

Chairman's Comment

Members will be sorry to learn of the death just before Christmas of Stan Grierson. I took over from Stan as Treasurer in about 2009 (I think). The books at that time were kept by an accountant in deepest Hampshire whose other job was as a civil airline pilot – giving Stan an excuse, as an ex-navigator in V-bombers, to dispense advice on how to roll a Vulcan. Stan and I shared a car to visit on a number of occasions and I like to think we became friends. When UKSA split he had divided loyalties which he handled with great honesty and he was for some years chairman of *ShareSoc*. Our condolences go to his family.

I've just completed the draft accounts for 2016 and we managed a profit of some £1,400 (subject to accountant's review – got to cover my back). The increased contribution from your voluntary donations played no small part in this, but the gentle revenue decline (associated with gentle membership decline) has continued. This is not entirely surprising because although we have a good position with those we try to influence we have not recently had the opportunity for a national campaign position of the sort that attracts new members. But with Helen Gibbons stepping up to the plate that is at least a start. We'll need volunteers to help her though (see Page 3).

Those with email will have seen that we accepted ShareSoc's invitation to join them in finding 100 Royal Bank of Scotland shareholders (the minimum required under S153 of the Companies Act) to submit a resolution to the RBS AGM in May for setting up a Shareholder Committee. The administration of this process was handled entirely by ShareSoc, and more specifically by Cliff Weight, a semi-retired remuneration consultant very active in policy work for ShareSoc. More on this from Peter Parry page 11. My take? The clause was clearly thrown into the Act as a sop to the individual shareholder in the expectation (hope?) that it would never be used. It requires professional organisations such as ShareSoc/UKSA to put it together, is demanding of the time of the Company, requires legal knowledge and is barely fit for purpose. But we'll learn a lot from the journey and we've already gained valuable publicity. This is our first co-operation with ShareSoc since the split 10 years ago. There's no reason why we shouldn't do more. Peter Parry and Cliff Weight have benefited from their co-operation; and Mark Northway, the new Chairman of ShareSoc, is an active leader with whom I'll keep in touch.

I may have mentioned that Adrian Phillips, who writes regularly for TPI (see his latest article which appears on page 14), is helping David Lowe to arrange small-company and specialist meetings. This has now moved on a step, with Adrian taking full responsibility for the branch. We'll continue to see plenty of David at these and other meetings, but perhaps this is the moment to recognise his enormous contribution to UKSA and be thankful that he will still be willing to use his extensive contacts list to our benefit.

Finally may I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year, and in the latter context..... Good Luck!

John Hunter
Chairman

Call for Volunteers

by Brian Hargreaves

You have just seen the message from our Chairman announcing the appointment of Helen

Gibbons as UKSA's Media Director. Her range of responsibilities is wide, and will fill a crucial gap in UKSA's efforts to project a more visible presence to the wider community. However, like all our Board members, Helen volunteers her time to UKSA, but she is also works full time running her own company. Are there members out there willing and able to give Helen support? Some particular areas of expertise are listed below:

Media Relations

You may recall from the recent Membership Survey the striking statistic that nearly half our membership joined UKSA as a direct result of reading an article in the Press. We want to build a more professional public relations effort that can help make UKSA's name more visible wherever and whenever relevant articles about investment are being written. In earlier days media relations were restricted to the Press. Now this has of course widened to all sorts of media channels. UKSA would welcome hearing from anybody who has had experience from within this growing field.

Social Media

Many members may only be aware of Twitter and Facebook through their children and grandchildren. You may not be aware that these channels are increasingly being used by all sorts of organisations – not just private individuals - to complement their traditional communications activities.

UKSA would be particularly keen to hear if there are members out there who can help Helen exploit these new media opportunities. In particular Helen would like to hear from anyone with ideas for Twitter content. We plan to create a regular programme of tweets, for which any thoughts are welcome.

Web Site

An attractive and user friendly website is a vital tool for any organisation wanting to communicate with the outside world. After all, if somebody reads about UKSA in an article and wishes to find out more, our web site is THE opportunity for us to convert that interest into a new member.

Anybody with experience working with web sites in whatever capacity, and willing to offer help, is encouraged to come forward. Experience in content management would be particularly useful.

Conferences and Seminars

A recurring theme from members in the recent Research Survey was the request for UKSA to offer more education/advice etc about better investment. People were particularly interested in reinstating the late lamented conferences which ran some years ago.

In this regard we would be interested to hear from members who would be interested in the administration/organisation of such events.

In the recent Membership Survey members were very helpful in suggesting how UKSA could do better and in particular what new services they wanted to be introduced. This is your opportunity to help make this happen! If you feel you have something to offer please contact either Helen Gibbons at bizlang@mac.com or Brian Hargreaves at bash87@email.com