

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003 MINUTES

Minutes of the 92nd Annual General Meeting held at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 64-68 Exhibition Road, London, SW7 2PA on Tuesday, 10 June 2003, at 6.00pm. 117 Members were recorded as being present.

In the absence of the President of the Society, Patric Dickinson, Vice President, was in the Chair. Apologies were presented on behalf of Mr Nicholas Newington-Irving and Mr Chris Broomfield, the Executive Committee Members who were unable to attend.

1. The Chairman requested, on behalf of the Executive Committee, that the meeting withdraw the minutes that were made available for the 90th AGM and replace them with the amended version that was circulated at this meeting. This was agreed unanimously. The Chairman then asked the meeting to approve these revised minutes for the 90th AGM and this was approved unanimously.

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The Chairman said that the minutes would be put on the Society's web-site and issued to anyone requesting them.

The Executive Committee's proposal that in future only one comprehensive set of Minutes be issued was put to the meeting and approved.

2. The Chairman requested that the meeting take as read the Auditors' report rather than having the report read out verbatim as stated in the Society's Memorandum and Articles. As one member raised an objection to this, the matter was put to the meeting. Only two people objected so Mr Stephen Tanner, representing the auditors, Messrs FW Stephens & Co, drew attention to the Auditors' Report as printed on pages 19 and 20 of the Annual Report which had been circulated to the Members.
3. The Chairman of the Executive Committee, Mr Frank Hardy, presented the Annual Report of the Executive Committee. Mr Hardy pointed out that although the year had been one of consolidation many of the activities had continued to expand. Library acquisitions were arriving daily, computer usage in the building continues to grow and the material on the Origins web-site is being increased continually. Also the range of lectures, courses and visits continues to grow. Mr Hardy mentioned the Members' survey and its vital input into the Business Plan that the Executive had been working on over the last twelve months in its commitment to improve the financial situation. There would be a presentation on the Business Plan and Survey after the meeting. Thanks were given to Sharon Hintze and her brother for analysing the survey. Mr Hardy spoke about the closure of the bookshop. For whatever reason there had been a downturn in sales which did not justify keeping the shop open. However, the Society's own books continue to be published. Mrs Marjorie Moore's representation on the Scottish Association of Family History Societies was noted and thanks were extended to Jim Willerton and John Addis-Smith who had come to the end of their period of service on the Executive Committee. Mrs Jeanne Bunting, who resigned during the year, was also thanked for all her efforts over many years, particularly in the computer field. All the staff were thanked for their support and hard work and emphasis was placed on the need for more volunteers to cope with the increasing range of activities at Charterhouse Buildings.

Mr Geoffrey Stone, the Treasurer, presented the Annual Accounts to the meeting. Mr Stone preceeded with an apology for an error in fact he had made at the previous year's AGM. He thought at the time that the overdraft had not been secured on the Library Collections but on

the building alone. It was clarified after the meeting that the overdraft had indeed been secured on all the assets of the Society. This had now been rectified with the bank who have given the Society a letter clearly stating "The library of Books and Special Genealogical Collections are excluded and released from our Debenture".

Mr Stone then went on to present a chart showing Income and Expenditure for 2002. He pointed out that the Accounts had been changed slightly in format to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities. Income had mainly fallen due to loss of gift aid on Membership fees and fewer donations in 2002. However correspondingly the Society had made savings in Expenditure to try to combat this mainly via the salary budget. Mr Stone made a detailed summary of the recent bookshop closure, which would save costs even further.

Mr Stone discussed the English Origins web-site and showed a chart of the royalty position. He informed the Members that a new agreement had been reached at the end of 2002. This would put the relationship between Origins and the Society on a firm footing for the future. 2.5 million indexed names had been added to the site during 2002 and the site would continue to give the Society a modest income.

A chart was shown with the subscriptions. Mr Stone pointed out that, although it was intended to increase subscriptions each year in line with inflation, due to the negative response to the increase no proposal would be made this year. It is hoped the Executive Committee will look again at the membership structure during the next year.

Mr Stone stated that 2003 would be another difficult year but as the lease is ending on Dallington Street and the bookshop was closing, this would hopefully be enough to create a modest surplus in 2004.

The Chairman then opened the meeting to questions on the Annual Report and the Accounts inviting the Chairman of the Executive Committee or the Treasurer to answer as appropriate.

Mr Mark Herber requested clarification of the Origins contract. The ongoing contract was estimated at £5,000 per month but last year Origins had shown an income in excess of £100,000. The treasurer clarified that the £100,000 was a minimum payment agreed for year two as per the original contract. It was not an actual amount of site usage as per the ongoing contract.

Mr Anthony Camp asked what costs there were in providing the hard copy. The Treasurer reported that they were only a few hundred pounds. He then asked why the staffing of the bookshop had been singled out for costing and not that in other areas; he understood that the research service took up a great deal of time. The Treasurer clarified that the Society no longer undertakes a paid research service.

Mr Camp asked for clarification on membership this year and how many members had been lost. The treasurer did not have the figure for the meeting as reminders were still to be issued for non-payment. He also stated that the Society did not keep records of how many members were renewed at different intervals during the year so there would be nothing with which to compare this information. Mr Camp wanted to know why the Society sent out magazines to everyone in March even if they had not renewed. Mr Hardy stated that the computer systems are not always as they should be and it was felt prudent to issue the magazine as it was impossible to know the exact numbers at that stage. Mr Colin Allen asked that in the light of this information that the Chairman give assurances that this would be sorted out. The Chairman assured the meeting it is being sorted out and that two Members of the Executive Committee are already looking at the Membership computer programme to resolve the issue.

Mr Simon Fowler asked why the income for Family History Fairs had dropped off. Mr Frank Hardy reported that ways to improve this were being looked into. Mrs Jeanne Bunting clarified from the floor that there had been a second fair in the Midlands that had resulted in a loss. Mr Frank Hardy confirmed this. The fair had been booked before it was known it would

coincide with two other major events and once booked it would have cost too much to cancel, but a second fair would not be held in the foreseeable future. Mr Michael Armstrong pointed out that the second day attendance at the Royal Horticultural Halls was falling off rapidly and asked if in future a one day event could be considered. Mr Hardy stated that the Society is committed to the two days in 2004 but the Committee is seriously looking for alternatives for the future.

Mr Douglas Capewell asked what the outstanding liability on the Dallington Street premises was. The Treasurer reported that the lease had now been surrendered and there would be no more liability. In this current year the Society is liable for ten months rent. Part of the deal with the landlord required that some of the money saved was required to reinstate the offices to their former open plan basis.

Mr Anthony Camp reverted to the closure of the bookshop; saying that for 10 years (with a largely internal accounting system) the bookshop had made a steady profit, which had reached £89,000 in 1999. He had been provided figures for the bookshop showing a loss predicted in the region of £100,000 for 2003. Mr Camp's opinion was that with a proper budget and stock control procedures in place this was 'drivel'. He requested how often management accounts were received and what controls were put on the purchase of stock. The Treasurer stated he could not comment on items before 1999 but that it was clear over-ordering had taken place. However, now tight controls on purchasing and the numbers of books published are in place. Mr Camp said that giving 10% to authors and 20% discount to members seemed ludicrous and this had contributed to the Society losing its gift aid on subscriptions. Mr Hardy reported this was not the case as the value of membership set by the Inland Revenue was high due to the free Library access.

Mr Douglas Capewell stated that he felt the late night closure on a Wednesday had been handled very abruptly. Mr Hardy apologised for this and pointed out that it had to happen fairly quickly due to redundancies, a lack of staff resources and falling numbers of visitors on Wednesday evening but would endeavour to make sure it did not happen again.

Questions having ended the Chairman asked for a member to move the reception of the Annual Report and Accounts of the Society of Genealogists. Mr David Hawgood proposed this and Dr Colin Chapman seconded the motion. The majority were in favour with only one member against.

Mr Anthony Camp asked leave to propose a vote of no confidence in the internal accounting procedures of the Society. Although not constitutional, the Chairman asked the meeting if they wished this vote to be taken. Only a minority wanted this so the vote was not taken.

The Chairman stated that the reports had been accepted and stated that a large number of Members were striving to put things right at the Society on behalf of the membership.

4. The Chairman proposed the re-election of HRH Prince Michael of Kent, KCVO as President of the Society. This was carried with a note that HRH had not attended the AGM since 1997.
5. The Chairman announced that in accordance with Article 37 the Executive Committee proposed the re-election of the Vice Presidents of the Society: The Rt Rev John Kingsmill Cavell, MA; Mr Patric Dickinson, MA, FSG, Richmond Herald; President Boyd K Packer, BS, MS, EdD, Quorum of the Twelve; Professor Peter Spufford, LittD, FBA, FSA, FSG; Robin Blair LVO, WS, Lord Lyon King of Arms, Fergus Gillespie, MA, Deputy Chief Herald of Ireland and Dr Elizabeth Hallam Smith, FSA, FRSA, FRHistS. These proposals were carried by a majority.
6. The Chairman announced that with regard to the membership of the Executive Committee Mr James Willerton retired by rotation after having served for eight years and therefore not being eligible for re-election. Mrs Jeanne Bunting, Mrs Marjorie Moore and Mr John Addis-Smith had resigned since the last meeting. Mr Frank Hardy retired by rotation having finished a

four-year term and being eligible offered himself for re-election. Mr Michael Williamson, having been co-opted to the Executive Committee during the year to fill a vacancy, offered himself for election, being nominated by Nicholas Newington-Irving and seconded by Mr Geoffrey T Stone. Mr John Egan, nominated by Mr Michael Gandy and seconded by Miss Sharon Hintze; Mr Mark Herber, nominated by Mr Nicholas Newington-Irving and seconded by Mr Geoffrey T Stone; Mr Tim Powys-Lybbe, nominated by Mrs Yvonne Jeanne Bunting and seconded by Mr Geoffrey T Stone; Mr Ian Waller, nominated by Mr William M Wood and seconded by Mrs Marjorie R Moore and Dr David Wright, nominated by Mr Anthony Camp and seconded by Miss Sharon Hintze all offered themselves for election. There being more vacancies than nominations, these names were put to the meeting for election and approved; short biographical statements having been circulated to the meeting.

7. Mr Geoffrey Stone, Honorary Treasurer, spoke on the remuneration and reappointment of the Auditors. In accordance with Section 384 of the Companies Act 1985 the remuneration and reappointment of the Auditors, Messrs FW Stephens & Co, at a fee to be agreed by the Executive Committee, was put to the Meeting; proposed by Walter Balmford, seconded by Miss Elizabeth McDougall and approved. It was requested that, due to the concerns expressed, the auditors should have good discussions with the Executive. The meeting was assured the auditors always ask meaningful questions.
8. The Chairman of the Executive Mr Frank Hardy announced the awards of Certificates of Appreciation to Nova Atkinson, Anthony Butler, Margaret Butler, Kathy Elam, Cyndi Howells, Chris Loveridge, Pat Loveridge, Virginia Ann Loveridge, Colin Gibbens, Deidre MacGillivray, Nicholas Newington-Irving, Andrew Nicoll, Daphne Palmer and Myrtle Rogala.
9. Mrs June Perrin, Secretary to the Fellows, announced that by a ballot of the Fellows, Mr Ian Jeffery Hilder had been elected as a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists for having rendered distinguished services to genealogy.
10. There was no other competent business

Before closure of the meeting the Chairman thanked President Paul Munden of the Hyde Park Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for making the building available for the meeting today. The meeting was then declared closed at 7.30pm.