



Airborne Engineers Association  
Aldershot Branch  
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held in the  
Potters International Hotel  
Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
**President**  
**Colonel D.M.R.Eagan**



**Meeting Opened at 1130Hrs**

|                                |                             |                    |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Chairman: Joe Stoddart MBE     | e-mail sylvanjo@aol.com     | Tele: 02380 243237 |
| Secretary: Betty Gray          | e-mail b.gee33@ntlworld.com | Tele: 01252 668339 |
| Treasurer: Dave Rutter         | e-mail d_rutter@sky.com     | Tele: 01252 326140 |
| Entertainments: John Smith BEM | e-mail thesmiths@beeb.net   | Tele: 01252 326100 |

**Members Present**

Harold Covington, Ron Day, Don Doherty, Col. Dennis Eagan, Ted Ellis, Gerry Hicks, Tony Manley, Frank Menzies-Hearne, Rick Mogg, Billy Morris, Peter Myatt, Ralph Pedder, John Piffner, Dave Rutter, John Smith, Steve Stephenson, Joe Stoddart, Bob Sullivan, John Thompson,

**Apologies**

John Barrie, Colin Bond, Jack Braithwaite, Major Dick Brown, Bob Chatterton, Ray Coleman, Syd Dane, Harry Evans, Bob Ferguson, Bert Flatters, Tony Gilbert, Fred Gray, Tommy Handley, Dennis Healey, Mick Humphries, Barry Ladlow, John Lee, Derek Leggett, John Mason, Bill Mcpherson, Roger Mockford, John Murphy, Jim O'Hagan, Harold Padfield, Norman Penny, Eric Rundle, Phil Taverner, Derek Taylor, Dennis Thomas, Tom Tuddenham,

**Guests**

None

**Chairman's Remarks**

The Chairman opened the meeting and thanked everyone present for attending.  
The President Col. Dennis Eagan also stood up to say a few word of congratulations to John Smith and his team for making the Annual Branch Dinner such a success. The food was excellent and our guest Major Peter Wade was so impressed with the evening he made a donation of £50 to our branch funds in appreciation.

**Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Chairman asked if everyone present had received the minutes for the December meeting and asked if there were any comments.

Proposed by: Rick Mogg

Seconded by: Ralph Pedder

That the minutes of the meeting were correct

Carried

**Matters Arising**

There was no matters arising from the previous minutes

## **Correspondence.**

The minutes of the Birmingham and Chatham Branches were made available for anyone wishing to read them.

## **Treasurers Report**

Dave Rutter proposed that the cost per person for the BBQ should be £5 with an additional grant from GPF to cover the cost of incidentals.

He also asked that any member not on Direct Debit for the payment of branch subscription and the journal give serious thought to doing so. As from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 the cost of the journal is to increase to £8 per year.

## **Branch Representative**

The Branch Chairman gave a brief on the items discussed at the OGM of the AEA held recently.

- There was no Archivist report due to Fred Gary being absent from the meeting
- The overall view of the finances of the AEA was that the Project Fund was down on last year but this was mainly due to the donation of £1000 to the John Rock Bust project. The overall percentage profit from the shop was down from 35% to 28% over the year and it was suggested that the treasurer and the shop manager (Ray Coleman) sit down together and look at the present prices with a view to a slight increase.
- Membership has continued to rise because of the very hard work put in by Billy Morris. Membership now stands at 1330 but this includes those that have passed away since the association formed in 1989. Recruitment was considered to be excellent and congratulations were proposed to Billy Morris
- The Journal has lost about forty-five members over the last year due to a lack of response from a number of members not renewing their subscription. The editor (Dave Rutter) pointed out that articles for the journal be more diverse and members of 51 & 12 Squadrons be made more aware that the Journal is for all members of 23 Engineer Regt who are qualified for membership of the AEA and not just a vehicle for 9 Squadron. A free copy of the journal has now been sent to the CO of the Regiment and all OCs of Squadrons.
- Due to un-acceptable amount of obstacles being placed on organizing the 100mile run that was to be held in August 2008 Billy Morris has reluctantly had to postpone the event until a later date, probably in 2009 when WO1 Mick Stewart takes over as RSM Gibraltar Barracks later in the year.
- The 2008 AGM/OGM is to be held in the Royal Court Hotel Coventry on 17-19 October (to be confirmed). The following year is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the AEA and the present Chairman, Mick Humphries, has proposed that Brigadier Robbie Burns be made the guest of honour. The Chatham Branch has asked the Birmingham Branch to organize this year's event as there is no suitable venue in the Chatham area. Bunny Brown is to oversee the reunion but Eric Blenkinsop will run the raffle. It was agreed that 75% of the raffle profit would go to charity and the remainder to offset the cost of the weekend. The cost PP for three nights will be £135 including breakfast and evening meal. Two nights will cost £120 pp including the breakfast and evening meal. Coach trips at a cost of £6pp will be organized to visit the new memorial to the service men and women who have died in the service of their country from 1945. Details will be in the journal and also sent to individuals.
- The association shop is doing great business with a profit of £752 for the year due entirely to Ray Coleman and Pamela. As far as they are concerned the shop is never closed.
- The I.T. report suggested that a number of ideas are under consideration to make the site more open to members. These include amongst others, a rolling forecast of events from around each branch with minutes of meetings so that everyone is able to see what is happening around the country. It was also suggested that the front page of the site might be able to incorporate a video clip of a parachuting nature.
- From the Association Treasurer (Major Dick Brown) a statement was made to the effect that all branches must inform the treasurer of the value of their branch funds. This was because of the charity and tax rules. He also said that branches must not go to outside agencies to raise cash, i.e. The Lottery Fund, without first clearing it with the Executive Committee of the association.

Any such funds are subject to close scrutiny and any wrongful use can lead to the loss of our own charity status.

- The purchase of wreaths, flowers etc for funerals should also be cleared by the committee
- It was suggested that a calendar for 2009 be produced with a good selection of photographs of interest to members. A figure of 200 was suggested at a cost of £3.50 per calendar.

### **Entertainments**

First on the entertainment agenda is the Army v Navy Rugby match at Twickenham on. 3 May 2008. Tickets for OAPs and children are £10 with car parking either £10 or £12. John Smith has asked that those wishing to attend to please get their name and numbers to him ASAP as time is now getting short, especially the car parking places.

John went on to say that there would be no Normandy trip organized this year but he is now looking ahead to either Arnhem or Normandy for 2009.

The Barn Dance organised by John and Ruth Barrie for New Years Eve was a tremendous success and thoroughly enjoyed by all those that attended. It was also suggested that weekend breaks at Bournemouth and Torquay be looked into with a view to attending concerts by James Last and other entertainment groups

### **Any Other Business**

The main item of any other business was the John Rock Bust project. The cost has now been met by a donation of £5000 from the REA and other donations from members of the association. There is enough money now available to meet the entire cost of the project .It is likely that the £250 donations by each branch will now be returned.

It was agreed that a limit of £250 be allowed for travel costs each year for the Standard Bearer and Frank Menzis-Hearne (our piper) to attend functions but to be paid for by the branch requesting the service of either.

Billy Morris offered video clips of the demolition of the south stand at Twickenham rugby stadium. Please contact Billy by phone or email.

Roger Mockford had made a proposal that the Aldershot and Chatham branches hold a combined Christmas dinner next year. There was a mixed response but it will be considered again at a later date

An email has been received from Tony Gillbert with his apologies for not attending the meeting but he was at a memorial service for a former colleague. He also sent his thanks for an excellent Christmas dinner

### **Latest News**

Many members of the AEA will remember that great character Fred Robson. Unfortunately Fred has had a stroke and he is in a coma in hospital in the Philippines where he now lives. The prognosis is not good. Various problems prevented his wife being unable to pay the hospital bills. A loan of £550 was made by the AEA but this was still a long way from paying for all the drugs he needed. Although he had more than sufficient funds available he was moved to a much lower level of care. The British Embassy in Manila is very reluctant to get involved

Sadly since this meeting we have been informed that Fred has passed away. An obituary will appear in the journal probably in the summer issue.

### **Next Meeting**

**Will be held in the Potters International Hotel 1100Hrs for 1130hrs Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

**For those who intend to have lunch after the meeting please let John Smith know at least one week in advance as tables have to be booked if we all wish to sit together.**