

## **The Church Monuments Society**

### **Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting held at 12 noon on Saturday, 10 September 2022 at the St Alban's Centre, Leigh Place, Baldwin's Gardens, London EC1N 7AB**

Mr Mark Downing, President welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting and invited everyone to stand in remembrance of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

**1. Apologies for absence** were received from Council members; Dr Ann Adams, Miss Sally Badham, Miss Elizabeth Blood, Dr Julian Litten, Dr Sophie Oosterwijk, Dr Andrew Sargent and Dr Adam White; in addition, Mr Jonathan Trigg's apology was missed from last year's Minutes. Apologies from members of the Society were received from; Val Franklin, Brian Gittos, Philip Lankester, Anne Norman, Iona Roberts, Tim Sutton, Michael Thompson and Iris Westby.

#### **2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting.**

The Minutes were unanimously approved – proposed Mr Jon Dawson and seconded Dr Jean Wilson.

#### **3. Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising.

#### **4. Presidential Address**

'Dear Members and friends,

Firstly I wish to thank all officers and council who have kept the society going since my last address and especially those members who are leaving after their 3 year term on council has expired.

It is with great pride that the society has done very well over the last twelve months, especially with the autumn and spring lectures and I wish to thank Elizabeth Blood and Moira Ackers for their organisation and their willingness to continue with these lectures. These online lectures have been a revelation for the society which has also increased our membership. The YouTube channel containing past lectures is also well received.

The society has successfully resumed in-person meetings since the pandemic with a meeting at Sutton Coalfield and Birmingham, plus a coach excursion to Derbyshire; thanks must be given to Robin Draper for organising these. Yours truly held a well-attended study day at Bottesford in June. The joint symposium at Kings Lynn with the Monumental Brass Society finally took place last weekend; this was postponed from 2020. This was organised by yours truly and David Lapine, with thanks to all involved that made this event a true success. Next month is a conference titled: Last Rites,

Funerals and Funeral Monuments. Plans are in hand for events for 2023 which will be advertised in the Spring Newsletter.

The society has increased its membership from the previous year and members have good value with their membership with the excellent journal and newsletter.

Once again I recommend members let the membership secretary have your email address to receive notifications for online lectures and pop-up events at short notice. For the 2023 AGM there will be further positions for Ordinary Members on council, therefore if you wish to sit on the society's council, which is a term of 3 years so please contact the secretary.

At the 2014 AGM it was put to the membership for their approval, that the society was to convert to a CIO, which would therefore exonerate council from any liability should such a case arise. Our application to convert to a CIO has been approved by the Charity Commission but until issues relating to the revised constitution have been completed the society remains a charity; once this process has been completed it will be proposed to the membership for their approval.'

## **5. Hon Treasurers Report For Year Ended 31 March 2022-Jon Dawson**

'The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 have been prepared and examined by Stephenson Smart and Company who have acted as the Society's accountants for a number of years, I would like to extend our thanks to them for their work on our behalf. Notwithstanding the restrictions on our activities caused by the Covid pandemic the accounts show a surplus for the year of £6,635.

The accounts are prepared on the basis of receipts and payments and income includes £7,778 in respect of the Symposium taking place in September 2022. The accounts also include £1,957 of expenditure in respect of the Symposium.

Expenditure on production of the Journal and the Newsletter continued to be the main expense of the Society. Total printing and associated costs amounted to £13,386 compared with £7,628 in the previous year.

Total income for the year increased from £11,626 for 2021 to £22,877 for 2022. Expenditure also increased to £19,155 from £10,439 in the previous year

The total reserves of the Society stood at £80,026 as at 31 March 2022. The reserves include general reserves of £75,026 and restricted reserves of £5,000. General reserves are funds that can be spent at the discretion of the trustees whilst restricted reserves may only be spent for a specific purpose in accordance with the wishes of the donor.

At 31 March 2022 the Society's assets consisted of bank balance of £31,058 and unit trust assets of £48,968.

### **Convection to CIO Status**

As noted in the Trustees Report the Society is activity pursuing conversion of the charity to CIO status. This was approved in principle by the members at a previous AGM. This will provide the protection of limited liability for trustees of the Society.'

There were no questions of comments on Mr Dawson's report.

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

Mr Dawson proposed agreement, seconded by Mrs Moira Gittos and unanimously agreed.

## **7. Hon Membership Secretary's Report – Mrs Claire Downing**

'This year currently the total membership stands at 575 a slight increase on last year.

This is made up of 58 corporate 517 ordinary, family and student memberships.

The membership breakdown is as follows:

EU Memberships 28

UK Memberships 519

ROW Memberships 28

I am still waiting for subscription payments from sixteen corporate and one hundred and twenty-five ordinary members for 2022/2023.

This does seem similar to previous years a reminder notice will be in the Autumn newsletter and letters, or emails of reminders sent in November.

People often renew at the time of year that they joined the society and not on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June renewal date.

Since the last AGM we have recruited fifty-six new members.

For the 2021/2022 membership year forty-nine members resigned or were removed from the database due to non-payment of subscriptions, resignations were due to age , cutting back on spending and people who have passed away.

Overall, the membership of the society remains quite steady with new memberships still related to the online lecture series.'

There were no questions or comments on Mrs Downing's report.

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

'As we return to more face-to-face events, the web site and Twitter account have returned to their traditional role in promoting our activities. The blog continues active, and we have been able to use it to publicise the activities of other groups as well. At the end of last year, we reported on the debate over an effigy at Coldridge in Devon: was it the tomb of a park keeper – or could it have been one of the Princes in the Tower? (Our correspondents thought not.) More recent posts have included an appeal for help in tracing lost monuments from the church of church of St Lawrence in Brentford, Middx. and a report on a major exhibition on the early modern funeral and memorial culture of the ducal court of Saxe-Altenburg. We have also been able to use the blog for follow-up discussions and suggestions for further reading after our online lectures. We welcome contributions: you can send these to [madeleine.gray@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:madeleine.gray@southwales.ac.uk) – ideally as a document in Word plus a picture as a .jpg file.

Our Monument of the Month feature also continues popular. Recent monuments have included a dancing abbess from the Netherlands, a Welsh monument by the infamous Iolo Morgannwg and a tomb chest designed to look like a deed box. 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 over 7,000 followers. We also have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3343925989030017>, a YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYjecKekCismOHg679yY0mg> and a presence on Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/church-monuments-society-32669221889> for our online lectures. Grateful thanks to our President Mark Downing, to Elizabeth Blood and to Moira Ackers for all their hard work in setting up and running these. We plan to continue the online lecture series, which has been very successful in widening awareness of the Society's work.

We are aware that it is becoming increasingly important for people to be able to pay online for events, purchase of back numbers of the Journal etc. We are proposing to work with our web designers, Considered Creative of Ironbridge, on the most cost-effective way of facilitating this.

Now that we have returned to organising face-to-face events, 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).

Prof Gray said she welcomed contributions for Monument of the Month.

## **9. Hon Archivist's Report Hon Archivist's Report – Dr Ellie Pridgeon**

'In the year since the last Annual General Meeting, I have forwarded the Society's publications and digital records of meetings, including the 2021 AGM, to the Borthwick Institute. All the digital records are stored on a secure server after being checked for viruses.'

There were no questions or comments on Dr Pridgeon's report.

## **10. Hon Event's Co-ordinator's Report - Mrs Moria Ackers**

'Since my last report Covid did manage a comeback but despite this we have had a good year of activities.

Our online lectures in spring were a great success. We now have a following of listeners from all over the world. There will be another series of talks in the autumn. When churches start to be just a bit too cold to hang around in you can now enjoy the many aspects of church monuments from the comfort of your own home. We hope the autumn and spring lecture series will become a fixed item on our calendar.

For those who can't attend them live they are all available on our YouTube channel which is available through the link on our website.

In the new year we will also launch our YouTube series 'All you want to know about monuments but didn't dare ask'. Once again, I must thank Elizabeth Blood for being the brains behind all this and made it all possible. We are also indebted to the speakers, who give so freely of their time and knowledge.

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2021, despite the encroaching clouds of a third lock-down we enjoyed a 'pop-up' tour based at Holy Trinity, Sutton Coalfield. This was organised by Robin Draper.

In June we had a very well attended study day at Bottesford spending time really concentrating on the wonderful collection of monuments.

### **Future events 2022/23**

Our Derbyshire day will finally occur on August 20<sup>th</sup>. This has been dogged by cancellations due to Covid and will also be affected by a rail strike. However, we decided to go on with the day. This will be our first coach trip day. I feel that days altogether on a coach are important. They create space for people to chat and share. Coaches have become more expensive, and I think the £30 day trip is no longer feasible. I note that the CCT charge £55 for an equivalent day. Thanks to Robin Draper for organising this day against all odds!

September 2022 Symposium, Kings Lynn organised by Mark Downing and David Lepine. Is now fully booked.

Our AGM 10<sup>th</sup> September in the St Albans Centre, London will include a free study day with four lectures, see the website for details.

Sally Badham has organised a joint study day with the Ecclesiological Society. 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 see the events page online for details

Church visits are in the process of being organised for 2023. So do lookout for details in the Newsletter and online.

We have plans for a day in August in Nottinghamshire, In October we are planning a weekend of lectures and visits in Leicestershire with the Richard III Society. This will be a celebration of Mark Downing's Presidency. There will of course be our spring online lecture series. Mark Downing is also planning an event in South Devon in June 23.

**As always, I welcome any suggestions for future events.** If you know of a group of churches worth visiting and would like to share them with our members, please contact me and I'll guide you through the process of planning such a day.'

There were no questions or comments on Mrs Ackers' report.

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

**Journal** -Jonathan Trigg, Co-editor, Dr Ann Adams, Co-editor, Mrs Nicola Lowe, Book Reviews Editor

'The editors would like to thank the large number of people – authors, peer and book reviewers, translators, Peter McGrath of Groundwork Design and the printers, Henry Ling – involved in the creation of the journal.

**Volume 36:** This was distributed at the beginning of July 2021. 675 copies were printed; the page count and print run were fixed in time to beat a further increase in paper prices that came in at the end of May. *CM36* included the winning essay from the 2020 competition –

congratulations to Dr Christina Faraday – and twenty-three book reviews, continuing the practice of bringing non-English texts to the notice of an English-speaking audience.

The disruption of mailings to our members in Europe experienced last year appears to have been overcome.

The editors have reviewed the process and believe an improvement could be made by introducing fresh eyes at the proof-reading stage (with multiple readings, there is a danger of seeing what you expect to see). The editors will be putting out a call for volunteers to read one or more articles for obvious errors.

**Volume 37:** The editors intend to better the timetable of *CM36*.

Articles, which are in various stages of the editorial process, have a wider geographic scope than *CM36*, with one on inscriptions on ledger stones in Wales and one on a monument in Portugal (the latter was the runner up in the 2020 essay competition). A further rise is anticipated in paper costs.

The editors welcome contact over proposed articles for future journals. It is a particular pleasure to include an author who has not written for *CM* before, or not for a period of time.

**Journal Style Guidelines:** The Guide for Contributors is reviewed after each volume and revised as necessary. It can be found on the website under ‘Publications’.

**Digital Publication:** Since 2013 the Society has made digital access to recent journals (2012 onwards) available through the EBSCO Art & Architecture database which is accessible through certain libraries. In July 2021 the Council took the decision to give notice to EBSCO. Many similar organisations provide digital access – in addition to continuing the print journal – though their own website. The feasibility of using the CMS website will be assessed, although other commitments have restricted progress this year.

**Essay Competition:** The essay competition is designed to attract authors who have not written for *CM* before. The deadline for the current competition is 31 December 2022. The winning entry, subject to peer review, will be published in *CM38*. The last competition produced material for the newsletter as well as the journal.’

### **Newsletter Report - Dr Andrew Sargent**

‘The Editor would like to thank all who have contributed to the *Newsletter’s* success this year. As always, their contributions have made stimulating reading for our membership.

Two issues of the *Newsletter* have been published in the last twelve months: 37.1 & 37.2. An Autumn issue (38.1) is due in October.

This is your Society and your *Newsletter*, 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 preferably in JPEG format) 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.

Brief reports on Society events are always of interest and may encourage other members to sign up for future activities. Organisers are always delighted if an attendee volunteers to write it up, so do consider offering.'

There were no questions or comments on either report.

## **12. Conservation Cases Recorder Report - David Carrington**

'Since last year's AGM we have, we hope, seen the last of the Covid lockdowns and my personal experience is that most churches are now open again as they were before the pandemic. I suspect however we are yet to see the long-term impact of the events of the last couple of years on monuments in churches and churchyards. The latest threat is the soaring price of energy, and this could yet have an impact too if funds normally reserved for maintenance have to be spent on keeping the church warm enough during services. If it's hard enough to understand the impact of these global events on monuments in the UK I really have no way of understanding the impact in other countries, but assume that broadly there are the same issues everywhere.

Despite those downbeat introductory remarks, it has been a relatively quiet year for Conservation Casework, and in fact I have had no 'new' cases for the last six months or so.

Some old cases have been revisited, such as querying with Bath Abbey why the railings are yet to be reinstated to Bishop Montagu's monument – which I reported on at the 2011 and 2014 AGMs. I am assured by the Abbey that they are currently undergoing conservation and will be reinstated in due course. Also in the south-west I visited Exeter Cathedral recently and saw that the gothic revival wall tablet to Reverend Prickett (d.1839), a case for concern after the gable fell apart in 2019, has been sympathetically restored. I hope to write this up as a 'Monument of the Month' for our website shortly. Finally, I am keeping an eye on an old favourite, St. Nicholas Stanford-on Avon (Northamptonshire) where bats have been thriving but causing no end of problems for the monuments – but new bat management strategies might be improving matters.

At the start of the year I had a successful follow-up visit to Hanbury church (Staffordshire), which I mentioned was imminent at last year's AGM, and gave the PCC much advice and encouragement including a long email to follow things up. The monuments though are just part of a much broader problem with keeping the building in good condition generally and keeping the church in use. Nonetheless the Society's input and appreciation of their monuments is a positive contribution.

There is a minor theft to report, sadly. Two minor figures forming part of the monument to Lady Lee (d.1584) at Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire were stolen in mid-October 2021. I wrote to the parish on behalf the Society offering advice, and made sure that *ChurchCare* were involved. As far as I know there have been no further developments here.

As ever, I am always open to new cases being brought to my attention by the Society's membership, as well as non-members, and will endeavour to deal constructively with enquiries anywhere.'

Mr Chrys Plumley asked about the theft at Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire and Dr Carrington replied that he had no further information, adding that he would be grateful to learn of any developments.

### **13. Election of the President**

Dr Jean Wilson proposed Mr Downing's re-election, this was unanimously approved with numerous seconders.

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

Mr Downing asked that the Officers and two Ordinary Members of Council be elected en-bloc and this was approved – proposed Mr Derrick Chivers and seconded Mr Jon Bayliss. Mr Downing thanked Dr David Lepine and Dr Adam White for their contributions to council.

Mr Mark Downing	President
Miss Sally Badham	Vice President
Dr Julian Litten	Vice President
Dr Sophie Oosterwijk	Vice President
Dr Jean Wilson	Vice President
Mr Jonathan Dawson	Hon Treasurer
Miss Hilary Wheeler	Hon Secretary
Mrs Claire Downing	Hon Membership Secretary
Mrs Moira Ackers	Hon Events Co-ordinator
Dr Ann Adams	Hon Journal Co-editor
Mr Jonathan Trigg	Hon Journal Co-editor
Dr Andrew Sargent	Hon Newsletter Editor
Dr David Carrington	Hon Conservation Cases Recorder
Dr Ellie Pridgeon	Hon Archivist
Prof Madeline Gray	Hon Publicity Editor

#### Ordinary Members

Dr Roger Bowdler  
Miss Elizabeth Blood  
Mrs Moira Gittos  
Dr Susan Jenkins  
Dr Holly Trusted

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

Mr Downing said that the Society was considering grant funding. He asked for approval to write a letter of condolence to the Society's Patron, HRH The Duke of Gloucester, this was unanimously approved.

Mr Andrew Skelton asked if the Society had received correspondence about the Society's position on the removal of monuments, Mr Downing replied that the Society had not been consulted.



Finally, Mr Downing asked for information about monuments under threat and thanked everyone for attending the Annual General Meeting.

#### **16. Announcement of the Date and Venue of the 2023 Annual General Meeting**

9 September 2023, St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, London SW4 0DZ

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.20pm