

ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH MEETING HELD
ON WEDNESDAY 4TH OCTOBER 2023 AT STROUD CARLTON CLUB AT 11.00
HOURS

1. Our Chairman Rick Rutter welcomed everyone to this meeting and asked everyone to stand if they could for the Exhortation and Kohima.

2. Apologies were received from John Friedburger, Michael and Judith Compton, Hugh and Sheila Gibson, Stan and Tricia Shearer, Catherine Corley, Don McPhail, Peter House, Roger Worth and Mike Rees. There were 26 attendees.

3. The Minutes of the meeting held and 5th April 2023 had been circulated. Brian Serrell proposed their acceptance and Dennis Flamson seconded. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Autumn/Winter Functions for 2023/24

a. 1st November - First Wednesday Lunch - Egypt Mill, Nailsworth (12.00 for 12.30). Jean Stubley advised those attending that payment for meals would be by card only.

b. 2nd November - Garden of Remembrance, Cheltenham

c. 12th November - Remembrance Sunday Parade - Cheltenham Long Garden

d. 29th November - 56th Anniversary of Withdrawal from Aden - Cheltenham Long Garden

e. 6th December - Christmas Lunch - Best Western Robinswood Hotel

f. 4th January, Quiz (Jim Major officiating) - Carlton Club

g. Feb, Mar, May, Jun, Aug(?), Sep, Nov - First Wednesday Lunches

h. 3rd April, 2nd October, Branch Meetings - Carlton Club

i. 3rd July, AGM - Carlton Club

j. 12th June - Earthcott Green

k. 29th June, Armed Forces Day, Gloucester

l. Dates TBA - Other Ceremonies

5. Reports to Members

Branch Treasurer David Gearing gave a short update on the financial position at the halfway point in the financial year. Our bank balance reflects payments in towards our Christmas lunch, for which we have paid a £200 deposit, There has been no unexpected expenditure, and financial transactions are in line with previous years. We currently have £1703. 87 in the bank, and once the Christmas Lunch transactions have been completed, we will be in a good position for the future.

As mentioned above, Jean Stublely reminded those attending the lunch at Egypt Mill, Nailsworth, that payment would be by card only.

Sally Welzel reported that numbers for the Christmas Lunch were now around 30, with hopefully more to come.

6. Any Other Business

Rick Rutter advised members that Stroud District Council had appointed a representative for veterans affairs, who Rick and Chris Blick had subsequently met, and planned to attend bi-monthly meetings.

On the question of the GSM for the "Missing Years", Rick Rutter informed us that this is now continuing as a Gloucestershire Branch initiative. The National Committee had tried twice at the highest level, with no success. There is a strong movement within our Branch, led by Denis Sparrow and Brian Serrell, that this is still an injustice to be put right, and Rick invited them to give an update. Denis reported that he had produced a draft letter which members could adapt as necessary, and forward to their MPs. A number have already done so, and Dennis Flamson reported that his letter to John Penrose, MP for Weston-super-Mare, had been forwarded to the Armed Forces Minister. Brian reported that he had been in contact with the Editor of "Soldier" magazine, in the hope of support from the wider retired Army community. However, Brian felt he got a negative response, but on a wider front our efforts will continue.

7. Talk by Lieutenant Helen Sims, Royal Navy (Retired)

Helen gave a most interesting and informative illustrated talk on her life and career, which started wearing the blue of the Womens Royal Naval Service, which later transitioned to the gold of the Royal Navy. The "Wrens", as we all knew them, lost their identity as a female Service, to merge into a unified Royal Navy. The same, of course, happened with WRAC and WRAF, likewise merged into single services. Helen started her 17-year Service as a rating and about midway through her career was selected for officer training. Various diverse and fascinating appointments followed, and Helen has agreed to return at our April 2024 meeting, to conclude the final part of her story.

8. The meeting concluded with a raffle, which raised £62, and lunch provided by the

Carlton Club.

9. We send our best wishes to Grahame Harper, who became unwell at the meeting, but was able to be taken home later.

