

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIETY**
held on Saturday 9 June 2018

at The Apostle Room, Clifton Cathedral Church of SS Peter and Paul, Clifton, Bristol

1. Apologies for absence

Barry Arden, David Heath, Rev John Latham, Anna Douglas, Bobby Drake

2. Approval of Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 17 June 2017

The minutes were approved and there were no matters arising

3. Chairman's Address – Peter Ruback

The Chairman thanked members for coming to the AGM. He thanked Bob Hardcastle, Chairman of the West Regional Group of the Society for their work in organising the splendid venue. He went on to give a few reflections on where the Society stands at the moment in relation on its challenges and the capacity of the system we operate in to cope with these challenges.

Our raison d'être and the cause when we were founded was of course the casework and the campaigning needed to save buildings under threat and that takes the great majority of staff and volunteer time. This can be seen as reducing the supply of destruction, by making it more difficult to do. But the other side of the issue is to reduce the demand for destruction, by increasing the awareness of our period through education of decision makers, by showcasing constructive reuse and by garnering support for buildings of our period before plans are hatched to destroy or mutilate them.

That is why we were very pleased that we were funded by Historic England to do some work on existing conservation areas and potential new conservation areas for buildings of our period. It spoke to conservation officers and planners independently of any ideas of redevelopment and made the case – so often ignored – that buildings of our period are of value and that the preservation is an important part of rooting ourselves in our history.

We were also pleased when Historic England advised Ministers favourably on the listing of Post Modern buildings. This is no doubt that this was triggered not only by our campaign for dealing with the threat to Number 1 Poultry by lobbying and arguing for its listing, but also by our highly successful conference in 2016 with Terry Farrell and others reviewing the Post Modern period, the buildings and their origins. It is good to think that Post Modern has so smoothly been taken into the world of heritage protection largely because of the Society's work.

That success should not be taken to imply that the battle for earlier parts of the post war period is won. The Chairman has argued in the latest magazine that the currently extremely cautious and hesitant approach to listing (and in fact official appreciation) of buildings of the 1945-79 period should now end and for the purposes of listing and other protections should be treated on a par with the interwar period, the social history and drivers for design now being fully appreciated. In fact, the threat for this period is high, given the preponderance of public sector development with land ownership in the hands of a limited number of players and hence the comparative ease of site assembly.

The Chairman acknowledged the growing contribution of the Regional Groups. They have grown in confidence and capability: are organising a significant contribution to our national events programme and are getting the Society greater coverage and impact than can be done by the Office and volunteers alone. They play to the side of our work which is about communicating what we are about before specific threats emerge.

The Chairman spoke about the question of how the Society should handle post 1999 buildings. These buildings have always been within our remit. They just don't sit well with the name. As a way of breaking open this issue, Trustees have commissioned Alec Forshaw, formerly senior conservation officer at Islington council and highly experienced in these matters, to undertake a review of the work that would be involved in taking on this caseload and whether it would be any different in nature. The hope is that in understanding the likely caseload and threat, and how it might be handled, we will have a clearer idea of the future activity of the Society and hence how we should communicate that, including any possible name changes, or any branding implications. We have described this review as a scope review. Trustees and the Director will want to consider its recommendations and how the Society should proceed.

One thing that we are determined to do is to ensure that the perhaps unfashionable parts of the 20th century do not get overlooked: for example Neo Georgian and mid-century modern, as well as Miesian buildings are not getting the protection they need.

The Chairman ended by paying tribute to Gavin Stamp. As well as being instrumental in setting up the Thirties Society and being a long standing Chairman, he maintained high standards of scholarship alongside passionate and effective campaigning. In his unique way he communicated the nature of threat – which he deplored - as well as articulating the value of buildings with clarity and honesty to a wide range of readers and avoiding any corruption by fashion. We will miss him sorely.

4. President's Address – Gillian Darley

The President referred to the Chairman's laying of emphasis on 'awareness'.

In the SAHGB conference (June 8 and 9 with C20 support), a considerable weight was put on the importance of, and identification of, intangible heritage. The President described the *Jaywick for Happiness* heritage trail project, a two-mile circular route around Jaywick Sands, the working-class holiday resort outside Clacton built in the 1930s. The route is demarcated into a dozen or so 'stories', in which a home movie or

photographs and commentary allow the visitor to get a sense of the place, through the imaginative use of personal and oral history. You can follow the scheme online as an app or via the website www.jaywickforhappiness.org.uk or 'walk, cycle, jog, run or even skip' around the trail.

The collective impact of this place, like many others which may seem essentially unpromising, is a way of reinforcing its importance and, with that, its value. Historic England now uses Trip Advisor comments to measure responses to sites. The key factor is understanding, and knowledge may be conveyed in all sorts of ways – far beyond the bare bones of a list description, even if such is available. *New Town Utopia* is a new documentary film made by Christopher E Smith about Basildon New Town. It is not a eulogy but a set of responses from the 'children of the new town', mostly now in their late middle age and many of whom have responded to the difficulties in the town creatively, particularly through poetry and music. It is a 'warts and all' picture compelling in its underlying optimism – both back then and even now. Grayson Perry has included Brooke House, the tower block at the heart of Basildon in one of his pair of 2015 tapestries depicting *Julie Cope's Grand Tour* (she is his fictional Essex girl around whom the *House for Essex* at Wrabness was designed). We are looking at Basildon and Harlow with new eyes, and must take others with us as we do so.

The President has been writing extensively (and positively!) about Essex recently. There is much to be done towards improving public understanding of the New Towns – to begin with by presenting their qualities and achievements to those who actually live there, not all of whom are particularly convinced. Yet the Bata village at East Tilbury (see John Tusa's article in the C20 magazine in 2014) is proof of how this can work, by drawing on memory, shared experience and – eventually – pride. The Society can help in this process, helping to inform, explain and share impressions (and not just hard facts).

Our own research and recommendations into the viability of twentieth century Conservation Areas will be invaluable here. We are in the business of changing minds, throwing light into corners which remain dark for most, and catching the 'arc of taste' as it settles into the mainstream but before the damage is done, quite possibly in ignorance. As the self-styled 'woman on the bus', the President is eager to keep our feet on the ground and put our experience in front of the widest possible public. The tap drips. People are interested. The Society has such a part to play.

5. Director's Report – Catherine Croft

The Director thanked the Society's members, both active and passive, for their support, and welcomed this opportunity to present the work of the past year.

The Director described Casework in absence of CWs and DH, symposium yesterday's session about how various groups work together. TP leaving to do GLC 60s and 70s Conservation work in GLC. Some candidates short listed.

5.1. 3 cases, all running for years, we use range of tactics, scattergun tenchinqu, cant really know which things worked

- 5.2. St Johns Waterloo. Georgian, bombed, close to Southbank Centre, adopted by Fest of Brit. Went to Consistory Court, CP and AP and Lambeth, we won but now a new case, the most controversial alteration is new window, new COI has been upheld by DCMS, we find shocking FOI re, making bigger point about Sec of State not following HE's advice, asking for how many times this has happened, preparing
- 5.3. Doug Black works for Lambeth Council stated Chancellor sitting as judge, Soc v professional, came out very well. People now listening more to Lambeth Council, rare for church cases to be won. We can't do this every time. We choose to when there is a bigger picture
- 5.4. Ready Mix concr hq, Ted Cullinan, proposal to demolish, built around Georgian building in beautiful landscape, arguably PoNo, we suggested gd housing for old people, and now is the newly proposed use. People have started to think about it in a different way, gradually sunk in that this is quite special.
- 5.5. Aec f has taken the agendas for last 3 yrs to analyse which decades. Most interwar period. Surprised. Doesn't take as long on the whole many already listed and alterations less drastic than later decades.
- 5.6. Recent PoMo group of listings, CC asked to do article for Guardian, spreads the range of publications we feature in.
- 5.7. Events, Vilnius War Mem walk in mem of Gvin Stamp, a loss, obit in last Mag but will be more next time. J Meades eulogy from the funeral. Elaine writing piece about all the for trips he ever did. PoMo and India talks coming up. A trip to India is being worked Chandraghore, New D and Chabad.
- 5.8. Endorsed CP comments on need to fundraise. Legacies make an enormous difference to us. We'd like to put together a fundraising committee, looking for the expertise, to make a professional and appropriate strategy.

6. Hon Treasurer's Report and presentation of 2017 Accounts – Carolyn Parmeter

- 6.1. Carolyn Parmeter final approved version will include non stat showing ordinary and non-recurrent eg special projects like Conservation Area project, legacies, can't be relied upon every year. 42k surplus, 16 recurrent, better than hoped, 26K nonrec Getty and Cons Areas contribution to the overheads when budgeted. 24k is gifts donations and legacies really important buffer. Surplus on normal activities because Journal in this year, budgeted for last yr would have been small deficit of 5k. Good yr for events, over 35k, record, Japan longest event ever, 10days, won't be so high this year. Subs and GA the most important 131k, funds the staff. HE grant towards CW reduced 5% from previous year, pay for a caseworker. CW exps 16k includes Cons Areas project 11K and admin higher 9.5k on IT, bought lot of hardware. HE grant this year, no inc in subs this year, pay rises are modest but must increase pension contributions. Need to continue fundraising. Relatively healthy, reserves more comfortable thanks to legacies. The Accounts were approved.

7. Ordinary Resolution to re-appoint Argent's Accountants Ltd as auditors

The Resolution was passed.

8. Ordinary Resolution to elect six Directors

One third (5 of the existing 14) of the existing Directors had resigned in accordance with the rotation requirements of Article 24 of the Articles of Association, being: Peter Ruback, Jane Rosier, Ellen Gates, John Clarke and Julia Lane, all of these being willing to stand for re-election. Suzanne Burn had been recommended by the Directors under Article 27 to stand for election. (The permitted maximum number of Directors (Trustees) is 16.)

The Resolution to appoint Peter Ruback, Jane Rosier, Ellen Gates, John Clarke, Julia Lane, and Suzanne Burn was passed.

9. Annual Reports

The Reports from the Publications Committee, the Hon Events Secretary, and the Hon Membership Secretary, had been placed on the About Us page of the website, together with AGM Minutes and Annual Reports from Regional Groups. Paper copies of all these are available on request from the office.

Timothy Brittain-Catlin, Chairman of the Publications Committee, added further observations on the good standard of our publications at a worldwide level, and the monograph series raising awareness of potentially overlooked architects. He reported that informal confirmation had just been received that the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain has approved £18,000 towards the series, which will help to make up the shortfall left after the withdrawal of RIBA for four titles. SAHGB do not want any books to sell, but would like to join the roster of logos in place of RIBA.

10. Any Other Business

Peter Ruback thanked Eva Tyler, retiring as Head of Operations, and welcomed Kate Southey as the new Operations Manager, under a revised office structure.

Susannah Charlton noted that the Report on the Conservation Areas research project (funded by Historic England on the 50th anniversary in 2017 of the start of Conservation Areas) is available on the website.

Signed Date 2019
Peter Ruback, Chairman

Draft 4 July 2018