

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

at the *Relais de la Haute Sambre*

Lobbès, 20 May 2022

Agenda of the 2022 Annual General Meeting

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting (p.m.)
2. Committee members' report
3. Treasurer's report and accounts as on December 31st, 2021
4. Auditor's report
5. Election of the Committee members and the officers until the next AGM
6. Appointment of an auditor until the next AGM
7. Approval of the annual subscriptions for members and associate members
8. Approval of the Committee's recommendations for the donation of association funds to the National Trust in Britain
9. Any other business

Jan Grauls, Chairman

Leo Nollet, Secretary

*Before moving to the formal agenda, the president invites members to **pay their respects to René Lock**, who passed away in March 2020, at the start of the first lockdown after a long fight against cancer. The funeral then took place in silence, in the absence of his family and friends, a situation imposed by the pandemic.*

On September 3, 2021, I represented our association at the memorial service for René at the Protestant Temple in Mons.

René belonged to the generation of 'founding fathers' of our association and was for many years our treasurer. He was a dedicated and enthusiastic member.

The memorial service was a dignified ceremony with beautiful readings and songs, and a most moving farewell homily.

On behalf of all our members, I offered Hansje, René's wife, as well as his son Léon and his son in law Jean-Dominique our heartfelt condolences and assured them that René will continue to live on in our memories.

1. Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM in 2021 (P.M.)

Members are reminded that the minutes of the previous AGM at the *Bouillon Blanc* garden on 9 July 2021 were approved through a written consultation.

They were mailed to all attendees on 14 September 2021 and posted on the NTAB website (see: homepage > [downloads](#)).

2. Committee members' report presented by Jan Grauls, Chairman

Since our last AGM in July 2021, the easing and later the ending of the covid restrictions allowed us again to offer to our members a traditional programme of activities, such as visits to gardens or historic places of interest. Only the end-of-year visit to Bozar and the reception at the British Ambassador's residence in December had to be cancelled due to a temporary flare-up of the covid pandemic.

The **resumption of our normal activities** after the summer seems to have been welcomed by our membership, since all our activities were well attended. In September we visited the citadel of Dinant and the Freÿr Castle, and in October we discovered the treasures of Belgium's oldest town Tongeren. In November we learned a lot about the Bruges' historic relationship with England and Scotland during a visit of the English convent and the Adornes Estate. Last February we visited Antwerp, where we were welcomed at the Plantin-Moretus printers' workshop and had an unforgettable guided tour of the Carolus-Borromeus Church, including a fascinating behind-the-scenes tour. In March we discovered the Park Abbey near Leuven and visited the Beguinage and the University Library, where we were shown centuries-old documents about the relationship between the Leuven University and England. And last month we had an enchanting walk in the Hallerbos which displays at that time of the year its spectacular carpet of bluebells; the day ended with a lambic beer tasting at a local brewery. And today we are gathering here in the Hainaut province for our visits of Thuin and Lobbes.

I would like to thank our programme coordinator André Ceulemans, and all those involved in the practical organization of our outings for the considerable their time and energy they spent organizing all these outings and for their enthusiasm in doing so.

As another sign of our going back to our traditional activities, we decided to organize a **trip to the UK**. Northern Ireland was chosen as our next destination. A group of 28 NTAB members will leave on 7 June for a 6 day visit. ([read more](#))

Here Johan Vanbrabant as well as Margaret du Maine-Simpson deserve a special word of appreciation for organizing this trip in not always ideal circumstances, but they managed to make the ends meet.

During the past year we also kept in touch with the membership through regular **Newsletters** and our renewed [website](#). We would like to recommend to all our members to read the blog section in particular (home page > [blog](#)), where you can find short reports on our outings. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that this blog is also open for suggestions regarding our future programme. Our members don't seem to have discovered this feature. As was noted last year already, a good number of members (and also non-members) visit our website, but even more visitors would be welcome. Since last year we also have a [Facebook page](#), which interestingly has resulted in a number of new memberships.

Our webmaster Johan and Janet Middleton (FB) deserve to be mentioned here. I would like to thank them on your behalf.

Our **membership** is indeed slightly on the increase (see the Treasurer's report). This confirms that we have a loyal and committed membership.

Since our last AGM, the **Committee** has met four times. (June, August, October and April). No changes have taken place in its composition. Margaret du Maine-Simpson asked to be discharged of her mandate as Treasurer, while she is willing to remain a member of the Committee. On behalf of all our members, I would like to express our high appreciation for Margaret's continued commitment to the NTAB and for her perfect management of our finances.

3. Treasurer's report and accounts as on December 31st, 2021 presented by Margaret du Maine-Simpson, Treasurer

Income & Expenditure

There is a slight increase in income from membership, which reflects the increase in the number of members since last year. The membership on 31st December stood at 124 (2020: 116). Interestingly, this is a return to the same number as in 2019.

Income from events showed a slow start, as we were still unable to hold physical events at the beginning of the year. Virtual events, while reasonably "attended", did not reach the same level of income as the normal ones. Once physical meetings became possible, we made better progress.

The basic costs of the website have now settled to a more acceptable level, but in 2021 we added a blog to the site, which is slowly gaining fame. This significantly added to the cost, on a one-time basis.

4. Auditor's report by Henk Hoogstraten, Auditor

(to follow)

5. Election of the Committee members and the Officers until the next AGM

According to our constitution, the Committee consists of 4 officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and not less than 5 other members, elected at the AGM among Associated members.

All Committee members agreed to remain in their functions. Margaret du Maine-Simpson requested to be discharged of her mandate as Treasurer, while willing to continue to sit on the committee.

Officers

Chairman	Mr. Jan Grauls	Kraainem
Vice-Chairperson	Mrs. Carole Ducastel	Overijse
Secretary	Mr. Leo Nollet	Gent
Treasurer (until the end of this year as Treasurer)	Mrs. Margaret du Maine-Simpson	Brasschaat

Committee members

Programme coordinator	Mr. André Ceulemans	St-Genesius-Rode
Membership Secretary (until the end of this year as Membership Secretary)	Mrs. Margaret du Maine-Simpson	Brasschaat
Webmaster/Newsletter	Mr. Johan Vanbrabant	Waarschoot
UK trip organisator (2022)	Mr. Johan Vanbrabant	Waarschoot
Programme committee	Mrs. Heather Charlton	Brussels
	Mr. Emile Debacker	Kampenhout
	Mr. Ludo Somers	Merksem

As a result of Margaret's resignation as Treasurer, we need to elect a new Treasurer and Membership Secretary to serve on the Committee.

The AGM is invited to elect the members mentioned above for the duration of one year.

6. Appointment of an auditor until the next AGM

The Committee proposes that the AGM elect Mr. Henk Hoogstraten as our external (i.e. independent of the Committee) auditor.

7. Approval of the annual subscriptions for members and non-members

The Committee proposes that the annual subscriptions remain unchanged, as defined at the previous AGM.

Members :

- Annual fee of 25 € for the first family member, and
- 20€ for any subsequent member at the same address

Non-members :

- Annual fee of 35 € for the first family member, and
- 25€ for any subsequent member at the same address

The AGM is invited to approve this proposal.

8. Approval of the Committee's recommendation for a donation to the National Trust in Britain

The AGM is invited to approve the donations of each 1250,00 euros to each of Greenway, Devon, and East Pool Mine, Cornwall.

Greenway is Agatha Christie's home, the author of the famous Hercule Poirot detective stories.

East Pool Mine started in the early 1700s, first produced quantities of copper and tin, and was one of the few mines to survive the Cornish mining depression in the late 19th century. After a shaft was sunk in the 1920s, its main product became tungsten which was much in demand in the Second World War for use of weapons.

Our association had planned to visit both NT properties and Carole got enormous help in setting up our planned visits both there and other properties. As members will remember, our UK 2021 UK trip had to be cancelled because of the covid pandemic.

The AGM is invited to approve the Committee's recommendation.

9. Any other business