

**H.M.S. GANGES ASSOCIATION**  
**Established 1982**



**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2014**

held at Gunton Hall, Lowestoft  
12 April 2014

**MINUTES**

The Chairman, Shep Woolley, opened the meeting at 10:09

**1. To remember those who Crossed the Bar**

Standards were paraded whilst Mac Brodie read out the names of all those Members who had crossed the bar, and a silence was observed in remembrance.

**2. Chairman's opening comments**

The Chairman welcomed all those present and in particular those from overseas who he asked to make themselves known. They were warmly applauded by those present.

He went on to say that we had a fight last year, but we worked hard and we won. Members are probably aware that Mr Foster was sentenced to 18 months in prison in September for embezzling money from the Association. We are now in consultation with the Financial Ombudsman with a view to asking Barclays Bank if they would like to contribute some money to the loss, which we feel they were partly to blame for. The Financial Ombudsman does not think we have sufficient information to support our claim but we are still pursuing the case and the Chairman thanked the Treasurer for his diligence in carrying on with the Financial Ombudsman.

The Chairman stated that the Committee had decided that it would be a nice gesture to contribute to all official Overseas Reunions so that they could purchase the tot and raise a toast to the HMS Ganges Association. They would of course have to apply with the appropriate paperwork to keep our accounts correct!

The Committee have agreed to hold a draw at Christmas. The names of all **paid up members** will be put in the hat and 10 names will be pulled out, who will each win £100. This raised a cheer from the floor.

The Chairman congratulated the Membership Secretary on getting members to pay their dues, and reminded members that Ken would be available after the meeting to receive any outstanding subs.

The RNA has formed CONA, similar to the FNA, and the Chairman stated that he has enrolled HMS Ganges Association, as it's free. On 15 June 2014 a memorial for all sailors is being unveiled at the National Arboretum and the Committee agreed to donate £1,000. The Chairman asked for support from the members for this donation, which was unanimous.

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The Chairman reminded members that the Secretary, Howard Trotter, was stepping down after the AGM, and wished him well in his new venture in France.

The Chairman said that he was pleased and proud to be Chairman of the Association, but that he would be stepping down at the 2015 AGM, so we need a new Chairman. The next meeting of the Committee will be in Mansfield, the date will be put on the Forum, and members are asked to come along, have a look, and find out what's happening.

**3. Minutes of 2013 AGM**

Basil Downing-Waite, Chief Scrutineer, passed to the Secretary the first page of the ballot results, including that for Resolution 1, which was to approve the minutes of the 2013 AGM. The votes were 397 For, 0 Against, and 21 Abstentions. Therefore the Resolution was passed and the Secretary and Chairman both signed a copy of the 2013 AGM Minutes as a true record.

**4. Matters Arising**

There was one matter arising. £150 was sent to the Cambridge TS Ganges Sea Cadets, together with a chain and bosun's call for presentation to a suitably qualified cadet. We have now received a reply thanking us for our contributions.

**5. Treasurer's Report**

Phil Bridge reminded members that last year we were **£7,500** in debt, but he was pleased to say that today we were £21,000 in profit. He stated that the Association accounts will run from 1<sup>st</sup> April every year until 31<sup>st</sup> March the following year, so that the figure he presents at AGM will be up to date.

Current Account: £6,733.48  
Tracker Account: £20,008.77

Phil presented a slideshow and handout to members to explain exactly where and how money was being spent. He stated that a copy of the Profit and Loss account would be included in the next issue of the Gazette, and that if any member has any questions regarding the accounts they are welcome to contact him for a more detailed explanation.

As we have more funds available, this year there will be three copies of the Gazette published. We are also donating £1,850 to refurbish the Mylor Memorial in Cornwall.

Phil asked members to ensure that they are paying their Standing Order for subs to the right account with Barclays. He reminded members that they are responsible for SO, and that he has no authority to change them.

Finally, Phil thanked David Rye, Des Kerrigan, and Liz MacLeod for examining the accounts last night and confirmed that they were satisfied with the accounts.

**6. Membership Secretary's Report**

Ken Bushnell reported that we have 2,600 Active Members. Of this number 1,233 are Life Members and 70 Associate Members. Overseas members total 248, located in various parts of the world.

Ken said the last 12 months had passed very quickly and he was pleased to report a lot of positives to the members.

One of his main aims was to ensure that the database was an accurate and up to date record of the membership. Ken stated that this is an ongoing project and that he continues to work at it on a virtually daily basis.

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One of the most arduous tasks over the last year has been the job of collecting the correct amount of subs, made all the more difficult as this is an area of little or no activity in previous years. Ken thanked all those members who responded to his emails and letters positively. All those members who continue to pay the £5 and £10's, **well they didn't receive the latest Gazette.** The association as you know has a large number of Life Members and Ken paid tribute to those members who continue to contribute to our funds, and also paid tribute to those Widows of Ganges Boys who continue to donate to the association.

One of the encouraging aspects to report is our recruitment over the past twelve months - **since AGM 2013 we have received 85 new members** - this is surely a sign of the 'Elephant' changing course.

Due to much improved finances, your committee has invested some serious money in the recruitment team by way of new equipment. And to further the benefits of new members joining the association, during the next twelve months we will be piloting a scheme with the recruiting team who will offer potential joining members at the specific venues a discount in the form of the joining fee being waived (£5) if they complete the membership application form and pay their £20 subs there and then. This will be reviewed with an announcement of their achievement at next year's AGM.

Whilst on the subject of recruitment, Ken gave sincere thanks to Bob Campbell for his dedication to duty and for his continued input and advice.

Care and welfare in the Ganges community took a step up at last year's AGM with the introduction of our 'Almoner' and further of his dedication to duty. Ken stated that when information is received by Phil and himself, they then initiate the action required and those of us on the website witness Colin's fine sense of the situation, always dealt with in a very sensitive manner. "It would be remiss of me not to ask you to show your appreciation to your 'Almoner' Mr Colin Brett, you know him as 'Pancho'"

In conclusion, Ken had one final request. Over the past year members have made their journeys to their bank, giving their instructions, increasing their subs to £20 per year and wrongly thinking that's it. You will be staggered to know how many members have been let down by their banks. So PLEASE check your Statements to see if the right amount is going to the HMS Ganges Association Account.....because we all know if you are not paying the correct amount of subs....you don't receive any more Gazettes.

Ken finished by saying the MemSec's Station was open for business, and if you wished to pay your subs, (cash or cheques), or you had any queries, they were online to our 'Database' - or just come and say hello.

## **7. Certificate Secretary's Report**

Since taking up the position of Certificate Secretary Gary Faulkner said he was very aware of the importance of keeping the down the costs of certificates, and so he no longer paid a professional printer to produce the certificates but did everything himself. Consequently the cost of producing a certificate, with frame and postage, was now just under £6 per certificate. This year he had sent out 55 certificates in the UK, 1 to Canada, 2 to Spain, and 1 to Australia. Gary read out the names of the 21 certificates that would be presented tonight: 50 Year - 11; 60 Year - 8; 70 Year - 2.

## **8. Promotion Team Report**

Martin Wiltshire of Solent Division introduced himself as the co-ordinator of the HMS Ganges Association Promotional Team and said the aim of the team was to encourage all those who served at HMS Ganges to sign up to the Association.

He said the Committee had provided funds for new equipment to better display their brochures and photographs at various events. 5000 promotional cards had also been printed and

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members were encouraged to take some home with them and distribute them in their area - there are still many Ganges boys out there who are not members of the Association. Martin reminded everyone that a list of forthcoming events that they would be attending could be found in the Spring Gazette, and that they needed volunteers to help out on the day, so if anyone could lend a hand, please contact him.

**9. Museum Report**

Carol Barnham informed members that the museum opened as usual on Easter Saturday until the last weekend in October last year. Due to the very cold weather until July visitor numbers were very low, and even when the summer arrived numbers were down by 1,097 compared to 2012. She said that they had noticed in the past that if Easter was late, it did affect visitor numbers. Even a coach company that arranges trips to visit the Museum found their trips were down on previous years. The coach company is very good to the Museum and pay us £1 per person on their trips, plus they sponsor the Museum newsletter that goes out to members three times a year.

The Museum receives quite a few phone calls from ex-Ganges boys who want to visit other than at weekends. Carol said that they do try to accommodate these requests, but bearing in mind that the staff are all volunteers and have other interests in their lives apart from Ganges, on rare occasions they were unable to help them, especially if they didn't receive prior notice. Groups from other organisations are also interested in visits, ie. History Societies, over 60's clubs and disabled groups. We also go to organisations and give talks.

In June of last year they were invited by Maritime Heritage East to take part in an exhibition along with other museums on Southend Pier. It was a very successful day, and they met some Ganges boys and sold some of their slops.

In December the Museum was flooded when we had a tidal surge, luckily none of the artefacts were damaged. They just had to dry the mats and floors and repaint the floors.

The Museum has had to have the central heating removed because the oil tank was illegal and therefore not covered by insurance, so there is no heating in the museum, other than some electric heaters but these are a drain on finances.

Carol thanked Peninsular Division, Suffolk Coastal and members who travel from Hertfordshire, Luton, Bedford, and Spalding for their continued help, and of course all the local people who support and help the Museum.

Carol also thanked their archivists, Harvey and Jack, who are doing a wonderful job, as is Sheila their Treasurer, George their Secretary, and Mick & Nicky who write the newsletter and carry out projects in the museum. Without them the museum would not be running.

Finally, she thanked Dick Lloyd for putting a piece in the HMS Ganges Association Gazette with application forms to become a member of the museum. It is much appreciated and the membership has doubled because of this.

**10. 'Perky' Mellow Award (Smartest Standard Bearer)**

'Perky' announced to the assembly that this year the "Perky Mellow Award" had been won by a very well known standard bearer, who went all over the map for the Association - Tony Higgins, our national standard bearer.

Tony thanked 'Perky' and went on to say that every August 'Perky' went to Newhaven to parade and commemorate those who were at Dieppe, as was he, and lay a wreath on behalf of the HMS Ganges Association. This year 'Perky' has been asked to go to Dieppe on 19 August to meet with dignitaries and represent GA. There was huge applause from the floor.

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The Chairman presented Tony with a bottle of 15 year old rum and thanked him for his excellence service over the years. He stated that Tony was stepping down and our new standard bearer was also called Tony - Tony Cooke - who he asked to stand and make himself known.

**11. Address by Chief Scrutineer, Basil Dowing-Waite**

Basil started by saying that it was disappointing that the overseas members had not received their Gazette and ballot papers and therefore most had been unable to vote, although he had been taking online votes up until the previous evening.

However, even if all the overseas votes had been against, it would not have affected the overall result, all proposals had been passed and fully accepted.

	For	Against	Abstain
a. Minutes of 2013 AGM	397	0	21
b. Association Accounts	380	5	22
c. Changes to Rule 6	380	1	6
d. Tony Cooke as Standard Bearer	383		
e. Colin Gent to Committee	360		
f. Cliff Snelling to Secretary	303		

Basil remarked that only 15% of the membership voted, which told him that 85% of the membership is fully satisfied with the way things are going, which had got to be due to the cracking committee that the Association has had for the last two years. He asked the assembly to stand and give three cheers for the Committee that has got the Elephant back on its feet.

**12. Closing Remarks by the Chairman**

The Chairman reminded the assembly that Howard Trotter was stepping down as Secretary, and Cliff Snelling would be taking over. He presented Howard with a bottle of rum and thanked him for all his hard work during the difficult times. He said that it had been a pleasure to work with Howard, he was a vital and phenomenal member of the Committee, and without him the Association wouldn't be where it was today. Howard thanked everyone and said it had been an honour and privilege to serve on the Committee, and definitely a challenge.

The Chairman also thanked all the helpers who worked tirelessly to assist the committee, in particular Jenny Woolley, Hanny Bridge, and Annette Clemenson, and asked for a round of applause.

Dickie Doyle had purchased an HMS Ganges Captains Launch light to be donated to the Museum. The Chairman presented the light to George and Carol on behalf of Dickie.

The Chairman asked for a round of applause for Des Kerrigan and Paddy Minns, our two mobile standard bearers, who try to represent the GA whenever we are asked by relatives of ex Ganges boys. Because of their dedication we receive many donations.

At 11:46 the Chairman once again thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed. He announced "Up Spirits".

Cliff Snelling  
Hon Sec