



The Merchant Navy Association
from ship to shore, from past to present



MNA EXECUTIVE REPORT 2018

“We can’t change the direction of the wind,
but we can adjust our sails to always reach our destination.”

Working together as part of a nationally recognised organisation and a nationally registered charity has given merchant seafarers a degree of national and local influence never before experienced in this country's history. Now, with over 780 red ensigns flying all over the UK on Merchant Navy Day we are achieving ever wider acknowledgement in those local villages, towns and cities? Amazing and you can expect more next year as we promote our 30th anniversary...we hope our two Founding members, Fred Harrell and Barry Osborne, would be proud of how far we have travelled and what has been achieved from that first meeting in Birmingham on 9th May 1989.

Every one of you is part of every success that has ever been achieved and that includes the significant increase in awareness, respect and recognition for our Merchant Navy veterans. We know there is more to do, more to achieve and more to have in place for welfare and wellbeing. There have been challenges and it has taken time, but you know, your Executive Officers and National Councillors **always remember** that we are here for you and we will always do what we believe is in **your interests** and protect what you hold to be **important**.

You also know success and happiness does not come ready made, it is something that takes time, it takes energy and it takes work...perhaps an element of luck as well. Just think how hard you need to work when it is for someone's special birthday or anniversary. The more you put in to making it a special day the more happiness you are likely to bring for everyone. Similarly, offering a helping hand to others makes a real difference to them and to you. Lasting friendships built on shared experiences, both ashore and at sea, may be considered as completing a virtuous seagoing circle that offers everyone something different but also the same; this because everyone is an individual with their own personal life experiences and views but we all belong to our community of the sea. This organisation works every day to make every member feel part of our community, part of something that has purpose and passion. The familiarity of routine and regalia add to that sense of belonging. When we attend regular meetings, parades and social gatherings we are proud to wear the blazer and tie and that signifies so much about who we are, our work experience and what working together looks like today.

Did you know, community-based acts of kindness can lower your blood pressure and increase your levels of oxytocin which benefits your cardiovascular system. There's more, yes, it also increases natural opioids in the brain to give you a self-induced high.

What more could you ask...all living on *natural highs*, how good would that be for maintaining a positive attitude and possibly reducing the need for that relaxing drink of beer or wine or both? OK..maybe a step too far, but worth a thought as the legs start to go and the mind starts to wander and that's just 'first trippers'!

Now, looking ahead and building on much that has been achieved by those before us we approach our next year's 30th Anniversary in good form as an expanding organisation with an enduring legacy already in place and a determination to do more, much more. New supporters will continue to join and help extend our sphere of influence for the next 30 years. We need to enjoy that and engender even greater empathy for those experiencing current challenges in the maritime sector, the life at sea and the likely impact of technology on their security of mind.

More has to be done through the combined will of the MNA's national consensus.

Membership retention and recruitment are basic elements of that willingness to do more. What about a National Recruitment Officer with a team of supporters right across the country? Your National Councillors will be discussing a new paper, produced by the Executive Officers, at their next NC meeting on 2nd February 2019. When their views are included in the document it will be circulated with the minutes of that NC mtg. Please take time to discuss the NC Minutes at your meetings and feed your views into the R&R document.

Another significant, enterprising and active year, if you see it that way.

It is not only the MNA who have initiated a change in the public perspective of merchant seafarers and lobbied for appropriate recognition of the value of their contribution in times of both war and peace. The 'title' Royal Merchant Navy was promoted by King George V during and after the First World War and particularly in 1919 when HRH gave a speech, in Glasgow Railway Station, to over 200 seafarers referring to "my Merchant Navy". It was to recognise the service and sacrifice made by merchant seafarers and fishermen. It was by no means the first time King George V had used these terms and it would not be the last.

Then in February 1928 the King decided, after much thought, to bring the British Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets into line with the other great Services of state. The King appointed Prince Albert, the Prince Regent, as the first titular head or 'Master of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets' in recognition of their service to both King and Country...so merchant navy became Merchant Navy...a capital idea! The King also proposed standardising uniforms, new training regimes and protocols that would support improved conditions and recruitment for the next generation of seafarers. A few years later King George V also supported the recently established and still only floating Livery the 'Company of Master Mariners'. This was for greater professional recognition, but he went a step further when he awarded the Livery Company the additional title of 'Honourable'...something unique at the time...helping to raise awareness throughout the City and the business community with such unique recognition. Today, Her Majesty the Queen, continues that support as Master of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleet. The MNA are honoured and delighted that the Queen writes a message, every

year, that is read at the Merchant Navy Day Commemorative Service at Tower Hill in London(MNDCS) by the Deputy Lieutenant. We are also honoured that Jim FitzPatrick MP reads the message from the Prime Minister every year and his continued involvement has been very much appreciated by all in the seafaring community. Thank you Jim and Shiela for all your support. Many of you also know the Princess Royal is Master of The Corporation of Trinity House as well as supporting a number of maritime charities and HRH Prince Edward is Patron of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Association. The MNDCS also welcomes Cdre RFA, as the Parade President every year; the opening address is always well considered and relevant. Our MNA National Patron, Lord West, has maintained his commitment towards greater recognition and supported the MNDCS since his days as First Sea Lord...we should never underestimate what is achieved without publicity and with the skilful use of soft power.

Today and every day your Executive Officers enjoy advancing our Associations charitable aims and objectives, much of which is then brought to our MNA National Council quarterly meetings. We have all gained much from this forum, with well considered and thoughtful discussions that help to take us forward, together, for the coming months and beyond. Observers are welcomed to our meetings and they are always invited to make a contribution.

Although our National President, Vivien Foster, is unable to be with us today she did attend one of our NC meetings as an Observer. Vivien has recently retired which has given her more time to visit her family overseas, give talks about our campaigns and our aims as well as being asked to Chair an exciting new MN memorial project to be sited on Plymouth Hoe. This new MN Memorial will be dedicated on **3rd September 2019** and all members will be most welcome. Vivien understands it is also your local Merchant Navy Day event that day and that many branch members already attend more than one event in their area that day. However, please try and send as many as you can to representative your branch. National Branch members now have a focus for MN Day 2019 and it is our largest branch. We have had contact with Capt John Rankin, who is co-ordinating attendees, and is also an MNA member. We will keep him up to date. It is John's wife Chris who has worked so hard to make the Seafarers Link phone groups so successful...now with the linkage to Silverline.

Today and every day we must also remember those who have been supportive of our work in many organisations all over the country but particularly Seafarers UK, Trinity House and the MNWB. Members, please also take time to thank your Branch Chairs and Secretaries and everyone who gives their time freely and with no thought of reward, just your respect.

With this year's Executive Report, I would like to review what was discussed at the National Council(NC)meetings and how those discussions and decisions impacted on how we have continued to progress the aims and objectives of this amazing campaigning Association.

Please note that next year is election year and details will be circulated at the appropriate time. Anyone who fulfils the criteria please have someone put your name forward for a more active role in the year ahead. When elected we always remember that we work for you.

The following headings are some of the interests discussed and their wider impact.

100th Anniversary, Merchant Navy Convoys, Serving the Need, Supporting a Nation.

This was the Post Mark agreed with the Royal Mail that went on millions and millions of envelopes in October last year. This was a huge boost to recognition for the Merchant Navy and the Convoys that effectively saved the country during WWI. We are in discussions with Royal Mail for another possible issue of stamps, possibly similar to the 2013 Battle of the Atlantic editions that the MNA campaigned for just a few years ago. We also have interest from The London Mint Company for another set of coins from ideas that we have already presented to them. All very exciting but only in the planning stage at the moment. We are all determined to make 2019 another year to remember for everyone.

Senior Rail Card 34% - This could now include an Oyster Card for those travelling through London. This was raised by a National Councillor who travels to London who knew about this additional linkage for discounted tickets. We then discussed the Defence Discount Card which offers a huge variety of ways to save money including a 7% discount on a leading brand of car, check it out if you are an MN vet. If you know of someone who would benefit from this card and any other discounted offers, please help them apply. Please also remember that the MNA is also registered with 'Just Giving' which allows anyone to nominate the MNA when they are making any purchases.

Careers - the MNA's 'Adopt a School' continues to be promoted in local schools near our branches and the MNTB Ambassador scheme has attracted interest although not as much support amongst our members as it deserves. Please consider getting involved as you could help the next generation of seafarers. Members are encouraged to join the Ambassadors Scheme where you can give talks to your old school or other local schools and provide them with some of your experiences with the additional support of MNTB info and flyers. Please contact Nigel Whitaker, the MNA's National Secretary, for more details as he has been an Ambassador for several years and visited many schools in his area. Thank you Nigel for all you do every day, seven days a week, fantastic commitment and very much appreciated. We all wish you much improved health in the year ahead and hope to see you at the next NC mtg.

Full Ahead - Councillors agreed it needs more membership involvement - John Rix has retired having enjoyed an illustrious career as our first editor after the current magazine was introduced shortly after I became National Chairman the the previous printing company refusing to print more than one edition a year. We have enjoyed four copies a year for nearly 20 years now and it represents exceptional value for your annual membership fee as well as presenting you with a wonderful opportunity to promote your own areas of interest. Anyone interested in being the next **Full Ahead Editor** please apply to myself as this could be an excellent job for somebody with the appropriate skills. We will be printing a special 30th anniversary edition in the Summer of 2019 and your ideas would be welcome. It is now most important that we recognise the huge contribution John has made and I am sure you would all, with me, like to show our appreciation...cheers John.

MNDCS - This year's event was really well received, and it completes our four years focusing on the MN and Fishing Fleets in First World War. Next year we need really good support for MNA30 year, the 75th anniversary of D-Day and the 80th anniversary of the start of

WWII. The idea for this annual Service was the concept of my predecessor as National Chairman, after he stepped down. He left the MNA and established another organisation and that organisation has now closed down after being dormant for the previous year. They have, however, agreed to pass their remaining spare MN Vets badges to Tim Brant and we much appreciate their work in this area and their goodwill in this transfer. This year I met a lady after the MNDCS who asked that we give more recognition to the Rescue Ships Service of WWII. They saved 4,194 lives from 14 nationalities in ships that were built for near trade and not deep sea. They were manned by merchant seafarers and worked independently of the Admiralty, so did not have to await orders before they diverted to rescue a distressed vessel. Once again, we received wonderful support from everyone at Trinity House and at All Hallows...thank you. You also advised that you welcomed the return of the MNA shop after the Service and it was good to see Brian Grey on parade with his 42 MN style wreaths ready for collection at Trinity House. Good work as always Brian, thank you.

Battle's Over - The MNA is one of the four nominated charities alongside the RNA, RAFBF and the ABF Soldiers Charity. Great coverage has been achieved for this national tribute by the organiser Bruno Peek, the Queens Pageantmaster. The tribute starts on the 10th Nov in New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Malta and other countries before the 0600 start on the 11th Nov in UK with the lighting of the Peace Lamp...a First World War genuine miners lamp to honour the 22,000 miners from Notts and Yorks coalfields supported by some of the 140,000 Chinese who joined the British Forces. We transferred the Peace Lamp from St Clement Danes to All Hallows on 18th October as part of the 100 days of remembrance ahead of the day of tribute, but it started its journey at Westminster Abbey on 4th August at a special ceremony spending 25 days with each participating charity. Our gallant President took the lead role that day and we welcomed one of the country's most famous singers of sea shanties and sea songs, Jim Radford. He was totally magnificent. The last line of Jim's self-written sea song was "to keep our lifelines open and keep this island free". Our warmest thanks to Jim and our Acting National Standard Bearer, Tom Martin and of course our President, Charles Woodward and Ian McNaught, the Deputy Master of Trinity House for their support that day. After the 0600 ceremony of the lighting the Peace Lamp in Westminster Abbey on the 11th November it will be transferred for display to the reception area of Trinity House. It should receive a great deal of interest before and after the HCMM Remembrance Service in TSG's and with those involved with the reading of names on the First World War memorial. A book has now been written and is available to members. We have written a couple of articles that try to set both time and place in context.

Branch Reports - Any branch can send a report to Nigel and it will be read on the day of the mtg. Those attending from branches generally discuss what has happened in their area from their reports. They generally cover a wide range of local events and interests. Thank you for those interesting reports, they take time and that is most appreciated. One recent report declared the use of both Red and Blue Standards at their local events. Another the number of Red Ensigns organised by the branch and others detailed how branches engaged with other organisations to promote awareness and greater collaboration. What is clear is that there is now much much more going on in and around our local branches; great news.

The Weymouth annual programme of events was discussed and it was agreed to be a notable success and again very well supported. The new MN Memorial could be seen clearly when the parade mustered for the Service and probably made everyone's heart pump that little bit harder. We do feel that the laying of the wreaths during the Service is something the Merchant Navy should also be engaged with as our losses are no less worth commemorating than those of the Armed Forces. We are Cobseo members and our vets and their families are included in the Governments Covenant. They should be honoured in the same way as all veterans now and always.

New BOA memorial in Liverpool. Problems arose with the original committee proposals for the memorial design with regard to statues being preferred by some which eventually led to resignations and retirements. For the MNA this has resulted in the establishment of a new group for a monument design that was rejected by the original committee. Our Liverpool Branch Chair will take the lead for this new Fundraising committee. Significant support has already been realised. More of this in the new year as matters are progressed and the final monument design is agreed by the new committee at their first mtg.

Newport's annual remembrance parade and Service was also a success and benefitted from a favourable wind and no rain. It is always good to meet up with friends from across the country and we look forward to attending this year's event on 17th November. Newport has two areas that commemorate and acknowledge merchant seafarers, the main memorial and another near the river where a new memorial seat was sited. Both events attracted a wide range of supporters from local dignitaries to local vets' organisations and friends from MNA Wales who we are hoping will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the National MNA next year. We are also hoping to extend that MoU to Hull, Thorne, the Isle of Man, the Isle of Wight and Harwich; bringing seafarers of all interests ever closer together.

HM Forces Day - representation in Llandudno. Tim Brant and I took part in a very long parade through the town, although we all did have a 10-minute tea break half way. Princess Anne and her husband were attending that day as was the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence. The crowds were amazing. After the parade the veteran's area was opened. Plenty of activities and military hardware to interest all ages. It was also an opportunity to say hello to Wendy Bale, who returned to the area of her childhood when Bert, the former Chairman of the Newport Branch, crossed the bar. She did say she was missing all her friends in the Newport area, but we tried to make her feel one of us by asking her to pay for the curry lunch! Not really, she made Tim and myself very welcome and cooked us a meal, thank you Wendy.

Silverline - They are finding isolated seafarers phoning for help and are now working closely with Seafarers Link to build an opportunity to make contact with other seafarers in their area for telephone calls. Once again, no seafarer needs to be isolated and this is another way of building relationships to improve health and outcomes

Data Protection Induction - The MNA National Councillors (Charity Trustees) induction was undertaken by your National Chairman as the MNA's Data Protection Officer (DPO);

required, by law, to complete and record this induction. You should all have seen details of the MNA's Data Protection Policy that particularly relates to the secure holding of your Personal Identifiable Information (PII). For those who haven't, there are copies you can collect today and there will be further information in the post provided you have agreed to being contacted in that way. As much as possible of this information will be circulated in the Winter Full Ahead, along with your copy of this year's MNA Executive Report. It will also be available on our updated website.

If you have any questions in relation to Data Protection or any elements of this report, please write to me direct.

MNA Policies - We discussed a number of policy proposals and you will now see that the Executive Officers have written a set of MNA Policies to help equip every member with an awareness of issues such as safeguarding, grievance procedures, prevent, conduct and areas of governance. We have a limited number of those policies here today but will ensure that you have sight of them online when we have updated the website. I would draw your attention to the Safeguarding Policy as it is quite explicit in the areas of adult abuse. Not good reading but members need to be aware of what to do in any of those detailed circumstances and should make sure those intending to visit colleagues or friends in their own homes be very cautious indeed. We should, however, all look out for each other whenever and wherever we can. There are always others who seek to take advantage of those less well off than ourselves...and well off does not necessarily mean financial but also physical and mental states as well. So please take care and help arrest any person or organisation abusing the rights of those left feeling insecure by the ups and downs of life but mainly the downs.

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) we have signed-up and registered with the ICO for Data Protection and updated our details to other organisations and in other areas. We did have experience of the workings of the ICO in relation to a grievance case appeal review for a branch member. That grievance also led to experience with the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Matters were eventually resolved on behalf of the branch and the member after almost three years this summer. If all members follow the Code of Conduct Policy there would never be any aggravated grievances, so please take care to follow any guidelines.

Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) - The Charity Commission have reviewed and updated accountancy procedures to gain further information and a deeper view as to how every Charity is managed. Some of this was possibly as a result of Oxfam and Kids Business. Our accountants asked a lot more questions about how we manage our accounts for this year's financial report and were completely satisfied by our reporting procedures. The Executive Officers have reviewed our procedures and protocols and are confident we comply with all the new requirements. New advice to National Councillors(Trustees) will be issued by the end of the year in line with additional advice from the Charity Commissioners. The Commission also require those engaging with members for the purposes of administering or managing the MNA Charity must have a Safeguarding certificate having completed an approved course relating to Adult Abuse. This now adds to the advice in the SSFA booklet we circulated to branches five years ago. It detailed precautions to take when making welfare visits to members and elements of pastoral care.

Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool - Sat 13th April 2019 This very exciting event is already building into something special and is receiving wonderful support from the first advert in the Full Ahead. We have produced a booking pack, and these will be circulated to members in a few weeks but have brought some advanced packs here today. If you are booking rooms at the Adelphi Hotel, we suggest you telephone them direct, if you are booking the meals you can telephone Roy Glencross direct and he is able to take your payment over the telephone. If you would prefer to complete the meal booking form and pay by cheque, then please send both to Roy Glencross. Some of you are interested in making it a long weekend event and we will work on advising you of how you can best see some of the sights in the time available. Perhaps some of you would like to attend a special MN Service at St Nicholas, the Seamens church on the Sunday...let me know any ideas that you have thought about. 'National' will help to subsidise transport costs for those travelling longer distances but will need invoices. Roy continues to progress a significant workload as our Membership Sec and a Branch Chair and his other charity work. He has successfully integrated the new Relationship Management software and negotiated terms for Worldpay that allows members to pay on the telephone if they choose. We have also re-set our passwords for PayPal and upgraded our emails to operate on a VPN, a virtual private network, for greater protection and security. All appropriate personnel have been sent the method of changing to this much higher level of cyber protection and should conduct all MNA business on their allocated email.

Birmingham - Sun 12th May 2019. Our thanks to the founding branch of the National Organisation for offering to support our 30th Anniversary and it does seem appropriate that we are all invited to Birmingham on Sunday 12th May 2019, back where it all started. With so many more events each year we need to book new ones as early as possible.

Boston - Sat 13th July 2019. So far this is the only other branch to advise they are having a 30th Anniversary event and you will all be receiving an invitation to that day. It will take place near Boston, Lincolnshire, in a field; Hog Roast with veggie options, Music, Entertainment, fun and laughter and all in the best of good company. Local B&B's are excellent value if you want to make a weekend out of the trip...perhaps visit the Boston Stump or Blackfriars jail where the Pilgrim Fathers were kept before they sailed aboard Endeavour to Plymouth.

HMT Lancastria - Thur 10th June was the date of this year's service in honour of the worst ever maritime disaster at St Katherine Cree church near Aldgate tube station. The MNA continues to raise awareness and maintain support for all their supporters and family relations. Some of those relatives and supporters have already provisionally booked a table for the MNA30 Anniversary Dinner in Liverpool. The MNA will continue to raise awareness of this terrible disaster and we look forward to welcoming them to MNA30.

UK Armed Forces Identity Card - The Government Strategic Review will report on 14th November 2018. The proposed card could be added to future driving licences. This UK Government commissioned strategy links in with the Armistice 100 commemorations. It is a cross-Government vision of how the country can best support Veterans into the future. We have previously been asked for feedback and written an MN Vets perspective. Veterans

Defence Discount is available to every MN Vet. Try...(www.defencediscountservice.co.uk) to register and start to save yourself and your family a load of money. It's probably even better than Black Friday discounts near the end of next month...November every year.

Our MN vets may now also join a new trade register for veterans if they are perhaps struggling to find work. If you know of any local job initiatives, please let National Council members know and we can discuss them with a view to promoting best practice in Local Authorities as well as National Government....some local Authorities have developed Veterans support groups as indeed has Nottingham County Council and my local village of Barrowby in Lincolnshire. Have you a local Vets Group in your area? If not, why not? Build relationships and partnerships with any local groups that do exist. This leads on naturally to 'Helping Hands'. People in local communities helping many aged and less able with their gardening and shopping.

We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone.

The RNA has four buses funded by a grant from the Aged Veterans Fund and they are available to MN Vets. This RNA initiative was inspired by their recently retired Chairman, Paul Quin, and we wish him well. He was really supportive and welcomed greater recognition for MN Vets...thank you Paul. They are now offering MNA members full membership of the RNA. We must also welcome the benefits of further collaboration through the good offices of CONA, a large group of associations that have negotiated special offers with a number of companies. Our thanks to Gareth Peaston for presenting our views at that forum and taking time to travel to Portsmouth for the meetings.

Fed Olson - Affinity Discount for MNA National Members (Use our reference code MNA10). You will also need your MNA Membership number and they may wish to confirm it is current so please pay your fees in January 2019. No money, no love! You all know how the world works. You may remember we enjoyed a similar scheme with P&O Ferries some years ago, but the discount became less than the special offers. We will be working on even more discounts and offers in the coming months so please pay your subs now or in January 2019...ASAP. Please also make sure your contact details are up to date. If you do want to change any of your details, we have produced a 'Subject Access' form to meet the need and it actually makes it very easy and straightforward.

The Red Ensign Campaign through Nick Harvey at SfUK - each branch needs to keep a record of how many ensigns they know are being flown next year. Make it a record year for the Red Ensign. Also record any red ensigns you see being flown on your travels both in UK and overseas. SfUK report 781 Red Ensigns as registered on their role of honour online as flying all over the country - some achievement, but we still want even more next year. Thank you to all those branches that have detailed the Red Ensigns that flew in their areas for their reports for this AGM. Next year, on our 30th Anniversary, we really need to push hard to have over 1,000 flying all over the country. Perhaps we could also find out how many are being flown in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malta, the Isle of Man and the Isle of Wight.

MNA Shop - Sandra Broom took over from Tim Brant and myself. We drafted new Terms and Conditions, reviewed the Distance Selling Regulations and reduced stock levels before drafting a different presentation of prices and postage costs after weighing every single item or collection of items such as the new Gift Sets...very popular choice and exceptional value. Sales have been excellent in difficult times with increased overheads, but we need to promote the shop to a wider audience - we need to be seen and heard outside our membership and the shop will be developed to another level...it is a significant income stream. We must again recognise the great contribution made by Brian Grey who continues to make our MN style wreaths and wish him well in recovering from recent poor health he has experienced. Thank you Brian.

Merchant Seafarers Veteran's Badge. We have now issued 5,830 badges with an estimated 11,100 in total being distributed. Tim has continued to do an amazing job and has posted the badges to over 14 different countries. We received 17 more requests for the Veterans Badge after our President's 'English' gaff on National TV on Remembrance Sunday 2017. Over 125 people contacted the MNA to complain, which clearly demonstrates how much people do care...every word matters, and facts need to be verified. We were encouraged by the response to our President's letter to those who registered their concern and we believe that her letter contributed to 51 new members joining the MNA. Thank you Vivien.

Branch encryption for Data Protection is something you will note from the Data Protection Policies and we are advising all branches, who hold members' personal details on their computers, to keep them secure. Keep paper copies of members details in a locked cupboard, drawer or room. Perhaps transfer members details to an encrypted memory stick and have nothing held on your computer. National would be happy to reimburse the branch for purchase of these sticks providing we receive the evidence of purchase to ensure we manage members money in a responsible and proper way.

RNA iPads - Project Semaphore. Over 600 iPads have been issued with 15 so far to MNA members. Recently the RNA proposed sending an instructor to the Liverpool area and it has been agreed they will go to the Seafarers Centre in Crosby, which is where our MNA branch meet. We have advised the organisers that we would welcome both MN and RN veterans if they wanted to attend the course. This will include those members of the Salford Branch who also have iPads issued to them. If Salford members have problems with travelling to Crosby, then National is prepared to contribute towards the cost of their travel expenses on the production of the appropriate paperwork to support those costs. For more information watch this short video <https://vimeo.com/286178772> Contact me if you are over 65 years old and qualify for one...this is all about not being isolated from your family and a community of fellow seafarers, digital exclusion.

Merchant Navy Medal - The Medals Committee continues and now meets with Dept of Transport before nominations go forward. We help where we can, but it remains a DoT decision whose names go forward. The MNA congratulate this year's 19 very deserving people who are now honoured by receiving the Queen's Merchant Navy Medal presented by the Princess Royal in Trinity House, London. A very memorable and Royal occasion for the

recipients and their families and held in such august surroundings. When this was discussed the National Council also went on to discuss the awards made by other organisations and the potential for the MNA to present an annual award. What are your views on this initiative? What about a photographic competition every year; perhaps the most interesting photo that incorporates water in an *unusual* way?

MNWB - Welfare Guidance Course - Branches were invited to attend this course but only your National Chairman took up the offer of a free course and free hotel accommodation in Southampton. It was really good to get up to date on care in the community. There are huge resources available to every member if you know where to look and there are many ways to access that little bit of guidance and help. Do you need a new cooker, a new fridge, help with sorting out your bills? It is all out there for you when you need it, just ask or go online to Seafarers Support or phone SAIL who currently are managing 56 cases relating to financial problems, all in total confidence. There will be more courses next year so please take the opportunity of free attendance and free overnight stay. If enough members apply the MNA will help to organise a welfare seminar locally in the area of greatest demand...look towards getting at least 8 people for each course. Then contact me and I will liaise with the MNWB contact for a course.

This Seminar was very informative and raised awareness of considerations such as 'what is the difference between giving someone help by signposting them or by referring them'? We also discussed how to improve our personal skills to be a more effective listener and how to build our unconditional positive regard. That is really not being judgemental when you are wanting to help someone. Talking or networking with others on the course was also both interesting and enjoyable. On this course I met people from the Queen Victoria home in East London near the old East India Docks. If you are home alone call 111. Our welfare contact and helpline information sheet holds 31 different organisations to contact, if and when.

NC Minutes - Please always review what is written in the minutes of the National Council mtg as there is so much of interest to local and national branch members. This also applies to our overseas branches who may wish to initiate policies and proposals for their own demographic. Members who enjoy the electronic 'MN Pulse' information sheets will also be able to read the NC Minutes in that email. If you are not on the email list please contact Malcom Mathison, who continues to excel in everything he does. Every organisation needs a Malcolm like ours! Thank you Malcolm, and a speedy recovery from the operation later in the year.

Safeguarding Courses for MNA Executive Officers and Branch Executives who are also Charity Trustees are available free of charge from the MNWB. The other option is to take the online safeguarding course which costs about £35 and this will be recompensed by National on production of the safeguarding certificate. Three Executive Officers have taken the Safeguarding Course, but we advise all branches that at least one member should take the online course. Any branches who are also charities should know it is also a mandatory requirement for anyone dealing with vulnerable adults, which you potentially do.

Trustees Roles and Responsibilities - new documentation produced was encouraged by communications with members of our branch in Ipswich. We were then well placed as the Charity Commission agreed new criteria. Thank you to them all, please continue to air your concerns and direct our thoughts.

Grants for funerals - This is something that came from the membership to the National Council originally. You can make a difference when you choose to, and this is just one example that has achieved a much wider impact nationally. This year saw increases and much more awareness;

Shipwreck Mariners' inc to	£600
Hospital Society	£300
MNA	£250

Check out Website 'www.lookaftermybills.com'. This will help anybody to check their financial security and please remember SAIL are always there to help at the end of the telephone. Contact Tim Brant who has been our Welfare Officer for many years and has a lot of experience in this area. Tim continues his amazing support and in many ways is the engine of our success as an Association over the last 20 years. Thank you so much Tim.

Imperial War Museum the mtg Terry Hughes and myself enjoyed with the IWM was essentially to develop our memorial pages on our website. They offered to share information and we gave them related facts about the MN in two world Wars. We then were invited to view the IWM special exhibition and there was a little bit of embarrassment when they discovered there was not one single mention of the merchant Navy, anywhere. We need a dedicated major MN museum as it would generate more MN recognition and support for more exhibitions. We thank Terry for all the difficult and sometimes 'dangerous' work as our webmaster and his very generous advice. Please send him pictures of any MN graves but please do not include people or ghosts! We aim to make that record the best in the world so please make it your aim to produce a clear photographic record of any losses including plaques, we will eventually become a reference site for all those seeking more information.

MNABC AGM took place at the Royal Dorset Yacht Club in Weymouth on 26th July. It was well attended and supported by local Weymouth and Portland Branch members. Next year's meeting will follow the MNA's AGM in Birmingham and all members are welcome to attend.

Concerns were raised at this year's mtg as to the objectives of this unique Boat club and how best members could contribute. The Association of Old Worcesters Yacht Club is also a club with a diverse membership. They have their AGM's in Southampton. So, it is not that we have a diverse membership that makes us unique but our series of initiatives. Clive Edwards, our Commodore, will speak more of this later in our Open Forum after the AGM.

The SeaVue project has progressed but no reports of minor or major disasters have been received. The concept is sound and its contribution to safety could be promoted more widely with some additional planning. SOLAS is just one of a number of other safety organisations but perhaps their remit does not cover inland rivers, lakes, waterways and canals.

The MNABC meeting advised that the RNLI had refocused on sea safety - was that through MNA initiatives, who knows but persistent lobbying will always have an impact even if it just opens minds. The RNLI scheme is called 'Casualty Prevention'. Like us they are working with NCI and MVS. Already this looks like our proposals for a national 'Safety Forum'. The MCA and RNLI have been testing drones along a stretch of Welsh coastline for SAR purposes. Could more lives be saved this way? How could drones be linked to existing systems of watch and wait and how could both the RNLI and the HM Coastguard better integrate this additional resource and then analyse the data. Could this be infringing Data Protection? Should the MNA sponsor a drone and work with NCI, RNLI, HM Coastguard, Port/Harbour and Manager/Masters? Since the AGM the very dedicated Commodore of the Boat Club and his team, particularly David Hughes and Chris Wade, have been encouraged by an offer of much greater collaboration and co-operation with the RNLI. It is very exciting and is certainly a clear demonstration of the increased influence of our Boat Club. Look up and look out for the "Respect the Water" initiative...it also could save lives.

SeaGreen10 - The MNA's environmental awareness scheme was sponsored by a member of the Boston and South Lincolnshire Branch. Reduce packaged purchases and plastic waste by 10%. Buy loose fruit and veg, use own travel mug at coffee shops and stop single use of plastic straws and spoons. The IPCC published a report earlier this month (Oct 18) on Climate Change. Climate is different to weather, perhaps not always appreciated. How will that impact sea trade and ports? The IPCC have forecast wars, famine and the spread of disease across the globe leading to inevitable changes in all aspects of society. Their view is the need to stop a rise in global warming by 1.5C above our pre-industrial levels, but we have already warmed by 1.0C since the 19th century. Modern warming began 200 years ago when we emerged from the little Ice Age. Until this report the IPCC agreed that that warming was due to natural causes. Now rising sea levels, extremes of weather and Arctic sea ice are blamed for this one degree rise. The sea levels have been increasing at about 8 inches every century for hundreds of years and, so far, we have managed the various challenges. More certainly needs to be done especially with parts of the world's growing industrialisation.

Science: Bubbles are the unsung heroes of the physical world, in Arctic ice, in every ocean and your morning coffee; discuss.

As detailed in last year's Executive Report, there is likely to be a 34% reduction in the carriage of goods by sea as a result of 3D printing, electronic bills of lading, advanced distribution ledgers and environmental pressures. Digital First solutions will be implemented at a time when the maritime industry is already in a period of accelerated change with the next step-change being when 5G is introduced. We certainly live in interesting times! Have UK training colleges properly assessed the industry employment skill sets, especially in an internationally competitive market place for young people with seafaring qualifications?

MV Freedom - This disability facilitated ship offers voyages at sea for youngsters. The NC agreed a grant to sustain their good work with trips around the Dorset coast. Over 1,350 children enjoyed a trip in the last 12 months. - We agreed a grant of £250. Next year we are establishing an annual bursary to help towards funding a person to have a trip every year on a sailing ship as part of our MNA30 initiatives. Similar possibilities could be agreed with the Shieldhall.

Phone-buddies - A Bristol Branch initiative for those unable to attend meetings - bringing members together and something to consider for all branches. Our Welfare Officers need to maintain contact with all members less able to attend every mtg and should remember to send Birthday Cards and Christmas Cards to maintain contact. Feeling part of something really matters and regular contact is reassuring and life enhancing for those living alone and especially for those without the benefit of any local family members nearby.

Signature Health Plan - has been in place for 14 years and still available to all National members. The NC agreed it needed promoting to new members and we will confirm the new premiums and benefits before producing a new information sheet that will then be circulated. No other group or company has ever offered this level of health care for merchant seafarers and their families. Take time to review the benefits and how it may take the pressure off payment for say new spectacles or private treatment for your teeth.

Welfare and Wellbeing (MNA Gateway) - Not unique to the MNA but a concept that is successful for Armed Forces Veterans. This was one of the best discussions as everyone could contribute so much. Access to help, when you need it, is essential as is confidentiality. We need a new volunteer to lead this initiative to build local welfare communities of support around each branch. Please contact Tim Brant or John Sail.

Aged Veterans Fund. We continue to monitor the substantial grant received and are delighted that Nautilus have recently opened the new dementia wing and are progressing a further 12 apartments for those seafarers in need who have been at sea for at least 10 years and are now needing help and assistance. There is continued work in researching seafarers needs which should be more relevant to our members across all age groups. The new drop-in centres are also a great start for community wellbeing.

Veterans Code - 13JY. This code is mentioned in this Report most years so please make sure you remember it as it is for your benefit. You really must tell your doctor and he will place it on your health records. Do it now, it could make a difference when you really need help later with fast tracked access to services.

Seafarers Awareness Week - Started with 'Seafarers Matter Day' on 25th June and lasted for the whole week. That week is also something we lobbied to achieve for a number of years. We continue to lobby for "Sea-tember" for a whole month of events. We will be adding to September 2019 events with a special Gala Dinner at Greenwich. Look up and look out for mn¹⁰⁰ details next year...the venue is booked.

Not Forgotten Association - Lunches /Christmas Dinners/ Boat Trips /Annual Palace Garden Party...all well supported, all successful and all very welcome with 62 MNA veterans enjoying veteran centred events throughout the year. Please contact Tim Brant if you wish to be included on any of their events in the coming year. Much appreciated, our thanks to the NFA.

Dress Codes for Standard Bearers and Members in hot weather. The MNA National has a document that details how Standard Bearers should present themselves, protocols and how they need to be aware of elements of their duties when on parade and representing the MNA. Our discussions centred on the prolonged hot weather and appropriate clothing with agreement for white short sleeve shirts with epaulets as the appropriate rig...now on sale in the MNA Slop Chest, contact Sandra Broom...very good price even with your choice of Branch or MN Logo added to top left of the shirt...where your medals would be placed.

Union Jack Club - Our National Secretary did some great work to finally agree terms for all MNA National members to stay over at the UJC. Thanks again Nigel. Yet another benefit of MNA membership that could save you money if you are attending any events in London such as Remembrance Sunday or the MNDCS and Reunion every September.

Research - Billy McGee and Ben Stocks supported by Sandra Turner and Eric White from our Birmingham Branch. Thank you to them all for their dedication and the very valuable contribution they bring to the many families who now want to know more about their grandfather or father and leading research projects. The National Secretary receives literally dozens of telephone calls a week with between 50 and 100 being for research. He first advises how they may start their own research before incurring any expense. Ben and his team received 350 requests this year. All have been attended to with just a few remaining. Additional projects for National awareness initiatives such as the Catchment and Charitable Risk Project, the SS Waianana research for a proposed TV special and D-Day research info. have and will encourage a further change in awareness and understanding.

National Service Day. "All gave some, some gave all" was the motto of National Service for Crown and Country. The MNA supported their very well organised events at the NMA in Alrewas. Sadly, they have been refused permission to continue this event at the NMA and we would like to wish Gerald, Ron and their wives a very much more relaxed year and thank them for their inclusion and recognition of the Merchant Navy, our seafarers and our fishermen. Gerald has joined the MNA as an Associate Member and we look forward to welcoming him in the future.

Fishing Communities after Brexit (UK Fishing Forum 2018). This document was circulated for discussion. The MNA supports the revitalisation of the industry, improved port facilities, a credit union, training initiatives and recruitment especially when 20% of the existing workforce are migrants to meet current crewing needs. We should never forget how EU policies decimated this valuable industry in UK. It will take time as much of the market sales have been centred on and around Rotterdam. There are new markets up and down the continental coastline that need exploring...perhaps Iceland has set the standards for the UK to follow. It is thought very likely that Fishing rights will be watered down to allow access for other UK goods and services to the European market.

BNTVA -British Nuclear Test Veterans- Doug Hern (Boston Branch Member) has been appointed their historian and has been conducting a wide variety of media interviews. He has always brought the MN into his discussions to help promote their involvement for greater

awareness. There were thought to be 22 merchant ships involved from UK, but Doug has found that there are more merchant ships from Australia. He has even found details that the Duke of Edinburgh flew over the site of the test in 1959, just six months after the explosion. Extraordinary, though the Government still had personal resident on the island. The BNTVA are now campaigning for a medal for over 22,000 of those involved including merchant seafarers. They have the support of the comedian Al Murray. The MNA fully supports the BNTVA and reminds those who may have connections with anyone who visited that area on a ship to please contact them or the MNA.

Chamber of Shipping - We welcome Bob Sanguinetti to his recent appointment as CEO UK Chamber of Shipping after being CEO of Gibraltar Port Authority and serving nearly 30 years in the RN. In line with last year's Executive reporting of issues experienced by those at sea today, it is wonderful to see that a new guideline has been issued, by the UK Chamber, in relation to mental health awareness, training and treatment. This is in fact just one of seven or eight pieces produced in this area of concern as standards of accommodation and working conditions for seafarers are reviewed. There are also new rights for shore leave. We received excellent support from Guy Platten who has now been appointed to the International Chamber of Shipping and we are sure he will enjoy the success he achieved at the British Chamber Chamber of Shipping.

Piracy - This year reached a 22 year low with 136 vessels boarded, 6 hijackings, 16 fired upon with 3 killed and 91 held as hostages. Many seafarers need additional support and advice before transiting the most troubled areas.

CWGC - The MNA are considered as a stakeholder in regards to the Commissions repair of the First World War memorial in Trinity Square Garden's(TSG's) as also are the Royal Palaces in respect of the Tower of London. The scaffolding is now expected to be erected next spring and will be covered in compliance of HSE requirements. It is likely this cover will be printed over with info as to why the memorial is closed and further historical info that would raise awareness of the MN. We have offered a number of suggestions including placing two new profile style statues on existing plinths alongside the memorial. The Commission have always been supportive of any requests we have made with regard to repairs to the wooden seats and more recently pressure washing the floor of this memorial in readiness for the reading of every name on every plaque as part of the Battles Over national tribute on 11th November starting at 0600. We are expecting an award-winning piper to start the day before we begin to read the 12,201 names. Sky News have also contacted me and have given them all the details they need. They will film the piper and then interview as many as possible within the hour. Associated Press have also been fully briefed and we are hoping for newspaper coverage. This MNA initiative, within the Battles Over events programme, has already received wonderful support possibly as a result of all the promotions we have undertaken that includes printed invitations and ads in shipping magazines. We will also be lighting the special brazier at 1900, reading the Town Crier speech and then completing the days programme with an amazing bugler from the RAF Cadet Training organisation. We would like to thank Bruno Peek, the Queens Pageantmaster for his astonishing organisational capabilities and for engaging with the Merchant Navy dynamic so thoughtfully. We have

mtgs planned for December with the CWGC to explore further opportunities. We also have more mtgs with Bruno Peek in December to explore even more possibilities about working with him again.

Maritime Charities Group Seminar. We were involved in completing the survey that went towards the production of a very comprehensive document that produced recommendations for all the charities in the maritime sector. It was agreed that charities in the maritime sector need to do more to measure their individual impact and have less focus on outputs and much more on OUTCOMES. www.seafarers.uk/about-us/partners/maritime-charities-group/

Port Welfare Committees - New guidance document written and then agreed with the MNWB before being circulated. Members need to apply to National for a seat on the PWC. The only area that is currently seeking representation for an MNA PWC member is the North West. Please apply to our National Secretary if you have interests in representing the MNA on that Committee.

Public Liability Insurance has been negotiated by Tim Brant, who has managed to secure a slight reduction on last year's costs but with an enhanced cover. Excellent work Tim.

New National Standard dedication (TBA). We need it to be dedicated in this our anniversary year and would welcome members suggestions about time and place. We did lay-up the old standard recently at a church in a village near Hull. We were supported at the Service by members of the Independent Hull MNA. The Standard prior to that one was laid-up at the National Memorial Arboretum in their beautiful wooden chapel.

D-Day 75th Booking problems caused by the American Embassy taking huge numbers of bedroom spaces in France which was reported to National by Paul Compton from our Weymouth and Portland Branch. At a recent RBL mtg in London we were advised that D-Day events will centre on Portsmouth from the 5th - 9th June. The RBL have now taken accommodation space aboard a Fred Olson ship called Boudica (437 cabins). The ship will be leaving Portsmouth on the 5th with 200, possibly more, veterans and their carers with the possibility of 10 MN vets and their carers also invited to join for the trip. Contact myself or Nigel as soon as possible if you are an MN Vet and have time for the trip to France and back. The RBL are also going large on VE and VJ Days in 2020 as well as remembering the Berlin Airlift.

HQS Wellington is again offering a free exhibition and all members are welcome if they are in the London area. Currently the exhibition is **War and Trade** and is open on Sunday's and Monday's until 11th November. It is hoped this exhibition will travel around the country and you are welcome to bid if you have a place for it to go in your local area. Perhaps ask your Local Council or school or museum or library and help to engage the general public.

Maritime Foundation. Recently attended the 'Lost at Sea, Never Forgotten Service' at All Hallows, London. This is sponsored by the Maritime Foundation and it is an annual event as is their Maritime Media Awards Dinner that seeks to gain recognition for media coverage of

maritime matters later in the year. The Service was very well attended including members from our London and Greater London Branch...who, by the by, also attend St Paul's Cathedral on Remembrance Sunday every year which means our members attend all three Remembrance Services in London that day. Our members have made many years of dedicated attendances.

The memorial books are all beautifully hand-written and the first book was started with the names of seafarers lost in the First World War. The most recent names recorded this year are the 19 seafarers lost from the British Crown, which blew up in the Gulf in 1966. Strangely, I attended one of the court days when I was studying during my Apprentice Release course in London in 1968...the Captain was being interrogated that day; the very detailed questions and his clear distress of what happened that fatal night made a huge impact on all those there that day.

Looking ahead to both near and more distant horizons we still have much to look forward to experiencing. Now, as we move forward, the need for more diverse welfare and wellbeing offers is evidenced in our seafaring communities. There is a need for all charities to work much closer together and integrate new ways of monitoring health issues to a distant source. Members need to feel they are *independant* and do not have to rely on charity just to get by in their lives and those at sea need a greater sense of community of support around them every day and every night. Many advances are being made including the basic pedometer that straps to your wrist and counts the number of steps you take but there are many many more...the MNA will lobby for free health-tech devises to become standard issue in specified conditions both ashore and afloat. We must continue to maintain the support of our members, our friends, our supporters and of course our significant others. We know everyone has the freedom to choose, to make a commitment, to join with others and simply enjoy the social contact. We do know that that freedom was often born from cold dark wind-swept, weather wretched nights during war and conflict by people who believed they were just ordinary men and women doing what they could, when they could.

We know it was so much more and we will always remember them.

"It is no exaggeration to say that whether in war or peace, the British Mercantile Marine has rendered more service, to more men of more nations than any other human agency".

John Darius
America Ambassador to Great Britain, February 1921

The National Councillors thank you all for your continued support.

John Sail
National Chairman