

EAB Update!



An occasional newsletter from the Honorary Secretary

Dear Fellow members. There has been some justified criticism that the rank and file membership of EAB learn very little of what is happening. Those who come to the congress and take part in the AGM know more, but then only once a year.

I therefore want to write an occasional newsletter, which can reach you with your copy of *La Brita Esperantisto*. Please feel free to contact me direct to make any comments on what is written.

The membership figures for the last 10 years make dreary reading.

Year	Total	Full Members	<18y	Student	Associate
1988	1070	1050	20	*	*
1989	1059	1035	24	*	*
1990	1094	1073	21	*	*
1991	1085	1071	14	*	*
1992	1030	1023	7	*	*
1993	994	932	13	22	27
1994	942	873	8	22	39
1995	913	844	12	14	43
1996	849	766	16	18	39
1997	773	711	11	14	37
1998	710	654	11	*	45

* Category did/does not exist.

I put them here to remind each of us of the situation. It has been said to me that one cause of our decline has been our gradual transformation from being a body whose main purpose was to recruit (and keep) new Esperantists into a body more interested in educating those who stay members to a high level of competence in Esperanto. Others say that the efficiency of our main and higher level committees has been weakened by an insistence on a high level of knowledge of Esperanto rather than experience of administration, publicity and marketing.

A factor that must surely be important is the low amount of money now spent each year on publicity and development compared with the amount used on administration.

It was with this background that an extended Management Committee in March 98 took the decision to sell 140 Holland Park Avenue, move to more modest and cheaper accommodation, thereby freeing large sums of capital for development work (publicity and marketing). The issue was complicated by the fact that the actual building is not owned by EAB but by BEA, two of whose Directors are not members of the Management Committee. Also, just after the decision to sell had been taken, a large legacy came, and some of those with authority had second thoughts and the decision was nullified. Now there have been third thoughts and the consensus, backed up by the strong recommendation of our Auditor, is that the Management Committee would not be fulfilling its legal responsibilities as trustees if it did not sell and move. However, although the

legal responsibility is that of the Management Committee (who in law are trustees of the charity Esperanto-Asocio de Britio and personally responsible for its prudent conduct) it is felt that we would like the backing of the membership as a whole and this will be asked for during the AGM at the Easter 1999 Congress in Newport.

A relocation committee has been set up to consider various options and submit recommendations to the Management Committee.

A plan for selling, removal and a three-year development project is ongoing.

Concurrently with the above plan, your Management Committee at its November sitting took the decision that a thorough review of all our working practices is called for and by the time this newsletter reaches you, an office systems analyst from our Auditors, Kingsgate Smith, will have started examining our current working methods and may recommend changes.

Also a detailed proposal is to be put to the January meeting of the Management Committee that we appoint for a two year period, a paid Director who will oversee the putting into place of new office systems but whose main task will be development work to reverse the decrease in membership which has been happening in recent years.

The Management Committee of EAB.
I have noticed that for many years there have been no elections to this committee, on the contrary it has been a struggle to find people to take part. Personally I am

not surprised as the requirement to make 6 or more trips a year to London would put a lot of people off! I have just been to California and visited ELNA (Esperanto League of North America). I was dumbfounded to learn that their Management Committee meets only once a year at Congress! In between times they correspond by e-mail. (Incidentally their membership situation is much more stable than ours is.) They have a staff of two plus a part time bookkeeper. Their publications are prepared by the two full-timers who also deal with all administrative work. The point I wish to make is that if we want to find people of the right calibre to be members of our Management Committee we must reduce the number of meetings and delegate more of the minutiae with which we currently find ourselves occupied and so be able to turn to strategy planning which should be our main task. The appointment of a Director would greatly assist in this.

May I say that a discussion forum on the internet, on the way ahead for our movement in Britain, is just being started by Ian Fantom. There are many Esperanto discussion groups on internet but this one is going to restrict itself to the important topic of how do we halt our declining numbers and reverse the trend. If you have a computer but are not connected to the 'net' do think again about it. Recently the High St. chain Dixon's have introduced a free 'service provider' (this is a company who provides a large computer which acts as a link between you and the 'net'.) Up until now these providers have charged between £7 and £15 a month, but the Dixon service is free. To my knowledge several Esperantists have taken advantage of this service, including Paul Hewitt who says that it is really good. So pop into your

Dixons and ask for the CD which has all the information on it. Paul says that it is easy to install. If you get stuck you can phone their Helpline (this is expensive - £1.00 a minute) but Paul Hewitt has kindly offered to help anyone who has problems. If you like to communicate you will find the use of e-mail cheap, quick and useful.

Finally, the decision has been taken to hold the 1999 AGM in English. Also in future all committee meetings will be conducted in English. We hope that this will encourage members who have administration and publicity/marketing skills rather than linguistic ability to come forward to serve on committees.

If you have any comments on the above, or on anything else concerning our movement, please do contact me either by letter, phone, fax or email.

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Other News Items.

Co-opted Management Committee members:

Paul Gubbins. Paul G. is one of our most vigorous playwrights and recently published a new beginners' course "Ni Kunvojagu". Paul wrote the script for an ambitious video teaching course "Pasporto al la Tuta Mondo" which is currently being produced in San Francisco. Paul is also the chairman of Esperanto Teachers' Association.

Paul Hewitt. Paul took early retirement from his post as Headmaster and as many

of you know is actively engaged in publishing a newsletter which is sent out to all local groups who pay a modest subscription fee. The newsletter contains information about publicity events run by local groups in many parts of the country. Paul is also very active, together with his wife Veronica who is also a keen Esperantist, in building up the Grimsby group which must one of the largest and most active in the country.

Geoffrey Wood. Geoffrey has been an Esperantist for many years and is the U.K. representative of Passporta Servo.

Publicity:

The Publicity Commission is considering advertising in 'Choice' (circulation 300,000) a magazine for the newly retired. They are also being asked to consider publishing some posters which local groups could use at exhibitions.

They have found an excellent graphic consultant, sympathetic to Esperanto and prepared to work for reduced fees. He is already working on some posters.

Esperanto Teachers' Association.:

To simplify our committee structure and lighten the burden on the Management Committee it has been agreed that all education work previously done by EAB will now be handled by ETA. EAB will pay ETA for any costs involved in carried out educational work that has been requested by EAB. In effect EAB will subcontract (outsource in modern management jargon!) work out to ETA.

The Urso-Kurso:

Already considerable numbers have been sold and it is becoming known throughout the world. A good selling point to parents with children from 5 years and upwards that quite apart from the merit of Esperanto in its own right, is the fact that it can help a child to start at a very early age to make meaningful progress in a pleasant manner without any of the drudge-drudge that I remember from my futile efforts to learn French from the age of 11!

A new full colour recruiting brochure is just about to go to the printers and should be available for all local groups in about two month's time. It will also be sent out to all enquirers.

A "Which?" Guide to the various courses and textbooks is now in preparation. This also will be sent out to enquirers. It will help people, according to their linguistic ability, to choose suitable learning material.

An excellent library of videos in Esperanto is available for hire from Wakefield & Leeds Esperanto Group, 4 Apple Tree Close, East Ardsley, Wakefield, WF3 2JE. Most of the films have been professionally produced by the Polish TV company Interpress and directed by Roman Dobrzynski well known Esperantist for many years. The content of the videos ranges from Brazil to China and includes the centenary congress in Warsaw. There are also

videos from other countries. The videos are described in a catalogue and are graded as to suitability for beginners, or others.

Send an S.A.E. for this.* The hire fee is about £6.00 which includes outward postage. Use a video to liven up your meetings!

*to Wakefield.

Important correction to announcement on page 215 of Nov-Dec 1998 La Brita Esperantisto:

The AGM will take place on Saturday 3rd April at 9:30 am.

Also, all reports and resolutions should be written in English and it will be helpful if these are received by the Hon. Sec. not later than 10th March 1999.