trapped men in prayer. CPO Rogers, an ex-RN PO, won his DSM when Coxswain of MTB 698 in action in May 1944. He joined the RAN in 1950.
12 th	1942	Unsuccessful attack on the German <i>Gneisenau</i> , <i>Scharnhorst</i> and <i>Prinz Eugen</i> during their escape up-Channel. Ships: <i>Campbell</i> (D 21), <i>Vivacious</i> , <i>Worcester</i> , <i>Mackay</i> (D 16), <i>Whitshed</i> . MGB: 41, 43. MTB: 32, 44, 45, 48, 71, 219, 221. FAA: 825 Sqn – Swordfish V4523, W5907, W5978, W5983, W5984, W5985 (all lost). RAF: Twenty-eight Beaufort aircraft of 42, 86 and 217 Squadrons, one of which, from 42 Squadron, dropped a torpedo which missed <i>Campbell</i> , standing by <i>Worcester</i> , which had been damaged. VC: Lt-Cdr (A) Eugene Esmonde (W5984/825). Posthumous. 'A mothball attack by a handful of ancient planes, piloted by men whose bravery surpassed any other action by either side that day' – a tribute from the German Foreign Office. 'If ever a failure can be glorious, then this must have been the most glorious failure in all British naval history.'
13 th	1940	The Admiralty appealed for the services of 10,000 fishermen for minesweeping.

14 th	1979	<i>Ark Royal</i> , fourth of the name, paid off at Plymouth, twenty-four years to the day after her first ship's company embarked at Cammell Laird, Birkenhead.
15 th	1968	First British Polaris missile fired, by <i>Resolution</i> , Port Crew, Cdr M.C. Henry RN, at 1115 EST submerged 30 miles off Cape Kennedy. The second firing made by Starboard Crew, Cdr F. Frewer RN, on 4 March 1968.
16 th	1762	The French island of Martinique finally taken after a well-planned amphibious operation led by Maj-Gen the Hon. Robert Monkton, who had been Wolfe's second-in-command at Quebec in 1759, and the Leeward Islands squadron commanded by Rear-Admiral George Rodney. The Seven Years War. Battle Honour: Martinique 1762.
17 th	1992	Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fieldhouse of Gosport died at Southampton. His ashes were scattered at sea on 28 February. The first five star submariner.
18 th	1940	Destroyer <i>Daring</i> , Cdr S.A. Cooper RN, escorting Convoy HN12, torpedoed and sunk by U-23, Kapitanleutnant Otto Kretschmer, 40 miles E. of Duncansby Head, S.E. of the Shetlands (58.38N, 0.40E). Captain, eight officers and ten men lost. The first British destroyer lost to submarine attack in the Second World War.
19 th	2010	Landing Ship Dock RFA <i>Largs Bay</i> , Capt Ian Johnson, arrived at Port au Prince, Haiti, with disaster relief supplies following an earthquake. Food was also landed from the ship by mexeflote at Gonaives and Anse a Veau. Operation Panlake.
20 th	1945	<i>Vervain</i> , corvette, sunk by U-1208 20 miles S. of Waterford, Ireland. Last of twenty-eight corvettes lost in the Second World War. <i>Amethyst</i> , 2nd Escort Group, sank U-1208 in S.W. Approaches, S. of Wolf Rock, 27 February 1945.
21 st	1861	Naval Brigade from <i>Arrogant</i> , <i>Falcon</i> and <i>Torch</i> with the 1st and 2nd West India Regiments, destroyed the stockades at Saba, Gambia River.
22 nd	1940	RM Depot at Lympstone opened. Now Commando Training Centre, Royal Marines
23 rd	1979	Former commando carrier <i>Bulwark</i> recommissioned at Portsmouth. She had been brought out of reserve and converted into an anti-submarine warfare carrier to fill the gap between paying-off of <i>Ark Royal</i> and completion of the Invincible-class carriers. A gallant old ship but her electrics were not up to it.
24 th	1944	First U-boat detected by MAD (Magnetic Anomaly Detection); two USN Catalinas detected U-761 off Gibraltar (35.05N, 05.45W). Catalinas attacked with retro-bombs, destroyers <i>Anthony</i> and <i>Wishart</i> with depth charges and with further contributions from a RAF 202 Sqn Catalina and a USN Ventura.
25 th	1991	Destroyer <i>Gloucester</i> destroyed Iraqi Silkworm missile with her Sea Dart just short of USS <i>Missouri</i> . Operation Granby.
26 th	1948	GC (ex-AM): CPO J. Lynch (<i>Nigeria</i>) for saving life of rating lost overboard in gale at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.
27 th	1966	Frigate <i>Lowestoft</i> first ship on Beira Patrol off Mozambique, establishing oil embargo on Rhodesia after UDI.
28 th	2006	The last embarkation of a Fleet Air Arm fixed wing aircraft. Two SHAR FA2 of 801 NAS landed on <i>Illustrious</i> as part of the ship's predeployment work-up. TO DATE!

2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE - BRANCH MOTIONS

Branch Motion

Proposed by Branch, Seconded byBranch

Proposed Motion (to begin; That the)

Explanation

Proposing Branch Contact details

S/M.....

.....

.....

.....

Postcode

E Mail

Telephone number

Please return completed form to Central Office for consideration by the NC and Governance Committee (SOC) by the **25th June 2021**.

**NOMINATION FORM
ELECTION OF MEMBERS AND DEPUTY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
2021/2022 (Revised RNA Bye-Law 7)**

For the attention of All Branch Secretaries in Areas. 2,6,7,8,9,11 and Scotland.

Each Branch may nominate **one full or life member** from any Branch within its own Area, as a Candidate for election to the National Council, and **one full or life member** for election as the Deputy National Council Member **subject to the approval of the Branch to which both persons belong.** (See Note Below)

Names of Nominees

NCM **DNCM**

Proposed by **Branch** **Area**

Address of Nominee NCM.....

..... **e mail**

DNCM.....

..... **e mail**

Brief history of nominees in the Association. (Continue on separate sheet if necessary)

NCM

DNCM

Chairman (signed)(dated).....

Secretary..... (signed)(dated).....

If the Candidate is **not** a member the proposing Branch, this section is to be completed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Candidate's **own** Branch.

Candidate's Branch

We are aware of the above nomination.

Signature of Chairman (Candidate's Branch)

Signature of Secretary (Candidate's Branch)

Candidate

I accept the nomination and promise to attend as many National Council Meetings as is possible and to sit on any Committees to which I may be elected.

Signature of Candidate Dated

The envelope containing this completed form should be marked **NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL** and must reach RNA HQ no later than **1600 1st June 2021.**