

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF VERBATIM REPORTERS

PROCEEDINGS

at the

118th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held in

THE FLEET ARBITRATON CENTRE

Hulton House
161-166 Fleet Street
London

on

Wednesday, 3rd May 2000

In the Chair:

Mr Robert Freeman

(President)

Secretary: Mrs M Sorene
Treasurer: Mrs P Humphreys

Council

L. Bickers S. Carter J. Chandler
V. Doyle (President Elect) N. Forrest
R. Freeman (President) J. Gough
J. Lukins S. McIntyre R. Nott V. Wason
E. Willett (Immediate Past President)

Present

R. Bell L. Bickers S. Carter J. Chandler
V. Doyle H. Edwards N. Forrest R. Freeman
J. Gough K. Jobson A. Lloyd J. Lukins
R. Nott J. Roper S. Scott M. Sorene
A. Taylor M. Thear V. Wason E. Willett

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A THE PRESIDENT: Welcome everybody.

I hope you do not mind if I remain seated.

As you know, Gillian kindly lets us have the premises here for nothing. We are most grateful to her and I would like to record in the General Meeting -- something we have already done in the Council meeting which preceded it -- our thanks to Gillian for her kindness and hospitality in allowing us to hold our meeting here. She tenders her
B apologies for not being here to greet her old friends and colleagues, but she has to attend a meeting herself this evening.

I will call upon Mary Sorene, our Secretary, to read the notice convening the meeting.

(The notice convening the meeting was read)

THE PRESIDENT: The next matter we have to consider is the
C apologies. Once again, I call upon Mary to read these to you, of which there are a few.

THE SECRETARY: Pauline Humphreys, working; Paul Sanders, holiday; Diana Burden, working; Francis Barrett, working; Laura Harrison, working; Ruth Bronzite, Sandra Khan and Lynn Gifford.

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to the Minutes and corrections and matters arising from the Minutes of the last AGM.

First, corrections. I have been asked to mention
D two. They are omissions from the typed report of people present at last year's meeting. They are Diane Muller and Anne Mills. Are there any other corrections?

(No response) Thank you.

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Are there any matters arising? **(No response)** Thank you.

May I have your agreement that the Minutes as recorded are correct and may be signed by our last year's President?

(Agreed)

(The Minutes were signed as a true record)

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It is two years now since I was voted President-Elect and had a whole year to ponder and worry about my year in office.

As to the Presidency, wishing for a quiet year was a quite forlorn hope. As usual, we have become the focus of all that is wrong with the Court Service. However, as I have been at pains to point out in my "President's Letters" during the course of the year, courts are not the only places where our skills are of invaluable use.

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More and more avenues for us to market our skills are opening all the time. There is still some work out there for pen writers. You will see Michael Thear taking the note here this evening, but the focal point for the future is firmly on Real Time CAT reporting. Hence our logo "Real Time Beyond 2000".

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To this end we are in the final stages of planning our Real Time CAT Seminar weekend. More of that later. It does, however, take a lot of work organising it and we always seem to be side-tracked by the LCD/Court Service and their slingshots thrown in our direction. I shall never understand why shorthand writers are

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treated with such hostility by some court staff.

Your Council and its sub-committees have met many times during the year to discuss our response to Steven Turnbull and his Consultation Document "Transforming the Crown Court" issued in September 1999 and sent to everyone connected with the Crown Court with the exception, of course, of ourselves!

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You may not appreciate it but we have a very effective early warning system. It is called "members of the Institute". As soon as one of **you** became aware of the document, **we** became aware of it. While the member must remain anonymous for security reasons, he or she knows that he or she has our grateful thanks. I am, of course, being deliberately obtuse as to their identity.

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Another useful source of information is the Internet, and our newsletters are often filled with what Mary and others have found on the Government websites concerning the court reporting profession. Of course, we like to keep not only the membership but the profession as a whole informed and so a copy of the document was sent not only to every member of the Institute but to the court reporters who sadly do not belong to the Institute; also to the logging personnel at all the Crown Courts throughout England and Wales. In that way all who work in our sphere, namely, "court reporting", know what is going on and have the opportunity to send us their views and, thus, assist us in our response.

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And respond we did, pointing out in no uncertain terms the error of their ways and where they were failing in their duty to carry out their legal obligations. This response, and no doubt that of others, had the effect of causing the Court Service to re-think.

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The result has been the Review currently being undertaken by Lord Justice Auld. We were invited by his Lordship to submit our views and any information which would help. Therefore, your Council and the sub-committees met to discuss the submission that we should make to Lord Justice Auld, which went to him at the end of March. I have received my acknowledgement. I now await the call to assist them further! As always, as soon as we know something, so shall you.

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The results of the Tape Panel Tender were finally revealed to successful tenderers at the end of March, and you should all have received that information in the latest Newsletter.

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We have arranged to re-institute the CRLC meetings; that is, the Court Reporting Liaison Committee. These are meetings where representatives of your Council meet with members of the Court Service to discuss matters of mutual importance, but mainly matters important to ourselves. However, because of my personal indisposition, the fact that we have constantly been in one tender round or another, which means we are in a sort of purdah, and the fact of the Review currently being undertaken, we have not actually had a meeting as yet. We have it in mind

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and Valerie will no doubt take it on board during the coming year.

During my year in office we have made a concerted effort to attract members. I am pleased to report that we have been successful in tempting many lapsed members back into the fold and several new people have applied to take their Associate and/or Membership examinations.

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That brings me to the vexed question of not actually having sufficient Fellows and/or Members to conduct our examinations. As well as looking into the feasibility of conducting examinations in other ways than by a 45-minute practical examination -- we are actively looking into that -- we do need those of you who are Associates to up-grade to full Membership and those already at Membership level to up-grade to Fellowship. It is in that way that we shall have continuity. We are not an Institute of Associates; or to put it another way, the Institute of Provisionally Accredited Court Reporters. We are the (British) Institute of Verbatim Reporters -- par excellence! To plagiarise from the seemingly successful advertising of one firm of court reporters, not too far from this building, one might say **we are the leading** (British) Institute of Verbatim Reporters in the United Kingdom. As we are the only real Institute of Verbatim Reporters, it is axiomatic that we are the leading one!

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Belonging to this Institute, as a full Member or Fellow, will not only help you by increasing your personal status (and in some instances you may be paid a higher

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fee), but you could then supervise a new Associate's test; you could vote at the next AGM; you could join the Council -- please join the Council! -- and you could, in but a few short years, become the President!

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I did it. I took my Membership examination more years ago now than I care to admit or remember. I also took a "conversion" examination from pen to machine, with great difficulty. I came on to the Council in the distant past of the last century! Then I became President. If I did it, so can you.

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I am not so much talking to those present, because I know that most of the stalwarts who are here and attend the AGM are full Members or Fellows, although we do get one or two student members attending, but all are welcome. I am talking to the masses out there who will be reading this address with their morning coffee or evening tea. Do not be a scaredy-cat -- be a full Member CAT.

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To further plagiarise -- this time from JFK -- Don't ask what your Institute can do for **you**. Ask what **you** can do for your Institute!

Believe me, there is more to being on the Council than sitting here looking pretty six times a year, which I am totally incapable of doing, but I can assure you, it is worthwhile. If you were not **there**, we would not be **here**.

But, if we were not **here**, you would not be **there**. We would like you to be there for a long time to come, so please help us by encouraging your colleagues to continue

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their membership, to re-join if they have lapsed, or transfer their membership to the BIVR. Here ends the hectoring session!

Let me talk to you about our proposed Real Time Seminar weekend. We have been working very hard to get this weekend seminar off the ground. We are very close to finalising it. I am not going to give you all the nitty gritty here. This is just to whet your appetite.

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We have made a provisional booking for a weekend at the end of September, from 29th to 1st October, this year, and have an estimate of the cost to each delegate. So far the estimate, and it is only an estimate -- it could possibly be more -- will be in the region of £250 per delegate or member for full board from Friday night to Sunday lunchtime. (I might point out that this is very reasonable indeed for a full-board weekend with seminar thrown in!)

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The Institute will, however, subsidise this to the tune of £35 per member-delegate. The balance may have to be found by you -- the attending member-delegate. I emphasise "member"-delegate as we can only subsidise our own membership. Non-members cannot be subsidised by the Institute's membership.

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That is all the more reason for those of you reading this, who are eligible to join us, to become members now.

The good news is that we are applying for a Millennium Lottery Grant. If we are successful, then each member-delegate's contribution will be only that

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"nominal" £35. The Institute will still be paying £35 per delegate-member subsidy, but the Grant would pay for the rest.

We have considerably more fine-tuning to do to our application, hopefully, to ensure its success.

Please wish us luck in our application as the bad news will be that member-delegates will have to pay the full sum for the weekend, less the Institute's subsidy of £35.

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Before I conclude, I must thank Mary, for her hard work in preparing and editing our newsletter to keep people informed of major developments. Mary, like all of us, leads a hectic life earning her crust and we are grateful to her. Please remember to send in items to the editor which you think may be of interest.

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She is also our Secretary and does sterling work in that department as well, especially in organising this meeting and the refreshments that follow.

I would like to thank all members of the Council for their support. At this point, I would like to say a special thank you to Karen Jobson and Andrew Howell who, through pressure of other commitments, resigned from the Council during the year. We miss them and their input.

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Thanks must go also to our Treasurer/Registrar Pauline Humphreys who, through pressure of work at the House of Lords, cannot be with us this evening.

Lastly, may I thank Michael Thear for taking the minutes this evening. As I said earlier, there is still

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work for pen writers. We are all most grateful for you stepping in to assist us.

That is my report. Are there any questions?

(No response)

We now move on to the Treasurer's Report.

Pauline Humphreys, as I mentioned earlier, is not here this evening, but the accounts have been prepared and a copy supplied to those of you present.

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In a nutshell, the turnover for the year to 31st December 1999 was £4,865. Interest on investments was £1,000. Our administrative expenses for the year were a hefty £7,028. We paid Corporation tax of £203. We therefore have an operating loss of £1,163 over income received, but we have retained profits, again as at

31st December 1999, of £24,744. We have been operating at a loss for the past several years, especially with hiring meeting halls for open meetings and such like. The subsidy for the Seminar weekend will also mean that we operate at a loss; that is to say our expenditure is exceeding our membership income. That is another reason to boost membership numbers.

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A copy of the Accounts will be supplied to every member with a copy of the AGM report. If, subsequently, you have any questions to raise on the Accounts, please write to the Treasurer, who will be happy to answer them.

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We now have to appoint an accountant for the ensuing year. Mr. Kypri of Woldingham, Surrey, who is a

A Chartered Certified Accountant, has made a splendid job of this year's Accounts. He is very happy to continue to be our accountant, and I have no hesitation in recommending him as such. Could I have a proposer?

MS. JACKIE ROPER: I propose.

THE PRESIDENT: Could I have a seconder?

MS. KAREN JOBSON: I second.

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour? **(Carried)**

B Mr. Kypri is duly elected as our accountant for the ensuing year.

We now move to the election.

C Mrs. Lindsay Bickers; myself, Robert Freeman; Miss Robyn Nott, Miss Virginia Wason and Mrs. Elizabeth Willett retire by rotation and being eligible offer themselves for re-election. As no other nominations have been received, no election will be needed and they are, accordingly, all re-elected.

However, at the conclusion of the AGM the term of office of President will expire. Valerie Doyle, having been elected President-Elect at the last AGM, will take over the office of President and it will be necessary for the meeting to elect her successor. Those eligible are -- I will ask them to raise their hands as I mention them:

D Lindsay Bickers, Jenny Chandler, Jean Lukins, Susan McIntyre -- she is not here -- Robyn Nott and Virginia Wason.

We need two volunteers to act as tellers.

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I would remind you that only full Members and Fellows are eligible to vote. Mary will hand round ballot papers.

(A short break)

We now have the results of the election and our new president Elect is Virginia Wason. **(Applause)**
Congratulations.

I thank the tellers for doing that.

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The next item on the list is to appoint a date of the AGM for next year which I gather will be Wednesday, 25th April, 2001.

Does anyone have anything that they would like to raise? Anything at all?

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MRS. BETTY WILLETT: The President did refer to shorthand writers and how important you are to us. The seminar that the Technology Committee is arranging will have a niche for shorthand writers in that we are going to try and do an awful lot on the Internet about software and things like that. Any of the pen writers who really feel that their skills could be enhanced are most welcome to come along. I have certainly put my name down because I want to surf the Net. Working as I do, on my own, we do not get very much rapport from others to help us learn these things. I certainly want to go along and I hope others of you will join me.

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MS. JACKIE ROPER: I would like to point out that of the members present, 50 per cent of us present this evening are pen writers. That is interesting.

MRS. LINDSAY BICKERS: I have a note here from Rita Fox, who is

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a member in the north. "Please place on record my thanks to Bob for his very enjoyable newsletters. He always manages to write so well and keeping those of us up north well informed." I think that goes for all of us.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

If there is nothing else, I declare the meeting closed. I thank everyone for attending. Please join us for refreshments supplied by Courts of Chancery Lane.

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Please eat, drink and be merry.

MS. JACKIE ROPER: On behalf of all of those present, we are very grateful for the time and energy which you give during the year in keeping our affairs in order and keeping us informed.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. **(Applause)**

(The meeting concluded at 7.40 p.m.)

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