

Discussion at the Annual Delegates Meeting of 17th April 2010

Summary of the speaker's comments for the Minutes

Terry Giles – Opened the debate.

The paper circulated to Groups for all to read and it is on the web site therefore it was not his intention to read it out but to set the background and provide a synopsis of the ideas.

The main body of the members joined on Stand down in 1991. The Association has moved on and evolved in the last 20 years and for the immediate next three to five years will continue to thrive. We all are aware that it is a diminishing Association but with a wealth of history and heritage to preserve and display for future generations.

The paper aims to look to the future where will the ROCA be in 10, 15, 30 years?

How will the legacy of the ROC be represented in 20 years?

When marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Britain how do we ensure the ROC heritage included?

It is the view of No 1 Group that the role of Archivist should be one of a much higher profile. Where is our legacy / heritage the role of the archivist needs looking at. The name implies something hidden and closed whilst our legacy should be open to all. We suggest a Heritage Officer as a more suitable title who should sit as a full member of the Committee.

Is the role of the Area Representative now superfluous, can they perform more proactive relevant roles?

With modern technology are there better ways to channel communications to keep in touch with members?

Do we need a publicity /PR Officer out ward facing secretary as well as an admin secretary?

On closing his opening address Terry emphasised if we do nothing we will simply fade away. We can carry on as we are for the next 3 or 4 years but it will take a minimum of 1 to 2 years to gather in member ideas to put in place revised resolutions to secure our future for the next 10 / 15 years. That is the synopsis and purpose behind the paper to stimulate discussion by the membership.

Other speakers to the discussion:

Tony Maasz – The Officers should be elected separately from Area Reps it is a nonsense that they are not. 14 Group suggest there is a need based on the current Area size for 2 Area Reps to share duties to travel the length of an Area.

David Jones – The Chair, Treasurer, Vice Chair, Secretary should be selected at the ADM and serve for 3 years. To retain continuity the selection should be staggered. To keep costs down the Vice Chair need only attend Committee if required. The Vice Chair

should serve with a view to take over the Chairman's role after 3 years. This would not prevent a Chairman's re selection after a break of 3 years.

Peter Jex – A most useful paper and agree we have to look to the coming years and the number of Reps required in the next 5 / 7 years. The time will come when Groups will of necessity have to merge and there will naturally be a reduced need for the number of Reps. It was the view of his members that there should be an AGM rather than an ADM. Maybe this could be on the Sunday morning of the Reunion. We cannot ignore the paper.

Mick Marks – Like the idea of electing Officers every year. Heritage an aging and fading past do not like the name Archivist. A heritage Secretary co-op or elected onto the Committee especially in respect of the Bentley Priory Museum proposal we need to be involved in that project.

Jim Millington – Gratified to No 1 Group for the thoughts given to stimulate the debate. However a word of caution we do need to be careful what we do to maintain continuity. We do not want to elect the Officers all at once.

John Millidge – Spoke from an Area Rep perspective and was pleased the paper has been generated from the members. The key role of the Area Reps is to talk directly to the members. Not all chose to have electronic contact it is important to maintain direct contact with the grass root membership. Currently the geographical areas remain therefore 2 Reps are required to cover the distance.

Peter Blockley – The paper was discussed in 28 Group Committee the view taken is the Area Reps role is defunct. If the Group Secretaries do their job than 5 Reps would be sufficient to represent the members on the National Committee. 28 Group President Chaired a sub committee of ordinary members to consider the paper. Their written findings have been made available today for the Delegates to take away with them.

Lawrence Holmes – Only go for change if it can improve. 95% of Resolutions to the ADM fail. This indicates members do not take kindly to change. 10 Group do like No 1 Group paper. But question if elected Officers would improve efficiency? 10 Group had a couple of concerns can we improve the running of the ROC Association now the Committee increased from 10 to 12 members? The length of time it will take to discuss the options and how to implement without losing continuity. 10 Group thought it should be done but couldn't define how. Provisionally agree to election of the Officers every 3 years. When planning we should look to 10 years ahead not convinced there should only be 1 Rep per Area. Because of the electronic form of communication thought there was a case for the Web Master to be represented on the Committee. To review heritage in all its forms a Heritage Officer required.

Jenny Morris – Agreed to secure the future of our heritage there was an ongoing need to look at how best to achieve this. One of her prime aims over the last few years is to raise the ROC /Association profile by our participation in National events and by publicity. Her appreciation and thanks also go to No 1 Group for producing the paper and she welcomed the discussion. However before the debate went further she wanted to correct three misconceptions.

1. Peter referred to Group Secretaries doing their job. Whilst the majority do pass on communications and information to members this is not always the case. Currently it

is the Area Rep's role to fill that gap by going out and about to meet members and feedback to the National Committee. Jenny is aware however like the Secretaries not all do this.

2. There is a danger to over estimate the number of members who have access to electronic media. The recent attempt by some Groups to encourage members to receive newsletters by email did not meet with an overwhelming response. As National Secretary she is aware there are still several Group Secretaries. Area Reps and members who do not have email and who have no intention of going down that route we must continue to cater for them to ensure all members receive all information in whatever format that suits them and not try to channel members to a specific route otherwise we will lose, exclude them.
3. The size of the National Committee has not increased to 12. There remain 10 elected Area Reps plus the co-opted Treasurer. The Constitution requires the office of Treasurer and Secretary to be co-opted if these posts cannot be filled from within the elected Committee. Specialist roles have emerged such as Web Master, Archivist, and Arboretum liaison, Keeper of the Standard. It is the view of the National Committee that these specialists are best done by willing volunteers rather than restrict to the Area Reps. They give their reports to Jenny to feedback to the Committee. The Chairman invites them to attend meetings when events require a discussion on their activities.

Peter Blockley – If Vice Presidents still have the expertise and relevant advice on matters they should continue to be invited to attend Committee meetings.

Diana Mothersole – She was unclear how the proposed election of the Officers would take place. Who would be entitled to vote?

Terry Giles – Do not need to discuss or decide on detail at this early stage he looked to leadership from the National Committee to take forward the proposals. When we have reached that stage it is usual for an Executive Committee to be nominated to provide the continuity and implement the changes.

Pam Saunders – It should be borne in mind some members belong to more than one Group therefore any voting may be distorted by some having more than one vote.

Hilary Daniel – An Area does not exist as an entity but there are too many Groups to have one Rep per Area. The only thing that matters to members is their Group they have never had a close local affinity to the idea of Areas.

Sheila Mitchell – Can we re-designate the Areas based on clustering different Groups thus reduce the number of Reps required?

Jim Millington – As in the ROC days Groups and Posts distinguished and kept apart. Similarly now Area Reps are a separate entity from the Association Groups. We do need to bring in the Reps to be involved with the Groups.

John Sharpe – Area Reps will only attend Group meetings and events if invited. They do so at their own expense unless the Group reimburse some costs. To be an Area Rep costs money even to attend National Meetings / ADM they only claim 12p a mile rate has not increased for a while.

Tony Maasz asked why the Committee had not increased the rate. John said following the affiliation increase the Reps did not consider the members would take kindly to an immediate increase in the mileage rate.

Diana Mothersole – She had remained willing to continue as a co-opted Treasurer but had no desire to take on the additional role of Area Rep. The treasurer's job was a mechanical process unlike the Chairman and Secretary it was an inward facing role. The Chair and Secretary was the public face of the Association. She recommended it was beneficial for any future Treasurer to have access to electronic communication.

Pat Fisher – Quoted the adage if it is isn't broke why fix it?

Peter Jex – Agreed that it might not be broke now but the paper looked to where we want to be in the next 10 years it is to the future we must look.

Lawrence Holmes – Asked each in turn if the present Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary would be prepared to put themselves forward for election as the Officers. In response the Chairman confirmed he would be happy to do so. The Treasurer thought it doubtful but would want more time to consider and review the arrangements and how the future unfolded in the light of the discussions. The Secretary also thought it unlikely she would put herself up for election. Again would need to consider the position when the options formulised. However she did welcome the ideas and opportunities the paper gives for further discussions on the options.

John Sharpe – Drawing the discussion to a close he thanked No 1 Group for the very useful paper and grateful to them for stimulating the discussion. The question was how to take it forward. There needed to be wide discussion and opportunity for all members to be fully consulted and have their say. There appears to be two halves to the paper. The election of the Officers, the role and number of Area Reps and secondly the future preservation and outward facing role of a Heritage Officer.

It is proposed that Groups continue to consult their members to submit written views. Time would be given at the Reunion Forum to further discuss ideas.

In response to a proposal from **Hilary Daniel** the Chairman agreed to write to all Group Chairmen to request they consult their members on the paper and ideas expressed at the ADM to submit their Group written response to Terry Giles to collate.

The Secretary would issue a summary of today's discussion to all Group Secretaries with ADM minutes as quickly as possible.

The Chairman closed the discussion by thanking all for their constructive comments and views.

This summary of the discussion forms part of the minutes of the ADM held on 17th April 2010.