

# EAB Update!

An occasional newsletter from the Honorary Secretary

The 1999 British Esperanto Congress has just taken place at Newport in South Wales. It was a very pleasant, though at times taxing, weekend for your Management Committee. As you know, the question of whether to sell 140 Holland Park Avenue was to be discussed. To make the decision as democratic as possible, based on the wishes of all our members, a postal voting form had been sent to every full member.

After studying the question long and hard, having had an extended meeting with non-committee members present, and taking professional advice, the committee was of the opinion that we had no choice but to sell and move, probably out of London. Although, being a charity, there was no requirement to ask the membership for approval, we nevertheless felt that for such a momentous decision, we needed the backing of our members. It is no secret that we were not sure if we would get this. A number of long-time and stalwart members were very much in opposition. So it was most gratifying to receive an overwhelming mandate of 212 votes in support, 6 against

and 10 abstentions. This shows that almost all those who voted realise that something drastic has to be done if E.A.B. is to be saved from extinction within the next ten years. Thanks are expressed to all those who took the trouble to vote.

Now the work of selling must start and also the search for a suitable new location. The following towns have been suggested. Colchester, Cheltenham, Grimsby, Sheffield and Wakefield. The relocation committee, which consists of Fraser Dunbar, Paul Hewitt, Don Lord, Bill Simcock, Eric Walker and Geoffrey Wood, will be starting work immediately. We shall be looking for a site for the office, as it has been decided that the Butler Library will be installed in a refurbished part of the Wedgwood Memorial College at Barlaston, location for many Esperanto events during the year. There is modestly priced accommodation available for people wishing to do research in the library. The available space will be larger and altogether more satisfactory than the cramped conditions at Holland Park.

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## MINUTES OF THE 1999 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF ESPERANTO-ASOCIO DE BRITIO

The meeting took place during the British Esperanto Congress at Kings Hotel Newport, Wales, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1999. The agenda had been distributed with the annual report, beforehand. 65 members of the association were present. Edmund Grimley-Evans presided.

Before the meeting commenced, the names of those members who had died during the year were read and we stood for a minute in silent thought.

1. Copies of the minutes of the 1998 AGM were given to all present. The minutes were accepted unanimously.
2. The annual report, which had been sent to all members 21 days in advance, was accepted with no votes to the contrary and one abstention. An error had been pointed out by the Hon. Sec. in relation to the Bendoteko. In fact the number of hirings was almost double that stated in the annual report.
3. The Recommendation to sell our premises at 140 Holland Park Avenue, West London was discussed after Don Lord had explained the legal position of the trustees (the management committee) in relation to Charity Law. Ivor Huetting, who had proposed an amendment which was not acceptable because many members had already voted by post, opposed the acceptance of the recommendation and a number of those present spoke both for and against or raised questions. On the close of the first half of the AGM, members who had not already done so, filled in their consultative voting papers and put them in the ballot box. After the coffee break the Returning Officer, Paul Gubbins, announced the result. The combined results of the postal votes with the votes made after the AGM discussion were:

<i>For the recommendation:</i>	212
<i>Against:</i>	6
<i>Abstentions:</i>	10

4. Accounts for the year 1997 - 1998. Joyce Bunting presented the financial report which had been circulated earlier by post. Thanks were expressed to Norah Brown and Peter Danning for their help during the past year. U.E.A. is now operating its international accounts in Euros. Joyce asked that members who were having problems with the finance dept of U.E.A. should contact her. She wished to continue with the same auditors for the coming year. The financial report was accepted unanimously. Warm thanks were expressed to Joyce for her diligent work and many hours devoted to the work of the Association.
5. It was agreed that the subscription fees should remain the same for the year commencing November 1<sup>st</sup> 1999.
6. Election committee members. Firstly, a vote was taken on whether to elect them in block. Even though there were only 7 against and 2 abstentions, it was pointed out that the election must proceed person by person. All candidates were elected. The new Management Committee is: President: Edmund Grimley-Evans, Hon. Sec. Eric Walker, Hon. Treas. Joyce Bunting, Other Committee members, David Bisset, Fraser Dunbar, Paul Gubbins, Paul Hewitt, Geoffrey Wood.
7. There being no other business and some 5 minutes remaining, David Curtis spoke on the question of the proposed transfer of the Butler Library to the Wedgwood Memorial College (W.M.C.) at Barlaston, Staffordshire. Derek Tatton, the Principal of the College, responded with information about the possibilities and about the governing bodies of the college. Martin Howard, who by profession is a town planner working as a consultant to firms and individuals making change-of-use planning applications, offered his services free of charge.

## Job Vacancy.

*It has been decided to appoint a paid Director. His/her initial task will be to supervise the setting up of the new office and the installation of new administration procedures and equipment.*

*Subsequent work will include:*

- *Research the reasons for the decline in membership.*
- *Consider the provision of new services and the increase of value-for-money for the members.*
- *Set up a publicity campaign.*

*It is envisaged that it will be a part time appointment for a period of one or two years and then the situation will be reviewed.*

*Anyone interested should apply to the Hon. Sec. for a job description and application form.*

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## Collect your belongings!

With the impending sale of 140 Holland Park Ave, it is urgent that people collect any of their belongings that are there. This will be the only announcement.

*Enquiries to Martyn McClelland please.*

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An interesting innovation during the 1999 Congress was a 2-hour brainstorming session on "The way forward for E.A.B.". Members could choose to participate in whichever of the three group discussions interested them most. Each group was guided by a member of the Management Committee:

- (A) Paul Gubbins - services to members,
- (B) Fraser Dunbar - on the move,
- (C) David Bisset - publicity and attracting new members.

Items covered were:

(A) Current services to members; strengthening of the Federations; improvement of our WEB pages; book service considered important but a shop is not necessary; more information in

B.E. about activities and people in the movement; make strong effort to re-recruit lapsed members; think out a strategy for the future.

(B) Care to be exercised in transfer of the Library; take care that contract with Barlaston looks after our interests; new director should be responsible for modernising of office systems; choose a new location, easily accessible to volunteers; London Club to be responsible for welcoming foreign visitors and offer help by phone.

(C) Keep radio & TV better informed of Esperanto activity; put on Web pages news about Esperanto, Esperantists and local /Federation actions; target particular types of exhibition; Federations should better pass on received information to their members.

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The Konsila Komisiono met and an inconclusive discussion took place on whether to disband it and replace it with a network of 'konsilantoj' reporting to and corresponding directly with the Hon. Sec. Here follows a report by Will Green:

## What is/was the Konsila Komisiono?

*At the Newport Congress the K.K. held a small meeting. Who are the members?*

➤ *In fact there are no permanent members. The Komisiono is intended to represent members of EAB and enable their views to be communally discussed and then presented to the Management Committee.*

➤ *Each Federation, after its AGM, should delegate someone to attend the meetings of the K.K., taking to it opinions, requests, complaints, etc...*

➤ *The K.K., in its turn should choose a representative to carry these opinions to the management Committee.*

➤ *Reciprocally, the Mancom. should give advance information and canvass the views of the Federations.*

*That system was intended to provide a channel for the views of ordinary members to reach the Mancom. It has failed.*

- *Fed. Reps were not always present at Fed. meetings, were not sufficiently well briefed, or did not attend the meetings of the K.K.*
- *Not every Federation holds meetings, and not every group attends the few meetings that some Feds hold.*
- *Not every Fed elects a delegate to the K.K. Few delegates attend and report back to the next Fed. Meeting.*

*It has been an inefficient (and expensive. Ed.) way to gather views and pass them on. Attempts at "telephone conferences" were unsatisfactory, and not everyone was able, or willing, to stay on the phone for half an hour or more at a given date. It saved little cost.*

*In Newport only five official representatives, plus the President and Hon. Sec. of EAB, were present. None had been briefed by their Federation.*

*A discussion was held to examine the need and usefulness of the K.K.*

- *Is it a useful arrangement?*
- *Is it being used?*
- *Should it be continued and if so, how should it be revised?*
- *Is there a better way of representing ordinary members' views to the Management Committee?*
- *Do members and Groups even know that the K.K. exists and what its purpose is?*

*Alternatives were briefly discussed, e.g. consultation by Internet, postal communication, etc...*

*The "Newsletter for Local Groups", now being sent occasionally to each Group's secretary was not intended to, and could not, replace the K.K.*

**MEMBERS ARE NOW INVITED TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT THE NEED FOR, AND USE OF, THE KONSILA KOMISIONO** by writing to EAB'S Hon. Secretary: Eric Walker, Downham Reach Cottage, Nacton, Ipswich, IP10 OLA, Fax 01473 274 531. Email [ericwalker@gn.apc.org](mailto:ericwalker@gn.apc.org)

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With regret we report the death of Joan Dawson. The deaths of many valued members unfortunately go by unreported but I feel that we should honour the stalwart work of Joan. Over

many years, working first with Karoline Gilmore, then on her own, and during the last few years with Rosalind Walter, she was active on the educational side, and was particularly involved in the administration of the Africa Foundation. This provides free correspondence courses to students, mainly from West Africa, out of funds from donations made by people in memory of John Brownlee, a very much loved former Hon. Sec. of BEA/EAB.

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### *Points of View.*

In the first issue of EAB-Update I asked for comments; here are some:

*...EAB does not make enough of the importance of ordinary correspondence, which is my only reason for keeping on with Esperanto. The letters are wonderful and everyone has a post-box. None of my correspondents speak English. One lady makes loads of mistakes, but I understand everything she says - and that is to the credit of Esperanto. I do feel that Esperanto has just been concerned with the learned elite translating learned plays etc. My friends and I write about the commonplace things of everyday life. I wish that others enjoyed it as much as I do...*

(A.S. from West Country)

*.... Sadly I have to agree with your sentiments on the decline in numbers (of members). Visiting E. Clubs in two towns I found that on the whole they were viewed as social clubs without any need to attract new members... there were no conversation classes! Everyone going to the meetings was expected to be a fluent speaker. I have kept up my membership but have not been able to take part in activities because of my poor grasp of the language. Still, I am buying a copy of the Urso Kurso to use with my daughter (and hopefully my wife also - a teacher) and maybe I will then have someone to speak to! Given some improvement, I will then introduce it to my Sunday School pupils in September...*

(G.N. from the Midlands)

*I threw myself into the movement 14 years ago and immediately found that I had to struggle to keep my mouth above a sea of Esperanto...*

(D.C. from West Country)