

# **Minutes of the Anglo-German FHS 28th Annual General Meeting**

Held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2016  
At King's Cross Methodist Church, Crestfield Street, London.

## **1. Welcome by Vice-President Peter Towey**

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Nöele & Paul Barnfield, Lynn Burling, Ray Haffner, Norma Shepherd, Jenny Towey.

## **3. Minutes of last AGM 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015.**

The previous minutes had been published on the AGFHS website and were agreed and signed as a true record of proceedings.

## **4. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

## **5. Chairperson's Report (read by Gwen Davis)**

Firstly, I apologise that I cannot be at the meeting today (I am cruising in Alaska). As you will have noticed, this year we have continued to focus on and commemorate various aspects of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WW1, both in our talks and in the Blatt. On this theme Paul Barnfield, our Internment Curator, wrote a helpful article about accessing the records of the International Red Cross and has assisted several members with queries regarding these. As a society we have sought particularly to highlight the plight of the innocent German in the UK who, overnight, became an 'enemy alien'. In October Yvonne Cresswell, from the Manx Museum on the Isle of Man, will be coming to talk to us about internment followed by a study session.

We also marked the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo and the involvement of the King's German Legion in the Peninsular Wars, with talks, including one by our member John Dear on his KGL relative in April.

Our joint Vice-Presidents, Jenny & Peter Towey, continue to be our main representatives at family history fairs, and this year this has included attendance for 3 days at Who Do You Think You Are Exhibition at the NEC Birmingham for the first time since it moved there. These regional fairs are an important platform to advertise the society, make our presence known and encourage new members. However, Jenny and Peter urgently need more help with running and, if possible, taking over the society book and information stall at these events. I do urge members to seriously consider volunteering, otherwise we may have to cease attending, which will have a considerable effect on the society.

Our bi-monthly meetings here at King's Cross, continue to have a good attendance, with our bookshop usually available, and, thanks to Ann Gilmore, many excellent speakers, on both and non-German topics.

We continue to enjoy regular social events in June and December, enjoying authentic German food, and testing our brains trying to answer the quiz questions set by David Burling.

Please talk to Peter and Jenny if you feel you can take the bookstall to a FHF local to you, or can offer to help at any of the fairs

We have had some really excellent articles in the Blatt and have seen the first of our intended 'occasional' papers, The Mutzkes. We should also be having a least one new book publication very soon, on the German Orphanage. New book ideas are always welcome and can be put through the committee for consideration for publication. We would very much like to encourage anyone else with ideas to discuss them with us.

We continue to have occasional regional meetings and would like to encourage other members who feel they could, to host meetings for members in their areas, such as those that Jenny & Peter, Gwen Davis and others have held in the past. We appreciate not everyone can or wishes to travel into central London. If you think you would like to arrange/host such an event, the committee would be happy to assist with suggestions on how to plan a meeting, advice and assistance finding about speakers etc. (possibly one of the committee or other members) Again, this is largely down to you as members to instigate, but your committee will support such meetings in any way we can.

Unfortunately, overall our membership is down a little but we do continue to see new members joining and I hope we make them feel welcome when they attend here and that they will be able to progress their German family history. I hope you will all agree that we still have a very successful, helpful and enjoyable society, which is of real benefit to our members.

In concluding this report I want to commend your dedicated and hard working committee, as well as all the other regular helpers, for all that they do to fulfil many essential roles and to make mine much easier.

So on behalf of myself and all of you, I would like to register a vote of thanks to all those who have done so much this past year to assist in the smooth running of the society.

Lastly of course to you the members, thank you for attending meetings and supporting the society. I hope you enjoy today and will continue to be part of the AGFHS.

Thank you

Noële Barnfield – Chair-person & Events Organiser, June 2016.

## **6. Treasurer's Report for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

As you will see from your copy of the accounts, we finished the financial year with a small increase in total funds of £18 with respect to assets at the end of 2014-15.

With respect to income over the year, the significant differences compared with 2014-15 are:

- 1) A £403 or 4% decrease in membership subscriptions. This continues the downward trend we have experienced each year since 2010, though the annual decrease does at last appear to be flattening out.

- 2) Also on the negative side, there has been a significant reduction in sales of books of £469 or 25% w.r.t. 2014-15. This is partly explained by the fact that the takings from 'Who Do You Think You Are? 2016' will appear in next year's accounts, though of course we did not attend the fair in 2015.

All other items remained approximately in line with last year.

With respect to expenditure, the significant differences are:

- 1) The apparent large decrease in Fees and Insurance: this is due to the abnormally high figure in last year's accounts, with 2 years' Liability Insurance falling within the 2014-15 financial year.
- 2) The costs for printing of the 'Blatt were more in line with earlier years when we published 4 issues per annum. As was explained by the Editor last year we moved to 3 standard issues of the 'Blatt in 2014; but this was compensated for in 2015 by the publication of a special edition in the autumn.
- 3) Other Printing costs were limited to a reprint of Peter Towey's 'Researching Your German Ancestors'.
- 4) The attendance of 'WDYTYA? 2016' is reflected in the increased expenditure listed under Fairs.

All other items remained approximately in line with the previous year.

The estimate of the value of the Society's assets shows a decrease, partly due to the continuing depreciation in the value of equipment but mostly because of a drop in Bookshop inventory.

In summary, it has been another financially stable year for the Society overall, though the upward trend in the Society's funds that we have seen over the last few years appears to have levelled off. This coming year there are plans for at least one book reprint and one new publication to add to the Bookshop's broad range of titles. It is intended that subscription rates should remain at the current level for the foreseeable future.

I would like to finish by thanking John Short for his advice, and the meticulous auditing of the accounts and dealing with the masses of paperwork that he has to sift through.

Jeremy Gilmore – Treasurer, June 2016

It was proposed that the 2015-16 accounts be accepted and this proposal was overwhelmingly accepted by those members present at the AGM meeting.

## **7. Other Reports**

### **7.1 Secretary's Report**

Living in Devon and having spent over a year recovering from a knee operation and pneumonia, I have not been in attendance much at AGFHS meetings. However I have kept up-to-date with society matters and have answered various letters and emails concerning the AGFHS.

Only one person, Anthony Steven, came back to me about my translation query in the last Blatt which apparently means, “The horse does not eat cucumber salad”.

Over the next year, I will try to contact overseas members so I can report on their research progress and see if there are any lessons to be learnt for those of us in the UK. This is a follow up on the work started by our previous secretary.

I always welcome any correspondence from members – on any subject relating to the society.

Gwen Davis – Secretary, June 2016

## 7.2 Membership Secretary’s Report

The Society membership has fallen again slightly and now stands at 715. Sixty-five members have joined since the last AGM, a slight increase on last year.

Fortunately, we are continuing to see an increase in previous members re-joining, as well as those from overseas.

Our attendance at the WDYTYA? show at Birmingham in April, proved successful with nine members joining, five of which were previous members.

Again, I am pleased to report that the majority of members renewed their membership on time. I sent out approximately 150 e-mail reminders and about two thirds replied.

Once again, a reminder that renewal time is nearly here and that you will find the renewal form for next year’s membership in the Summer edition of the Blatt.

Finally, thank you all for the kind donations.

Betty Anderson – Membership Secretary, June 2016.

## 7.3 Programme Organiser’s Report

Over the past year we have had talks on a variety of topics—in June of 2015 we heard a fascinating talk by Cambridge Professor Brendan Simms entitled *How 400 Hanoverians Won the Battle of Waterloo*. In August we heard from Simon Gregor in a talk titled *The Remembrance Image Project: WWI Centenary Commemorations Photos and Stories*. The second talk for August was by Professor Matthew Stibbe who spoke about *Researching WWI Internees in Austria and Germany*. In October we heard part one of member Peter Towey’s two part talk on *Tracing Your German Ancestors*. The second talk in October was by Celia Heritage on *Wills: Not just a Source for your Better Off Ancestor!* In December we heard part two of Peter Towey’s talk on *Tracing Your German Ancestors*, and the second talk in December was by member Patrick Wiegand on *The German Orphanage, Dalston, 1879 – 1939*. Patrick’s grandparents were Master and Mistress of the German Orphanage and his moving talk contained many photographs from their time, some of which also showed ancestors of a few other members of our society. In February we had three talks, two short ones and a full length talk. Member Terry Mitchell spoke about his ancestor, *William Young – A German Shoemaker in Victorian East London*. Terry’s talk was followed by another short talk on *Our AGFHS Website* given by member Jeremy Gilmore. The full length talk was by Julian Pooley from the Surrey History Centre. His topic was *The Gentleman’s*

*Magazine (1731 – 1856): A Resource for Local and Family Historians.* In April, the scheduled speaker, Tom Doig, who was going to speak on *Dating Old Photographs*, had to cancel his talk due to illness. I hope to rebook his talk for sometime next year. Fortunately, Kathy Chater was able to step in at very short notice. She gave her talk on *London Labyrinth: Finding Your Way Through the Hundreds of National and Local Records in Many London Repositories*. The second talk in April was by member John Dear and was about his ancestor, *Johann Sebastian Felger, King's German Legion*. John's talk was originally booked for April of last year but he also had to cancel then. Is April jinxed? Today's talk after the tea break will be by Brian Bates and it is about *Living With the Enemy -- Dorchester's Great War Camp*. Brian has come up from Dorchester today.

As last year, again I would like to say a special thank you to those members who gave talks in the past year. As well as allowing us to hear about other members' research, it is good for our society's finances since it reduces the cost of having speakers at our meetings. Please contact me if you would like to give a talk, and if you have mentioned it before, please remind me—thanks!

I would also like to thank those of you who have suggested speakers in the past. In particular, Jenny Towey, Noele and Paul Barnfield, and Peter and Dee Helmore have suggested several speakers over the years, as well as a few other members who have offered ideas--thanks. Please let me know if there is a speaker you would like to hear or a topic of particular interest to you and I will see what I can do. Anything with a German connection or any aspect of social history, German or British, are welcome as topics. And of course, Jeremy is happy to help you with putting your illustrations into a PowerPoint presentation.

Ann Sternberg Gilmore – Programme Organiser, June 2016.

## 7.4 Bookshop and Fairs Report

This year Peter and I took the bookshop to Woking, for the Surrey FHS Fair, Poole, for the Dorset FHS Fair and the NEC for WDYTIA? Live. All the fairs did ok: better for renewals and new members than selling our publications. As usual the general genealogical public are not aware of family history societies – especially us! At the NEC I performed “trriage” whilst having my lunch in the public seating area: each day I happened to sit at a table where the other occupants had German ancestry – p'raps we should rename it, from WDYTIA? Live, to who'd a thought it?!

Book orders via Genfair are also down.

We also held a regional meeting at our home and every seat was filled: again, we didn't sell a thing, but had one renewal and one new member.

Jenny Towey – Vice-President and Bookshop Manager, June 2016.

## 7.5 Editorial Report

We hope you enjoyed the first occasional issue, which appeared last autumn. This year, in addition to the three regular issues, we are planning to bring you a second occasional issue – this time, on the German School. In response to requests from the membership, we have adjusted the timetable so that you should receive the summer edition in time for this meeting.

We continue to streamline the digital side of our operation, with an e-Blatt being available to overseas members. However, we are still committed to producing a hard copy for the majority of our members.

The Editorial Team would like to thank all our contributors. Please keep the articles rolling in.

The Blatt is nothing if not a team effort, and it could not appear without the assistance of many people. This year we must give first mention to our publisher, Roger Chouler, whose firm has, as of the spring issue of this year, been responsible for producing fifty editions. Thanks are also due to the typists, who turn hard copy into a form which can be read by a computer, and the proof-readers, who expunge all the typos and other errors that have evaded the vigilance of the editorial team. Many thanks to these teams. Finally, thanks must also go to Jeremy Gilmore, our webmaster, for the efficient way in which he irons out any technical difficulties.

Jennifer Taylor - Editorial Team, June 2016.

## **8. Election of Independent Examiner**

John Short was re-elected as the Society's Independent Examiner.

## **9. Election of Officers**

As no new nominations had been received and the current officers were all willing to stand again, Peter Towey proposed that the current officers should be re-elected. His proposal was overwhelmingly agreed by those members attending the AGM meeting.

**There being no other business, Peter Towey thanked everyone for attending the 2016 Annual General Meeting.**