

Submariners Association

Recognised by the Ministry of Defence
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NATIONAL COUNCIL CONFERENCE

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE

Held in the
HOLIDAY INN HOTEL, LEICESTER
On
Saturday 28th MARCH 2015

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Conference, then gave a safety talk with particular reference to emergency exits and reminded those assembled of the 'No Alcohol' rule for the Conference and they were requested to remove any drinks that might be present. He then reminded those attending that only one delegate per Branch was permitted to sit in the front sections of the seating arrangements and that all the Observers should be located in the rear sections. He then advised the Observers that they were not permitted to take part in the debate but had a useful role in assisting their delegates to accurately report back to their branches what went on during Conference. The Chairman then requested the delegates to make themselves known and following a count by the Tellers a total of 36 Delegates were found to be in attendance. Prior to the Roll Call the Chairman took the opportunity to inform the assembled that the rules for debate would be explained at the appropriate time, however a Delegate wishing to speak should raise their hand and when asked to stand should clearly state their name and Branch for the benefit of the National Secretary who was recording the proceedings.

2. ROLL CALL National Management Committee:

Present	Absent
Admiral Sir James Perowne KBE (President)	Mr Ray Gritt (Vice President)
Mr Rick Elrick (Vice President)	Rear Admiral Tony Whetstone CB (Vice President)
Mr Dave Barlow (Vice President)	Cdr. Bob Seaward OBE (Vice President)
Mr Jim McMaster (Chairman)	Mr Keith Bishop (Membership Secretary)
Mr John Wood (Vice Chairman)	
Mr David Watts (Secretary)	
Mr Ian Atkinson (Treasurer)	
Mr. Iain Mackenzie MBE (Committee & Parade Marshal)	
Mr Frank Pas (Committee)	
Mr Colin Jones (Committee)	
Mr Chris Freeth (Committee)	
Mr Andrew Jeffrey (Committee)	
Mr Frank Powell (Committee)	
WO1 Perry Mason (RASM Rep. Serving Members)	

Conference Power Point Presentation produced and presented by the webmaster Mike Kemp.

Branches Represented:

Barrow-in-Furness	Leicester & Rutland
Basingstoke	Lincoln
Bath	Manchester
Beds & Herts	Medway Towns
Birmingham	Merseyside
Blackpool & Fylde	Middlesex
Blyth & Wansbeck	North East
Brierley Hill	North Staffs
Cheltenham & West Midlands	Northern Ireland
Derbyshire	Nottingham
Dolphin	Plymouth
Dorset	Poole & District
East Kent	Scottish
Espana Levante	Sheffield
Essex	Sunderland
Exeter	Sussex
Gosport	West of Scotland
Hull	West Riding

Total number of Branches represented = 36

Mr Ian Atkinson (National Treasurer) confirmed that all who attended were in date with their annual subscriptions.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following members of the NMC:

Rear Admiral Tony Whetstone CB, CDR Bob Seaward OBE, Mr Ray Gritt, (Hon Vice Presidents) and Mr Keith Bishop (Membership Secretary).

Apologies were received from the following branches (16):

Australia
Burton-on-Trent
Colchester
Eastern States (Australia)
Gatwick
Indalo Spain
Morecambe Bay
New Zealand
Norfolk
Peterborough
Portsmouth
Royal Berkshire
South Kent
Southampton
Taunton
Vectis

Three branches did not have the courtesy to respond. These Branches are: Shropshire, Teesside and Welsh.

4. DEPARTED SUBMARINERS

The meeting stood to observe one minute silence in memory of those members of the Association and indeed all submariners who had Crossed the Bar in the preceding years.

5. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

See Appendix A

6. **MINUTES OF THE 2015 NATIONAL COUNCIL CONFERENCE**

The Chairman commented that the Minutes from the 2014 NCC were long and he did not wish to read them at length if this was acceptable, particularly as everyone has had them for the past year as well as having them sent recently by the Secretary David Watts. This was acceptable to all present. He then asked for someone who was present at the last NCC to propose that this was an accurate record of the proceedings and someone to second this.

This was:

Proposed by Les Catlin – Gosport Branch

Seconded by John Erskine – Northern Ireland Branch.

The Chairman then asked for a show of hands to confirm that the Minutes are a true and accurate record of the 2014 National Council Conference.

FOR: 36 AGAINST: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 0

Motion Carried The Minutes of the NCC 2014 are now CONFIRMED.

7. **ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

There were two actions from the 2014 Minutes.

Action for this year was to ballot all members on when they preferred to have the Reunion – March/April or September/October. Results were: 42 branches responded; 22 voted for March/April; 17 voted for September/October; 3 had no preference; 1 abstained; 14 did not even bother to respond which was very poor indeed.

It was agreed by the NCC that the Rules & Constitution and Management Committee Standing Orders be reviewed every three years. The reviewed R & C have now been distributed to all Branch Secretaries with amendments highlighted in red. A printer will now be sourced.

8. **The post of Membership Secretary**

To be ratified as a fully appointed member of the NMC with full voting rights. Keith Bishop is the present incumbent.

FOR: 34 AGAINST: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 2

9. **OFFICERS REPORTS**

Secretary

See Appendix B

Following which the Chairman asked the assembled Delegates if they had any questions for the Secretary.

Bill Rayner (Essex Branch): Asked the Secretary if as well as the Navy News, if the British Legion had been approached with regards to displaying an SA recruiting advertisement in their magazine?

Secretary: Replied, not to his knowledge and that he would make Keith Bishop aware of his suggestion.

Chairman: Asked if there were any further questions for the Secretary especially relating to membership and that although the Membership Secretary was not present the Secretary would try to answer them and if not able to do so would reply in due course.

Dave Palmer (Sussex Branch): Said that, following an online application, Keith Bishop had sent him a membership card along with the new applicant's application form and that he had been in touch with him on several occasions. However it was a 40 minute drive for him to attend their Branch meetings and he had never appeared or paid his subs and that he'd had no option but to lapse his membership. Surely it was a waste of time for the Membership Secretary to print the card, as well as a waste of money, especially if this occurred frequently. He suggested that perhaps it would be best for Keith just to forward the application for processing, and then once the formalities have been completed and the subscriptions paid, he could then send the membership card.

Chairman: Said he thought this was a valid point and that Keith Bishop will be made aware of it.

Rick Rothwell (Merseyside Branch): Asked, what was the current number of members belonging to the overseas branches, as he understood they did not pay the same amount of subs that the UK Branches did.

Chairman: In response said, at this moment in time they do not and unfortunately I can't tell you the exact number of overseas members, however it is only a small number of the total membership, but perhaps the Secretary may be able to tell him.

Secretary: In reply said, that he was unable to give a number, but would find out and inform Rick Rothwell in due course, he then advised that the overseas branch members currently pay subscriptions of £2.00 per annum.

Rick Rothwell: Then asked, if later on in the Agenda, we do we increase subscriptions will the Overseas Branches subscriptions be increased?

Chairman: Responded by saying, let's not jump the gun; I can't go into that; however the Recommendation does say All Full Members, so the answer to his question was yes. The reduction they currently pay had been agreed a number of years ago, but he didn't know how long ago or the reasoning behind it, but no doubt the answer to his question would be forthcoming in due course.

Following this the Chairman asked if there were any further Membership questions before proceeding to the Treasurer's report.

Treasurer

See Appendix C of document for Income & Expenditure Sheet.

Submariners Association Treasurer's Report. Year ending 31st December 2014

Morning Gents, since taking over the Treasurer's Job, I have endeavoured to produce accounts which are easy to understand and explain. We have now reached a point now where we can use an accounts package called "Quick Start" and both I and the Membership Secretary have spent the last couple of years setting up the system to work for the Association. (If you are wondering why Keith Bishop has been helping me, it is simply because he has actually used this system himself and knows it well!) Year on year I have provided more and more detailed information in the accounts and we have progressed from a one page spreadsheet, to a balance sheet and two to three pages of detailed income and expenditure figures.

Apparently, this is still not good enough for some Branches, indeed one Branch is so suspicious that I received an email from a "Council Official" saying he had been asked by this Branch to get details of figures, including balance sheet figures, for his perusal and study, in particular the travel expenses of the individual NMC members and Conference delegates, which are given as totals. All the figures he requested are in the Profit and Loss figures sent out to all Branches and which are all fully audited. On being informed of this he then requested that I complete a spreadsheet designed by him of travel expenses (mileage only) which I was not prepared to do. It turned out that the "Council Official" was actually a member of the Branch, so I can only assume that the work title was meant to scare me in some way.

The accounts are now in a form which gives all the necessary details and the only way I can improve on that is by printing off an "accounts journal", which will show every transaction made over the year, both income and expenditure. This would make a printout of some 25 A4 pages, which I think is completely un-necessary if a little trust is placed in the Treasurer and indeed the Auditors.

Now to the Accounts, as has become the norm, the Webmaster has produced a PowerPoint presentation which you can follow as I explain the accounts which I printed out prior to coming to Conference. The balance sheet shows fixed assets which have not appeared before, which consists of a franking machine, and a printer / copier, which we share with the Dolphin Branch. The £32.27 is the unused amount contained in the franking machine, i.e. the number of stamps remaining. Cash at Bank and in hand, is the bank account figure and the petty cash figure. We now come to "current liabilities" another new addition to the balance sheet. If you cast your minds back, this is the figure that was difficult to explain because it was the Conference money, which was collected over the latter part of 2014, and the early part of 2015 as members pay for their hotel bookings prior to the Conference. So the figure of £15,167.34 is NOT the hotel cost, but the total amount of money collected so far from members who will be attending the Conference, and it is in the bank, and will increase as more payments come in. I stress, it is a liability, not an asset. That is, it is money held on account to pay an upcoming bill.

The total assets – the current liabilities is £18,557.70, this shows a loss over the year of £3,239.30, part of which is made up of £500.00 deposit, lost when the families weekend had to be cancelled due to lack of support. It should have been £1,000.00, but our Committee hotel organisers managed to persuade the hotel that we should only pay a £500.00 deposit. We also lost whatever raffle income would have been forthcoming, which in the previous year was £645.00.

The cost of £1,000 invested to start the “Slops Shop” which is not fully operational yet and is therefore not making us any money yet, but will hopefully do so in the near future.

We now come to the Profit and Loss Accounts. Income wise we have lost the Annual Draw, which was a good money maker, from which Branches could also enhance their funds. This was discontinued due to lack of support. We have also lost out on income raised from the raffles and Irish Bingo which were held during the families’ weekends. However we do make a small income by the Membership Secretary undertaking external printing jobs, which realised £300.00 and a small profit of in the region of £250.00 from sales of Association diaries, but our main source of income is of course are the Annual Subscriptions.

Thank you for your attention Gentlemen, this completes the presentation of the accounts, if you have any questions I will do my best to answer them.

Ian H. Atkinson
Honorary Treasurer

The Chairman: Thanked the Treasurer for his very comprehensive report and then asked the Delegates present if they had any questions for the Treasurer.

John Doherty (Nottingham Branch): Said he objected to the Treasurer belittling one of his Branch member’s for what was deemed at the time to be a legitimate financial enquiry! Therefore he would like” his whinge” as the Treasurer called it deleted from the minutes of the meeting, as he saw that it belittled both his Branch and the Treasurer. The matter in question, of which he didn’t wish to take up too much of the Conference’s time, was a legitimate enquiry, mandated by his Branch to the Treasurer, which actually had ruffled a lot of feathers! He then went on to say that, you only ruffle feathers when there was a problem, however they had total trust in both the National Executive Committee and the Treasurer, all they had made was a mandated enquiry to the Treasurer, which resulted in a lot of nasty emails from certain people, which he would come to later and once again requested that the Treasurers whinge be deleted from the minutes!

Chairman: In reply, stated that both the request and spreadsheet that the Branch had submitted was totally inadequate and the author, who initially purported to be acting as a council official, should have realised that the content of that spreadsheet would have told him nothing whatsoever. He then went on to say that he had said before we must learn to trust NMC, the accounts are transparent, and were available to anyone who wishes to see them, just by making an arrangement with the Treasurer and he reiterated that the spreadsheet was inadequate, as he had expressed in an email communication earlier.

John Doherty: Once again requested, would it be possible for the Treasurers whinge be deleted from the minutes?

Chairman: Asked for clarification, which part of the Treasurer’s comments?

John Doherty: Replied, everything relating to his Branches financial query.

Chairman: Responded by saying that, the Treasurer had had to respond to what was sent to him, which wasn’t very pleasant and went on to say that there are ways of asking questions, and certainly we had no objection to anyone asking them and this was made clear in the replies made to the authors of the emails concerned.

John Doherty: In response said that he had copies of the emails with him and anyone was welcome to read them to see whether they were nasty or not!

Chairman: Stated that he also had copies of the emails and the way they were sent were not really acceptable, they were aggressive and there was no need for that. However, everyone is entitled to ask questions and we were perfectly happy to answer them, and there was no reason why they should not. But the questions they had asked implied that they didn’t really trust the NMC with regard to the fiscal state and emphasised that “yes” it really came across that they did not trust the NMC to make cuts and savings and that he could ensure him that it was practically a full time job looking for ways to save money.

John Doherty: In reply said the originator of the initial email request had been mandated by the Branch and that he had not done it off his own back, he'd done it on behalf of his Branch.

Treasurer: In response said, In the first email that he had received, the author had not identified himself as a Branch member, but gave him the impression that he was a Council Official who had been requested by the Branch to obtain the information and it was this that had annoyed him.

John Doherty: Responded by saying that he could understand why the Treasurer was annoyed, however in his Branches eyes they still considered it to be a legitimate enquiry and therefore the Treasurers comments regarding how the enquiry was made should be struck from the minutes and that he should have limited his report to financial matters and not to denigrate one of his members. He then repeated that his Branch had total trust in the NMC and the Treasurer.

Chairman: Said there was no intention to denigrate anybody, but he must bring to his attention that by saying it "ruffled a lot of feathers" or in effect a phrase implying there was something wrong, he could assure him that it was not the case. Feathers had been ruffled because of what had been perceived to be the attitude in those particular emails, which were not very courteous in their content. At this point there was further dialogue between the Chairman and John Doherty who both stated that there were points on which they could agree and disagree on, as that was the nature of debate. However the Chairman said that he still felt that the manner in which the Branch had approached this issue was aggressive and sadly gave the impression that the Committee was untrustworthy. John Doherty at this point interjected by saying that was not the Branch's intention. Following which the Chairman said he fully accepted that and a line should now be drawn over that issue, but hopefully he would see the NMCs point of view. In conclusion the Nottingham Delegate said in his opinion all reference regarding to this issue should not be included in the NCC Minutes. The Chairman responded by saying this would be looked into if deemed necessary.

Stuart Brown (Beds & Herts Branch): Said personally that he thought that all of what the Treasurer had said should be included in the minutes, as we had to be seen as open and transparent. He also thought that the use of Local Authority Brands had been totally inappropriate and the content of the emails were irrelevant.

Dennis Rawle (Scottish Branch): Requested that the Delegates and Committee raise their voices when speaking, as not all the Observers could hear the proceedings.

Rick Rothwell (Merseyside Branch): Asked the Treasurer regarding two items he had mentioned briefly associated to the Blue Plaque Account, one relating to £300, the other regarding the purchase of birth certificates and he questioned as to whether they were right and proper to be shown in the profit and loss account?

Treasurer: Replied, yes they should be recorded in the Blue Plaque Account; however these transactions had taken place prior to that account being established. However he may recall that whilst he was serving on the NMC that the setting up of the Blue Plaque Account took a considerable amount of time and those figures related to that fact.

Dennis Rawle (Scottish Branch): Speaking on behalf of the Scottish Branch said that the whole of the Treasurers report should be included in the Conference minutes.

Chairman: Agreed that the whole of the proceedings should be recorded in the minutes, as there was no doubt that, throughout the proceedings of the meeting someone would say something that they don't want to appear in the minutes. However it may be necessary to perhaps check the wording of the minutes to ensure that no offensive or inflammatory remarks remained. He then went on to say that he hoped that our colleagues from the Nottingham Branch would be able to put the issue regarding the content of the minutes behind them, as we had made our point and they had made theirs and it was now time to move on!

John Doherty: At this time responded by thanking the Chairman and saying that he appreciated the comments that had been made and that he fully accepted the general consensus of the Conference.

John Erskine (Northern Ireland Branch): Made the point that when the Treasurer gave his report no one knew what branch he had referring to.

Les Catlin (Gosport Branch): Said he was going to make the same point as John Erskine and that he saw no problem with whole of the Treasurers report being recorded in the minutes.

John Deeth (Leicester & Rutland Branch): Stated that as our commitments and costs are now increasing year on year, especially with regards to the Embankment Parade etc., could we not tap into another source of income.

For example Submarine wise, we are keeping BAE at Barrow employed for many generations to come, perhaps they could offer us some form of sponsorship.

Chairman: In reply said that companies such as BAE had their own charities and good causes to support, however this is something that could be looked into, to try and persuade BAE and other companies to support us financially, as a submarine related organisation.

Bob Clarke (Medway Towns Branch): Asked why the National Draw had been discontinued?

Treasurer: Replied, that was an easy question to answer, the National Draw was discontinued due to lack of support. Branches were sent books of draw tickets with the potential to earn income for the Association as well as for their Branches and it also enabled subsequent donations to the Submarine Memorial Fund to be made. Sadly the number of tickets sold did not cover the cost of printing them, so this method of raising funds became unviable. He then went on to remind the Conference that when the draw was well supported 2/3 of the money raised from each Branch went to the National funds, and 1/3 to the Branch, and also a donation of in the region of £1,000 was made to the S/M Memorial Fund, unfortunately now we are running at loss we are unable to donate even a £100 annually to the Memorial Fund.

Chairman: Asked if there were any further pertinent questions relating to the Treasurers Report and if not we would move on.

Dave Palmer (Sussex Branch): Proposed that a vote of thanks should be given to the Treasurer for his presentation and all the hard work he had done over the last 12 months. This was followed by calls of, Hear! Hear! as well as rapturous applause.

Chairman: Then went on to ask could we now draw a line under the Treasurer's report and there being no further questions for the Treasurer, moved on to the next Agenda item.

10. PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONFERENCE

Before proceeding the Chairman outlined the rules for the debate as follows:

The Chairman will read the Motion and then invite the proposing Branch to confirm that he has a Seconder for the Proposal and will then ask the Proposer to make his Proposal, following which he will invite the Seconder to make his contribution to the Proposal. He will then open the Debate to the Delegates. A Delegate wishing to speak should raise his hand and wait to be called to speak; each Delegate may speak only once and the Chairman has the right to curtail a speaker if he is going on too long or if he is being repetitive. When all Delegates who wish to have spoken, the Proposer will be asked to conclude the Debate and then a vote will be taken. In the event of a tie the Chairman has the casting vote in accordance with Clause 5(d) of the Rules and Constitution. Are there any questions from the floor before we proceed?

Proposal

Proposed by: Sheffield Branch **Seconded by:** Derbyshire Branch

The Sheffield Branch of the Submariners Association Propose that the timing of the Annual Submarine Remembrance Parade and Service held at the National Submarine Memorial on Victoria Embankment, London is changed to 14:00 to enable attendees who live further away to travel to and from the Service on the same day to save the expense of overnight accommodation.

Background Information: It is felt that if the start time for the Embankment Parade was changed to a reasonable time later in the day it would enable people who are unable to attend due to the extra burden of paying for overnight accommodation to attend, thereby increasing the numbers attending the event.

Note: In addition to the Background Information given above it is thought that it may be helpful if the following points are taken into consideration before making a decision as to whether to support this proposal or not.

As the time suggested for holding the parade is 14:00 the Vice-Chairman has put together the following reasons why it may provide difficult to change the start time and he also checked National rail and the following are First trains from the country to London.

Sheffield	08:10	arrive London 11:17
Newcastle	08:00	arrive London 12:04
Bristol	07:45	arrive London 09:43
Lincoln	11:05	arrive London 13:14
Portsmouth	06:48	arrive London 09:15
Glasgow	07:50	arrive London 13:49

These timings indicate that to be fair to everyone the latest the Parade would have to start would be around 14:00 and this would then prove difficult for those returning home that Sunday.

Also the following points should be taken into consideration:

- Changing to a later time may reduce our chances of having the carriageway shut off. It is a major road and the City of London and Police may not allow it in the afternoon.
- Security may be an issue as at present the police search team scan the area 2 hours before we even board HMS President (1918)
- Hotel checks out times are normally by 12:00 so this presents a problem of storing gear whilst the parade is on.
- We currently have a large number of onlookers for the parade and at a later time the numbers would increase making it difficult for us to police them correctly or safely.

The Chairman: then called upon the Proposer to speak.

Proposer Bill Fennelly (Sheffield Branch): Opened by saying that the Submarine Service was referred to as a “Band of Brothers” and this term is fitting, as it was first used by a Royal Naval Officer Admiral Horatio Nelson in referring to the officers and men under his command at the Battle of the Nile and later at Trafalgar. The phrase had become popularised over the years as a close knit group of fighting men. Submariners more than fitted that description and they could all rightly, justly and proudly include themselves in that “Band of Brothers”. The Submarine Memorial on the Victoria Embankment, London was erected to commemorate the ultimate sacrifice made by that “Band of Brothers” in the service of their country during both world wars, it was only right and proper that this was commemorated every year by the Embankment Parade, at which the Submarine Service was generally well represented. The Sheffield Branch believed awareness of that auspicious event could be raised further and along with that the profile of the Submariners Association and the wider submarine community as a whole could equally be raised. The first step to raising awareness was to make the Embankment Parade accessible and more attractive to more people, this could be achieved simply by altering the start time to later in the day. This would allow more people to travel to and from the event on the same day without suffering the financial burden of an overnight stop in London. It was also believed that it would attract those who would like to attend, but were put off by the cost of overnight accommodation.

Their original proposal hadn’t stated a specific time, but had stated for it to be changed to a reasonable time later in the day, that had been deliberate in order to be flexible, provoke discussion and to invite Branches to consider their options. However the NMC had decided that the wording should be changed and a particular time stipulated. The constitutional rights and wrongs of this were felt to be questionable, but should not be aired here today. Suffice it to say following research into train times to London from various parts of the country it was decided on a nominal time of 2 p.m., which Mr Fennelly stressed, was nominal and not set in stone! It was flexible and negotiable, and it was hoped that should their proposal be carried that the NMC would take the programme forward to and negotiate with the relevant authorities in the spirit in which it had been conceived. That was flexibility, compromise and a willingness to negotiate, but above all else had to be in the interests of the submarine community as a whole and not any individual or minority. Also included in the Agenda which they all had copies of were the NMC Vice-Chairman’s reasons as to how it could make things difficult to change the start time, but he didn’t go into those again in great detail, but went on to briefly address each point in turn to show that they were not insurmountable problems.

1. The relevant authorities may not allow a later start time: Obviously this would be something beyond our control; however it was thought that the NMC would do their best on the association’s behalf in any negotiations.
2. Timing of security searches: If a later start time could be agreed then the timing of any security operations could be adjusted accordingly.
3. Hotel checkout times: Not an insurmountable problem because most, if not all hotels provided secure storage of guests luggage in the event of them having to check out by a certain time, but didn’t want to leave the hotel until later in the day.
4. Marshalling of onlookers: It was understood that marshalling of spectators by the Association was tried last year and there were some problems. Surely those problems will be addressed and improvements made for this year and subsequent years. Coping with extra onlookers as a result of delaying the start time could

be incorporated into any future marshalling plans. This again was not a valid reason to dismiss the proposal out of hand.

Following this he went on to say he accepted the fact that their Proposal may not suit everyone and some people may even be disadvantaged by a later start time. However, generally the Sheffield branch believed that the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages and in conclusion he felt sure that should this Proposal be carried the NMC would be open and transparent in their reporting to the membership of the negotiations carried out, and in particular the detailed reasons as to why the later start time cannot be achieved if that appeared to be the case. In conclusion he said that he hoped that his fellow Delegates would also keep the interests of the submarine community as a whole, as well as the general good of the Embankment Parade and our Association at heart whilst deciding which way to vote.

The Chairman then called upon the Secunder to speak.

Secunder Terry Hall (Derbyshire Branch): Said as the Sheffield Branch has given full and comprehensive details of their Proposal he had nothing to add except that, as our President in his Address stated, during his incumbency the numbers attending had increased from 200 to 400, he felt that this Proposal would help increase those numbers even further.

The Chairman then opened the Debate by asking, “Did anyone wish to comment on this Proposal?”

Brian Tate (West of Scotland Branch): Stated that to members of his Branch travelling from Scotland it wouldn't be an inconvenience, however traditionally the Remembrance was centred on the time of 11 o'clock, which relates to the time when the armistice was signed and he recommend that we adhere to that time. Although he appreciated that some members would be inconvenienced, but this was fundamental in what the act of Remembrance was all about at the Embankment Parade, 11 o'clock is when we remembered the fallen!

Les Catlin (Gosport Branch): Said that he could see how this Proposal could help quite a few Branches in certain parts of the country, but of course there would be Branches further afield such as Scotland and Northern Ireland etc., who would be inconvenienced by a later start because they would not get home that night.

Rick Rothwell (Merseyside Branch): Agreed that our colleagues from the West of Scotland Branch had raised a very valid point, Remembrance is traditionally at 11 o'clock. However for a large number of years we had not held the service on the Embankment at 11 o'clock, it was generally earlier than that. The Merseyside Branch strongly supported their friends from Sheffield on the matter and that the comments made by the NMC were noted, as well as those made by the Vice-Chairman, who had failed to show that the return journey times, having made the argument that people would not be able to get home on the same day. Likewise the NMC seemed to have failed to make a case against moving the service to 14:00 based on the points that were raised in the further information. Each had stated that changing to a later time may, security may. If people were not staying in hotels and were travelling on the same day they would not need luggage, there would only be the odd few. He then went on to repeat that the Merseyside Branch strongly support this motion and hope other Delegates will also support it.

John Erskine (Northern Ireland Branch): Made the point, as they all knew, the Northern Ireland Branch as usual were the furthest travellers to most of the events that the Submariners Association held and they supported those events with a heart and a half! However, to alter the time of the Embankment Parade could mean that they couldn't come, because they wouldn't get home without having to book an extra night's accommodation. They were quite prepared to come across at their own expense, but personally his view was that “If a thing was not broken, we did not try to fix it!”

Andy Kirk (Bath Branch): Asked the question, had anyone queried with Transport for London what their response would be if the time was changed to 2 o'clock in the afternoon? He later went on to make a point regarding rail travel being usually disrupted on a Sunday due to engineering works, which could also impact on return rail travel on the same day.

Vice-Chairman: Responded by saying that he hadn't looked into this, as it was pointless to do so until the outcome of the Proposal was known.

Dennis Rawle (Scottish Branch): Proposed that the Embankment Parade remained the “status quo”. Having listened to Sheffield and they hadn't told him anything of the numbers they considered that they would increase by and in this respect they appeared to have done very little research into how their Proposal would have enhanced the Embankment Parade by. He said, that to him was the reason that their proposal had been put forward and then reiterated that the timing of the Embankment Parade should remain as it was.

Chairman: Agreed that was a valid point, as it had to be considered that if the time was changed, how many people than before of the 150 who were already attending, would it increase by and who could lose out.

Les Catlin (Gosport Branch): Quoted, a very valid point, our Branch as most of the NMC would know, was one of the bigger Branches, representing 10% of the whole of the Association, with nearly 200 members and they sent a coach every year to the Embankment containing 70 people. When this proposal was put to the Branch the majority were very much against it and many of them implied they would not attend, if the start time was changed and that would mean travelling by coach would be unviable due to a lack of support.

Chairman: At this point respectfully reminded the Gosport Delegate that he should have only spoken once and then asked: “Do any further delegates wish to make an issue or a point on this particular proposal?”

No other Delegates wished to speak and the Proposer was called upon to conclude the Debate.

Bill Fennelly (Sheffield Branch): In conclusion, advised that he had not much more to add, other than to reply to the Scottish Branch Delegates query regarding numbers and in response to that he said it would be virtually impossible to give a figure as to who would and who would not be attending the Embankment Parade.

Chairman: Obviously everyone who had wished to speak had now spoken so they would now put the Proposal to the vote. He reminded the Delegates that because it had no impact on the Rules and Constitution it could be carried on a simple majority vote.

Whilst voting was in progress a person sitting amongst the Observers raised his hand and he was advised he wasn't permitted to vote.

FOR: 8 AGAINST: 28 ABSTENTIONS: 0 **Motion Failed**

At this point the person located in the observers section was found to be a Delegate who had arrived late and had failed to make his presence known or offer an apology or reason for his lateness and the Chairman stated that he should have been in attendance when the Roll Call was taken. It should be noted that this point was 1 hour and 37 minutes into the meeting and 3 of the 4 Agenda items had been voted on.

Recommendations:

The Chairman explained - the NMC can make recommendations to you the Delegates. We then require a Delegate to Propose the issue and one to Second it. Otherwise it cannot be debated. The branch proposing may amend the recommendation wording as long as it still reflects the intent of the original recommendation. Delegates will then vote on whether the proposal can be debated, and if approved we then proceed in the same manner as for the proposals previously debated. The debate will be open to all Delegates. A delegate wishing to speak should raise his hand and wait to be called upon to speak. Each Delegate may speak only once. The Chairman has the right to curtail a speaker if he is going on too long or if he is being repetitive. When all Delegates who wish to have spoken, the proposer will be asked to conclude. A vote will then be taken. Today's Recommendations require a simple majority, as it doesn't affect the Rules and Constitution The Tellers will take a count of the votes FOR, AGAINST & ABSTENTIONS. You should hold your hand well into the air to avoid any misunderstanding during the count.

Recommendation 1

The National Management Committee recommends: That the Submariners Association's annual subscriptions be increased to £15 per annum for ALL full members, with effect from the start of the next National Association financial year (1st January 2016).”

Background Information: The NMC consider that this proposed increase is essential to maintain the National Association Funds in good order. Costs rise year on year and we must have the capability to cover our budgeted expenditure and running costs without constantly accessing our small cash reserve.

The Submariners Association is recognised as the primary association for our unique profession. Surprisingly, our subscriptions fall far short of many of the other service associations and if they are not increased the financial position of the Association will, within four years make its existence untenable. The proposed increase is therefore appropriate for a National Association of our size.

You will all be in possession of the justification document that was circulated to members who could be contacted by e-mail. Branch Secretaries were asked to distribute the document to their members who are not connected electronically!

There were a couple of points generated from this distribution that I would like to address now before we start the debate. This Recommendation has proved to be a matter for some discussion and you should be under no illusions - this is a very important issue.

I know that there are some here who will stand up and point out with outrage that this is a 100% increase. This is indeed true - but please, let us look at it from a practical point of view.

The NMC are in fact recommending an increase of £7. 50 and that equates to a figure of 2 pence per day!! We are asking you to pay 28 pence per week to be a member of a unique National Association. If you really believe that this is too much to ask, is it really because an increase of 2 pence per day is unaffordable? The £7.50 increase that we are recommending can't even buy you two pints of Guinness in the bar of this hotel!

One branch wrote to us saying that their members just couldn't afford the recommended increase and would have to consider leaving the Association if it went ahead. We most certainly do not want anyone to leave the Association. (But if you do leave, when you chat with your Oppos at the RNA or RBL in the weeks and months ahead explain to them that you left the Association because they wanted four pence per day from you). They suggested an increase of 50p per year would be a better solution. Just what impact would that make on our bank balance? This is totally unrealistic.

I expect that someone will stand up and suggest that instead of implementing a 100% increase in one go - why not phase it in over a longer period! How do you phase-in 2 pence per day? A **1 pence per day** increase might seem more appropriate but someone will still point out that this is a 50% increase!!

The Treasurer and I were sent an Excel Spread sheet to complete so that a Branch could examine it and look for ways to save money. The Association's Accounting Software professionally collates our financial records and these are under constant scrutiny by the Treasurer and the NMC to see where cost savings can be made. Many of the savings that have been made in past years have already been highlighted in supporting documentation for this NCC. To save costs, we have held several NMC meetings in Darlington Railway Station thanks to a useful contact. How dignified is that for the management of a national association?

Another branch wrote a letter to us requesting that we withdraw the Recommendation and look for a smaller increase that would be acceptable to the Association! They felt that the present Recommendation might..... "cause a certain level of anger against the NMC" If the NMC did not take appropriate measures to ensure the financial sustainability of the Association then THAT would be just cause for their anger. They go on to say that as a large branch they are "better placed to weather the storm"!! Heavens above - we are asking for an extra 2 pence per day!! Is this not a storm in a tea cup?

A branch suggested that we could reduce costs by "putting a limit on the number of VIPs being invited along with their entourage as others attending the Embankment have to foot their own costs for travel and accommodation". **Let me assure everyone here and put it on record that not one single VIP receives any compensation or payment of any kind for attending the Embankment Parade.** Every single person is there because they wish to pay their respects to our colleagues who have gone before us!

I would also point out that whenever a member of the NMC travels to represent the Association it is him and him alone who can claim for reasonable travel and exceptionally, accommodation costs - not his wife or partner! Wives and partners are at own expense.

I would draw your attention to our Rules & Constitution, Clause 2- Objectives. Part (b) of this section says: **"To foster the friendships and comradeship peculiar to all submariners so that they may continue to share the experiences and associations, and keep alive that pride in the Submarine Branch formed during their service in HM Submarines"**

Are you telling me in all honesty that you don't think that special bond and camaraderie we enjoy is worth paying 4 pence per day?

I certainly think it is worth it and I ask you most earnestly to support this Recommendation as written and ensure the Submariners Association remains sustainable for the foreseeable future.

.....

Chairman: Asked if there was a Branch present prepared to propose the Recommendation?

Stuart Brown (Beds & Herts Branch): Proposed the Recommendation.

Chairman: Asked if there was a Branch present prepared to second the Recommendation?

Mick Brocklesby (Lincoln Branch): Seconded the Recommendation.

Chairman: Then proceeded to ask the Proposer if he wished to make the Proposal as written or if he wished the wording to be changed in any way, as long as it maintained the essence of the Recommendation?

Stuart Brown (Beds & Herts Branch): Said, further to the argument for making this Proposal he thought it should be taken into context that what they were talking about was the equivalent to two pints of beer a year and went on to say there must be no one present who suffered from alcoholic constipation and who couldn't pass a pub without going in and to him it was a "no brainer" if they wanted the Association to survive!

The Chairman then called upon the Delegates to vote on whether the Proposal could be debated as there were no alternative Proposals put forward.

FOR: 33 AGAINST: 1 ABSTENTIONS: 2

Chairman: Asked the Proposer to make his statement.

Proposer Stuart Brown (Beds & Herts Branch): Stated that as he had said earlier this wasn't a massive amount of money they were talking about and that he appreciated that this might put a little bit of a strain of some people's finances. However, this was 2015 and that the Association needed to survive, and if it was to survive it would need the funds to pay for the activities it wanted to participate in and they should want the NMC to carry this out on their behalf. He then asked the assembled just think about having perhaps three pints of beer less there today and that could be achieved by closing the bar 10 minutes early and they would have covered the cost of what they would be debating.

Seconder Mick Brocklesby (Lincoln Branch): Advised that he had nothing to add and that he agreed entirely with what the Proposer had said.

The Chairman: Then opened the Debate by asking, "Does anyone wish to comment on this Proposal?"

Mal Davey (Exeter Branch): Made the following statement; prior to the NCC this issue was discussed extensively by my Branch and the main points raised were as follows:-

1. Figures for 2014 show a profit deficit of £3,239.30 and if continued, the contingency fund according to the money men would further be depleted and the Association would be bankrupt in three years.
2. They were aware that another Branch had suggested ways that the NMC could cut back on its expenditure on Meetings, as well as expenses arising from those meetings and also that Delegate expenses could be eliminated, to make further savings.
3. Those cutbacks however, would not be immediate, at it was thought they would have to be made as Proposals for a future Conference, which in the meantime would result in the contingency fund being depleted further.
4. The Embankment Parade continued to be a growing concern because of its increased popularity it had outgrown its current venue. The proposed alternative venue would cost £4,500.00.
5. If things stay as they were it was likely that financially 2015 would see a deficit of around £3,239.00.
6. By their calculations:

Inner Temple Venue	£4,500.00
Prospective deficit	<u>£3,239.00</u>
Overspend	£7,739.00

This related to a need to increase income by £7,739.00, which divided by the current membership of 1,968 gives an increase of approx. £4 per member to stop the deficit, which suggested that an increase in subscriptions to £12.00 would be in order.

7. However, this would only result in breaking even, with no replenishment of the contingency fund.
8. It could also be viewed as an acceptable state of affairs because the Association was non-profit making organisation and was operated solely for the benefit of its members.
9. If no increase in subscriptions or cutbacks to NMC expenditure etc., were made, it would possibly result in the cancelling of the Embankment Parade, as well as other Submarine related ceremonial and memorial occasions.
10. It should be worth remembering this statement taken from part of the Agenda for the NCC, which they totally agreed with, which read as follows:

“The Embankment Parade is our Association’s major event and we need to provide a venue that will take care of all our members, serving Submariners, friends and families professionally and safely. With so many boats lost and fellow Submariners having perished for their King and Country, it is our duty to ensure that their sacrifice is honoured with ceremony and gratitude for years to come.”

11. However, having got the general feeling from his Branch members that maybe a 100% rise in subscriptions would be just too much to bear and as their Delegate at Conference he would consider the comments from the other Delegates before selecting which way to vote.

Rodney Hodge (Birmingham Branch): Asked why had the NMC held an emergency meeting which resulted in the subscriptions being reduced from £10.00 to £7.50?

Chairman: Explained that at an Earlier NMC meeting due to information received from a reliable 3rd party that both the City of London and the Police would be levying a total charge of in region of £4,000.00 for their services during the Embankment Parade. At the time it was felt that because of this potential extra burden on our finances the only way to cover this would be to increase subscriptions. Following this a Recommendation made at the 2011 National Council Conference, at which, following a debate the motion was passed. He then went on to say that, it subsequently came to light that this extra expense would not be incurred and the NMC were then faced the fact that they had previously spoken to the membership asking them for more money for that reason and were now in the position where it was thought that amends had to be made for this. Therefore an emergency meeting was held, which resulted in the subscriptions being reduced from £10.00 to £7.50, however in hindsight this shouldn’t have been done, but it was done with the best of intentions, because the subscriptions had been raised for a specific reason, which no longer existed.

Les Catlin (Gosport Branch): Stated that at his Branch’s AGM earlier in the month where in the region of forty to fifty members were in attendance, he had thought at that time that when this issue came up to be discussed an Irish Parliament would have ensued! However those attending were clear in what they wanted, they agreed that they didn’t see it as four pence a day, but as a doubling of the subs, and as quite a number of their members were elderly, in their nineties and existed on very small pensions, but some of the lucky ones had very generous pensions. He went on to say that the figures given by the Exeter Delegate were very much the same as his own, as he had also been asked to look at the figures in relation to the Treasurers budget given today, with the loss and the impending cost of the Inner Temple facilities they may be using. However he had not taken into account the savings that would be incurred by not using the ship President. Having looked at those figures he had then looked at ways of covering all of those costs, as well as producing a small profit to go into the contingency fund and came up with a figure of £7,500.00, which could be realised by increasing the subs by £4.50 to £12.00 per year, this would also give a small profit to the contingency fund. This was based on the fact that as the Treasurer had said that the income received from subscriptions was in the order of just over £13,000, so doubling the subs he had calculated could probably bring in another £10,000 to £13,000, but as the Gosport Branch were against the subs being doubled, they were perfectly happy for them to be increased to £12.00 in total.

Chairman: Then reminded the assembled that he had suggested that the issue being debated should not be talked about in terms of percentages, as statistics and percentages were devised by mathematicians to paint the picture they want to paint! Statics, they should have heard the saying “lies, damn lies and statistics” which was a very true saying, because statistics did not tell you the fact of a matter, they just give a vague picture of what is occurring. Yes it was a 100% increase, but that 100% was only £7.50 per year and he reiterated that related to only two pence a day extra and in those terms didn’t paint the picture of a 100% increase; they should be realistic about this. So far the Delegates had concentrated on seeking answers about the Embankment Parade, as it was a drain on the Association’s finances that would always be there, but there were other things. Already that year an application had been received from a Branch asking for financial assistance for a Memorial Service they were holding for a Submarine, the amount was not large, but regretfully we were not in a position financially to assist them. So the increase in the subs that we were looking for was not solely for the Embankment, it was also with the view of being able to assist Branches if they asked for financial help, which currently was not possible, as well as to fund any other forthcoming exigencies. In conclusion he went on to say that it was desirable, as the Embankment although expensive wasn’t the only issue we required money for, there were a whole raft of things going on, so please don’t tie yourselves up with the Embankment issue or think in terms of percentages as that didn’t tell the whole picture.

Rick Rothwell (Merseyside Branch): Stated that the Merseyside Branch had discussed and voted on this issue and were somewhat concerned that the NMC had seen fit to recommend this increase, which based on the current membership numbers would raise in the region of £13,700 extra per annum. He then went on to say surely the current subs should be sufficient to fund the activities of this small Association, it should be remembered that this is the members’ money, paid by them. He went on to suggest that, with good prudent housekeeping the NMC could save in excess of £5,000.00 per year, by the holding electronic meetings, which were used by other Associations, even when members of their committees worked or lived abroad. This he thought could encourage

members from Canada, Australia or Spain to put themselves forward as members of the NMC, at no cost to the Association. He then made the point that comparisons from other Associations were a pointless exercise like comparing apples and pears. First and foremost the NMC should have considered the veterans of the Submarine Service, because many of those veterans are on low or limited incomes, they didn't have works pensions etc., He agreed with the figures project by both the Exeter and Gosport Branches and said his Branch would agree with an increase of no more than £5.00 per annum.

Brian Tate (West of Scotland Branch): Said, having listened to everyone here today that he agreed with some of the comments that had been made, but not all. However, when the President had addressed the Conference earlier he had said that "our focus as an Association when it was the Submarine Old Comrades Association had shifted and we were now more about remembering." The Embankment Parade was a crucial event, our key event and if we were unable to attend, because he was aware that figures were being bandied about of £4,500.00. This was down to our own success in hosting the event, which had outgrown utilising the ship President and an alternative venue had had to be found, costing four and a half grand! Also the City of London had also indicated that they were intending to levy a charge for applying to hold the event and for closing the roads etc., which was thought to be around the £2,000.00 mark. The figures presented by the Treasurer had indicated that we were running at a loss and that in three to four years' time our organisation, as the Chairman had implied when he said "What would you say to another member of the British Legion, when asked why aren't you a member of the Submariners Association? The answer could be quite simply there won't be one! Following this he stated that it was written in black and white, that in four years' time there wouldn't be a Submariners Association, because currently the Association was not self-sustaining! However the sum of two pence per day that they had been talking about should be related to as a mere two pints of beer a year and the West of Scotland Branch fully supported the recommendation to increase subscriptions to £15.00 per annum.

Andy Kirk (Bath Branch): Went on to say that the Submariners Association as we all knew was a very professional and proud organisation, known the world over and they should all be proud of who and what we were, and what we all had achieved. We were also an Association that was operating on a shoe string budget from year to year and the figures that had been displayed in the PowerPoint Presentation had clearly shown the losses made were not sustainable and that he fully supported the Recommendation to increase the subscriptions to £15.00 per year. He also said, that a number of years ago one of his colleagues from the Bath Branch proposed that subscriptions be increased to £10.00 and this proposal had failed and it was because of that, we were now in the financial situation we found ourselves to be in today. He then reiterated that the increase related to only two pence per day and if, as others had said earlier, we didn't put the Association back onto an even keel and make it stable it would undoubtedly fold.

John Erskine (Northern Ireland Branch): Added to the debate, this had been discussed at their last Branch Meeting and the Branch had unanimously agreed that the increase was necessary, because, if we wanted the Association to survive we have to pay for it. He then said that there was no point going on about the figures given, of which there was absolutely no reason for doubt, the Association was going to lose about £4,000.00 to £5,000.00 per year, year on year, with less coming in. So therefore, he felt that if nothing was done that the Association could fold in three years' time and not four as was implied earlier. He then said his Branch didn't want to see this happen as they were all proud to be both Submariners and members of the Submariners Association and they fully endorsed the Recommendation.

Ken Glover (Poole & District Branch): Stated that when he came to Conference he wasn't happy with the Recommendation, but having listened to all the figures, he could now see that we were in trouble and there was no two ways about it. But, he thought that one of the reasons it had angered many of the members and he was aware that the term 100% ought not to be used, but the fact was subscriptions would be doubled. However we must look ahead and not let this situation happen again and if in the future there is a regular need to increase subscriptions it should be done gradually and not in one large increment, as that was why some members were angry.

Mark Pugh (West Riding Branch): Spoke and said that the £7.50 increase proposed also equated to the Branch subscriptions currently paid by each member to the Branch, which meant they were already paying £15.00 per year, however he wasn't aware of what other Branches were paying in this respect.

Chairman: At this point said, that was of no consequence.

Mark Pugh (West Riding Branch): Continued, it was the doubling of this £7.50; however, he agreed that he believed that something had to be done and that the issue had been discussed at their last Branch Meeting, following which a £5.00 increase was thought to be in order, to be reviewed annually. He then went on to say there were some elderly members in his Branch who were on low and fixed incomes and he had been instructed by the Branch to vote for a smaller increase with the view of revisiting the issue year on year.

John Doherty (Nottingham Branch): Went on to say that his Branch's mandate was for a lower increase to £10.00, subsequently followed by a 3% rise year on year. This he said would ensure that any further increases in costs incurred by the Association due to inflation would be catered for, as well as helping to keep the finances in a robust condition.

Bill Rayner (Essex Branch): Said that he been quite surprised by the reaction that his members had given, because they were also experiencing problems with recruiting members, as many members, as previously stated are on low incomes, although some were more affluent. His members paid an extra £5.00 to the Branch, which meant his Branch members would be asked to pay a total of £20.00. In relation to the figures stated earlier by fellow Delegates, he went on to say that he belonged to eight ex-service organisations and the only one whose subscriptions related to £15.00 would be ours. At their Branch meeting when the subject had been raised it resulted in quite a heated discussion, there had been torpedoes and other projectiles being loaded ready for discharge! However to put things into a nutshell, the Essex Branch disagreed with the Recommendation to increase subs by 100%, (he subsequently apologised for speaking in percentage terms) and went on to say his members suggested that an increase of £5.00 in 2016 and £5.00 in the following year would be appropriate, but not in one increment, as this would have a detrimental effect on recruiting members.

John Bartlett (Blyth & Wansbeck Branch): Stated that the preamble at their Branch Meeting regarding the recommendation being proposed was that, they were concerned on the affect it would have on their elderly members who relied on their pensions and as an example, he said one of them had to enhance his pension by being a "Lollipop Man" and being frank said that this member would be unable to afford to pay a great deal more. He then went on to say that two members of the Branch were World War 2 Veterans and they often experienced difficulty in getting to Branch meetings and having examined the Recommendation their Branch Secretary had written an email letter expressing the Branches feelings regarding this issue and went on to ask if he could read it out to the Conference?

Chairman: Replied, yes you may, if you feel it is both pertinent and helpful to the debate.

John Bartlett (Blyth & Wansbeck Branch): quoted their Branch Secretary's email message; The proposal by the National Management Committee to increase the annual subscriptions by 100% in today's economic climate is wrong. At our Branch meeting last night (2nd February 2015) it was unanimously rejected. A counter proposal of raising the subscription to £8.00 was agreed upon, as this was deemed more affordable to the majority of our Branch members. As was stated in your recent correspondence, "The Association therefore does indeed live within its means". So if the Association is living within its means at present. Why the call for such a massive increase in subscription fees? There may be a way in which to reduce costs for the Embankment Parade, in that putting a limit on the number of VIPs being invited, along with their entourage, as "other" visitors attending the ceremony have to foot their own costs in travel and accommodation, there surely will be saving made there. The use of HMS President can therefore continue as present. These points were discussed at last night's meeting. Finally..... Yes, this is beyond the capability of some of our members, with the threat of resignation from the Association being mentioned!!! Yours aye, John Green (Branch Secretary)

Chairman: At this stage said he wished to clarify a point, although he had mentioned this in his preamble and went on to say that the Ship President has nothing to do with money and the fact of the matter was that the attendance at the Embankment Parade has grown and grown, it had grown massively. It was a matter of health and safety rules and regulations that had made using the ship President untenable, as when used those boarding had to be counted on and off the vessel and once a number of 300 persons had boarded, no one else was permitted to board. He then repeated that it was nothing to do with money, it was related to the number of people attending and how would it look if we had to stop people from attending, it would be an impossible situation and we should not get wound up regarding finance and the ship President, as it was not money related and that all the other points mentioned in the Blyth Secretaries email had been dealt with earlier in the proceedings.

Bob Clarke (Medway Towns Branch): Stated, with regard to members here today who like him were old age pensioners, when he looked back on the statement he had been given by the Government, it works out that this increase in subscriptions would equate to about the monthly increase they have received in their pensions for this year, so how was it deemed that old age pensioners were facing hard times, when he is receiving about a £2.00 a week increase on his pension.

Chairman: then asked: Do any other delegates wish to make an issue or a point on this particular proposal before the vote was taken?

Dennis Rawle (Scottish Branch): Addressed the Conference and stated that he endorsed the West of Scotland Branch's scenario regarding the proposal and continued by saying that his Branch had a few years ago found

themselves in a quite serious financial situation and this resulted in the doubling of their Branch subscriptions and at the time there was lot of negative feeling about this, however it had now been taken for granted that the financial situation had been resolved and they were now quite solvent and he thought nationally we had to bite the bullet and agree to increasing the subscriptions to £15.00.

Chairman: Once again asked if anyone else wished to speak and as no one wished to he invited the Treasurer to speak.

Treasurer: Commented that things should be put into prospective about a point that the Chairman hadn't mentioned regarding the £7.50, quite a lot of members had implied, as to why they should have to pay an increase in their subscriptions if they didn't attend the Embankment Parade? He then went on to say that personally, he felt that the Embankment Parade was not about how many people attend, or how much we had to pay to hold the event, it was about paying homage to Submariners like us, who gave their lives during the war and they did that for us, so we could carry on living! So this business about it costing four or four and a half grand for future events and we are putting the subs up so much to pay for this, to his mind the argument didn't bear water. Following this he went on to say that as he had mentioned earlier about delegates presenting their expenses for attending the NCC, and at that point there was still 18 Delegates who hadn't submitted their claims, following which he requested a show hands from the delegates who would be claiming in excess of £15.00. This indicated that there were quite a number and the Treasurer continued by saying how did they expect the Association to continue paying their expenses when they only paid £7.50 to the Association, yet they were complaining about subs going up, but were quite happy as some people were, to claim in excess of £100.00 in expenses and how many £7.50's did that add up to! It was quite a lot, however we have endeavoured a lot to keep the expenses to a minimum, but they were not helping. He went on to say that he understood their argument about old age pensioners, however he was a pensioner and when they talked about the Embankment Parade it is an important event and that he took pride in going there to honour our dead, even though it affected his health and hopefully they recalled that at last year's event it rained heavily and he as well as many others got absolutely drenched right through and to begin with as most would be aware that he had a very bad chest and he subsequently spent the following 6 weeks sleeping in a chair. He then went on to say again that he didn't mind the subs having to be increased to ensure the future of this important event in our calendar and then asked the Delegates to take into consideration what he had said about expenses and the Embankment, as well as the argument the Rick Rothwell had made earlier, bearing in mind that when he was a member of the Committee, he has changed course 180 degrees, as he had about 3 years ago voiced the opinion that if we did not increase the subs we would go down the pan and now he was implying that we shouldn't!

At this point Rick Rothwell interjected by saying; two years ago and the Chairman intervened by saying stop, however Rick Rothwell continued to speak, saying that, two years ago he brought to the attention of the Committee that he was forecasting a loss in 2013 and he was subsequently shouted down quite loudly, however a loss of £1,700 occurred that year and we had now gone on to make a loss of £3,200.

Chairman: advised the speaker that there was no place for personal arguments during the debate and went on to thank Ian Atkinson for his comments, which had been very well expressed. Following this he asked if anyone else wished to speak. As no more Delegates wished to speak the Chairman called on the Proposer to conclude the Debate.

Stuart Brown (Beds & Herts Branch): Said they had all listened to valid arguments from everyone who had chosen to speak, however he still thought the proposal was an "absolute no brainer" if they all wanted the Association to survive, and for it to do more. Earlier someone had mentioned the number of old age pensioners in the Association who would be unable to afford a rise in subscriptions, well currently we were not in a position to help them as we didn't have the funds. He went on to say that, if they remembered earlier the Chairman had said that, "If we asked for donations towards holding the annual Memorial Service, people wouldn't attend." He then posed the question, was that the type of Association they all wanted or did they want to support our important events and to continue to have an Association that they could be all be justifiably proud of? He then went on to repeat that the proposal was a no brainer!

Chairman: Stated that now that everyone had had the chance to speak and that he had appreciated the decorum of delegates during the debate and then went on to recap on the proposal they were voting on as follows; the Proposal that came from the Recommendation was that the Submariners Association's annual subscriptions be increased to £15.00 per annum for all full members with affect from the start of the next Association's financial year, 1st January 2016.

The vote was then taken:

FOR: 22 AGAINST: 12 ABSTENTIONS: 2 **Recommendation carried**

The Chairman: Once again thanked the Delegates for their excellent conduct during the debate.

11. APPOINT A BRANCH TO PROPOSE THE 2016 REUNION TOAST

Per the rote the Espana Levante Branch has the honour of giving the toast to the Submarine Service and Bob Head, their Branch Secretary, who was in attendance responded by say the Branch would be honoured to do this.

12. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The President: Opened by saying that as there was only one nomination received for the position of National Chairman and that it was for the current Chairman Jim McMaster, West of Scotland Branch, therefore an election would not be necessary and that Jim McMaster was re-appointed as National Chairman for a further three years. Following this he made the Conference aware that he was very impressed by the quality of the debate that morning.

Chairman: Every year two Members of the NMC are up for re-election and we also ask for volunteers from the Branches to step forward as Candidates with the view of taking an active role in running the Association to the benefit of the Membership. This year we have four candidates for the two vacancies on the NMC and I would like to thank those four people: Stuart Brown, Iain Mackenzie, Paul Swaby and Brian Tate. These guys have had the courage to step forward and say "I would like to be considered to take an active part in the management of the Association" and we thank them for that. Unfortunately they can't all get a role, so we have to hold a ballot and all the Branches have cast their votes and I have the result here:

Stuart Brown - Beds and Herts Branch = 20 votes.

Iain Mackenzie – West of Scotland Branch = 30 votes.

Paul Swaby – East Kent Branch = 18 votes.

Brian Tate –West of Scotland Branch = 14 votes.

One ballot paper was classed as void because it was a duplicate.

Chairman: I have great pleasure in welcoming Stuart Brown onto the NMC. Stuart, please stand and make yourself known to the Delegates and Observers. He then said he thought everyone present knew Iain "Mad Dog" Mackenzie and then went on to thank both Paul Swaby and Brian Tate for stepping forward, as not everyone had the courage to step up to the plate, but that they had and that gratified him and he hoped that with them not being elected on this occasion, it would not deter them from putting themselves forward again in the future.

Before shutting the meeting the Chairman advised that two people had requested to address the Conference; the first being Ian Vickers, Secretary of the International Submariners Association who was allocated 10 minutes to speak, along with their Chairman and Treasurer. Following which, with the view of cementing a better relationship between the ISA and the SA they spoke about their forthcoming 52nd ISA Congress which they were hosting and being held in Portsmouth from 18th – 21st May 2015. It had been three years in the planning, with 22 countries being represented and, as there was spare capacity they were cordially inviting members of the Submariners Association to attend. Subsequently an explanation was given stating how members could apply to attend and it was particularly hoped that Branches would support the Memorial Parade being held on Southsea Common on the 21st May. Association members parading their Branch Standard, including members volunteering to carry the national flags at the event would be entitled to free drinks and a buffet at the Royal Maritime Club in Queen Street on completion. Anyone else attending would have to pay £15.00, following this, a brief outline of all the events taking place was given, which also included plenty of wining, dining and entertainment. In conclusion, Ian Vickers said that he and the members of the ISA (GB) hoped that members of the SA would be able participate in this attempt to bring our two Associations closer together.

Following this Mr Ray Wigmore (Sussex Branch) was given the opportunity to speak regarding the passing of his son in laws sister in January of this year at St. Wilfred's Hospice in Eastbourne. He said, the support given by the staff of the hospice during that very difficult time was absolutely superb and following the funeral the family had made the decision to raise some money for the Hospice. Initially his grandson had suggested that he would make a charitable parachute jump, subsequently both Ray and his son in law had also agreed to participate and as they had all now managed to achieve the initial £330.00 each it would cost to make the freefall parachute jump, he was now requesting those present to sponsor him to raise money for this worthy cause. He then said he would be available on completion of the proceedings with his sponsorship form in the area immediately outside of the conference room.

Chairman: Then continued by saying that, the first person he had to thank was Colin Jones, who had stepped down as a member of the NMC and his place had been taken by Stuart Brown. He went on to thank Colin for all his help and support over the past few years whilst serving on the Committee and that his presence would be missed. The second person he spoke about was the man re-elected onto the NMC known to all as “Mad Dog” and he invited him to say a few words!

Iain Mackenzie Asked those in attendance to take the message back to their Branches that he wished to thank all their members for their support in re-electing him back onto the NMC.

Chairman: Then indicated that Sandy Powell wished to speak.

Sandy Powell (NMC/Lincoln Branch): Advised the assembled that the Blue Plaque immediately in front of the Committee table was the one being dedicated to Lt. Cdr. Nasmith VC which was being unveiled on Saturday 11th April at 14:00 at Barnes, London and he then requested that any Standard Bearers wishing to attend should contact him by email at their earliest convenience.

13. SHUT THE MEETING

Chairman: Started to bring the Conference to a conclusion by thanking both the Delegates and the Observers for conducting themselves well, as their decorum and behaviour had been most welcome as he had thought that the proceedings may not have gone so well, however, everyone had been able to put their points of view forward and it had been done in a proper and diplomatic manner. He then went on to thank the Conference for giving him the privilege to serve as their Chairman for the next three years, it was for him an honour and he found it to be enjoyable, even on occasions such as this and that he would endeavour to live up to their expectations and not let them down, as the Association was moving forward in leaps and bounds and everyone in the Association was doing their bit and it was very rewarding to know they had allowed him to continue as Chairman for the next three years. Following this he said tinged with sadness that, the National Treasurer, Ian Atkinson had resigned with immediate effect because of his health, which had over the past couple of years become more debilitating, especially in the winter months as Ian indicated when he spoke earlier. He then stated that Ian had been both a wise councillor to both himself and the NMC over the years and it would be a difficult role to fill, however thankfully, he thought that as there were so many financial experts in attendance at Conference it wouldn't be a problem and then went on to thank Ian for his excellent support whilst in the role of Treasurer. Following this he said as this was with immediate effect there was a need for someone to be caretaker Treasurer and that the Membership Secretary, Keith Bishop had volunteered his services temporarily until a new Treasurer was found. A circular would be sent to the Branches in due course asking for volunteers to fill the vacancy, which hopefully would lead to a suitable replacement being found. [Post Conference note:- Ian Atkinson has subsequently withdrawn his resignation as National Treasurer]

At this point the Chairman wound up the proceedings by saying that he wanted to thank everyone for their support over the past three years, during both the good times and the bad, he especially thanked Bob Seaward in his absence as he was convalescing at home following surgery in hospital, Bob being both a Vice-President and member of the West of Scotland Branch had been very supportive. He also went on to mention that Dave Barlow, who because of his experience and knowledge had also been a great help and that he was also grateful for all the help and advice he had received from all the other Vice-Presidents and the NMC although the Vice-Presidents were not permitted to vote at Committee meetings, they provided their wisdom and support by keeping any deliberations taking place at meetings on the straight and narrow and that also included the President. The Chairman said there were some other people that he should mention who played a part in the Association, by helping to keep it running, however they did so in the background, the first being Mike Kemp, the Webmaster, who through his hard work and dedication had made the Website more dynamic and produced the PowerPoint Presentation they had all seen displayed during the Conference.

Following a round of applause Mike Kemp responded by thanking everyone for their positive feedback and said he hoped that the members would continue to forward items for posting on the site, as this would enable more information to be available to anyone visiting our Website.

Jim McMaster then said there was another name that they didn't hear very often was that of Trevor Thomas the National Standard Bearer and he went on to ask Trevor to take a bow, as he attended not only Embankment but also other events where our National Standard was paraded, for example just recently at the late Tex Golding's funeral and whenever Trevor paraded our Standard it was with both dignity and solemnity, as well as this he also passed on his experience and knowledge to the Branch Standard Bearers. He then in his absence due to unforeseen circumstances thanked Ted Hogben for representing the Association on the Advisory Panel of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum and also for the reports he provided to the Association, he also thanked David Ottley our representative on the Friends of the RMSM Committee, as they both ensured that the Association was kept up to

date regarding events at the Submarine Museum. Finally in closing the Conference the Chairman said that he had said all he wanted to say and as it was coming up towards “tot time” it was now time to shut the Conference, once again thanking everyone for their attendance and conduct during the proceedings.

The Conference was declared shut at 13:15

President's Address to The SA Conference 28th March 2015

Vice Presidents, Chairman, Members of the NMC, Delegates, Fellow Submariners.

I am delighted to be here today and I am pleased to see 36 Branches represented here but would still like to see more attend. It is also good that there are nearly 200 people at the reunion and it is good to see so many of you here observing the Conference. I do feel that the more who observe the Conference will see that the SA is a very democratic organisation where the NMC do their best to action what the membership want, not just do their own thing. This has been our third year under the Leadership of Jim McMaster and in my view he is doing a great job with his normal good humour and positive outlook coming through in all the issues he deals with so adeptly. Jim we are indebted to you for all your hard work in keeping us together and in check. I would also like to thank all the members of the NMC who put in so much of their own time and money to ensure the organisation of the SA runs smoothly. This year we have a very difficult decision to make on the level of subscriptions for the SA. It is up to you voting members to decide but if we want to run a professional well managed organisation that does what you as the Branches want then we need to raise the right resources to do it. I have noticed a significant change in what you all want over the years I have been your President. The old style reunion of leaning against a bar until either it or you falls down is waning. I notice that more and more members are going to events that have meaning, like at the NMA or our own Embankment Parade; maybe after that they lean against the bar. I fully support this change but as you will hear today it is causing us extra expense if we are to continue doing these very worthwhile events in a fitting fashion to remember those who have given their lives in defence of the realm and our present freedoms, there is no doubt we need more resources. The Old SOCA was formed so that the wartime submariners could keep in touch with each other and remember their friends who were lost and keep some of that special close relationship that had developed in time of conflict. It has subtly changed to one now where we in the present SA want to commemorate our fallen heroes and ensure their loss was not in vain and that they are still remembered. It has to be done correctly with dignity and solemnity. Please think about this when you vote later this morning.

As you know two years ago we introduced a President's Certificate to honour those who go above and beyond as Branch Officers and I presented the first to Frank Deadman of the Sussex Branch who was 97 and fit as a fiddle. It shows what a good tot of rum a day can achieve. Secondly, it was the turn of Denis Churchill of the Nottingham Branch, and once again there was a great turn out by both the Branch and his family and it was a very fitting and appropriate tribute to a great man. This year I have presented two Certificates. First to Dave Thomsett of the East Kent Branch and secondly to Dave Summers, of the Nottingham Branch, which I have to say it gave me great pleasure as we were old boats together in Finwhale in Singapore. Once again they were both most worthy people to receive this honour and I was particularly pleased to see both Branches put on a great spread and invited family to attend plus local newspaper photographers and in one case the Lord Mayor came as well. It is a tremendous occasion when the effort is made to make it a special event for the recipient and do please look out in your branch for any suitable recipients and forward their names to Jim McMaster for consideration. I will try to present them all but it may not always be possible. I would also like to mention the VC Plaques that we are putting up on buildings related to these brave men. So far we have done two: Commander Linton in Newport Wales, and Lt Cdr Holbrook in Portsmouth. On 11 April we are honouring Lt Dunbar Nasmith of E11 who in my mind is one of the greatest submarine COs of all time. The plaque is being put on the house where he was born in Barnes London. I feel this is a great initiative and hope it has your support. Finally, as I said last year, I have now been your President for 13 years and I feel it is time for me to pass on the baton. Rear Admiral Niall "Chuckles" Kilgour has formally agreed to take over. He is still in full time employment as Secretary of The Hurlingham Club but gives that up in October. He then wishes to go on a long holiday to most of the world including Australia and NZ but assures me he will be at Conference next year and be ready to take on the role. I have informed the NMC and seek their approval for me to hand over to him in one years' time but I will remain very engaged with the SA as I firmly believe in what it stands for, and all of you, the members, who are such a great fun team.

I hope we have a productive conference and a great reunion dinner tonight.

Thank you.

Admiral Sir James J. Perowne KBE

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT 2015 NCC

Good Morning Gentlemen, following the hard work of both Dave Barlow and Maddog Iain Mackenzie in arranging the venue for both the Conference and Reunion this weekend, I hope that you are all finding the hotel comfortable and to your liking.

Since our last Conference I've been kept very busy circulating information to the Branches, especially relating to quite a number of events were taking place to commemorate particular events that took place during the 1st and 2nd World Wars, as well as the unveiling of our 2nd Blue Plaque dedicated to Lt. Norman Holbrook at Portsmouth Grammar School and a new memorial being unveiled at Birkenhead Waterfront to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of those Submariners who sadly lost their lives during the accidental sinking of HM Submarine Thetis. These occasions were additional to the ones that both the Association and individual Branches attend annually and I would like to thank those Branches and their members who gave up their valuable time to represent both the Association and their Branches on these occasions, which hopefully had brought the SA further into the public's attention. Also recently the Government's had decided to commemorate VE 70 over the weekend of 8th – 10th May and an invitation for up to four eligible members (aged 85 or over) to participate was received from the RBL, who had apologised for the short notice given. I'm pleased to be able to inform you that, thanks to the Secretaries of both the Medway and Exeter Branches, two of our World War 2 Veterans have expressed a wish to represent the Submariners Association at one of the events and I have forwarded their details to Royal British Legion. Further to that, an invitation had been circulated to the Branches from the Not Forgotten Association for up to 10 eligible guests inclusive of carers to attend their Annual Garden Party and I'm pleased to say that to date I've been advised of three members, two of whom will be accompanied by their carer's as escorts have applied to attend.

Once again there is a good turn-out here today and, as always I endeavour to circulate all relevant information to the Branches as soon as possible, with the view that the Branch Secretaries will pass that information on to their members. However when applicable I do send information globally to all members contactable by email and following a reconfiguration of my address book the number of message delivery failures has reduced significantly, but having said that I still experience problems at times, when members change their email addresses and I'm not advised. Communication is a two way process and it would be appreciated for me to receive some feedback from the Branches, as to for example; how can we encourage younger Members to take on more responsibility by becoming Branch Officers, as currently there are still quite a number of elderly Branch Secretaries who have served in that role for many years, but unfortunately it still appears that our younger members are still unwilling to commit themselves into a role of responsibility. Sadly, as I've said before, if this trend continues we may be potentially faced with a further reduction in Membership due to Branches having to close, such as the Scotland North East Branch which unfortunately ceased to exist in January of this year. However thankfully, some of those members have transferred to other Branches.

It is customary at this meeting, the National Council Conference, for the National Secretary to give you all a breakdown on the Association Membership figures for the previous year. I would like to thank our Membership Secretary Keith Bishop for compiling these statistics, which will be given later in my report and will also be displayed visually as part of the PowerPoint presentation.

Hopefully you will be aware that since the last NCC our Webmaster Mike Kemp has spent many hours revamping the Association's Website, which has now been brought into the 21st century and is receiving a vast increase in numbers viewing the site, thanks to Mike's hard work, which is very much appreciated. Also our Membership Secretary Keith Bishop has set up the Association's Facebook Page and recruited a number of members to ensure that messages posted on it contain suitable content. I thank Keith and his team for this, as that has also helped improve the profile of our Association by making information more accessible in the public domain. On another subject, Frank Pas has for some time now been in the process of setting up the SA Slops Shop, and has been collaborating with the Mike Kemp to set up a Slops page on the Website. However it still needs a few tweaks, but hopefully it will go live in the very near future and I hope that our members will support it, as part of the proceeds from any items purchased will go into the SA funds.

In conclusion gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention and I hope you all enjoy the Inaugural Fully Integrated Reunion Weekend; I will now proceed on to the Membership Secretary's Report.

David N. Watts (Hon. National Secretary)

Membership Secretary's Report

Membership of the Association as at 31st December 2014 stood at 1,968. The last two years have shown a net gain in numbers of 74 and 78 for 2013 and 2014 respectively.

Membership Changes		
	2014	2013
New	144	132
Re-joined	65	156
Lapsed	55	136
Deceased	72	74
Resigned	4	4
Members as @ 31/12	1968	1890
Net Change	+78	+74

Since January 1st this year to date (20/03/2015) we have a net loss of 17 members. Judging by previous years the numbers, lapsed by branches for failing to pay their subscriptions, will fall as the late payers cough up.

Membership Changes	
	2015 to date
New	30
Re-joined	12
Lapsed	41
Deceased	16
Resigned	0
Net Change	-17

Since the last NCC a new branch in Grangemouth has been formed albeit with a core of members transferring from other branches has resulted in new members.

Next month a new branch is being formed in Bridlington, again with a few members transferring from other branches, but I am assured that new members will be forthcoming.

Applications that I receive from branches are recorded as a current member of the Association. Applications that I receive directly from an applicant are recorded as 'Application Received' before sending the form to the appropriate branch and the applicant is not included in Association member totals until I receive confirmation from the branch that the applicant is a paid up member.

At the present time there are 25 applications awaiting confirmation of membership, some going back nearly a year. It disappoints me when chasing up such applications to be told 'We have heard nothing from them so we are lapsing them,' and when I email the applicant to find out why they haven't joined the Association I'm told 'I haven't heard anything from anyone.' This is more of a problem with serving member applicants who obviously aren't immediately contactable. We need the new members and if I can eventually contact them why can't the branches? I am not tarring all the branches with the same brush. If secretaries/membership secretaries are having difficulty please don't just ignore the applicant, contact me and I will do my best to help get their membership confirmed. I will be discussing, with the serving rep, at the next NMC meeting ways we can improve the recruiting of serving members.

On the subject of recruiting you will have seen the pop up banners displayed in the hotel. These are available for branches to use at any events in their area to help them recruit new members.

I will shortly be doing a mailshot to the letters page of as many local newspapers as I can to say who we are and that we are seeking new members.

Keith Bishop
National Membership Secretary