

On the platform:-

Mr Boardman, Chairman.  
Lady Mayhew,                      Mr Glark,                      Mr Forsythe.

The Chairman rose to address the meeting at 7.36. He said that the Albion had been kept in commission trading on the Yare with some holiday work on the Bure, and he expressed gratitude to those firms who had continued to make cargoes available. The Committee met regularly on the first Wednesday in each month at Augustine Stewards House. He regretted that Skipper Cates had left the Albion on health grounds but was glad to report that Mr Victor Bircham had been engaged in his place. The mast had been sprung rather badly during the winter, but they were making every effort to obtain a new spar. He commended the Trust's recently published booklet to the meeting, and was sorry to report that the Hon. Treasurer had found it necessary to retire from office. He then called upon the Secretary for his Annual Report.

The Secretary said the three years since the Trust's foundation had been largely ones of exploration due to its unique character, but in that time much had been achieved. The greatest tribute yet paid the Trust was the number of distinguished people who had come forward to take part in the Norfolk Night. He hoped that everyone present would do their utmost to ensure that this occasion should be the success it deserved to be.

The year 1951 saw the laying of new decks bringing Albion into as good a state of repair as a vessel built in 1898 well could be. The good work put into these repairs made it possible to sail her from Yarmouth to Lowestoft on August 8th which made a beautiful sight for those fortunate enough to witness it. No wherry had made this trip for 44 years.

Despite being laid up two months for repairs she carried 42 freights in 1951 as compared with 43 in 1950. Holiday work had, however shown a considerable increase over 1950 and this was likely to continue.

The Secretary then went on to consider the future of the Trust. He said it remained their intention to build a new wherry as soon as funds made it possible, as Albion would do well to last another ten years. They had to ensure, however, that the Trust in the meantime, did not, like the old soldiers, quietly fade away. The best guarantee that this should not happen was to turn the Club membership into a reality by establishing a permanent headquarters in the City, where those interested in maritime matters could foregather, and where a permanent exhibition could be maintained of those wherry relics, ships models, paintings, photographs, etc. which had been collected over the last few years. To this end the Committee had made application to the City Council for the tenancy of the Briton Arms in Elm Hill, which would be ideal for the purpose. Everyone who has visited, say, Whitby, would appreciate what a great asset such a museum represented, and he felt sure, if the application were successful, everyone would rally round to help getting it into commission.

If there were other points upon which the meeting would like information he would be glad to answer any questions.

The Chairman then called upon the Hon. Treasurer to report, who said that in view of the Albion having been laid up for two months, it was most satisfactory that she had carried only three less freights. The decrease in earnings over the year was accounted for by a decrease in certain freight rates and the need to repay certain sums which had been overpaid on freights in 1950. But he felt it was no mean achievement to have paid Fellowes the sum of £1,200 on the original refit, and Richards £333 for the new decks. He said the indebtedness of the Trust at present was amply balanced by the market value of the Albion.

He said he regretted the necessity of having to retire from the Treasurership, but commended to the meeting Mr A.D. Pullen who had volunteered to take his place.

The Chairman called for questions and Mr Dicker, on behalf of the Hon. Auditors said Mr Forsythe had fairly presented the financial position of the Trust.

Lady Mayhew said in looking at the accounts she was struck with the efforts of Mr Ramus in making and selling his key-rings, and proposed a vote of thanks to him which was carried with applause.

The Chairman moved the adoption of the accounts, which was seconded by Mr Mills and carried non con.

Mr Meadows asked if Mr Clark was a Trustee and the Chairman replied No. Mr Hornor thereupon proposed Mr Boardman and Mr Forsythe, seconded by Mr Dicker.

Mr Meadows proposed Mr Clark and Mr Dicker seconded.

The three candidates were then combined in one resolution, proposed by Mr Hornor and seconded by Mr Dicker, which was carried unanimously.

Mr Dicker then proposed, and Mr Hornor seconded, that the Chairman send a letter of thanks to Mr Storey and Mr Read for services rendered. Carried nem. con.

The officers then stood down, pending the election, Lady Mayhew taking the chair.

Col. Glendenning proposed the re-election of Mr Boardman to the chair, seconded by Mr Hornor, and carried with acclamation.

Mr Boardman proposed re-election of Mr Clark as Secretary, seconded by Lady Mayhew, carried nem. con.

Mr Forsythe proposed Mr Pullen be re-elected Hon. Treasurer, seconded by Mr Boardman, carried unanimously. Mr Pullen said he had first become interested in the Trust when he was far from Norfolk and he would be very pleased to assist it in every way possible. (Applause).

Mr Forsythe proposed, and Mr Hornor seconded, the re-election of Messrs Lovewell, Blake & Co. as Hon. Auditors, coupled with a vote of thanks for their past services.

Mr Dicker proposed the election of the present Committee en bloc., seconded by Mr Meadows. The Secretary proposed Mr Meadows if he were willing to serve. Saying he was this was seconded by Mr Hornor, thereupon the old Committee plus Mr Meadows were elected unanimously.

The Chairman asked Miss Bush to say a few words about the Norfolk Night. She said the kind co-operation of those who had agreed to take part had made her job an easy one and she hoped that all members of the Trust would now play their part by giving it their wholehearted support and by persuading as many friends as possible to come along. The Chairman said they were indebted to Miss Bush for her efforts.

The Chairman announced "Any other business" and Mr Mills enquired when the film of Albion was likely to be finished. The Secretary replied that this was being made in collaboration with the Society for Nautical Research and should be finished by the end of the year. He would ensure that members would have the opportunity of seeing it when it was finished.

Mr Hornor said he was not comfortable in his mind about the Club. He was concerned whether we could, in fact, afford it. We could not know what the cost would be to run it, how much would be needed in repairs, or how it was to be furnished. These questions must be given serious thought before we became involved.

Capt. Palmer said the idea of a Club was excellent and our concern should be whether we could actually obtain the tenancy.

Mr Dicker said that rent and wages were revenue items which would be met out of earnings, to some extent at any rate, so that the cost of the Club would not be a total burden.

Lady Mayhew said a Club of the kind envisaged would be a tremendous asset, indeed almost a cultural centre.

The Secretary, replying to these points, said the question was not really whether we could afford to have such a Club, but whether we could afford not to. He felt sure that when a headquarters was an accomplished fact there would be many more than 250 annual guinea subscribers, and it had been suggested that £250 per annum might be the cost more or less of the Club. But as Mr Dicker had pointed out, there would be appreciable earnings to set against this, and he was convinced the overall picture would reveal an annual profit which could go towards building the new wherry. With regard to furnishings he said he would willingly give a chair whereupon Capt. Palmer said he had a bar he would give, and the Secretary felt sure in this way much could be done by the membership to furnish the place.

Mr Dicker said it was true that if the Trust had paid regard to orthodox finance it would never have come into existence at all. He believed the meeting could not do better than leave the whole matter to the discretion of the Secretary and Committee, which was agreed to with acclamation.