

Dear Friends,

Well, autumn is truly here; I lost my beautiful new garden fence in last night's blow! It rather put me in mind of a sleepless night in RFA SIR GERAINT back in October 1987, anxiously anchored in a rather crowded Weymouth Bay. Waiting-in for the contractor who built it (the fence) to come and survey the wreckage leaves me with no excuse for not getting on with this!

Having been mildly scathing about summer weather prospects in my last effort, it turned out rather well; we certainly had the best of warmth and sunshine for our Banyan in Stuart and Margaret Pearce's garden at Emsworth. Thanks to them and to the usual organising stalwarts for another great success. While we are on successes from the organising stalwarts, they had another a few weeks later, when a goodly number of us took to the water on a canal boat out of Chichester. I'm sorry I missed a good outing! There are pictures of both these events (with wittily droll commentary) on the RFAA website.

Despite some early misgivings, we had an excellent turn-out for our AGM in September, held as usual in the Ship Anson when we conducted our annual business. There were few surprises and we propose to continue running the Solent Branch along now well-established lines. We were pleased to have Andy August join the committee to take over the work of Jack Harrison-Jones as Almoner, keeping in touch with those members we see less frequently. Jack has become Deputy Chairman – Social Duties Only! We wrote a cheque for £300 to send to HQ (joining £700 already remitted this year) and rounded the gathering off with the usual jolly good lunch and a pint.

October saw us meeting at the Sir Walter Tyrell pub in the New Forest for another in our popular series of convivial lunches. Many thanks as always to Maureen & Alan who marshalled us all to this well-hidden venue. It was worth the effort to find!

Next up of course is the annual wreath laying at Marchwood on Remembrance Sunday which falls on the 10th November this year. Sadly, Jim Wright will be unable to play the pipes for us any more due to health problems, but we certainly hope to see him there. We send him and Mary our best wishes. I am unaware of a ship being in the port so we have decided that those who would like to join the SIR GALAHAD Association for lunch should make their own arrangements by contacting Syd & Jane Kempton to confirm (01202 761802). (Maureen sent an email about this on 26 October).

Our Solent Branch Christmas Lunch will be on Wednesday 11th December at the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth. The team have negotiated an outstanding deal for us, and we look forward to another splendid do. Details about cost and menu choices etc will be available soon. Can I please ask you all to respond to "Alemo" as promptly as possible (indeed for all our events which need input from the rest of us) to avoid additional effort at chasing-up and cliff-hangers over viable numbers. I think we all have a duty to them not to make their many efforts on our behalf more onerous than need be. Thank you.

Hoping to see you at one or all of our coming gatherings

With best wishes to all, Aye, Brian