

ROYAL SOCIETY PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting 1999 Minutes

of the thirteenth Annual General Meeting of the RSPA held at The Royal Society at 2.00pm on Monday 17 May 1999.

Members present:

Chris Argent (*Editor, BTT*)

Ratti Bulsara

Frances Chetham

Alan Clark

Wendy Clifford

Vera Cockle

Gladys Dance

Brenda de Vere-Lewis

John Deverill

Iris Drake

Sheila Edwards (*Hon. Sec.*)

Don Harlow

Marjorie Harris

Joan Hurrell

David Griffin (*Chairman*)

Jenny Hutchinson

Christine Johnson

Jeannie Lamb (*Events Sec.*)

Erica Lazarus (*Hon. Treas.*)

Jennifer Malcolm

Jean Martin

Maurice Oak

Nigel Parfitt (*Committee mem. & Hon. Auditor*)

Jenny Shanahan

Nadia Slow

Richard Theobald (*Pensions Trustee*)

Nancy Tupholme

Peter Warren

Jackie Witchalls

Karen O'Connell [RS Personnel Officer] and Nick Boross-Toby [RS Staff Association Chairman] attended part of the meeting by invitation.

Unable to attend: 38 members

The Chairman welcomed Marjorie Harris and Joan Hurrell who were attending their first RSPA AGM.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 1998 were confirmed.

2. Hon. Secretary's Report

Sheila reported that Peter Cooper, Marjorie Harris and Shirley Latty had joined the RSPA since the last meeting. Geoff Fortnam and Ursula Togle had been sent flowers while they were in hospital. Anne-Marie Kerr had resigned. With sadness she reported that Philip Wigley had died on 12 July 1998 and John Boreham on 10 November 1998. Denny Noble, known to many members, but not herself a member of the RSPA had died on 8 February 1999. An obituary of Philip had been published in *BTT*, Issue 15, and obituaries of John and Denny in Issue 16. She hoped that the 1999 List of Members, including the list of Groups, would be circulated with the next issue of *BTT* and thanked members for providing their dates of service with the RS. 8 members had asked that their service dates should be omitted from the circulated List. The 1999 List would include the new telephone dialling codes due to be introduced on 1 June 1999.

Finally, she had asked the Personnel Officer if a copy of the annual List of Members could be placed in the Postroom (a personal letter to a long serving former member of staff had recently been returned to sender marked 'not known').
On behalf of the members David thanked Sheila.

3. Hon. Treasurer's Report

Erica reported that Nigel Parfitt, as Hon. Auditor, had signed the Accounts for 1998/9 on 13 May 1999.

She explained that the Miscellaneous expenditure of £89.54 was the cost of the members' lunch at the RS and said that in future the postage costs of distributing *BTT* would be included in *BTT*'s production costs.

She also explained that the Welfare Fund was 'topped up' to £200 each year by the RS when she submitted the accounts to the Head of Personnel. The RS did not usually query her expenditure from this fund and there were no agreed guidelines as far as she was aware.

Erica noted that there was a current surplus of £879.94 and suggested that perhaps subscriptions for those over 80 and for widows/widowers of staff, currently £2.50 pa, be waived. Members present who were over 80 and/or widows unanimously agreed that they wished to continue paying the current subscription rates and would like any surplus to go towards members' use.

Erica then suggested that another members lunch be held at the RS, and that members' partners should also be invited, but asked to pay the costs of the lunch. Jeannie suggested that the lunch be held in January 2000 and this was agreed.

On behalf of the members, David thanked Erica and Nigel.

4. Pensions Trustee

Richard reported that the Trustees meeting scheduled for November 1998 had been cancelled and the next meeting was not now due to be held until 21 July 1999. He had approved the draft of a new Pension Rules Booklet and would press for copies to be circulated to members. (Subsequent to the meeting Richard received a letter from the RS saying that there was nothing in the new booklet which would affect existing pensioners and they did not plan to circulate copies)

Questions about reduced SERPS payments to widows and the distribution of surplus funds in the Pensions Fund were raised and Richard said he would bring these to the attention of the other Trustees.

On behalf of the members David thanked Richard.

5. Beyond the Terrace Editor's Report

Chris reported that Issues 14, 15 and 16 had been mailed to members since the last AGM. He particularly thanked Vera Cockle for her obituary of Denny Noble, Norman Robinson for his obituary of John Boreham and Brenda de Vere-Lewis for her obituaries of Philip Wigley and Nicholas Kurti FRS ('an honorary member of staff'). The news sent by members to Sheila on the 'blue form' would be included in the next issue. Only 13 members had sent in news of their activities and Chris asked more members to send in news and articles to *BTT* as this was one of the most effective ways of keeping members in touch with each other.

On behalf of the members David thanked Chris for his work in editing *BTT*.

6. Events Secretary's Report

Jeannie reported that there had been a free lunch for members at the RS in September 1998, and a visit to St Paul's Cathedral, organised by Len Mole in October 1998 - lunch at the RS before the latter visit had been spectacularly disrupted by a bomb scare at Carlton House Terrace - and finally an uninterrupted lunch and visit to Apsley House in April 1999.

She suggested that another visit could be arranged in March or April 2000 and this proposal was welcomed.

On behalf of the members David thanked Jeannie.

7. Elections

- a. David noted that Len Mole was retiring from the Committee after completing the maximum two years service. He expressed the thanks of the members to Len for his service. The Committee suggested that Maurice Oak be appointed to succeed Len, and as no other nominations had been received, this was agreed.
- b. Erica Lazarus had completed four years service as Hon. Treasurer and had indicated her willingness to be renominated for one final year. This was agreed.
- c. David then noted that in May 2000 -
 - a. He, as Chairman, would complete his three years of service (although he was eligible to be re-nominated for a further two years)
 - b. Sheila, as Hon. Secretary, would complete her three years of service and because of family commitments did not wish to be re-nominated.
 - c. Richard, as Pensions Trustee, would complete his initial two years of service (he took over from Ronald Keay when Ronald died one year after his re-nomination for a three year period) Richard is eligible to be re-nominated for a further three years.
 - d. Erica, as Hon. Treasurer, would complete five years of service and could not be re-nominated until at least one year had elapsed.
 - e. Nigel, as a Committee member, would complete his two years of service and was not eligible for re-election, except as an Officer.

David asked that members give some thought to whom they would like to elect as Officers and Committee members and to contact him with their nominations.

8. News of Members

Sheila noted that she had reported above and that other news would appear in the next issue of *BTT*. She asked if members present had any news of members from whom the Committee had not heard for some time.

9. Future of the RSPA

Sheila introduced this item by saying that since she became Hon. Sec. in May 1997 she had sent out 23 invitations to join the RSPA. Of these 7 people had joined, 2 had declined and 14 had not answered her letter. She felt that this raised a question as to why so small a proportion of eligible staff had joined. She suggested that possibly the word 'Pensioner' in the RSPA title put younger members of staff off. One of the primary aims of the Association was help keep former staff in touch with each other and if few 'leavers' joined then perhaps it was not fulfilling its full role. She asked, now that patterns of employment and pension arrangements were so different, it might be appropriate - if the RSPA was not to become moribund - for members to consider if a change of name might be desirable. She was not suggesting that the rules of eligibility be changed. There was an animated general discussion and several points were raised and views expressed. David suggested that members would like to give the idea some further thought and Sheila proposed that she canvas members' views when sending out the papers for the AGM in 2000. Among the names suggested by members were Royal Society Alumni Association (RSAA) and Former Royal Society Staff Association (FRSSA)

10. News from the RS

a. Report from the RSSA Chairman

Nick Boross-Toby gave a lively report on RSSA activities. These included visits to *La Boheme*, *The Merchant of Venice* at The Globe, and Catford Greyhound Track; they had thrashed British

Telecom at soft ball; there had been a special edition of *OTT* to mark Peter Cooper's departure; there had been quizzes at the Christmas Fair and on Red Nose Day and a free 'pudding and wine decadence night' courtesy of Gerry Watts. On-going activities included a fantasy football league, aerobics classes and 5-a-side indoor football. The RSSA had raised over £500 for Tommy's Campaign and Mind.. They had produced a response to the Penzer Report [a comparison of RS salaries with those of similar organizations] and were represented on the Health & Safety Committee and at the monthly staff meetings initiated by Stephen Cox. 89 out of approx. 100 RS staff were RSSA members. Finally, a May Ball/Staff Soiree would be held on 21 May, tickets £12, RSPA members were warmly invited to come.

Members asked if the date of the annual Christmas Fair might be included in their invitation to the Christmas lunch.

b. Report from the Personnel Officer

Karen O'Connell introduced herself and said that as she had been in post for only 8 weeks, there was little that she could report upon. The previous Head of Personnel had left at the beginning of May and interviews for her replacement had so far been unsuccessful.

Members asked if deceased members of the RSPA could be deleted from the RS mailing lists as continued mailings distressed their families and friends, and also asked that the database of pensioners and retired members of staff be kept up-to-date.

David thanked Nick and Karen for their reports and for coming to the meeting.

11. Date of next Meeting

It was agreed to hold the next AGM on Monday 15 May 2000 at The Royal Society at 2.00pm. CR1 & 2 had been booked and it was hoped to be able to hold the lunch beforehand as usual.

Sheila Edwards
18 May 1999

