

The Church Monuments Society

Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting held at 2.00pm on Saturday, 22 September 2018, St Olave, Hart Street, London EC3R 7NB

Dr Jean Wilson, President welcomed everyone to the 2018 Annual General Meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Council members Mrs Moira Ackers, Prof Brian Kemp, Dr Ellie Pridgeon, Dr Andrew Sargent, Dr Christian Steer and Dr Kelcey Wilson-Lee and members Roger Bowdler, Barbara Cocker, Brian Cook, James Stevens Curl, Bryan Egan, Blanche Ellis, Katherine Eustace, Val Franklin, Neil Iden, Jane Kelsall, Richard Knowles, James Miller, Annie Norman, David Pallister, Pat Reynolds, Iona Roberts, Basil Smith, the Squire de Lisle and Iris Westby.

2. **The Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting** were approved with one correction – **Apologies for Absence** for Franklyn read Franklin.

3. Matters Arising

Ben Elliott reported that there had been damage, caused by candle wax, to two monuments, the Cheney monument and the tomb of the boy bishop, in Salisbury Cathedral. He had raised the matter and hoped that the new Dean would be sympathetic; Dr Wilson asked him to stay in touch with David Carrington.

4. Presidential Address – Dr Jean Wilson

Before making her address, Dr Wilson presented the prize to the winner of the **Photographic Competition** - Chris Lockyear for a detail of the Knightley tomb at Fawsley, Northamptonshire. She also thanked the judges Cameron Newham, Tim Sutton and Roger Rosewell.

I must begin by expressing my gratitude to all those who have supported me,

Thanks, then, to everyone who has served on Council, and particularly the Officers of the Society: our Treasurer, Michael Thompson & our Secretaries, Barbara Tomlinson and her successor, Hilary Wheeler, our Conservation Officer, David Carrington, our Events Secretary Mark Downing, our Membership Secretary Clive Easter (both very long-standing members of the Society), the successive editors of the Journal and Newsletter, Paul Cockerham, Rhianydd Bierbrach, Jonathan Trigg, Sophie Oosterwijk and Andrew Sargent, and our Archivist, Ellie Pridgeon. Last, although by no means least, a special debt of gratitude is owed to our Publicity officers, John Bromilow and his successor, Maddy Gray, who manages our Twitter Account and the splendid new website, which she has overseen!

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to our Vice-Presidents, Brian Kemp, Julian Litten and Sally Badham, without whose wise advice & necessary reminders my term would have been much more fraught.

I would also like to thank our members who, while not on Council, do so much to help the Society: Sue Kelland, who oversees distribution of back copies of the Journal, and Tony Carr, responsible for leaflets & brochures.

Also those members who organise tours: Patrick Farman & the late Peter Hacker, Robin Draper, Andrew Skelton, Jane & the late David Kelsall, and Peter Bolton, whose Warwickshire tour is coming up: see the website for details. Suggestions for and (even better) offers to lead tours are always welcome!

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to our Royal Patron, the Duke of Gloucester, for his support over the years: he has on two occasions (the latest this year) enabled the Society to be represented at Royal Garden Parties, which those attending have thoroughly enjoyed!

This has been an innovative and busy year for the Society: the most striking development is the new website, which I hope that you all find satisfactory. Council has also had to ensure that the Society complies with new data protection and safeguarding regulations, and these policies may now be found on the website (under Governance).

Details of the Society's events and publications may be found in the respective reports, so I will not enumerate them here.

My final thanks must go to you, the members of the Society. If you did not keep up your subscriptions, attend events (often involving heroic cross-country journeys), read our publications, contribute to the website (more submissions for Monument of the Month, please!) the Society could not exist. The amount of accumulated knowledge you collectively hold is enormous - as was displayed at the Hereford Symposium. So please, continue the way you are, defend and appreciate monuments, and convey your enthusiasm to others - and if anyone here can produce a more plausible explanation for the odd lumps of stone on the Denton tomb at Hereford than that of three of our most erudite members - that they represent the droppings of the heraldic animal serving as Alexander Denton's footrest - would they please let me know?

5. Hon Treasurer's Report – Mr Michael Thompson

Mr Thompson's report and the Accounts had been circulated and there were no questions:

AGM 2018: Treasurer's Report

1. I am pleased to report that the accounts for the year show a surplus of £2,100. However, it ought to be noted that in the year to 31st.March no interim payments were made to the printer Henry Ling towards the production of Volume 32 of the Journal. The subscription income is up.

2. The Journal is an excellent publication, and all illustrations are now in colour. The charge for Volume 31 amounted to £10,924. Volume 32 will be invoiced at about £7,500.
3. The newsletter continues to be issued twice a year, and the cost remains much the same as in previous years. I know how useful members find this publication.
4. The travel expenses incurred by members of Council went up by fifty percent in the year, in spite of in most cases being the cost of standard advance tickets.
5. It is necessary for the Society to have liability insurance, not just for the events organised, but also to cover transgressions such as breaching copyright in respect of illustrations or media matters.
6. The redesign of the website has been completed, and went “live” this summer. The cost amounted to £8000 and this will be shown in next year’s accounts. Council was delighted to receive an award of £1,000 from the PF Charitable Foundation, and this money will be used to defray the cost of the website.
7. The cash at bank was £1699, and on deposit stood at £24,228. The balance sheet shows the book value, or purchase costs of the unit trust investments. In the notes, the market value is given as £61,829.
8. Last year I reported that an application to register the Society as a Charitable Incorporated organisation had been rejected on a minor point [the use of the word “the” in place of “a”]. When I came to register a second time the rules had changed. Registration to convert during 2018 is governed by the turnover of the charity, and the Society was eligible after May. However, further statements and written policies have to be attached to the application. It was felt appropriate that the incoming president should contribute to those papers. Consequently the application will now be submitted in the coming weeks.

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

This was unanimously agreed.

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

Dr Wilson reminded everyone to ensure that they had updated their subscription. Dr Easter’s report had been circulated and there were no questions:

Last year I reported that the membership stood at a total of 511. This year it has dropped slightly and we now have 499 members in total - 63 Corporate members and 436 Ordinary and Family members. While we had an exceptional level of recruitment last year we also had slightly higher than average losses including resignations, those removed for non-payment of subscriptions and deaths that totalled thirty-six. This is a little higher than normal and represents 7% turbulence whereas about 5- 6% turbulence is the norm. On a more positive note we have been able to recruit one new Corporate member this year, thus reversing a trend that has seen our Corporate members leaving us year on year almost entirely due to funding cuts and the need to make economies.

I am happy to say that new members come in reasonably frequently and since the last Annual General Meeting we have recruited 24 new members with a burst of activity in June at the start of our membership year. Our impressive new web site has new membership forms built in and it is clear that this is the main vehicle by which new members are recruited as these revised forms have been used in about ten new membership applications. Very occasionally I receive a membership application from one of the forms we deposit in churches and at other meetings and events

The increase in subscription rates continues to have gone unnoticed by some of our members and it has been necessary to contact them and ask that they complete a new standing order form. Of those contacted just under half have so far responded with revised standing order forms and cheques for the arrears. Further responses are expected.

I am pleased to report that, overall, the membership of the society remains reasonably stable. As I have already stated, members usually resign for reasons of age and its associated infirmities and only very rarely for financial reasons. No-one has ever resigned because of any stated dissatisfaction with our publications, events or other activities although one recent resignation claimed that the journal was too academic!

8. Hon Publicity Officer's Report – Prof Madeleine Gray

Prof Gray asked to be notified of corrections, details of events and submissions for Monument of the Month. Her report had been circulated and there were no questions:

The main news of the year (as most members will be aware) has been the redesign of the web site. This has received a very good response. The new site runs on WordPress software and can be maintained by the Publicity Officer. We are all grateful to Janet Groome for her sterling work in keeping the old site going.

An unexpected charitable donation enabled us to pay ConsideredCreative to move the Monument of the Month archive across and to create interactive maps showing the location of all the monuments we have covered.

Other new features include a blog which can be used for all kinds of Society news, news from related organisations and topics raised for debate in the Press and on Twitter. Ideas and contributions for the blog can be sent to madeleine.gray@southwales.ac.uk.

This year we decided that the Monument of the Month would focus on war memorials. This has been very successful and we have featured contributions considering single monuments and community memorials, looking at social history, design and construction. Next year we will revert to considering a wider range of memorials: as ever we welcome contributions. You will see from past contributions that we like the important and significant but also the intriguing and quirky.

The Twitter account continues to be lively and encourages debate and discussion. We now have nearly 4,000 followers.

Along with the Newsletter and Stop Press, the web site is an important venue for publicising events and other news. It helps if organisers of events and others with news can send a photograph as well as text (text as a Word document) to madeleine.gray@southwales.ac.uk

9. Hon Archivist's Report – Dr Ellie Pridgeon

Dr Pridgeon's report had been circulated and there were no questions:

I continue to manage the paper and digital documents relating to the CMS meetings and AGMs and will deposit these in the CMS archive at the Borthwick Institute each year.

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

Mr Downing's report had been circulated and there were no questions:

Since my report for the 2017 AGM, there have been a number of successful events that have taken place. Sally Badham organised a very successful day titled *Interpreting Medieval Monuments: Iconography and Meaning*. The event was held at London School of Economics, London, and was very quickly subscribed. Robin Draper's coach excursion to Staffordshire on 19th May and Andrew Skelton's excursion to Mid/West Surrey on 18th August were very well attended and thanks are given to these organisers. On October 20th there is to be an excursion to South Warwickshire, organised by Peter Bolton. The society's biennial symposium at the Green Dragon Hereford, titled *Monuments of Hereford and Herefordshire* from 14th-16th September was a very enjoyable event, attracting some 40 delegates.

Events planned for 2019.

In the Spring there will be a coach excursion to Northamptonshire lead by Jean Wilson; a two-day coach excursion to Dorset and Somerset on June 15th, starting from Sherborne organised by Mark Downing (no accommodation will be included which will be up to members to organise themselves). A study day at Kilkenny is planned for September organised by Brian and Moira Gittos. A walking tour of Stamford churches on October 5th will be organised by Julian Litten.

11. Reports on the Society's Publications –Mr Jonathan Trigg and Dr Andrew Sargent

Dr Wilson said that the latest edition of the Journal would soon be with members and there were no questions for Mr Trigg. Copies of the front cover and contents were available.

Dr Sargent's report, on the Newsletter, had been circulated and there were no questions:

The *Newsletter* depends on its contributors, and the Editor would like to thank all who have contributed to its success 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; 33.1 & 33.2. An Autumn issue (34.1) is due in October/November following the AGM, and as an experiment all illustrations will be printed in colour. Please let the Editor have any feedback.

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). We are looking for an impression rather than a précis. If this sounds possible, have a word with the organiser in advance as they will welcome a keen volunteer.

Stop Press! Council is concerned that only 10% of our membership are currently signed up to receive this non-intrusive email reminder and notification service. This means that members may not hear about CMS and other relevant events, including opportunities which come up at short notice. Members (and indeed interested non-members) may sign up to receive this service by sending their email address to andrewsargent@gmail.com and including 'Subscribe to CMS Stop Press' in the subject line. There have been 5 issues of Stop Press! since the last AGM, so you will not be bombarded! (It is easy to unsubscribe.)

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

Dr Carrington's report had been circulated and there were no questions:

The Society's Conservation Cases Recorder's role has the following facets:

- Providing advice to parishes seeking help with the care of their monuments.
- Responding to expressions of concern received from the Society's membership and beyond. This might include bat damage.
- Keeping a watching brief on reported thefts.
- Monitoring and at times becoming directly involved in cases where monuments become at risk due to the closure of churches.

Fortunately there have been relatively few new cases reported to me since the last AGM – seven in total. Some simply require a helpful letter to the parish and this often leads to on-going dialogue and continuing support and encouragement – not always successfully as the challenge faced by many small parishes in caring for often large and complex monuments can be huge. A case in point here is the Pile monument at Collingbourne Kingston, Wiltshire, upon which I now have quite a large file.

Other cases require site visits, for various reasons. The condition and apparent disregard for the monuments at Langar (Nottinghamshire) have been of concern for some time but I have been invited to meet the vicar and churchwardens at the church to talk through concerns and what might be done. Elsewhere I might have apparent neglect or poor condition reported to me, sometimes second hand, and I feel it incumbent upon myself to find out more before contacting the parish. An example here includes churchyard monuments at Usk (Monmouthshire).

Given that this year marks 100 years since the end of the First World War there has been a great deal of interest in War Memorials, as shown by the Monument of the Month on our new website. Advice on these is generally well served by the War Memorials Trust and I have not had any cases in this area.

Finally, in the last 12 months I have completed the cataloguing of conservation cases dealt with by the Society from as early as 1980 up to the present day, covering the work of four Conservation Cases Recorders. We are up to number 279 at present. These are cross-referenced and on a database to make it easier for myself and future Recorders to check if a case has arisen before – as at Langar.

I conclude as always 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.

13. Election of President

The candidates were Mark Downing and Clive Easter and the votes were counted by Sally Badham and Julian Litten. Dr Wilson announced that Mark Downing had been elected and he took the Chair.

14. Election of Officers and Two Ordinary Members of Council

Mr Downing asked that the Officers and new Council members be elected en bloc, noting that there was now a vacancy for Events Co-ordinator, and this was unanimously agreed.

Miss Sally Badham	Vice President
Prof Brian Kemp	Vice President
Dr Julian Litten	Vice President
Dr David Carrington	Hon Conservation Cases Recorder
Dr Clive Easter	Hon Membership Secretary
Dr Ellie Pridgeon	Hon Archivist
Dr Andrew Sargent	Newsletter Editor
Mr Michael Thompson	Hon treasurer
Mr Jonathan Trigg	Journal Editor
Miss Hilary Wheeler	Hon Secretary

Ordinary Council members – Mrs Moira Ackers, Mr Jon Bayliss, Dr Roger Bowdler, Mrs Moira Gittos, Dr Christian Steer and Dr Kelcey Wilson-Lee.

15. Date and Venue of the 2019 Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 21 September 2019 at the St Albans Centre, Leigh Place, London EC1N 7AB.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2.45pm.

Following the meeting Julian Litten, on behalf of the Society, thanked Jean Wilson and made a presentation to her and to Norman Hammond.

Julian Litten then spoke about John Bushnell and his monument to Elizabeth Pepys, Jon Bayliss spoke about the brasses, using notes written by Derrick Chivers, and Jean Wilson spoke about the monuments: followed by refreshments.