



勳章及獎章研究學會香港分會

Orders and Medals Research Society

HONG KONG BRANCH

PATRON: H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, K.G., K.T., G.C.B., O.M., A.K., Q.S.O.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held on 23 December 2019

at the USRC, Gascoigne Road, Jordan, Kowloon

Present

Steve Verralls – President and Hon. Treasurer

Martin Heyes – Hon. Secretary

Mike Broom – Committee Member

Angus Stevenson-Hamilton

Pamela Leung

Amy Verralls

Nigel Collett

John Leighton

Tony Carroll

Ron Taylor

Gavin Ure

Opening of the Meeting

The President called the meeting to order at 19:30 hours with 10 members present, (later 11), and declared a quorum.

Apologies

The Hon. Secretary reported that a number of members had tendered their apologies for being unable to attend the AGM for various reasons, and these had been noted.

President's Report

The President opened the meeting with his Report as follows:

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone for attending this evening; just 2 days before Christmas and of course coming to the heart of Kowloon in these difficult times. It

No. 8, Tai Hang Chung Sum Wai,
Tai Hang Village, Tai Po, NT,
Hong Kong

was only a few days ago that tear gas was drifting across the club. I would like to extend a special welcome to our immediate Past President, Angus Stevenson-Hamilton, and Pamela, visiting from the U.K.

Because of the troubles during the second half of the year, 2019 has been a difficult time for the Branch. We have had to cancel the ever-popular Christmas Dinner as well as the previously planned AGM. I apologise for the fact that this AGM has been organized somewhat in haste, but we saw a window of opportunity to hold the meeting and get business done, so we seized it.

Martin, our Hon. Secretary, will look back over the year in his report, so I will prefer to look forward to 2020. With both the calendar and Lunar New Years in close proximity to each other in 2020, we hope to start events in February with a visit to Macau. We plan to visit historic sites there together with the Club Militar. This visit will probably include an optional overnight stay. In addition to arranging for a number of interesting talks to take place during the summer months, we have a line-up of visits planned for the cooler part of the year.

Our membership is strong with 30 paid-up local members – a significant increase, of which 6 are full OMRS members. I would again encourage local members to join the OMRS as full members. At £15-00 per annum it is good value and would keep the Branch in good standing with the main Society. The latter's Committee changed considerably at the last AGM with Dr. Robin Thomas assuming the post of President. The venue of the annual convention has been moved from Nottingham to Bristol and the AGM will take place during the convention, rather than as a separate event. These moves are generally seen as positive.

We now seem to have found 2 homes for holding our events. These are: -

- (a) the Royal Hong Kong Regiment's Clubhouse for events with a larger attendance; and
- (b) the USRC for smaller events and socials.

I would like to thank the management of both clubs for their hospitality. The Police Officers Club, our original meeting venue, is due to open within the next 18 months which may offer another possible venue for meetings.

The Branch now has a revamped website at www.omrs-hk.org where you can find

details of forthcoming and past events, in addition to items of interest. Should you have any items of interest for inclusion, please forward them to me.

Finally, I would like to thank the Committee; Martin Heyes, Mike Broom and Peter Hunt, for their hard work and support over the year, and particularly Mike for organizing tonight's venue and refreshments.

With that I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Let us hope that 2020 brings us back to normality.

Hon. Secretary's Report

The Hon. Secretary tabled his report as follows, which closely resembles the 2019 Branch report which has been forwarded to the OMRS in the U.K.:

It would be disingenuous to deny the tumultuous effect that the social disorder of the last six months has had on Hong Kong. A large number of sporting, cultural and other events, both Government and privately organized, have fallen victim to this disorder, including the ever-popular Branch Christmas Dinner. Other Branch activities during 2019 were also adversely affected.

We began the year with a talk from our Past President Angus Stevenson-Hamilton, visiting from the U.K., on the Chinese Regiment which was raised in 1899 to "police" the British concession of Wei Hai Wei. The Regiment, part of the British Army, was disbanded in 1906.

In March the Branch conducted a very popular two day visit to the Bogue Forts area of Guangdong Province in the PRC, and other locations connected to the 19th century Opium War which led to the Qing Government ceding Hong Kong island to the British.

We returned indoors for our April event, which was a well-attended talk given by Branch stalwart Lt. Col. (ret'd) Nigel Collett on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre, which occurred almost 100 years earlier to the day. This talk was held in the delightful venue of the Royal Hong Kong Regimental Association Clubhouse at the Happy Valley Racecourse.

Our next event was held in June, this time outdoors, when an enthusiastic group braved the summer heat and humidity to visit the Green Hub in Tai Po in the New

Territories. (N.T.). The Hub is the old Tai Po Police Station which opened in 1899, shortly after the leasing of the N.T. to the British by the Qing Government. It functioned as a Police Station until 1987, when the Hong Kong Government selected the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden to run the project by transforming the site into an education and conservation centre. Visitors learnt the story behind Chief Inspector William McHardy, BEM CPM (Gallantry), whose career was inextricably linked with the building.

Branch activities were put on hold from that point, until this AGM and social gathering. Let us hope that a degree of normality will return in 2020!

Hon Treasurer's Report

The Hon. Treasurer tabled his report which showed a balance of Branch funds of \$17480-HK, which was a healthy surplus. The major proportion of the income for the year has come from membership subscriptions and income from meetings. The most significant expenditure was on meeting venue fees, namely the RHKR Association Clubhouse.

Due to HSBC arbitrarily closing the Branch bank account, the account now operates under a private bank account under the account name Walam Global Innovations. The Treasurer will look at other options for a dedicated Branch bank account. However, HSBC have refused to reopen the account and the Bank of China require an initial deposit of \$50,000-HK to open an account. It was suggested that the Bank of East Asia would open an account for less than this amount and the Treasurer will examine this option.

Election of New Committee

The President announced that the outgoing Committee had offered to continue in the same posts and he proposed that their offers be accepted. This was seconded by Mr. Ron Taylor and accepted.

The newly elected Committee are therefore: -

President and Hon. Treasurer : Steve Verralls

Hon. Secretary : Martin Heyes

Member : Mike Broom

Member : Peter Hunt

Branch Annual Subscriptions

The President proposed and the meeting unanimously agreed that the annual Branch subscriptions would remain at HKD100 for the year 2019-20.

Vote of Thanks

Mr. Angus Stevenson-Hamilton proposed a vote of thanks for the outgoing Committee. This was seconded by Mr. John Leighton and accepted by unanimous general acclaim.

Any Other Business

The meeting then discussed future Branch activities to be conducted during 2020. The following suggestions were put forward for consideration: -

- (a) a talk from local historian Philip Cracknell on his recent book, "The Battle for Hong Kong, December 1941;"
- (b) a talk from retired HK Marine policeman Les Bird on his recent book, "A Small Band of Men;"
- (c) a talk from a newly posted-in USN attaché to the U.S. Consulate-General in Hong Kong, and finally;
- (d) a visit to Macau, including lunch at the Club Militar.

The meeting also noted the annual meeting of the OMRS to be held in the U.K. from September 11 – 13 inclusive, at the Marriott Hotel, Bristol, in south-west England.

Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 19:55 hrs.

Martin Heyes

Hon. Secretary
OMRS Hong Kong Branch