

Annual General Meeting – Thursday 20 May 2010

The Aldershot Military Museum was the venue for the 2010 Annual General Meeting where 16 Branch members assembled in the Boyce Room. This 1930s wooden barrack block came from Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham, and was once the home of the Regimental Administration Offices for the camp. It was carefully reconstructed at the Museum thanks to a £50,000 Heritage Lottery grant. A tasty buffet lunch arranged by Claire Read was enjoyed before the meeting started. Complete with the usual 'snacky' bits, rolls, sandwiches, fruit all washed down with juices etc. we were also introduced to the delights(?) of Japanese Teriyaki Chicken and Australian BBQ Kangaroo flavoured crisps! Well done Claire for enhancing our education!

Steve Spender, the Institute's President designate, thanked the Branch for the opportunity of speaking to the meeting when he updated and provided data on the current state of the Institute's Membership and Finances. He also thanked the Branch Committee for its co-operation in moving the date of its Winchester Seminar so as to coincide with the National AGM which was to be held in Winchester after the Seminar. At this event he was to be installed as the President for the next two years which were 'firsts' for the Branch. A President from its ranks and the first time the AGM had been held in the Southern Branch area.



He said that the future would be challenging for IHE, particularly financially when, like many other Institutes and their members the affects of any future financial restraints will be keenly felt. Having said that he relished these challenges and during his term of President he would be making every effort to promote IHE and establishing good working relations with like minded Institutes (ICE, CIHT).

IHE were in a solid position and though we had lost members, recruiting had enabled us to maintain a static membership of nearly three thousand members. Steve reminded that with great reluctance Council had taken the decision to increase member subscriptions which was vital to ensure the viable future of IHE. Discounts for payment by Direct Debit had been increased to slightly offset this increase and, as agreed before, student membership would remain free.

Chris Stark reported on the Branch's activities over the past year highlighting the events that had been held. Though slightly down on the previous year; the Branch had organised 7 events that had attracted a total attendance of over 230 delegates. This was achieved by the hard work of the Branch Committee to whom Chris expressed his thanks, especially the Branch Secretary who pulled everything together. Future events were in the pipeline and Chris urged members to make a regular visit to our regularly updated web site for further information.

Despite expecting the arrival of a baby within 4 days (which did arrive on time, fortunately not early), Branch Treasurer, Helen Currie presented the Branch accounts for the previous year. In common with everyone else the Branch also faced financial challenges. Our 'trading' position for 2009 revealed a loss of just over £300.00 but with a reasonably healthy bank balance we were able to absorb that loss. Though we held the Seminar at a 'value for money' price we relied on an element of excess income over expenditure which enabled regular events to be sustained at no cost to members (room hire etc.).



Committee members move on and others retire and it was particularly pleasant to have two Branch members volunteer their services to the Committee. Gokmen Ozkan from The Stilwell Partnership (our Branch sponsors) and Marc Samways, Surrey County Council. They were elected unanimously and welcomed by Chris Stark. Having younger Committee members can only be good for the Branch and we hope they enjoy their involvement in Branch activities.

Once the business of the day was concluded, members took the opportunity to tour the museum which contained various displays of early military life in Aldershot and surrounding areas. Some exhibits were interactive enabling one to sit at the controls of a military vehicle in virtual reality. Fascinating provided you didn't hit year head on entry! Many artefacts were recalled by some senior members as being every day items in their youth – a sign of passing years?

We are grateful to the Museum volunteers and Hampshire County Council who jointly operate the museum for their warm welcome and hospitality