



# HMS GANGES ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of HMSGA Committee Meeting**  
**RNA Uxbridge, London. UB10 9PG**  
**11:00, 5 February 2026**

**Committee Members Present:** Eddie Seaborne, MBE (ES), Phil Bridge (PB), Ken Bushnell (KB), Bungy Williams (BW), Tony Willders (TW), George Barnham (GB), Sean Sweeney, MBE (SS).

**Observers** – Ron Carr, Annette Bushnell, Carol Barnham, Tina Wills, Bill Wills

- 1. Minute Silence** – The Chairman (ES) welcomed the attendees and called for them to be upstanding for a Minute's Silence for all Members who had Crossed the Bar (CTB) since the Committee had last gathered.
- 2. Apologies for absence** – The Sec (BW) advised he had received no apologies for absence for this meeting.
- 3. Approval of Minutes of Meeting RNA Uxbridge 19 August 2025** – BW –  
**Acceptance of previous Minutes** – Unanimously approved.
- 4. Chairman's Opening Remarks** – ES – Ladies & gentlemen, thank you all for attending our first committee meeting of 2026 and, as the Sec indicated pre-meeting, we have a lot to discuss. My report will be short and sweet as a lot has happened since I drafted my opening remarks, so I will feed bits in as we go along.

It has been a busy few months and, sadly, we've seen a lot of our stalwarts Cross the Bar and my personal thanks go to those of you and the Members who've attended the various funerals over the period since I was elected last April.

On a brighter note, we found an ex-Ganges lad, Donald Muckley, who PB was put in touch with via the lad's niece. She asked if we could do something to brighten his day. It wasn't a cry for help but an enquiry for further contact. He lives in Lancing, Sussex, so I attended his birthday party to surprise him. He was in a room with around 15 other people, and I was trying to hide amongst them, so he didn't see me. Eventually, he spotted me and I presented him with a Ganges Challenge Coin and a framed copy of 'The Legend of Ganges'.

He joined Ganges in 1951 and was on GI's course in 1964 at Whale Island. Whilst on course, he was playing hockey for the RN when he got a crack on the head which resulted in a nine-month stay in Haslar! Unfortunately, he wasn't permitted to go back on course and was re-categorised to Regulator - so there may be some truth behind the dit about having the operation before becoming a Reggie. He went on to become a FMAA.

A big chuck-up to Tony and Nina (NYTD) who have also secured places for Donald and his niece at the Reunion.

On the way to today's meeting, I was contacted by our President who advised me to keep it short. I told him I intended to do just that, to which he replied, "Fat chance of that!" My chauffeur, Sean, responded saying "Seconded, Sir!" and we then missed the turning for Uxbridge!

The Admiral is really pleased with the direction in which the Association is going, he hears things about it through other channels. Ken is supplying him with the Magazine, but he has his own 'networks'!

Responses have been received from the King, and I will be approaching a couple of people to read these messages out at the Gala Dinner – people who deserve some recognition for what they do in the background.

5. **Secretary's Report** – BW – Very little by way of secretarial business over the period worthy of reporting. The vast majority of my dealings had to do with certificates which will be covered with later on.
6. **Treasurer's Report** – PB submitted the following report:

Community Account (Working)	£5,418.09
Tracker Account (Savings)	£70,000.00
Fixed Assets (IT Equipment)	£819.20
Petty Cash Box	£25.28

Giving the Associations total assets of: £76,262.57

**All figures correct as of 4 February 2026**

Our finances continue to be buoyant, but you will notice that figures are reducing due a reduction in subscriptions/donations and costs in running our fine Association.

So far, this financial year our income has been £27,754.23 with running costs at £32,639.38 thus showing a loss of £4,885.15, with our AGM just 10 weeks away, I can see my prediction of a loss over profit being reported to members.

You will notice that income for our 2026 Grand Draw is not going to cover the costs (winnings). I therefore propose that we reduce the prize money down to £2,000.00 from £4,000.00. From GD 2027. The Grand Draw has always been to not make a profit, but neither is it to make a loss.

(After discussion, it was stated that the Committee would revisit this matter on conclusion of the Reunion/AGM weekend.)

Our membership to the Royal Maritime Club (Home Club) Portsmouth has been renewed and our membership number is 7342. It is highly likely that proof of membership of the Ganges Association will be asked for, so ensure you have your membership card at the ready.

One thing I do resent is sending donations to various charities and institutions and getting no receipts back – sometimes I don't even get acknowledgement of our donation!

7. **Membership Secretary's Report** – KB submitted the following report:

As at the 28th January 2026

<b>Active Members -</b>	1112
<b>Life Members -</b>	256
<b>Associate Members -</b>	63
<b>Lapsed -</b>	493 (345 Life Members)

**Total** 1924  
Statistics 1 November 2025 – 28 January 2026

**Crossed the Bar - 18**  
**New Members -10**

Well, the festivities have quickly been enjoyed and gone, my wife and I spent our Christmas time in Dartmouth, such a magic place.

The Ganges Association has entered the new year at pace and all guns blazing (a little clue there) in the first six months of the year two major events to look out for and no doubt our fine chairman will ensure they will be memorable.

During the last six months we have gained 22 new members. I often say this but tell me which RN association received 22 new members last year alone – the spirit of Ganges lives on, and this is a true reminder.

As a courteous notice, especially to new members, should any personal details change, i.e. home address, telephone numbers, email address, please inform the MemSec. Also, when changing bank, you will need to set up a new 'Standing Order' as they don't automatically transfer over.

We still have a lot of members paying their subscription by cheque and I tell them creating a standing order is not that difficult. I even send or give them the appropriate form informing them that I and the bank will action their SO request.

Contacting members can be difficult as some don't respond to e-mails or letters. In that case, I ask PB to remove their access to the Forum. PB confirmed he often gets requests for reconnection to the Forum because people have changed their e-mail address and not informed the Association, specifically the MemSec!

- 8. Reunion Organiser, Update – TW –** The latest numbers for the 2026 Reunion/AGM attendees are 232 bookings to date, however, not everybody has paid their outstanding amounts which must be paid by 20<sup>th</sup> February.

We are actively searching for a new venue for next year and Nottingham is in our sights, possibly the Crown Plaza which is in the city centre and offers plenty of diversion outside of AGM & Reunion functions. Although a price has been given for Stratford, we think four consecutive years is too often and we are seeking a change which, I'm sure, will be welcomed by the members.

Nottingham is a central site with good road and rail links. It was stated to me at the last Reunion that we should hold it in a naval town. I then canvassed several of the attendees over the weekend and asked if the event was held in the Portsmouth area or thereabouts, would you attend? Overwhelmingly, the answer was "No, it's too far to travel. We can only come if it is central like here."

A suggestion from the Bishop John regarding a charity to donate the church service collection at Reunion; The Royal Naval Association "Thriving Together" fund, which is to

support and aid former matelots going through difficult times. The Committee is unanimously in agreement with this suggestion.

- 9. Certificate Secretary Report – BW –** I've had many requests for the various anniversary years, well over fifty. I estimate there will be around 15 which will be presented with the remainder being delivered by post. The biggest pain I've found since taking this on is, I get back from dropping a bundle into the printer to find a couple more have dropped through my letterbox or arrived in my in-box!

As far as donations are concerned, some people are very generous! I've received cheques for £30 and £50 and I believe PB has received similar by BACS payments. Some arrive with no cheque but, for all I know, they may have made donations through the BACS.

We used to do 40-year certificates, but I see no sense in continuing to advertise that one any further and intend to drop it from the form. If my memory serves me well, we've at least half a dozen 75<sup>th</sup> requests, some of which will be presented at the Reunion.

- 10. Standards & Events Report – (Steve Scholes) –** delivered by BW:

As you'll see from Steve's communications below, he doesn't consider himself a 'fully fledged' Committee Member as he doesn't attend these meetings. I'd disagree and say he is and we should be delighted to have him aboard. When you look at how he works to get a goodly number at the Cenotaph, he's an integral member of the Committee.

As you'll see from the two e-mails, he is aiming to apply for 50 places on behalf of the Association this year in order to mark the 50-year anniversary of Ganges closing. I see at least two potential stumbling blocks – the RBL allocating fifty places and getting that many volunteers. He's made a good start with the 23 stalwarts who've already enquired but it may be more difficult to amass the numbers both he and the Association would like. As he says, he'll be hoping to swell the ranks during and after Reunion this year.

Irrespective of what's to come, it must be agreed that Steve has done a great job since stepping into the role.

***E-mail 05Dec25:***

*This is just an end of the year heads up on the progress for Cenotaph 26.*

*Up to now I already have 23 names on the list which is really good news. I have had a few enquiries and, hopefully, these may end up applying. At this rate we will far exceed this year's numbers and I'm hoping that we may get more names after the reunion and AGM.*

*The RBL will be issuing info for 2026 around April then I will be requesting numbers.*

***E-mail 02Feb26:***

*Many thanks for copying me into the proposed minutes. Not being an actual committee member, I would still like to pass on my apologies for not being there, but I see you have included a couple of my e mails regarding Cenotaph 2026. At this time numbers are still 23 and awaiting confirmation from a couple of interested parties.*

*For info. As we are celebrating our 50th Anniversary this year, I may request 50 places from the RBL. A bit ambitious maybe but if we could field 50 on our 50th that would be a terrific achievement for the Association. I'm not sure the RBL will allocate us so many, but I'll be putting forward our case, they can only say no. If you don't ask, you don't get!*

*Thanks again shipmate and please pass my regards to the Committee.*

- 11. Grand Draw Update** – GB – You've had the financial details from PB in his report. From when the tickets went out in the Magazine, I was getting as much as £275 in the first week, maybe £300 a couple of weeks later. We're averaging around £160 weekly, that can fluctuate up to £190 some weeks and much less in others, but money is still coming in which is the main thing. And I still get people sending me the tickets instead of the counterfoils!

(PB commented that some people will tell George they are paying by BACs which George has to believe and I have to check my accounts to make sure we've received the money and we're still around four outstanding payments.)

I won't put tickets in until PB tells me the money has arrived. It's annoying to have to deal with payments this way and adds to PB's workload. If no payment is forthcoming, then the tickets will end up in the bin!

I also get given money for subscriptions along with people's draw money. Some will send me £10 for the tickets and £10 for their subscriptions or a donation. On those occasions, I will write another book of tickets out for them and let them know their money has gone to the draw.

The bank I did use has since closed and am currently using the Post Office, which is due to close on March 31<sup>st</sup>, so I'll have to look around for another bank or PO where I can bank the cheques. And, if anybody gives me cash, as some have here this morning, I have to put my own cheque in bank that money.

In conclusion, we're ticking over but would like to see an uptake in ticket sales before the Reunion – all that driving the sales over the weekend takes it out of you!

## **12. AOB –**

- a) **Request from a Member** – PB - Dave Tate contacted PB in regard to a late member, John Galt, who lived in his vicinity on the Isle of Man and died at the age of 102 last year. John was a founder member of the RNA on the IoM and involved with the local SCC Unit, TS Manxman.

Dave would like to commission a design for 50 Command Coins for presentation annually in the name of John Galt. The coin would go to the Cadet who displays the most friendship, camaraderie and help to those around him/her. The design would also commemorate HMS St. George, the establishment used whilst Ganges dealt with the HO entries of WWII.

In furtherance of this pursuit, the Committee agreed to fund the creation of the coins. ES will enquire with his contacts in regard to costs and design and contact Dave Tate concerning the specifics of his request.

- b) **Rededication of HMS Ganges Mast, OP. JOINT VENTURE** – ES – This proposed rededication came about after a meeting with Colin Chapman (CC) in his

office at the Museum and those who may have read his newsletter which contained pretty much what we'd discussed. I wasn't upset about this because I believe we should forge a better bond and relationship between the Association and the Museum; however, we have our objectives and aims and the Museum have theirs.

One of the things discussed was the Mast; I told him we should have something ceremonial such as we had in 2005 and 2016. CC stated he'd like to host the weekend to which I agreed but with the proviso the Association takes care of the rededication of the mast service and he acts as host and employs his local contacts to get permissions and accesses as required. Both entities would contribute to financial undertakings on a 50/50 basis.

CC launched a poll on Facebook to garner interest which would feed the feasibility of hosting the event and, in a very short time, over 350 highly favourable responses were posted. Indeed, around fifty people stated that they'd already booked accommodation and were booking flights in order to attend the proposed weekend, 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

I had calls from members asking, "Is it definitely happening?" and that is the big question. The first thing we have to do is ensure access to the site which must be on the Friday (5<sup>th</sup>) because a Saturday or Sunday event would be cost prohibitive. I will draft a set of orders to take care of the rededication ceremony which I propose will commence at 1230; that allows travellers to come down the night before and those more local to have sufficient time to travel to the site.

I do not intend to march on the Ganges Veterans; we will muster together. We will not be able to have 350+ people stand for an hour's ceremony, so we've got to sort out seating, Portaloo, catering which, for 350, would cost a minimum of £6,000.

**TW** - What is the cost and who are the Association paying for; Are we paying for those former Ganges lads who aren't members? If so, this doesn't get my vote.

**ES** – It's a good point and I've seen this from a couple of members asking similar questions on the Museum FB site and CC has stated the event will be open to anybody who passed through Ganges in whatever role, Trainee, Instructor, Ship's Coy or civilian employee.

**PB** – I always thought the local residents should also get an invitation; it would bring them on-side. We could just slip a flyer through their letterboxes informing them of the event and telling them they're welcome to join us.

**ES** – That's a good idea and we've much more to consider - cost, car parking, amenities, catering. We can get 300 under that mast but the rest of it needs to be considered. I spoke to CC on Monday (2<sup>nd</sup> Feb) who'd given the council a copy of my draft 'parade orders' for the event. I told him he/we must now consider who is going to do the catering and how will that be financed – I know the Museum Trustees have put aside £5,000.

There are still many pieces of the jigsaw to be put into place, but this is an auspicious occasion which will probably for many, if not all of us, never be repeated. It needs to be open to anybody who wishes to attend.

**PB** – When I took over as Treasurer, I said I needed a floating balance of around £36,000 in order to secure two years' worth of magazines, so if everything fell apart, we'd have at least enough money to carry on with the magazine.

We've now got seventy odd grand and I'm not saying throw it away, but I did say, well before the mast came down, this is where the money's going. We're going to have a big day on this, and I personally would get a Royal Marine band but that would cost £8,000!

ES – Well, it won't because if we go official and invite the Admiral, the Lord Lieutenant, Sheriff etc, I can then go back to the State Ceremonial Team who can put it through Navy Command and seek their support.

(Much discussion took place with regards to catering, safety reviews, media coverage, costings, parking etc., and ES went through a proposed parade order for the event).

**BW** proposed HMSGGA match-fund the Museum to financially support this venture, seconded by **PB** – passed by majority vote with one abstention.

**[Post-Meeting Note - No firm notification has been received of the event going ahead, however, if it does, subject to any conditions and restrictions placed on the Association's participation, the Committee voted (one abstention) to match the Museum's funding to support the event.]**

- c) **Gizzits** - ES presented a couple of not so small items commemorating the Mast Rededication and 50th anniversary of Ganges closure.
- d) **Travel Expenses** - BW informed the Committee that since the last meeting, the cost of the Premier Inn hotel in which he and TW stayed had increased by 75% - in August the cost of the stay inclusive of evening meal and breakfast was £82.99, and the cost to stay to attend this meeting was £142.99. We find this cost prohibitive and feel it's a price the Association will be unable to support going forward.

PB said nobody should be out of pocket in supporting the Association and the cost isn't a problem. BW said he thought it was an excessive price to pay when added to the 308 miles travel costs and it was time we looked at meeting on-line via Zoom, Teams etc.

PB disagreed stating more is done by holding a physical meeting than gathering in cyberspace. This view was supported by the rest of the Committee with the exception of BW & TW who will, for their part, attempt to find lower cost accommodation in the future – without the horrendous thought of sharing a double bed!

- e) **Elections** – BW – Prior to going into the Election AOB item, BW proposed Bill Wills to be co-opted to the Committee with a view to ratifying his place on the Committee at the AGM. Seconded by PB, Carried unanimously.

Many members felt they'd been disenfranchised in the election procedures over recent years. This was a result of a lack of a system in lieu of postal votes which the Association had discontinued due to the prohibitive cost in comparison to the relatively small return of votes; I'm informed the last time postal votes were

employed, the cost to the Association was in excess of £1,700 and less than 10% of the voting slips were returned. We will not be going back to postal votes.

In its stead, voting proformas will be contained within the Magazine along with instructions to the Members on how to complete the form and where to return it. All votes will be taken to the AGM by the Secretary and opened by the Scrutineers at the count.

- f) **Gala Dinner Top Table** – ES identified those Members who will be seated at the Top Table at the Reunion Gala Dinner: President & Lady Burnell Nugent, Eddie & Mrs Seaborne, Sean & Mrs Sweeney, Tony & Mrs Cook, Des & Mrs Kerrigan, Bill & Mrs Wills.

PB, in his role as Vice Chair, will play host on a second 'top table' comprising himself, Ken & Mrs Bushnell, Bungy & Miss Kirk, Tony W, George & Mrs Barnham and Michael Kerr.

This is my way of recognising and rewarding, in some small way, the work you all do supporting myself and all the Members of the Association.

**13. DONM & Venue:** To be decided after AGM

Meeting closed 1410.