



## WEBSITE UPDATED AGAIN

Further improvements to the website have now been completed by Webmaster, Phil Hall. Improvements include:

- The spacing and layout of all major elements is consistent across the whole site.
- The space down the left hand side is slightly wider and looks less cluttered. The campaign section left navigation bar is better separated from the body of the page.
- The underlines on all the links are now consistent.

The previous inconsistencies were partly due to the fact that, in order to hit our target date for relaunch, design and uploading was split between two members of the Working Group (WG). Now that this phase is behind us, Owen Massey has withdrawn from the WG.

## A VERY BRITISH MESS (AKA LORD HOWE'S DOSSIER)

As reported on the Smartgroups forum, UKMA's Committee has been working on this important document together with Lord Howe for several months. Entitled "A very British mess", it argues the case for early completion of the metric changeover. It is aimed at key opinion formers in industry, the professions, the academic world, the media and of course politicians and civil servants. The plan is that Lord Howe and some of his parliamentary colleagues will organise a press conference in the summer at which this document will be "launched". Lord Howe intends to lobby personally the many influential people whom he knows, and the intention is to try to organise a joint approach to Government to try to get some commitment to metric completion.

Efforts are now being made to raise funds for this project, which will cost at least £2500. An appeal to UKMA members is being launched.



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Thanks are due to him for his enormous contribution and of course to Phil for the latest update.

For a more technical explanation of the changes made and the underlying philosophy, see the description below from Phil Hall:

The restructured web site has been produced using Macromedia Dreamweaver 2004.

The whole site is now based on a series of templates. The main underlying one is a file named Outline.dwt - this is a Dreamweaver template that holds the logo, Assoc tile, top nav bar and search form. Below that are table cells 1 row by 2 columns holding a reserved area for left nav bar and page content. Underneath those is a spanning row holding the copyright statement.

There are no pages attached direct to the Outline template. Instead a series of nested templates have been derived from and are attached to 'Outline', one for each variant of the left nav bar, roughly one for each major section. The pages of each section are based on the template associated with that section.

With this structure the site is more amenable to growth and basic design changes without excessive manual re-editing of existing pages.

The templates relate mainly to layout and content in areas of each page that overlap.

Style is another aspect - fonts, colour border, characteristics, background etc that can be similarly controlled and replicated through style sheets. A file Outline.css contains font style definitions for the first 4 heading levels, link styles and a few others. Changes to these styles only require editing the style sheet.

In addition, incremental changes are being made to update and improve the website's content. New material should be uploaded to the Practical Help and the Policy pages in the near future. Members may have noticed that news items on the front page are refreshed at least monthly - e.g. when the "metric martyrs" appeal was rejected by the European Court of Human Rights.

## AGM/ANNUAL CONFERENCE DATE FIXED – LORD HOWE TO ATTEND

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UKMA's 2004 AGM/Annual Conference will take place on 10 July in London (probably at the University of Westminster – venue to be confirmed). After an extensive consultation exercise to find the timing and venue which would be most convenient to the majority of members, the outcome was that we should stick with the second weekend in July in central London – as in the previous two years!

As in previous years, the formal business of the AGM will be kept as short as possible and followed by a Conference which will include presentations and discussion of strategy, tactics, policy and detailed issues. Lord Howe has indicated that he has the date firmly in his diary and will make every effort to attend this year and give us the benefit of his advice and experience from many years in government and politics.

If any member would like to give a presentation or suggest topics for the agenda, please advise the Secretary, Roddy Urquhart.

Note: The AGM is the meeting at which constitutional amendments can be made. Proposed amendments must be in the hands of the Secretary by 29 May. The Committee has no proposals for change this year.

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## JUDICIAL REVIEW ON HOLD

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We reported in the last issue that the Committee was seeking advice on whether UKMA could mount a legal challenge to Government inaction on completing metrication, especially on road signs. This process - called judicial review – is the process whereby the Court can be asked to declare that a decision of a public body is beyond its legal powers, or irrational in the face of the evidence, or that the public body has not taken account of the proper factors or has been influenced by irrelevant factors (such as voter reaction). The Court can order the Government to review its decision and take it again properly – as for example when the Home Secretary was told that he had no power to fix the tariff for life sentences.

Advice has been sought from a firm of solicitors on whether the Department for Transport’s failure to “fix a date” for adopting metric road signage (as required by the EU Directive) could be challenged. The reply so far is that it may be challengeable, but the Courts may not be keen to intervene in what they might see as a political matter. Any challenge would cost a lot of money, and Lord Howe has advised that we should explore other avenues first.

This need not stop us from presenting to the DfT the dossier of evidence which we have been preparing, and work is continuing on this.

Judicial review is therefore on hold for the moment.

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## NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER CO-OPTED

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Following John Hyde’s resignation last year, there were no volunteers to replace him on the Committee. It was therefore decided to invite John-Michael Jones and he has agreed to be co-opted for the remaining 4 months of the year.

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