

Area Conference – Leyland.

July 30th 2005

The Summer Area conference, hosted by the Leyland Branch took place on July 30th 2005. The meeting commenced at 1400. Only 20 branches were represented at the meeting; the lowest number for several years.

In ‘Matters arising,’ the Delegate from Bolton once more returned to the theme of the increased subscription levels. His branch’s objection to these increases was directed to the salaries paid to the General Secretary and his Assistant, which now amount to over £70,000 per annum. The delegate further expressed the view that the ordinary rank and file member of the Association has no satisfactory way making his feelings known to the hierarchy. This subject refuses to go away, and is now becoming a regular feature at Area conference despite assurances from the Area committee that the vote to increase subscriptions had been democratically arrived at by the delegates at the Chatham conference in 2003.

Correspondence received in the previous quarter followed the usual pattern of Secretary and branch venue changes within the Area; there was also a letter from the Hazel Grove branch requesting the NCM to raise the question of the National Chairman’s role in the Association. They wish to know why the President of the Association chairs the meetings of National Council, and also national conference. If this situation is the norm, what is the point of having a Chairman? The Area committee, have requested our NCM to raise this at the next meeting of council.

Headquarters advise they received a letter from the Secretary of the Oldham branch of the TUC complaining of a threatening letter he had received from some alleged members of the RNA in the Birmingham area. This arose from an incident at the Holocaust Day commemoration in Oldham earlier in the year. Letter passed to Oldham RNA branch seeking further information if known.

Correspondence has been raised with the Royal Star and Garter Home for ex-servicemen following their announcement to build three new homes. This Area has asked them to consider siting one of them in the North-West.

The Area President has been involved in correspondence with the General Secretary concerning the validity of the ‘Proof of Service’ cards as issued by Headquarters. This follows a complaint from several members from this Area that these cards were not recognised by MOD personnel, in Portsmouth as proof of identity at various establishments in the city, even though these persons had made prior arrangements with the authorities concerned to visit these places.

The Area Secretary reminded the delegates about the Area web-site and the facilities it offered. This was the first news channel to give a report, accompanied by pictures of the proceedings at the Bridlington national conference in June.

In the Treasurer’s report, S/m Brocking said the Area’s finances were in a fairly healthy condition, boosted by a successful Area reunion in April. Interest on our savings in our investment accounts could be better, but these are affected by the current low interest rates on offer.

Due to the absence of S/m Atkinson, there was no National Council news to report.

S/m Caulfield giving his report as Area PRO said he was delighted to have been offered the post of deputy national PRO. He gave an account of his activities in Portsmouth in connection with the ceremonies there in June, including the Drum-Head service and the fleet review. He had helped to man the RNA stand along with several shipmates from his branch and neighbouring ones. He was actively pursuing plans to produce a commemorative mug, or glass to mark the occasion of Trafalgar 200; More news on this shortly.

In Any Other Business, the South Liverpool delegate complained of the large amount of unsolicited raffle tickets sent to his branch from the Seafarers UK (formally the KGFS). Several other branch delegates reported they had also a similar experience.

The Chairman announced the date of next year’s Area reunion as May 12th – 15th 2006.

Next Area Conference will take place at North Manchester branch on October 29th commencing at 1400