



**ROYAL NAVAL
ASSOCIATION**



The First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key, addresses RNA National Conference in Liverpool

Royal Naval Association Annual Trustees Report 2023

Includes

**Report to Annual Conference 2024
Annual Accounts for Financial Year 2023**

Central Office
Building 1/087, Scott Road
HM Naval Base PORTSMOUTH, PO1 3LU

www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Registered Charity Number 266982

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The RNA is a going concern; indeed, it is thriving. The major events in the year included a highly successful AGM and Annual Conference in Liverpool which coincided with the 80th Anniversary of the turning of the tide in the Battle of the Atlantic, the hosting of the Naval Associations Parade at the Cenotaph and, recognising the importance of Welfare and Wellbeing of our Shipmates, a well attended symposium weekend to educate and inform those in our Branches involved in the provision of this support.

At the close of 2023, our membership numbers were sitting just shy of 19000 members and our finances are in better shape than a year ago. RNRMC now do our Management Accounts with Brooms retained as our Auditors; Sarasin are our Investment Managers.

S/m Keith Ridley stood down as National Chairman after seven years of dedicated service and was succeeded by S/m Peter Godwin.

Another successful World Uckers Championships was staged in Portsmouth as well as the routine business of Culture and Values Sessions with Phase 2 trainees and support projects like Project Semaphore.

The Association was represented at the Coronation of the King both by our National President, VAdm Duncan Potts CB and our National Standard Bearer, Steve Champion. Confirmation of continuation of patronage by the Monarch is awaited. Recognising the RNA's role as current President of the International Maritime Confederation, the National President laid a wreath at the German Naval Memorial in Keil on Armistice Day.

REFERENCE and ADMINISTRATIVE DETAIL

1. Central Office Address

Royal Naval Association
Central Office
Building I/087
Scott Road
HMNB PORTSMOUTH
Hants PO1 3LU

2. The Trustees. As at 31 December 2023 the Trustees of the Royal Naval Association were:

VAdm D L Potts CB

Cdre M Slawson OBE RN

S/m R Lock MBE

S/m K Ridley

WOI J Wright

WOI C Robson

S/M P Godwin

S/M A Christie

National President

Deputy National President

Vice-President

Vice-President and NCM 6 Area

Vice President – Warrant Officer to the Royal Navy

Vice President – Serving Member

National Chairman & NCM 8 Area

Deputy National Chairman & NCM 3 Area

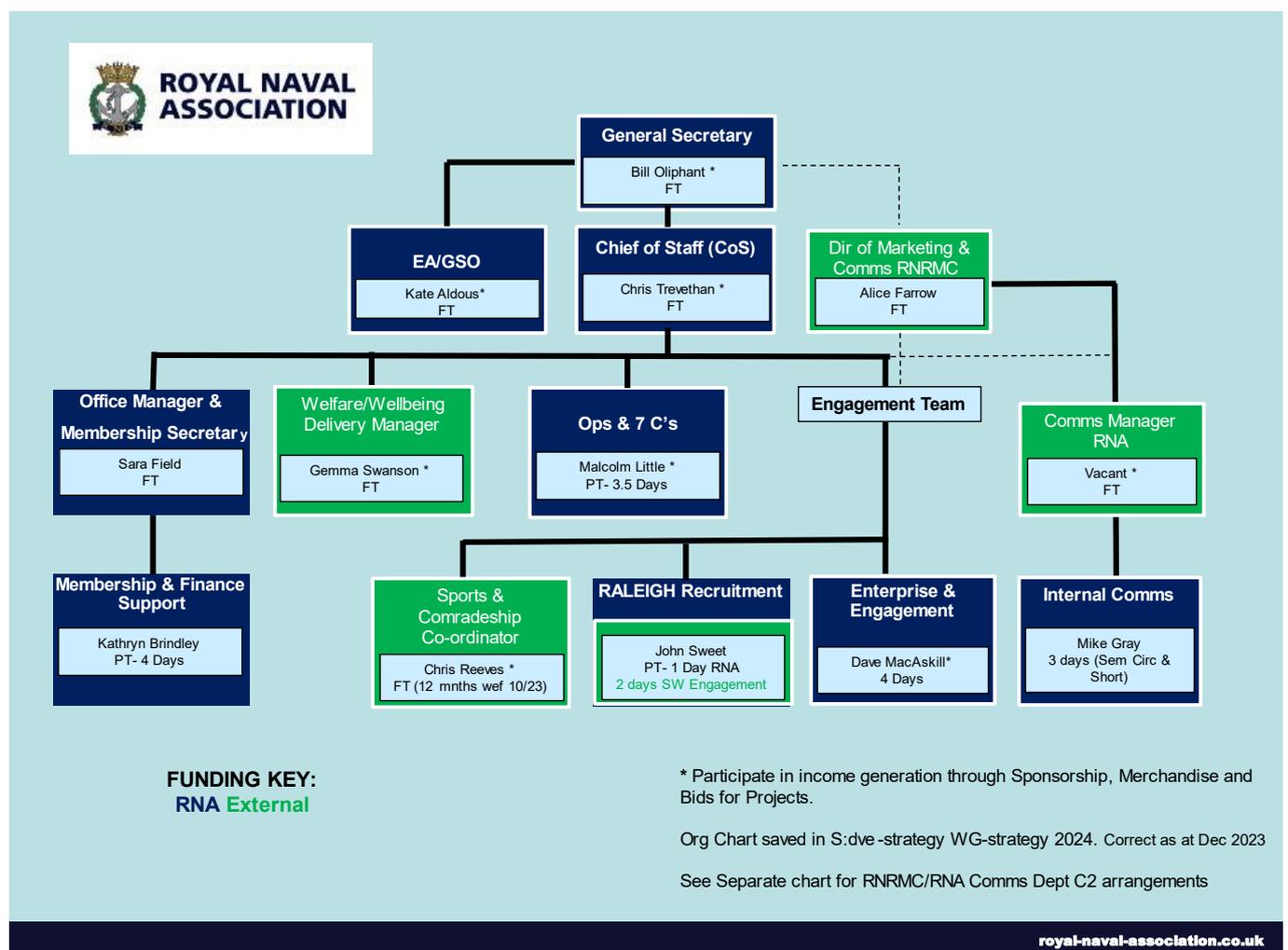


New National Chairman: Peter Godwin

S/M M Foley	NCM	1 Area
S/M W Belfitt	NCM	4 Area
S/M P Chivers	NCM	5 Area
S/M L Higgon-Young	NCM	7 Area (S Wales and Gloucester) & Overseas
S/M S Simmons	NCM	10 Area
S/M R Hastie-Murray	NCM	11 Area
S/m P Stephenson	NCM	12 Area (Ireland)
S/M S Elliot	NCM	Scottish Area
S/M I Irvin		National Treasurer

No 2 and No 9 Area NCM/Trustee billets remain vacant.

3. **Executive Staff.** The Trustees delegate responsibility for the day-to-day management of the affairs of the Association to its General Secretary, Capt Bill Oliphant RN. The Central Office team in 2023 consisted of:



4. **Independent Examination.** The Association's Auditors acting as independent examiners are Messrs Brooms Professional Services Ltd of Broom House, 39/43 London Road, Hadleigh, BENFLEET, Essex, SS7 2QL. They are represented by Mr Kevin Cornelius a Director of the Company.

5. **Bankers.** Our bookkeeping and management accounts are now done by RNRMC and our accounts sit with the RBS. Branch: Holt's, 31-35 Victoria Rd, Farnborough, GU14 7NR. Our investment managers are Sarasin and Partners LLP under a custody arrangement with the RNRMC on a

unitised basis. The National Hon Treasurer, Ian Irvin, represents the Association at the RNRMC Investment Committee.

6. **Solicitors.** The Association’s Solicitors are Messrs Blake Morgan LLP, Harbour Court, Compass Rd, Portsmouth PO6 4ST.

7. **Advisors.** In addition, the Trustees have appointed a number of Advisors to assist the Association Management Committee:

S/M Nick Purkis	Head of Governance Committee
S/M Geoff Apperley BEM	National Welfare Advisor
S/M Mike Smyth	National Ceremonial Advisor
S/M Gareth Booth	National Branch Recruitment and Retention Advisor
S/M Steven Caulfield	National Events Advisor
S/M Terry Whitty	HMS RALEIGH Lead Mentor

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2023

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

8. The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the

accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the Charity’s Royal Charter, the Charities Act 2011 (in accordance with note 1 to the Accounting Policies YE 31 December 2020 sub para a ‘Accounting Convention’) and the Statement of Recommended Practice 2015. The accounts have been prepared under the provisions of FRS 102.



The original Charter hangs in Central Office in HMNB Portsmouth

9. The Royal Naval Association was incorporated by Royal Charter granted by Her Majesty The Queen on the advice of Her Privy Council on 15th July 1954. A Supplemental Charter was granted on 26th May 1990, which is the Charter now in force and forms the basis of the current Rules and Bye-Laws and is our primary governance document. There was a minor revision of the Charter and more significant revision of the Rules and Bye-Laws during 2014. The Charter and Rules are subject to minor amendments annually depending on Conference motions. While the Association enjoyed the patronage of Her late Majesty, it is yet to be confirmed by

Buckingham Palace who will take on the patronage.

10. The Trustees comprise the National President, Deputy National President, National Vice Presidents which includes the Warrant Officer to the Royal Navy (WORN), in addition a serving Warrant Officer, National Honorary Treasurer and elected members of the National Council. Each elected member of the National Council represents a loosely defined geographical area and is elected for a period of two years by a simple majority based on a postal poll of Branches within the area represented. These are counted and reported on by members of the Standing Orders Committee at each Annual Conference. The National President, Deputy National President, National Vice Presidents, National Honorary Legal Adviser and National Honorary Treasurer (when not an elected NCM) are appointed by the National Council, as are the two RN Warrant Officers. The National Council of the Association delegates routine work to three sub-committees – the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), Association Management Committee (AMC) and the Governance Committee. In 2022, it also established a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group (DIAG).

11. Newly appointed Trustees are provided with information regarding their legal duties and responsibilities, as well as key documents published by the Charity Commission. As soon as practicably possible, Trustees training is also conducted. The General Secretary also arranges Trustees Continuation Training.

12. Details of the Association's officials are included on the Association website ([here](#)) which allows members of the public and Association members to know easily who represents them and manages the affairs of the Charity. After 7 years of outstanding service, S/M Keith Ridley (NCM 6) stood down as National Chairman and S/M Peter Godwin (NCM 8) was elected to succeed him. The RNA enjoys membership of: COBSEO; International Maritime Confederation and the Conference of Naval Associations. The RNA signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Navy in 2023. There is a strong network of naval charities who are in regular communication. These include, but are not limited to: RNRMC, Greenwich Hospital, RNBT, the Naval Families Federation and the Royal Marines Association. The General Secretary acts as a managing member of the Irish ex-Services Trust disbursement committee.

13. **Central Office.** RNA Central Office is located in Scott Road and the building is shared with the Association of Wrens. The Board of Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank the Second Sea Lord and Naval Base Commander (Portsmouth) for their continued support of the RNA in providing premises within the Naval Base for use as RNA Central Office.



RNA Central Office, HMNB Portsmouth

14. **Objectives of the Royal Naval Association.** The Objects are:

- (1). To further the efficiency and well-being of the Service, preserve its traditions and encourage recruiting.
- (2). To foster comradeship and "esprit de corps" among those who have served or are serving in Her Majesty's Naval Forces.
- (3). To provide facilities for bringing Members together.
- (4). To perpetuate the memory of those members of Our Naval Forces who have died in the service of their Country.

- (5). To provide relief from conditions of need, hardship or distress to persons who have served or are serving in Our Naval Forces and their dependants.
- (6). To advise members and other persons who have served in Our Naval Forces and their dependants on subjects affecting their welfare, referring on to appropriate agencies where specialist advice is required.
- (7). To advise and assist Members and other persons who have served in Our Naval Forces in their search for employment.
- (8). To pursue any or all of objects (2), (4), (5), (6) and (7) above for the benefit of members or former members of the Naval Forces or former members of the Commonwealth at a time when those Naval Forces were part of Our Naval Forces, and either or both objects (5) and (6) above for the benefit of the dependents of such persons.

15. Public Benefit. The Trustees confirm that they have taken due regard of the guidance contained in the Charity Commissions guidance on public benefit, set in 'Charities and the Public Benefit – Section G', when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives; and in planning future activities and setting the budget for the year. The Trustees note the ongoing exceptional public benefit provided by Project Semaphore iPads, the LIBOR minibuses and through the Seven Cs Comradeship model. Also, there exists a host of academic evidence that being part of an Association like the RNA creates social benefits which contribute extensively to improved mental health resilience and by contributing to the fight against loneliness the Association does much to lend itself to social prescribing.

FINANCE

16. Funding Model. At the end of 2020, a Special National Meeting was convened to set subscriptions to zero and switch to a donation funding model. The Trustees are most thankful to the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity who have underwritten this move with a substantial grant. This has allowed considerable growth of the organisation which has now nearly doubled in numbers in the 3 years since. We are now reaching more of the wider naval family.



17. Risk and Reserves Policy. With the shift in funding model, the Trustees recognise that there is considered to be more financial risk however with the loss of approximately 1000 members per year for over 30 years, the risk in maintaining the same model was obvious – membership numbers in 2020 had dwindled below 10k for the first time. The Trustees have concluded that the risk set against the Reserves policy remains satisfactory for the uses of the Association. The Association's Reserves Policy is reviewed annually and aims at holding sufficient Unrestricted and Undesignated Funds to provide funding for the following:

- a. To provide financial resilience if donations do not keep pace with the rising costs of providing services to members.
- b. To generate income to subsidise current activities.
- c. To provide future income.
- d. A reserve in case of a major business continuity issue.

- e. A contingency for wind up costs to cover legal requirements for redundancy payments; incomplete periods of contracts etc, which the Trustees will be legally obliged to meet.
- f. A contingency for other unexpected events.
- g. Future projects not yet mature in development.
- h. To provide the opportunity to purchase a freehold or leasehold property as the Central Office, since the lease for the present premises in HM Naval Base, Portsmouth is unsecured.

18. **Review of Reserves.** The Trustees have reviewed the level of reserves against their policy and, despite the additional risk of moving to a donation-based income model, have agreed that they remain at a satisfactory level. The level of investment income deriving from the Association’s Reserves is an important factor in deciding whether or not to expand or reduce them since investment income contributes significantly to meeting operating costs. The Trustees have also reviewed the policy of maintaining the designated Property Fund and have considered that this is still a valid necessity in order to secure funds needed to acquire property in the event of changes to our current arrangement.

19. **Offices.** Our lease for the offices within the Naval Base has been renewed and there is little sign that we are likely to be asked to move. Notwithstanding, the Trustees conclude that it remains prudent



Open Day in full swing at Central Office – note the GS’s legs are whiter than his RNA Tropical Rig white shorts!

to make provision in the reserves to cover the potential costs of providing office space. The property fund stood unchanged at £491,375 at the end of FY2021. The Trustees have reviewed Portsmouth commercial rents, and the trustees consider this remains an adequate figure to provide office accommodation. The requirement

to maintain funds in case of a major Business continuity problem remains valid, as does provision against wind-up costs and unexpected events.

20. **Investments.** After the political turmoil in 2022 which took a toll on our investments, the performance in 2023 has improved with better than budgeted results. That said, the investment brokers which we are using – Sarasin – have not done as well as might have been expected so they remain under scrutiny by the Investment Committee.

21. **Legacies.** Unless we have had prior knowledge of a legacy coming in, we do not bank on legacy income when budgeting. 2023 was, however, an exceptional year for legacies with income of £234k.

22. **Restricted Funds.** The reserves figure is inflated by grant money held for various projects and which are held in Restricted Funds. The generation of income through investment of the reserves is an essential part of the RNA business model as donations alone do not cover expenditure. This policy has not changed with the shift to the donation-based income model.

23. **Standards Fund.** This is a fund where the Association self-insures Branch Standards with Branches paying an annual premium. It provides for the cost of repair and in cases of loss or damage beyond repair, the cost of a new Standard.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

24. The Trustees make the following observations:

Overall. The Trustees report an overall increase in funds of £84,386 – an increase in the value of the organisation of 5.4%. This was due in the main to a generous legacy bequeathed to the Association. The Trustees are content with the financial position of the Association.

The Board of Trustees are thankful to the RNRMC for taking on the role of Management Accountants during 2023. Brooms retain the audit function. The 2024 budget process included all Funds

The Trustees are cognisant of the additional risk the switch to a donation based income model presents and are thankful for the support of the RNRMC to allow us to achieve this. Nevertheless, the Trustees are thankful for the level of strategic reserve which gives confidence to allow the safe transition and grow the Association.

- a. **Donations in lieu of Subs.** £72,901 was raised in donations, including a very generous donation from the Plymouth Branch to the Central Charities Fund for £10k. This was up from last year's £61,708. The RNRMC has underwritten the move to withdraw annual subscriptions and kindly donated £147,000 towards operating costs. This grant is also tied to the 7 Cs initiative.
- b. **RNA Lottery.** To help with fundraising, the RNA introduced a lottery in 2023 launching it at the Annual Conference. After set up costs, it raised £4161 to 31 Dec 23.
- c. **Legacies.** It was a good year for legacies with £234k income received. The Trustees are thankful for these donations and recognise they are an important element of our funding. We do not however anticipate legacies, so they are not included in the budget unless we have had prior indication with some certainty that they are forthcoming. Recognising the value of these legacies, the RNA has joined services with a major will writing organisation to introduce a free will writing service where, it is hoped, that more shipmates will leave a little something to the RNA in their will.
- d. **Operating Costs.** The operating costs of the charity increased in 2023. This year they were £565,828, up from £402,183 in 2022. This includes a charge of £72,959 for the services provided by RNRMC which is effectively a contra entry as these services were donated. The true figure therefore for operating costs is £492,869.
- e. **BCSF.** The Trustees continue to be delighted with the success of the Branch and Club Support Fund minor grants scheme introduced in 2018. The scheme allows the CEO to approve grants of up to £250 with minimal bureaucracy. Applications this year have included Branch annual

Zoom fees.

f. **Gift Aid.** £3,816 for 2023.

g. **Investments.** Investment income is reported under FRS102. Investments remain held in a Custodian arrangement with the RNRMC. The market value of investments at Year End was £1,395,324 which is down from £1,416,454. This included a drawdown of £50k for cash flow purposes. The investment income for the Full Year was £33,412. Our National Treasurer, S/m Ian Irvin represents the RNA on the RNRMC's investment Committee.

h. **2024 Budget.** With RNRMC now acting as our Account Managers, we have extended the 2024 budget to include all Funds rather than just the General Fund. This means that we will have a better handle on our Cash Flow throughout the year as the budget will encompass the entirety of our business.

i. **The Naval Service Memorial Fund.** Expenditure on the fund was £1417 leaving £8511. The fund stands at a sustainable level with 10 years worth of insurance and maintenance in hand.

j. **Minibus Fund.** The Minibus Fund was established in 2017 with a sizeable grant from the Libor Fund. It is now down to £2,666 and running costs for the 3 x minibuses sit at approx £7.5k/year. A number of bids have been raised to support the continuation of the minibuses as they are all still in very good condition.

k. **Standards Fund.** The standards fund remains at £10,000

Annual Accounts

25. The main element of the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 is the Statement of Financial Activities for the year, which is an annex to this report.

26. It is important that the Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet are read in conjunction with the Notes, which appear in the Accounts. The market value of Investments is as stated in Notes to the Financial Statements.

27. The Trustees remain indebted to the auditors Brooms for their continued support and guidance and to the Finance Team in the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity who do the bookkeeping and management accounts.

Risk Management

28. Risks are assessed by the Trustees, with the Risk Management Policy reviewed annually and the Risk Register reviewed more regularly. Financial risk is assessed in the 10-year forecast. The most significant financial risks are: the switch to a donation based income model will not realise the funds required to operate the Association, movements in financial markets affecting investments and the MoD unexpectedly terminating the lease on HMNB Portsmouth offices.

29. The main strategic risk is to membership numbers. The strategy of switching to a donation based income model and the development of Special Interest Groups where members are encouraged to form groups to feed their interests and hobbies, demonstrate relevance to a younger cohort and serving personnel and are already proving attractive – the Association has nearly doubled in membership

numbers in the last three years. Marketing and communications are tuned to this goal.

30. The Trustees are also very alive to the risk of reputational damage to the Association and have established a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group (DIAG).

31. The most serious operational risk is slip, trip and medical emergencies during RNA events. The Charity mitigates this risk by training all the Central Office (HQ) staff as Red Cross qualified workplace first aiders and the acquisition of an Automated External Defibrillator. There is also the Reputational Risk associated with branches failing to meet their governance responsibilities. which is now receiving a great deal of focus as part of an ongoing Governance Review.

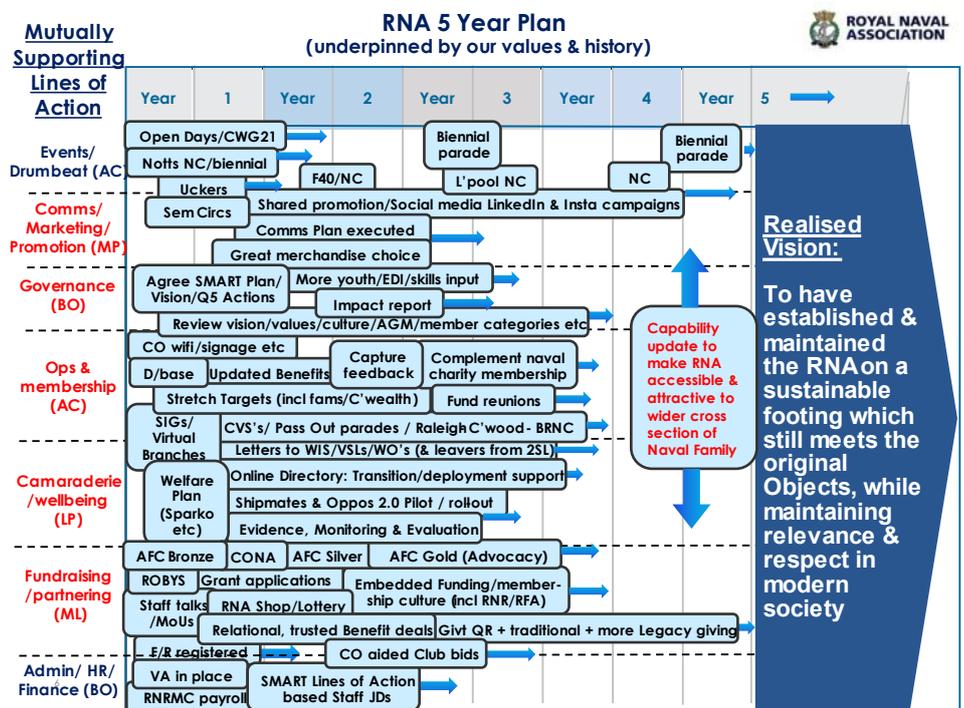
32. **Branch Governance.** It came to light during the year that some Branches of the Association are not following the Association Rules and Byelaws as laid down in the Royal Charter and, having taken advice from the Charity Commission, one Branch is subject to further confidential investigation. This has necessitated hoisting governance up the priority list, and it is now a standing item on the agenda of the Trustees Board Meeting. The risk of reputational damage to the Association is significant so it has been necessary to employ a Governance Support Officer both to police and support this business area.

33. **Insurance.** Risks to the Association and to the RNA's support of its Trustees are mitigated by adequate insurance, which has provided a significant protection to RNA funds in previous years. Insurance has been expanded to include the activities of the mentoring at HMS RALEIGH and also includes liability insurance for the National Standard Bearer when on RNA duties. The Association is GDPR compliant and has invested in strong security of members' data held in the new database server. Nevertheless, insurance also exists for data breaches including hacking and theft.

STRATEGY

34. **Mission.** Our mission is to **foster comradeship within our membership.**

35. **Strategy.** 2023 represented Year 3 of our 5 Year Plan depicted here. While this plan has driven budgeting, all effort aligns to our Objects in Paragraph 14 above, pointing in one direction towards a realised RNA vision.



The 7 Components of Comradeship - The 7 Cs



36. As reported in our Annual Report last year, we have developed the concept of the **Seven Components of Comradeship – the Seven Cs** - and we are working with partners like the RNRMC, Greenwich Hospital, the Naval Families Federation and the naval benevolence charities to take forward the components of this initiative. As we move forward, the Seven Components of Comradeship

will become our measurable deliverables of output and our reporting will be geared around this.

ACTIVITY REPORT

37. **Annual Conference.** This year the Conference was held in Liverpool to coincide with the 80th anniversary celebrations and commemorations for the turning of the tide in the Battle of the Atlantic. There were a full range of events including the dedication of the Battle of the Atlantic Memorial Garden by HRH The Princess Royal who also took time to meet some of our WWII veterans in the Memorial Thanksgiving Service held in the Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas.

38. During Conference, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Councillor Mary Rasmussen, admitted the Association to Liverpool City Council's Freedom Roll of Associations and Institutions in recognition of the RNA's outstanding contribution to the community.



HRH The Princess Royal shares a moment with RNA Vice President, Claire Robson at the Battle of the Atlantic 80 commemorations in Liverpool.

Conference was privileged to hear from:

- The Lord Mayor of the City of Liverpool, Councillor Mary Rasmussen, and the Mayor of Liverpool, Joanne Anderson.

- The First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key KCB CBE ADC briefed on the current opportunities and challenges facing the Royal Navy

And, complementary to the BOA80 theme:

- Dr Jann Witt of the Deutscher-Marine Bund (DMB,) which is the RNA’s German equivalent, briefed on German maritime strategy for WWII.
- Vice Admiral Mike Gretton CB CVO presented on the success of Convoy ONS-5 which is generally accepted to be the turning point in the Battle of the Atlantic. His father, Peter Gretton, commanded the Convoy Escort Group for that convoy.

39. **Biennial Parade of Naval Associations.** The RNA led with the planning and execution of the Naval Associations Biennial Parade at the Cenotaph on 10 September. The event was enjoyed by some 400 participants on Parade at the Cenotaph. The complete naval family was represented with serving



The Naval Associations' Biennial Parade - Whitehall

squads from both Sultan and Collingwood, RNR from HMS President, Sea Cadets and of course the RNA and many other associations represented. We were also joined by the RNA’s sister association in Belgium who sent representatives to take part. All in all, with Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Martin Connell, taking the salute in a sunny Whitehall, it was a great occasion.

40. **HMS RALEIGH Mentoring.**

After a period of adjustment post Covid the mentor programme, has been re-established on a firm footing in RALEIGH. All mentors will now be DBS checked and receive the same E&D training the staff enjoy. The mentoring was one of five examples of “Best Practice” in a recent OFSTED type inspection at HMS RALEIGH.

“The divisional staff do an amazing job of turning recruits into sailors. But it is just that, their job. They are proud professionals and the gatekeepers to the Navy. But who is there to balance that? Who is there to say “Don’t worry, this is normal, trust the process”? Well simply, you were there. Thank you so much. Thank you from the recruits and thank you from the families.”

Quote from parent of an HMS RALEIGH trainee – Dec 23

41. **Open Days.** Central Office arranged a number of Open Days in 2023 which were much enjoyed by Shipmates. The Open Day features a sandwich lunch, RNA activity brief and boat trip of Portsmouth dockyard. Branches from all over the UK have previously enjoyed this event.

42. **Culture and Values Sessions.** The initiative continues with Phase 2 trainees from COLLINGWOOD and SULTAN. Andy Christie has kindly offered to continue this service *pro bono* after his retirement.

43. **World Uckers Championships 2023.** As endorsed by the First Sea Lord, the RNA is the World Governing Body for Uckers and the Association was



The RNA hosted World Uckers Champs 2023 – never underestimate the intensity of this blood sport!

proud to host the 2023 Uckers World Championships in the Royal Maritime Hotel on Saturday, 14 October. The popularity of this event means that it will now take place on an annual basis.

44. **Special Interest Groups.** A successful bid to the Afghan Fund of the Covenant Trust Fund in the autumn of 2023

resulted in the employment of a former RN PTI, Chris “Scouse” Reeves, with the aim of attracting a younger cohort of working age veterans to the Association. This has also added momentum to the SIGs some of which are doing particularly well, for example, the Caravanning and Camping Group now has over 500 members. The list of current SIGs is at Annex C.

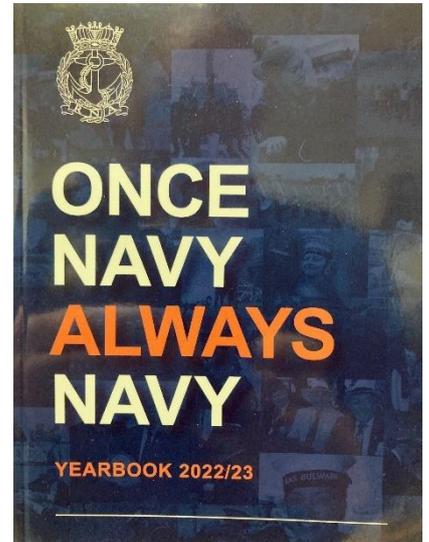
45. **CONA Conference.** This was successfully conducted in Feb 2023 with participation from many associations. The RNA retained the Chair.

46. **LIBOR Minibuses.** Well used and still in very good condition. Funding bids are pending.

47. **Communications.** The following comms outputs have been achieved in 2023:

a. Hard Copy

Yearbook. The Central Database has allowed us the ability to post a copy of the Yearbook to all members' households. Although a costly evolution, it is the only occasion that something physical is despatched to the entire membership so is considered a worthwhile exercise. It also gave the opportunity to remind those who might not have already set up a Standing Order to donate to the Association.



b. Soft Copy:

Semaphore Circular. This is the monthly newsletter of the Association which is published on the first Friday of the month.

Semaphore Short. The Semaphore Short is a weekly publication sent out on the third and successive Fridays in the month. As with the Semaphore Circular, it now goes out to all the membership who have an email address on the Central Database.

Branch Committee News. The 2nd Friday of the month is communications for Branch Committees and is addressed to both the Branch Secretary and, as backup, the Branch Chairman.

c. Virtual Gatherings:

Fireside Chats. These continue on every Monday evening at 1830 (stand fast Bank Holidays and Christmas leave period) with a range of both internal and external speakers on naval matters historical, current and charitable. The list of Fireside chat speakers for 2023 is at the Annex. They are all recorded and available on the RNA community Facebook site. To avoid confusion, we use the same Zoom link each week:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2888305105?pwd=TmtwempUWGwwUEtOciY4ZU15RU5FZz09>

Saturday Night Virtual Tot. Equally, the very popular Saturday evening virtual tot hosted by the Wrexham Branch continues. Details on the Community page.

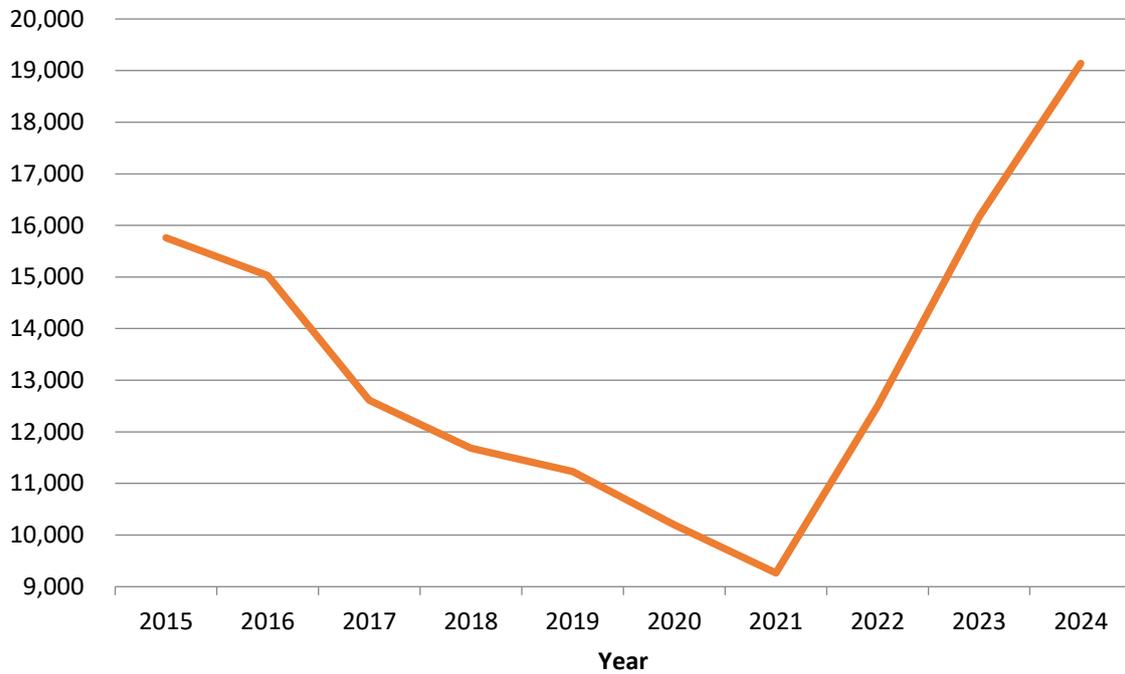
QR Codes. We started using QR codes to lead us to our "Join Us" page in 2021 and the original QR code has now been updated to lead you to a menu of choices including offers like tickets.

48. **Operations and Membership**

The Central Office database still works well although with the increase in numbers, we have started work on a more powerful successor.

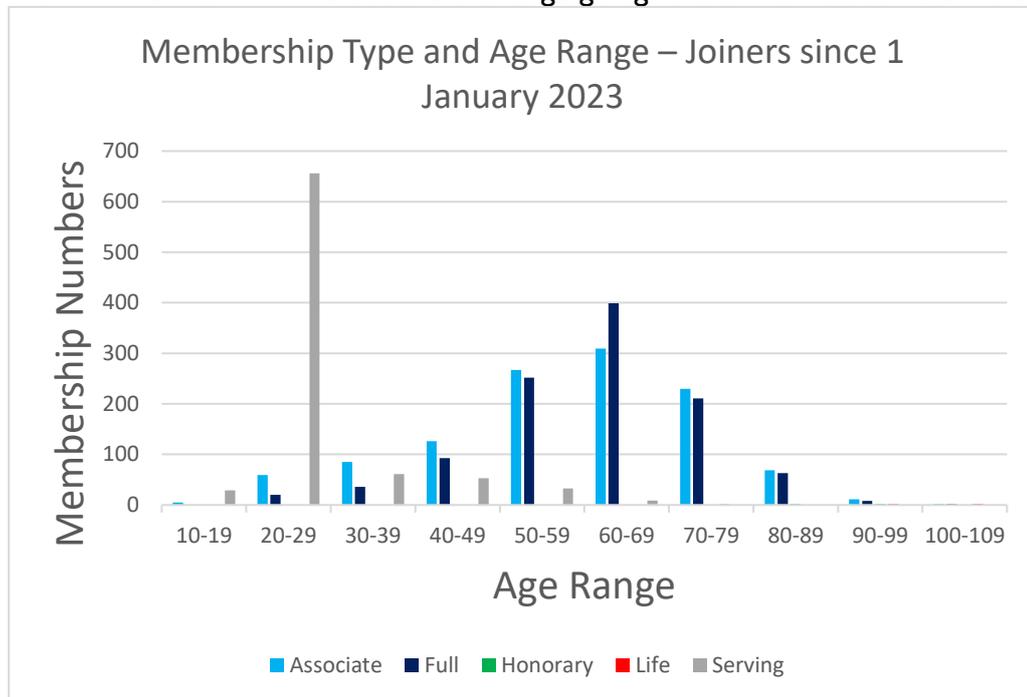
With the third year of a donation-based income model now achieved we can see that it has done wonders for our membership numbers – at the end of the year we were nearing 19,000 members, up nearly double our figures of 3 years ago.

Membership of the RNA 2015 to 2024



2023 Membership Matrix						
Area	Life	Full	Assoc	Year 2023	Year 2022	Year 2021
1	11	85	346	442	371	274
2	39	361	283	683	667	626
3	57	934	765	1756	1563	1283
4	80	972	387	1439	1374	1208
5	38	404	505	947	958	868
6	22	283	423	728	681	577
7	27	363	325	715	645	605
8	49	468	727	1244	1217	981
9	33	302	582	917	834	680
10	54	620	763	1437	1277	1103
11	45	430	830	1305	943	623
12	18	175	221	414	407	362
Scotland	24	482	108	614	577	495
Overseas	9	245	367	621	519	298
HQ	83	4743	1,051	5877	4136	2758
TOTALS	589	10,867	7,683	19,139	16,169	12,741

49. We are keen to attract working age veterans into the Association to give the organisation a younger feel and to give it some longevity. The data below is encouraging in that it shows that the majority of new joiners in the 50-70 age range are Full members and the numbers of Serving members who have joined the Association are also increasing. We can clearly see the effect of recruiting the new entrants at HMS RALEIGH and BRNC but the challenge going forward will be to retain them.



WELFARE/WELLBEING

50. **Strategy/Funding.** The Welfare/Wellbeing component of Comradeship really came to the fore during COVID when it was realised just how important this was. The Trustees therefore take the opportunity to thank RNRMC for their continued support in granting the Association continued funding for the provision of a Wellbeing Delivery Programme in 2023. The Board of Trustees are cognisant of safeguarding legislation and are seeking to ensure that the Association operates within the bounds of safeguarding best practice while not losing sight of our desire to support close friends and shipmates.

Project Semaphore. Funding for the Project is now exhausted and the Fund is closed but rather than bringing the Project to a complete halt there will be a natural wind down as there will be an element of recycling of hardware which should keep us going for a few years. We will reach obsolescence at some stage. In 2023, this was subsumed into the Wellbeing Delivery Programme.

Wellbeing Workshop. Significant energies were invested in the planning, preparation, and engagement of welfare officers for the Wellbeing Workshop which took place in Feb 23. There was an excellent response and 95 delegates attended.

DBS. We are now registered with the UK DBS Umbrella Service and the Raleigh Mentors were the first tranche to be DBS checked.

ENGAGEMENT

51. **Partnering.** There has been lots of change in the leadership of close partners within the naval charity sector with RNRMC, Greenwich Hospital, the Royal Marines Charity/RMA and the White Ensign

Association all appointing new Chief Execs in 2023, while the WRNS Benevolent Trust voted at their AGM to come under the management of RNRMC. 2024 will also see new Chief Execs in the RNBT and Aggies changing over. Despite this, the Association continues to have a close working relationship within the sector.

The Association has collaborated with the following partners **during 2023**:

- **RNRMC** for funding, admin support, and shared communications. RNRMC's key support is fundamental to the success of this programme.
- **RNBT** for beneficiaries Wellbeing Support and advice - our "one up" when wellbeing becomes a welfare need.
- **Fighting With Pride** for support with D&I improvement and tackling loneliness within the LGBT community. We have signed up as a Pride in Veterans Standard (PIVS) member, and updated our D&I policy.
- **RNRM Widows Association** for a close partnership in bereavement support.
- **NFF** to reach the wider naval family.
- **Aggies** to better link pastoral support with wellbeing.
- **CONA**. As President to reach and influence up to 100 individual large and small naval associations (including Submariners, the AoW, RNR, MNA, and RMA), providing overall co-ordination, advocacy, and leadership where applicable. Our next CONA Conference is on 28 March 2025.
- **Cobseo, OVA, SSAFA, TRBL, VOS, ASDIC, Veterans UK, Single Capbadge Association Network (SCAN), Portsmouth/Liverpool City Council** and others regarding AFC, Freedom of the City and a wide range of advocacy issues. NB: On many higher level occasions, the RNA are the only naval representative, speaking on behalf of members.

52. **Corporate Sponsors.** The Trustees are also extremely grateful to all our corporate sponsors.

53. **Chairman's Message.** The Council continue to be supported by a growing professional crew in Central Office; without their dedication and determination to deliver the best for our Association, we would not be the centre point for Royal Navy veterans around the world. We recognised the outstanding work of our Membership Secretary, Sara Field. The Council awarded Sara a Certificate of Appreciation for going above and beyond in her service to the Association. Also, our partnership with RNRMC in particular, has seen our Association expand further this year in so many ways. We thank them for all their support.

The Council recognise that we need to modernise our governance and professionalise our delivery of welfare and wellbeing to our veteran community. Furthermore, we continue to develop our Diversity strategy so that the RNA is a place for all who have served in the Royal Navy. These transitions are essential to modernise our Association, to meet the needs of our members and to reach out to the 'lost and lonely' veterans, wherever they may be. In particular, to provide a safe harbour for those shipwrecked in the storms and turbulence of life.

I was honoured to be elected as National Chair in 2023 and recognise I have large shoes to fill. I thank my predecessor Shipmate Keith Ridley for his outstanding service to the Association and the Council honoured Keith making him a Vice President. The RNA has achieved a lot in the last twelve months but there is still much to do. There is a wealth of experience and leadership in the National Council, with the contribution of our advisors, Central Office crew and our partners, we will rise to meet the challenge of providing a safe and hospitable haven for all who are serving and who have served.

Peter Godwin
National Chairman

Annexes:

- A. Life memberships awarded in 2023
- B. List of Fireside Chats conducted in 2023
- C. Current list of SIGs with lead contact details

Annex A

Life Memberships awarded to Shipmates in 2023

Deborah Beeson – Plymouth
Andy Christie – Lee-on-the-Solent
Ronald Howell – Dartmouth
Donald Jones – Wrexham
Anne Macleod-Carey - Purley
Desmond McCarthy MBE – Plymouth
Gordon Mustard – Woking
Kevin Norman – Paddock Wood
Michael Noonan – Portsea & Portsmouth
David Richards - Caerphilly
Dennis Taylor – Ramsgate
Ken Tinkler - Birmingham
Brian Toney – Falmouth
Gordon White - Rhondda
Brian Witham – Eastbourne

The following were also awarded Honorary Life Memberships in 2023 to mark their service in WWII

Vera Brett – HQ Roll (WWII veteran)
Robert Dack – HQ Roll (WWII veteran)

Annex B

Fireside Chats Programme 2023

02-Jan		NY Public Holiday	
09-Jan		RAdm Steve Moorhouse	Director Force Generation, Royal Navy
16-Jan		Richard Cutler	International Search and Rescue
23-Jan		Gordon Jones/David Clough	RN E Gaming Association
30-Jan		Prof Matt Kiernan	Veterans Food Poverty Survey
06-Feb		Capt Mark Hardwick	RN Logistics Training in 2022
13-Feb		Mike Milne	Battle of the Atlantic
20-Feb		Capt Katharine Armstrong RN	Head of Naval Intelligence Branch
27-Feb		Stuart Wright	White Ensign Association
06-Mar		WO1 Jim Wright RM	WORN - Naval Update
13-Mar		Kevin Casey	Diving Museum No2 Battery Stokes Bay
20-Mar		Cdr Tom Sharpe	HMS ENDURANCE near loss
27-Mar		Micheal Edwards	SAIL - Seafarers Advice Information Line
03-Apr		Malcolm Farrow	The Union Jack
10-Apr		Easter Monday	
17-Apr		Cdr Bryan McCavour	RN Battlestaff Update
24-Apr		Dr Mark Barton	Duelling in the Royal Navy
01-May		May Day BH	
08-May		Coronation BH	
09-May	1900, Tues	Steve Dingley	Pusser's Rum to propose Toast to His Majesty, King Charles III
15-May		David Lewin	The History of Waterproof Clothing
22-May		Mike Milne	Western Approaches Tactical Unit
29-May		Spring BH	
05-Jun		Mark Calhoun	US National WW2 Museum
12-Jun		Hugo Mitchell-Heggs	HMS Audacious - RN Ocean Rowing Team
19-Jun		VAdm Mike Gretton	The Tonnage War - Convoy ONS-5
26-Jun		Richard Jones	The sinking of the SS Lulworth Hill
03-Jul		Mike Ellis	The Baltic Cauldron
10-Jul		Sandra Peaston	CIFAS (Credit Industry Fraud Advisory Service)
17-Jul		Cdr Brian Boxhall-Hunt	Royal Alfred Seafarers Society
24-Jul		Dr Jann Witt	WWII German strategy for defeating the RN
31-Jul		Hannah Prowse	Portsmouth Historic Dockyard - Future Plans
07-Aug		Summer Leave	
14-Aug		Summer Leave	
21-Aug		Malcolm Farrow	Colours of the Fleet
28-Aug		Summer BH	
04-Sep		Brian Finch	The SS Lisbon Maru story
11-Sep		Susie Martin	Helicopters at sea
18-Sep		Mark "Dicky" Barton	The history of the Engineer Branch
25-Sep		Paul Godfrey	Operation Source - X-Craft v Tirpitz
02-Oct		Malcolm Farrow	Britain beyond the Seas

09-Oct		Craig Jones/Caroline Paige	Fighting With Pride - Government Compensation Roll-out
16-Oct		Mark Johnson	Legal issues in an uncertain commercial maritime world
23-Oct		Angus Konstam	"The Convoy"
30-Oct		Tony Moth	The RNA Riders Branch
06-Nov		Capt John Foreman	Defence Attache in Russia when Putin invaded Ukraine
		Prof Claire Jowitt/Julian	
13-Nov		Barnwell	The Last Voyage of the Gloucester and Why it Matters
20-Nov		RAdm Iain Lower	Commonwealth War Graves Commission
27-Nov		Capt J-M Sullivan USN	USN Update
04-Dec		Mark "Dicky" Barton	Forgotten/lost naval dockyards and bases
11-Dec		Matron Dodds	The Confessions of a Health Professional - Part II
18-Dec		Christmas Leave	
25-Dec		Christmas Leave	

Annex C

List of Special Interest Groups/Branches with lead contact details

Riders Branch – Mark Gayton: secrnariders@gmail.com

Camping and Caravanning – Ron Shilton: rna.camping.caravan.motorhome.club@gmail.com

Classic Cars – Mike Burnham: hon.secretary@rnarayleigh.org

Cricket – Mark Smith Markmiff1962@gmail.com

Cycling – Craig Fulton: craig@govguide.co.uk

Divers – Bill Lawless: billylawless40@yahoo.com

Fishing – Selwyn Davies/John Stephenson: rna.fishing.sig@gmail.com

Football – Chris “Scouse” Reeves: scc@rnassoc.org

Golf – Colin Dinsdale: rna.golfers@gmail.com

Model Makers – Gary Daisley: gddaisley@blueyonder.co.uk

Rugby - Steve Phillips: stevephillips99_uk@yahoo.co.uk