

## The Church Monuments Society

### Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting held at 12.00 noon on Saturday, 22 September 2019, St Alban's Centre, Leigh Place, Baldwin's Gardens, London, EC1N 7AB

Mr Mark Downing, President, welcomed everyone to the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Council members Miss Sally Badham, Dr Julian Litten, Dr Ellie Pridgeon, Dr Christian Steer, Mr Jonathan Trigg and Dr Kelcey Wilson-Lee and members Stephen Chater, Norman Hammond, Iona Roberts, Tim Sutton and Jean Wilson.

2. **The Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting** were approved with one correction – **Presidential Address** Stephen Chater was also an excursion organiser.

3. There were no **Matters Arising**.

#### 4. **Presidential Address – Mr Mark Downing**

Mr Downing's Address had been circulated.

The Society holds a biennial essay prize competition with the winning entry for 2018 being Ann Adams with the title of her essay being "The tomb of Jacques de Lalaing Reputation, identity, and family status". She is awarded a certificate plus a cheque for £250.

In August Professor Brian Kemp sadly passed away. He was a founder member of the Society and President, serving from 1991-1996; Brian was also Vice-President and a great supporter of the Society. Can we please stand for a minute silence in his memory.

I wish to thank the members of Council who have served the Society during the past twelve months plus those who will be leaving the council who have served for three years; John Bayliss and Moira Ackers, however Moira is proposed for the role as Events Coordinator so will remain on Council.

My first year as the Society's President has seen a long standing member of Council Clive Easter stepping down as Membership Secretary. A post he held for 18 years, of which a huge gratitude is owed by the Society for him doing this. This position as Membership Secretary has been filled by Claire Downing to whom the Society is extremely grateful for her doing so. Our long standing Treasurer, Michael Thompson, will be standing down at the 2020 AGM. This is a very important position which the Society needs to fill, therefore if any member knows of anyone who is capable or willing to do this role then contact myself or the Secretary. Also Sophie Oosterwijk has stepped down as Book Review Editor, and again this position also needs to be filled. While the Society is functioning well we need willing members to come forward to help run it.

The Society has held good excursions during the past 12 months and to continue doing this we need members to organise future events, therefore if you are willing to organise one please let a member of Council know.

## **5. Hon Treasurer's Report – Mr Michael Thompson**

Mr Thompson's report had been circulated and there were no questions.

1. I am pleased to present the accounts for another year to this members' meeting. As I have mentioned before, the style of preparing the accounts has changed from being an Income & Expenditure Account to a Receipts & Payments Statement. I understand the accountants were obliged to make this change, to comply with professional accounting standards, as a full audit is not undertaken.
2. The accounts show a deficit of £5,389 for the year. I assure you this is no cause for concern. The reason is that in the year £8,550 was spent on commissioning the new website, securing a new domain name and so on. Under the Income & Expenditure basis of preparing accounts, that sum could have been charged as a capital expense; in which case, the surplus would be shown as £3,161 [ $£(-5,389+8,550)$ ].
3. Further as a result of this change, year-to-year comparisons are now misleading, since the current format does not allow for accruals and arrears. For instance, subscriptions paid in advance, say in March, are now included in the year in which the money is received. Before the change, that money was accrued and carried forward in the balance sheet as income for the following year.
4. With regard to the income for the year, the subscriptions are shown as about £500 less than last year. There were fewer events, which explains the drop-in income such activities. However, please remember the objective when setting prices is to 'break even' or make a modest surplus. You will see the successful symposium held at Hereford did just that.
5. We all acknowledge the Journal is an excellent publication. The charge for Volume 32 was £8,457. Volume 33 is likely to be invoiced at about £8,000.
6. The newsletter continues to be issued twice a year. The cost has risen compared to the previous year, as have the expenses for Council meetings. This can be attributed largely to the room hire at Senate House.
7. It is necessary for the Society to have liability insurance, not just for the events organised, but also to cover possible transgressions such as breaching copyright in respect of illustrations or media matters. In 2017-18, the accounts showed the premium paid for two years.
8. Lastly, the cash at bank was £2808. The sum on deposit with HSBC was £9,370 and with COIF £8,029. The balance sheet shows the book value [ $£43,968$ ], or purchase costs of the unit trust investments. In the notes, the market value is given as £61829 as at 31 March, 2019.

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

This was proposed by Mr Michael Thompson, seconded by Dr Sophie Oosterwijk and unanimously agreed.

## **7. Hon Membership Secretary –Mrs Claire Downing**

Mrs Downing's report had been circulated and there were no questions.

This year the total membership stands at 506

This is made up of 56 corporate 428 ordinary 18 family and 4 student memberships.

In my November report I will breakdown the membership further as an over view of where our subscribers are from.

I am still waiting for subscription payments from eighteen corporate and ninety-seven ordinary members. From reading past reports this does seem to be the trend and reminder notices will be sent in November.

Since the last AGM we have recruited twenty-five new members although we have lost four ordinary members and one corporate member due to non-payment of subscriptions and, resignations.

Six Corporate members although we have their details on the data base for last year did not renew their corporate membership for 2018/2019.

The increase in subscription rates still continues to be a slight problem. I have contacted everyone concerned with a gentle reminder and a new standing order form for their attention.

It would seem that, overall, the membership of the society remains as stable as last year.

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

Prof Gray's report had been circulated and she asked that if anyone would be able to assist her with minor tweaks to the website.

The new web site continues to be well received. We are planning a few minor modifications including a more informative method of recording payments and a page to encourage donations and legacies.

In July the President and I, with the help of the Conservation Officer, staffed a stall at the Societies' Fair of the Leeds International Medieval Congress. The Leeds Congress is the world's second biggest medieval studies conference, with over 2,000 delegates. We had a busy and fruitful day, signing several new members and re-enrolling a few lapsed ones, and we were able to publicise our activities to a range of established academics and early career researchers. I was also able to present a paper at the conference on Welsh poetic evidence for tomb carvings and burial practices. More details will be found on the blog at <https://churchmonumentsociety.org/2019/07/06/cms-and-the-leeds-imc>.

Monument of the Month is now back to featuring a more general range of monuments: we have had an effigial plaque from Ladenburg (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), a tombstone shaped like a medicine bottle from Aberystwyth, and the monument to Sir Redvers Buller which dominates the church of Holy Cross, Crediton, as well as more traditional effigies and wall monuments. Though not exactly a monument, we also featured Archbishop Tenison's funerary mitre, found in the Archiepiscopal Burial Vault at St Mary's, Lambeth. We welcome further contributions: send them to the Publicity Officer at [madeleine.gray@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:madeleine.gray@southwales.ac.uk). As you will see from past Monuments of the Month, they can be significant, interesting or just quirky. Short notices for Monument of the Month can serve as preliminaries for more detailed academic study, or can be used to get wider readership for something already published.

The Twitter account continues to be lively and encourages debate and discussion. We now have nearly 4,500 followers. Discussion on Twitter has produced some entries on the blog, and we have also had guest posts. We had a short note in the Society of Antiquaries' online newsletter *Salon* about one blog post, on bare-breasted angels on Baroque tomb carvings.

The blog can be used for all kinds of Society news, news from related organisations as well as topics raised for debate in the Press and on Twitter. We welcome contributions: you can send these to [madeleine.gray@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:madeleine.gray@southwales.ac.uk).

Along with the Newsletter and Twitter, the web site is an important venue for publicising events and other news. Any news on the web site is also posted on Twitter. 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](mailto: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.

During the last year I have managed the documents, both paper and digital, relating to all CMS meetings and the AGM. These are deposited in the Society's archive at the Borthwick Institute each year.

## **10. Events – Mr Mark Downing**

Following his election as President, Mr Mark Downing had continued to oversee events and presented the report.

Since the 2018 AGM, there have been a number of successful excursions. On October 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Bolton led an excursion to South Warwickshire; 27<sup>th</sup> April Michael Thompson led a tour of Northamptonshire churches where members used their own transport; on 15/16<sup>th</sup> June Mark Downing led a two-day coach excursion to Somerset/Dorset. All were well attended and thanks are given to those organisers. On October 5<sup>th</sup> there is a walking tour of Stamford churches led by Jon Bayliss.

### Events planned for 2020.

On 25<sup>th</sup> April there will be a coach excursion to Derbyshire led by Robin Draper; 16/17<sup>th</sup> May a study weekend at Kilkenny by Brian and Moira Gittos. The biennial symposium will be a joint conference with the Monumental Brass Society from 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> September at the Dukes Head Hotel, Kings Lynn. In October there is a proposed coach excursion in Nottinghamshire.

Derrick Chivers asked if there would be further excursions by car. Mr Thompson replied that, if convenient, car excursions were a good way forward and could allow access to churches that could not be reached by coach. He added that a car excursion or walking tour were less costly than a coach tour. Mr Chivers asked if this should be emphasised as a way of encouraging people to organise excursions. Andrew Skelton asked how many people had joined the car excursion and Mr Thompson replied there had been 19 people and five cars. John Dyson felt that cost should not be used as an excuse for not doing something. Mr Downing said that the questions raised would be discussed by Council.

## **11. Reports on the Society's Publications**

## **Newsletter – Dr Andrew Sargent**

Dr Sargent's report had been circulated and he said that, as always he was keen to receive items from new contributors.

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 published in the year since the last AGM: 34.1 & 34.2. This year the Society experimented with printing illustrations in colour throughout, though as yet the Editor has received no feedback from members. An Autumn issue (35.1) is due in October/November following the AGM.

As with everything the Society does, the *Newsletter* depends on our membership, so all members are encouraged to consider whether they could contribute. 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 – something to make other members resolve not to miss out next time! If this sounds possible, have a word with the organiser in advance as they will welcome a keen volunteer.

**Stop Press!** Due to the poor take-up of this notification service, Council decided that it should be discontinued.

Mr Downing said that there was no report on the **Journal**.

## **12. Hon Conservation Cases Recorder – 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.

In the last 12 months I have dealt with only 13 new cases – this has been pretty much the average over the last few years.

I visited Coleorton church (Leicestershire) with Moira Ackers, where we met a churchwarden. There is a large alabaster monument here, to Sir Thomas Beaumont (d.1607) with an effigy on a tomb chest with an arch over, complete with Cockleshell marble 'jewels'. It's in really poor condition, but then so is the church generally with a myriad of damp issues, and with problems with access and long-term viability. I have written to the parish, but can really only emphasise the significance of the monument and how its survival is so closely tied to the condition of the church.

There always seem to be a handful of new cases arising at each Symposium, and Hereford was no exception. I have a half dozen or so cases in and around Hereford, not least of all a fine 14<sup>th</sup> C composition inlaid slab in the Cathedral. I have had a most successful dialogue with the Cathedral's Buildings & Property Manager, who has at my encouragement actively sought to engage a conservator to provide a report. Unfortunately, he has found it hard to find somebody to take it on, and his preferred conservator has advised him (by complete coincidence) that he really ought to engage my services. I try very hard to avoid placing myself in conflict of interest positions – probably to my own detriment at times – but I have discussed this particular case with Mark Downing, the Society's President, and I will be taking this on in a private capacity – which actually allows me to provide more specific technical advice and estimates that I can't do whilst acting for the Society.

I have also engaged with a number of cases in Yorkshire, prompted by Brian and Moira Gittos's new book 'Interpreting Medieval Effigies' and questions raised at the launch earlier this year. In particular I am taking up concerns about the wonderful military effigy at Felixkirk (North Yorkshire), which I have re-visited, discussed with the incumbent, but have yet to formally follow up. As ever, there aren't enough hours in the day.

My latest case, which I have yet to follow up, is a 19<sup>th</sup> century wall monument at Exeter Cathedral which seems to be at risk of losing its gothic surround.

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 the President**

Mr Thompson proposed that Mr Mark Downing be elected and this unanimously agreed.

### **14. Election of Officers and Two Ordinary Members of Council**

Mr Downing said that Dr Sophie Oosterwijk and Dr Jean Wilson were proposed as Vice Presidents, Mrs Moira Ackers as Hon Events Co-ordinator, Dr Ann Adams as Journal Editor and Dr David Lepine and Dr Adam White as Ordinary Members of Council. He asked that they and all the Officers be elected en bloc and this was unanimously agreed.

Miss Sally Badham	Vice President
Dr Julian Litten	Vice President
Dr Sophie Oosterwijk	Vice President
Dr Jean Wilson	Vice President

Mrs Moira Ackers  
Dr Ann Adams  
Dr David Carrington  
Mrs Claire Downing  
Prof Madeleine Gray  
Dr Ellie Pridgeon  
Dr Andrew Sargent  
Mr Michael Thompson  
Mr Jonathan Trigg  
Miss Hilary Wheeler

Hon Events Organiser  
Journal Editor  
Hon Conservation Cases Recorder  
Hon Membership Secretary  
Hon Publicity Officer  
Hon Archivist  
Newsletter Editor  
Hon Treasurer  
Journal Editor  
Hon Secretary

Ordinary Council members – Dr Roger Bowdler, Mrs Moira Gittos, Dr David Lepine, Dr Christian Steer, Dr Adam White and Dr Kelcey Wilson-Lee.

### **15. Any Other Business**

Andrew Skelton said that the Culpeper embroidery would be displayed at All Saints' Church, Hollingbourne, Kent on 23 November 2019 and Prof Gray asked him for details for the website.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.40pm.

**The date and venue of the 2020 Annual General Meeting** – Saturday, 12 September 2020 at St Andrew, Holborn, 5-7 St Andrew Street, London EC4A 3AF.