

# Minutes

Triennial General Meeting  
Saturday, 13 November 2010  
Corpus Christi Parish Centre, Rainford, Lancashire



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<b>Present:</b>	Rupert Barnes	RB	ABC Vice-Chairman
	Geoff Bayley	GB	Saddleworth White Rose Society
	Peter Boyce	PB	ABC Chairman
	Michael Bradford	MB	ABC President
	Tim Butterworth	TB	ABC Treasurer
	Chris Dawson	CD	Friends of Real Lancashire
	Colin Foster	CF	
	Mari Foster	MF	ABC Magazine Editor
	John Heathcoate	JH	
	Hilary Holt	HH	Yorkshire Ridings Society
	Gary Hope	GH	
	Eric Scaife	ES	
	Roger Sewell	RS	Yorkshire Ridings Society
	Keith Smith	KS	
	Jonathon Worne	JW	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Roy Beardsley	RBe	
	Michael Garber	MG	Oxfordshire Association
	Gavin Gibb	GG	
	Robert Hawley	RH	Committee Member
	Edward Keene	EK	Oxfordshire Association
	Martin Phillips	MP	ABC Border Signs and LG Officer
	Dave Russell	DR	
	Jason Saber	JS	

After the Chairman's welcome members briefly introduced themselves in turn. The Chairman expressed the Association's thanks to FORL for arranging the meeting venue and catering.

Item	Action
<b>1.0 The Minutes of the TGM held on 12th May 2007</b>	
1.1 The Minutes of the TGM held on 12th May 2007 at Coventry, Warwickshire were received.	
<b>2.0 Presentation on Department for Communities and Local Government's Historic County Flags project</b>	
2.1 A presentation on this project and ABC's role in supporting it was given by the Chairman.	
<b>3.0 Treasurers Report</b>	
3.1 The Treasurer presented a statement of ABC's current financial situation. The overall balance was £7,364.78. The Chairman	

Item		Action
	noted that ABC can be approached by member organisations for funding for specific projects.	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Membership Report</b>	
4.1	The Chairman presented a brief report on membership. ABC currently had 191 paid-up individual members (cf 130 in 2007). 15 new members had joined in 2010 and only 6 had been removed from the membership list for non-payment. 110 members pay by standing order, the rest by cheque. ABC had members in 47 counties, though membership was particularly low in Scotland (9 members in 5 counties), Wales (4 members in 3 counties) and Northern Ireland (no members).	
4.2	The following organisations were members of ABC: Friends of Real Lancashire, Yorkshire Ridings Society, Saddleworth White Rose Society, Unite Craven, Campaign for True Identity, Hunts Society. The following ABC county associations also exist: Sussex Association, Westmorland Association, Oxfordshire Association, Warwickshire Association, Gloucestershire Association.	
4.3	Action: Peter Boyce - to check whether the Staffordshire Association still exists. Rupert Barnes to ask the Middlesex Federation if they wish to be part of ABC.	<b>PB RB</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Chairman's Report</b>	
5.1	a review of noteworthy ABC developments during the past three years.	
5.2	The Chairman noted that the long term challenge for ABC must be to forge an appropriate, sustainable role for the counties in the future life of the nation. This did not mean going back to how the counties were used in the past, but looking to find new ways in which the counties could be recognised, used and valued in the future	
5.3	Much of ABC's work involves trying to undo some of the wrongs of the last 50 years as regards the muddling of LG with county:	
5.3.1	ABC seeks to cement the concept of the historic county as cultural and geographical units totally separate from administration;	

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5.3.2 ABC would like to amend LG terminology / names so as to make clear the distinction of LG from historic counties;	
5.3.3 ABC wants to see the geography of the historic counties resume its role as the standard, general-purpose geography of the UK.	
5.4 ABC produces the Gazetteer of British Place Names and the Traditional County Postal Directory. HCT produces the Historic Counties Standard and the County Borders project, digitised border data in GoogleEarth format. ABC lobbies central government for changes to LG terminology. We lobby local government to erect appropriate borders signs for the counties.	
5.5 Elsewhere ABC tries to encourage an appreciation of the history and heritage of the counties. ABC lobbies for their fair treatment by National Trust, English Heritage and the rest of the heritage movement.	
5.6 ABC tries to encourage social, sporting and cultural organisations to base themselves on the counties, most especially by encouraging local ABC members to form 'county associations'.	
5.7 In the 3 years since the last TGM, ABC and its association and member organisations have had a fair degree of success in many of these areas. For example:	
5.7.1 New county associations for Sussex, Westmorland, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire have been formed;	
5.7.2 HCT has completed its border data for England and Wales.	
5.7.3 We have managed to get many bogus LG and former LG signs removed and signs for traditional counties erected.	
5.7.4 Users of the gazetteer and the traditional county postal directory have continued to grow steadily.	
5.7.5 We have seen DCLG go some way to recognising the importance of the counties by flying their flags. We've got a foot in the door with DCLG by supplying them with the flags. We've seen DCMS write in clear, uncompromising terms about the importance of the counties to our heritage, history and culture.	

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5.8 Many of these areas still require much more work. Where might our priorities lie?	
5.8.1 Encouraging the creation of further county associations and county flags	
5.8.2 Increasing our membership, especially our active membership	
5.8.3 Extending the county border project to Scotland and Northern Ireland. Publish a final version of the Historic Counties Standard.	
5.8.4 Encouraging Royal mail / address management software suppliers to keep supplying traditional county data	
5.8.5 Using DCMS's words to lobby afresh heritage bodies such as English Heritage	
5.8.6 Encourage UK tourism bodies to make better use of the historic counties	
5.8.7 Lobby DCLG for change to LG terminology	
5.8.9 Lobby DfT for proper provision in TSRGD for traditional county signs - lobby more local authorities to erect traditional county signs	
5.8.10 Create a more up to date feel to our web site and make use of other web technologies such as Facebook, blogs, youtube etc. to spread our message and encourage participation in our cause.	
5.8.11 To increase the number and prominence of our patrons	
5.9 These are all worthwhile aims. However, perhaps ABC should also sit back and think "outside the box" about other ways we can meet the challenge of forging an appropriate, sustainable role for the counties in the future life of the nation. To some extent the idea of the county flag is such an idea - though not from ABC! Over the last few years this has slowly spread to the point where soon half of the counties in England will have an "official" flag. Such flags can provide a powerful and far reaching way of displaying and enforcing county pride and identity. Are there other ideas like this? Perhaps we should challenge ABC members to see if they can think of any.	

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5.10 The Chairman concluded by reminded the meeting of three huge weapons in our armoury:	
5.10.1 Tenacity - our message doesn't change. What we want doesn't change. We don't go away. 38 years on from LGA 1972 we are more active than ever, the counties are still a key part of the national life, albeit an undervalued one.	
5.10.2 The breakdown of administrative geography as any kind of basis for general purpose geography	
5.10.3 The IT revolution - we can do things and reach people which would have been inconceivable 20 years ago.	
<b>6.0 Election of officers</b>	
6.1 The chairman noted that, under the Constitution, member organisations are entitled to 1 voting representative on the Committee.	
6.2 The meeting re-elected Peter Boyce as the Chairman of the Association. The following were then re-elected to the Committee: Michael Bradford (President), Rupert Barnes (Vice-Chairman), Tim Butterworth (Treasurer), Martin Phillips (Border Signs / LG Liaison) and Robert Hawley. Mari Foster agreed to continue as the Magazine Editor. The following were newly elected to the Committee: Jason Saber (County Flags Officer) and Hilary Holt.	
<b>7.0 Any Other Business</b>	
7.1 There was none.	