

The Church Monuments Society

Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting held at 2pm on Saturday, 24 September 2016, Vestry Hall, St George's, Bloomsbury, London WC1A 2SA

Dr Jean Wilson, President welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Council members Mr Mark Downing, Dr Clive Easter, Dr Julian Litten and Dr Adam White, and David and Jane Kelsall, Iona Roberts and Jonathan Trigg.

2. **The Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting** were approved unanimously.

3. **Matters Arising from the 2015 Annual General Meeting**

Dr Wilson reported that the discussion with the Charity Commission was ongoing.

4. **Presidential Address – Dr Jean Wilson**

Dr Wilson reminded everyone about Monument of the Month and asked for submissions. She added that she had forgotten to mention, last year, that Mr Michael Thompson and Dr Clive Easter had attended a Royal Garden Party in 2015.

Dr Wilson paid tribute to Paul Cockerham, the retiring Journal editor, and announced that the new joint editors were Rachel Morley and Jonathan Trigg, Sophie Oosterwijk would continue as the book reviews editor. A presentation was made to Dr Cockerham.

Dr Wilson said that there was still time for entries to be submitted for the Church Guide Competition before the closing date of 31 December 2016. In 2017 there will be a Photography Competition, with the next Essay Competition in 2018. Dr Wilson said that feedback from members was always welcome.

Dr Wilson then made her address:

The Church Monuments Society has once again had a successful year. As you will hear from the Membership Secretary, our numbers are increasing, and we have held many events - three Study Days, in London on neoclassical Memorials (jointly with the MMT), one at Tong in Staffordshire, and another (jointly with the Courtauld Institute) at Wingfield, Suffolk. We made excursions to south Nottinghamshire, south London, the West Midlands and North Essex, and there was a 'pop-up' event, organised by our Treasurer, Michael Thompson, to visit the church and house at Deene (Northamptonshire). Our most recent event was the Symposium. Although all the papers delivered there were of the highest quality the highlight for me was the organiser, Barbara Tomlinson's, description of the monument to Colonel Richard Nicholls (killed 1672 at Sole Bay) in Ampthill church, which incorporates the cannonball which cut him in half. I don't know of any other monuments which actually incorporate the means of death. If anyone does, please send it to Monument of the Month.

One item which should have come in last year's report was that the Society was honoured by an invitation to a Royal Garden Party, where we were ably represented by our Treasurer and our Membership Secretary.

We are bidding farewell at this meeting to Paul Cockerham, under whose careful editorship the Journal has gone from strength to strength, with a magnificent 30th anniversary issue. The next issue will be the last under his aegis, but I am happy to announce that we have found two successors, Rachel Morley and Jonathan Trigg, who have been working alongside him on issue 31 (which also looks to be a corker) and under whose editorship the Journal will continue to flourish.

This year we are running our Guidebook Competition, closing date December 31, details on the website; please encourage any church you visit to enter. Next year we will hold the new Photography competition, which will run till December 31 2017. Details will again appear on the website and in the Spring Newsletter.

This is your Society: I appeal to you for feedback. Please keep items coming for Monument of the Month, and please make suggestions for possible tours/subjects for study days. If you are prepared to volunteer to organise either, that would be even better!

Our recruitment is going well, but if any of you would like some back issues of the Newsletter to distribute to raise awareness of the Society, do please contact either the editor, Andrew Sargent, or me.

In his fascinating short talk at the Symposium, Cameron Newham gave some of the reasons why he started his vital project of recording churches. One (depressing) reason was his belief that within a few years many of our parish churches will be abandoned or have passed to other uses. I thought when he first (some years ago) said this to me that he was being unnecessarily pessimistic. I have gradually and reluctantly come to the conclusion that he is right. The final straw was our recent attempt to take part in the Ride, Stride & Drive event on September 10, when one-third of the Norfolk churches we visited were not open.

Of more relevance is the recent Church of England report on the future of churches. As you will know, this anticipates that churches will become more generally used by the communities they serve, but also suggests that some will become "Festival Churches", with infrequent services and little intervening use. I should say that both these proposals have their merits - many rural churches in multi-church benefices only have one or two services a month as it is, and the ability to leave a church in inclement weather without the intermittent heating and change of temperature that may produce damage to the fabric may not be a bad thing. Boughton Aluph, in Kent, is not used in winter, but is used in summer, when it houses an important music festival. From October to May the congregation moves to Boughton Lees, where the church (an adapted medieval hall house, later used as a village school) has heating. (The other church in the benefice, Eastwell, is redundant & ruined & the monuments are mostly in the V&A).

The experience of visiting a well-used church which serves its community is exhilarating. I would mention Yaxley, near Peterborough and Walsoken, Norfolk, as examples where an open and imaginative use of the church goes with a real appreciation of its history and treasures.

BUT these examples of good practice are not necessarily typical. Granted that the churches of the UK hold the bulk of the national art collection from before the eighteenth century, everyone who cares about them must be worried about both the buildings and the treasures that they hold. At the most extreme churches are sold off by the church with no guarantee that any covenants regarding their contents will be respected. Already a most important medieval effigy at Wolfertow has effectively passed into private hands, while the church at Horton, Northamptonshire, containing the monument by Richard Parker of Lord Parr, d.1546 (uncle of Catherine Parr), an object of national importance both for its quality and its royal connections, is for sale, with no apparent thought given to the future of the tomb.

Closures, while the most extreme of the threats to Parish churches are not, however, the only ones. Yaxley and Walsoken are admirable in the way in which they both serve their community and conserve their treasures, but other churches may regard such things as nuisances and neglect them (I think of the early sixteenth-century monuments at Langar which at one point when we visited were covered with cleaning materials and Christmas decorations). This isn't a problem confined to small parish churches - the outrageous proposal to move Bishop Montagu's monument at Bath Abbey to improve the sight-lines during concerts has been repelled, but not necessarily defeated.

Festival churches present another problem: the likelihood of neglect. If the churches are not often used they may not be often visited, with the accompanying danger of late discovery of theft, damage, and similar issues. These churches face the threat of deteriorating into an unusable state, with consequent damage to their contents.

Much of the blame for this must be put squarely on the ecclesiastical hierarchy. For too long the church, anxious to avoid controversy, has sought to avoid the question of the heritage in its care. Some, of course, repeat the mantra that the church is people not buildings, which has always seemed ridiculous to me - it's both! This doesn't alter the need for us to be even more vigilant about the threats to our heritage. If we, and others like us, do not keep pointing out, at the tops of our voices, that the parish churches of Britain contain most surviving British medieval and early modern sculpture, most surviving British medieval painting, most surviving British sculpture from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and a large number of works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These include masterpieces by Nicholas Stone, John Bushnell, Thomas Rysbrack, Edgar Boehm & Eric Gill (to take one example at random from each century) which would be undoubtedly forbidden export licenses were they to come on the market. They are all available, free, underappreciated, and possibly more under threat, in the case of the medieval material, than they have been at any time since the Reformation. In a time of change for the church it is up to us to speak for them.

Dr Wilson said that Dr David Carrington's report would be taken next as he had to leave early.

12. Conservation Cases Recorder's Report – Dr David Carrington

The threat to monuments resulting from churches being made redundant continues to be a theme. Sadly it is feared that this will only become a greater issue in the coming years. In the last year the church at Gamston, which has been closed for three years,

has at least been considered for vesting with the Churches Conservation Trust. Monuments include three medieval effigies, several 19th century wall tablets, brass plaques, and ledger slabs. Meanwhile the church at Sutton (Essex), closed since 2010, has been advertised for sale. It contains important brasses as well as wall monuments of 1695 and 1711. The latest I have heard is that the church is to be turned into a community centre, a use that will not be altogether incompatible with the future of the monuments being in the building.

Another church which has been under threat of closure is at Tatenhill in Staffordshire. I visited the church in March and made a report on the monuments (which were listed in the Autumn 2015 Newsletter) for the parish. I am pleased to report that local support for the church has resulted in negotiation of a five-year plan with the Diocese allowing them, hopefully, to deal with their financial arrears and to remain open.

On a different matter I have been in contact with Norwich Diocese regarding the fate of the monuments in Bixley church. This was gutted by fire in 2004 and the four monuments, dating from the 16th and 18th centuries, badly damaged. Despite various efforts to either re-house them or to conserve them in the church their fate remains uncertain. They are currently being stored in a local farmer's barn, where I hope to be able to inspect them shortly and to report back to the Society on their security and condition.

I have also dealt with several other cases since the last AGM, typically offering guidance as to where further advice and grant aid might be found, but also simply highlighting concerns which have been brought to my attention. I am always careful with the latter to try and be as fully informed as possible before contacting the church, often entailing a site visit first. I haven't dealt with any cases outside England in the last year, but always welcome cases from further afield.

I conclude, as I have done in each of the six AGMs I have reported to, with a thank you to members both of the Society and of the general public who have drawn attention to various monuments at risk in one way or another, and for the invaluable support offered by Council in dealing with these cases.

Dr Carrington asked for questions and comments. Jon Bayliss said that he had visited Bixley, after the fire, he had taken photographs and asked Dr Carrington about local contacts. Dr Carrington replied that he was in contact with the diocesan office.

Ben Elliott spoke about his concern for some monuments in Salisbury Cathedral as candles, in metal troughs, were placed on them for some services. Monuments, for example that of Bishop Roger, had been badly splashed with wax, Mr Elliott said he had raised the matter with the Dean and Chapter but they appeared unsympathetic. Brian and Moira Gittos said that they were also concerned, noting that the removal of wax could also cause damage. Mrs Gittos said she had some photographs of the affected monuments and Dr Wilson said, after consultation with Dr Carrington, she would write to the Dean and Chapter.

5. Hon Treasurer's Report – Mr Michael Thompson

1. I am pleased to report that the accounts for the year show a surplus of £ 3,086. However, it ought to be noted that the subscriptions are down by £703. The events made a reasonable surplus.

2. The Journal is an excellent publication, but production costs continue to increase. The bills for Volume 29 amounted to £7616.
3. The travel expenses incurred by members of Council went up by fifty percent in the year.
4. With the retirement of John Bromilow, the redesign or re-building of the website has cost £579. This work has been undertaken by Janet Groome (who trades as Handshake Computing near Melton Mowbray).

The cash at bank was £752, and on deposit stood at £18671. The balance sheet shows the book value, or purchase costs of the unit trust investments. In the notes, the market value is given as £52,670

Mr Thompson said that copies of the accounts had been provided.

Mr Thompson introduced the proposal to increase the rates of subscription for individual and family members.

Celia Charlton suggested that as not everyone could pay by standing order, possibly because they did not have access to a computer, they would have to pay the enhanced subscription. Dr Pridgeon said that people might be put off by money coming out of their account. Mrs Gittos pointed out that standing orders reduced the work load of the Membership Secretary.

The proposal was put to the meeting, proposed by Mr Thompson and seconded by Miss Wheeler, the vote was as follows:

for	28
against	1
abstention	1

6. Thanks to the Independent Examiner and Appointment of the Independent Examiner

This was proposed by Mr Thompson, seconded by Miss Badham and agreed unanimously.

7. Hon Membership Secretary's Report – Dr Clive Easter

Dr Wilson read Dr Easter's report, there were no questions or comments.

The past year has been an interesting one from the point of view of membership. Members would have doubtless noted that in the spring issue of the newsletter we recorded that 11 new members had joined in the 6 months or so since the preceding newsletter. That is a quite reasonable number and within our normal range.

Since then and in preparation for the next issue of the newsletter that the editor is already preparing, I can report that we have received 25 applications for membership – a quite unparalleled number – and that includes two new Corporate members. This last part – **2 new corporate members** – is especially encouraging since we have been losing such members at the rate of about 1 per year since 2000!

What is frustrating is that so few new members actually tell us (a) how they heard of the society and (b) what encouraged them to join. What is clear however is that the majority join via our website, doubtless browsing to see what is out there. Some obviously join by word of mouth and events like the recent symposium are always targeted with some members joining up on the spot. Your membership secretary is ever on the lookout for any waifs and strays that can be encouraged to part company with the modest membership subscription.

While there are still some 85 members who have yet to pay this year's subscription, a matter that the membership secretary will be addressing very shortly in his usual style. We have a very healthy number on the books at the moment. The numbers are

Corporate	62
Ordinary and Family	454
Grand total	516

While some members will inevitably be struck off for non-payment, every effort is made to secure membership for another year from the defaulters. We hope that the present numbers will grow and by this time next year I would like to report that even more have joined than the 36 since the issue of the last autumn newsletter and that we remain forever above the magical mark of 500.

8. Hon Publicity Officer's Report

Dr Wilson explained that the Society was currently looking for someone to fill this role, someone who could look after the Twitter account, and liaise with Janet Groome (web site) and Dr Sargent (Stop Press). She asked for anyone who was interested to contact her.

Miss Badham said that there was a continuing increase in Twitter followers with many postings being re-Tweeted, for example the posting about the Guidebook Competition was seen by about 7000 people.

9. Hon Archivist's Report – Dr Ellie Pridgeon

Dr Pridgeon reported that the Society's archive was held at the Borthwick Institute, University of York and added that some old conservation reports might be added to the archive.

10. Hon Events Co-ordinator's Report – Mr Mark Downing

Dr Wilson read Mr Downing's report, there were no questions or comments.

The society has recently held two splendid events; Norbury in July and the symposium at Herstmonceux in September. There is an excursion to West Suffolk lead by Julian Litten in October.

Events planned for 2017 is a study day at Lichfield on 20th May organised by Robin Draper, a joint event with the Ludlow Palmers Guild on 24th June and a study weekend at Brecon on 28th October organised by Maddy Grey. Robin Draper has offered to organise another coach excursion to Staffordshire in October of this year.

The 2018 symposium is to be held at the Green Dragon in Hereford, taking advantage of the cathedral, which is opposite.

11. Report of the Society's Publications

Dr Paul Cockerham presented the report on the Journal, there were no questions or comments.

Volume 30

This was distributed in mid-March as expected, and has been well received, particularly the seminal article on precious-metal effigial tomb monuments, which quite rightly attracted generous grant aid. At 240 pages it is the largest volume produced so far by the Society, with full colour illustrations throughout, and is particularly distinctive because of the laminated covers. The articles have been uploaded to EBSCO for digitisation and further distribution.

Volume 31

At the moment I envisage this being published on schedule in Spring 2016. The following articles have been approved:

Sally Badham, 'The Rise to Popularity of Alabaster for Memorialisation in England' – the text and illustrations have been finalised, and being a substantial article occupying around 70 pages of the journal, an application to the Paul Mellon Centre has been submitted for grant aid

Sonsoles García González, 'The Tabulae: Ephemeral Epigraphy in the Surroundings of Medieval Tombs'

Trudi Brink, 'First-rate and Second-hand: Tombstones Produced by Vincent Lucas in Sixteenth-century Friesland (Netherlands)' (winner of the CMS Essay Prize Competition 2016)

James Stevens Curl, 'Two Contrasting Seventeenth-century Church Monuments in Ulster'

Sophie Oosterwijk with Alice Zamboni, 'Painted Memories: The Commemorative Drawings and Paintings of the Seventeenth-century Dutch Ter Borch family'

Joanna Wolańska, 'The Monument to Archbishop Isaak Isakowicz in the Armenian Cathedral in Lvov' (runner-up in the CMS Essay Prize Competition 2016)

Anthony J. Parkinson, 'Humphrey Llwyd of Denbigh – a Musical Monument'

Dr Sophie Oosterwijk, our book reviews editor, has to date arranged twenty-four book reviews. They include books in other languages (German, French and Polish), which, like the range of articles, will continue to maintain the Society's international scope and reputation. In addition there will be two illustrated review articles: the first is by Toby Capwell on Matthew Ward's *The Livery Collar in Late Medieval England and Wales: Politics, Identity and Affinity*; and the second by our President and Norman Hammond on John Goodall's *Parish Church Treasures: The Nation's Greatest Art Collection*.

The *Index* to Volumes 21–30 has been compiled as previously by Tony Carr, and is now with the journal designer. It is planned to produce this as a separate booklet for distribution with Vol. 31 in the Spring of 2017, with a monochrome cover formed of a collage of images to match the previous *Index* to Volumes 11–20, but this time laminated so as to match Volume 30.

Church Monuments Society Essay Prize 2016

The winner of the prize, Trudi Brink, with her essay 'Friesian tombstones made by Vincent Lucas – first-rate and second-hand', has been presented with her cheque, and her article, as listed already, will appear in the next *Church Monuments*. Also, the President organised the production of a certificate which incorporated an illustration of a Friesian tombstone, and will be something to serve as a splendid reminder and celebration of Trudi's achievement.

European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH)

Details of the Board of Editorial Advisers have been posted on the CMS website, which is a prerequisite for listing, as well as being published in the last journal (30). Dr Oosterwijk has commenced the application process for ERIH accreditation of the journal, and will liaise with the new journal co-editors to finalise the application.

In conclusion, although I will see Volume 31 through publication, that one will be my last, as I will have worked on five issues and for me – and maybe for others – that is enough. I would like to place on record my thanks to all who I have had the pleasure of working with, particularly Sally Badham and Jean Wilson, who have always been supportive and offered valuable advice when called upon, but even more so to Rhianydd Biebrach and Sophie Oosterwijk, with whom I have enjoyed a hugely convivial and learned editorial time. I wish my successors Rachel Morley and Jonathan Trigg, together with Sophie, every success for the future production of the journal and I am sure it will be secure in their hands

Dr Andrew Sargent presented his report on the Society's Newsletter, there were no questions or comments.

The Editor would like to thank all who have contributed to the success of the *Newsletter* this year, including those who were prevailed upon to write up individual excursions and events. Most are named in the relevant issues, but special thanks are recorded to Brian & Moira Gittos for checking draft copy.

Two issues of the *Newsletter* have been produced in the year since the last AGM; 31.1 & 31.2. An Autumn issue (32.1) is due in October/November following the AGM.

An index to Newsletters 24.1 to 31.2 has kindly been compiled by our member Tony Carr and will be issued shortly. (An index covering the earlier volumes, also by Tony, was issued in 2008. A few copies are still available.)

The Editor would like to encourage members to contribute to the *Newsletter*. Short pieces (up to 3 pages at 400 words per page plus a good photograph) are most welcome. They do not need to be the polished results of a major research project! Or if you are researching a topic try tapping the Society's collective knowledge by asking a question.

If you are attending an excursion or event, you might like to write it up for the *Newsletter* (up to 900 words and a photo). I believe the purpose of the report is to make those who did not attend wish that they had! In other words, an impression rather than a précis. If this interests you, have a word with the organiser in advance as they will welcome a keen volunteer.

Stop Press! There have been 10 issues of Stop Press! during the year. Members (and indeed interested non-members) are urged to sign up for this non-intrusive reminder service. To join, please send your email address to *andrewsargent@gmail.com* and include 'Subscribe to CMS Stop Press' in the subject line.

13. Election of the Officers and two Ordinary Members

The re-election of Dr Jean Wilson, as President was proposed by Prof Brian Kemp, seconded by Miss Badham and agreed unanimously.

The following serving officers of the Society prepared to stand for re-election:

Prof Brian Kemp	Vice President
Dr Julian Litten	Vice President
Miss Sally Badham	Vice President
Mr Michael Thompson	Hon treasurer
Dr David Carrington	Hon Conservation Cases Recorder
Mr Mark Downing	Hon Events Co-ordinator
Dr Clive Easter	Hon Membership Secretary
Dr Andrew Sargent	Hon Newsletter Editor
Dr Ellie Pridgeon	Hon Archivist
Miss Hilary Wheeler	Hon Secretary

The following two new Officers prepared to stand for election:

Rachel Morley	Journal Editor
Jonathan Trigg	Journal Editor

This year there were two nominations for new Council members – Moira Ackers and Jon Bayliss – replacing Dr Jessica Barker and Dr Madeleine Gray.

14. Date and Venue of the 2017 Annual General Meeting

23 September 2017 at All Hallows by the Tower.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3pm.

After the meeting, Prof Chris Scarre of Durham University spoke about the monuments in Surat, before tea.