

# **Unapproved Minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting of the BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY**

The meeting was held in the Unitarian Meeting House, Churchgate, St., Bury St. Edmunds, IP33 1RH at 11.00 a.m. on Saturday 17 May 2014, and was followed by a tour of Bury St. Edmunds, led by local guide Martyn Taylor.

## **Present:**

Mike Chapman	Chairman
Mick Oliver	Secretary
David Kennett	Editor, Congresses, Visits Coordinator
Mike Hammett	Enquiries Secretary

Brenda Chapman, George Clark, Richard Harris, Adrian Corder-Birch, Fergus Muir, John Jones, Maurice Page.

## **1. Chairman's remarks**

The Chairman, wearing his Chairman's badge of office, drew attention to the challenges the Society had faced and met in the year, to increase its subscription to £12 p.a. and for members to change their standing orders accordingly, to modernise its website, and to change printers and circulation arrangements for *Information*. He expressed the Society's gratitude to Richard Harris for his work on the website, reported that Chris Blanchett had been forced to stop his work as Distribution Secretary through ill-health but that his health was improving, and paid tribute to David Kennett for finding a new printer for *Information 125 & 126*, with work of high quality, and for handling the distribution.

He reported that brick sales in Britain had increased over the last year, but that the consequence of closures during the recession was that the increased demand was filled by imports.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Emery, Barry Fairweather, Alan Hulme, Mike & Pamela Kingman, Ann & Peter Los, Ken Redmore, Jacqueline Ryder, Terence Smith, Julie Harrald, Anthony Preston, Graeme Perry, Adrian Parker, Roy & Penny Berry, and Andrew Langridge,

## **3. Minutes of 2013 Annual General Meeting**

The minutes of the 2013 Meeting at Beverley on June 22 2013 had been circulated to all members with Information 125, and separately to new members who had joined since. The meeting accepted the minutes as an accurate record unanimously (proposed John Jones, seconded Richard Harris).

## **4. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

## **5. BBS Treasurer's Report**

The Chairman apologised for the Treasurer's absence through ill-health and presented the Financial Statement (see p8) which showed a deficit for the year of £448.57, an increase in income from an increase in subscriptions, and lower expenditure on circulating *Information*,

with 3 issues in 2013, (compared with 4 issues in 2012). He pointed out that Susie Clift, Graeme Perry's PA, deserved the Society's thanks for her continuing part in the Society's work.

In discussion, the meeting expressed a preference for steady increases in subscriptions rather than stability with occasional large increases. The financial statement was approved, proposed John Jones, seconded Mike Hammett, carried unanimously with one abstention.

## **6. Membership Secretary's Report**

The report was read by the Secretary as the Treasurer was absent.

"Since June 2013 we have attracted 12 new members, two more than last year, thus new membership continues to be stable. The total membership this year is 249, a very slight increase from the 246 in 2013 but below the 258 in 2012.

Our biggest problem is with those members paying by cheque who forget to renew their subscriptions. A reminder letter was sent out with *Information 126*, the address label being given a red spot and the appropriate letter being matched up. The increase in postage is making it not cost effective to write to so many late payers individually.

I looked up the makeup of the membership, and 20.5% are female. We have a good sprinkling of academics, 7% being doctors and 1.6% professors, so we are a well-rounded Society with an academically accepted journal. Our sincere thanks should go to our Editor, David Kennett, who has overseen the production of *Information* after the very serious illness of our former Printing and Distribution Secretary Chris Blanchett, to whom our best wishes should go."

Points which came up in discussion which the Committee were asked to address were whether overseas members should pay an increased subscription to cover increased postal charges, whether these members should receive their copies of *Information* electronically, and whether the application form needed revising to discourage payment by cheque.

## **7. Secretary's Report**

The Secretary reported: "At the last meeting I indicated that I aspired to serve as Secretary for one more year, in the expectation that someone else would have offered to serve in my place. We have not received any such offer, but happily I am prepared to continue to serve in 2014–5, if elected to do so. But I am not getting any younger, neither are the rest of the committee.

Outside the BBS, I am also involved in my local National Trust group, and environmental forum. At the former's AGM, in the absence of other candidates we had to reappoint as Chairman a former Chairman in her 70s, and a Vice-Chairman of the same age. The environmental group has a Chair and Secretary who already hold the same posts in our local Civic Society, and our treasurer is in her 80s. These groups are potentially rocky, and the BBS is in better shape, but I mention them as a warning that we should not be complacent about our own future.

Around January this year Richard Harris completed our new website at our new address of <http://britishbricksoc.co.uk>. It is easy to use, has searchable pdfs of *Information* and I commend it to all members. We must thank Richard and our former webmaster Sandra Garfield Neville for completing this transfer.

I regret to report two pieces of unfinished business – we are still intruding on John Tibbles' hospitality as he is still holding back copies of *Information* as hard copies, and we still have

to decide what form our sponsorship for a candidate on Gerard Lynch's course "Introduction to gauged brickwork" should take. Tasks for the next year's committee!

Often I am the first point of contact for enquiries which are more appropriate for other members of the Society, and I pass these on as appropriate. And I would like to recognise the cooperation I get from the other members of the committee – members are well served by the officers they have."

The Chairman supported the Secretary's comments on the need for new officers, and the meeting asked the Secretary to prepare a statement on the Secretary's duties. Points which arose in discussions were that AGMs could be publicised to local Conservation societies; uncertainty about the value of social media; links to the BDA; and information on Wikipedia. The Committee will consider how the Society's profile could be raised.

## 8. Enquiries Secretary's Report

Mike Hammett reported: "At last year's AGM I reported a continuing decline in the numbers of enquiries and a tally of only 20 since the previous year's AGM. The picture changed shortly after and we have had a bumper "year" with a tally of 69 on the eve of today's meeting – which is a month earlier than last year at Beverley. I am not sure of the reason, but I think it must be the impact of our re-launched website. The power of the media has helped again with an appeal from BBC Radio 2 "Drivetime" to help with an answer to the question "Who built the first brick house?" in their "Homework Sucks" feature.

Enquiries followed a similar pattern to former years: 40% + were about history, 30% + identification of brickmarks or the names of companies, nearly 20% were sundry, fringe or unclassifiable and about 10% were on technical matters (not strictly our remit, but I help where possible and/or refer to industry sources).

What has struck me is the number of enquiries from overseas: mostly about 19th/early 20th century exports found in Brazil (3), Chile, St Kitts and La Coruna in Spain, but also two about indigenous brickmaking in Australia and one in Kenya.

Some responses have been referred to particular members for assistance and I am most grateful for their help and support. Many enquiries lead to an interesting resolution while others can be only partially assisted. For some time I have considered that an "Enquiries News" page on the website would be of interest to members and foster helpful communication. Now that our website is running so well I will pursue the possibilities – watch out for developments."

Richard Harris and Mike Hammett agreed to consult each other to investigate the possibilities floated in the final paragraph of the report.

## 9. Report from the Editor of *BBS Information*

David Kennett reported: "Three issues of *Information* have appeared since the last AGM:

124	June 2013	40 pages (Fortieth Anniversary issue)
125	December 2013	40 pages
126	April 2014	40 pages

The irregularity of appearance has been caused by a delay in finding a new printer following Chris Blanchett's unfortunate heart attack. We wish Chris a speedy recovery.

Notable items in recent issues include:

- 124** Editorial: British Brick Society enters its Fifth Decade  
 Love Story: A Brickmaking Family (Alan Cox)  
 A Mid-Eighteenth-Century Brick Clay Mill? (Mike Kingman)  
 Brick for a Day: Measham Brickworks, Leicestershire (Michael Chapman)  
 The Red Bank Manufacturing Company, Measham, Leicestershire (M. Chapman)  
 Brick for a Day: The British Brick Society in London, 2009 and 2012 (D.H. Kennett)
- 125** By Ship, by Horse and Cart, by Lorry: Transporting Bricks in Northern Ireland  
 (the late Desmond Sloane)  
 Phoenix Brick Company, Barrow Hill, North Derbyshire (Mike Chapman)  
 News from Bursledon Brickworks (Barry Fairweather)
- 126** Editorial: Brick in an Eighteenth-century County Town: Bury St Edmunds  
 Coggeshall Abbey, Essex: the Guest House (Penny Berry and David Kennett)  
 Brickworks at Bury St Edmunds (Graeme Perry)  
 London Foundation (Peter Hounsell)

Work is progressing on the next two issues of *Information*, and there is still space in both issues: **127**, July 2014, and **128**, October/November 2014 'Brick in Asia' issue.

The editor would particularly like to have contributions to the latter on countries other than India, Pakistan, and China, as brick is a major building material in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Burma, Thailand, and Japan, and a minor one in Israel/Palestine and Turkey.

In 2015, there may be three or possibly four issues, of *Information* depending on what is submitted. Planning for the first two issues is in progress. Projected contents of *Information*, **129**, February/March 2015 were noted.

It is anticipated that *BBS Information*, **130**, June/July 2015, will be an issue devoted to 'Brick in Churches', for which one paper has been received although other papers and reviews have been suggested. The editor would welcome further contributions on 'Brick in Churches'.

Amongst future issues various ideas have been proposed:

1. We hope to have an issue devoted to 'Brick and Tile in the Netherlands' in October 2015, for which we have one long completed item and one possible (but not yet written) item.
2. Five papers have been received or suggested and some are partially set for one or two issues with articles on the Brick Buildings of Sir John Fastolf. (These could be issued together and sent out in the same envelope; weight will be kept below 250 grams, a total of 72 pages, including the covers).
3. In April 2016 it is hoped to have an issue of *Information* including an article on 'Brick in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire: the last Fifty Years'. This will coincide with the 400th anniversary of the death of the town's most famous son, the playwright William Shakespeare. There is also an editorial on 'Brick and Anti Brick in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire' in draft form for the issue.

The editor thanks all contributors. The three issues between June 2013 and May 2014, including *British Brick Society Information*, **124**, attracted nine authors, four of whom have not been regular contributors: the late Desmond Sloane, Penny Berry, Barry Fairweather, Graeme Perry. Their contributions are much appreciated, but it would be good to have more new authors.

Especial thanks are due to Chris Blanchett who has successfully organised the printing and distribution of *British Brick Society Information* over many years."

David Kennett raised the problem of the Office of the Agent for the Legal Deposit Libraries, which has moved from the address he was given at 100 Euston Street, London (en route to Bury St Edmunds he attempted to deliver copies of the last two issues of *British Brick Society Information*). Adrian Corder-Birch agreed to supply the address – now in Edinburgh.

## 10. Report from the Visits Coordinator

Three visits have taken place since the last AGM, and these will be reported in *Information*, **127**:

Saturday 7 September 2013 – Northcot Brick, Blockley, a brickworks visit arranged by Mike Chapman.

Saturday 12 October 2013 (rearranged from 20 July 2013) – Royal Leamington Spa: pump room, former library/museum, 1920s cinemas, St Mark's church (1876, George Gilbert Scott jnr) Arts and Crafts school buildings.

Saturday 20 April 2014 – London: Abbey Road and beyond; the brick buildings of St Marylebone North.

Visits arranged for later in 2014 are:

Saturday 26 July 2014 – Worcester: Guildhall, Edwardian brick and terracotta, railway buildings and structures, eighteenth-century hospital buildings.

Saturday 6 September 2014 – Aldershaw Homemade Tiles, near Seddlescombe, Sussex, (arranged by Mike Chapman)

The projected weekday in August to Tilbury Forts is now being scheduled for 2015, and other ideas for 2015 include Oxford (South and West); London: (most likely) Battersea, (possibly) Lambeth. The possibility of visits to Marlborough, Wiltshire, including Marlborough School, and/or to Harrow School is being explored for 2015 or 2016, and other potential visits in 2016 and beyond include Derby, Warwick and Macclesfield.

Potential London visits for future years include buildings on Marylebone Road and Harley Street; a downhill walk from Alexandra Palace to Hornsey Town Hall; and Mayfair.

Ideas for visits and volunteers to organise them are always welcome, but after two decades of organising and coordinating visits, the present Visits Coordinator has begun to run out of ideas and at some point would like to hand the task on to another.

## 11. Report on Congresses

David Kennett reported on Leeds International Medieval Congress 2013 and the forthcoming congress in July 2014. Leeds International Medieval Congress is an annual event.

The society did not have a session at either the 2013 or the 2014 congress, although David Kennett spoke at both, this was on episcopal topics not brick ones.

The society mounted an exhibition at the Historical and Antiquarian Societies' Fair held on the Wednesday afternoon of the 2013 congress. We have had a stall at each of the last three years, and we now have an exhibition to use at future events. As a result of the exhibition material, David Kennett has been invited to contribute short papers to the *Ricardian Bulletin* on the fifteenth-century brick buildings drawings and photographs of which are on the various exhibition sheets. David Kennett has prepared further exhibition material on 'Early Brick in Yorkshire' for the 2014 congress.

David Kennett is going to man this year's display, which has been put back to the Thursday afternoon. What is needed is good publicity material and a stock of back issues of *British Brick Society Information* to display.

David Kennett is willing to try to organise a session for the Society at the 2015 congress and will be placing a flyer to this effect in the July mailing. We have one suggested presentation for potential session, a paper on 'The Patronage of Brick in a Poor Town: Great Yarmouth 1320-1600'. One advantage of the society's contribution to the Leeds Congress is the possibility of papers for future issues of *British Brick Society Information*. David Kennett is also willing to mount a display at the Historical and Archaeological Societies Fair in 2015, but next year may be the last time he seeks to present a paper at Leeds IMC..

David Kennett is willing to try to organise a session for the Society at the 2014 and 2015 congresses.

## **12. Election of Officers**

All officers elected in 2013 were willing to stand for a further year, and no other nominations were received. Adrian Corder-Birch thanked the existing committee for their services over the year and proposed should they should be re-elected en bloc, John Jones seconded, carried unanimously.

## **13. Election of Auditor**

Adrian Corder-Birch confirmed his willingness to serve as Auditor. (Proposed by D Kennett, seconded by J.Jones, and reelected unanimously). The Chairman thanked Adrian for his continuing service in the role.

## **14. Result of Ballot for 2015 AGM**

A ballot paper for the 2015 AGM in a "northern" location had been circulated with the papers for the AGM. The locations proposed were Stoke-on-Trent, Port Sunlight and Dudley. Weighted voting (3 for first choice, 2 for second, 1 for third) gave 23 choices for Dudley, 22 for Stoke-on-Trent and 21 for Port Sunlight. It was agreed to continue to hold the meeting in mid-May, and the provisional date set was Saturday May 16th, provided a meeting room was available at the Black Country Museum on that date.

## **15. Preparation of shortlist for AGM venue in 2016 (in a southern venue)**

The meeting selected 3 locations from 7 proposed by the committee. Results were **Chichester 10, Bursledon 8, Salisbury 7**, Alton 4, Bristol 4, Ham House 3, Bridport 2 – the 3 locations **in bold type** are to be offered to members for a postal ballot during 2015.

## **16. Any other business**

Mike Hammett pointed out that David Kennett's duties had broadened with his new role as Distribution Secretary, and suggested that the Society could fund paid help to assist him with this. David Kennett agreed to investigate possibilities.

David Kennett pointed out that current postal rates for overseas members used all their subscription, and that the printed paper rate no longer existed. Mike Chapman proposed that overseas members' subscription should be increased to £20 p.a., seconded by Adrian Corder-Birch, carried unanimously.

The Secretary alerted members to a Landmark Trust Open Day at Queen Anne's Summerhouse in Old Warden, Beds on May 18th. David Kennett pointed out that the Cistercian Abbey ruins there contained the remains of a 1540s brick house. Adrian Corder Birch informed the meeting that Gestingthorpe Pottery near Bulmer was firing its kiln "today".

Richard Harris described some of his work on the website. Points which arose in his presentation and the discussion were:

- the website is hosted by Unlimited Web Hosting – and storage space is unlimited, so information that is out of print could be made available on the site
- one page remaining from the previous website has proved difficult to remove
- RH believes that it would be counter-productive to seek payment for access to *Information* on the web, but possibly users could have give free access to all but the three most recent editions
- Mike Hammett and Richard Harris to cooperate on an Enquiries blog/page
- RH stressed the value of optical character recognition, a tool which enables the contents of the site, including *Information*, to be searched through Google.

The Chairman thanked the committee (absent and present) and members for their contributions and effort in the previous year, and the meeting closed at 1.08 p.m.

*MSO 23.5.14*

**BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2013**

<u>2012</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>2013</u>
£		£
345.64	Postage and miscellaneous expenses of Officers	151.80
3,553.30	Information, Notices, etc	2,885.91
80.00	AGM Costs	17.50
0.00	Website	0.00
3,978.94	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	3,055.21
<u>INCOME</u>		
2,249.00	Subscriptions	2,599.93
8.42	Bank interest	6.71
2,257.42	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	2,606.64
3,978.94	DEDUCT TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,055.21
-1,721.52	SURPLUS	-448.57
7,959.43	SUPLUS FROM EARLIER YEARS	6,237.91
6,237.91	<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>	5,789.34
629.49	<b>Current account balance 31.12.2013</b>	274.21
5,608.42	<b>Deposit account balance 31.12.2013</b>	5,515.13
0.00	Unpresented cheques	0.00
6,237.91		5,789.34

04.02.13<sup>4</sup> *AG*

17.05.13<sup>4</sup>  
*AG*

*Alan Cordor*  
*Hon. Auditor*  
*AG*

04.02.13<sup>4</sup> *AG*

17.05.13<sup>4</sup>  
*AG*

**NOTES TO ACCOUNTS (GJP)**

- 1 Subscriptions up by 15.5% on previous year
- 2 Information costs are down due to three issues being sent