



# ROYAL NAVAL PATROL SERVICE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 81 Winter 2016

## POSTAL ADDRESS and HEADQUARTERS

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### Reunion 2016

Taken as a whole, the reunion has to go down as a success. The AGM on the Friday afternoon (in dry conditions) was well attended and the necessary business was conducted satisfactorily. The dates for the 2017 reunion are 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> October.

The Friday night dinner at the new venue of the Hotel Victoria was a great success with the venue offering more room and a more relaxed, light and airy atmosphere. This year we broke with tradition and did not have a "top table" but had those who would have been on it spread amongst the tables and it seemed to work well. Apart from the civic guests, including the Mayor of Lowestoft Cllr Nick Webb, we also had the Commanding Officer and MEO from HMS Trumpeter with us, Lt Joshua Morris and CPO Mathew Hudson who enjoyed the evening and the dits they were regaled with.

The Saturday of the parade was a culture shock to say the least and two old songs came to mind, "What a difference a day makes" and "The day that the rains came down". It started with light drizzle so John Coble and I decided to hoist the white ensign and get the outside ready but a sudden downpour made us rethink our strategy. It continued to alternate between rain and drizzle but we kept convincing ourselves that we could see a bright patch of sky coming. It may well have been coming but thought better than settling over us. Eventually we all started to gather up at the memorial in a steady drizzle. This year we were extremely honoured to have with us an armed guard from the Mine Hunter, HMS Brockelsby, based in Portsmouth and they too were slowly soaking up the rain! Our Guest of Honour, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Major General John Sutherell CB CBE DL, in full uniform, joined the rest of the official party and the service started with the march on of the guard and the standards. Our new Local Padre, Rev Peter Payne, took the service which followed our tried and tested formula. It was very noticeable that none of our veterans had an umbrella, none of the official party had an umbrella and most of the public that were there stood all the time without shelter. I found this quite a humbling experience and took it as a true expression of why we were there, to remember all those who have gone before and would have given anything to stand in the rain next to us. After the service the Guard and Standards marched off and a soggy crowd started to make their way down to the Sparrow's Nest Gardens. As we started to gather in preparation for the march past and salute the rain increased and it was clear it was set in for the rest of the day. We fell in around the mast and our President Cdr Garry Titmus gave us words of wisdom and encouragement and then presented the museum with a copy of an oil painting of the trawler HMS Shirley taking the surrender of the U boat U-111. After "Sunset", which some wag suggested should be re-named "rainfall", we mustered by the new lift for the official opening by Major General Sutherell. The RN guard lined one flank and our President and Vice Presidents along with the Civic Dignitaries lined the other. At this point the weather decided that it wanted a starring role in the proceedings and so started to pour down but undeterred everyone stood their ground and Major General Sutherell spoke about the importance of the lift and the work of the museum. Our Padre, Peter Payne then blessed the lift and Major General Sutherell unveiled the plaque to our benefactor that made it all possible, S/M Gordon Sear, who kindly left us a legacy in his will which financed the project. By this time the guard and everyone else were soaked to the skin but a tot of rum followed by a mug of hot tea put a better complexion on the situation,



*The oil painting by Charles Pears depicts the surrender of the German submarine U-111 to the anti-submarine trawler 'Lady Shirley' in position 27.15N, 20.27W south west of Tenerife, on 4 October 1941. She had been brought to the surface by repeated depth-charging and eight of the 52 strong crew had been killed.*

hardened instructors would probably say that it was character building but I do not think this idea was going through the minds of the young Sea Cadets who stuck it out along with everyone else. As if to convince us of the value of the lift, I heard that 2 of our members who come regularly said, quite independently of each other, that the lift had enabled them to get back up to our top room again after about 3 years. So ended a very wet but a very successful reunion and as people gathered in our top room you could see steam rising from their wet clothes – our very own Chinese laundry!

Our local ITV Anglia News did a very good report on the event and this can be viewed at: <http://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2016-10-08/the-surviving-veterans-of-the-little-known-royal-naval-patrol-service-based-in-lowestoft-parade-through-the-town/>

Also the November issue of Navy News carried a good picture and report by the Gunnery Officer of HMS Brockelsby who acted as Guard Commander, Lt Daniel Buttar, and they headed it “Brollies for Brockelsby”

I have put together a couple of pages of pictures of the reunion so you can see, in the dry, what it was like. In some of the photographs you will notice the disparity between my height and that of the 2 escorts that the Sea Cadets supply for our National Standard, I am convinced they do this on purpose every year!

#### HMS Bedfordshire commemoration by Richard Eagles, Florida

**Ocracoke Island May 2016.** This was the 4<sup>th</sup> year Bear and I have had the honour of representing the Patrol Service at the HMT Bedfordshire Memorial in North Carolina. This year was the first time that we presented a wreath from the RNPSA and what an honour it was. The Graveyard of the Atlantic museum were equally pleased.

I have to say I think I got a true taste of the 'Harry Tate' feeling. The wreath was right up front between the RN, USN and RCN wreaths. All were much larger and might even be considered prettier, but there it was right up front as if clearing the way. This was not the only 'Harry Tate moment'. The day was windy and the wreath was very light so it was prone to blowing over as well (probably knocking one or two other wreaths with it).

The naval attaches were called to present their wreaths and 'fluff the flowers' when it was the Patrol Service turn, I stepped forward and leaned over to 'fluff the flowers' when it suddenly occurred to me that if I actually touch the display in this wind it will go right over. I smiled to myself and reached out as if to 'shoo' a fly away and left it at that. I thought most of the 'old timers' would really get a kick out of that, a true 'Harry Tate moment'.

Next year will be the 75th anniversary and the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum are going all out to put on an extra good show. The museum are looking for photos of the Bedfordshire as they have very little, can anyone help? If anyone can make it over for the memorial it will be well worth the trip. Something I highly recommend. Bear and I are planning to take our wives next year and hope to present a RNPSA wreath again.

**September 2016.** Bear and I and our wives managed to get over to the 'Nest' this past September and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves for a couple of hours. A big thanks to John Street, Mike Simms, and Tony Addison for opening up the museum for this one off trip and taking time out to show our wives around. We took back a few mementos to hand out at next year's service to get and keep the Patrol Service name out there.

'Yours aye'. Richard Eagles and Andrew (Bear) Wolf

#### MMS 117

My grandfather **Charles Edwin Tully** served in the Royal Naval Patrol Service as an Engineman and died on active service in the Mediterranean on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1944 aged 34. His Service number was **LT/KX 109773**. The only known pictures of him, held by my grandmother, were lost during the Blitz.

I would dearly, dearly love to try and find a picture of him to go with his medals.

Ley Lashbrook, [leylashbrook@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:leylashbrook@blueyonder.co.uk)

#### ML 237

We have received the following enquiry and although it relates to a Coastal Forces ML could have an RNPS connection.

Some years ago I paid a visit to Lowestoft, to try and understand and learn about my late father's WW2 service, like many serving men he never spoke about what happened other from a memory of him talking to me as a young boy and saying how his friend had been killed near him when he shot a mine far too close to the ship – his friend and part of the stern went skyward in pieces.

So in my 40's when my children asked me about the war, I told them a little of what I knew about their grandfather, hence my journey to Europa. I have still continued the search off and on, discovering what the RNPS was and to a certain extent what he did. In more recent years I heard from a gentleman,

whose late father had served on **ML 237** and he told me of a story whereby on D day she saved the life of a Canadian vessel stuck on a sandbank, trying to offload soldiers on Juno beach – I have tried to trace this story and records are limited, but I did find at Kew PRO reference to this ship being given ‘special Leave’ d-day +1 for the actions they took. My question to you, before it is too late, is could you ask through your newsletter if there are any surviving members of the crew of **ML237**, that recalls the event and if possible for research if I may make contact with them. This little ship/boat is ‘shown’ to be in places where things took place (St Nazaire/ Cockle shell heroes/Dieppe) even a spy story from Kiel! But no fact or records. Hopefully there is someone out there that has memories of D DAY  
 Thanking you, Peter Hopkins, [ph@richardlawrenceassociates.co.uk](mailto:ph@richardlawrenceassociates.co.uk)

RNPS Memorial, National Memorial Arboretum

On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August we gathered at the RNPS memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum situated in Alrewas Staffordshire for the annual service. The weather was dry and eight RNPS veterans gathered with their families to await the start. It was noticeable that some were arriving with walking aids or wheelchairs but when they saw each other the years seemed to fall away and they were all standing chatting and laughing like the young 20 year old matelots that they used to be. The guests of honour arrived who were the Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mine Counter Measures Squadron (MCM2), Portsmouth, Cdr Paul Ottewell and his Executive Warrant Officer WO1 Stephen “Bunny” Warren” and our President Cdr Garry Titmus. Tom Colleran, who was the main organiser of the event, took the service as the Rev. Jim Izzard was not well enough to attend. The congregation numbered about 40 with a few of the Arboretum visitors stopping to show their respects. After the service Tom Colleran provided the customary “Tot” of rum and it was decided that as this was likely to be the last of these services that a group photograph be taken of the veterans and the official party. As we were posed for the cameras a very fine shower of rain started and one of our veterans said “can we hurry this up as the rain is starting to dilute my rum” – once Navy, always Navy! I gave him an extra tot for that remark!

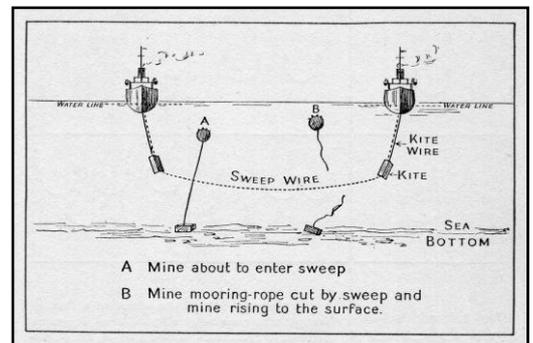


*Arthur Young, Cdr Paul Ottewell MCM2, Stanley Cox, Cdr Garry Titmus, Peter Rose, Don McLeod, Tom Colleran, Leonard Turner, WO1 Stephen “Bunny” Warren Executive Warrant Officer MCM2, Tom Townley, Charlie Hay, Leo Whisstock, Sim Mayou.*

We must thank the Ex Midlands branch members for all they have done regarding this memorial and the annual services over the years but as a post script I am very happy to inform you that a member from Preston, Lancashire, whose father was in the RNPS has agreed to pay an endowment to enable the memorial to be cared for by the National Memorial Arboretum in perpetuity. This very generous gesture was announced at the AGM at the reunion and the member concerned was thanked personally by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Major General John Sutherland.

Origins of the Oropesa sweep by Mike Sims

At the beginning of WW1 the Royal Navy's method of sweeping mines had progressed only slightly from the Russians who during their war with the Japanese in 1904 had used grappling hooks dragged along the sea bed. The Royal Navy used pairs of vessels with a length of wire up to about 500 metres slung underwater between them and fitted with kites at each end to keep the sweep at a determined depth. If they fouled a mine but did not succeed in cutting the securing wire they would try to drag the mine towards the shore so that it could be dealt with from there. Later versions used a serrated wire which had a better chance of cutting the mine free.



By 1915 a Lt. Dennistoun Burney, a gentleman sailor/engineer/innovator and son of Admiral Sir Charles Dennistoun Burney, was given leave of absence from his ship to pursue his experiments with what he called the paravane. By gentleman I do not mean a man of manners but one of private means who could afford to ask for leave on half pay to follow up on his enthusiasm for this and other perceived mechanical

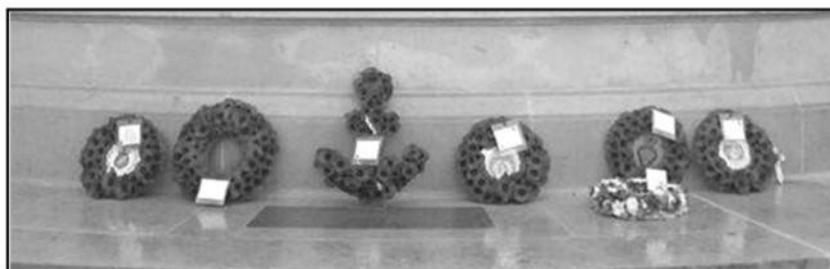
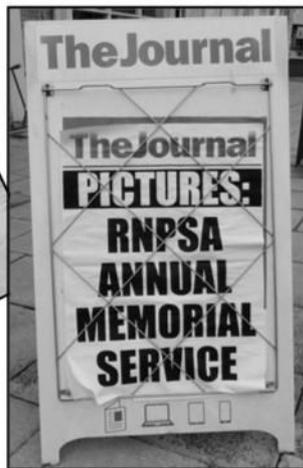
# 41<sup>st</sup> Reunion 2016 – Belle Vue Park



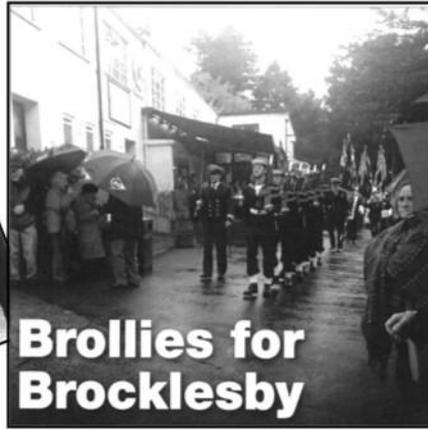
Past

Present

Future



# 41<sup>st</sup> Reunion 2016 – Sparrow's Nest



ROYAL NAVAL PATROL SERVICE  
ASSOCIATION

THIS LIFT IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
**GORDON GEORGE SEAR**  
LT/JX 627759

OPENED ON 8TH OCTOBER 2016  
BY  
MAJOR GENERAL SUTHERELL CB CBE DL



improvements to the service. With assistance made available to him through HMS Vernon, the Royal Navy's research and development establishment into submarines, mines and their respective counter measures, he was able to patent his designs. The paravane was a manoeuvrable underwater kite which, when towed by a vessel, would take up a position parallel to but away from the side of the vessel. Two versions of the paravane were developed, the one having the higher priority at the time being an anti-submarine weapon. Submarines at this stage of WW1 were slow moving when submerged and could easily be caught and overtaken by a surface vessel. The anti-submarine paravane contained an explosive charge which was designed to be towed from each quarter of a destroyer into areas where the presence of a submarine was suspected, in the hope that the paravane would foul the submarine and in doing so explode against it. In practice it was not so successful as had been hoped and was not too popular with those using it either as after every unsuccessful deployment the explosive paravanes had to be recovered and brought inboard once more, a hazardous process.

The anti-mine protector paravane was more successful. The large capital ships of the time had large anti-torpedo bulges along the sides which increased the hull profile considerably and so made fouling a mine far more likely if they strayed into a minefield. With anti-mine paravanes streamed on either side from the stem of the ship at keel level any mines encountered would be pushed out of reach of contact with the vessel's hull, usually cutting the mine adrift at the same time.

The strange thing is that these developments seem to have been an almost entirely private enterprise undertaken by Burney with a small staff of naval personnel. They were based in HMS Vernon when it was a hulk lying at Portsmouth and much of the early work was funded at Burney's personal expense. Another odd thing is that although the mine protector paravane proved its worth and was adopted for general use by both naval and merchant vessels in WW1 the concept seems to have been forgotten by WW2. The WW1 merchant vessel version was identical but named the 'otter' but I have not been able to find any reference to its use in WW2 by the Royal or Merchant navies despite the fact that British patents had been registered. If nothing else it would have helped to protect the lead minesweeper in any sweeping operation. The Germans however had not forgotten and they used what they called 'Bugschutzgerät' bow protection gear to achieve the same purpose for their minesweepers in WW2. A variation of the mine protector paravane was developed as the oropesa float, the latter believed to have been so named after the vessel which had been used to help the development. This would become the standard method of sweeping submerged contact mines for the remainder of WW1 and into WW2 but the idea of protecting individual vessels seems to have been abandoned.

Sources: Swept Channels - An Account of the work of Minesweepers in the Great War, by 'Taffrail', 1935

The Paravane Adventure, by L. Cope Cornford, 1919

The Gathering Storm - The Naval War in Northern Europe Sept. 1949-April 1940, by Geirr H. Haarr, 2013

### Bottom museum room refurbishment

Ted Thompson and John Coble have been working very hard to transform our bottom museum room and now it is brighter, more spacious and has new display cabinets. Their work received very favourable comments from those who saw it at the reunion and here are a couple of photos for you to see how it looks now. In the course of the work we had a good look at some of the exhibits and discovered that two of our steel helmets were in fact quite rare, one having an oilcloth neck cover and the other being an experimental "Cruise" steel helmet that had a mesh visor which actually turned out to be so impractical it was discontinued so we are lucky to have it.



*The refurbished museum room and our 2 "special" helmets*

### Mission accomplished

We received an enquiry from our member Tom Collieran regarding 2 years he spent in the Far East while in the RNPS, 6 months of which were at the base at Khorramshahr. He remembers being told about a RNPS rating who was killed out there before 1944 and had been buried in Basra but has since been unable to find any details. I looked into this for Tom and was able to give him not only information he wanted but also of another RNPS sailor in the same cemetery. Their details are:-

Martin Higgins, Stoker LT/KX130310, HMS Snowdrift, died 07/05/43 buried in Basra War Cemetery.

Henry McDiamid, seaman LT/JX205461, HMS Euphrates, died 15/07/43 buried in Basra War Cemetery.

We do our best with research but it is very gratifying when we achieve 100% success – I only wish we could do this for all the enquiries we get.

### A new one on us – Mike Sims

Our esteemed Secretary, Leo Whisstock, recently visited the Queenborough Guildhall Museum and was so impressed that he brought back their DVD which covers aspects of mine-sweeping during WW2. It was while watching this DVD that a rather strange Motor Minesweeper was spotted - see image of **MMS 8**.

None of us has ever seen a MMS with a gun mounting over the quarterdeck, aft of the sweep drum, where the LL sweep pays out, Can anyone throw any light on how this worked?



*Note the aft mounted gun*

### Newsletter in PDF format

Our newsletters are now available on line on our website or can be sent in PDF format via email for anyone who would prefer this method.

### Subscriptions – PLEASE NOTE

This is an important item from those in the office who deal with subscriptions. Firstly, can you please note that the current subscription rate is **£8 for Served Members** (formerly known as Members) and **£10 for Members** (formerly known as Associate Members) and could you also please make sure you send in your membership book and SAE with your subscription so that your renewal can be accurately recorded and accounted for. Subscriptions become due on the 1<sup>st</sup> January each year.

### HMT Le Tiger



I have received an email from the daughter of RNPS man, **Ronnie “Mickey” Watkin** who served on **HMT Le Tiger**. She recently purchased an old photo album at auction and discovered in it a set of pictures, dated May 1942, of men who served on Le Tiger complete with their names!

Named photos are - L/Sea Tubby Westlake, A.B. Pincher Martin, A.B. Billy Bennett, Stokers Black & Smith, Cooks Stockman & Wood, Sparks Bob Ramsbottom, Cox'n Duncan

Campbell, Gunner Percy Hounsome, Sparks Jack Beaumont, A.B. Bob Madison, Sparks Ernie Baxter, Bunts Tony Prior & Bill Groom, L/Sea Johnny Walker, P.O. Steward Oscar Fryar, Asdic Paddy O'Connor. If you have any information on her father or any of those mentioned or Le Tiger, please contact Carolyn Southern 07740537736 or email [chicken\\_shed@hotmail.com](mailto:chicken_shed@hotmail.com)

### Wreath laying service

With the help of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (and others) it is now possible to arrange for Poppy Wreaths to be placed on graves in most overseas countries.

Please make requests for laying at least eight weeks in advance.

Contact The Poppy Appeal, Royal British Legion Village, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7NX Tel: 01622 717172

### Welfare

Our National Welfare Officer is there to try and help you, she cannot perform miracles but will do her best to address any concerns which, of course, are kept confidential. Bonnie's contact details are - Mrs Bonnie Whisstock, 133 Corton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4PR. Tel. 01502 584555 or via e-mail at [bonnie@theharbour.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:bonnie@theharbour.fsbusiness.co.uk) As an extension of this service our Honorary National Padre, Rev. Jim Izzard has a very understanding ear backed up by a lifetime of dealing with maritime folk so if you would prefer to have a chat with him his telephone number is 01983 855155 or 07899902933.

### Curator

If you are sending anything to the Museum can you please make sure you state if it is on **loan** or a **gift** as it helps with the cataloguing and any future claims to ownership and with photographs please give descriptions and/or names where possible.

### Web site

Don't forget, if you have access to a computer, to keep checking the web site connected to our Association which is: [www.rnpsa.co.uk](http://www.rnpsa.co.uk) Keep the odds and ends coming, they all make interesting reading. If you have any items for inclusion in the next Newsletter or comments on this one, please send them to me at, Leo Whisstock, 133 Corton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4PR. Tel. 01502 584555 or you can email them to me at my home email address [rnpsa@theharbour.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:rnpsa@theharbour.fsbusiness.co.uk)

Yours Aye, **The Duty Watch**

### Reunion Draw Results - 2016

	Prize	Ticket	Winner
1	£200.00	13550	M Williams, Lowestoft, Suffolk
2	£150.00	13047	S Walsh, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft, Suffolk
3	£100.00	10791	Mrs Ashton, Norwich, Norfolk
4	£25.00	06902	Ms Garrett, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
5	£25.00	00780	Donated back to RNPSA

### Obituary for Winter 2016

S/M T Butterworth	Heywood	Lancashire	S/M E Chapman	Harlow	Essex
S/M S T Richards	Warley	West Midlands	S/M R Godwin	Leigh on Sea	Essex
S/M D Russell	Uddington	Glasgow	S/M J Willis	Bracknell	Berks
S/M D Schofield	Birmingham	West Midlands	S/M E Tomkinson	Erdington	West Midlands
S/M N Leavesley	Halesowen	West Midlands	S/M H Niblett	Romney Marsh	Kent
S/M L Hancox	Birmingham	West Midlands	S/M J Williams	Cardiff	Wales
S/M K Scrutton	Beverly	Yorkshire	S/M B Banbury	Margate	Kent
S/M R Smith	Ugborough	Devon	S/M E Huntington	Pulham Market	Norfolk
S/M B Cook	Ashford	Kent	S/M W Smith	Kettering	Northants
S/M J Thomson	Edinburgh	Scotland	S/M E Sharman	Dronfield	Derbyshire
S/M A O'Hanlon	Swindon	Wiltshire	S/M G Smith	Glasgow	Scotland
S/M R Bass	Colne	Lancashire	S/M W McNabb	Darlington	Co Durham
S/M G Cocker	Harwich	Essex			

At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them

Cut ✂ or copy -----

### Slops items for sale from HQ (Winter 2016)

Item / Title	£	Qty	£	Item / Title	£	Qty	£
Lg. Blazer Badge, Gold wire	12.00			Sparrows Nest Post Card	0.20		
Lg. Blazer Badge, Woven	6.50						
Small Blazer Badge, Gold wire	8.00			<b>Publications</b>			
Jumper / Cap Badges, Woven	4.00			Christmas cards - original	0.50		
Association Crested Tie	12.00			Christmas cards – clean sweep	0.50		
RNPSA Ladies head square	7.50			HMS Europa Booklet	2.00		
Museum Squiggle pen	1.00			Dawn Always Breaks	5.00		
Museum 4 colour pen	2.00			Churchill's Pirates Pt.1	5.00		
Lapel Badge, Blue enamel	7.00			Churchill's Pirates Pt.2	4.50		
White Ensign Lapel Badge	3.50			A Brief History of the RNPS	4.00		
White Ensign Car Sticker	0.50			Blue Mariners CD	4.00		
RNPSA Car sticker, coloured	2.00			The Story of the RNPS, 2 CD set	6.00		
RNPSA Bookmark	0.50			Red Diamonds	3.00		
RNPSA Jubilee Mug	3.00						
RNPSA Key rings	1.00			<b>Total</b>	<b>£</b>		
RNPSA Epaulettes (pair)	6.00			P & P Small items	1.25		
RNPSA Colouring Poster	0.30			P & P Large / Heavy items	2.50		
RNPS Memorial Post Card	0.10			<b>Total Submitted</b>	<b>£</b>		

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. No. \_\_\_\_\_