

Annual General Meeting 2005

Having suffered appalling weather at our AGMs over the years (yes, even snow in April on the alleged sunny Isle of Wight!) Southern Branch unilaterally decided that “up with this we would not put” and determined we would hold ours in the month of June.

One of the best decisions we, perhaps, ever made and the 2004 event was held in magnificent Sussex weather at the Weald & Downland Open air Museum set in the South Downs just north of Chichester.

In layman's terms, the Museum is run by a charitable trust with volunteers who derive immense satisfaction in seeking out old derelict buildings that typified the lifestyle of the construction period, knocking them down and then reconstructing them in the precincts of the museum. The site is set in several acres of countryside with equally panoramic views across the downs. It is a truly 'outside' event so we were relieved to have good weather.



The management made us very welcome with various 'corporate' direction signs to the Crawley Hall where the meeting was held. The upper floor is open beamed and as a sop to modern living has a fitted carpet and comfortable seating. An excellent buffet was supplied, including locally pressed Apple Juice (non alcoholic). We were told the venue is also licensed for marriages and during the course of the meeting there is a strong suspicion that the Chairman may have married the President – though there is not trace of this incident on the minutes!

Gerry Harvey, the President, paid tribute to the Branch's vitality which was appreciated by the Institute's Council and also gave a potted history from the start in 1965 up to the current 40th anniversary year. Billy Gooch, Chairman, summarised the past year's activities which were numerous and, generally, well supported though a higher turn out by members would always be welcome.

Financially, the Branch was in good shape through careful management and organisation of our Annual Seminars. As a result, Billy Gooch was able to make a 'donation' from Southern Branch to the main HQ account of £5000.00 which, the President said, would be put to good use in promoting the Institute and the work it did for Incorporated Engineers.



The business of the day being concluded a guided tour lasting some 2 hours and probably 2 miles in open countryside was given concluding at the Gridshell Building – a unique modern construction comprising diagonal ‘struts’ that rose at an angle from one side of the structure and down to the other side (further up) so as to form a roof beam. Fascinating building.

Southern Branch always endeavours to find attractive and interesting AGM venues – this was no exception. We have our stalwart supporters but all members and Affiliates are welcome, the event is usually free so why not give us a try next year..... date and venue to be advised.

Tony Suter