



## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

**Royal Court Hotel**

**Coventry**

- (1) The National Standard was paraded into the meeting by Mike Weller, the Union Flag by Debbie Lofts and was accepted by the Chairman.
- (2) There was a one minutes silence for departed members. The Homage was read by John McAulay.
- (3) The Chairman, Allyn Rees opened the meeting and welcomed the Honorary President, Mr. Frank Rhodes.

### **National Executive Members Present:**

Chairman - Allyn Rees, Secretary - George Tullis, Treasurer Grahame Bamford, Membership Officer - John McAulay, Assistant Secretary - Ted Williams, Webmaster - Annie Burden, Committee Members - Brian Roche, Jack Spackman.

### **(4) Apologies.**

Apologies were read out from Ron Blain, Major & Mrs. Hancock (Bridgend), Carmarthen & District Branch, Ireland Branch and the Deutschland Branch who sent their best wishes to everyone attending the meeting.

### **(5) Minutes of the last meeting.**

Ray Drew proposed that the minutes of the 2007 meeting be accepted, seconded by Mike Weller.

### **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the 2007 minutes.

**(6) Chairman's Report.**

Allyn Rees said that he had enjoyed the last 12 months as National Chairman and was pleased with the N.E.C. and Delegates meetings that had taken place. He had attended quite a few events including the Gurkha March For Freedom and the Standard Dedications for both Carmarthen and Surrey Branches. He also reported that the Deutschland Branch was thriving but the Ireland Branch was still having some difficulties.

**(7) Acting Vice-Chairman's Report.**

John McAulay said that he had nothing to report as the position of Vice-Chairman was only a temporary one due to the sudden resignation of Ian Hone and move up of Allyn Rees from Vice-Chairman to Chairman.

**Membership Secretary's Report.**

John McAulay began by praising Fred and Annie Burden's work as previous Membership Secretary. He also said how well deserved Fred's recent MBE was, John had seen first hand just how much paperwork was generated by the PJM medal and how much appreciation there was from members for the work that Fred had done. John said that there were only two main problems now, bringing the national database up to date and membership forms. The audit of the NMBVA membership was just about finished and he thanked all secretaries and membership secretaries for their help and co-operation during the audit. The new audited figures show that we have **3174** members, consisting of **2986** 'Ordinary' members, **173** 'Associate' members and **15** 'Honorary' members. The audit showed up that **1090** members were now listed as 'Lost Contact'. In the last year since the 2007 AGM, **388** new members have joined the Association, consisting of **371** 'Ordinary' members, **16** 'Associate' members and **1** 'Honorary' member. John appealed to all secretaries and membership secretaries to please inform him of changes to their membership, changes of address, deceased members etc., so that the database can be kept as up-to-date as possible.

**(8) National Secretary's Report.**

George Tullis said that the N.E.C. did work very hard on Association matters and branches were kept informed on Association business.

**(9) Assistant Secretary's Report.**

Ted Williams apologised for the lateness of minutes, he had been burgled and his car containing NMBVA documents had been stolen. He promised that he would try and do the minutes on time in future.

**(10) National Treasurer's Report.**

Grahame Bamford asked that if the people who have been making offensive anonymous telephone calls to him would care to come forward he would gladly show them the accounts where **all** details of NMBVA monies is recorded. Grahame reported that income from NMBVA regalia was down from last year but nearly £3000 profit had been made for the last year. Dick Richardson (Grantham & District Branch) asked how much money the Association had in reserve. Grahame informed the meeting that there was £24,000 with a variable interest rate of between 4 and 5%. A question was asked about an item on the accounts, where there was a difference of £192. Grahame informed the meeting that this covered a payment for travel expenses of £96 to an N.E.C. member who had donated the £96 back to the Association. A question was asked if it would be beneficial for the Association, for tax purposes, to become a Registered Charitable Organisation. Grahame said that this had

been discussed in the past and had been rejected but even so this would have to be a decision by the whole of the Association and not the N.E.C. The National Treasurer appealed to all Secretaries and membership secretaries when sending cheques to cover renewal subscriptions for branches to please include details of which members had paid their subscriptions.

The Chairman thanked Grahame for his detailed report and said how well he had done as he had been in hospital several times during the year and had literally done some of the accounts from his hospital bed.

**(11) Cenotaph Co-ordinators Report.**

Due to ill health, Les Paddon was not at the meeting and had sent his report to George Tullis. Les said that he had done the job as Cenotaph Co-ordinator since the start-up of the Association but said that ill health had made it impossible for him now to attend the Remembrance Day Parade and it was with deep regret that he was standing down. George said that Les had done sterling work over the years and a certificate of merit with the Association's thanks would be sent to him. George told the meeting that the Chairman of North Kent/South East London branch, Donald Mott has volunteered to take over Les's duties as Cenotaph Co-ordinator. It was reported that the North Kent/South East London branch also take care of the Garden of Remembrance plot. George reported that once again, Dominic Elliott would be leading the NMBVA contingent at the Cenotaph for the 2008 Remembrance march. Terry Baldwin will lay a poppy cross in memory of her husband Patrick Baldwin and George has asked Mrs. Baldwin for copies of some of Patrick's poems with a view to making them into a booklet which will be sold through the Regalia Office. The Chairman added that he would look forward to seeing the poems in print.

**(12) International Liaison Officers Report.**

Ron Blain said that this year had been a quiet one in relation to last year which involved many Merdeka Celebrations both here and in Malaysia. He had visited Australia earlier this year and met many members of the Australian NMBVA who all sent greetings to our members.

There had not been any feedback as yet from New Zealand regarding this years Richard Webber Trophy entries. Ron also said that he wished to remain in his position as International Liaison Officer.

**Honorary President Mr. Frank Rhodes.**

The Chairman apologised to the meeting that he had omitted to ask the Honorary President to say a few words to the meeting.

Frank Rhodes said that it had been a privilege and pleasure to serve as Honorary President over the last 12 months. He said thank-you to the members for their confidence in him to carry on for the next 12 months and said that comradeship was the main aim of the Association and wished everyone well.

**Other Reports Relevant To The Meeting.**

**(13a) Litigation.**

The Chairman said that as members were aware, there were very serious cases going on in the Law Courts involving the Association and certain members.

The Chairman told the meeting of the continuing disputes between individuals and the NMBVA in the Law Courts and members of the Association were involved but in all such cases they were involved as individuals and not in an official capacity. Claims were registered against the Association by David Neil who was at one time Chairman and Honorary President, and John English. The claims they had registered relate to their belief that they were covered by the indemnity of the Association in regard to their actions.

When the litigation was taking place the individuals who were named in this litigation were not indemnified by their Association, however, at a later date it was proposed and accepted that officers who acted on behalf of the Association would be indemnified. It has been agreed by the N.E.C. that because David Neil was the Honorary President of this Association during a period when he was covered by this indemnity, to pay him that amount of money that that period covered. John English was not covered during the period he was involved in the litigation and has been offered half of his claim against the Association.

Frank Rhodes made a point of order that the other 10 named individuals in the litigation had stood by what they believed was right in their actions on the Associations behalf and had paid their own costs. No other claim has been made to date against the Association for costs incurred during this litigation.

**(13b) St. Paul's Memorial Account.**

Grahame reported that there was £4187.15p in the account to date. He told the meeting that the 2 signatories of the account, David Neil and Terry Clarke had written to the past Chairman, Ian Hone relinquishing their duties but had not yet, after being approached several times, handed over the accounts. The N.E.C. had written to everyone who had been on the St. Paul's Fund sub-committee and to the St. Paul's Committee Chairman, Sir Garry Johnson, who all agreed with a proposal from the N.E.C. that the fund should now be brought in-house and used for upkeep of memorials. A mandate had been sent to the 2 signatories earlier in the year but as yet there has been no action taken by them.

There was a formal proposal by Grahame Bamford that *'The St. Paul's Fund monies be brought back in-house to be used for the upkeep of memorials.'*

It was seconded by Lance Smales and passed unanimously. A letter would be sent to the 2 signatories informing them of the decision of the AGM.

**(13c) Wreath Laying at Bata Gajah**

It was reported that George Worsnop (Doncaster & South Yorkshire branch) had laid the NMBVA wreath at the service at 'God's Little Acre' at Bata Gajah in June

**(13d) Eden Camp**

David Rigley could not be at the meeting but had sent a letter saying that he was working on the proposed NMBVA Day at Eden Camp, North Yorkshire on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2009 and further details would follow.

**(14) Proposals and Recommendations.**

**( A ) Membership Subscriptions.** Proposed by Brian Roche and seconded by Ted Williams

1. *That the initial application for membership of the NMBVA, using the official Membership Application form, should be sent to the National Treasurer (Const. sec.5, par. A ) with a payment for the current Association annual subscription of £4 plus an amended Association joining fee of £3. The existing Membership Application form should be amended accordingly. This would resolve the existing anomalous procedure of the National Treasurer having to return so called 'Branch dues' to Branches.*

2. *Branches should be self financing, by setting and collecting their own fees (Const. sec. 8, par. B) so the National Treasurer would no longer be responsible for processing any Branch fees. Branches would remain responsible for submitting the current Annual Subscription of £4 per registered member to the National Treasurer with details of those who have paid. This should clarify the procedure for Branch Secretaries/Treasurers.*

3. *Postal Branch members would continue to submit an annual renewal subscription of £7, as they are not subject to Branch contributions.*

After a full and detailed discussion the proposals were accepted by the meeting.

**( B ) Branch Delegates Meetings.** Proposed by Geoff Parkes and seconded by Terry Gibbs.

*Proposed that 2 Branch Members be allowed to attend the Branch Delegates Meeting.*

It was agreed that there should be a trial period of 1 year and if this proved to be successful then the necessary amendments to the Constitution would be made.

**( C ) Amendments to the Constitution.** Proposed by D. Richardson and seconded by G. Reeve. Withdrawn

**( D ) ANZAC Day Visit by NMBVA.** Proposed by Ron Blain and seconded by D. R. Foster.

*Proposed that the Association consider sending a contingent to march in the ANZAC Day parade in Australia in April 2010.*

The proposal was amended to '*that the Association organise a contingent*' and the proposal was agreed unanimously.

**( E ) NMBVA Magazine.** Proposed by George Reeve and seconded by Ian Newton.

*That a magazine be published quarterly and distributed free to all U.K. members.*

After a discussion of the costs involved and the difficulties of distribution and finding an editor for the magazine it was agreed to refer this item back to the N.E.C. where it will be further discussed with the proposer, Mr. George Reeve invited to that meeting.

( F ) **NMBVA Memorial.** Proposed by Ian Newton and seconded by George Reeve.

*That the Cross/Kris part of the NMBVA memorial at the National Arboretum at Alrewas be revamped.*

There was a discussion about the amount of hard work done 2 years ago at a cost of £4000 to revamp the Kris Memorial and the fact that there was only £4000 left in the Memorial fund. Costings had been made to ring fence the Memorial and Geoff Parkes was asked for his views on the matter as it was he and his Branch that take care of the upkeep of the site. He said that the main problem was that the site was on a flood plane and there is constant water-logging over several months of the year. There is also a constant problem with the Memorial being contaminated by rabbit droppings. Until these problems were sorted out the situation at the Memorial would continue.

The Chairman asked that the proposal be withdrawn under the understanding that the interested parties, Ian Newton BEM, Geoff Parkes and John McAulay meet to discuss ways of resolving the difficulties at the Arboretum. Mr. Newton agreed to withdraw his proposal.

(15) **Any Other Business.**

**Geoff Parkes had the following items for discussion.**

**Reconciliation with Manchester Branch.**

*The reason for not holding the reconciliation meeting with the Manchester Branch that was unanimously agreed at the Branch Delegates meeting held in Leicester on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2008.*

At the April Delegates meeting, the Chairman had assured delegates that there would be action taken to try and bring the Manchester branch back into the Association. He had spoken to Mr. Simcock, President of the Northern MBVA and replied to a letter from Mr. Riley, the Secretary of the Northern MBVA. In both cases there seemed to be some hope of a reconciliation. However, after reading their newsletter in which they said that they would rejoin the National MBVA but retain their own unique identity as the Northern MBVA. Because of this, Allyn Rees said that he did not see any point in continuing the discussion. He also said that he did not want the name of NMBVA to apply to both Associations and the copyright of the NMBVA logo issue would have to be looked into by the Associations solicitor. John McAulay told the meeting that he had written to all members of the Manchester Branch and had received 65 replies from members stating that they wished to remain with the National MBVA and have nothing to do with the Northern MBVA. Fred Burden asked that he be allowed to approach the Northern MBVA with a view to reconciliation.

**Delay of Minutes of N.E.C. Meetings.**

*Why has there always been a delay in producing the minutes of the Branch Delegates Conference and other meetings.*

Geoff and other members expressed their dissatisfaction at not receiving information from the N.E.C. regarding meetings as they had still not received minutes of the April Delegates meeting and other meetings to date.

The Chairman said that he accepted this criticism and that he and the N.E.C. would do their best to see that future minutes would be sent out more quickly in future.

Geoff Parkes asked the Chairman about catering for the AGM as in previous years there had been a buffet available for members attending. The Chairman informed the meeting that soup and coffee were available in the hotel foyer for members to purchase.

Mrs. Pemberton said that she thought that subscriptions ought to be paid at National level instead of Branch level so that any subs can be withheld from a Branch wanting to withdraw from the Association. The N.E.C. said that they would discuss the matter.

George Reeve asked that funding should not have to be found by those starting up a new Branch. Grahame Bamford advised that new Branches should apply to the National Office for consideration for funding.

A vote of thanks was put forward to all members of the N.E.C. for all their hard work over the past year.

**(16) Election of Officers**

As usual, all officers stood down and nominations for the N.E.C. were read out. The following members were elected;

**National Executive Officers.**

National Chairman, Allyn Rees.

National Vice-Chairman, Fred Burden MBE.

National Secretary, George Tullis.

National Treasurer, Grahame Bamford.

National Membership Officer, John McAulay.

Assistant National Secretary, Ted Williams.

Committee Member, Brian Roche.

Committee Member, Jack Spackman.

Committee Member, Malcolm White.

Webmaster, Annie Burden

**Non Executive Officers**

International Liaison Officer, Ron Blain.

Cenotaph Co-ordinator, Donald Mott.

Regalia Officer Annie Burden

Postal Membership South Co-ordinator, Brian Roche.

The positions of Archives Officer and Postal Membership North Co-ordinator were both unfilled.

The Chairman thanked the members present for their attendance and wished them well over the coming year and hoped he would see them again at the next AGM.

The total number of members that signed the attendance register was **95**