

## Chairman's Chapter

Dear Members,

As you are all aware, our Chairman, Malcolm Smith informed you of his impending resignation from the Chair at the AGM last year. At the meeting of your committee on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>. March, I was duly elected (there being no other 'volunteers' for the job) as your interim Chairman. An honour I have accepted on behalf of the Association. The election of the new Chairman will take place at the AGM on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October. Anyone who wishes to volunteer for this position, can you inform me in writing by the end of July please. These names will then appear on the Agenda distributed prior to the AGM, so you can decide who you will vote for. This position can then be ratified by the Members plus that of the new Membership Secretary and any of the other vacant positions that may be filled by volunteers coming forward prior to the AGM!! I look forward to hearing from you volunteers shortly!!

Malcolm will be a hard act to follow and our warm thanks go to both him and Diane for their hard work over the years in organising the Association and its spectacular reunion dinners.

In order to make the Association work in the manner to which we are accustomed, we do need your help. We now have three places on the committee requiring volunteers. These are:

Secretary  
AGM/Reunion Organiser  
Raffle Organiser

We are extremely fortunate in that Joe Cornish has very kindly come forward and has taken over the role of Membership Secretary as Geoff's employment now takes him away from home for much of the time. We welcome Joe to the Committee and on your behalf I would also like to thank not only Geoff for all his hard work but all of the Committee Members who give freely of their time for you. I feel therefore that now is the appropriate time for three volunteers to come forward to take up these roles and provide the Association with the team it deserves to continue organising our various annual activities.

Having said all of the above and due to those vacancies, it is with great regret that I have to inform you that as a result of these difficulties, we will not be organising a Reunion Dinner this year. Unfortunately we have no choice but hopefully this is nothing more than a temporary hiatus. It's not the start I wanted on taking over my new role but one I believe we can resolve with your input. Some of you have proffered alternatives. Unfortunately they were either unacceptable for various reasons or just too expensive, with all being substantially in excess of our £25-£27 per head.

The AGM will go ahead in its usual format with tea and coffee prior to the AGM itself and a Fish 'n Chip luncheon with wine. Our Treasurer Tony Dewhirst is very kindly organising the lunch and there will be the ubiquitous chit in the Spring Newsletter.

With regard to our volunteers, and as we have stressed before, whoever does come forward will be ably assisted by the current members of your committee. Also, again as we have

mentioned before, we feel it would probably be expedient if the AGM/Reunion Organiser lived in the Gosport/Fareham/Portsmouth area in order to obtain assistance from the Committee, most of who live within or reasonably close to Gosport. I trust you will consider offering your services if you are able and please be assured that you will receive all the help you need.

The next subject is the increased subscription of £12.50p and the Standing Order changes to ensure this transition runs as smoothly as possible. Some of you have already changed your SO's to the new figure, keeping our Treasurer and new Membership Secretary happy. There is a new SO form which you can download from the website and there will also be one in the Spring Newsletter for those who do not venture on-line.

The mechanics of this which was explained at last years AGM is that if your payment date is prior to the end of April, you pay your old subscription of £10 and then the £12.50p on the due date of October the 1<sup>st</sup>. **On completion of payment please don't forget to change your SO to the new £12.50p rate.**

If your subs are due after the end of April, then you do not pay anything until October the 1<sup>st</sup> when you pay the increased subs of £12.50p. As I mentioned when this was opened to the floor for discussion, if anyone has any financial difficulty with this arrangement, please don't hesitate to contact me, we are here to help. **This group will need to contact their individual banks to cancel their existing Standing Order and replace it with the new one, again at £12.50p.**

I know some will consider this unfair but it is a model we have researched from many other clubs and associations. It does mean that in effect some will pay a little more and some a little less, but at the end of the day the Association survives financially which is the most important outcome and we will all be on the same subs next year.

Overall, despite this being a difficult beginning to the year, I am confident that we will resolve these slight setbacks and move the Association forward again. In the meantime take care and thank you all for your patience and understanding.

KC  
Acting Chair