

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Oxfordshire Local History Association, Rycote Park, Tuesday 16 May 2023 at 12.45 pm**

The AGM was preceded by two well-received lectures relating to the history of garden design in Oxfordshire. Gardener and botanist Timothy Walker spoke on 'Paradise Lost and Restored: 400 Years of Garden Design in Oxfordshire', using the Oxford Botanic Garden (of which he was Director for twelve years) as an example of a garden which illustrates changing ideas about garden design from the 17th to the 21st century. Archaeologist Stephen Wass spoke about his long-term research into Sir Anthony Cope's 17th-century gardens at Hanwell Castle, describing the like-minded people whom Cope gathered together at his 'New Atlantis', the excavation of Cope's extraordinary 'House of Diversion', and finishing with a display of some of the terracotta urns recovered during the excavations.

**Attendance.** The following Officers and Committee Members were present: Christopher Fance (Chairman); Liz Woolley (Treasurer, Membership Secretary and e-Bulletin editor); Vanessa Moir (Journal Editor); Simon Townley (Vice-Chairman); Priya Atwal and Kathy Davies (Committee Members). Another 46 people attended, the majority of them as OLHA members or as representatives of OLHA member-societies.

**1. Apologies and declaration of conflicts of interest.** Apologies were received from Committee Members Norma Aubertin-Potter, Malcolm Graham, and Priya Atwal; and from OLHA member Ruth Waddle. No conflicts of interest were declared.

**2. Minutes.** The Minutes of the AGM held at Bampton on 7 May 2022 had been distributed. No objections were received to the Chairman signing them as a correct record. Proposed: Linda Mustill. Seconded: Janet Hurst. **Approved unanimously.**

**3. Matters arising from the Minutes:** none.

**4. Officer's Reports:**

**(a) Chairman's Report for the year 2022/23:**

The Oxfordshire Local History Association, known as OLHA, exists for all those interested in the history of Oxfordshire. It aims to foster and promote the study and publication of local history. It acts as an umbrella organisation for local history groups in the county.

Among its activities, it campaigns to preserve and improve services for Oxfordshire local historians and normally holds regular liaison meetings with the management of the Oxfordshire History Centre, the Bodleian Library and occasional *ad hoc* meetings with local government officials. In the last year, there have been quarterly meetings with the archivists at the Oxfordshire History Centre and two meetings with the Bodleian.

OLHA's programme of small financial grants has begun to return to pre-Covid levels. A grant was made for the digitisation of a card index in the Bodleian Library but has been put into abeyance because of unforeseen complications. The committee will be considering another application at its June meeting. OLHA also continues to make regular donations to help fund the Oxfordshire volumes of the Victoria County History and to provide items of equipment for the Oxfordshire History Centre.

The AGM in May 2022 was held in Bampton. It was preceded by three talks as described

later in this document in the report of the Acting Study Day Organiser. Liz Woolley has continued to compile the very popular monthly e-bulletin of news and events relevant to local historians. Her roles as Treasurer and Website Manager are invaluable. Our new Journal Editor, Vanessa Moir, has been working on the latest edition of our journal, to be published in the autumn this year. The intention is to return to a regular yearly publication. Phil Morris resigned from the committee earlier this year. He had been a member for about ten years and, as the chairman of a Local History Society in Oxfordshire, was able to provide a different perspective to the committee. He is thanked very much for his contribution. Last year, I omitted in this report to thank Margaret Hauser, who stepped down after a long stint as a committee member, for her service. I do so now.

Our Secretary since 2011, Norma Aubertin-Potter, wishes to give up the post in the coming year, and so there will be a vacancy on the committee. Volunteers for this position and for being other committee members will be welcomed. I would like to thank Simon Townley, the Vice-Chairman, for undertaking the role of Secretary on a temporary basis in addition to his many other responsibilities.

*Christopher Fance, 5 May 2023 ([chair@olha.org.uk](mailto:chair@olha.org.uk))*

### **(b) Treasurer's report**

The financial year 2022/23 ended on 31 March 2023. The accounts are summarised overleaf and have been examined and signed off by the external examiner Andrew Churchill Stone of Mercer Lewin Ltd, Chartered Accountants, New Barclay House, 234 Botley Road, Oxford OX2 0HP. The key points are:

- The Association is in a healthy position financially with £5,173 in the bank at year-end. During the financial year, income (£5,129) exceeded expenditure (£4,283) by £846.
- Subscription income (£3,392) was slightly higher than in 2021/22 due to an increase in the number of members.
- A gift aid claim on subscriptions and donations received during 2022/23, and on those received since 2018 from a few members who had only recently signed Gift Aid declarations (which can be back-dated four years), resulted in income of £546.
- Donations received included those from regular annual donors, plus a one-off gift of £100 in support of the forthcoming May 2023 study day.
- Because of a lack of a Study Day Organiser on the committee, only one study day (rather than two) was held, at Bampton in May 2022. Income from the Bampton study day was £343; costs totalled £397. Additional study day income of £616 relating to the forthcoming May 2023 study day was banked before the end of the 2022/23 financial year.
- An increase in interest rates paid by banks meant that interest gained on our COIF (Charities Official Investment Fund) account was £39, significantly higher than last year.
- Printing of the journal (Vol. 10 No. 4) cost £1,809 and posting copies to members cost £360. Small additional amounts were spent on stationery, and on postage of other mailings to members who are not on e-mail.
- One grant of £250 was made, in support of the production of a documentary film about Oxford politician and peace campaigner Olive Gibbs. We made our usual donation of £1,000 to the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust. A similar donation of £1,000 to the Oxfordshire History Centre has been deferred until the year 2023/24 at the

Centre's request.

- Bank charges on our HSBC account included a monthly fee of £5 (totalling £60 for the year) plus fees for cashing cheques sent in by members.
- Miscellaneous expenditure of £228 included our annual subscription to the British Association for Local History (£75); and website hosting, domain name renewal and SSL certificate renewal (£153 in total).

Liz Woolley, 9 May 2023 (membership@olha.org.uk)

**OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS  
2022/23**

<b>RECEIPTS IN</b> 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023	<b>2022/23</b> <b>(£)</b>	<b>2021/22</b> <b>(£)</b>
Subscriptions	3,391.56	3,298.84
Gift Aid claim	546.03	364.78
Donations	193.10	54.76
Study day fees	959.28	472.31
COIF interest	38.88	0.92
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,128.85</b>	<b>4,191.61</b>

<b>PAYMENTS OUT</b> 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023	<b>2022/23</b> <b>(£)</b>	<b>2021/22</b> <b>(£)</b>
Journal printing	1,809.00	0.00
Postage	463.40	23.40
Stationery	71.44	8.99
Donations and grants	1,250.00	3,000.00
Study days costs	397.00	554.10
Bank charges	64.00	19.00
Misc (incl website costs; BALH annual sub)	227.99	392.38
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,282.83</b>	<b>3,997.87</b>

<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>			
<u>Cash at bank on 1 April 2022 (£)</u>		<u>Cash at bank on 31 March 2023 (£)</u>	
HSBC current account	2,134.65	HSBC current account	2,941.79
COIF deposit fund	2,192.49	COIF deposit fund	2,231.37
plus receipts in	5,128.85	plus payments out	4,282.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,455.99</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>9,455.99</b>

<b>ACCUMULATED FUNDS (£)</b>	
Balance at banks (HSBC & COIF) 1 April 2022	4,327.14
Receipts in	5,128.85
Payments out	4,282.83
Total accumulated	846.02
Balance at banks (HSBC & COIF) 31 March 2023	5,173.15

This statement of the receipts and payments of the Oxfordshire Local History Association for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 is in accordance with books and records of the Association and the explanations given to me.

Signed: *Andrew Churchill Stone* ..... Date: *9 May 23* .....

*Andrew Churchill Stone FCA DChA, Mercer Lewin, Chartered Accountants*

### **(c) Membership Secretary's report**

At the end of the 2022/23 financial year we had 208 individual members; 83 societies; 10 journal-only subscribers; 15 complimentary; total: 316. We estimate that on average Oxfordshire local history societies have a membership of c. 40, so OLHA represents about 3,500 Oxfordshire local historians.

Overall membership has grown by just over 6%. We were pleased to welcome 26 new members during 2022/23 including the Cropredy Historical Society.

Liz Woolley, 6 May 2023 ([membership@olha.org.uk](mailto:membership@olha.org.uk))

### **(d) Journal Editor's report**

The development of the journal has gone well this year. Five articles should be suitable for publication in the journal in the next issue in October 2023:

- *The Prince, the Squire, the Cook, and their Daughter: Sophia Wykham and Thame Park in the early 19th century*, a short article by Julie Ann Godson. This received feedback from the editorial board and Julie has submitted a revised version.
- *Ranters in Harwell*, by Malcolm Thick. This was developed from an article written for a village newsletter during the pandemic and is about religious non-conformism in the 17th century, in particular a man who thought he had religious approbation to walk around naked. This has received mostly positive feedback and a revision has been submitted which is close to publishable.
- *The Foundation of the Geering Almshouses in Harwell: a case study on women's property rights in the early 18th century*, by Matilda Hill. Another Harwell-based article, about a woman who funded the almshouses there. This received feedback and has been rewritten to provide a single focus on the 17th century rather than both the 17th and 19th centuries as it did initially. I think this has helped and it is close to publishable.
- *The history of the treatment of mental health in Oxfordshire*, by John Hall. A first submission has been made and I have received feedback from external reviewers. There could also be a second follow up article for next issue.
- *The history of Tumbling Bay bathing place*: by Malcolm Graham. Malcolm has submitted an updated version of an article he wrote in 2015. I have received one assessment and am waiting for a second.

Other articles:

- *Joan Vokins and other 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Religious Radicals in West Oxfordshire*. Emily Grieg submitted this and then retracted it as she said it needed more work. I'm hopeful that she will resubmit for the next issue.
- Julie Ann Godson sent a draft list of men from Oxfordshire who fought at Waterloo and asked if we would be interested. I said that we would be, so hopefully that could be something for next issue.
- Frances Moody agreed to submit an article on the history of Florence Park for the 2024 issue, which will coincide with the park's 90th anniversary.

Book reviews have started to be [published on OLHA's website](#) and noted in the monthly e-bulletin. Eight have been published so far, and there are three more coming. Notice of books to review is always welcome.

In the early autumn of 2022 I did some investigation of new printers for the journal. I

contacted Parchment, Holywell Press, the Henley-based company that my predecessor Chris Hall used, and some others recommended by a contact in the publishing industry. All advised that, given the number of pages, we should use a sturdier binding (known as perfect binding, the sort of binding that *Oxoniensia* has) and suggested that the dimensions of the journal be made slightly bigger. Holywell was notably more expensive than the others.

Parchment was the cheapest but did not seem to have much capacity for designing and typesetting the pages. WPG, one of the printers recommended to me, is based in Wales, so not locally, but was very friendly and helpful over the phone, is able to do typesetting and could post out the copies for a price that appears comparable with what we are spending to send them out ourselves. The unknown factors are how much prices will have risen by the time of publication and ultimately how much the design costs will be, as this will not be known until we have the final files. The quotes also didn't include VAT.

As I am less experienced than the previous editor I would like to develop more of a peer review network for people to assess articles. An appeal for members for an editorial board brought Jane Card from Harwell, who has been a very enthusiastic member, sourcing two articles and providing assessments of others. Simon Wenham and Mark Davies also agreed to join, alongside Malcolm Graham and Simon Townley from the OLHA committee, and all have provided feedback on articles. I also have three new book reviewers. I spoke to Stephen Miles, the editor on *Oxoniensia*, for general advice. He suggested that people in the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education could be asked to provide assessments of articles and said that *Oxoniensia* does not ask authors to transfer copyright, which was useful to know. I also got some advice from Ruth Jeavons, editor of *Herts Past and Present*, which was useful too.

I am looking to start up some new shorter sections in the journal. These include profiling a noted local historian by asking them a series of short questions; looking at how a particular issue or event affected different parts of the county (starting with coronations); and short accounts of events with an anniversary in the year. Other suggestions include a guide to lesser-known archives, which was a popular suggestion in a survey, but relies on people suggesting such archives. Other feedback about what readers would like to see more of included more and shorter articles on non-urban areas, and more about individual local history societies.

Contributions to all parts of the journal are very welcome.

Vanessa Moir, 6 May 2023 ([journal@olha.org.uk](mailto:journal@olha.org.uk))

#### **(e) Acting Study Day Organiser's report**

The 2022 AGM and spring study day was held on 7 May in Bampton Village Hall, with three talks on the theme of *Oxfordshire: World War Two at Home*. These were given by Bill King on *Dad's Underground Army*, Malcolm Graham on *Air Raid Precautions and Air Defences in Oxfordshire* and Matthew Smaldon on *Second World War Prisoners of War in Oxfordshire*. The venue and the theme had been planned before lockdown by our long-standing Study Day Organiser Vicky Jordan who had had to resign.

The absence of a replacement Study Day Organiser meant that there was no autumn 2022 study day. However, someone has volunteered to undertake part if not all of the role in future. The 2023 autumn study day is planned for 18 November in Bicester, but the details are yet to be finalised.

Christopher Fance, 5 May 2023 ([chair@olha.org.uk](mailto:chair@olha.org.uk))

**(f) E-bulletin Editor's report**

The e-bulletin was sent to members and to other subscribers on the first day of every month throughout the year. At year-end (March 2023) it was being sent to 530 recipients, (compared to just under 490 the same time last year), including our 83 society members, many of whom forward it to their own members. Feedback on the e-bulletin has been positive. The editor welcomes items of news and notices of forthcoming events; text and images can be sent to [membership@olha.org.uk](mailto:membership@olha.org.uk) by the 25th of the month prior to publication.

*Liz Woolley, 6 May 2023 ([membership@olha.org.uk](mailto:membership@olha.org.uk))*

**It was agreed that all the preceding Officers' Reports should be approved**, no questions or objections having been raised. Proposed: Kathy Davies. Seconded: Deborah Hayter.  
**Approved unanimously.**

**5. Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Officers and Committee.** All the current Officers and Committee, except Phil Morris, have expressed their willingness to stand for re-election. Proposed: Janet Hurst. Seconded: Linda Mustill. **Approved unanimously.**

The Chairman paid tribute to Phil Morris, who had served on the Committee for some ten years and had provided a useful link with Stanford-in-the-Vale. He re-emphasised to the meeting that we need a replacement Secretary and a replacement Events Organizer, and that new ordinary Committee Members would also be welcome.

**6. Election of independent examiner of annual accounts.** Mercer Lewin Ltd, Chartered Accountants, have undertaken this role since 2019, and it is recommended that they should continue. Proposed: Liz Woolley. Seconded: Kathy Davies. **Approved unanimously.**

**7. OLHA's compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)** (a matter of report by the Chairman). The Committee has reviewed OLHA's existing policy and has identified no necessary changes. **No objections were raised by the meeting.**

**8. Consideration of matters raised by members** of which due notice (as set out in the Association's Constitution) has been given in advance to the Chairman. **None raised.** Emergency motions (at the meeting's discretion). **None raised.**

The AGM ended at 1pm, followed by a lunch break and a tour of Rycote Park grounds and chapel.