

**Branch meeting held Ennis Square Social club,
Wednesday 10th October 2011**

1/10b/11

The chairman opened the meeting at 1930hrs. The tribute to the fallen was given by the secretary. Apologies received from s/ms Jan Harper, Noreen Sowden and Brenda Coaster,

The chairman began by telling the members that following last months meeting being ended so quickly, members must listen to what is being said and if a question needs to be asked, just raise your hand and everything will be dealt with in order.

2/10b/11. Minutes

The minutes of the last branch and committee meetings were read and approved.

There were no matters arising.

3/10b/11. Correspondence

All relevant correspondence was read, there were 7 items as follows:-

- 1. From national who say they are looking forward to the good turn out by the members at the coming AGM at Birmingham, on the 15th October.*
- 2. There were three CVs from MNA members who have put their names forward to be on the trustees council, Capt. Rod McDonald, Newport, Wales, Capt. Gareth Peaston and Alan Speight.*
- 3. From the secretary Cleveland Police Band.*
- 4. A letter from Colonel Stewart regarding being our Patron*
- 5. A letter sent by the branch secretary to our Branch Patron Colonel Stewart.*
- 6. From national regarding a book having been written about the Cunard Shipping Co.*
- 7. From s/m Noreen Sowden who sends her apologies for not listening at the last branch meeting.*

Regarding the correspondence:-

- 2. The CVs of the three candidates were not read out, but the secretary told the members that they were there if any member wished to read them.*
- 3. This item from Cleveland Police Band secretary is in relation to a letter sent by the secretary on behalf of the branch asking that the bill be sent to us for the band's appearance on 4th September in the 'Garden of Remembrance'. The information received states that our request for the invoice has been asked for.*
- 4. Colonel R. M. Stewart OBE, TD, DL has agreed to be our branch patron. (see next item).*
- 5. The secretary had sent a letter to Colonel Stewart using an updated letterhead that shows the Colonel as our patron, and also thanking him for accepting the invitation and also informing him of what he will receive from the branch so that he is up to date with what we are up to.*

There were no other matters arising.

4/10b/11. Treasurers Report

Treasurer s/m Raymond Coaster gave his usual up to date report on how the branch is standing financially.

Income to the 30th September stood at £626.50. Expenditure at £313.56, giving the branch a balance of £1,480.92 (Yorkshire Bank statement £1,480.92). The branch Welfare & Remembrance Fund stands at £2,279.48. The treasurer also informed the members that Christmas Cards are now on sale as are tickets for the branch social evening in December at the Redcar RAFA Club.

5/10b/11. Branch Representative

S/m Billy Dobson gave an insight to his work for the branch over the past month

Following my research in to piracy for the library display I have put 'Save Our Seafarers' in contact with Tim Brant with respect to possibly getting someone to talk at the AGM on Saturday.

Outings/Dinner

Speaking with Col. Stewart this afternoon, he suggested the possibility of a tour of the HMS Trincomalee in Hartlepool. He is past chairman, and a current member of the Trincomalee Trust and said he would be able to arrange something for us. There is a charge but he thought he may be able to negotiate a discount for us.

What about a branch dinner? The Trincomalee can cater for dinners, either seated or buffet. I believe Col. Stewart they could cater for up to 40 seated or 60 standing in the Captain's Cabin and even more in the mess.

Library Exhibition 2011

Thanks to Tony for his excellent publicity. There have definitely been visitors to the exhibition who would not have seen it if it were not for the publicity.

Book

It has been suggested (lady from Loftus) that we should produce a book on the branch based on the material used for the exhibition. We could sell the books for raising funds.

Would suggest possibly for 2013 - the 20th Anniversary of the branch.

Initial research has found £1.80 to £2.50 per book, based on 100 copies.

The exhibition is now over for 2011, and we are intending to repeat it in 2012.

Has anyone any thoughts as to where we could also display besides the libraries?

When collecting the display from Skelton I was informed about:

Heroes Return

Allowing WW2 veterans from the UK to visit the sites on which they served

The Big Lottery Fund is pleased to announce it has extended its Heroes Return 2 programme by a further 12 months with a new closing date for applications of 31 January 2012.

This will ensure Second World War veterans from the UK, Channel Islands and Republic of Ireland who are yet to take advantage of the funding, will have more time to apply for grants to cover travel and accommodation expenses and enables them to make trips throughout 2011 back to places across the world where they served. They can also receive funding to take part in an official commemoration in the UK.

Since 2004 over 50,000 people have made commemorative trips with funding from BIG's Heroes Return schemes with grants totalling over £24 million.

Veterans who fought with or alongside British forces in World War 2 and who are resident in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. War widows and widowers of veterans are also eligible for funding, and carers and spouses can receive funding to travel with veterans.

Calendars

We now have about 40 calendars left.

Several members have still not bought, yet we have some members who have excelled.

Please let us have more effort from some members - you know who you are.

I've done a crew list and I will be marking it off against each member as the year progresses.

There was no report from the Welfare Officer, as she is away on holiday.

6/10b/11. Branch Public Relations Officer

s/m Tony Whatmore gave a good insight to his work with the media on behalf of the branch. It had been noted that a good report appeared in the press regarding our new Patron Colonel Stewart. Tony also reported that November's events had gone out to Coastal View. Tony touched on a very upsetting story that had appeared recently in the press regarding the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill, London, where bankers were wishing to hold a corporate event in the sunken garden. Tony went on to say that he was disgusted with this news and he was going to take it up with the press and do all he could to have this insult stopped. The secretary told the meeting that the MNA were onto this already and that he had first seen this report on the breakfast BBC news.

As another sideline in Tony's report, he again said that he was willing to take over the running of the branch 25 Club to ease the pressure on the treasurer.

This report was well received with a round of applause.

7/10b/11. Any Other Business

7.1 Football Card & 25 Club

A Football card was run with thanks to s/m Tommy Graham, and won by Stoke, s/m John Wilkinson.

The 25 Club draw was made. 1st prize No. 31 s/m Vilma Collins, and the second prize was won by s/m Noreen Sowden with No. 30.

7.2 Ladies Section

The secretary again raised the possibility of having a Ladies Section within the branch, he reported that the ladies are in favour of this move. The secretary went on to say that putting ladies in a room together with a cup of coffee and they will talk and talk and will come up some way of making money that us men will miss. Another item the secretary raised was the fact that the branch over the past 21 months had spent £4,500 on Welfare & Remembrance and by the time the year end comes it would be nearer £5,000, and that is why we need to turn these ladies loose on money making ideas. The members voted for the Ladies Section to go ahead. The secretary told the meeting that the ladies will have no overheads any items they require like stationery and postage would be supplied by him, but they will need to keep a record of their activities.

7.3 Change the Constitution

The secretary informed the members that he wished to make changes to the branch constitution namely on finance; he outlined the clauses he had in mind. He also said that he would also have to make changes to the constitution to make provision for a Ladies Section, he had all the details in mind that were required and he would get on with the work and put it to the members. If all goes well he would like the constitution ratified at the branch AGM in January. This would be a better way than just making amendments as they would be handed out and get lost. All was agreed.

7.4 Memorial Books

With regard to the branch Memorial Book, the secretary reported and gave them out for the members to look at to show how he had divided all the names of those who had Crossed the Bar into two books, one for branch members only, and one for merchant seamen in general from the Teesside area. The members were asked where they would like these books to be displayed. After a short time of toing and froing it was agreed that we will try and have them placed in the Kirkleatham Museum.

7.5 Taff Jenkins.

s/m Taff Jenkins had brought a very good blazer with him to the meeting and he was looking for a good home for it, any money given would go into branch funds. Taff also told the meeting that he knew of two flag poles that were at an old closed down pub, and he thought that we should have one if possible as we are intending having a flag pole at the Birger anchor when it is put back in place after all the regeneration work is completed on the sea front.

7.5 Combined Services

s/m Ian Barnes reported on activities within the Combined Services group where he represents the branch. He reported that there was disappointment at the turn out of Standards and personnel for the flag raising to mark Armed Forces Day. The secretary told the members that the Merchant Navy had turned up. Ian also said that it had been announced that the BKUA will disband on 13th October 2013 but hopefully not locally.

Other items put forward were by the chairman regarding the coming trip to Hull 12th October and on the 15th October for Birmingham to attend the MNA AGM. The pick up times were given out for both events.

With no further business the chairman thanked the members for turning out, and told them that he was pleased with the way the meeting had gone and closed the meeting at 2030 hrs.

Secretary Dave Buckworth Chairman Dave Price

Proposed ----- Seconded -----