

Resignation Address from Peter Etherden

I have advised the Chairman of my decision not to stand for re-election as Magazine Editor and have also decided to stand down from the work of RHBOA's committee. However I intend to remain an active member of the association and have indicated to the Chairman my willingness to look after RHBOA's website and represent the interests of members on Rye Partnership.

Iwould hope that my resignation decision will be seen as a signal of my intention to become more deeply involved in maritime affairs in Rye rather than the reverse. Were I to remain on the RHBOA committee I would run into too many conflicts of interest...one of my criticisms of HORAC appointees.

When I took over as *Magazine Editor* two years ago I was given a budget of a thousand pounds. RHBOA had 200 members and believed that improving the quality of the magazine would bring in new members. Following a year with a much-improved magazine this assumption can be seen to be incorrect.

Along with an improved magazine, the *Committee* also embarked upon a programme of removing non-paying members from the register. The new *RHBOA Member Register* was published in Spring 2001 and showed the association's true membership to be 160 and not 200 with a magazine print run of 110 being enough to service paid-up members with one magazine per household.

The magazine cost the association £ 400 in 1999, £ 900 in 2000 when three issues with supplements were published (Numbers 90, 91 and 92) and £ 200 last year when one 32-page issue with a 12-page supplement (Number 93) was published. The *Committee* has authorised £ 250 for one final issue of the magazine under my editorship (Spring 2002, Number 94).

The printing costs for the magazine have been running at £1.25 per copy implying an annual budget for the new improved magazine of between £ 500 and £ 600. This could have been funded by an annual subs income of between £ 800 and £900 provided everything else stayed unchanged. Unfortunately this did not happen. Instead two factors changed.

The *Committee* realised it could no longer assume that events organised on behalf of members would run at a profit. And the heavily subsidised magazine services...illustrations, design, computer services... which in 2000 were made available free of charge would need to be paid for.

So RHBOA is reverting to the old John Sivier-style newsletter which served the association well for many years.

John Morgan has agreed to combine his role as *Secretary* with the job of *Newsletter Editor*. He will do a first-rate job. ■

Rye Maritime Industries Confederation

In discussions last year with Carl Bagwell on a possible involvement with *D&M*...an Edinburgh-based publisher of port guides...and more recently in discussions with Steve Kemp, it has become clear that there is an urgent need for a *Rye Maritime Gazette*.

This could be published by an existing organisation such as *HORAC*, *RHBOA*, *RHSC*, *The Environment Agency's Harbour Office* or one of the fishing organizations, but I believe it would be better coming from a new organization, operating on a 'for-profit' basis, entitled the *Rye Maritime Industries Confederation*.

Membership of *RMIC* would be open to any commercial organization whose livelihood depends on maritime activity in and around the ancient ports, harbours and waterways of *Rye* and *Romney Marsh*. Annual fees should be around the £ 250 mark...with member services to match.

REB Limited

I am the *Financial Director* and one of the three major shareholders in *REB Limited*.

My two fellow directors and shareholders, Mike Roud and Ted Bird have their own boat businesses here in *Rye* and remain on the committee of the *Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association*. Mike is also on the *Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee*.

One of the projects being explored for the new company is the development of floating moorings and slipway facilities here in *Rye*.

In the longer term we see our firm playing a pioneer role in the revival of a boat building industry in *Rye*, our view being that *Rye* should stand or fall as a port and as a centre of maritime industry as she has done for the last twelve hundred years.

John Collard Trust

I have been seeking to persuade John Collard of the benefits of establishing a *John Collard Trust*. I view the Collard name as a tremendous asset to such a trust. John's selfless work on behalf of the boat people of *Rye* provides a set of core values that would be crucial to the trust in any difficult times that might emerge over the next few decades. John's most recent letter would seem to put a damper on the whole notion, but ideas have a life of their own and the exchange of correspondence is being published in *RHBOA's* magazine to broaden the discussion of the idea of such a trust.

RHBOA Website

There is currently no call from boat owners for a website. However the web will be an important campaigning channel for the association in the years ahead. Very few of the issues that led to the founding of *RHBOA* 40 years ago have gone away. They are merely lying dormant. When the call goes out for campaign funding to prevent some local disaster the web will come to the fore as part of our campaigning armoury.

The Idea of the John Collard Trust

Dear John,

Rye should stand or fall as a port, as she has done for the last twelve hundred years, This became clear at a recent *REB* board meeting where the need for a *Rye Maritime Industries Confederation* was identified. But while this will help, by itself it is not enough. Something else is needed and this is where you could help.

Would you be willing to bequeath a small nominal sum, as *Settlor*, to a *John Collard Trust*...or some such...and I am thinking of trusts in their broader sense not just the charitable tax-avoidance types. Judicious drafting of the *trust purpose* and related matters concerning *beneficiaries* and *trustees* could allow such a trust to be used to orchestrate a resurgence of *Rye* as a port and as a centre of maritime industry and endeavour, able to match anything achieved across the channel in *France* or *Holland*? As an example, defining *beneficiaries* as those 'resident within 35 miles of Rye' would allow the trust to apply for *European Union* funding...and counter the anti-maritime bias of the (landsman's) *Rye Partnership*.

Settlement of further sums onto the trust by *Friends of John Collard* would doubtless follow which would allow the trust to take on a part-time secretary or subsidise a quarterly magazine, *Rye Maritime Gazette*, for the 2-3 years before subscriptions and advertising brought the magazine into profit. As an example, a ten percent return on £ 25 000 of trust capital would provide an annual income of £ 2 500...sufficient to pay a project manager reasonable reimbursement for working one-day a week or an editor working eight weeks a year to produce the *Rye Maritime Gazette*.

Regarding the *purpose* of the trust, one place to start would be the *Act of 1550* and the various responsibilities vested in the *Mayor and Jurats of Rye and Winchelsea*. Another place might be *RHBOA's* rulebook, although this could be a little too restrictive and disallow the *John Collard Trust* from engaging in such activities as running and owning *Rye Harbour* or developing the *Rye Bay* coastal region.

Assigning rights to your classic *A Maritime History of Rye* might also make sense, particularly as there are now no copies to be had for love or money and the title needs republishing. The first task of the *John Collard Trust* would then be to publish a new edition along with a biography of its author. A *Life of John Collard* would provide future trustees with a body of 'settlor lore' to fall back on when challenged (or confused) about the activities of the *John Collard Trust*.

Trustees could include yourself or your sons to safeguard *Collard Family* interests...eg. as *capital beneficiaries*...and perhaps also one or two *ex-officio trustees* such as the *Commodore of the Rye Harbour Sailing Club*, *Chairman of HORAC*, *President of Rye Fishermen's Society* or *Sussex Sea Fisheries* etc.

Peter Etherden, P.O. Box 36, Rye, East Sussex TN31 7ZE

10th January 2002

Dear Peter,

Though the idea seems attractive (albeit airy-fairy) I regret that at the age of 89 my health will prevent me from participating in any attempt 'to orchestrate a resurgence of Rye as a port' either through a trust fund or otherwise. I would like to suggest others who would be both willing and able to produce the effort and leadership required but sadly I know of nobody (except possibly yourself?).

With due respect to *REB* (a new name to me) I cannot see it having much influence on the future of *Rye Harbour*. Even the sailing club has withdrawn from harbour affairs despite its objectives being dependent on a successful harbour enterprise. Due to the same narrow influences the *Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee* has become a pathetic charade and a lap dog of the *Environment Agency*.



Perhaps a source of comfort may be found in the lines of Arthur Clough:
'If Hopes be Dupes, Fears may be Liars'...

While the tired waves vainly breaking
Seem here no painful inch to gain
Far back through creeks and inlets making
Comes silent, flooding in, the main

With best wishes and please excuse my feeble handwriting. ■

John Collard, Peasmarsh Place Nursing Home, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6XE.