

## The Twentieth Century Society

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The Twentieth Century Society held on Saturday 18 June 2015 at the City Hall, Leicester

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Joyce Glasser, Robert Hardcastle (Bristol Group), Sarah Jackson, MG Jones, Revd John Latham, Ian McInnes, Alan Powers, Nicola Rutt

#### 2. Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting

held on 13 June 2015 at St Aloysius Parish Hall, London NW1. These were approved, and signed by the Chairman.

#### 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

#### 4. President's address

- 4.1. Gillian Darley spoke about the kind of evidence we need to persuade the wider public of the validity of our judgements and views. She said that however thorough and convincing the research and the conferences there is a far more pressing case to be made, and that is essentially a visual one. We need to put the words and pictures together to proselytise.
- 4.2. GD said that for the 1950s to the 1980s, it is to Youtube, Vimeo and Pathe that she resorts first, and the bloggers, Dirty Modern Scoundrel (John Grindrod), City of Sound (Dave Hill), Municipal Dreams, Single Aspect etc. Still photography is too eager to edit, dust down or intervene: the current Martin Parr selection at the Barbican's 'Strange and Familiar' exhibition of overseas photographers observing us, has dozens of bowler-hatted gents in the fog, urchins in the dirt or toffs out for their fun, but hardly a sighting of the built fabric beyond, other than one, Axel Hutte's depopulated series of 1970s public housing, and another, Edith Tudor-Hart, of Kensal Road nursery soon after its opening.
- 4.3. Films about the family sagas of Louis Kahn, the Eames, etc, and the new thirst for documentary films in cinema, all help. GD urged that we stoke these embers, returning to sources such as public information films of the immediate post war period eg Halas and Batchelor, 'Charley in New Town', and the BBC's architecture programmes of the 1960s and 70s: Ian Nairn, Christopher Booker, Patrick Nuttgens, Colin Ward, John Betjeman, many of which are now online. Words from Nairn's 'Football Towns' were transcribed for inclusion in the Preston Bus Station listing application. Jonathan Meades has created a personal television style. GD urged us to explore the visual material available.

#### 5. Chairman's Address

- 5.1. Peter Ruback said that the AGM is an opportunity for members not only to see the progress that is being made in the work of the Society but also to gain an insight into the issues that the Trustees are grappling with. He commended the work of Clare Price and Tess Pinto, and in the year in question, Henrietta Billings, in pushing forward a large amount of listing recommendations and listed building consent work with skill and vigour, assisted by as many volunteers as the office can house. PR thanked Patric Morley and Susannah Charlton for their work on membership, administration, social media and fundraising.
- 5.2. PR reported on the post modernism conference, an interesting subject, being primarily about commercial architecture, and a contrast with the largely public sector brutalism that went before it. That has caused some critical problems and a profound establishment hostility to its conservation. The critical climate and the rapid turnover of stock in the commercial sector with

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a life expectancy of 25 years or so mean it is very much at risk. Historic England does recognise these concerns, but its cautious approach to listing is a serious impediment. The post war list is growing at about 40 buildings a year. If the rate is not increased substantially, there will be just over 4,000 of the post war part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the time we reach the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If local authorities would use their planning powers to recognise the heritage aspects of non-listed buildings, that might be an alternative to listing. This is unlikely, so we must persuade the government to list more buildings and we must encourage wider recognition of the range and quality of post war buildings. Our conference was designed to promote both the strands of argument and we have plans in preparation for further conferences on commercial buildings in particular.

- 5.3. PR noted that the Regional Groups are full of enthusiasm.
- 5.4. PR emphasised the importance to the Trustees of the financial situation. He explained that the 2014 deficit, and what would have been a deficit in 2015 were it not for a few very generous donations, had resulted from the decision to expand the office staff in 2013 in order to increase membership. Our membership has held up, not the case for other amenity societies, but has not expanded, and legacy income has fallen, and we now need to raise more funds from donations or partnerships or we will have to reduce activity, although we are determined to protect the scale of casework and campaigning. We also hope to move the Journal to a more self-supporting basis. PR and Gillian Darley have written personally to all life members, benefactors and patrons and have emailed all members of over 5 years' standing. PR said that we are concentrating on cost savings and Trustees are almost entirely not claiming expenses. PR thanked members for their response and support, and will update members later in the year about the fundraising. In the meantime we are undertaking a review of the work of the office.
- 5.5. PR welcomed the new Trustees proposed for election. He thanked retiring Trustees Nicky Rutt and Bobby Drake. NR has been fantastic in setting up the newer Regional Groups and supporting them in the earliest stages and a tower of common sense and energy. RD has been a meticulous Secretary and his commitment to the Society is second to none. His comprehensive knowledge of past cases and personal interest in twentieth century church architecture keep him on the casework committee and he will continue to put on events.
- 5.6. PR thanked Patric Morley, who is leaving the Society, for his able and courteous support over the last 4 years.

## 6. Director's Report and Casework Review

- 6.1. Catherine Croft gave an overview of the activities of her busy office. She thanked Henrietta Billings, now Chief Executive at Save Britain's Heritage, in the same building, a useful potential partner. CC thanked Patric Morley. Susannah Charlton's time has been increased to work on the website and newsletter, but is not enough. The caseworkers' areas of responsibility have been rejigged. Clare Price, now Senior Caseworker, who has started to study for a PhD on interwar churches and is a churchwarden, will sit on the London committee, which will give her more insights. CC welcomed new caseworker Tess Pinto, a strong candidate from a panel of strong applicants, who has hit the ground running, and is sensitive to campaigning issues. The office depends on a large number of volunteers, too many to identify, helping in all sorts of ways, including the mundane. Wendy Ackers, a PR professional who has taken early retirement, has helped get more TV, radio and press coverage.. CC thanked all the Trustees especially retiring Trustees Nicky Rutt and Bobby Drake. NR will continue on St Albans DAC. Without RD's broad knowledge and passionate commitment we would not be where we are today. CC said that we value Gillian Darley's expertise in social media and communication and encouraged us to use the website more.

### 6.2. Casework

- No 1 Poultry, James Stirling, 1994: CC said that there are no PoMO buildings listed, hence our PoMo Conference, which had good speakers and did boost the profile, HE's Emily Gee saw the

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passion in the room. HE turned down No 1 Poultry because the proposed alterations are not damaging enough. It is a technical argument. We have good knowledge but Lord Palumbo, the original owner, assisted us to obtain a barrister, and we are awaiting the outcome of a review to which we had sent our report before Christmas. Cases take a long time and we cannot let up. In the meantime the publicity has drawn attention and this is a good example of linking casework to events. CC observed that No 1 Poultry had replaced the 1870 Mappin & Webb building demolished in 1994, and we must acknowledge this and be sensitive to other amenity societies.

- Smithfield Market 1961-3 – we will be working with SAVE, and will apply for Grade II\*.
- The new Design Museum will move into the Commonwealth Institute. We will argue that it could have been done in a better way and that the associate housing scheme severely affects the fine landscape that had been there before.
- Casework is not just postwar. Our commitment to all styles of building from 1914 onwards remains as strong as ever and we are working on art deco buildings eg Havering.
- CC also mentioned Preston Bus Station, the US Embassy, Battersea Power Station, Robin Hood Gardens (unlikely to get a reprieve), and the tragic demolition of John Madin's Birmingham Central Library.

**6.3.** The HE partnered exhibition 'Out There' drew on their research and our recent sculpture listings. The exhibition is going on to Newcastle and audio tours are available online. Cycling Tours for the brave had proved popular.

**6.4.** CC said that we need to maintain a balance of dates and styles. We continue to act as critical friend to HE. In the area of public art they have been exemplary and we should celebrate their achievements. CC said that we cannot do what we do without money and we need to celebrate what we have been able to do.

### **7. Hon Treasurer's Report**

**7.1.** Carolyn Parmeter reported that 2015 was a reasonably good year. The accounts show a modest surplus of around £3,000, better than we had anticipated for much of the year, and this reflects the fundraising effort led by the Chairman, as well as a surplus from a special conference we ran on behalf of the Getty foundation. CP thanked those who responded to the fundraising appeals: gifts and donations were £14,000 higher than 2014.

**7.2.** We asked the accountants to introduce a new page (page 12) which shows recurring activities (casework, publications, events, etc) being similar to last year with a deficit of £25,000. Events profits were down by £2,000 to £23,500, but 2014 was a particularly good year. Membership income showed a decent increase of around £15,000 (although with some linked increase in expenses) reflecting the subscription increase at the start of 2015 and success in sustaining our membership numbers, where Regional Groups have been key. We continued to receive the Historic England grant towards casework of £45,000. No legacies were received in 2013-2015 but we know there are some bequests in the pipeline, and we have received £27,000 so far in 2016. This will help to replenish our reserves which at the end of 2015 were broadly equivalent to 10 months' expenditure, and we want to aim for 12 months. Journal expenditure was higher than for 2014, reflecting the bumper 'Houses' in autumn 2015. Magazine expenditure was reduced by 10%.

**7.3.** We will receive the HE grant through to April 2017, though reduced by 5%. Staff costs will continue to increase: we are now legally obliged to pay pensions, and rates will increase, and Susannah, who used to work on a consultancy basis, is now on the payroll. We are proposing a modest increase to subscriptions, to ensure we continue to meet staff costs and other overheads. In parallel, we are looking to reduce expenditure wherever possible. We need to continue fundraising.



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Household	from £70 to £75
Concession	from £35 to £40
Household Concession	from £60 to £65
Corporate Benefactor	from £375 to £500
Affiliate (non-profit making)	from £110 to £120
Benefactor	from £300 to £330

The motion was proposed, seconded and passed by a show of hands.

### 9.3. **Motion c. Appointment of auditors**

The motion to re-appoint Argents of Norwich was proposed, seconded and passed by a show of hands.

### 9.4. **Motion d. Election of Directors**

RD stated that Article 24 of the Articles of Association provides that one third of Directors stand down at each AGM usually after a three year term. The Directors/Trustees standing for re-election and members standing for election are named on the agenda.

Retiring Directors/Trustees: Robert Drake and Nicola Rutt

Directors/Trustees standing for re-election: Carolyn Parmeter and Simon van Heyningen

Candidates standing for election as Directors/Trustees: Barnabas Calder (who was a Trustee from 2013-2015), Sarah Jackson and Julia Lane.

RD proposed the election of Carolyn Parmeter, Simon van Heyningen, Barnabas Calder, Sarah Jackson and Julia Lane. The motion was seconded and agreed by a show of hands.

## 10. **Hon Membership Secretary's Report**

- 10.1. Jane Rosier thanked members for their continued support. Although membership levels have been maintained we have not increased them in the way we had hoped. We are keen to explore every option and JR urged members to contact her with thoughts or suggestions about how we could persuade more people to join and support us.
- 10.2. JR said that our aim, as always, over the past year has been to provide a consistent and high quality offer for all our members, however they experience us, be that through the Magazine, Journal, enewsletters or social media. The editorial content and quality of all of those is of a very high standard and gives excellent coverage of the full range of the Society's work and interests. JR urged members who are not receiving our regular enewsletter to consider signing up to stay in touch with the Society's work, in between issues of the Magazine.
- 10.3. Our social media activity continues to grow; Twitter followers up 41% on last year and Facebook likes up 146%. We also see higher levels of comments and contributions on these platforms, and some great content on our Instagram feed. These channels give us the opportunity to engage with wider discussions about twentieth century architecture and make connections with both individuals and organisations who share our interests and concerns. JR thanked Patric Morley and Susannah Charlton and the numerous volunteers who work on membership, digital and social media. It all contributes to what is hopefully a positive membership experience for everyone.

## 11. **Hon. Events Secretary's Report**

Simon Van Heyningen gave an overview of the events and trips of 2015, and thanked Leigh Stanford for her work on the programme.

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### 12. Publication Convenor's Report

- 12.1. Timothy Brittain-Catlin said that the Publications Committee, which meets twice a year, takes responsibility for the Journal, the monographs, and the lecture series. The Society produces a great deal of textual information of a high standard, which could not be achieved without the hard work and commitment of the staff. The Journal in particular requires an enormous amount of time and work and is a highly valued production even by the high standards of British architectural publishing. We use our publications to draw attention to areas deserving of broader interest. Historic England has to be convinced of the public interest, irrespective of personal likes and dislikes. We are aware of the costs and for example have been considering producing a Journal every 18 months, aiming publications at a broader market for an increased income, and developing commercial partnerships to share production costs. TBC urged members to buy the publications to give as presents.
- 12.2. There has been a slight gap in the Twentieth Century Architects series on the change of publisher. There are two in preparation and thereafter there will be two or three at two year intervals. The Magazine designer has retired and been replaced. The forthcoming lecture series will feature lettering on buildings, inspired by the Edward Johnston centenary. The next Journal 13 will be on the architecture of public service and Journal 14 will be on commercial architecture which is under-represented, and by its nature susceptible of change. Asked about bookshop sales TBC replied that the mainstream booksellers are unlikely to take our publications. There are not many takers for expensive hardback architecture books. TBC pointed out that Country Life's magazine income supports its research. He suggested that our tour guides could be reproduced for commercial income when, although small print runs are expensive, the work and the photos would be free. The post-1914 churches database on our website has been completed for England and will be expanded. He mentioned the RC Taking Stock database and asked members to tell the Society about missing or re-used churches. There are only 12 non-conformist churches in our database. In answer to a question TBC said that we will consider negotiating deals for paper. TBC thanked Jenny Walmsley for her work.

### 13. Regional Groups Report

- 13.1. Barry Arden, Regional Groups Co-ordinator, reported on a very productive and positive year for the eight Regional groups. Their support of the Society's casework and their events promote the Society in their regions and attract new membership. BA commended their energy and enthusiasm, particularly now that their role and status has been formalised and recognised. He paid tribute to the Chairs: NE – John and Karen Topping, NW – Matthew Schofield (Aidan Turner-Bishop has stepped down after many years in the role), Yorkshire – Andrew Jackson (also now Chair of Sheffield Modernists), East Midlands – Chris Matthews, West Midlands – Anna Douglas, West – Bob Hardcastle, Southern – Pauline Mousley, South West – Tony Stokoe. The framework agreed at last AGM is being developed by the Regional Groups Committee, including communications and website pages with guidance and support from the centre.
- 13.2. BA thanked: Nicky Rutt for setting a strong foundation for the RGs; head office for the governance structure and advice; the caseworkers; Patric Morley; Susannah Charlton; events organiser Leigh Stanford; and Susannah Straughan who has developed the RG web pages, which have become a key factor in strengthening collaboration with head office. There are clearly resource implications for staffing at the centre given the budget pressures facing the Society but there is much potential contribution of RGs to membership, casework support, and events income.
- 13.3. RGs can give early warning of threats to buildings and can provide information. Examples can be found on the website and include: South West – the Grimshaw Western Morning News building; West Midlands - three Basil Spence Churches listed in Coventry, but John Madin's

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Birmingham Central library have demolished; North East – Ryder and Yates Salvation Army Hostel listed but the practice's office in Killingworth delisted; North West – the Society's caseworkers are working on Salford RC diocese's decision to reduce its number of parishes by 50% with consequent threat to many post war churches, and sweeping redevelopment proposals in Manchester City Centre.

- 13.4.** Events run by RGs spread the word about C20 architecture and design, attract new members, and can contribute income. RGs, especially the newer ones organise small free local events to attract interest. RGs manage to reach out to all parts of what are sometimes very large regions.
- 13.5.** BA said that the future for RGs will be to consolidate their work and programmes with support from the centre. The head office review will include consideration of the work of the RGs. Development of collaborative working with kindred organisations will be considered eg Modernists and Civic Societies.
- 13.6.** BA introduced Chris Matthews of the East Midlands Regional Group who gave a review of the Group's activities, casework and events.

### **14. Any Other Business**

Peter Ruback presented a gift to Robert Drake in appreciation of his service to the Society.

Julia Lane  
Hon Secretary