

# **Minutes of the Anglo-German FHS 30th Annual General Meeting**

Held on Saturday 9th June 2018  
At King's Cross Methodist Church, Crestfield Street, London.

## **1. Welcome: Vice-President, Peter Towey**

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Gwen Davis; Doreen Heywood; Betty Landrock;  
Keith and Sheila Schnaar; Irene Short.

## **3. Minutes of last AGM 10<sup>th</sup> June 2017.**

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

## **4. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

## **5. Chairperson's Report**

Last year marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the society (celebrated with a cake and our publication including memories of many early members), so we are now in our fourth decade. Our membership may be slightly down again but I hope you will agree that this is still a lively, helpful and enjoyable society, that continues to serve its purpose and is of real benefit to our members.

Our bi-monthly meetings here at King's Cross, continue to have a good attendance, with our bookshop usually available.

As always we have enjoyed interesting and varied talks, with many given by members. Particular thanks go to Ann Gilmore for arranging such excellent speakers, on both German and non-German topics. We have also had new publications, with more due out later this year.

This year we have, to some extent, still focused on various aspects of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WW1, including talks on women artists in WW1 and the inception of the Imperial War Museum, and the role the holdings there have. An upcoming talk in October will be about Life in Germany in WW1. We also hope to shortly have a new publication out regarding the life of a WW1 internee, based on his diary.

Our Vice-Presidents, Peter & Jenny Towey have held a regional meeting this year, at their home in Weston-Super-Mare, which was well attended, and this is another area where your committee would like to encourage other members to host meetings for members in their area. 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.

Moving on, there are a few important changes happening. Firstly, you will have hopefully all seen Peter Towey's notification about General Data Protection Regulations, which we are bound by. We owe Peter a big thank you as he has done a lot of work on this and made it as straightforward as possible to comply with this legislation.

Secondly, unfortunately, the German Deli, who have been catering for our socials in June and December for many years, are no longer able to cater for us. I know this is a great disappointment to many of us, who have really enjoyed these events. I am especially sorry that today's social was cancelled at fairly short notice. Hopefully, we may be able to arrange something for December and any suggestions are very welcome.

Another important change is that, as stated last year, Jenny & Peter Towey, will no longer be representing us at family history fairs, although they have indicated a continuing willingness to help out.

Previously, these family history fairs have been an important platform to help advertise the society, make our presence known, and encourage new members. Therefore, I really do urge any members interested in this aspect of the society to seriously consider taking over the book and information stall at some of these events. If no one comes forward then we will have to cease attending any family history events, which is 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.

Even if the FH fairs are not for you, we would strongly encourage and actively welcome and value more volunteers, especially on the committee.

I personally have now completed 10 years as your chairperson and, as I said last year, 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.

There is also talk of a Facebook page, although we have yet to be able to set this up, because we need volunteers to both set it up and monitor it.

Before I conclude, I must give thanks to all your dedicated and hard working committee members, and to 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 June 2018

## 6. Treasurer's Report for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

As you will see from your copy of the accounts, we finished the financial year with a decrease in total funds of £450 with respect to assets at the end of 2016-17; and with the Deposit Account standing at £19833 after taking into consideration the modest interest applied and the transfer of £5000 from the Current Account.

With respect to income over the year, the significant differences compared with 2016-17 are:

- 1) A £372 (or approximately 4%) decrease in membership subscriptions. This follows a modest £154 increase the previous year. We shall need to see this coming year whether this is a renewal of the downward trend in membership that we have experienced every other year since 2010. I would like to thank members for their continued generous donations which they include on making their subscription payments.
- 2) Also on the negative side, there has been a significant decrease in sales of books of £697 or 29% w.r.t. 2016-17 through the Bookshop, from the Bookstall at meetings or at fairs; though it should be pointed out that last year's sales were significantly boosted by the new publications or new editions that were added to the Society's book list. Hopefully the additional publications planned for the coming year will again help book sales.
- 3) Raffle receipts at the bimonthly meetings showed a marked drop of £109 (or 35%) but this partly reflects a slight drop in the number of attendees. I would like to thank members who buy raffle tickets and also those who donate prizes – the money helps offset the significant costs of renting the venue.

All other items remained approximately in line with last year.

With respect to expenditure, the significant items are:

- 1) Other Printing costs have been very modest this year, but as just mentioned we expect this to be significantly increased in 2018.
- 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 remained relatively high, partly due to the carry-over of some of the costs for the WDYTYA? 2017. As Peter and Jenny have already explained they will no longer be able to support major fairs such as this, so we would expect future expenses for these events to be significantly reduced.
- 4) Fees for speakers increased last year but simply because fewer members volunteered to talk about their own genealogical interests compared to 2016-17.

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

The estimate of the value of the Society's assets shows a fall, due to a decrease in Bookshop inventory.

In summary, it has been a year where we have seen a further reduction in funds though not as large as in 2016-17. However it can clearly be seen that the Society remains in a very sound

financial position and we can continue to regularly produce new publications. It also follows that we intend to maintain subscription rates 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 2018

**It was proposed that the 2017-18 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**

Once again I am sorry not to have been able to attend more meetings. Back problems mean that I find travel more difficult but I do hope to make the Christmas event. This year has seen an increase in queries about finding living relatives – I sometimes think we should be renamed Anglo-German Tracing Service. Some non-members do not seem to appreciate what a family history society does!

One request was to help someone find a missing brother and if I could help then I was offered a £25 reward as an inheritance was involved. Sadly I could not help.

Fortunately most queries are actually related to German family history research.

I also welcome correspondence about items in my Notes section of the Blatt. Do let me know if I mention anything that relates to your family. I think I got the most responses to my zebra articles – a couple of people had also come across zebras being ridden but then again at least three people thought it was a joke. Several emails came appreciating the photo of zebras being used to pull carts.

**Gwen Davis** – Secretary, June 2018

### **7.2 Membership Secretary's Report**

The Society membership continues to fall and now stands at 667. There have been 74 new members joining since the last AGM, including 8 re-joining – a slight increase on last year.

July, January and May were the best months for recruitment and nearly 50% of new members have joined via GENfair.

Last year's final WDYTIA? show in Birmingham only produced 3 new members and disappointingly, 'The Name Show', which was held on the May Day weekend, failed to produce any new members.

Approximately two thirds of the members renewed their membership. Of the 200 e-mail reminders I sent out to members, 107 did not renew.

Once again I must remind members that it is time to renew your membership and that you will find the form in the summer 'Blatt.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the kind donations.

**Betty Anderson** – Membership Secretary, June 2018

### 7.3 Programme Organiser's Report

As in previous years we've had a variety of topics covered in our talks over the past year. It seems a long time ago now, but in June of 2017 we heard a talk by historian Dr. Stefan Manz from Aston University about *The Stobs Internment Camp during the First World War*. In August we heard a talk on *Dating Old Photographs* by historian Tom Doig and a second talk on *Using LDS Resources to Research Your German Ancestors* from Sharon Hintze, formerly of the LDS Family History Centre in London but now retired. In October the first talk was on *Musical Boxes* from Alison Biden of The Musical Box Society of Great Britain. She met Jeremy and me at Muriel's house and loaded our car full of small musical boxes, most in the boot but with one sitting on the back seat between us and another under her feet! Her talk was sprinkled with music from each of the boxes. October's second talk was from member Jeanette R. Rosenberg who told us about *Developments in German Jewish Genealogy in the Past Few Years*. If you have German Jewish ancestry and would like some advice about searching for them, we can put you in touch with Jeanette since she is the go to person for German Jewish research. In December, member Gwen Davis talked about *North German Surprises*. The surprises were several unexpected discoveries which she and her husband encountered while on a trip to Germany looking for information on his King's German Legion relatives. December's second talk was by member Sarah Paterson entitled *A Very Important Pantomime: Celebrating the Century of the Imperial War Museum Library*. The pantomime was notable because the very first item acquired by the Library was a programme for 'Dick Whittington' performed in 1916 in Salonika. In February this year we had a talk by family historian Kathy Chater entitled *Cemeteries in London*. February's second talk was by member Sigrid Werner and entitled *Ethnic Cleansing? The End of 'Little Germany' in the East End of London*. This involved what happened to Germans, particularly women, in Tower Hamlets in WWI. In April we had the previously postponed talk by member Suzanne Frick Davis on *German Sugar Bakers in London's East End – from the Sixteenth Century to the Twentieth*. Suzanne is an historian and editor at the National Maritime Museum. If one or two or several of you would like to share a speaker's slot next year and tell us about your Sugar Baker ancestors that would be great. I would love to hear more about this topic which is part of the German ancestry of quite a few of our members. April's second talk was *Women War Artists of World War One* by Jane Fox, family historian. She discussed several women artists who worked during WWI, comparing their work with that of several male artists. She also pointed out various features of many of the paintings which we might not have noticed had she not mentioned them and she gave us a few fascinating interpretations of the paintings. Finally we round off the year with today's talk by two of our founding members, Peter and Jenny Towey, on *Using DNA in Family History*. 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 2018.

#### **7.4 Editorial Report on Mitteilungsblatt**

This year we have continued the pattern of three issues – spring, summer and autumn, plus an occasional issue to be 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.

Last year's autumn issue was a special commemorative issue to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society. Thanks are due to Lynn Burling for her hard work in collecting the reminiscences of the founder members of the society – and to Rose Mint for making available the very first issue of the Blatt, an extract of which was printed in the commemorative issue, that is, no. 118

The occasional issue this year returns to the theme of internment in the Second World War – letters written to Franz Joseph Buch, a British citizen of German parentage who was interned in Peveril Camp on the Isle of Man because he was suspected of fascist sympathies.

There are as yet no plans for next year's occasional issue, so if you have any suitable material – a diary, for example, or an extensive description of an ancestor's activities, please let the team know.

We have now succeeded in clearing our backlog, so would ask you to keep those articles coming – they do not have to be any particular length and so while extensive articles with copious illustrations are always welcome, shorter contributions are always welcome. Please send to the g-mail address to be found on p.1 of the Blatt. You will receive an automatic acknowledgement so you will know it has arrived safely.

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 2018.

## 7.5 Publications Report

This year has seen the publication of a new book, 'Re-educating German Prisoners-of-War After WWII', which is available from our bookshop or from the bookstall here at this meeting.

We are hoping to offer a further new title, 'The Tailor of Ongar', based on the diaries of a German internee by the name of Korf, in the near future.

**Irene Cowan** – Book Production Team Organiser, June 2018

## 7.6 Bookshop and Fairs

Sales are down but steady.

Peter and I are hanging up our German hats, after the South West Area Group Fair, at the Swindon Steam Museum on June 30<sup>th</sup>. We are physically unable to cope with getting the boxes of books for sale to and from Family History Fairs. If anyone would like to take on this task then please talk to either Peter or myself about what is involved. We are quite happy to attend future fairs and give help and advice to customers should anyone take on this role.

There are going to be two major fairs next year:  
April 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> at Alexandra Palace, London and  
June 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> at the NEC in Birmingham. (The latter is not a WDYTYA? fair).

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has ever volunteered to help out at Family History Fairs: I hope you enjoyed it – we certainly did.

**Jenny Towey, Vice-President** – Bookshop & Fairs Manager, June 2018

## 7.7 Name Index Officer & FEEFHS Liaison

1. The number of requests received for searches in the **Names Index** appears to be dropping. Similarly the number of requests for my research advice is very small. However, members who do take advantage of these two avenues to pursue their research, do seem to benefit. Possibly we need to find ways of reminding existing members of these options.
2. For many years, I have been the Society's liaison officer with the Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies (FEEFHS). We are members. The Federation does not appear to be very active though their website (feefhs.org) is still there and contains many useful articles, including the scanned text of all their excellent Journals up to 2008, and very useful pages on research in most central and eastern European countries. They do still have annual conferences in US and this

- year's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference is being held in Salt Lake City on 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> August. Should I draw members' attention to these conferences in future?
3. A relatively new organisation, which the Society has also joined, is the International Germanic Genealogy Partnership (GGP), again based in USA. Member societies come from North America Brazil, Australasia and Europe. Their website is <https://iggpartner.org>. They also organise Conferences; so far in USA though other places are under consideration. As announced in the latest Blatt, the next one is in Adelaide on 17-19 August. Next year there will be a conference in Sacramento, California, on 15-17 June 2019. Details are on our website.
  4. IGGP is also organising a system whereby members of member societies can ask other member societies for advice on their own German research in those countries. It is not quite ready to launch but I have agreed to be the UK representative and deal with queries received. I am not certain exactly how it will work but, if it looks likely to be helpful, I will bring it to our members' attention. Many German and other European societies are members – over 100 so far!
  5. Many German parish registers are now appearing online in various websites. The most recent is Archion ([www.archion.de.en/](http://www.archion.de.en/)) which is now in English. It is a co-operative venture between many German Protestant church archives. I have written an article in the most recent Blatt which explains how it works and how much it costs. I will keep my eyes peeled for other sites. Do not ignore Ancestry or FamilySearch, both of which contain large numbers of German church registers.
  6. Members who discover other useful websites are invited to let me know about them.

**Peter Towey, FSG, Vice-President - Name Index Officer & FEEFHS**  
Liaison, June 2018

## 7.8 Website Editor

Jeremy reminded members about the useful information to be found on the Society's website: newsflashes; information about events, calendar etc. There are also links to other pages.

**Jeremy Gilmore-** Website editor, June 2018

## 8 Election of Officers

With the current committee all being willing to stand again and no new nominations being received, the current committee were unanimously re-elected to serve for a further two years.

## 9 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 2018 Annual General Meeting.**