



Report of Headley Voluntary Care AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Headley Voluntary Care, held on Thursday 13th March 2014 in the Church Centre, was well attended. John Evans chaired the meeting and thanked everyone for their help over the past year. 49 drivers had travelled over 16,700 miles taking people to hospital, doctor and dental appointments, an increase of over 2,000 miles on the previous year. The scheme had been managed by 11 co-ordinators, 1 short of requirements, and a plea was made for anyone who wished to come forward to help. The funds remain in good health and £1000 had been made to local charities. The Thursday coffee morning at the Church Centre came in for much praise and there was discussion at the end about how to encourage even more people to attend. Peter Marsh, the Publicity Officer, was resigning as from this meeting and the sterling work he had put into advertising the group was much appreciated.

Michael Grant, a Member of the Lord Mayor's Guard, the Company of Pikemen and Musketeers and Member of the Honorary Artillery Company, then gave a most interesting and well-illustrated talk. He came dressed in his 'soft kit' fortunately minus his 12 foot pike and body armour. His is the oldest regiment in the British Army being founded in 1537 by Royal Charter from Henry VIII but also has a modern unit and in fact his regiment lost 2 soldiers in the past years' fighting in Afghanistan. His uniform dates from the time of Charles 1 and to be a Pikeman, you have to have had at least 5 years of previous active military service. The unit covers ceremonial duties, guards of honour, salutes to the Tower of London and is the Lord Mayor's ceremonial body guard.

The Company of Pikemen and Musketeers consists of 63 members. The Pikeman's armour weighs 12lbs and the pike is 12ft long (it was 18ft in 1638) and it weighs 10lbs with a 2lb rest. The uniform is based on descriptions from 17th century books. There is no age limit to being a member but you have to be fit! The company has to march in step at the speed of the Lord Mayor's carriage every year for a distance of 5.2miles, avoiding the horses dung as they go!!! This year the wheels of the Lord Mayor's carriage jammed and the Lord Mayor decanted to a Land Rover, so the speed of marching was even faster.

At the time of the Pilgrim Fathers, 4 of the regiment crossed to the Boston area in the States, where they founded a sister regiment in Boston. A visit to the States of the regiment where a banquet in Feneuil Hall is arranged.

Mr Grant then showed a series of slides illustrating drill and battle movements – "Charge your pikes", 17th century drills and formations with musketeers firing, "frame a batelle", "assume a lazy posture".

The regiment formed part of the guard at the Queen's Jubilee, the Entrance Guard to the Tower of London and the Heroes to the Tower in 2012.

Headley Voluntary Care is a thriving group. As stated we need 1 more co-ordinator and we also need more drivers to help us. If you feel you can spare some time to help, please contact us on 01428 717389 or if you just feel like a cup of coffee and to meet up with some friends, call in at our coffee morning at the Headley Church Centre held every Thursday 10am – noon.