



The Society Newsletter

Progress of the Engineering Technicians

The Royal Naval Engineers' Benevolent Society has been in existence since 1872, for the promotion of the social, intellectual and general welfare of its members.

The main points of the Branch Structural Change

- Major change for all branches
- Constructive comments still welcome
- Future scheme to include the word apprentice
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Some change is needed and cannot be avoided. The Society hopes this is the right change.

Some phrases were recently given to me :

- A more focused junior rate.
- Chief Petty Officer difference clear to view.

While sure that these phrases mean something real and tangible there is something about them that makes me feel uneasy. Thought has definitely gone into them and they do feel generally right, but when they are neatly packaged is it not just spin?

The Objectives of the Branch Development is to bring about change to all service personnel that will make their jobs clear and the difference they make to the performance of their Ship or establishment evident.

When change comes it will be with some problems, to ignore this fact would be complacent and court danger. The change for the Artificer is one of name and structure of training, the change for the mechanic is more profound. To move from being a mechanic to an engineering

technician will require additional training for many, this is particularly true for senior rates. It is the aim to have all senior rates trained up to the Engineering Technician specification set by the Engineering Council ^{UK}.

All those who remain within the structure and change will be rewarded by enhanced prospects. Some Chief Petty Officer Mechanics (Chief Stokers) will opt to remain the same and they will be allowed to if they want. They are part of a small group that would have their jobs totally redefined. For most groups the changes will be undertaken by minor redefinition of their job and some alteration training (PJT style).

All Engineering Technicians who remain in the Royal Navy will be trained for the next level of advancement once they have achieved the requirements for the additional training. To get the next block of training certain technical and educational requirements will have to be met.

Interestingly the different levels of training are being proposed as the different levels of an apprenticeship. The reason for using the term Engineering Technician from entry is partly seen as giving everyone a clear identity to branch and partly because all the alternatives are unworkable.

Important tasks

For Members:

- Tell the Managing Secretary of any changes of address and nominee.
- Let the Secretaries know if you have an email address.
- Attend a Section meeting.
- Get another serving engineer to join the Society.

Branch Development

The Navy Board Personnel Change Programme has been presented with the views of the Society and has given some answers to the questions raised by the Society's members.

The future training of Engineering Technicians will be at a reduced standard?: It is felt that by using a sandwich course style, similar to the developments in universities and industrial apprenticeships, there will be the advantages of understanding what is being taught and discussed as the student will know and have seen working examples.

The standard of entry has been reduced?: It is a fact that many Artificers who use the candidate route do

not enter the Royal Navy with the educational qualifications for the Artificer training but gain it during their time in the Royal Navy. The standards needed to undertake the next phase of training will be set at the higher levels. This will allow those who start with the necessary qualifications to progress faster than those who need to gain them while serving at sea.

The new proposals will not improve retention?: It is accepted that not everyone who joins the Royal Navy will stay for a full career and the present rate is just under 50% make it to PO. The new career profile will give clear incentives to stay while allowing for the fact that life within the service will not suit everyone. Giving the training in sections with sea-time between those sections will better target the training to those who are motivated for advancement in the Royal Navy.

The Engineering Technician will not attract the right recruits?: The current situation is that it is easier to recruit Mechanics than Artificers partly due to the reduced commitment - some entrants who have the qualifications for Artificer still join as Mechanics. Setting to high an entry standard can act as a de-motivator if the expectations of the entrant are not met.

The Royal Navy does not recognise qualifications obtained elsewhere?: There is a proposal to acknowledge appropriate qualifications gained including those gained before entry and during service. It is not clear what benefit this will have in the long term.

The Society would encourage members to seek out information - ask your DO, MEO, WEO or attend a roadshow. You can contact Cdr Cran or the Society's General Secretary.

Information flow and the Royal Navy.

The communication of information relating to personnel within the Royal Navy is an important feature of the Modern Navy.

The future branch changes and change in working practice make it imperative that everyone makes the best use of the information being given to them, seeking to understand its implication both to themselves and others.

The present Second Sea Lord has made it a personal campaign to re-invigorate the Divisional System and expects it to be the primary method of getting information to the personnel of the Royal Navy and receive feedback. While there are those who suggest that the Divisional system is not the best method that the modern Navy could offer with Divisional officers

often having other jobs of a higher priority in the running of a ship or establishment, it is the method that has served the Royal Navy over a long period of time.

There are many ways in which members of the Royal Navy are able to get information and to seek representation. The main form is the Divisional System. The system allows communication between the lower rates and the Flag officers through the chain of command.

Information can and regularly is passed down to the division and feedback is frequently requested, making it a two-way channel when it works at its best. If there is an issue that an individual feels the divisional system will not correctly represent or is of a more directly pressing nature then members of the Royal Navy can make direct presentation to their Divi-

sional Officer, Captain or Flag officer. If there are a number of personnel with the same problem they need to make separate presentations.

The Second Sea Lord's presentation team have for a number of years visited ships and establishments, there are a number of surveys and campaigns aimed at finding out what people are thinking and there is the Buzz buster email system.

With all these systems in place the Society still feels there is a strong case for the independent representation that the Society gives. It would be helpful if it was on a more official basis but it is still an effective tool.

If you have comments to add, an issue to raise or a story to tell please feel free to contact the General Secretary as indicated at the end of this newsletter.

Faslane Section Meeting

The Faslane Section Annual General Meeting will be held on 1 June 2005 - starting in the Warrant and Senior Rates mess.

The format for the Faslane meeting is open to change and those who wish to

attend the meeting should watch the Web-site or telephone the General Secretary for details closer to the date.

This meeting is to give members access to the Society. There will be a session at which the General Secretary will give the present view of the

Branch Development from the Society and listen to the concerns of serving members. There will then be a short meeting that should take approximately 15 minutes to decide the format of any future meeting in the Faslane area.

Portsmouth Section Meeting

The Portsmouth Section Annual General Meeting — at the Grapevine Centre.

The Section Annual General Meeting of the Portsmouth Section will be held on Friday 13 May 2005 at 2000 hours.

The meeting will start in the Grapevine Centre HMS Sultan and then is expected to move to the Warrant Officer's and Senior Rate's Mess for more

general discussions.

The Section will elect section officers (including those who will attend the Annual meeting of the Society's Executive Council).

There will be an opportunity for members to give their views relating to the Branch Development to the General Secretary and the members of the Portsmouth section who will be attending the EC meeting. These views

are central on the approach of the Society to the Branch development.

The Portsmouth Trustees will be present for members to give their views on what to purchase with the money from the sale of Holland house in Southsea.

The meeting is open to all Society Members and all will be made welcome.

Devonport Section Meeting

The Devonport Section Annual General Meeting —

The Section Annual General Meeting of the Devonport Section will be held on 24 May 2005 at 1915

The meeting will start at 1915 in the Devonport Royal Fleet Club. All Society members will be made welcome.

The agenda will include a report on the health of the Devonport Section and the election of section officers (including those who will attend the Annual meeting of the Society's Executive Council).

There will be an opportunity for members to give their views of the branch development to the Managing Secretary and the members who will be

attending the EC meeting. These views will be central to the way the Society presents its opinion of the Branch Development.

For further information about the Section Annual General Meeting and any other event or information about the Devonport Section contact the Managing Secretary Chris Heaver.

Annual Executive Council Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Executive Council of the Society will be held on Saturday 18 June 2005.

The Executive Council of the Society holds an Annual meeting in June every year. Other meetings are held as the President of the Society requires ac-

ording to the needs of the Society.

At the Annual meeting this year one of the main topics will be the future Branch Development of the Royal Navy and the changes that the Society needs to make to best represent all its members and potential members.

The views of members are expressed by the Section representatives. The

General Secretary will present the views of members who have contacted him directly and those who are not represented by the section representatives.

It is important that the views of the Society members are known - please either come to a section meeting or contact the General Secretary.

The Society and You - News

The Society represents your views and concerns to the necessary people.

Change is coming - that is definite. On many occasions the members of this Society have said the present situation needs to change, those changes are now on the way. To ensure you have your views clearly and effectively represented the Society must be clear what your concerns are.

The Royal Navy is giving all personnel the opportunity to state their views of the proposed changes. However some of you feel this is not the best forum to express your concerns and feelings or there is not enough time for your views to be clearly heard.

The Society feel strongly that all serving personnel should be independently represented so that views which individuals hold can be expressed without endangering their career.

Items for the Newsletter and returned Newsletters should be sent to:

newsletter@rnebs.co.uk

If you have a concern and wish to have it presented for you contact the General Secretary. He will give your view attention and present it to the correct quarters. He will give you the reply. If it is a general view this may be in the newsletter or if it is personal by direct letter or email to you.

The Society wants to represent you fully, but you have to contact us to enable the Society to do so. Contact the General Secretary.

Royal Naval Engineers' Benevolent Society

Useful RNEBS Addresses and telephone numbers

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