The Anthony Powell Society

Registered Charity No.: 1096873

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Saturday 20 October 2012

Conference Room, St James's Church

Piccadilly, London, W1

Present: Christine Apperley, John Blaxter, Edward Hathaway, John Heald, Dr Michael Helm, Ivan Hutnik, Dr Keith Marshall (Hon. Secretary), Noreen Marshall, Dr Derek Miles (Hon. Treasurer), Pat Miles, Julian Miller, Edward Morris, Paul Nutley (Chairman), David Pattison, Dr Peter Payan, Prue Raper, Tony Robinson (Trustee), Jean Rollason, Elizabeth Savidge, Michael Sheahan, Dr Bernard Stacey, Elwin Taylor (Trustee).

Apologies: Dr Nicholas Birns, Jill Chalmers, Dorothy Davie, Graham Davie, Christopher Francis, Dr Catherine Hoffmann, Stephen Holden (Trustee), Phillip Holm, Karina Huhtala, Jeffrey Manley (Trustee), David Pilkington, Prof. John Roe (Trustee), John Rollason, Benjamin Smith, Victor Spouge, Barbara Strangfeld, Col Peter Taylor, Susan Taylor.

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

1. The Chairman, Paul Nutley, thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and reminded them that the Society needed to vacate the room by 1700hrs.
2. Apologies for absence are recorded above.
3. Ten proxy votes had been received; seven in favour of all the motions and three which were open.

2. Minutes of the 2011 AGM

1. The minutes of the previous AGM had been circulated in the Spring 2012 *Newsletter*; copies were also available at the meeting.
2. Acceptance of the minutes of the 2011 AGM was proposed by Pat Miles and seconded by Tony Robinson, and unanimously approved.
3. The minutes were duly signed by Paul Nutley as Chairman of the meeting.

3. Annual Report 2011-2012

1. Keith Marshall, Hon. Secretary, presented the Annual Report for 2011-2012.
2. There had been a small increase in membership and the 'five years for the price of four' option continues to be popular. But other ideas to attract further numbers would be much appreciated.
3. The 2011 Annual Lecture, 'The Politics of the Dance' was given by Professor Vernon Bogdanor at the Wallace Collection on 18 November 2011. The lecture was a complete sell-out and was very successful. The 2012 Lecture 'Think First, Fight Afterwards', to be given by AN Wilson at the Wallace Collection on 30 November, was already fully booked with a long waiting-list for tickets (the third successive year in which this has happened).

4. John Heald asked how many tickets were issued for the lecture and whether in view of the success this could be increased. Keith replied that the Wallace Collection's lecture theatre's full capacity was 135 audience seats, and the only way more tickets could be made available would be to move the event somewhere else, which would be more expensive and more work, as well as breaking the link that had been established by the Anthony Powell Centenary Exhibition in 2005. There was unanimous agreement that the Wallace Collection is where the lecture belongs.
5. Jean Rollason asked about the strength of the link with the Wallace and whether the lecture would continue should Jeremy Warren leave; it would be a shame if the lecture were to cease now it is such a success? Keith said that he felt the event was now sufficiently well-established that it should be quite safe.
6. Also successful was 'Borage and Hellebore: The Many Sides of Anthony Powell's Art', Dr Nicholas Birns' afternoon lecture followed by a debate, on 17 March 2012 at St James's Church, Piccadilly. If Nick Birns is in London at any time in the future we should investigate the opportunity to hold another similar event.
7. The Society's quarterly *Newsletter* and the local groups (especially London and NE USA) continue to flourish.
8. The Society's most recent publication is its Calendar for 2013 'Anthony Powell's London', featuring 13 specially commissioned photographs by Keith Marshall.
9. Recent externally-produced Powell-related publications include *The Acceptance of Absurdity: Anthony Powell–Robert Vanderbilt Letters 1952-1963* (Maggs Brothers) edited by John Saumarez Smith and Jonathan Kooperstein, and *Caledonia – A Fragment*, the Greville Press edition of Powell's 1934 privately-printed work.
10. The Society has a new online shop which has already resulted in several new memberships as well as selling merchandise using the PayPal facility. The Society's credit card merchant account with HSBC has been closed; PayPal's charity rates are equally attractive and still permit payment by credit card without the need for a PayPal account.
11. Anthony Powell Birthday Lunch this year will be on 1 December in London and 14 December in New York.
12. The Society's 2013 Biennial Conference will be at Eton College on 27-29 September, with plenary sessions on Friday afternoon and all day Saturday. Other events are to be finalised, but are likely to include a walk followed by lunch on the Sunday.
13. The 2011 Conference was accepted as generally having been very good; it attracted several new members as well as raising the money for a London commemorative plaque to Powell
14. Tony Robinson asked when the 2011 Conference Proceedings would be published. The Hon. Secretary replied that this would be done as soon as time is available.
15. Social events in London and SE England include the London pub meets and the Hon. Secretary's New Year brunch: others will be arranged if someone will take on the organisational work.
16. The Hon. Secretary made an urgent plea for more members to come forward to help with aspects of the Society's work, particularly events, the Conference, the shop and the website.
17. Acceptance of the Annual Report was proposed by John Heald, seconded by Tony Robinson, and unanimously approved.

4. Accounts 2011-2012

1. Derek Miles, Hon. Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report and Accounts.
2. The Society's reserves are good and have been boosted by the 2011 Conference (monies raised at the Conference auction have been separately accounted for). The reserves are intended at least partly for use, not just as savings: for example, investment in the production of merchandise, and to cover on-going liabilities such as the cost of supporting those members who have paid in advance.
3. John Heald felt that the calendar was too modestly priced. Keith explained that it had been in the nature of an experiment this year, and the price may well be higher next time. It will certainly also need a stronger binding.
4. The Society has been quite successful at controlling the impact of increased postal charges.
5. David Pattison asked if stamps are bought in bulk in advance. Keith replied that we print on demand using Royal Mail SmartStamp, which gives a great saving on time, but purchase of stamps in advance should be considered.
6. There is currently no need to increase subscriptions, but we may have to look at doing so next year, principally because of escalating postage costs, especially for overseas mail.
7. Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Eddie Hathaway, seconded by Tony Robinson, and unanimously approved.

5. Election of Trustees

1. The three Trustees retiring by rotation (Stephen Holden, Dr Keith Marshall and Tony Robinson) had all been nominated to continue as Trustees and were elected unopposed for a further three year term.

6. Questions from the floor

1. John Heald asked if there was any way to preserve the connection with Simon Russell Beale, the former President. Keith considered that this would best be done on the website and he will check that this has been done. **Action: Keith** *Done; all previous Presidents and Vice-Presidents are recorded on the "Society Officers" webpage.*
2. Eddie Hathaway asked if the speaker's fee for the Annual Lecture was a major element of the cost. Keith replied that no fee is paid to the speaker, although a bottle of champagne (or equivalent) is presented and the speaker is given dinner afterwards.
3. John Heald asked if speakers were made honorary members. Keith said no, but they were put on the mailing list for a limited time (otherwise it can lead to sending out material for no return).
4. John Heald also asked if the Society's *Newsletter* was sent to literary editors *etc*. Keith said that this was not cost-effective: the *Newsletter* is sent free only to Eton College, Georgetown University Library, Washington DC (who have the John Monagan collection), Modern Language Association in New York (who index many literary publications), the London Library and the British Library (this last being a legal requirement). We have tried distributing more *Newsletters* in the past but with no tangible results.
5. John asked if it would help dissemination of the *Newsletter* if the cost of merchandise or subscriptions were increased. Keith said that he was reluctant to do so, as we already charge a higher membership fee than many literary societies. David Pattison confirmed that the Betjeman Society currently charges £14 a year membership fee; they do send newsletters to the press, but are reviewing this practice.

6. Jean Rollason asked if the *TLS* reviews the Annual Lecture. Keith replied that it doesn't, but that the lecture does get mentions in the press, and talks are often republished as the speakers retain the rights.
7. Prue Raper asked if there should be a cover price for the *Newsletter*, and whether it was worth an e-press release. Keith agreed that there should be a cover price on the *Newsletter*. He would also ask Julian Allason about an e-press release, but this would need the right list of contacts – if anyone can help with this it would be appreciated. **Action: Keith** *There is now a cover price on the Newsletter. We do not have a current list of useful contacts for press releases; this should be investigated.*
8. Bernard Stacey asked if there were plans for another auction at the next Conference. Keith replied that he didn't want to overdo any aspect of the conferences, so that there would probably not be one at the 2013 Conference, especially as the programme is probably going to be very tight for time. This could however change and will be kept in mind, since the last one was a fairly late addition to the event.
9. Paul drew the meeting to a close and reiterated Keith's plea for more volunteers. He gave a vote of thanks to Keith (and Noreen) for all work done for the Society, and Keith added his thanks to all the other Trustees, including Paul.

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The formal AGM business was followed by a talk

Anthony Powell's Ancestral Lands

by John Blaxter

It is hoped to publish the text and photographs in due course.

Dr Keith C Marshall
Hon. Secretary
4 December 2012

With thanks to Noreen Marshall for the notes and for drafting the minutes.
Post-meeting updates in italic.