

# **The Church Monuments Society**

## **Minutes of the 2014 AGM and accounts for the Year 2013-14**

**MINUTES of the 2014 Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2014,  
at 2pm at St John at Hackney, Lower Clapton Road, London E5 0PD**

The meeting was chaired by the Honorary President, Dr Jean Wilson.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Were received from Dr Rhianydd Biebrach, Dr Paul Cockerham, Dr Andrew Sargent, Dr John Bromilow, Dr Ellie Pridgeon, Dr Madeleine Grey, Mr Cameron Newham, Mr Mark Downing, Miss Sally Badham.

**Present:** Dr Jean Wilson, Dr Litten, Professor Kemp, Dr Easter, Dr Carrington, Mr Chivers, Miss Tomlinson, Mr Thompson, and Miss Wheeler.

**2. Approval of the minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting**

The minutes were approved. They were proposed by Dr Easter and seconded by Mrs Moira Gittos

**3. Matters Arising:**

It was proposed by Dr Wilson and seconded by Dr Easter that the new constitution should be accepted. The motion was carried unanimously.

**4. Presidential report (delivered by Dr Jean Wilson)**

The Church Monuments Society has had a full and in many respects satisfactory year.

I am happy to report that my predecessor, Sally Badham, featured in the Birthday Honours list, as did the President of our older sibling, the MBS, Martin Stuchfield – to both we offer many congratulations.

On a sadder note, our former President, and until his death, Vice-President, John Physick, died on October 14th last year. A memorial service will be held in Rochester Cathedral, Kent at 12-00 noon on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2014.

Our activities have combined day conferences, excursions, a highly successful Conference at the University of Kent at Canterbury in co-operation with the centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (we owe an enormous debt to Mark Downing and Alixe Bovey who organised it) and several more informal – “pop-up” - events,

such as David Carrington's invitation to visit Warkton (Northants) while his company was working there, which was fascinating! I would particularly like to mention an innovation – Michael Thompson, our treasurer, arranged a wonderful pop-up trip to Marholm Church (burial place of the Fitzwilliams) and Milton Hall (their home at Peterborough). We hope to have more on these lines.

Our excursions included one to Gloucestershire in October one to Hertfordshire and Middlesex, led by Jane Kelsall, and what will, it seems, be the last trip to Yorkshire churches, led by the indefatigable Peter Hacker and Patrick Farman. A highlight of this for me was a visit to Ryther which when I went many years ago was in a shocking state, and is now obviously flourishing. Peter and Patrick have done immense amounts for the Society over the years, and we are greatly in their debt.

Pop-up events are obviously more informal than the weekend trips/conferences. We can't arrange transport (though we can put members in touch with each other), we can't arrange catering – it may even be 'bring your own sandwiches'. Loos may be a problem. And of course, they tend to be mid-week, which, I am aware, cuts out a large number of members. However they are successful and I would encourage members to suggest and arrange their own – possibly on a local basis, and in conjunction with other heritage organisations. If you then circulate the Society, then the expertise available can be called on to help you.

From this you will be aware that I am very keen on co-operation with other Societies with shared interests. We have had successful joint events with both the MBS and the MMT, with more in prospect. With the MBS we sponsored a session at Kalamazoo, had a stall at the Leeds International Medieval Conference, which (we hope) at least increased awareness of our existence and publications, even if it does not produce an increase in members. We are also joint sponsors of a day conference in London in November.

With the MMT, we held a highly successful one-day conference on churchyard monuments, arranged by Sally Badham and Roger Bowdler, which was appreciated by all who attended.

With both these Societies we have formalised agreements that members may attend each other's events at member's rates – an arrangement that I hope may be expanded

in the future, with other Societies. It seems to me that those antiquarian societies with ecclesiological interests are far more effective if they co-operate.

The other main focus of the year has been the formulation of the new constitution which we are putting to you today. This has been rendered necessary by on-line publication and its implications for copyright in illustrations. It became clear that it was desirable to change the Society from being a Charity (with all Council, as Trustees bearing liability) to a Charitable Incorporated organisation, where only some of the Council are Trustees, and the Society is the charitable equivalent of a limited company. It has been a very tedious process, and I am profoundly grateful to all involved, particularly our Treasurer, our Secretary, and Moira Gittos, for the work they have put in. Provided the constitution is accepted by the Society, and by the Charity Commissioners, members should not actually notice any difference in the way the Society works.

The Society depends on the participation and enthusiasm of all its members: I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in its activities this year, and particularly those who have helped me so much during my first year as President.

**5. Hon. Treasurer's report** (read by Mr Michael Thompson)

Copies of the accounts ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 as examined by Mr Robert Burborough of Stephenson Smart & Co were provided. The total income for the year was £24,404 and expenses £26, 764. There was a small deficit of £2, 360. Total assets less liabilities on 31 March 2014 were 47, 389.

The Claude Blair Conservation Memorial Fund was closed during the year. After consultation with the executors, the accumulated fund was awarded as a grant towards the restoration of monuments in the Athlehampton chapel of the Martyn family at the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, Puddletown, Dorset. The sum paid to the Parochial Church Council was £8, 890.

The financial position is good, even though these accounts disclose a deficit for the year. One reason is that the whole of the production costs of volume 28 of the Journal have been paid for this year. Normally the cost is spread between two financial years. In addition volume 28 was much larger and all illustrations were in colour. Also

media copyright insurance was taken out during the year for a premium of £530. The several study days and excursions made an overall deficit of £623. Cash at HSBC (current and deposit accounts) was £16,574. The COIF General Fund deposit account balance (now £6, 838) has been reduced by the transfer to a separate fund of the £5,000 grant received from the J.P. Getty Foundation some years ago. Further legal fees have been charged to the John Coales fund, so the balance is only £492. It is pleasing to note the market value of the investments with M & G and COIF totalled £31,068 at the year-end.

The accounts were accepted

They were proposed by Jane Kelsall and seconded by Dr Carrington

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

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

Proposed by Michael Thompson and seconded by Jane Kelsall.

**7. Hon. Membership Secretary's report (read by Dr Clive Easter)**

The Membership Secretary reported a slight drop in membership, down from 517 members to 506. Since the last Newsletter we have recruited eleven new members including three in the last week.

Reasons for the drop in numbers include deaths, age, economic hardship and inability to participate in events. Three corporate members have been lost through resignation or non-payment of subscription. Dr Easter will as usual send reminders to those late in paying subscriptions and hopes that the economic upturn will go some way to remedy the situation.

At present there are:

445 Ordinary and Family members

61 Corporate members

Total 506

**8. Hon Publicity Officer's Report (read for Dr Bromilow by Barbara Tomlinson)**

Dr Bromilow sifts Society emails which contain some serious enquiries which are passed on to experts on the Council for reply. The main site is regularly updated but

will be redesigned and transferred to a new system in the coming year. The publicity leaflet has been redesigned and will appear on the website in a modified form so joining via the website will be easier in future.

The county guides will be split from the main site, so the latter can be readily accessed from mobile devices.

The Monument of the Month series continues. More contributions are always welcome. This month's entry is unusual and relevant to the centenary of the First World War.

**9. Archivist's Report** (read for Dr Pridgeon by Barbara Tomlinson)

Dr Ellie Pridgeon reported that after lengthy discussions over the terms and conditions of the deposit, with the Borthwick Institute for Archives (University of York), the CMS archive was finally transferred to the University in July and is now available for consultation. Although it is not catalogued and does not (as yet) feature on their online catalogue, there is a finding aid available on request. The archive is essentially on long-term loan, and the CMS can choose to withdraw it after the initial five-year period. The Society will continue to deposit its records with the Borthwick on an annual basis.

Bothwick Archivists Chris Webb, Paul Dryburgh and Amanda Jones were thanked for their help.

**10. Events Co-ordinator's Report** (read for Mark Downing by Barbara Tomlinson)

Mark Downing reported that the recent symposium in Canterbury had been a huge success. The excursions which took place to Hertfordshire and Yorkshire were also well attended as was also the Churchyard conference at Senate House. Thanks were extended to all who organised those events. The programme of forthcoming events was looking very good. There was an excursion into Suffolk planned for October and in November there was a joint conference with the Monumental Brass Society on post-graduate research at Senate House.

Looking forward to 2015, there will be an excursion in May or June in Nottinghamshire, led by David Carrington and Michael Thompson, a study day at Tong on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and an excursion around Wolverhampton led by Robin Draper.

The events planned for 2016 included Julian Litten's proposed joint conference in May with the Mausoleum Trust and the possibility of a study day at Lichfield Cathedral and St George's Chapel, Windsor.

## 11. Report on the Society's Publications

JOURNAL (report read by Dr Easter on behalf of Dr Rhianydd Biebrach, Dr Sophie Oosterwijk and Dr Paul Cockerham,)

The editors reported the publication of volume 28 of the journal with a good mix of periods and a strong European focus. Every article benefitted from the use of full colour throughout. They were sad to say goodbye to the book reviews editor, Dr Kelcey Wilson-Lee but her shoes had been amply filled by the return of Dr Oosterwijk to the editorial team. The volume was supported by generous grants from Lincoln Record Society, the Mark Fitch Fund, the Francis Coales Charitable Foundation and Sir Tony Baldry. It was digitised by EBSCO and was available to view on their *Artsource* database.

There were two entries for the Essay Prize, but the judges decided that as neither contribution was up to the required standard this year, the prize should not be awarded.

The copy for volume 29 was nearing finalisation and would soon be ready to send to the designers. The estimated publication date was February 2015. There were no submissions of Shorter Articles this time, but some bumper contributions had made up for this deficit. Five articles by Timothy Connor, Oliver Harris, Nigel Saul, David Wilson and Jean Wilson were planned for inclusion and Dr Oosterwijk had received nineteen book reviews.

An article on Edward Onslow Ford's monument to the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley would probably be held over to volume 30 which would also include a major survey on medieval copper alloy tombs in Europe.

NEWSLETTER (report read by Dr Clive Easter on behalf of Dr Andrew Sargent)

The Editor thanked everyone who had contributed to the success of the *Newsletter* including those who had written up individual excursions and events. He particularly thanked Brian and Moira Gittos for checking draft copy.

Two issues have been produced since the last AGM; 29.1 and 29.2. An autumn issue (30.1) is due in October following the AGM.

The Editor encouraged members to contribute. Short pieces were most welcome (up to three pages at 400 words plus a good photograph). Researcher's queries could also

be published to tap into the Society's collective knowledge. He encouraged those who attended events to write them up (900 words and a photograph) and reminded volunteers that the purpose was to make those who did not attend wish they had.

He reminded members about *Stop Press!* the Society email alerts initiative which anyone could opt to receive. This was to advertise opportunities that arose between *Newsletters* such as the chance to see conservation work in progress and also to offer reminders about booking deadlines. To join, he asked members to send their email address to [andrewsargent@gmail.com](mailto:andrewsargent@gmail.com) and include 'Subscribe to CMS Stop Press' in the subject line.

12. **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 same themes of theft, poor condition and damage from bats recur every year.

Thefts reported in the last year included the portrait busts from two monuments in Norfolk churches – Caistor and Martham—both of which, thankfully, have been recovered with slight damage to both, and major damage to the socle at Caistor. Dr Carrington was pleased to report that the funerary helm stolen last year from Stoke Poges had now been recovered. However, earlier this year a set of funerary armour from Bamburgh (Northumberland) was also stolen. Monumental brasses have been stolen in the last year from Letheringham (Suffolk) and Wentworth (South Yorkshire). Dr Carrington was working on behalf of the CMS to compile a list of stolen monuments, in collaboration with the Monumental Brass Society and with Churchcare. This will make it easier to track thefts in future and will provide a ready reference for the authorities.

The CMS was also compiling a database of churches where bat damage was known to be occurring as part of the Society's campaign to put the safeguarding of the national heritage of monuments on at least an equal footing with the protection of endangered wildlife.

Dr Carrington offered the support of the Society to the Victoria and Albert Museum in their campaign to save for the nation the four bronze angels from Cardinal Wolsey's monument.

He was pleased to report that following numerous letters from the CMS and other societies, Bath Abbey has abandoned its plan to move Bishop Montagu's monument to a new location.

13. **Election of new Vice-President**

The election of a new Vice-President, Sally Badham MBE, FSA was proposed by Dr Professor Kemp, seconded by Moira Gittos and carried unanimously.

14. **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: Mrs Moira Gittos AMA, FSA by Sally Badham seconded by Cameron Newham; and Andrew Skelton BA (Hons) AIFA by Dr Jean Wilson seconded by Barbara Tomlinson. Their election was uncontested and was passed unanimously.

15. **Date and venue for the 2015 Annual General Meeting**

**It was proposed that the next Annual General Meeting should be held at 2pm on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at the St. Albans Centre, Leigh Place, Baldwins Gardens, Holborn, London EC1 7AB**