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Tuesday, August 03, 2010

1st Meeting Report

Dear KOBs

I am pleased to announce that our first meeting, was held at The White Rabbit, Maidstone, between 12:00 (noon) and 3.00pm on Tuesday 27th July 2010 and it was a great success.

There were in total 35 attendees

27 from Kent, 7 from East Sussex and Margaret Wadman from the CHA.

At the venue we were allocated the exclusive use of a function room at one end of the building, where people's food, ordered at the bar, was delivered to them. There was seating for everyone with some to spare.

Attendees came from all over the county some travelling considerable distances and using public transport.

I was very pleased to see that whilst groups of people formed on a "table by table" basis this was no barrier to complete integration of the groups.

As was intended there were a good many re-unions of old comrades / sparring partners as well as a chance for some of us who hadn't seen each other since leaving CH 43 years ago.

Of course for those meeting after such a long time it was naturally noted that "they hadn't changed a bit."

Once lunch had been taken I addressed the meeting and thanked everyone present for attending. I made a point of mentioning that I had over 20 correspondents from people apologising for not being able to make it. So as far as the meeting was concerned they were definitely with us in spirit.

We also expressed our appreciation to Margaret Wadman for the efforts and help given by the CHA that had enabled the revival of KOBs and the putting on of this meeting to be accomplished so successfully.

From the floor of the meeting we had a refreshing and vigorous exchange of ideas relating to the current format of the meeting as well as the frequency, location and format of future meetings.

The size of the county of Kent was acknowledged as a challenge and rather than have the association split into "regional sections" it was felt it would be better if we identified potential sites in other areas of the county that could accommodate meetings of this scale. Thereafter we could take the meetings to the regions of Kent.

It was acknowledged that a significant number of those unable to attend were primarily restricted by the fact that they were working. Whilst the majority of those attending on

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Tuesday were more representative of the “retired” generation, we were very conscious of our younger members who are a vital part of our community. It doesn’t matter how old an Old Blue is – they still did their time!

Concerns were expressed regarding weekend and evening meetings. These related to primarily to our security in visiting pubs on weekend evenings. The issues of evening travel and the way some town centres turn into “drinking jungles” were raised. I would welcome any suggestions from our younger and working members how best we can overcome this.

We also discussed the frequency of these meetings and it was agreed, by a show of hands, that quarterly was the best option.

It was agreed, after some debate, that whilst trying to formulate a method of delivering meetings to the various regions of Kent, that our next meeting would once again be held at this venue in Maidstone. The hope is that word will get around regarding the success of our first gathering and given that Maidstone is fairly well accessed by public transport, our next meeting will be as well attended if not better. Meanwhile I have asked members from the east and north west of the county to scout out possible future venues in their areas.

The attendance at this meeting by our East Sussex Old Blues was a very welcome sign of support. I had recently attended one of their regular monthly meetings and had been inspired by the way they have gone about organising themselves. So in line with one of life’s more positive ethos’s “mimickery is the sincerest form of flattery”, I would like to pinch one of their ideas – organised outings. If anyone has any thoughts on this matter with possible venues or occasions, let me know and we’ll see what we can do.

Please remember that our meetings are not the only forum for discussions and ideas, if you have got an idea or suggestion, please contact me and discuss it. I need all the inspiration I can get.

Next Meeting: Thursday – 4th November at The White Rabbit Maidstone 12:00 to 15:00.

Get as many OBs as you can to attend. If you can let me know that your coming great, but it’s not mandatory. If people can make labels again – brilliant.

Again my thanks to all of you who attended or communicated, lets see if we can’t get our numbers attending up to 50+ next time.

Regards

Richard Briggs