

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2001

Minutes of the 90th Annual General Meeting held at the Royal Over-Seas League, Over-Seas House, Park Place, London SW1 on Tuesday, 19 June 2001. 97 Members were recorded as being present.

In the absence of the President of the Society, Patric Dickinson, Vice President, in the Chair.

1. The Chairman announced that the Minutes of the 89th Annual General Meeting, held on 27 June 2000, had been printed in the *Genealogists' Magazine* for December 2000 and, thus, circulated to the Members. It was agreed that they be taken as a correct record and they were signed by the Chairman.
2. Mr Stephen Tanner, representing the auditors, Messrs FW Stephens & Co, drew attention to the Auditors' Report as printed on page 20 of the Annual Report which had been circulated to the Members.
3. Mr. Alan Wood, Honorary Treasurer, moved the adoption of the Annual Accounts for 2000 and Mr Stephen Chastelle seconded.

In a lengthy intervention from the floor, Mr Anthony Camp expressed his concern at the deficit and some of the figures shown in the accounts. He said that if donations and bequests were removed from income, the Accounts revealed a deficit of £169,000. The audit fee had doubled. There seemed to be errors in the Accounts. For example, subscription income shown on page 5 was £21,000 less than that shown on page 26. The number of new members was not shown but the income from Entrance Fees had apparently fallen by a third. Subscriptions paid in advance were only £19,000 as compared with £107,000 in 1997. Bank and credit card charges had trebled in one year. Important statistics as to library use were lacking. Publication finances were alarming. Publications expenditure had jumped from £23,000 to £86,000, so that the profits of the previous year had turned into a deficit of £18,000. Magazine costs had gone down but the cost of the compositor did not appear to be included. Photocopying which in the past had regularly made a surplus had in these accounts made a loss. The cost of internal printing (unexplained) had increased from £10,000 to £27,000. The cost of staffing had increased by £167,000 on the 1996 figure. Of the total expenditure £1,014,000 it seemed that only £14,000 had been spent on the library. Mr Camp was not surprised that income from Gift Aid might be at risk. This should have been guarded against.

Mr Camp also stated that the cost of the Charterhouse Buildings refurbishment were not clearly stated in the accounts even though it was very significant. He did not agree with the huge expenditure on the refurbishment and the apparent use of Miss Brock's legacy for that purpose. It seemed that all the Society's reserves and all the bequests had been spent on refurbishing a building which would still need to be replaced at some stage. Mr Camp felt this would prove to have been a foolish decision.

Mr Camp also stated that he thought the standard of *Genealogist's Magazine* and of the publications, especially the Newsletter, had gone down.

Mr Camp said that Miss Brock's bequest had been "for the copying of parish registers and monumental inscriptions and for the general purposes of the Society". Mr Willerton, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, said that there had been no discussion of those terms in the Executive and that the whole of the bequest received to date had been spent on general purposes including the refurbishment of the building which was in his opinion compliant with the terms of the bequest.

Mr Camp then expressed the view that not only was the competence of the Executive Committee in question but also its integrity. At this point Mr Jim Willerton, Chairman

of the Executive Committee, stated that he and, his fellow members would accept any justifiable criticism of their performance but not of their motives or their honesty. Mr Willerton agreed to provide some answer to the main points raised, and to record in some permanent way within the building Miss Brock's bequest (as proposed by Mr Stephen Hale).

Another member noted the financial loss of the trading company. He was concerned that it seemed that this company had made a loss and was therefore being supported by charitable funds. The Treasurer confirmed that a loss had been made in the first year, but that this would be recovered in the subsequent year.

The motion was then put to the vote. An exact count of the votes has not been preserved, but on a show of hands the motion was passed by a small majority with a significant number of abstentions.

4. Mr Alan Wood, Honorary Treasurer, spoke to 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 Mr Geoff Stone, seconded by Mr Alec Tritton, and approved.
5. Mr Jim Willerton, Chairman of the Executive Committee, presented the Report of the Executive Committee for 2000 which had been circulated to the Members. During the Report Mr Willerton also announced the resignation of Mr Robert Gordon, the Director of the Society to become effective September 2001. The motion for the approval of the Report was proposed by Mr Simon Fowler, seconded by Miss Elisabeth McDougall, MBE, and carried.
6. The Chairman proposed the re-election of HRH Prince Michael of Kent, KCVO as President of the Society. This was carried by acclamation.
7. The Chairman reminded Members of the recent death of the one of the Society's Vice Presidents, Sir Colin Cole. The Chairman announced that in accordance with Article 37 the Executive Committee proposed the re-election of the Vice Presidents of the Society: Major General The Duke of Norfolk, KG, Earl Marshal; The Rt Rev John Kingsmill Cavell; Mr Patric Dickinson, Richmond Herald; President Boyd Packer, Quorum of the Twelve; and Professor Peter Spufford and the election of 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 with acclamation.
8. The Chairman announced that with regard to the membership of the Executive Committee Mr Alec Tritton, having been elected under Article 41 retires by operation of that article and, being eligible, offers himself for re-election. Mr Chris Broomfield, Mr John Price and Mr John Townsend offer themselves for election. There being more vacancies than candidates the Chairman declared Messrs Broomfield, Price, Townsend and Tritton to have been elected to the Executive Committee.
9. The Chairman of the Executive Committee, Mr Jim Willerton, announced the award of four Certificates of Appreciation.
10. Mr Robert Gordon, Secretary to the Fellows, announced that by a ballot of the Fellows, Mr Richard Ratcliffe had been elected a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists for having rendered distinguished services either to the Society or to genealogy.
11. There was no other competent business.