



AGM sees strong turnout

By Mark Gunton

It was encouraging to see over forty members attend the Dinner and Annual General Meeting held at the Al Khozama Hotel on the 17 Mar 97. This was the first time in many years that the meeting had been so well supported. After dinner the meeting commenced with an opening address by Mike Walsh summarizing the developments and progress made during the course of the year.

Kevin O'Brien, Treasurer followed with a brief presentation of the 1996 statement of accounts, which highlighted the much improved financial position of the RGBB in comparison to previous years. Subsequent presentations on membership communication and development by Paul Dugan and Doug Read covered the improvements made in refining the membership database, speeding up communications and forthcoming events.

The meeting concluded with an election of the new committee, Chris Segar assisted by John Howarth undertook the task of registering the ballot papers and counting the votes. Following the AGM a ballot by the committee for the assigned posts was completed, accordingly the composition of the new committee is as follows :

John Freel	Chairman
Paul Dugan	Vice Chairman
Mark Gunton	General Secretary
Kevin O'Brien	Treasurer
Mike Parkhouse	Membership Secretary
Doug Read	Membership Development
Mike Walsh	Member
John Jackson	Member
Roy James	Member

I would like to thank all those members who took the time to attend the AGM, not only is it an occasion to make your views known about the progress made during the year, but also through the ballot of the committee and vote on the constitution, influence the future direction of the Group.

Mark Gunton is General Secretary of the RGBB Executive Committee

Freel resigns BDSC chair

John Freel has relinquished his chairmanship of the BDSC both to concentrate on the executive committee and to provide an opportunity for another BDSC member to chair the committee. Elections are underway and, at the time of going to press, nominations from the committee were being sought.

New Chairman seeks further RGBB development

John Freel, the newly elected RGBB Chairman has announced that he will be seeking to build on the changes brought in by his predecessor and to carry on the development of the group. He cited the development of special interest groups and improved communications as milestones in the group's history and spelt out his vision for the coming year. His inaugural address to the RGBB Committee on the 12 May is reprinted here in full.

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Gentlemen,

In welcoming you all to this first Committee Meeting under my Chairmanship, I would like to take the opportunity to record our thanks to Mike Walsh for his past efforts in the Chair and I look forward to Mike's continued contribution to the Group on this Committee.

I would also like to offer my congratulations to Roy James and John Jackson on their election to this committee and to extend a warm welcome to Richard Northern (replacing Chris Segar as the Embassy's ex-officio representative).

Richard, Chris will be a hard act to follow, for he committed a great deal of effort towards building the relationship between the RGBB and the Embassy, which developed significantly during his time with us. We are sure though that once you have got your feet under the desk, you will wish to maintain what has already been achieved and continue the policies that have proved so successful.

History has been made this year, in that for the first time an election was held for the membership of this Committee, and subsequently, a postal ballot was held for the election of Officers. This has clearly demonstrated to the membership that we have a proactive link with them and they are being led by a transparent organisation.

The past year has seen three key developments within the RGBB:-

- The formation of new Special Interest Groups has created greater interest within the membership and brought in new members.
 - Communications within the group, namely the Newsletter and the Members Database, have improved dramatically.
- The BDSC and the Main Committee have begun to evolve into more organised and action-oriented entities.