The Anthony Powell Society

Registered Charity No.: 1096873

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Saturday 25 October 2014

Conference Room, St James's Church

Piccadilly, London, W1

Present: Christine Apperley, John Blaxter, Robin Bynoe (Merchandise Secretary), Jill Chalmers, Patric Dickinson (Vice-President), Stephen Eggins, Paul Graham, Edward Hathaway, John Heald, Dr Michael Helm, Stephen Holden, David Lowis, Dr Keith Marshall (Hon. Secretary), Noreen Marshall (Hon. Archivist), Dr Derek Miles (Hon Treasurer), Pat Miles, Julian Miller, Harry Mount (Trustee), Graham Page, Prue Raper, David Rawlins, Antony Robinson (Chairman), Dr Bernard Stacey, Elwin Taylor (Trustee), Susan Taylor.

Apologies: Lord Gowrie (President), Philip Holm, Kaarina Huhtala, Clive Gwatkin Jenkins, Neville Keery, Jeffrey Manley (Trustee), Daniel McCarthy, Alastair Morrison, Matthew Nimetz, Gerald Parsons, Dr Peter Payan, Prof. John Roe (Trustee), Cathleen Steg, Elizabeth Savidge, John Trotter, Alison Walker, Stephen Walker (Editor & Social Secretary).

1. Apologies for Absence

1. The Chairman, Tony Robinson, opened the meeting and thanked everyone present for attending.
2. Apologies had been received from those listed above.
3. The Chairman and Hon. Secretary held ten proxy votes between them.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2013 AGM

1. The minutes of the 2013 AGM were unanimously accepted and were signed by Tony as Chairman of the meeting.

3. Annual Report 2014

1. Hon. Secretary, Keith Marshall, presented the Annual Report for 2013-2014.
    - There had been another small increase in membership (now just over 300) and an approximately 40% take-up of the '5 years for the price of 4' membership offer.
    - The unfortunate loss, due to illness, of two long-serving Trustees in early 2014.
    - The highlight of the year was the 2013 Conference at Eton: 3 keynote speakers; 8 papers; a Presidential address; musical recital with champagne; dinner; College tours and Library visit; and a guided visit to nearby Dorney Court. The whole event was a resounding success, with the best feedback ratings ever.

It attracted a total of 93 delegates (original estimate 70) and a grant of £1200 from the Derek Hill Foundation. More delegates and a lower catering bill than expected resulted in a quite unexpected surplus of around £1800. Eton College was also very generous and helpful in many ways and Keith expressed many thanks to Vice-President Michael Meredith for his outstanding contribution to the event. Nonetheless we do need to keep an eye on speaker presentation skills, the cost to delegates and printing & postage costs.

- The 2013 Annual Anthony Powell Lecture on 6 December at the Wallace Collection was given by Alastair Laing, former Curator of Pictures & Sculpture at the National Trust, on 'Anthony Powell and Sculpture'. Although not the sell-out of recent years the lecture was well attended by an appreciative audience.
- The donation of a significant group of Powell-related material and research notes amassed by the late Nancy Cutbirth Small of Western Michigan University, who played a major part in running the first Anthony Powell Society of Kalamazoo, USA. Vice-Presidents Patric Dickinson and Michael Meredith with Hon. Archivist Noreen Marshall have assessed the material; the priorities are to replace the metal paper clips, re-file the articles A-Z by author, list and catalogue the contents and check them against George Lilley's *Powell Bibliography*.
- The Society's local groups, particularly those in London and New York, continue to flourish.
- The quarterly *Newsletter* also continues to do well and is invariably at least 32 pages.

2. Notable since 1 April 2014:
   - October 2014 Venice Conference.
   - Stephen Walker has taken on the roles of Editor and Social Secretary.
   - Robin Bynoe has taken on the role of Merchandise Secretary.
   - Pat Chambers has made a donation to the Archive of over 750 newspapers (mostly from the 1970s and 1980s) containing AP's literary reviews *etc*. These are in the process of being indexed.
   - Curry lunches were held in New York and London to commemorate the start of the First World War and the opening of *The Kindly Ones*.
3. Looking forward:
   - The 2014 Annual Lecture is due to take place on 21 November at the Wallace Collection: 'The Curious Case of *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant*: Constant Lambert and his friendship with Anthony Powell' by Stephen Lloyd. *This was unfortunately cancelled as Stephen Lloyd had to withdraw at the last minute due to serious family illness.*
   - The 2014 AP Birthday Lunches will take place on 6 December at the Oxford & Cambridge Club, London and on 19 December at the Grolier Club, New York.
   - The Hon Secretary's New Year Brunch in London will take place on 17 January 2015. *Venue is Patisserie Valerie in Brompton Road, Knightsbridge*.

- The next AP Conference is planned to take place on 8-9 April 2016 at King's Manor, York (part of the University of York).

4. The Hon. Secretary reminded members that there was still an urgent need for volunteers to help with aspects of the Society's work, particularly the website.
5. The Annual Report was unanimously accepted.

4. Accounts 2013-2014

1. Highlights of the 2013-2014 Accounts:
   - A surplus of £4210, with £825 received in Gift Aid tax recovery; donations of £581 plus £929 from the 2013 book sale at the 2013 Conference; and a conference surplus of £1799.
   - £1000 has been transferred to the fund for the proposed Green Plaque commemorating AP's birthplace (44 Ashley Gardens, London SW1). Keith added that this is reportedly on the London Borough of Westminster's list for this (2014-15) financial year.
   - Expenditure continues to be well controlled.
   - Interest rates remain poor but security is preferable to higher (but riskier) rates and Derek does not currently advise moving the money.
   - The Society's reserve funds remain essential to meet commitments and absorb risks (*eg.* events, forward liabilities such as subscriptions paid in advance, guaranteeing funding for the Green Plaque, funding publications and merchandise).
2. The Society is in a good financial position despite continuing concerns about printing, stationery and postage costs and there is no need for subscriptions to increase this year.
3. Questions about the Accounts:
   - Michael Helm asked for more details on the presentation of the subscription receipts. Derek explained that this is an adjusted figure to account for the subscriptions paid in advance.
   - Bernard Stacey asked about the cost of the proposed commemorative Green Plaque. £2000 has been set aside for this purpose. This has to cover the cost of a celebratory reception as well as the plaque itself.
   - John Heald asked about the Society's insurance. The Society has public liability insurance through AON; this includes employers' (and volunteers) liability. The Archive material is not separately insured, the Trustees having taken the view that the Society reserves should underwrite that risk.
   - Keith also noted that all the Hon. Secretary's electronic files were backed up daily, and a monthly copy sent to the Hon. Treasurer as offsite backup.
4. The Accounts were unanimously accepted.

5. Election of up to four Trustees

1. Trustees Jeff Manley and Professor John Roe had come to the end of their terms in office. Both were nominated to continue as Trustees.
2. Stephen Holden and Paul Nutley had had to stand down as Trustees during the year due to illness.

3. Robin Bynoe and Graham Page were proposed as new Trustees.
4. All four nominees (Jeffrey Manley, Prof. John Roe, Robin Bynoe, Graham Page) were unanimously elected to serve as Trustees for a term of three years.
5. The appointment of officers would be discussed at the next Trustees' Executive Meeting.

6. General Questions and Comments from the Floor

1. Those who had not been at the recent extremely successful Venice Conference were keen to hear further details. Elwin Taylor gave a short account of the event.
2. Stephen Eggins proposed a vote of thanks to Elwin & Susan Taylor and all those involved in organising the Venice conference. This was unanimously approved.
3. Paul Graham asked what the Society gains from membership of the Alliance of Literary Societies. Keith replied that we do get some publicity from it. John Heald mentioned that the ALS had in past years run an insurance policy scheme for its member institutions.
4. Stephen Holden echoed Tony's comments in his Foreword to the Annual Report drawing attention to the web-based APLIST and its discussions, and urged others to join in there. It is "an amazing archive".
5. John Heald asked whether his collection of AP material would be of interest to the Society as a bequest, to which Keith replied that it would, and thanked him.
6. Patric expressed surprise that the Society was keeping Pat Chambers' gift of newspapers entire, rather than excising the pieces by AP. Noreen acknowledged that there would come a time when it would prove impossible to preserve the whole papers (newsprint being notoriously acid paper and liable to deteriorate), but that until that time, having the whole paper provided a great deal of interesting, and sometimes essential, context.
7. Despite rising postage and printing costs, and low interest rates on its savings, our Society has had a very steadily successful year. Stephen Eggins highlighted that we were in a sound financial position. Keith commented that over the years we have been lucky: our financial security had been done on a 'slow and steady' basis, with no intention to make significant profits.
8. A vote of thanks was proposed to Keith and all the Trustees for all their work in achieving this. This received unanimous support.

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The formal AGM business was followed by an illustrated talk
Architecture in Dance
from Trustee Harry Mount

Dr Keith C Marshall
Hon. Secretary
21 November 2014

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