



BSAP REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION UK BRANCH AGM 2023

CHAIRMANS ADDRESS

I thought this year as I reflect on my 2022 AGM report, that I would try and find a different way of thanking my committee colleagues for the work they do. It is really hard to find words when 'thank you' seems so insignificant. Few people realise how much work it takes for 'office-bearers' to properly fulfil the functions of their duties. We have been successful in getting a wider spread of us 'young' members of the Association to serve on the Committee, but that presents additional challenges because most are engaged in full-time 'day jobs' which in my experience can easily get in the way of running the BSAP!

However, again I must pay particular thanks to Steve Acornley who continues to efficiently keep things on track and keeping excellent records, to Helen Tate who is a brilliant Treasurer, and believe me, I know and understand the complexity of that role, and notably, to Tony Granger. Tony's steadfast and unwavering support of the members is quite astonishing. He spends countless hours of his own time travelling all around the Country supporting and helping members, attending functions, not only on behalf of the Association, but on behalf of the Trust as well.

This year, additional grateful thanks go to Bertie Cubitt, who, after 20 long years of loyal and dedicated service to the Association, is standing down as a committee member. Bertie, it is people like you that gave the BSAP the reputation it had and still enjoys and binds our Association together in a spirit of friendship and Camaraderie. On behalf of the Committee, and the entire membership, and on a very personal level from me, can I offer heartfelt thanks for the unbelievable amount of work and dedication you have given to us all, over the past 20 years. I know that recent weeks have been difficult for you and your family, and we wish you all well, and of course look forward to any ongoing interaction you feel able to have with us and the wider membership. The Committee have a small gift for you as a token of our genuine appreciation, not only for you, but also for Jenny for her tireless support to you in your role as Dep Sec and Quartermaster over all these years. You are both very special people. Ladies and Gentlemen, please show your appreciation for Bertie and Jenny Cubitt.

My usual grateful thanks to all the other committee members who give their time, effort, and energy to the ultimate benefit of the Association, and work hard at making our BSAP world a smaller, and more caring one.

I am also delighted to report that we recently supported the 98th Birthday party for Ted Sheriff, our oldest member. A party was organised for him in the Southwest in the care home in which he now lives, and it was funded by the Association. We also provided a small gift for him. Many thanks go to John Padbury for organising and facilitating this effort.

Membership numbers remain relatively stable, I can report.

New Membership UK since the last AGM: 24.

Deceased members since last AGM: 25

Deceased members, Non-Members plus other branches (details in Outpost): 65

Committee members have continued in the last year to try and get around to the regional events wherever possible, and I hope as a result of that that we have met with more members and helped the members and regional reps to understand the roles and responsibilities of the committee more clearly. We have also dedicated some cash resources directly to the regions, to help carry some of the cost of the regional gatherings, as this galvanises the very important function of the Association, to promote and support Comradeship amongst the membership.

We have, at previous AGM's and functions, fallen short of begging other members to come forward and support regional functions, but we have been profoundly unsuccessful in this drive, which is such a great shame. Last year I repeated from the year before that the Southern Region has a growing number of members, who do not have any regional representation. This is particularly sad, given the now defunct SE region, which no-one has picked up after the tragic death of our friend and colleague, Biff Way.

I am pleased to report that Committee member, Bruce Braes, has kindly agreed to add to his responsibilities by becoming Regional Rep for the newly formed Southern Region. Those living in this area will hear from Bruce in due course about how he intends to arrange and promote Gatherings in this region, which also might involve combining with our Rhodesian Regimental Associations.

Also, in the last year, following his co-option to the Committee as Webmaster, I must offer genuine thanks to Murray Russell for redeveloping the UK Branch website. Murray is always open to feedback and suggestions to the website, and I'm pleased to say he is here with us today, so please feel free to peck his head in the bar after the meeting if you have any suggestions.

Murray is also busy right now re-writing the Branch database which will be aligned to the website to automate some of the processes and procedure we have. This will also help with communicating with the membership and will also simplify the generation of reports that can be used by the Committee, and the Trustees to enable us to better serve our membership.

A big part of the new website sits around the regional event planning and information.; In order to make this function work well, we need commitment and input from the regional reps. Please, regional reps, make use of this system, and reach out directly to Murray if you are unsure of how to use it.

I would like to deliver a short update on the progress being made by our historian, Paul Brewster, insofar as the work we are doing to preserve for the long term, the history of the BSAP. This is a slow process, and Paul is mid-conversation with a range of different options about how best to go about preserving our history – with the key being ensuring the long-term stability of whichever solution we reach that achieves this objective. Paul cannot be here today since we changed the date of the AGM, but he is very actively working on this in the background, and combining his discussion with other Rhodesian Forces Associations, to make sure that what we end up with is appropriate and fitting. As soon as we have anything of note to update you with, we will be in direct touch with the Membership.

At last years AGM I talked about our approach from the Zimbabwe Pensioners Support Fund. Following discussions after this meeting, the committee took the decision to support the fund, and donated [XXXX] from Association funds, which was very graciously received. We do not rule out making future donations, finances permitting.

Finally, I would like to address the recently raised proposal from the BSAP Trust, that going forward, 25% of subscription fees are deposited with the Trust, as well as any additional 'donation' that is made alongside subs payments.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there have already been a few expressions of very differing views as to the pros and cons of an arrangement such as this. This is a very important proposal, and one which I feel needs proper input from as much of the membership as possible.

My proposal, therefore, is as follows. The Trustees have published a paper directly to the Membership outlining why this proposal has been put forward.

The committee will assemble the views that have already been put forward that oppose the proposal and circulate the whole membership.

This will give the membership the option to make their own minds up, and their informed view will then be sought in the form of a membership-wide online vote. The committee will subsequently observe the wishes of the membership.

It is my belief that this is the only fair, and democratic way of dealing with a significant change in process and put to bed any differences of opinion that would otherwise linger, and invade the good work carried out by both the Association and the Trust.

I am grateful to those of you who have managed to attend today, and regret having to take the decision to change the date of the AGM, at the hand of the rail workers unions.

I close with the ongoing commitment that I, and my colleagues on the Committee will continue to do our very best in service of the UK Association in respect and honour of our fine Force and all those who served and supported it.

I commend this statement to the House! Thank you.

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UK Branch Chairman.