



The Chairman's Annual Report 2013

The Finances

The interest on the CCLA account has declined in percentage terms but the capital sum has increased. In 2013 bank interest earned us £294. See figures below:

2007 - £1423
2008 - £3000
2009 - £200
2010 - £300
2011 - £422
2012 - £525
2013 - £294

We are also limited, by the Charities Commission, as to where we can deposit funds. Whilst you only need to look in the financial sections of your favourite newspapers to see better interest rates, these are unfortunately not open to charities.

It is also worth looking at is the income and expenditure over the last 8 years. This information is readily available on the Charity Commission website (England and Wales) <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk> and the Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) www.oscr.org.uk/search-charity-register/charity-extract/?charitynumber=sc039054

It shows a continued fall in income up to 2010. 2011 and 2012 include substantial receipts towards the memorial costs but the 2013 figure is virtually clear of memorial income.

Year	Income	Expenses
2006	£36144	£35152
2007	£51264	£27190
2008	£28767	£27364
2009	£27121	£23822
2010	£28778	£25807
2011	£38653	£25081
2012	£61461	£40683
2013	£25932	£33789

Note that if the final memorial payment of £15,720 is removed from 2013 expenses our costs last year would have been £18,069. Which means Income has exceeded expenditure since 2006.

A gift aid claim was made during the year which added £2,568 to our income.

Marketing

Website Sales

This area of our activities is, sadly, quite problematic. In order to sell an item we have to buy in and to do that we have to buy in in quantity to just break even which of course means laying out a lot of money. As with the Christmas cards, see below, items can remain in stock for some considerable time and even pass a sell by date leaving us out of pocket. We would welcome any suggestions for items that might interest members, and of course anybody else who would wish to purchase RFAA ephemera but in the absence of credible suggestions we consider the website sales option to be a good idea that wasn't quite as good as we had hoped.

Christmas Cards.

RFA Association Christmas Cards have been quite popular among the membership in the past and we have a number of boxes left over from earlier years. It is not our intention to produce or sell cards in the future as the profit is very small and the left over cards are difficult to move. However we are certainly open to offers to shift the remaining cards we do have. Just one design of the RFA Colours Ceremony in 2008. The chairman is open to any reasonable offer to clear stocks.

The Membership

Membership is currently running at around 653. This comprises 10 Honorary Members, 201 Life Members, 433 Full members and the remainder are either widows or unclassified members. Life membership is still awarded by COMRFA to retiring staff but staff taking redundancy packages are given just their first year membership. It is the Association's position that all staff leaving the Service should only have their first year sponsored by RFA. As life membership deprives us of future funds and more importantly we want members to value the Association and to want to pay their annual subscription which continues at just £15.

The Trustees.

The Constitution was amended during the year to allow trustees to stand for a continuous term in office of 9 years although they must be re-elected on a year to year basis.

Chief Officer (SE) Frank Andrews, Chairman, Preston. (Stands down Nov 2016)

Captain Pat Thompson, Deputy Chairman, Barnard Castle. (Standing down AGM 2017)

Captain Alan Roach, Belfast. (Stood down in 2013)

CPO (Carp) George Mason, Crombie. (Stands down AGM 2019)

Mrs Pam Axworthy, Welfare, Newark. (Stands down AGM 2018)

Captain Robin Lock, Corporate Fundraiser, Exeter. (Stands down AGM 2020)

Captain Ray Bennett, Solent. (Stands down AGM 2021)

Mr Peter Fry, Treasurer, Solent. (Stands down AGM 2020)

Captain Nigel Jones, Cardigan. (Stands down 2022)

Also the following are Ex Officio Trustees appointed by COMRFA

Captain (LS) Rupert Drew

PO (E) Ian Boyle

Chief Officer (LS) David Gatenby (Stood down in 2013 and has yet to be replaced).

The Association is always looking for potential candidates to undertake the duties of a trustee. Without trustees the Charity cannot function correctly so members must be prepared to support their Association and they should contact the Chairman if they feel they could volunteer their services. We look for members from across the board, across the specialisations, and across the country as it is crucial that the Board is as representative as it is practically possible to make it.

The Branches

Plymouth and South West.

A very active branch with by John Halford as Chairman.

Solent

A very active branch with Brian Waters as Chairman.

London and the South East

Chairman, Shane Redmond assisted by David Cooper manage this branch.

Midlands

John Sail is Chairman.

Scottish and Newcastle

Andy Armstrong and Gill Forth now jointly run this branch

North West

This small branch is chaired by Ian Thompson and has held its first meeting during the course of the year.

It is important that the work of all Branch Chairmen and their committees are fully recognised and I would like to offer my sincere thanks for this volume of work that is readily undertaken and for time so freely given.

Associated Organisations

The Association has links to the RFA Association of Malta, Chairman Anthony Farrugia, and John Caruana of the London Branch provides liaison.

There is a very unofficial “branch” (The Far Flung) in Thailand with John Littlechild providing the necessary liaison.

The Management

The Association continues to occupy rooms 212 & 214 in Semaphore Tower, Portsmouth Dockyard. Our offices house the entire collection of RFA artefacts, pictures, battle honours belonging to ships no longer in service and a substantial collection of literature. We are particularly grateful to Richard Williams and Steve Talbot who are currently giving us sterling service in bringing order to both rooms.

The Association continues to have trustees from all areas of UK and our management has become a more diverse and widespread task. Modern IT has enabled this to be done successfully although a few of us would prefer to spend less time on our computers. The trustees continue to meet approximately 4 times a year but all the day to day work is effectively done in private homes. The Chairman is assisted by Dawn Reay who is our Membership Secretary and Bookkeeper. The Deputy Chairman runs the website and manages ceremonial duties. Trustee Peter Fry is our Treasurer. Robin Lock handles Corporate Fundraising and Pam Axworthy takes the lead on Welfare issues.

The Website (www.rfa-association.org.uk)

The website continues to provide news to the membership and has been further enhanced by Dave Gerard, the Plymouth Branch webmaster who has added a photo gallery archive. This is now on display and more will be added to it in the future.

Each branch now has its own area on in the website to publish whatever is necessary to keep the members informed, likewise each branch has its own area in the HQ photo gallery.

In addition to the website we now operate a Facebook and Twitter page, members should just search the Facebook and Twitter sites to find our entries.

The Members Handbook

The Members’ Handbook and Yearbook. The 2013/2014 Yearbook was distributed to all members in March 2013 and the 2014/2015 Yearbook was edited in November/ December and distributed in March 2014. It is hoped to produce a new Handbook in 2015.

Despite the fact that we get the Year/Handbook for free it still costs a substantial amount of money to distribute it. This year it cost in the region of £1100, and this figure is likely to rise significantly, as it does every year. We try to mitigate the expense by coupling the mailing with the Reunion and AGM mailings.

Gunline

Gunline was our normal third line of communication with our members but because publication was not forthcoming during 2013 the Deputy Chairman devised and produced an on-line edition called Force 4 and this has been sent to all on-line members who have declared, and maintain, an up to

date email address with us. Clearly postal delivery reaches every member but without Gunline this has been an excellent means to keep in touch with the majority of our members and without cost.

The RFA National Memorial.

In October the new RFA National Memorial was given its first annual inspection by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman who are pleased to report that it appeared in excellent condition and is easily withstanding the Staffordshire weather.

Keeping the memorial alive and relevant is not so easy and consideration is currently being giving to holding some sort of service/remembrance event in the National Memorial Arboretum grounds in 2015. This would naturally be open to all RFA and RFAA members and anyone who has an RFA connection.

Annual Meeting with the Commodore.

The Formal Annual meeting with the Commodore did not take place in 2013 as many informal meetings allowed us to keep up to date with our parent organisation. We were however able to welcome Commodore Rob Dorey shortly after his appointment and have since been able to hold our first formal meeting with him.

The Association has requested a short list of candidates who may qualify for the James Coull Memorial Award and the Association will take this forward as soon as possible.

The Constitution

At the 2013 AGM in Liverpool we amended our constitution to allow trustees to serve a total of 9 years given the annual support of our membership. It is now thought that we may not have had 5% of our membership physically present and even though we were only a couple of members short the decision could be regarded as invalid. After discussions with the Charity Commission we have agreed to reintroduce this amendment in 2014 to rectify the situation. We will also take steps to ensure this situation does not arise again.



Frank Andrews
Chairman
The RFA Association.

14th May, 2014