The Anthony Powell Society

Registered Charity No.: 1096873

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Saturday 24 October 2015

Conference Room, St James's Church

Piccadilly, London, W1

Present: Christine Apperley, Dr Jonathan Black, Peter Brunning, Robin Bynoe (Trustee), Jill Chalmers, Geraint Dearman, Patric Dickinson (Vice-President), Bruce Fleming, Paul Graham, Eddie Hathaway, Stephen Holden, Ivan Hutnik, Mike Jay, David Lowis, Dr Keith Marshall (Hon. Secretary), Noreen Marshall (Hon Archivist), Dr Derek Miles (Hon Treasurer), Pat Miles, Julian Miller, Edward Morris, Harry Mount (Trustee), Graham Page (Treasurer Designate), Prue Raper, Tony Robinson (Chairman), Benjamin Smith, Dr Robert Tresman, George Warren

Apologies: David Barker, Dr Nicholas Birns, John Blaxter, Yvonne Cocking, Paul Denman, Elizabeth Doty, Dr Michael Helm, Dr Catherine Hoffmann, Phillip Holm, Kaarina Huhtala, Clive Gwatkin Jenkins, Neville Keery, Dr George Lilley, Jeffrey Manley (Trustee), Simon McArthur, Thomas Miller, Gerald Parsons, Regina Rehbinder, Prof. John Roe (Trustee), Elizabeth Savidge, Elwin Taylor (Trustee), Susan Taylor, Dr Jeremy Warren (Vice-President), Neil Woodcock

1. Introduction & Apologies for Absence

1. The Chairman, Tony Robinson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for another good turnout.
2. Keith reported that he and Tony held 16 proxy votes between them.
3. Apologies had been received from a further nine members. All apologies are recorded above.
4. Those present were asked to record their names on the attendance sheet.
5. **Julian Allason**. Tony paid tribute to Vice-President Julian Allason, who had died unexpectedly on 3 October, and was due to have been re-confirmed as a Vice-President of the Society at the meeting (in consequence Item 5 on the agenda was withdrawn).
   Keith added a reminder that it was thanks to Julian that we were all there. It had been Julian's idea to have a conference to celebrate AP's life and work, and the Society had been founded at his rooms in Chelsea on 1 June 2000 for that purpose. Tony announced that the Secretary's top hat would circulate for any personal donations to The Melanoma Research Fund in Julian's memory in addition to the official donation from the Society. *£115 was raised as a private (not Society)*

donation for which members are gratefully thanked.
A requiem mass had been held for Julian at Brompton Oratory on 15 October, at which Stephen Walker (Editor & Social Secretary) had represented the Society.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2014 AGM

1. No corrections or amendments were requested to the minutes of the 2014 AGM, which were unanimously accepted and were signed by Tony.

3. Annual Report 2015

1. The Hon. Secretary presented the Annual Report for the Society year ending 31 March 2015
2. **Membership**. By contrast with the last few years, there had been a small decrease in membership which was now back below 300. Keith observed that death, terminal illness and the downturn in the economy were still the likeliest causes. It was, however, a help that 40% of members continue to take up the "5 years for 4" subscription offer.
3. **Annual Lecture**. The re-scheduled 2014 Annual Anthony Powell Lecture "The Curious Case of *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant*: Constant Lambert and his Friendship with Anthony Powell", was given on 10 April 2015 (just after the end of the reporting year) at the Wallace Collection by Stephen Lloyd, author of the recently published biography *Constant Lambert*. The event was well attended by an appreciative audience.
4. **Archive**. Member Pat Chambers's gift of a large number of copies of *Daily Telegraph* and *TLS* from 1970s and 1980s containing Powell's literary reviews had been listed and added to the Society's Archive. Thanks were recorded to Pat for her generosity.
5. **Local Groups**. The Society's local groups, particularly those in London and New York, continue to flourish. Other groups meet on an occasional basis.
6. ***Newsletter***. The quarterly *Newsletter* also continues to go from strength to strength under Stephen Walker's editorship; it is now invariably at least 36 pages.
7. **2016 Conference**. Work is in progress on the 2016 Conference in York which is being organised by Prof. John Roe. The full details and booking information are expected to be available with the Winter *Newsletter*. *Done*
8. **Commemorative Plaque**. The Management Board of Ashley Gardens, London SW1 turned down the Society's request to place a Westminster Council green commemorative plaque on Powell's birthplace. At the suggestion of Westminster City Council, the Society has now requested the plaque be installed at 9 Shepherd Street, Shepherd Market, on the site of the building in which Powell lived after coming down from Oxford. Negotiations are ongoing and the installation is unlikely to be before Easter 2016.
9. **Venice Conference**. The 2014 Venice Conference was extremely successful and hugely enjoyed by all who attended and resulted in a surplus just under £1400. Once again Elwin Taylor and all the organising team were thanked for their realising the conference.

10. **Looking forward.**
    - The 2015 AP Birthday Lunches will take place at Da Corradi in London on 5 December (with an opportunity to view the site of the proposed commemorative plaque) and the Grolier Club in New York on 18 December.
    - The Hon. Secretary's New Year Brunch in London will again be at Patisserie Valerie in Brompton Road on 23 January 2016, which will also celebrate the 65th anniversary on 22 January of the publication of *A Question of Upbringing*.
    - The 2016 Conference, "Anthony Powell, Shakespeare and Other Literary Influences" will be in York at the King's Manor, 8-10 April 2016.
    - Due to the postponement of the 2014 Annual Lecture into 2015, the next lecture will take place in 2016, when the speaker will be Ruth Scurr, author of the recently published *John Aubrey: My Own Life*. Details will be announced when known; however the venue will not be the Wallace Collection as they no longer wish to support the lecture.
11. **Society Development**. Keith also spoke about what keeps him awake at night.
    - **Membership Numbers**. We have under 300 members at present but really need at least 400, including more younger members, for long term viability.
    - **Volunteers**. There was still an urgent need for volunteers to help with aspects of the Society's work, particularly with the website. There is a backlog of publications and the current officers need to have some time freed up to enable these to be completed. Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you can help.
    - **Succession Planning**. Who will take over from Keith when he stands down as Hon. Secretary in five years' time? The sooner there is a volunteer, the easier the transition can be.
12. Tony asked if there were questions about the Annual Report.
    Bruce Fleming asked whether there were job specs available. Yes, these are formally documented in our *Roles and Responsibilities* document.
13. The Annual Report was unanimously accepted. *A copy of the Annual Report and Accounts has been lodged with the Charity Commission as part of the Society's statutory Annual Return*

4. Accounts for the Year Ending 31 March 2015

1. Derek presented the 2014-15 Accounts which show another uneventful year in which a modest surplus was achieved largely thanks to the Venice Conference and donations.
2. Expenditure continues to be well controlled although postage, printing and stationery costs remain a challenge.
3. Interest rates continue to be low, but security is preferred to higher rate (but riskier) investments. The Society's major funds are liquid, which puts it in a strong position.
4. The reserve funds remain important to meet commitments such as memberships paid in advance and the commemorative plaque, to underwrite risks and enable flexibility with regard to the funding of events and new merchandise.

5. Derek thanked Eddie Hathaway (and previously Patric Dickinson) for surveying the accounts and Graham Page for his work as part of the Treasury Team.
6. Tony thanked Derek for all his years of service as the Society's Treasurer.
7. The Accounts were unanimously approved.

5. Confirmation of Vice-President

1. This item was withdrawn; see item 1 above.

6. Election of Two Trustees

1. Trustees Keith Marshall and Tony Robinson had come to the end of their three-year terms in office.
2. Both Keith and Tony had agreed to stand for re-election and in the absence of other nominations were duly re-elected.
3. The appointment of the Society's officers would be discussed at the next Trustees' Meeting in November. *The only changes are that Graham Page has, as planned, taken on the role of Treasurer from Derek Miles; and Robin Bynoe has been appointed as Vice-Chairman*

7. General Questions and Comments from the Floor

1. Paul Graham asked about papers for the 2016 Conference: how successful had the Call for Papers been? Keith replied that we have a good variety of papers and are looking at other possible elements such as a discussion panel on Proust. There will also be four keynote speakers. A full timetable is planned.
2. Prue Raper asked if we could get some of our academic members' students to take part in the Conference, and whether there were student rates? Keith answered that we always have a student rate for conference attendance, and the problem is really that Powell is not currently fashionable in academic circles, so the students are not familiar with his work. However it is hoped that some students from University of York may attend.

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The formal AGM business was followed by an illustrated talk
Bohemian Exhibits: Anthony Powell and the 'rackety' world of the British inter-war *avant garde*
from Dr Jonathan Black

Dr Keith C Marshall
Hon. Secretary
19 January 2016

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