

Moody Owners Association

South West Branch



Away Weekend and 2022 Annual General Meeting

Held at the White Hart, Salisbury, 3rd- 5th February 2023

The end of year South West Branch Away Weekend and Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at the Mercure White Hart Hotel, an old coaching Inn in the centre of Salisbury, beginning Friday 3rd and ended on Sunday morning of the 5th February. The Annual General Meeting was held at 1730 on the Saturday, followed by a dinner and talk.



Guests began to arrive on Friday, some in the morning so that they could spend more time in the city. Two evening meals had been arranged, one on Friday evening and the AGM dinner of the Saturday. All inclusive rates for bed, breakfast and evening meal were arranged to the guests at a special rate. Options included rooms for Friday and Saturday, Saturday only and attending only the AGM and

dinner. On Friday as we had 35 booked into the hotel, and on the Saturday as we had 37.

Two tours had been arranged. The first was a conducted tour of Salisbury Cathedral on the Saturday afternoon, and the second a guided city walk on Sunday morning. The weather over the weekend was overcast but dry, so there was no need for heavy rain gear and at times we did see the sun. Salisbury is a nice compact city, so getting around on foot is easy.

As guests arrived on Friday, we all assembled in the hotel lounge for a social get-together over the tea, coffee and cookies provided by the hotel. The formal check-in time was 1500, but if rooms were available they were provided early and most were. We had a great time renewing acquaintances and catching up on news. This went on well after beverages had been taken away, but the bar was open so many remained in the lounge until it was time to meet in the private dining room for the evening meal. This was from pre-booked menu choices, but the choice was excellent and the food very good. Guests sat where they wished around three large tables and the dinner was served by the hotel staff. 35 sat down to the meal and it was a great success. Most retired to the lounge afterwards.



On the Saturday most guests wandered into Salisbury. At 1320 we met up outside the Cathedral for the guided tour, which included the Chapter House to view a copy of the Magna Carta. It is thought that this is the first of at least four copies to be written, but no one knows. As there were 33 of us for the tour, we split into two groups. The guides were excellent, both were very knowledgeable and enthusiastic.

Salisbury is a very nice cathedral and built in only 38 years – a record for a building of this size in the middle ages. We were shown the oldest clock in existence, not accurate enough for determining longitude, but good enough to call the clergy to prayer. Salisbury was the seat of the English king in its early history, so King John 1st and his family and associates feature in the tombs and decoration.



After the tour, people went back into town or returned to the hotel to prepare for the AGM. This was held in the Garden Suite, our dedicated space, and lasted about 45 minutes. The draft minutes of the meeting are lodged on the web site, so please read that for a detailed summary of the meeting. One significant development was the re-establishment of Port Officers. These are volunteers who agreed to help with the Plymouth and Dartmouth. We are still looking for someone to help with Weymouth, The Exe and Brixham. It was agreed that for 2023 the branch should attempt to run a full rally programme (i.e. that planned for 2022), including the boatless rally in October.

After the AGM, people retired to their rooms and reassembled in the bar and social area. At 1930 we all sat down to a superb dinner and a talk by a local guide on “The Ghosts of Salisbury”. This was a fascinating talk and was enjoyed by all. It was a good lead-in to the town walk that following day. After dinner, many people retired to the lounge to continue the social evening.

On Sunday morning the guides arrived at the hotel and again we split into two groups of 14. The town walk lasted about 90 minutes and weaved through the Cathedral Close, past Edward Heath’s house (Morning Cloud was fitted out by A.H. Moody) and into the town. We saw where the infamous poisoning of the Russian took place, and it was interesting to note that the restaurant had only just been reopened. We went past the buildings where the ancient ghosts of Salisbury are supposed to reside and through the town square. It was a fascinating tour by two excellent guides. Margaret and Georgina.



After the tours, we all returned to the hotel as most were travelling home in the afternoon. A few stayed an extra day and met up for lunch and an evening to complete the Telegraph giant crossword – well that was the excuse!

Based on the members feedback, the weekend was a great success and thanks go to the hotel events manager, Sarah Archer, for her strong support and excellent service that we received.



Sunset over Salisbury Cathedral. This picture was taken by Mrs Sue Bush