

SOA Executive Committee

Minutes of the Meeting

15th January 2014

1. The SOA Executive Committee met on the 15th January 2014 in the PAO conference room (Attendance apologies received from Steve Covington, Scott Sunquist and Jean-Marie Boulet). The Chairman of the US Chapter, Jack Haas, also attended as a special guest. The following agenda items were discussed and the consequent actions noted below:
2. **Approval of the previous minutes and approval of the Agenda:** The Minutes and Agenda were approved and open items were addressed as indicated in this report.
3. **Action Items from the 53rd General Assembly:**
 - a. The Treasurer presented a summary of the 53rd General Assembly costs and it was noted that this was significantly less than the cost for previous years. Some final invoices had yet to be received by the Treasurer. The Happy Hour restaurant bill had not been received and Bank statements were still being directed to the previous PAO representative. The restaurant will be contacted to check on the status of the Happy Hour bill and the addressing for bank statements will be amended. (Action: CH).
 - b. The PAO representative had received some monies for inventory items sold at the Symposium. This prompted an action for a stock inventory that should be undertaken annually for audit purposes. (Action: CH & VL).
 - c. The Executive Committee was requested to explore a 'SHAPE tour' as part of the 2014 Symposium and this issue will be addressed under the following agenda item.

4. Symposium 2014

- a. As agreed at the 2013 Symposium, the 2014 Symposium will take place on the 9th, 10th and 11th of October 2014 at SHAPE. The format of the event will be as follows:
 - i. Accommodation: Located in a former convent, the Hotel Dream is a newly restored 4 star hotel that has received very favourable reports, is ideally situated in the city centre of Mons and is No. 1 on Trip Adviser. This venue is being explored as the hotel of choice for the Symposium. (Action VL).
 - ii. There will be a welcoming Happy Hour on the evening of the 9th of October. This will take place either at the hotel chosen for the Symposium or at a venue linked to the Mons 2015 Committee activities such as the prestigious Hotel de Ville or the BAM museum of Fine Arts. (Action: VL & JV).
 - iii. The programme for the Symposium on Friday the 10th of October will begin with a SHAPE tour for those who wish to see the extent of the changes that have been made and are still planned across the SHAPE estate. The morning session will continue at one of the SHAPE briefing facilities with the standard SOA Executive Committee reports, presentations and scholarship awards, to be followed by a no-host lunch at the SHAPE Club. The afternoon session will be taken up with a number of pertinent briefings to include an Allied Command Operations update brief. (Action: CH and MO).
 - iv. The evening of Friday the 10th of October will be a planned social event but unlike recent years this will not be the formal dinner. This is partially to avoid a potential conflict, as was the case in 2013, where the annual Mons SHAPE Concert is usually scheduled on a Friday evening early in October. This allows SOA members the opportunity to attend the Concert as part of the Symposium programme. Whenever the Concert dates do not coincide with the SOA

Symposium dates, the SOA will organize an alternative social event for the Friday evening, such as a wine tasting.

- v. The social programme for Saturday the 11th October 2014 will include the traditional SOA Golf Tournament at the Royal Golf Club Hainault, one of the top golf courses in Belgium, and a 'City Exploration' trip. This year, the historic and charming city of Tournai has been chosen. It is relatively close to Mons, has a famed Romanesque Cathedral and has the privilege of being the only city in Belgium that was once English. The tour should include a visit to one of the famous breweries for education and refreshment. (Action: JW & JV).
- vi. The final event of the Symposium programme will take place on the evening of Saturday the 11th of October and will be the formal SOA Dinner. This reverts to the original scheduling format whereby tales of the Symposium's formal and social happenings can be summarized and shared by all. The Hotel Dream offers fine dining and will be the ideal venue for the concluding event of the 2014 SOA Symposium. (Action: VL).

5. US and GE Chapter Reports

- a. The US Chapter events for 2014 include a Luncheon in the DC area on 26th January, a reunion weekend in Tampa Florida 7-9 March and a formal Dinner in Late Spring. SOA Subscription Fees are being collected and should be forwarded by early February 2014.
- b. The GE Chapter reported that, following a very poor attendance at the last GE Chapter meeting in Cologne, a questionnaire had been circulated to garner GE members views on their continuing interest in separate GE Chapter activities. The results were disappointing and consequently the Chairman decided to dissolve the GE Chapter. There will be a final, informal meeting in May 2014.

6. SOA Activities 2014

- a. The SOA had agreed to match the scholarship funds raised this year subject to a limit of 10% of the SOA Operating Fund. To avoid any double accounting, this would be a one-time contribution on a nominated date. A letter of appreciation had been received from one of the SOA Scholarship recipients and this would be published along with photographs on the SOA WEB page. (Action: JW)
- b. Action continues by the SOA to sponsor a performance by 'Tops In Blue' as part of the official Mons 2015 European City of Culture activities.
- c. A formal invitation to the SOA 2014 Symposium will be sent to SACEUR in May 2014. Additionally, the inclusion of the SHAPE CofS in email relating to SOA activities will be proposed. (Action: GB).
- d. Social activities planned include:
 - i. A presentation for the general SHAPE community in the SHAPE auditorium on 'Mons 2015 European City of Culture'.
 - ii. A historical tour of the significant battlefield sites/cemeteries around Mons to mark the 100th anniversary of the Great War
 - iii. A guided 'Van Gogh' tour in the Mons Borinage including a walk up a slag heap for a vista of the local area.
 - iv. A wine tasting event

7. AOB.

- a. The SOA Web page was outdated and needed maintenance and new material published. It was noted that the official Webmaster position had been deleted and support from SHAPE was therefore on an 'as available' basis. (Action: JW).

- b. There had been some confusion with the SHAPE registration of local members as both the SOA and the ANARCP provide support. As Jean Vanderwal is now on the SOA Committee and is the BE representative for the ANARCP, he would coordinate the registration actions with SHAPE and provide a consolidated list. (Action: JV).
- c. The US Chapter Chairman undertook to review and clarify the role and responsibilities of the SOA President. (Action: JH).
- d. The potential for a UK Chapter was discussed but no conclusion reached. This topic was deferred for subsequent review.
- e. The policy for SOA email traffic was discussed in the context of privacy and security concerns where open address lists were used for email traffic. The SOA policy is therefore that 'Blind Copy' should be used for all SOA email communications. Separately, a list of SOA members could be provided in .pdf format. (Action: MO).

8. Next Meeting

Wednesday 9th April 2014 at 14:30 in the PAO conference room.