

**PJI CANOPY CLUB ASSOCIATION**

**Winter 2014 Newsletter**

**Message from the Association President**

**Group Captain (Ret’d) Peter Watson FCMI**

Welcome to the Winter Newsletter, which our hard-working Gen Sec Mick Threlfall, has wisely decided to continue for the present – you’ll see why when you read on! As you may recall, I have had a particular interest in getting our Association website up and running and Nic Martin has now taken this on, in tandem with James Bruce, at Hereford. They both have some good ideas and we hope to see the fruits of their labours in due course. For now, though, the website has been kept broadly up-to-date and this Newsletter will of course be added to it.

They say that the older you become, the faster time seems to pass, and with this in mind, I find it almost incredible that the third OC Airborne Delivery Wing (ADW) is in post! Wg Cdrs Glynn Allcock and Stu Williams (both stalwart supporters of the PJI Canopy Club and Association) achieved many outstanding advances and milestones and Wg Cdr Wayne Loxton, the current OC and Chairman, has already taken things forward even further under his dynamic leadership during his first year in post. He has also been an outstanding supporter of our Association. His article (which immediately follows this Foreword) makes really interesting reading. ADW is clearly thriving, despite all the barriers associated with cuts to the Services, and I know we are all hugely impressed by the excellent calibre of newly-qualifying PJIs. The present is clearly in good hands; but that said, it’s important that we also appreciate the contributions made to military parachuting made by our elder brethren and forebears – in other words, our heritage. Mick Threlfall mentioned at the last Association AGM how interesting he found all the extra snippets of information received with the returns for our last reunion. These ‘gems’ continue to flow in.

The latest was from Mickey Price, son of Bert Price. (George Sizeland, now a valuable living piece of PJI heritage in his own right (!), was able to recall that Bert was a keen and efficient PJI Canopy Club Sec in the mid-60s. He also set up the original ‘Comforts Fund’ for ex-instructors who had ‘fallen on hard times’). Bert’s son is forwarding items of memorabilia that will be of great interest to some of our veteran members. They include photos, badges and ‘wings’, none more prized than those of the Belgian SAS, with whom he had a particularly close association. Bert joined the RAF to become a wireless operator/air gunner before re-mustering as a PTI and then a PJI. Bert died in 2002 aged 89, but Mickey Price recalls that Bert’s best pals were Harry Feigen, Sid Brenner and Peter Davey, and he had fond memories of Eric Metcalf, Bill Yexley and Jimmy Young – as well as Gp Capt Jimmy Blyth and Gp Capt Maurice Newham. What times! Make a point of looking at the ‘PTS Diaries’ next time you visit ADW to read and see more about these outstanding characters.

But enough from me; I hope you agree that we are doing all we can to blend all the best features and qualities of the old Club with the new Association. So on that note, let us return to the present, and OC ADW’s excellent article, which follows!

 Best wishes

Peter Watson

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**The Chairman - One Year On**

In January 2013, I realised a life-long ambition to command our specialisation and one year on, I would like to believe that I am still as enthusiastic as ever and I am certain that I am just as proud to be a PJI. As I said in the Summer Newsletter, many things have changed, but the fundamentals of being a PJI remain constant. I was privileged to witness this “constant” in the 7 young PJIs who graduated in November 13; many of you were present as they delivered a fantastic tribute to Doug Peacock who was awarded our Lifetime Achievement Award. These new PJIs have all progressed to the next step and are all key members of Military Training Flight delivering basic training (we call it Phase 3 these days) “on the floor”.

Their Graduation day also enabled me to indulge myself a little and I was honoured that 2 of the most influential people in my career agreed to come as my official guests; Billy Moyse who was my own UT Instructor and Mike Milburn who guided me through my early years and kept me out of the proverbial XXXX. The real ethos of what being a PJI really meant was also demonstrated by Wing Commander Howard Marsh who chose to serve his last day in uniform at the graduation day of our newest PJIs.

In January 2014 we had our annual Cross Brief and in a departure from the routine format, it was a 2 day event. Firstly, a day at the Wind Tunnel with 25 non PJIs experiencing their first “rides” and 56 PJIs who competed in a “scrambles” 4 way event. The tunnel was a great bonding experience for the entire Wing and as you would expect the banter was merciless – winning was of course important, but not as important as not coming last! No names, but it was a bitter pill to swallow for our newest Warrant Officer! The second day was a review of the year and more importantly an opportunity to focus on the next steps and I thought it would be appropriate to share just a few of these with you.

**A Few Highlights**

* 100% completion rate of all parachute courses, including both High Altitude Courses (HAPC) and more importantly, the 2 SF Parachute Courses
* A highly successful PJI collective training package delivering Military Canopy Control Training and almost 1,000 parachute descents in the UK over a 3 week period; we called this Exercise Black Hawk.
* A newly formed PTS Ops team comprising PJI, SE Fitters, MT Drivers and Flight Ops Assistants, who were largely responsible for enabling the first 2 achievements. This Team was also nominated for the Brize Norton Team of the Year at the inaugural Bravos Awards Ceremony
* The PJI of the Year Award (first presented by WO Andy Stalker to WO Robbie Blain) was re-introduced and awarded to FS Paul Floyd for his outstanding efforts within the Ops Team and his direction of both HAPCs.
* Successful introduction into Service of the BT380 parachute, which now replaces the GQ360 as the low level static line square parachute.
* Successful integration of Parachute Engineering Squadron into ADW
* Successful training and employment of Warrant Officer DZSOs (at last Frenchy).

**Some of the Next Steps**

* Main Effort: Deliver effective and professional support to UKSF and SPAG.
* Successfully convert the SBS to the BT380 parachute.
* Support future capability programmes such as: the replacement for the BT80 parachute; the introduction of A400M aircraft; and the tactical use of the C17 aircraft.
* Maintain the successful Air Safety Culture that has been implemented and “guide” the Military Aviation Authority’s requirement to govern military parachuting.
* Increase PJI training opportunities by having an “aircrew mentality” to training; ie PJI first.
* Increased focus on the use of the Skyvan aircraft and active management of the C130 fleet.
* Re-introduction of Inter-Schools team.

Much of this may sound like management “gobbledy-gook”, whilst some of it is also reinventing the wheel, but it does give you a flavour of where our priorities now sit and what will be keeping ADW busy over the next 12 months.

**Finally**

ADW is now firmly established as a Force Element of the Air Mobility Force. The ADW crest is now endorsed (sorry no parade planned as we are a little busy) and we are definitely moving forward. However it is important to acknowledge that much of what we have achieved in the past 12 months and are now planning for the future, is the result of 3 or 4 years of different teams making the “hard yards” up the centre of the pitch and I am extremely grateful for their efforts, which have enabled me and my current team to score a few tries out wide.

**UPDATE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

**General Update.** Colleagues, due to popular request, I have put together this Winter Newsletter. I think the requests are based on the fact that this winter’s appallingly wet weather has kept too many of us inside, or at best filling sandbags! It appears that we need the promise of better summer events to come, combined with the odd memory poke or 2 to remind us how good we all were, to keep us warm in these mainly ‘dreich’ days. To that end please find below some information both for your diaries and of wider, and at times, poignant, but inspirational interest.

Towards the end of the Newsletter you can find a request for information from you all. This is a result of an initiative by Merv Green to resurrect the membership database that is more than a simple list of names, addresses and contact details that I hold at the moment. I urge you all to fill it in and send it to Mervyn. For all of us on Email and with access to Microsoft Office, you will also be sent an attachment that will allow you to reply using Excel. To save the hours of data transfer that would be required if we all used snail mail, if at all possible please use Email. Merv’s address is 18 Ock St, Abingdon, Ox14 5b2. His Email is m330green@btinternet.com

The last item in the Newsletter are the minutes from the 2013 AGM

**2014 Reunion & Annual General Meeting.** The **2014 Reunion** is to be held on **Friday 10 October** at RAF Brize Norton in the Sgts Mess**.** PTSU (PCAU in old money) have indicated that accommodation may be available (at short notice only) on the understanding that members bring their own sleeping bags**.** The annual Golf Competition for the Tatton trophy will undoubtedly be scheduled for that same afternoon; details will be circulated with the Summer Newsletter.

**Recently Retired PJIs.** The following PJIs have recently joined the civilian world and on your behalf I welcome them to the ‘real world’ and wish you every success: Robbie Blaine, Mick Murphy, Tim Sheppard, Mick Birchall, Toby Goodchild,

**Obituaries.** In 2013 we lost 4 of our own. John Gant, Hector McMillian, Tommy Maloney and Chris Buchan. All sadly missed.

Following my request to members for any records/ memories they would like to share, Mery Green has kindly sent a piece on Pat Maloney, a remarkable man, who truly had ‘more than one string to his bow’! Doug Peacock has also been kind enough to send me a fascinating excerpt from a much larger work he is putting together. I also have to thank Peter Hearn for his input on John Gant. I urge the younger amongst us in particular to read these contributions including fascinating the insights into the days when remarkable men did remarkable things.

**Sqn Ldr John Gant**

Members will have been saddened to learn of the death of John Gant last year. Although John outlived most of contemporaries he was an outstanding servant to the RAF and PTS. To say that John’s record of service is outstanding barely does it credit.

John was awarded a DFM for 30 missions over Germany in a Lancaster; he baled out once to gain a ‘caterpillar’; John founded the Far East Survival School and led Jungle Rescue Teams on 2 missions; awarded a MBE; John served as 2i/c PTS in the late 50’s; and returned to the Far East again as Command Para Officer.

To quote Peter Hearn, who was a long time friend and who I have to thank for this note, John ‘was one of the good guys, worth remembering’.

**RON ELLERBECK MEMORIAL PRESENTATION.**

On the 27 Sept I was invited to the Graduation Ceremony of U/T PJI Course 1/13 at ADW Headquarters. I was also asked to give a history of Ron's PJI career.

The graduating course gave an excellent pictorial and anecdotal account of the training they had received and I was very impressed by the amount of advanced training they now undertake and which is considered normal nowadays.

For the first time an award was also to be made to the Best Overall Student. This was in the form of PJI Statuette and was awarded in memory of Ron Ellerbeck.

Ron's family who were present at the graduation had expressed a wish that a Cup/Trophy bought by them be presented in his memory and after discussion between the Executive Committee, ADW and the family it was agreed on the PJI Statuette which could awarded annually.

After my tribute setting out Ron's remarkable PJI career the inaugural presentation was made on behalf of the family to Cpl Freya Lees by Bonnie Brookes, Ron's daughter.'

I cannot think of a more fitting Tribute to Ron's memory although I don’t think he would have wanted any fuss, such was his modesty.

My grateful thanks to; George Sizeland, Doug Peacock and Harry Watts for their memories without which I could not have compiled the history of Ron's remarkable PJI career.

Glan Evans

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**A TRIBUTE TO WARRANT OFFICER PATRICK MOLONEY (Rtd) BEM.**

I first met Pat Moloney in 1966. I had recently qualified as a PJI alongside Flying Officers David Cobb and David Gibbons together with Sergeants Les Allworthy and Sid Garrad. Pat was the School Warrant Officer and to me epitomised the image I had in my mind as a Warrant Officer. He was smart, erect, disciplined, organised and with an obvious air of authority. ‘ Not a man to be messed with’ I thought to myself. I learnt a little of his background at this stage. Born in Eire as one of a large family and from humble beginnings, joined the Irish Army at the age of sixteen and on leaving the Army joined the RAF together with his three brothers in 1946. He completed his basic training with his brother Tommy at RAF Methfield in Lincolnshire and later in the same year his PTI training at RAF Cosford. This was immediately followed by his PJI course at RAF Upper Heyford and his posting on the permanent staff at the Parachute Training School to then begin a long and distinguished career as a PJI. The year 1946 was obviously a quality year for the recruiting of PJI’s as one of our other distinguished and long serving PJI’s, George Sizeland, joined the staff of PTS in the same year but interestingly enough neither he nor Pat served in the same place at the same time. I also discovered at this time that Pat had something of a reputation as an athlete and fitness fanatic.

 It was not until 1973 when I was OC RAF Detachment To Special Forces and based at the Duke of York’s Barracks in Chelsea that I discovered much more about the man. By this time he had served on parachuting duties in the Canal Zone, Palestine, Germany the Jungle Survival at RAF Changi in Singapore, The Depot Parachute Regiment at Aldershot and The Parachute School at both RAF Upper Heyford and Abingdon. The tour in Palestine was a real eye opener for a young PJI. He was dealing with experienced and hard bitten paratroopers with operational experience and in addition to his PJI duties he was detailed to carry out patrols with them in Haifa. The first patrol turned out to be a cover for a visit to an establishment of ill repute but before Pat was able to further his life experience the establishment was raided by the military police. Pat ended up in a cupboard with a fellow PJI Ken Cross and a naked Flight Sergeant to avoid being arrested. A chastening experience and the delights of socialising with the ladies of Haifa would have to wait another day. During his time in Palestine Pat was also attached to the 1ST Guards Parachute Battalion. Pat recalls one incident that typified the ‘modus operandi’ of the Guards at that time. A young Guardsman requested through the RSM to see his Commanding Officer on a welfare matter. The RSM was duty bound to oblige and carried out the request by marching the Guardsman through the CO’s office giving the order ‘Eyes Right’ as he marched through then ‘Eyes Front’ and straight out of the exit door. He then gave the command ‘Halt’ and said to the Guardsman ‘You have now seen the CO- Dismiss’ So much for man- management.

Pat had already been awarded the BEM in 1955 for his outstanding work with the Parachute Regiment at Aldershot before his posting to the Special Forces Detachment. In my early days at the Detachment I made it my business to find out more about this highly experienced individual. What better than to partake of the odd jar or two at the Duke of Wellington pub alongside Sloane Square underground station? My timing was not great on the first visit as the establishment was closed when we arrived at 1730hrs. The strict opening hours applied in the early seventies. Not to be outdone we agreed to adjourn to the running track at the Barracks for a quick work out before then returning to the pub. I then discovered more about his reputation as an athlete and at the end of the session and my gasping for breath the facts emerged. Both he and his brothers had won various athletic trophies over the years with the Irish Army and the RAF. They all enjoyed physical challenges none more so than Pat who became an enthusiast for marathon walking. John-o’-Groat’s to Lands End, St David’s Head to Lowestoft, Edinburgh to London are just a few of the walks undertaken but the big one was the walk from San Francisco to New York with Staff Sergeant Mervyn Evans who was an instructor on ‘P’ Company at The Depot Parachute Regiment. The aim was to arrive in New York to meet the opening of the British Trade Fair at Madison Square Gardens in June 1960. The details are well documented in a book written by Pat in 1987 entitled ‘I Never Walked Alone’ but the bare details speak for themselves on what an achievement this was for the two men. San Francisco to New York, distance 3032 miles completed in 66 days and 4 hours. To achieve this they walked for 11 hours/day at a speed of 4.5 mph. In doing this they endured all types of climatic conditions and terrain including amongst others the desert, salt flats, mountains, extreme heat, cold and snow. They also endured their own physical problems and Pat developed haemorrhoids which required immediate medical treatment. The doctor made a hospital reservation but was told by Pat that he needed to be back on the road in 30 minutes to maintain their planned schedule for the day. The haemorrhoids were lanced, no anaesthetic was used and Pat, albeit with tears still in his eyes and clutching pads and plasters, rejoined his walking partner. The pads were changed every 7 miles and he bled for another 5 days. They arrived as planned to a tumultuous reception at Madison Square Gardens in New York and witnessed by a young Corporal PTI, one Henry MacDonald, who was performing with the RAF Gymnastic Display Team and later to become himself a most respected Parachute School Warrant Officer. The achievement by the two servicemen demonstrated the initiative, drive, commitment, determination, the mental and physical strength involved and above all the sheer bloody mindedness to complete this marathon walk and arrive as planned on time for the opening of the Trade Fair. Their achievement gave most welcome publicity to the British Trade Fair and also brought great credit to both the Army and RAF. However, the reaction of the RAF was to place Pat on unpaid leave for the duration of the walk, deduct his marriage allowance and for good measure increase the rental for his Married Quarter in Aldershot. The incompetence and disrespect shown by the RAF to a man who had brought great credit to the Service is difficult to comprehend but despite this Pat’s loyalty to the RAF never waivered.

Life at the Detachment was always busy and staffed by many characters. Jack Flint, Norman Pilling, Peter Keane, Danny Gallagher, John Parry and Bill Coad are a few that readily spring to mind. Parachuting tasks were carried out and completed in a variety of locations and often only as a result of a flexible interpretation of the SOP’s. Pat was highly respected by all staff for his knowledge experience and expertise on matters parachuting. He organised and controlled the General Office or Orderly Room as he preferred to call it, allocated PJI NCO’s for despatching duties and acted as the DZSO for week-end ballooning programmes with TA units. I noticed that golf clubs were always on the check list of equipment and in the event of adverse weather conditions for parachuting Pat was never short of an alternative activity. He organised a golf practice area in ‘G’ Block which helped him lower his golf handicap to eight and members of both the Special Forces and 44 Brigade Detachments will remember well the variety of activities carried out in this building and to this day some of those must remain strictly classified.

Security was always an issue at the Barracks and none more so than an evening in September 1973. John Parry and Pat had returned from a late night programme when there was an enormous explosion in the area of the 21 SAS building that fronted onto the Kings Road. Not only were windows blown out of the building but also those opposite of the department store Peter Jones. The IRA had infiltrated the Barracks and parked a vehicle loaded with explosives which they then detonated. The obvious problem presented itself – how was a man in civilian attire, from County Limerick and a former member of the Irish Army going to explain his presence in the Barracks late at night? A hurried consultation between John and Pat ensued and both agreed that the safest place was to exit with all possible speed to the Centre Block and hole up there until staff arrived for duty in the morning. It worked.

Pat retired from the RAF in 1980 having spent 34 years continuous service as PJI. This in itself is something of a record. As a civilian Pat worked for a while with a Security Company before retiring with his second wife Saras to Cyprus. After 10 years he returned to the England and set up home at Louth in Lincolnshire. Pat is now aged 88 and has suffered a number of medical problems in recent years including having a heart attack and triple by- pass operation in 2003 and suffering a major stroke in 2006.Typically, he has met the problems head on and continues to exercise every day using fitness equipment installed in one of the bedrooms in their house. Pat Moloney is a man who has lived life to the full and is one of the stalwarts of the PJI fraternity the likes of whom we may not see again. He deservedly has a special place in the history and folklore of the RAF Parachute Training School.

Mervyn Green

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**PTS 1956 – 1957 (Excerpt)**

The overriding consideration was safety; this was instilled into us from the very outset. It is my firm conviction that parachuting is as safe or as dangerous as one cares to make it oneself, and that the most important safety factor is one’s own attitude. Ground training was carefully progressive, and practical parachuting followed the same pattern. The first two descents were made from a static balloon from 800ft (more accurately, from 800ft cable length, actual height depending on the cable angle). First was a door exit, whilst the second was a floor aperture exit. This aperture was a rounded, coffin-shaped hole in the floor of the balloon cage some five and a half feet long by three feet wide, originally to duplicate the size of the exit aperture in the Albemarle, which had been used as a jump aircraft in exercises and operations during 1943-44. This aperture exit training was retained with the introduction of the Beverley aircraft in 1957 (see under)**.** The two balloon descents were followed by aircraft descents with progressive increase in stick length and speed, leading up to a qualifying descent of simultaneous 15’s from the Hastings. The Hastings was the main jump aircraft in 1957, the Valetta was on its way out and the Beverley was just being introduced. The latter had both lower and upper decks, with forty troops downstairs while the upper deck, or boom, held twenty troops who exited in a single stick through a rear aperture (hence the balloon training).

The foregoing notwithstanding, these activities did not always proceed totally smoothly and according to plan. I recall particularly a balloon incident which certainly grabbed our attention. This was during the Dropping Zone (DZ) phase of our course at Weston on the Green when we were covering the DZ under supervision for a Hastings sortie. It was January, the weather was pretty murky, the plume from Smokey Joe four miles west was horizontal and the Hastings called down to report a 700ft cloud base; they were hence unable to drop as 800 was required. OC PTS, the aforementioned Wg. Cdr Jimmy Blyth, was on the DZ and decided the aircrew were mistaken, and announced his intention to put up the balloon to check the cloudbase. OC Weston on the Green tentatively mentioned a lightning risk two, but, being comprehensively outranked, had this well-intentioned information ignored. The cable paid out, up went the balloon with the cage unmanned. Pennants were attached to the cable every 200 feet. Just after the third pennant had been attached, a dozen flashes of lightning from all angles of the sky converged on the metal vent valve at the rear end of the hydrogen-filled balloon. The conflagration was spectacular, with the balloon coming down in flames, eventually settling, neatly draped over the cage, in front of the Control Tower and burning away merrily. The fire section arrived with commendable alacrity, whilst the OC jumped into his staff car and departed in similar fashion. It started to rain. The Hastings decided to run in anyway and drop the drifter, I believe it was Ron McKail, who landed, totally ignored, at the far end of the field at a great rate of knots. The rain poured down, the Tower fired a red Verey, the Hastings disappeared into the lowering cloud and we all went home.

On another occasion, we were running a night descent programme using the Beverley freight bay (downstairs). I was the starboard door despatcher, and hence merely an interested bystander. Before dropping troops, it was standard procedure to drop an experienced instructor on the first run to act as drifter to confirm the exit point. It was also standard procedure to carry out a lights check prior to a live jump run (Red on, Green on, Go). Port door was open, drifter at action stations, Murphy’s Law ensured the inevitable outcome. Out went the drifter, Jerry Cording, on the lights check, which the navigator had switched on shortly after passing the Bicester Ordnance Depot at Graven Hill, some two miles short of the DZ. The face of the number one despatcher, Jock Brown, on headset with the rest of the aircrew, was a mixture of horror and disbelief. Jerry was located some thirty minutes later trudging across hedge and ditch on his way back to Weston. Needless to say, SOP’s were re-drafted with some haste.

Before the students made their first balloon jump, there was always a demo cage of five instructors, each of whom would demonstrate a particular aspect of the flight drills as had been taught in the hangar. It was possible to steer the X type to some degree by pulling down one lift web in the desired direction of travel. It was also possible to slip the parachute by hauling down several handfuls of rigging (suspension) lines. This resulted in a noticeable increase in rate of descent. On this occasion, I was detailed to demonstrate steering and slipping to the basic course. I knew that Flight Sergeant Alf Card was reputed to have pulled down so far as to have reached the periphery of the canopy and I accordingly decided to put this to the test. I grasped one set of lines and kept on hauling down until the canopy had had enough and partially collapsed, putting about ten twists in the lines in the process, all this from an open canopy height of about seven hundred feet. I let go in a hurry, making sure the lines did not catch on my reserve on their way back up, and made a rather spectacular crash landing a dozen yards from the assembled troops waiting to make their first descent. Despite this (to me, anyway) perfectly convincing demonstration, my Syndicate Officer immediately grounded me for a couple of weeks, leaving me to explain matters to my own section; I certainly learned about parachuting from that. Those were indeed the days…. we were young, dynamic and unsuccessful…. all for an extra six shillings and nine pence (34p) per day.

Doug Peacock

I’m sure I speak for all the Executive Committee in wishing you a pleasant (and hopefully much drier!) Spring. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year’s Reunion and AGM, final details of which will be in the Summer Newsletter.

Best wishes and hope for Blue skies!!!

Mick

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| **End sheet** |  |

**Minutes of the inaugural AGM of the PJI Canopy Club Association held at RAF brize Norton on 21 Sep 13**

See distribution 26 Sep 13

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| Present | Wg Cdr W Loxton34 Association membersM Threlfall | OC ADW | ChairmanSecretary |
| Apologies | F Marshall, G Hand, B Souter, G Edge, B Fell, P Denley, J Hurford, B Roberts, R Wadmore, N Oswald, R Mitchell |

**Item 1 – Opening remarks**

1. The Chairman welcomed those members in attendance to the inaugural AGM of the PJI Canopy Club Association. Notwithstanding that, the AGM minutes’ of the previous Canopy Club Association were unanimously accepted as a true record of that meeting.

**Item 2 – Matters arising**

2. There were no matters arising.

**Item 3 – Secretary’s report**

3. The general correspondence from members on a wide range of Association issues not only brought matters to the Secretary’s attention but also provided rewarding relief to some of his more onerous tasks. Therefore correspondence from Association members was most welcome and had to continue (see para 5).

4. Sadly there had been a number of bereavements within the membership and Association members had been informed and condolences passed to the families of those concerned. Most recently, however, Sqn Ldr (ret’d) John Gant had passed away and details of the funeral were announced.

5. An Association website had been activated which would become an extremely beneficial portal for a variety of Association matters in general, but for communication between the membership and its Executives in particular. Members were encouraged to visit the site and give feedback or comment as necessary (see para 14d).

6. On behalf of the Association, the Chairman thanked the Secretary for the time and effort expended, often behind the scenes, over the previous 12 months.

**Item 4 – Treasurer’s report**

7. There was a concerning number of annual subscriptions outstanding and it was hoped that those members who had yet to pay would do so as soon as possible. The Association’s funds were in a healthy condition, which was reflected in the sum of £7362.44 for total assets. Once again, members were thanked for their generosity and voluntary donations, which assisted the Association’s income and administration. A copy of the Statement of Accounts (as at 10 Sep 13), certified by the Secretary, was presented for members to scrutinize. Acceptance of the annual Statement of Accounts was proposed by Dick Wooding, seconded by Joe Featherstone and carried unanimously.

8. The Chairman reminded the meeting of the unglamorous yet vital role of the Treasurer and thanked him for his invaluable support and stewardship of the Association’s accounts.

**Item 5 – Vice Presidents**

9. There was a requirement for additional Vice Presidents to be nominated, owing to the shortfall in the number allowed in accordance with the Constitution. The role of a Vice President was to provide sound advice and support when necessary and, more significantly, future Presidents of the Association were elected from that elite group. Moreover, those nominated to act as a Vice President would have previously demonstrated a keen interest in Association affairs and contributed significantly in some notable way to the Association. Therefore, due consideration was required when selecting Vice Presidents and, as a consequence, one potential candidate’s name was rescinded. However, Peter Watson proposed Glan Evans for one of the Vice President vacancies, seconded by George Sizeland and the vote was carried unanimously.

**Item 6 – Assistant Secretary’s ratification**

10. When combined, the Secretary’s full-time employment, family commitments and Association responsibilities exerted enormous pressures on the limited time available. An Assistant Secretary would ease the workload and make the overall task more manageable. Wg Cdr Loxton proposed Chris Heathershaw to act as Assistant Secretary, seconded by Roger Harrison and carried unanimously.

**Item 7 – Application for Associate membership**

11. The Secretary had received a request for membership of the Association from a retired military paratrooper from the Rhodesian (as was) Armed Forces. In accordance with the Constitution, Associate membership only could be offered, and that was proposed, by Mick Threlfall, seconded by Glan Evans and carried unanimously. The Secretary would write to inform the individual accordingly.

12. Similarly, Mike Westwood (wg cdr ret’d) was well known to the Association over many years and had attended a number of functions as a guest. In accord with Constitution rules, an offer of Honorary membership was proposed by Doug Peacock, seconded by Chris Heathershaw and carried unanimously. The Secretary would write to inform Mike Westwood accordingly.

**Item 8 – Result of female guest vote**

13. The result of the postal ballot concerning female guests being invited to attend Association functions was announced. The votes, counted by the Secretary and confirmed by the Treasurer, were 63% in favour of female guests attending functions and therefore the vote was carried. The Executive Committee would amend the Constitution to reflect the membership’s decision.

**Item 9 – AOB**

14. The following items were discussed:

a. The family of Ron Ellerbeck had produced a memorial book in his honour and requested Association members to sign it.

b. A suitably worded certificate could be given to past recipients of the Award of Merit as a permanent reminder of the occurrence. The same principle should also be applied to the Lifetime Achievement Award. That was agreed on both counts, and the finer details would be discussed by the Executive Committee and the membership informed of the outcome.

c. Terry Hagan’s daughter was employed as a partner at a solicitors’ offices which offered a discounted service to Association members (see the Secretary/website for details).

d. The Association website was functioning but needed some improvement and had to be kept up to date. The current website manager would no longer be able to fulfil the role and, in the event of nobody else volunteering, Nic Martin could manage the website from Dec 13 onwards.

**Item 10 – DTNM**

15. The date and time of the next AGM would be announced by the Committee.

C M Heathershaw

Asst Sec

For Gen Sec