

MGCC SE Centre Annual Secretarial Report 2020

When I took over as secretary from Philip Bayne Powell at the AGM in the autumn of 2019, I was aware that I had very large shoes to fill.

As a relative new-comer to South East Centre activities, Derek and Philip seemed to me to be the embodiment of The South East Centre.

Derek's very unfortunate illness followed by his elevation to the Presidency and Philip standing down for a very well-earned rest left the Centre in the hands of our "temporary" chairman and me.

We set about trying to take a long hard look at the way the Centre was working with the objective of looking to find some small tweaks to the way things are done and to try to find some improvements that might start to stem the tide of falling membership.

There was no way that I could emulate the prodigious work out-put of Philip and we managed to persuade John Morgan to come on board as Competition Secretary and Andrew Mitchell as Events Secretary.

With these two experienced and competent colleagues on board, I thought we could now make a fist of it. I restyled my job as administrative secretary.

Derek and Philip were both very supportive and encouraging, for which many thanks.

Philip and Rosemary have been presented with a special award (socially distanced – of course) in recognition of their past contribution to the Centre.

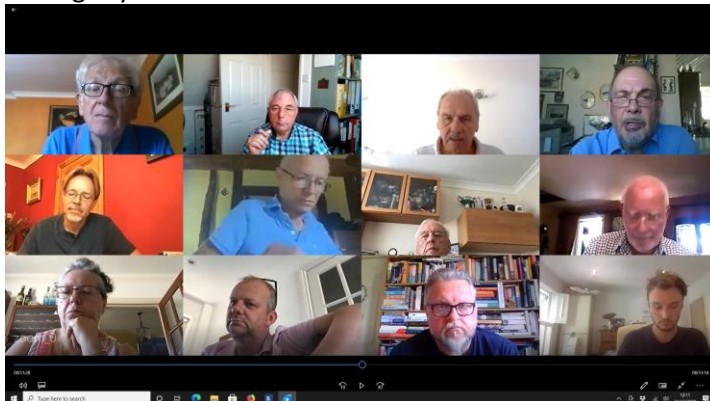


Then Covid 19!

Our 2020 general meeting was held as scheduled at the Pheasant, but we were by then in the first day of lockdown. The three officers were the only members present, but that was sufficient to approve Tony Atcheson's excellently presented accounts. We then had a short discussion on how to proceed.

As a result;

- All Natters and Wanderer groups were cancelled until further notice.
- The committee meetings were moved on-line via Zoom with the frequency increased to fortnightly.



- On-line Natter leaders' meetings were established.



- The entire 2020 programme was cancelled or postponed. John Morgan and Andrew Mitchell will report on their exceptional success in getting three events up and running in the Autumn before the second lockdown.

The on-line nature of the committee meetings resulted in a much larger attendance than hitherto, and with the involvement of John Morgan (Competition), Andrew Mitchell (Events), Ray Ruffels and William Opie (Safety Fast and the Newsletter), Tim Morris (MGF Register President -Website and Face book), John Gallop (VC Young members Branch – Liaison and communications), with the support of our stalwarts, Tony Atcheson (Treasurer), John Davies (Awards and Trophies) Diana Calvert (Membership), Roy Baker (wise head) and the careful skilful guiding hand of Chris Leigh we set about using this unique time to undertake a root and branch assessment of the Centre and its activities. Derek maintained a respectful and much respected watching brief with well- aimed pithy interventions.

This work is well advanced but very much not complete.

The committee has been very mindful of the steady reduction in membership. Diana provides the committee with the monthly figures from HQ and Tony has been bringing his analytical brain to bear on the trends. Under our chairman's leadership the committee is starting to implement strategies to enhance recruitment and stem losses.

However, I have to report that the Centre had a membership of 1587 at December 2019 and 1470 at December 2020. This is a reduction of 117. There is clearly more work to be done.

The AGM needed to move on-line but as I write vaccines are slowly coming on stream and our chairman will be working with the committee to finalise an appropriate and hopefully exciting programme for 2021, probably starting in earnest around Easter time.

As far as the committee function is concerned, I expect that one of the positive effects of the pandemic will be that a significant proportion of the work and meetings will stay on-line. I expect this to continue the trend towards a much wider committee involvement and interaction with our geographically dispersed leaders and members.

My thanks go to all our committee members, and to Mick Brear who has electronically distributed our Newsletter. Particular thanks go to Chris for supporting this rookie secretary and for dutifully reading and acting on the plethora of documents that he has inflicted on the committee.

I look forward with some optimism to 2021.

I guess a secretary should provide some stats!

AGM 6

We have held 1 AGM, 1 GM, 17 committee meetings (14 of them online), 7 Natter and Wanderer Leaders' meetings (online) and 3 sub- group meetings.

We plan to hold a further committee meeting and a further Natter leaders' meeting between the writing of this report and the AGM.

Austin J Banner
Secretary MGCC SE Centre
December 2020