

Social Meeting

Cougar Park, Royd Ings Avenue, Keighley

Wednesday, 27 October 2021

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, there was a minute's silence in respect of members who were no longer with us since our last Social Meeting on 25 July 2019.

In particular – Mr Victor William Dineen (died on 24 August 2021)

Mr Alan Smithies (died on 13 September 2021)

Mr Ian Thompson (died on 21 September 2021)

Mr Langford (Lance) Turner (died on 27 September 2021)

David Allan Emmott (died on 22 October 2021)

Roll Call -

Vince Curran, Tony Hennigan, John Chambers, Graham Berry, David Lonsdale, Mick & Sue Spencer, Fred Dadswell, Hilary Baxter, Paul & Dot Margerison, Jim McSharry, Deborah & Lloyd Heeley Hirst, Steve Walker, Andy Holmes & Sheila Dunstan, Jens & Andrea Hislop, Steve Norman, Robin & Mary Hebden, Ian & Elizabeth Hemsworth, Tony Thornton, Laraine & Jack Davies, Derek Callon, Geoff Craven, Peter Hastings, Bill Cunliffe, Steve Marshall, Audrey Sands, Carol Harrison, Patrick Rout, Alvin Leverton, Jim McSharry and Diane Watts.

(38 Members & Partners)

Apologies –

Les & Margaret Allinson, Roger & Ann Yearby, Garry Jeggo, John Sharp, Byron Sykes, Alec & Linda Barclay, Sue Neave, Milly Wheelwright, Pauline Grundy, George Wardley, Hilary Smith, Liz Baluk, Brian Russell, Peter & Dianne Sharpe, Rose Huck, Samantha Buckley, Les Scaife, Marion Taylor, Judith Fisher, Fraser Dunn, Paul Spencer, Allan & Angela Jacks, Alex Robb, Tony Durkin, and Joe O'Doherty.

(30 Members & Partners)

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2021 – Were read & approved on a proposal by Graham Berry and seconded by Dave Lonsdale.

Approved

Matters arising – There were no matters arising. These minutes were previously circulated by bulk mail shortly after the meeting.

Chairman's Address –

- (a)** Tony welcomed those present and included members who had attended via the 'Zoom' link.

- (b) One new member since the Social Meeting on 28 July 2021 - Samantha Buckley.
- (c) Welfare – He mentioned Alex & Linda Barclay, Terry & Betty Nattress, Joe & Ann Marie O'Doherty, Roger Yearby, Joe Graham and Alex Robb. We send them all our good wishes.
- (d) Conference was attended by Tony & Marion Hennigan, Graham & Lynne Berry and Jens & Andrea Hislop, who replaced Dave & Kate Lonsdale who were isolating due to Covid 19.

The only 'motion' discussed was 'the location of a new NARPO HQ to be pursued'. This 'motion' was 'defeated'.

- (e) The Regional Meeting was held on Saturday 16 October 2021 at the Police Treatment Centre, Harrogate. It was attended by John Chambers and me. The most significant points to pass on concern the 'Hillsborough Disaster'.

Hillsborough Update – An update report prepared by Mick Brookfield and Rick Naylor (Sheffield Branch) was then read by Tony to the meeting, as below:

"Reading the national press and listening to the national news we're led to believe that the judicial system is broken. The judiciary, and everything else that represents any degree of safeguard to ensure that the innocent remain so until proved guilty, is apparently broken. All this because two retired police officers from SYP have been acquitted of charges alleging that they were involved in acts intended to pervert the course of justice and even though a senior High Court Judge stated that they should never have been charged in the first place. Two senior Barristers have also said publicly that there was not a scrap of evidence to support the charges. Why then were they ever charged and why so much outrage at their acquittal?

Welcome to Hillsborough where people purporting to seek justice are now heartbroken because innocent old men have been acquitted of charges which should never have been brought. To turn the situation on its head what is implied is that for justice to have been delivered these innocent old men should have been convicted of criminal offences which they never actually committed.

After an investigation spanning eight years and costing around 70 million pounds the IOPC failed to discover any evidence to justify these charges. Rather than accept the truth and follow the evidence, however, the CPS succumbed to political, public and media pressure. They chose to sacrifice these decent men and their families rather than follow the evidence and face the wrath of the Hillsborough campaigners, their avaricious lawyers and the politicians who constantly gave them false expectations, the same politicians who also placed disgraceful and legally questionable pressure on the IOPC and the CPS. Anyone wishing to question the degree of political

opportunism which has pervaded the entire investigations into this disaster should read the comments published by Sir. Norman Bettison's legal representatives.

This followed the disclosure of documents from the IOPC which revealed evidence of what they described as "naked political interference". These events were reported in the press; see The Telegraph 21 August 2018. Not surprisingly the charges against Sir Norman were quickly withdrawn following this revelation.

The Hillsborough disaster was a dreadful tragedy which occurred following a catastrophic combination of factors many of which should have been remedied years before 1989. Everyone shares the grief of the bereaved and their families but the desire to sacrifice decent and loyal people as scapegoats was never the way to deal with this disaster. Hillsborough was an awful tragedy, but tragedy should never be used as an excuse for injustice. Contrary to the recent public vilification of the judicial system which is said to be broken the opposite is the case.

The result of the latest trials clearly illustrates the integrity of the judiciary and the courage of its representatives who refuse to be influenced by political opportunism and improper pressure. The conspiracy to apportion individual blame and convict a scapegoat for this dreadful disaster has thankfully failed. The time of all the many experts involved in the process and the public money wasted would have been better spent on an operation focused upon ensuring that nothing like this ever happens again."

On behalf of all those present, the Chair thanked Mick & Rick for their excellent and informative report, and he again confirmed that they were supported by everyone in our No2 Region and thanked them for the support and time that they had given in assisting with this complex and long running matter.

General comments of support were given by those present, and Mick & Rick stressed that the concerns regarding welfare were important in respect of all our members, as well as families, who had been drawn into this situation especially David Duckenfield who had been finally acquitted of all charges on 28th November 2019. During the trial there had been issues of "Juror interference" resulting in a male Jury member being discharged.

Mick & Rick also expressed their concerns that enquiries may follow in respect of the Miners' strike in the 1980's which would again give everyone cause for concern but information regarding this would be given whenever possible. It was believed that archive letters would be issued by the Police, but NRPO have not been made aware of when, or to whom. A question had been raised during this namely "who do you make a complaint to that relates to the IOPC?" It remained unanswered.

- (f) **Remembrance Day NARPO Representative** – Tony mentioned that one of our own members will be representing the Branch at the Ceremony this year. It was to be, Deborah Heeley Hirst, accompanied by her husband Lloyd Heeley Hirst. She wrote:

“My grandfather served in the 9th Coast Regiment of the Royal Artillery. He was imprisoned in Changi in Singapore and then taken to Burma to work on the railway. After the railway was built, he and many others were hospitalised in Nathong Patong in Thailand. When the Japanese realised, they were not going to win the war they took 1000 men from the hospital to build them an escape road. This was called Mergui road. My grandfather and many of the men died building this and was buried on Mergui road. He died on the 28th of July, 2 weeks before the end of the war in 1945. He was buried at 12 Kilo camp.

He is now buried in Kanchanuburi cemetery. We have been out to see his grave and the railway. What a sobering experience, heart-breaking.

That is why I would like to take part in the parade, in memory of my grandfather and all those who lost their lives in the war.

I hope this is ok. It would make my dad proud for me to do it in my grandfather's honour. (My dad too sadly passed away in 2004).”

Debbie was selected by HQ and rightly so.

- (g) Tony also mentioned the fact that John Chambers and he had recently attended a Branch Officer's Course on 20/21 October and Jim McSharry attended a Welfare Course on 21/22 October at the Holiday Inn Barnsley, Barnsley Road, Dodworth, Barnsley, S75 3JT (junction 37 of M1).
- (h) John Chambers and he had attended a West Yorkshire Group Meeting at 1.30pm today, where a summary of N.E.C. Updates & Amalgamation of Pontefract with Wakefield was given by Richard Critchley (the new President of NARPO and Branch Secretary of Wakefield). Several N.E.C. matters were put to Richard by the Leeds and Huddersfield Branches which were openly discussed; the minutes of which have yet to be formulated. Much discussion surrounded the various websites.
- (i) The Christmas Lunch is to be held at Keighley Rugby League Club on Sunday 12 December 2021, starting at 12 noon for 12.30pm. The cost of the meal is £20. and the menu has now been circulated. The Annual Christmas Raffle will be shortened this year. There is no need to bring raffle prizes, as three raffle prizes will be purchased by the Committee, and each person will receive one raffle ticket.
John has 6 tickets remaining for the Christmas Lunch.

Jens Hislop stated that he was organising a Burns Night on Saturday 22 January 2022 - details to follow.

Tony then introduced our guest speaker - who is also one of our members - Diane Watts, an ex-cop, whom many of us have had the pleasure to work with, and she spoke of her cherished registered charity, Embrace Child Victims of Crime. Following her moving and stimulating presentation, Diane was presented with a cheque from our Branch and a collection also took place. With Gift Aid, an incredible £250 was raised and once processed and with Embrace's collaboration with The Big Give's 2021 Christmas Challenge, this will be doubled to £500! Thank you one and all. Remarkable kindness and generosity were on display on that evening, for sure!

Any other business – There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.45pm and followed by a most enjoyable pie and peas supper.

Proposed

Seconded

Chairman

Date

Footnote: The members who attended via the 'Zoom' link were later identified as being: Terry Slocombe, Dave Hodgson and Bev Ramsey.