

The Church Monuments Society

Minutes of the 2013 AGM and accounts for the Year 2012-13

MINUTES of the 2013 Annual General Meeting held at 2pm on Saturday 7th September 2013, at The National Maritime Museum, London SE10, 9UZ.

The meeting was chaired by the Honorary President, Miss Sally Badham.

1. Apologies for absence

Were received from Dr Jean Wilson, Dr John Physick, Professor Brian Kemp, Mr Cameron Newham and Mr Michael Thompson,

2. Approval of the minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting

The minutes were approved. They were proposed by Dr Litten and seconded by Dr Easter

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Presidential report (delivered by Miss Sally Badham)

“It has been an exceptionally busy and productive year for the CMS Council. It takes a good deal of time and effort to keep the Society running and to ensure that members receive good value for money in terms of publications, events and other services. I am delighted to be able to report that, thanks to Council’s hard work and the splendid support of our members, we have a continually increasing membership and operate on a sound financial footing, despite holding subscriptions at the same rate since 2005.

One notable success this year is that, thanks to Ellie Pridgeon and Richard Marks, the Borthwick Institute at York are to house our archive, which includes a full run of all our publications and council minutes. Last year I reported Council’s increasing concern at the risks to our monumental heritage. David Carrington has been very active in drawing the attention of individual churches to monuments at risk from decay and advising them how to get grant funding to aid conservation work. We have also been worried about the steady stream of church thefts and are doing what we can to publicise them in the hope that some items may be recovered.

Two of our new initiatives are aimed at extending the use of digital media to widen knowledge of the Society and the study of church monuments and to communicate news. The website, run by John Bromilow, has proved invaluable, but social media are a vital tool in reaching the younger generation. A few months ago Cameron Newham and Ellie Pridgeon opened a Church Monuments Twitter account. It now carries a photo report of the Northamptonshire excursion and we hope to add more such events in the future. In addition, Andrew Sargent is launching a ‘Mailchimp’ email ‘Stop Press’ service; see the next Newsletter for details of how to receive this new facility for members and others.

None of this, however, will replace our publications, which continue to arrive on members' doorsteps on time and full of interest. Church Monuments Vol. 27 was produced under by the new editorial team of Rhianydd Biebrach and Paul Cockerham aided by Kelcey Wilson-Lee as Reviews Editor. It had a striking colour cover and re-introduced short articles, but the editorial team has even better plans for the future: Vol. 28 will be produced in full colour. We have also finally signed a contract with EBSCO enabling individual articles from Church Monuments to be made available digitally to non-members, potentially providing us with a small new income stream, but more importantly widening knowledge of the Society and the study of church monuments, which is one of our charitable aims. Kelcey Wilson-Lee and Moira Gittos have taken the leading roles in making this possible. We have also had to face the challenges of the Government's Open Access policy. The four UK higher education funding bodies have just launched another consultation on the rules for the second Research Excellence Framework (REF) evaluation of universities, possibly to take place in 2020. They have maintained their insistence that, to be eligible, journal articles and edited conference papers will have to be made open access, but from 2016 onwards, to give journals time to adjust, and only for journals based in the United Kingdom. We have complied with these requirements, thanks to work by Barbara Tomlinson and Jean Wilson, thus ensuring that academics will continue to send their articles to Church Monuments rather than turning elsewhere.

The Newsletter, produced by Andrew Sargent, also goes from strength to strength, especially in the range of short contributions from members. The excellence of our publications is reflected by the fact that Sue Kelland was able to add about £300 to our coffers from sales of back numbers.

Over the past year, we have held a particularly wide range of events, all of which have been very successful and made modest surpluses for the Society. Our excursions, to Lincolnshire organised by David Carrington and Michael Thompson and to Northamptonshire under the guidance of Jean Wilson, were both very enjoyable. Adam White organised a one-day conference on Renaissance monuments and Brian and Moira Gittos arranged a study day at Puddletown. The conservation there has been completed and a substantial sum was given to them from the Claude Blair Memorial Fund, which is now closed. However, the most ambitious event of the year was the Northern Lights Tour organised by the redoubtable Robin Millerchip; those who attended sent glowing reports of its success. We also held an event at St Mary's Priory, Abergavenny to the award the prize for the Guide Book competition, arranged by Clive Easter.

I should also mention that we are taking the first steps towards adopting the new Charitable Incorporated Status for the Society; this will make no difference to members but should provide extra financial safeguards for our trustees in particular, which is important in this litigious age. To this end a sub-committee is working on a revised constitution which will be presented for members' approval at the next AGM, with a view to applying for CIO status when it is opened to charities of our size in October 2014.

Finally, I would like to express my personal thanks to all those who have made my five year term as President such a rewarding one. I feel honoured to have served such a wonderful Society and proud that I can hand it over to our new President in such good heart."

5. Hon. Treasurer's report (read by Dr Clive Easter)

Copies of the accounts ending 31st March 2013 as examined by Mr Robert Burborough of Stephenson Smart & Co were provided. The total income for the year was £25, 369 and expenses £20,471. The surplus after expenditure is £4, 898 of which study days contributed £3,498.

The individual subscription rate of £20-00 covers the cost of the Journal and two Newsletters and meets the routine expenses of running the Society. The next council meeting will discuss the merit of an increase in subscription rates as from June 2015.

Cash at bank (HSBC current and deposit accounts) was £18, 407) at the end of March. In addition, the Society had at that date £11, 802 on deposit with the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF) and also holds an investment in M & G Charifund, value as of 30th June £19, 775.

The grant from the J. Paul Getty Foundation has been withdrawn from the general reserve and transferred into a separately identified account with COIF.

The Claude Blair Memorial Conservation Fund has been closed and a cheque of £8,890 sent to Puddletown PCC.

The accounts were accepted

They were proposed by Moira Gittos and seconded by Dr Cockerham.

6. Thanks to the independent examiners: appointment of independent examiners

It was proposed that Mr Robert Burborough of Stephenson Smart should act as independent examiner.

Proposed by Jane Kelsall and seconded by Dr Andrew Sargent. The proposal was carried unanimously.

7. Hon. Membership Secretary's report

The Membership Secretary reported that membership numbers were holding up quite well. Final reminders for payment of subscriptions will be sent out in October with a deadline of November. After that membership will cease for those who have not paid.

At the time of the meeting there were:

453 Ordinary and Family members

64 Corporate members

Total 517

There has been an encouraging move to payment by standing order which will save the Society money.

8. Hon Publicity Officer's Report

Dr Bromilow reported that he now has an assistant publicity officer —Tony Carr to deal with non-website publicity. The proposal for a family history leaflet has now been abandoned and the general leaflet is being redesigned with assistance from Mr Carr. It will be cheaper to produce and will be brought up to date, to include details of the Society's new *Twitter* account. The new leaflet will go into print as soon as the illustrations have been chosen.

Regarding the website, the Society fax number has been abandoned, links to publishers have been reinstated and Dr Bromilow has also reactivated the *Notes & Queries* section. He intends to have the website revised and updated, in particular, improving access to the membership form.

9. Archivist's Report (read by Dr Ellie Pridgeon)

Dr Pridgeon reported that she was currently liaising with Dr Paul Dryburgh, Archivist at the University of York Borthwick Institute concerning the deposit of the Church Monuments Society archive. It is intended that this will be complete by the end of 2013, and the collections moved there within the next few months.

10. Events Co-ordinator's Report (read by Dr Clive Easter)

Mr Downing reported a good attendance for the events taking place so far this year. A study day on *the Renaissance in Great Britain and Ireland: recent research and new horizons* was held in London on 16th March. David Carrington and Michael Thompson's excursion to South Lincolnshire in April received glowing reports from the President who attended. The week-long Northern Lights break in the Durham and Newcastle area, including a visit to Carlisle, was a great success and most enjoyable. Jean Wilson led a visit to Northamptonshire in August and in October there will be a visit to Gloucestershire led by Ellie Pridgeon. Together, these activities included a wide variety of monuments of all periods so as to appeal to all members' interests.

Early in 2014, Sally Badham will organise a joint meeting with the Mausoleum Society. Jane and David Kelsall will lead a visit to Middlesex and Hertfordshire on 10th May. The following year, a study day will take place at Tong on 16th May 2015.

The 2014 symposium is being held jointly with the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at the University of Kent, Canterbury. The cost will be around £250, a rise on two years ago. The call for papers is to go out in the autumn and Mr Downing and Alixe Bovey are working on an outline programme.

Report on the Society's Publications

JOURNAL (report read by Dr Rhianydd Biebrach)

Volume 27 of the journal was published in February, with a good mix of articles covering all periods and a good sprinkling of papers with a European focus. It also saw the successful introduction of the new 'Shorter Articles' section and the first appearance of a colour image on the front cover. It was published with the aid of the Isobel Thornley Bequest Fund.

Essay prize

As yet there have been no entries for the 2014 Essay Prize, contributions are encouraged.

Copy for Volume 28 is nearing finalisation and should be ready to send to the designers by the end of September, with an intended publication date of February 2014. Colour images will be produced throughout and it is hoped that this will considerably to the legibility of many illustrations as well as to the journal's overall aesthetic appeal.

Digitisation

The editors were pleased to announce that an agreement had been reached with EBSCO to digitize *Church Monuments* and they received confirmation at the end of July that volume 27 was now available to view online on the EBSCO database *Artsource*. This will immeasurable increase its potential audience and will hopefully increase submissions to the journal and more members to the Society. Thanks were offered to Mrs Moira Gittos and Dr Kelsey Wilson-Lee for seeing this development through its many stages.

Volume 28 will be the last volume for the current Book Reviews Editor, Dr Kelsey Wilson-Lee. The editors thanked her and announced her successor as Dr Sophie Oosterwijk, previous editor of the journal.

NEWSLETTER (report read by Dr Andrew Sargent)

The Newsletter Editor thanked all who had contributed to the success of the Newsletter this year, particularly to those who had written up particular excursions and events. Especial thanks were recorded to Brian and Moira Gittos for checking draft copy.

Two issues had been produced in the year since the last AGM; 28.1 and 28.2. An autumn issue (29.1) was due in October following the AGM.

The October issue is to announce a new email alerts initiative which members and non-members may opt to receive. This will provide updates between *Newsletters* on events arising at short notice, such as opportunities to view conservation work in progress and also provide reminders about booking deadlines.

The editor invited contributions of up to three pages at 400 words per page plus a good photograph. He also drew members' attention to the Notes & Queries section.

11. Report of the Cases Recorder (read by Dr David Carrington)

Dr Carrington thanked members of the Society and general public who have reported monuments at risk and for the support offered by Council.

The number of cases was down from 19 to 10—all in England, from County Durham to Devon and ranging in date from the late 13th to the mid-18th century. In some cases the Society has been approached by the parish for help in finding a conservator or grant-aid; in other cases, monuments at risk have been brought to the Society's attention and Dr Carrington has written to the parish encouraging them to seek further advice.

Thefts continue to be a concern and include several thefts of brasses and funerary helmets during the last year. During the theft of one helmet at Navestock, Essex, the monument was slightly damaged when it was used as a ladder to get to the helmet. After the spate of thefts in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire reported last year, there was one further attempted theft of a heart burial at Coberley, Gloucestershire which did not succeed.

Sally Badham's wrote to Ed Vaizey MP of the DCMS, raising concerns about bat damage to monuments. His reply pointed out current research underway at the University of Bristol. This is looking into ways of managing Natterer's bats in East Anglian churches. It would seem that acoustic deterrents are proving successful and the research is also looking at improving bat boxes. This research is due to be presented in January 2014.

12. Election of the New President

The election of a new President, Dr Jean Lesley Wilson, BA, Ph.D was proposed by council and carried unanimously.

13. Re-election of Council Officers, Events Co-ordinator and election of ordinary members of council

Other serving officers were prepared to stand for re-election and this was unanimously accepted.

Two ordinary members were proposed: Dr Madeleine Grey MA, Ph.D and Miss Hilary Wheeler BA, MA. Their election was uncontested and carried unanimously.

14. Any other business

Vice President Dr Julian Litten proposed a vote of thanks to Sally Badham for her energetic and successful work as President.

15. Date and venue for the 2014 Annual General Meeting

It was proposed that the next Annual General Meeting should be held at 2pm on the 20th September 2014 at St John's Church, Hackney.