

# **Minutes of the Anglo-German FHS 29th Annual General Meeting**

Held on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2017  
At King's Cross Methodist Church, Crestfield Street, London.

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

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Gwen Davis, Sue Neale, Jennifer Taylor.

## **3. Minutes of last AGM 11<sup>th</sup> June 2016.**

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**

Firstly, sadly, as most of you know, this year has seen the loss of two stalwarts of the society, Len Metzner, one of our first members, who did so much for the society in the early days and whose 'indexes' provided the main vehicle for our very successful Names Index. His obituary is in the latest Blatt. We also said farewell to our excellent former secretary, Jeannette Spence. They will both be missed.

On a happier note, this year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the society, set up by our Founding President, Roy Bernard in 1987. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to arrange any special events to mark this milestone, but I hope you will agree that this is a lively, helpful and enjoyable society, that still serves its purpose and is of real benefit to our members. We have excellent new publications, more and more areas of research, and many members stepping forward to give talks at our regular meetings.

Having said that, we would strongly encourage more input from you, the members, and would actively welcome and value more volunteers, especially on the committee. This is also the start of my tenth year as your chairperson and I am sure it would be beneficial for someone new to take on this role and bring some fresh ideas. It is not an onerous job and I will happily talk it through with anyone who has an interest.

This year we continue to focus on and commemorate various aspects of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WW1, in some of our talks and in the Blatt. As a society we have sought particularly to highlight the plight of the innocent German in the UK who, overnight, became an 'enemy alien'. Last October Yvonne Cresswell from the Manx Museum, on the Isle of Man, gave a talk to us about internment on the island and our talk today, (after the AGM) is '**The Stobs Internment Camp During the First World War**', given by Dr. Stefan Manz.

Our joint Vice-Presidents, Jenny & Peter Towey, continue to represent us at family history fairs, which again included attendance for 3 days at the WDYTYA Exhibition in Birmingham in April. That was, however, the last WDYTYA event. Nevertheless, regional fairs are an important platform to help advertise the society, make our presence known, and encourage new members. I really do urge more members to seriously consider volunteering or indeed to take over the society book and information stall at these events, as Jenny and Peter, who have carried out this role for so long, feel the need to step back. Otherwise we may have to cease attending any family history events, which would be likely to have a considerable effect on the society. Do come and 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, or if you would like to know more about serving on the committee.

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

No one has held a regional meeting this year and this is another area where your committee would like to encourage other members to host meetings for members in their areas, such as those that Jeannette Spence, Richard Ford, Jenny & Peter and Gwen Davis 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 very happy to assist with suggestions on how to plan a meeting, give advice and assistance finding about speakers etc. (possibly one of the committee or other members) and help meet extra costs. The success of such events is largely down to you as members to instigate and host them, but of course your committee will fully support such meetings in any way we can.

We have had some really excellent articles in the Blatt and our recent book publication on the German Orphanage is excellent and I highly commend it. 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.

I hope you continue to enjoy our regular social events held in June and December, where we partake in delicious, authentic, German food, and have lots of fun trying to answer the quiz questions set by David Burling.

In conclusion I would especially like to thank your dedicated and hard working committee, and all the other regular helpers, not forgetting all of you for regularly attending meetings and supporting the society. I hope you enjoy today and will continue to be part of the AGFHS.

Thank you

**Noële Barnfield** – Chairperson & Events Organiser, June 2017

## **6. Treasurer's Report for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

As you will see from your copy of the accounts, we finished the financial year with a decrease in total funds of £1071 with respect to assets at the end of 2015-16; and with the deposit account standing at £14780 after taking into consideration the modest interest applied.

With respect to income over the year, the significant differences compared with 2015-16 are:

- 1) A modest £154 increase in membership subscriptions. It is good to see that the downward trend in membership we have experienced each year since 2010 appears to have halted. I would like to thank members for their continued generous donations which they include on making their subscription payments (up 12% on last year).
- 2) Also on the positive side, there has been a significant increase in sales of books of £1018 or 73% w.r.t. 2015-16 through the Bookshop, from the Bookstall at meetings or at fairs. This is no doubt helped by the new publications or new editions that have been added to the Society's book list.

All other items remained approximately in line with last year.

With respect to expenditure, the significant differences are:

- 1) Other Printing costs have risen this year, with a reprint of Jennifer Taylor's publication on the Huyton Camp and the new publication by member Patrick Weigand about 'The German Orphanage, Dalston'.
- 2) The costs for printing of the 'Blatt have been kept under tight control for which we should thank our printers, Roger Chouler and Associates.
- 3) The charge for attendance of Fairs has increased very significantly primarily due to the large fees involved in attending WDYTYA? 2017. Part of these 2017 costs will also be reflected in the 2017-18 accounts.
- 4) Fees for speakers have again been modest, thanks to the number of members who have volunteered to talk about their own genealogical interests.

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

The estimate of the value of the Society's assets shows an increase, due to an increase in Bookshop inventory with the new publications, offset by the removal of the Library assets.

In summary, it has been an unusual financial year for the Society's accounts, with a reduction in funds w.r.t. last year. However I should stress that this has been due primarily to the printing or reprinting of publications, a key objective of the Society. It is intended that subscription rates should remain at the current level for the foreseeable future.

As always 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 2017

**It was proposed that the 2016-17 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

Sorry not to be with you today. Everything is going well from my point of view and I may have volunteers for at least one regional meeting – details to follow.

I have had some lively correspondence from my Notes and more is always welcome.

Gwen Davis – Secretary, June 2017

### 7.3 Programme Organiser's Report

Over the past year we have had talks on a variety of topics—in June of 2016 we heard a fascinating talk by Brian Bates about *Living With the Enemy – Dorchester's Great War Camp*. In August we heard from John Neal in a talk titled *Immigration in the East End of London*. The second talk for August was given by member Paul Barnfield on something a bit different. It was not about family history but about social history and his topic was *Weston and Lee—the Most Prolific Songwriters You've Probably Never Heard Of!* The whole of our October meeting was devoted to *Internment on the Isle of Man*. Yvonne Cresswell from the Manx Museum originally suggested a workshop, but in the end, she gave us two interesting talks about IOM internment. Considering her extensive knowledge of the subject, I suspect she could have gone on for several more hours. In December we heard Roy Bernard's talk on *My German Family in England*. Roy and his late wife, Margaret, founded the society in 1987 and it was his interest in meeting living relatives which motivated him to begin our society. The second talk in December was by member Andrew Guentert and it was about his family history. His talk was *From Obereggingen in the Schwarzwald to Galashiels in the Scottish Borders*. In February both talks were by members. Keith Schnaar talked about *The History of the Order of St. John and the Priory Church in Clerkenwell*. Jennifer Taylor gave a talk about *Franz Joseph Buch: Interned for Having a German Father*. It was a particularly moving afternoon because one of Franz Joseph Buch's descendants was present and she had with her a file with some of the original documents. In April, just as in April last year, one of the scheduled speakers had to cancel at short notice. Member Suzanne Frick Davies was booked to talk about *German Sugar Bakers in London's East End—from the Sixteenth Century to the Twentieth* but unfortunately she had to cancel. I hope to rebook her talk at some point if possible. Fortunately, thanks to Steve Pilcher (recently retired from the Historic Chapels Trust) I was given details for Anette Jäger, one of their previous speakers, and she generously stepped in to give us a talk entitled *To Whom Can I Turn If Not To the Church To Which I Belong?* Anette is doing research for St George's German Lutheran Church, studying letters in several London archives from Christian Germans of Jewish descent who were asking for help because they were being persecuted. This was a report of her initial work so she is happy to come back when she has found more of interest. Member Michael Potter gave the other April talk on *Urlaub in Osterreich und der Schweiz: Two Innocents Abroad*, talking about his various impressions of early visits to Austria and Switzerland. Finally, today's talk after the tea break will be by Dr. Stefan Manz, a historian from Aston University, and his title is *The Stobs Internment Camp during the First World War*.

Again I would like to say a special thank you to those members who gave talks in the past year. Please contact me if you would like to give a talk.

I would also like to thank those of you who have suggested speakers in the past. Please let me know if there is a speaker you would like to hear or a topic of particular interest to you. If you

have suggested a talk or speaker in the past and nothing has yet happened about it, please remind me. And of course, Jeremy is happy to help you with putting your illustrations into a PowerPoint presentation.

**Ann Sternberg Gilmore** – Programme Organiser, June 2017.

## **7.2 Editorial Report on Mitteilungsblatt**

This year we have continued the pattern of three issues – spring, summer and autumn, plus an occasional issue sent out in September.

We hope you have all received your summer issue in good time for this meeting so that you can hand in your membership renewal form.

The occasional issue this year is the translation of a diary by Anselm Ungar, proponent of democracy and a political refugee, the ancestor of one of our members, which recounts his voyage from Germany to the US in order to seek freedom in the new world. This voyage was made in 1852, shortly before steam replaced sail.

The Autumn Issue will be a commemorative issue for the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society.

We are hoping that there will be many members who wish to share their memories of the Society – please submit in the usual way by 8 September. If anyone has any photographs of interest these too would be welcome. But please make sure you state clearly when it was taken and what it depicts. Please submit to the g-mail address which you will find on the first page of the Blatt in the editorial.

The Blatt is nothing if not a team effort, and it could not appear without the assistance of many people. In addition to the editorial team, 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 2017.

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

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

**There being no other business, Peter Towey thanked everyone for attending the 2017 Annual General Meeting.**