

**MINUTES OF THE
SEVERN ESTUARY LEVELS RESEARCH COMMITTEE AGM
at the National Museum and Gallery, Cathays Park, Cardiff
Saturday 16th November 2002**

1. Apologies for absence

Neil Maylan (GGAT)

2. Minutes of the AGM 17.11.2001

The minutes were accepted as a faithful and accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

None

4. Chairman's report

Martin Bell reported on the successful year which SELRC had experienced and regretfully reminded the members that this was his last year as Chairman. He thanked the organisers of the three SELRC field trips which had been carried out to Redwick, Flatholm and Huntspill.

5. Secretary's report

Barbara Taylor reported that 95 people attended the public lectures earlier in the day including 12 who had booked via the website.

The Secretary reminded the AGM that Richard Brunning was now taking over the post of Secretary as agreed at the last AGM and that the archive had been passed over to him. The only objection came from Richard Brunning but the chairman ruled this was invalid and that he was now Secretary. The chairman thanked Barbara for the enormous effort she had put into SELRC over the years.

6. Treasurer's report

Julie Jones presented the audited accounts for 2001 and the draft unaudited accounts for 2002 up to 15/11/02. Thanks were given to Keith Crabtree for auditing the accounts for 2001. Attention was drawn to the fact that there was a shortfall between the costs of printing ASE and the revenue derived from sales of the publication and subscriptions. This was only offset by the publication grants that accompanied some of the papers. As the costs of the journal and the new leaflet were not yet included in the 2002 draft accounts it was pointed out that SELRC was operating on a very narrow margin and that it was essential to obtain publication grants wherever possible.

ACTION: All articles to be accompanied by publication grants wherever possible
The Editor mentioned that some had already been agreed for the next issue.

7. Editor's report

Paul Davies apologised that issue 12 of Archaeology in the Severn Estuary was not ready for the AGM as he had intended. There had been a significant and unavoidable delay because he had been off work with a slipped disc for four months. The printers had also failed to complete the job by the time they had originally intended. The editor thanked all the contributors and referees to issue 12 and announced that there were already almost enough papers to fill issue 13.

8. Election of officers

Only one nomination had been received for the post of Chairman which Martin Bell was vacating. Nigel Nayling was elected with unanimous vote of those present. No other committee members were due for election. Vote of thanks to the chairman for all the effort he had put into SELRC during his tenure.

9. Popular leaflet

Rick Turner showed a draft design for the leaflet which had been designed in house in CADW. The design met with popular approval. Rick asked the AGM how many copies should be printed. The options (including design) were;

5,000 copies for £2,151

8,000 for £2,500

10,000 for £2,740

Grants of £500 had been received from Bristol City Council and Somerset County Council and £750 from English Heritage. CADW had guaranteed to fund one third of the total cost. This totals £2,663. It was suggested that EH could be asked to find the additional £77 required.

Action: Martin Bell to explore possibility of additional EH money

After much discussion John Allen moved that 10,000 be produced and this was agreed by a vote. Rick reminded the AGM to distribution of the leaflets to the target audiences was a crucial part of the project. The curatorial members of SELRC would be required to aid distribution to planners and developers in the area. Peter Griffiths volunteered to organise distribution of the leaflets with a small working group.

Action: suggestions for distribution methods and target audiences to Peter Taylor.

10. Newport Medieval boat

Martin Bell reported that he had sent a letter on behalf of SELRC to Newport Borough Council suggesting that there was an opportunity for a new maritime/boat museum in Newport with the new boat find at its centre. Nigel Nayling explained that he could not express a personal view as he was deeply involved in the project. However he pointed out that Newport B.C. were afraid that such a stand alone museum would not be financially self sustaining in the long term. He also pointed out that the Magor Pill wreck was to form part of a new lottery funded 'Waterfront Museum' in Swansea.

There was still some feeling among the AGM members that the numerous nationally significant boat finds from recent times in the area justified the creation of a Welsh or perhaps UK national maritime museum in the area.

Action: Martin Bell to draft a further letter to Newport B.C. and send to the new chairman and secretary for comment.

11. Severn Estuary Partnership

John Allen reported that three meetings had taken place in the last year. Three main developments had taken place. A new project officer would shortly be appointed to assist in the implementation of the strategy. An opportunity was presented for SELRC to put information and/or a web link on the SEP website. A sub committee was to be set up involving the planning authorities.

Action: The secretary to liaise with SEP and John Allen about the sub committee and to check with Charles Hill (GGAT) to make sure he was taking part.

12. Flat Holm

Mark Hilditch will be carrying out a desk top assessment of Flat Holm to inform the archaeological management of the area. He will survey the early medieval enclosure in spring or summer.

13. Research frameworks for Wales

The next meeting in the consultation process was to take place one week after this AGM. Subsequently the research framework was to be circulated to SELRC steering group for comment.

Action: Rick Turner to ensure framework circulated to steering group.

14. Future development proposals

- Large managed retreat scheme between Stolford and Steart, Somerset
- M4 relief road (Wales) shelved indefinitely
- Proposal for new dormitory town and University in large area at East end of second Severn crossing by Trafalgar House
- Bristol City Plan has been rewritten and now includes mention of historic landscape
- BUFAU are conducting a desk top assessment of both banks of Jack's Pill, Newport.

15. Current and forthcoming research projects

- Martin Bell is conducting further work on the Mesolithic landscapes in the inter tidal area of the Severn Estuary
- Vanessa Straker and Bob Jones mentioned a proposal for aggregates levy funding for a desk top and field survey of the sub tidal and inter-tidal area by Wessex Archaeology in S. Gloucs, Bristol and N. Somerset. Many members were very unhappy that this proposal had been put forward with no consultation with other interested parties in SELRC.

16. Field meetings 2003

- Vanessa Straker proposed to lead a visit to Holcombe Head and Porlock
- Nigel Nayling proposed a tour of the Newport ship store at Llanwern steelworks if Kate Hunter was agreeable
- Richard Brunning said there might be an opportunity to visit a small excavation at Glastonbury Lake Village, Somerset and the nearby Tribunal Museum subject to project approval and landowners consent

17. The SELRC website

Barbara and Peter Taylor indicated a willingness to continue to maintain the SELRC website on an interim basis until an appropriate successor could be found. There had been 6,300 hits on the site by the AGM.

There was however a general lack of pictures and news of latest discoveries/research being forwarded on to the Secretary for the SELRC website. Many heads were hung in shame.

ACTION: All members, and especially Committee members, to forward such information on to the web site organiser on a regular basis in future

18. Venue and topics for 2003 AGM

Greg Hunter suggested in absentia that Yatton was prepared to host the AGM in a local school although he felt the seats might be uncomfortable for a whole day conference.

Bristol was suggested as an alternative venue.

Action: Richard Brunning to obtain further details of Yatton. Bob Jones to investigate the possibilities for Bristol

Tony Firth (Wessex Archaeology) was suggested as a guest speaker to talk about the Kent rapid coastal survey and/or other coastal survey work they were undertaking.

Action: Richard Brunning to invite TF

19. AOB

- Steve Rippon mention the storage problem he had with back issues of ASE (12 boxes) as the University wanted them removed from the premises. Anyone who can help to contact Steve.