

# AIRSHIP HERITAGE TRUST

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD REMOTELY BY ZOOM ON SATURDAY, 19TH JUNE 2021 AT 2:00 PM

The Chairman welcomed the many members, from all over the world, thanking them for the fantastic turnout to the AGM.

The Chairman then mentioned that the AGM would be recorded and a talk given by Membership Secretary Roger Allton, on the “**Innovations and patent designs of Barnes Wallis**” would take place after the AGM.

### **Moment of reflection**

Before the start of the meeting, the Chairman took a moment to reflect on the recent passing of several longstanding members:

**Brian Hussey**, who gave wonderful talks and lectures and was a longstanding supporter and member and contributor to the Trust.

**Jasper Tomlinson** who was one of the key members of the team who worked on one of the first new airships with Anthony Smith and Giles Camplin.

We had also lost two key members of the Trust:

**Crispin Rope**, who was the son of the R101 designer and the major benefactor and supporter of the founding organisation, F.O.C.A.S.. Without the support of Crispin Rope and the Rope Trust, both financially and with assistance on projects, the AHT would have folded many decades ago.

Finally, the Chairman was sad to report that **Den Burchmore**, who many of us had known for many decades as a friend, had passed away at the beginning of May. As we knew, like Crispin, without Den managing the Cardington display and exhibition plus saving historical items which could have ended up being “skipped”, many things which are now in the AHT Collection, would have been lost.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

No formal apologies had been received.

### **2. Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting**

It was proposed by Chris Angell that the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting. This was seconded by Richard van Treuren and the minutes were accepted by consensus.

### **3. Chairman’s Report**

The year 2020 had certainly been memorable. There was not one person who had not been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The Chairman said that he did not intend to dwell too much on what everyone knew, but he’d like to just raise how it had impacted the Trust in its activities.

2020 meant that the usual activities such as talks had to be immediately curtailed, however with the advent of Zoom, we did have the ability to continue our work and the Chairman knew Roger Allton had been able to adapt his delivery to fit the new media and had given some excellent talks to the Royal Aeronautical Society on the R-100 and the expertise of Barnes Wallis in time for the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the transatlantic voyage.

We had discovered the new media could also help with reaching out to a larger audience, as we had been working with the Bedford Creative Arts team who were looking to put a project together called “Airship Dreams” where they would celebrate in different art forms, the airships of Bedford. We were able to work with them on the social history side and record a series of “Airships Unboxing” videos, as members came forward to share items from collections online and recollections and memories.

The Chairman said he would like to thank Roger Allton, Dr Giles Camplin, Basil Abbott, Dr. Nina Baker, David Dennington, Tony Francis and Cheryl Ganz for participating. He had found it a wonderful excuse to catch up with people and meet members he'd not met before.

The Chairman recommended that members looked at the videos on our website, and if they wanted to participate, to let him know.

### **New Video Channel**

With Covid locking everyone down, we had to look at new ways to “promote the study of airships and present them to the public”. With that, and the inspirations from the unboxing videos, this led to setting up of a YouTube channel, and the creation of online videos. The Chairman was able to work with our very talented graphic designer, Marshall Young, who had given the Trust some wonderful graphic images free of charge. The Chairman had turned his images into a series of videos, which were popular, and we had now had some 2,100 subscribers and the “Welcome aboard the R-100” video had over 300,000 views.

### **Commemorative Covers**

Thanks to Roger Allton's initiative in creating some commemorative covers to commemorate the flurry of airship anniversaries which were occurring, we had been approached by renowned postal cover producer, Buckingham Covers, who saw what we had been doing, and also saw there was an opportunity to help us. They had produced a wonderful R36 cover and were working on an R38 cover for us, designed and produced at no cost to us, but also giving us 30% of each sale. The Chairman encouraged members to purchase one, if they had not already done so, and he suspected that Buckingham Covers would also look to produce more in the future as we had established a good relationship with them—and a new audience with an interest in airships. We even had a new member join who found us through Buckingham Covers.

### **October 2020 – Great British Railway Journeys**

With the summer of unlocking and then locking again, this had led to the cancellation of plans to commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of the R 101, however just before that in August, AHT Trustee and resident railway expert, Paul Ross, was deemed the most suitable person, and most photogenic, to help out with a media request which came in from the production company who made the Michael Portillo series, “Great British Railway Journeys”. With a lot of running around before—for photos and questions—and on the day, as these media companies tend to do, Paul, resplendent as a brand ambassador in his AHT attire, was suitably matched against Michael Portillo's wardrobe. Recording in Shed 2, he was interviewed with the Alan Morton AHT model in the background, which we had presented to the Shortstown Primary School.

We did not have any idea how much would appear in the programme, if at all, and with a flurry of follow up requests for pictures etc., we didn't see the end result until the 5<sup>th</sup> May transmission. The Chairman encouraged those who hadn't seen it to do so, as Paul was certainly the star of the episode and it was excellent.

The Chairman added that he would like to take the opportunity to also say a very big thank you very much to Paul as he was stepping down from being a Trustee after 21 years on the board. Not only taking the helm as Chairman, but also working extremely hard for the AHT over the last two decades, the Chairman said he would like to record a vote of thanks to him.

### **90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the loss of the R 101**

The end of 2020 had also seen the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of the R101, all our plans were changed and adapted each month as the summer went on. By the time of the anniversary, we were now down to the “rule of six”, which meant that our plans were very restricted. We were however able to provide a respectful small ceremony at the graveside in Cardington, and wreaths had been laid by the RAF, the Trust, a representative of the families of the crew, and Cardington Parish Council. Again, The Chairman said he would like to thank Paul Ross for the arrangements and constant changes he had to make to this commemoration. For those who might not remember, the weather had been simply atrocious on the day, however at the moment of our commemoration, the sun had come out and the clouds had cleared.

### **Finally,**

The Chairman said that he would also like to personally thank the other members of the board of Trustees—Roger Allton, Martin Penn, Brian Harrison and especially Giles Camplin for keeping production of ‘*Dirigible*’ going, and Chris Angell for his work with the banks, and co-opted

members, John Baker and Nigel Hills who met regularly on Zoom and continued the work of the Trust in very challenging times.

#### **4. 2020 Report and Accounts**

Chris Angell presented the accounts for the year to 31st December 2020, which had been certified by Collett Hulance, the Trust's accountants. It was proposed by Tony Francis and seconded by John Baker that the Report and Accounts for the year to 31st December 2020 be adopted. This was carried unanimously.

#### **5. Election of Council Members**

The Chairman noted that Chris Angell and Alastair Lawson were due to retire this year and that co-opted council members John Baker and Nigel Hills were standing for election. This had been already been proposed by Chris Angell and seconded by Paul Ross. This was carried unanimously.

#### **6. Appointment of Reporting Accountants**

That Collett Hulance be appointed as the Reporting Accountants for the coming year was formally approved and carried unanimously.

#### **7. Any Other Business**

The Chairman noted that no other business had been advised in writing by the due date, but he invited questions from the floor.

Charles Luffman asked the chairman what the Trust was doing to promote the development of airships in the future. The Chairman replied that as a historical society with a remit to "foster and promote the study of the history of airships" he hoped that any future developer would seek information from our records in order to educate the next generation of airship builders.

Peter Davison took the opportunity to remind the membership that he was giving a talk to the Royal Aeronautical Society on 1st September 2021 on the subject of the R38. It would be online and available on Zoom. Peter also updated the meeting on the sad state of the R101 memorial in France. Its poor condition seemed to ensure it would be demolished as it was beyond repair.

#### **8. Closure of Meeting**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 2:44 pm and thanked everyone for their attendance.

BH: 25/06/2021