



Merchant Navy Association (Wales)



*Happy New Year Shipmates.
Best wishes and plain sailing to you
and yours for 2023*

STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

Where do we stand after two years and more of Covid???? Our current membership is 39 which includes 17 in our Barry Branch. So far this year (1 May 2022 to 31 April 2023) we have lost two “National” members who Crossed the Bar, Mr. Karl Clissett and Mr. Cyril James, along with one “National” member and three Barry Branch members who were removed from the membership list on the 1st May 2022 due to non-payment of subscriptions. However, Barry Branch managed to enrol 5 new members during May/July 2022. This includes Associate Member James Clive Jones (A76), of Barry who joined in July 2022. Well done Barry. Based on the date of birth information provided by 28 members, as of 2022 the membership as a whole includes 7 members in their 90s and 8 in their 80s. The average age of membership is 75, the eldest being 96 (two members) and the youngest 27. We are definitely in need of some new members so if you know of any ex or serving merchant seafarers out there please point them in our direction. We also have an Associate Membership which is open to relatives, descendants and all who wish to ally themselves with the principles and aims of the Association.

Barry Branch Members have resumed their meetings which are held on the last Wednesday of every month at 2.00 p.m. in The Liberal Club, Thompson Street, Barry. Sadly the “National” have not. Barry normally get 4 or 5 members at a meeting, and benefit from most of their members being resident in the Barry area, whereas the “National” members are spread throughout South Wales. Unfortunately there is currently very little interest from our “National” members in starting meetings again. Those that were regular attendees prior to Covid have sadly Crossed the Bar or their

physical condition makes it difficult to travel. I am in touch with our Chairman and another Committee member to discuss any issues that may arise and meet up if necessary. But we need to get together again as a group at a suitable venue, be it in Cardiff or a Valley town. Please contact me if you are interested or have any other comments to make on the future of MNA (Wales) and the way forward. Or maybe you have an Article/photo you would like to include in the next Newsletter. I'm sure there is many a story waiting to be told.

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We keep in touch with our contacts in the Community to ensure that the MN is represented at any appropriate events during the year and we are kept very busy as you can see from the following pages. Our Standard Bearer Mr. Dave Richards has been run ragged attending events and funerals and we really appreciate his support.

EVENTS ATTENDED



November was our busiest month of the year as you'd expect. The first event was the Field of Remembrance in the grounds of Cardiff Castle, on the 3rd November. Sadly, yet again, the Royal British Legion (TRBL) did not invite us to plant a cross on behalf of the Merchant Navy. But our Standard was paraded and I planted a cross in the Merchant Navy Section for my fathers ship S.S. Ramillies. The Ramillies was torpedoed and sunk on 8 May 1941 with the loss of 29 crew members, many of whom were from the Cardiff area. Thankfully my father survived and was picked up after 10 days in an open boat and taken to Halifax, Nova Scotia. On the 4th November I was invited to a Reception onboard HMS Portland at Cardiff Bay, which was very interesting indeed. The Service at St. Johns Church, Cardiff was

held on the morning of the 5th Nov. when I was invited to plant a cross on behalf of the Merchant Navy. Our Standard Bearer was also in attendance. The event was somewhat low key as many of the invited participants failed to show up due, so I am told, to TRBL organising another event at the same day and time behind Cardiff City



Hall. Later that day our Standard Bearer attend the Festival of Remembrance Service in St. David's Hall where our Standard was paraded. On the 9th Nov. I was asked to give a talk on Remembrance to a Brownie Group in the Ystrad Mynach area which went down very well. While all this was going on we were also preparing for our own Service down Cardiff Bay on Saturday 12th Nov and I must say that the time taken in preparation was well worth it as the event was very well attended (perhaps maybe a few more Standards next time) and feed back was very positive. Unfortunately Our Standard Bearer was in London but our Shipmate John Evans (age 93) proudly stood in for him.



On the 13th November the Wales National Remembrance Service was held at the National Memorial, Cathays Park, Cardiff where our Chairman laid a wreath on behalf of the Merchant Navy. He was supported by the myself and member Keith Walker who, although not taking part in the parade (no Standard), were in the congregation to show their respect for all those Merchant Seafarers who never returned. But it didn't end there. On Saturday 25th November I supported our MNA Newport Branch shipmates at their Remembrance Service at the Seafarers Memorial, Newport and laid a wreath on behalf of MNA (Wales). The Barry Branch Chairman, Joe Norton and members of the Branch attended our service down the Bay and Joe



laid a wreath on their behalf. They had previously attended the Barry Service at the Merchant Navy Memorial on the 11th November (why weren't we invited??). On the 13th November Peter Rees laid a wreath at the Merchant Navy Memorial and Joe laid one at the Barry Memorial Hall Cenotaph.

CYRIL JAMES

Cyril James of Cardiff, Crossed the Bar on Saturday 13th July 2022 age 91. Cyril was at sea between 1951 and 1958 and served as an Engineer. His first ship being the Hapalycus followed by Baron Murray, Laurentian Hill, Birmingham City, Bristol City, Toronto City, New York City and finally Gloucester City. He join MNA (Wales) on the 9th of October 1996 and regularly attended our meetings and events over the years. He will be dearly missed by all who knew him. He is buried in Thornhill Cemetery along with his wife.



ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Membership Secretary reminds all members that subscriptions for the year 2022/2023 and now due and subscriptions for 2023/2024 are due on 1st May 2023. The annual subscription is £10.00.

In accordance with our Articles of Association, any member who is three years in arrears, may be removed from the membership list.

Please advise the Secretary of any sickness or bereavement which may come to your notice.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

The Facebook page Merchant Navy Association (Wales) Facebook and the web site www.mnabarrybranch.proboards.com initiated by Barry Branch earlier this year, are up and running and proving popular. The National website www.mnawales.org.uk is also being updated and will be available again early 2023.