



# The Chairman's Annual Report 2014

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## The Finances

Our reserves currently stand at £60,533 and whilst the capital has increased over the past year the 2014 bank interest earned us just £256. An interest rate of .44% See figures for recent years below:

2008 - £3000  
2009 - £200  
2010 - £300  
2011 - £422  
2012 - £525  
2013 - £294  
2014 - £256

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

It is also worth looking at the income and expenditure over the last 7 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) <http://www.oscr.org.uk/>. Figures for 2011, 2012 & 2013 are distorted by the memorial costs and if these receipts and expenses are removed it would show that our income has just exceeded our expenditure every year since 2008.

Year	Income	Expenses
2008	£28767	£27364
2009	£27121	£23822
2010	£28778	£25807
2011	£38653	£25081
2012	£61461	£40683
2013	£25932	£33789
2014	£31596	£22650

Note: The 2013 annual award from the Central Benevolent Fund was received in May 2014 which further distorts the figure for these years.

No Gift Aid claim was made in 2014 but one will be made this summer to cover the last 18 months.

## The Constitution

No changes to our Constitution were made in 2014 and the Board of Trustees take great care to ensure the Association meets our constitutional requirements to the letter. We were able to make a small welfare payment in November 2014 and we have since produced a set of guidelines for future welfare use.

## The Membership

Membership is currently running at around 665. This comprises 10 Honorary Members, 202 Life Members. Life membership is awarded by COMRFA to retiring staff whilst staff taking redundancy packages are given just their first year's membership. It is the Association's position that all staff leaving the Service should only have their first year sponsored by the RFA. As life membership deprives us of future funding 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.

Trustees stand for a period of 6 years but may serve for a maximum of 9 years although they must be re-elected on a year to year basis.

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

Captain Pat Thompson, Deputy Chairman, Barnard Castle. (Standing down AGM 2016)

CPO (Carp) George Mason, Crombie. (Stands down AGM 2016)

Mrs Pam Axworthy, Welfare, Newark. (Stood down in October 2014)

Captain Robin Lock, Corporate Fundraiser, Exeter. (Stands down AGM 2017)

Captain Ray Bennett, Solent. (Stands down AGM 2018)

Mr Peter Fry, Treasurer, Solent. (Stands down AGM 2017)

Captain Nigel Jones, Cardigan. (Stood down in September 2014)

Captain (E) R Settle, Wirral. (Stands down AGM 2020)

Also the following are Ex Officio Trustees appointed by COMRFA

Captain (LS) Rupert Drew

SG1A Ian Boyle

Second Officer (E) Russell Downs

The Association is always looking for potential candidates to undertake the duties of a trustee. Without trustees the Charity cannot function and members must be prepared to support their

Association. Anyone who would like to volunteer their services and who is interested in becoming a trustee please contact the Chairman. 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.**

Plymouth and South West hold 6 meetings a year; normally seasonal lunches. A very active group with representation at Armed Forces Day, Remembrance ceremonies and other civic services.

### **Solent**

The Solent branch holds 9/10 functions annually, 4 committee meetings and have an active fundraising scheme with its 139 members. The branch have booked the De Vere Hotel for 2016 AGM and Reunion Dinner.

### **London and the South East**

London and the South East has a very busy year which included visits to Greenwich and Houses of Parliament. Representatives attended the Seafarers Service, and made a donation to the Marine Society. A questionnaire sent to branch members indicated more social activity and visits were wanted.

### **Midlands**

Midlands Branch had a quiet year however their membership is spread over a wide geographical area. They are hoping for more support in the next 12 months.

### **Scottish and Newcastle**

The Scottish and Newcastle Branch held 4 lunches within the year as well as organising the 2014 AGM and Reunion Dinner. This was a superb occasion at a first class venue. The branch is to be congratulated for their efforts.

### **North West**

An embryonic and small cadre who have recently been formed and who are actively chaired by Ian Thompson.

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 the volume of work that is readily undertaken and for the time they so freely give.

## **Associated Organisations**

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

We have an affiliation with Seychelles, Mr. Guy Govinden is leader and there are currently 12 Affiliates and a very substantial number of retired RFA Seychellois seamen.

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

We also have members in: Falkland Islands, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Croatia, Singapore, Oman, Spain, South Africa, Japan, Bahamas and Jersey.

## **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.

The Association continues to have trustees from all areas of UK and our management has become more diverse and widespread. Modern IT has enabled this to be done successfully although a few of us would prefer to spend less time in front of our computers. The trustees continue to meet approximately 3 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 and Robin Lock expertly handles Corporate Fundraising.

## **The Website ([www.rfa-association.org.uk](http://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.

Each branch 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 2014/2015 Yearbook was distributed to all members in March 2014 and the 2015/2016 Yearbook was edited in November/ December and distributed in February 2015. It is hoped to produce a new Handbook next year.

Despite the fact that we get the Handbook for free it still costs a substantial amount of money to distribute it. This year it cost in the region of £1300, and this figure is likely to rise, as it does every year. We try to mitigate the expense by coupling the mailing with the Reunion and AGM mailings.

## **Gunline**

Gunline used to be our regular third line of communication with our members but there was no issue in 2014 and only one in 2013. Whilst we expected a December 2014 edition this sadly did not materialise and whilst the Association pages were prepared they were not printed. It is thought likely that a large proportion of our older members are not on-line and would in any case prefer to

read the printed word therefore it is our intention to produce our own newsletter which we will post to members in September if there is still no sign of Gunline. Pat continues to write and despatch an on-line newsletter called Force 4 which is sent to all on-line members who have declared, and maintain, an up to date email address with us. Clearly postal delivery has the advantage of reaching every member but without Gunline Force 4 has been an excellent means to keep in touch with the majority of our members and without cost.

### **The RFA National Memorial.**

Keeping the memorial alive and relevant is not easy and consideration is currently being giving to holding some sort of service/remembrance event at the National Memorial Arboretum in October 2017. We have already raised this proposal with our patron HRH The Earl of Wessex and the event 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 2014 as several informal meetings allowed us to keep up to date with our parent organisation. We have however held separate meetings with both the CBF Board and the Commodore this year which will be included in next year's, 2015, report.

### **The Coull Memorial Award**

On 8<sup>th</sup> October the Coull Memorial Award was presented to 1/O E. J. Read in our Semaphore Tower offices. Present were most of the Association trustees, Commodore Rob Dorey and a number of Ed's colleagues. The award reflected the outstanding work Ed has done for the Strategy and Development Team since 2012. It is planned to make a further award in 2015 and annually thereafter.

### **Christmas Cards.**

Our thanks go to the Solent Branch who have managed to sell some of the Association's old stock of Christmas cards. This has not only added £121 to our coffers but has given us more cupboard space too. We still have a number of cards remaining, just one design, the RFA Colours Ceremony in 2008 and the chairman is open to any reasonable offer to clear these stocks.



Frank Andrews  
Chairman  
The RFA Association.

4<sup>th</sup> May, 2015