

**ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH MEETING HELD  
ON WEDNESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023 AT STROUD CARLTON**

**CLUB AT 11.00 HOURS**

1. Our Branch President Chris Price welcomed everyone to this meeting and asked everyone to stand for the Exhortation and Kohema.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Peter House, Tony Holland, Judith Compton, Catherine Steel, Don McPhail, Roger Worth, and Mike Ward. There were 27 attendees.
3. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th October 2022 had been circulated. Dennis Flamson proposed their acceptance and John Longhurst seconded. There were no matters arising from the minutes.
4. Branch Committee Membership  
Michael Compton advised the meeting that we still have two vacancies on the Branch Committee. Rose Longhurst proposed, and Jean Stublely seconded the appointment of Sally Welzel; Chris Blick proposed, and Sheila Gibson seconded the appointment of Emlyn Phennah. These proposals were accepted nem com.  
The Committee had been advised by Chris Blick that he would be resigning as Vice-Chairman at the next AGM. On behalf of all present Rick Rutter thanked Chris for his exceptional contribution and service to the Branch.
5. Summer Functions for this Year.
  - a. ANZAC Day - 23<sup>rd</sup> April. Leighterton - assemble 13.30 at Primary School, walk to church; service at 15.00; tea after service.
  - b. St Georges Day Service - 24<sup>th</sup> April (NOTE DATE) at Holy Trinity Church, Gloucester, at 7.00pm. We have 3 spare tickets. Please apply to the Secretary if you would like to attend.
  - c. Remembrance Service at Earthcott Green - 15<sup>th</sup> June. 21 members have already stated that they would like to attend. Apply to Michael Compton if you would like your name added to the list.
  - d. Weymouth Weekend - 17/18<sup>th</sup> June – Payment to organisers required by 19<sup>th</sup> April if staying in the hotel at the agreed price.
  - e. Armed Forces Day - 24<sup>th</sup> June – Main event in Gloucester City centre has been cancelled, but Emlyn Phennah advised that we can still have a table at the event at the Jet Age Museum, Staverton Airport. This was accepted.
  - f. AGM - 5<sup>th</sup> July. Graham Mottley, Membership Secretary of the National Committee has accepted our invitation to attend.
  - g. Summer Outing - 3<sup>rd</sup> August. The visit to RNAS Yeovilton Museum and Vintage Aircraft Renovation Centre was agreed; travel would be private car. Sally Welzel proposed that those not wishing to go to RNAS could attend a tea and chat event to be arranged.
  - h. Blackpool Event – Weekend 8/10<sup>th</sup> September
  - i. Battle of Britain Sunday - 17<sup>th</sup> September at Cheltenham
  - j. Branch Meeting - 4<sup>th</sup> October

- k. Garden of Remembrance - 2<sup>nd</sup> November at Cheltenham
- l. Remembrance Sunday - 12<sup>th</sup> November at Cheltenham
- m. 56<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Withdrawal from Aden - 29<sup>th</sup> November at Cheltenham
- n. First Wednesday Lunches - 3<sup>rd</sup> May to be held at the Bell Inn Frampton-on-Severn  
7<sup>th</sup> June to be held at the Corner Cupboard, Winchcombe (Note change of venue)  
6<sup>th</sup> September and 8<sup>th</sup> November to be advised.
- o. Christmas Lunch - 6<sup>th</sup> December at Best Western Hotel Robinswood, Gloucester;  
because of the size of the venue, it was agreed at Jean Stubley's suggestion that we  
invite the Grenadier Guards Association. Payment for those wishing to attend will be  
required in September.

## 6. The Future of the AVA

There was a prolonged discussion regarding the future of the AVA nationally, as well as locally. This subject had already been raised at the branch committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March, at which it was agreed that we should make every effort to preserve the Association at least until the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Withdrawal from Aden. Michael Compton gave a brief statement of the current thinking at National level having had telephone conversations with some members of the Committee: you will remember that Clive Candlin gave his view at our last AGM, that the continuation of the AVA is under threat because the effort having to be made by members of the Committee, some in poor health, is becoming too much. Unless there are volunteer replacements soon it is likely the AVA cannot continue beyond 2025. It seems this subject will be expanded on in the March issue of the Dhow. Meanwhile, all members of the Gloucestershire Branch agreed that, if possible, the AVA should continue beyond 2025, even if this means that the Association continue in a different form. It was agreed that depending on the situation at National level, the Branch should plan to be in a position to make a proposal at the July Branch AGM for consideration at the National AGM in September.

## 7. Any Other Business

a. Hazel Wrighton made the proposal that when RIP notices appear in the Dhow for lady members, the maiden name (or the name used when serving in Aden) of the lady is quoted as well as the current name. There was a rush to second the proposal, Sally Welzel won by a "short head", and it was unanimously accepted. Michael Compton was asked to pass this on to the National Committee asap for ratification.

b. John Courtman was introduced and welcomed to the Branch as a new member.

c. Sheila Gibson has agreed to take responsibility Rose Longhurst for the raffle; Rick Rutter thanked Rose for running the raffle for many years.

d. Hugh and Sheila Gibson were thanked by all present for the cake (fully iced with the AVA crest on top); this was to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Branch.

## 8. The Story of Tommy Clough

We were given a rare opportunity, when Tommy Clough, who is well into his 90's, agreed to talk to us about his experiences both as a soldier in 45 Regt RA (29 Bde) at the Battle of the Imjin River and subsequently as a prisoner of war in North Korea. He described how surrounded by a massive army of 70,000 Chinese volunteers, they had held out for 3 days and nights, allowing the remainder of the British and American forces to withdraw to the defensive lines North of Seoul. After the battle and the surrender, he, together with what

remained of the Glosters, had been subjected to a 500 mile forced march to a prison camp in North Korea. He then spent years living where, in his words "Diet not good, treatment and care worse", while being subjected to communist propaganda for long periods by commissars. His final words - "The men who died are the heroes; the price of freedom is not cheap".

We gave him a standing ovation, and then asked him to cut our birthday cake!

9. The meeting closed at 13.00 for raffle and rolls.