

## **Mercury Old Boys Association**

### **Annual General Meeting 2010**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea on  
September 2010.

25<sup>th</sup>

- 1) Apologies – as read.
- 2) The Chairman David Parsons opened the meeting at 17:35 and welcomed all those attending, especially the President Barry West who had, earlier in the year, suffered a bout of ill health. He also remarked that the membership goes back a long way with Claude Chowles who is now aged 109 and living in Australia. There were 33 members present with only one from abroad, which also happened to be Barry West.

The Chairman announced with great sadness that the Association had learned, since the last AGM, of a number of Old Boys who had crossed the bar. All were then asked to stand for a minutes silence in remembrance.

- 3) Minutes of 2009 AGM had been circulated to all members present and approved as a correct record.
- 4) Matters arising from 2009 AGM minutes:

One member reported that the Admiralty warrant for “Mercury’s” defaced blue ensign had, in fact been awarded but subsequently withdrawn after the school closed, but could be reinstated. It was agreed to this should be requested and the member kindly undertook to action this. The Chairman thanked him for his research and agreeing to complete the task. He suggested that a 2 yard ensign should then be commissioned for reunions. Furthermore if members wanted their own ensigns they should contact Ron.

- 5) Chairman’s address

David Parsons firstly thanked to Mike & Barbara Ball for all their hard work in organising this years’ reunion, which included an excellent visit the Weald and Downland Museum. He added that Mike and Barbara had made up many of the refreshments at home which was no small effort. His thanks were unanimously supported by all those present.

He announced, with regret, that the former Vice Chairman, one of the founding members of the Association, had resigned due to personal reasons. He paid particular tribute to his huge contribution and long term support in the past. Subsequently Peter French had been appointed, by the committee, as Vice Chairman until today’s AGM, when he would formally stand for election to that position.

There would be service in Hamble Parish Church on Sunday morning and members were welcome to attend.

The War Memorials in Hamble churchyard were in good order. The plinth by the slip and the adjacent display panel were also both in good repair, whilst Hamble Parish Council had taken responsibility for maintaining the bench. The Committee would continue to monitor the condition of all the memorials.

The provision a library in Hamble was now in doubt because of cut backs. This, it had been hoped, would provide a suitable display area for the Mercury memorabilia and trophies. An alternative location would need to be sought. Warsash Maritime Academy had provisionally agreed, some years ago, that the trophies and model might be displayed there and the chairman agreed to approach them again. In the meantime Snowy White would approach Hampshire County Archive, Winchester and Southampton Maritime Museum to eventually take the Mercury archives.

Thanks were given to Snowy White for yet another excellent magazine.

New Mercury ties, of more modern design with traditional multi logos, had been purchased by the Association and were on sale for £16 each. The remaining stock of the old ties, plaques and books were also available.

6) Treasurers Report

Peter Hillman, Honorary Treasurer, reported on the 2009 annual accounts:

The accounts were distributed to the members present and a comprehensive breakdown of funds was given which showed income of £5,082.15 and expenditure of £4,680.66 for the year.

Opening balance at Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 2009	
Current account	£421.73
Capital reserve	£9,481.31
Memorial Fund	£4,379.03
<b>Opening balance</b>	<b>£14,282.07</b>
Plus Income	£ 5,082.15
Subtotal	£19,364.22
Less Expenditure	£ 4,680,66
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>£14,683.56</b>

Closing balance at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2009	
Current account	£763.07
Capital reserve	£9,502.65
Memorial Fund	£4,417.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>£14,683.56</b>

Additional signatories had been added to the account from among the committee members.

A member asked whether the committee had a target figure in mind for the Association's funds as the balance had increased once more. The Treasurer responded that when numbers of subscribers sadly began to decline, as was inevitable, this would provide a cushion as income reduced. Furthermore, eventually, a trust would need to be established to maintain the memorials once the Association was wound up.

The accounts were unanimously approved.

7) Membership Secretary.

Richard Briggs, Membership Secretary, reported that membership numbers were down from 497 last year to 489 this year. There were 18 additional members, 7 of whom had reestablished contact. Five others were as a result of contacts through other old boys. Losses included those who had crossed the bar. There were 6 resignations and 8 whose addresses had changed but had not notified the Association. An interesting statistic showed that 30% of members lived abroad.

8) The Chairman thanked each individual committee member for their huge support and contributions through the year. He reminded all those present that the success of the Association was almost entirely due to the hard work of the Committee. This was unanimously agreed.

9) Election of Committee

The Chairman handed the chair to the Honorary Secretary, for the election of the Committee. The Secretary asked if there were any further nominations for the Committee. There being no new nominations the retiring members offered their names for re-election as follows:-

Position	Member	1 <sup>st</sup> Nomination	2 <sup>nd</sup> Nomination
Chairman	David Parsons (4709)	Peter French	Steve Wade
Vice Chairman	Peter French (4728)	David Parsons	Steve Wade
Hon Secretary	Steve Wade (4958)	David Parsons	Peter French
Hon Treasurer	Peter Hillman (4554)	David Parsons	Peter French

Membership Sec	Richard Briggs (4920)	David Parsons	Peter French
Social Sec	Mike Ball (4500)	David Parsons	Peter French
Magazine Editor	Snowy White (4151)	David Parsons	Peter French
Committee Member	Ken Deane (4334)	David Parsons	Peter French

Members present unanimously elected all those nominated to serve another year. David Parsons resumed the chair and thanked all those present for their support. He added that any volunteers to the committee would always be most welcome.

10) AOB

A member suggested that an “question” should be placed into a national newspapers asking “Whatever happened to the TS Mercury on the Hamble river?” The chairman could then reply with details of the Association. The member felt this might provoke responses from old boys who had not previously known of the Association. This was supported and the member volunteered to action this. The chairman thanked him for this useful suggestion.

The Chairman reminded members that the Association also had a plaque in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. This was mounted in a small memorial alongside several other training ships. It was situated on the edge of the Royal Navy Flotilla of Oaks and the Merchant Navy Convoy (2,535 tress remembering all British merchant vessels lost in WW II – the biggest site in the Arboretum). He added that the Arboretum was well worth visiting, for both these and all the other sites.

Ken Deane, supported by another member, suggested that consideration be given moving the reunion to Eastbourne. He felt that there were cheaper hotels with, perhaps, better standards, than those now at the Royal Beach. There were reservations expressed by other members who felt that Southsea was much closer to the Mercury’s spiritual home and that it was also more easily accessible. The chairman agreed that the committee would discuss this but, in the meantime, felt it would be sensible to return to the Royal Beach in 2011 as it was necessary to secure the venue at the preferred weekend. This was supported.

The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and their valuable contributions, adding that he hoped they would greatly enjoy the reunion that evening.

11) Next Annual General Meeting to be held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011.