

DRAFT

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2018

Wednesday 17 January 2018

Held at Atlantic House, Holborn Viaduct, London EC1A 2DY

In the chair: P. Bryant

Present:

C. Blain, D&M Blain, D. Brassington, P&K Bryant, E. Chalk, D&V Chapman, A. Cole, S. Crofts, A&C Dawson, D&P Doble, R. Dodd, D. Hill, H. Holland, A. Lindo, A. Maitland, A. Moulton Barrett, R. Paice, K. Panton, D. Penso, F&J Pheasant, P&S Porter, A. Powers, His Excellency Seth George Ramocan, R. Randall, J&J Reynolds, A. Smith, J. Streeter, P. Streeter, A&F Valmarana, J. Weisz

1. Chairman's Welcome and Report

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies

J. Anderson, C. Andrae, F. Arbuthnott, G. Baker, G. Bernard, J&J Besson, C&M Bett, C&I Bright, S. Budd, C. Carver, A. Cole, J. Flower, D. Forbes, M. Foster, P. Higgs, J. Hogge, J. Howe, VA Hutton, PG&B Jensen, PJ Macdonald, H&B Morris, G. O'Neill, L. Rhodes, S. Ricketts, A&J Rudolf, V. Seymour, F. Stampa Gruss, E. Stewart, C. Swaby, D. Thomson, B. Wakehurst

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 2017 AGM

The adoption of the minutes of the 2017 AGM was proposed by David Chapman and seconded by Dennis Brassington. The minutes of the 2017 AGM were duly adopted on a show of hands.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman delivered his report:

'Fellow friends, how quickly a year has passed but here we are again and welcome indeed to the FGSJ AGM. It is good to see such a good turnout – perhaps lured by the whiff of rum! I promise we will get to that as soon as we can.

I would like start by thanking my fellow Trustees for all their work and support through the last year. As you will remember we elected three new Trustees last year, Sara Crofts, Clive Dawson and Andrew Smith and it is great to benefit from their experience, knowledge and enthusiasm for the protection and enhancement of Jamaica's built heritage.

But this is also a very sad day for the Friends because as of today John and Felicia are finally standing down as Trustees, having warned us that they would be doing so last year. It is impossible adequately to thank them both for the terrific support and dedication they have given to the Friends over many years. By his knowledge and swift action John played a crucial role in rescuing the Friends from a potential huge financial loss when substantial funds were misappropriated. It was by his actions that these funds were retrieved. He also put in place safeguards to ensure that such a thing could not happen again. He subsequently acted as our Secretary and, for a few years, our Treasurer in both roles carrying out his duties efficiently and effectively.

Felicia was Chairman of the Activities Committee, until Helen Holland took over, and also edited and produced the FGSJ newsletter, a role now nobly taken on by Sue Jones. I should also remind you that it is thanks to John that we continue to be able to use these premises for our activities and will be able to turn to Hogan Lovell for legal advice if we need it. We are very grateful indeed for this generosity.

So to both of them I would like to offer our sincere and heartfelt thanks and wish them well in their future activities, particularly Seva Mandir, the Indian Charity with which they have become closely involved and which helps to transform the lives of communities in southern Rajasthan. I hope they will remain touch with FGSJ and we with them. Sara Crofts has nobly agreed to step into John's shoes as Secretary and John has introduced her to what this entails.

Alison Dawson has efficiently continued in her role as our treasurer. She is meticulous in ensuring that everything is carried through in an exemplary manner. She will be presenting the accounts due course.

Helen Holland will shortly be outlining to you the activities that her Committee have organised over the past year and all of you who have been lucky – and sensible – enough to attend them will have witnessed how well she manages our affairs, gently cajoling others to help and ensuring that things run smoothly. Over the years under her stewardship we have had some wonderful events – for example the 20th Anniversary Concert in St James's Sussex Gardens in 2014 and several memorable Lady Nugent's Breakfasts and, latterly suppers. I am recalling these triumphs because she has decided she must stand down; to her we owe an enormous debt of gratitude. We therefore give our heartfelt thanks to Helen for all that she has done. I hope that Helen will remain involved with the FGSJ and will continue to support us.

As Helen will explain her role is being taken on jointly by Rosie Dodd and Anne Powers and I am very grateful to them both for doing so. We should also thank all members of the Activities Committee for their continued hard work. I know that Helen will make the same plea, but please don't be backward in coming forward and offering your talents and enthusiasm in fund raising and spreading the knowledge and understanding of Jamaica's

heritage. Remember our role remains two fold – to spread this knowledge through our talks, newsletters and website, and to raise money so we can continue to make a difference in projects on the Island – and through bursaries.

Steve Porter continues in his sterling and vital role as membership secretary following up subscriptions and liaising with Alison on collecting gift aid.

Beatrice Berglund at Hogan Lovell has for many years provided invaluable backup with Charity Commission and Companies House filings, and ensured all of our legal obligations. Alas, she is now moving on to pastures new but has agreed to continue to be a sounding board on these matters. I would like to record our thanks for all her help to us over the years.

I am delighted to report that the new High Commissioner, His Excellency Seth George Ramocan has agreed to be our patron, as was his predecessor Aloun Assamba Ndombet. He came to Louis Nelson's terrific talk last year and the High Commission subsequently hosted a presentation on the work and ambitions of the FGSJ in the autumn. He also came to Lady Nugent's Supper at St Peter's in Eaton Square and gave every appearance of enjoying himself – and participated enthusiastically in David Chapman's quiz. I am keen that we should continue to foster our links with the High Commission and perhaps, with their agreement, alternate our talks and events between the Hogan Lovell offices and the High Commission's premises on Prince Consort Road. One talk I think it would be good to have there would be one by Michael Siva, the husband of Community Relations officer at the HC, Vivienne Siva, on the Maroons. I think this would be likely to attract a good audience from the wider Jamaican diaspora.

I have continued to talk to David McKinstry, the Secretary of the Georgian Group about forging closer links between the Friends and the Group and he and the Chairman are open to this. Exactly what form this will take will need to be developed – but at least we can advertise our talks through their website and hopefully attract their membership to attend our talks. I am also keen that the annual Georgian Group Awards should include an award for the restoration of a Georgian building overseas – including, of course, Jamaica. Indeed, I think it likely that this category will be included later this year. If such an award was given, say, for the restoration of the Tharp House in Falmouth, which is currently under way, think how good the consequent publicity could be for raising the profile of the island's built heritage.

In terms of projects to which FGSJ might contribute, we continue to seek suggestions from our parent society, the Georgian Society of Jamaica, which last year celebrated the 50th anniversary of its foundation by the late Geoffrey Pinto. I also remain keen that we should fund training initiatives and the provision of conservation equipment – e.g. stone cleaning. I am also pursuing the dream of establishing a traditional brickworks on island. I am promised by Dr Ivor Conolley that clay should now, at last, be en route to the UK for test firing at the Bulmer Brickworks in Suffolk. If successful, I am hopeful that we may persuade Tony Minter to come to Jamaica to advise on the setting up of a brickworks in or near Spanish Town. Apparently there used to be one in the gaol in Spanish Town. Prisoners could learn a trade and we would have bricks to help restore the wonderful surviving buildings in the town and elsewhere.

Over the last few years a group of us have gone out to Jamaica in February to give talks and try to lobby for Jamaica's buildings. Nothing is planned as yet but I am hopeful we will

arrange a visit (with luck bearing sample bricks!) this year. There are lots of people I'd like to see and talk to – and Dr Ivor Conolley has flagged up a number of buildings he would like us to look at. It would be great also to check out how the works at Tharp House are going, and there are plans to try to rescue Manchester House in Spanish Town. There is so much to do and that could yet be done. As ever in Jamaica one veers between hope and despair – but we must continue to concentrate on the former sentiment and try to make things happen.

A presentation of a small gift was made to Felicia and John Pheasant and also to Helen Holland.

5. Activities Committee Report

The Chairman invited Helen Holland, chair of the Activities Committee, to make her report.

Helen reported:

'It has been another busy year for your Activities Committee. We have had the good fortune to add two new workers to our team – Jenny Mein, a long-standing member of the FGSJ, and Anne Powers, a newer member, who gave us that interesting talk on her book about her family's Jamaican letters – both are most welcome and we much appreciate their contribution to our tasks.

These continue to focus, first and foremost, on projects of course. Peregrine has given you an update on these. He has also mentioned the very successful presentation at the Jamaican High Commission in October where we were able to explain our work to the deputy High Commissioner and some of the staff, as well as interested others. We are cheered by the connections made and look forward to further joint events.

Our own talks were crowned this year by the visit of Louis Nelson who spoke in June to an audience of both our own members and some of the Georgian Group. We had also Dr Duncan Sutherland's colourful lecture on Jamaican heraldry and in March the fascinating description by Dr John Cross of the work of Ralph Turnbull, Jamaican furniture maker. In May a small group of members went to Oxford and, thanks to Rosie Dodd, not only saw some of the finest University buildings, but also enjoyed the opportunity to inspect a small selection of the Jamaican papers held in the Bodleian, a tantalising feast indeed.

We ended the year with another Lady Nugent's Supper, held this time, thanks to our President, Mrs Patsy Robertson, in St Peter's Church Hall, Eaton Square. A very merry evening indeed with our new High Commissioner, His Excellency Seth George Ramocan, as our Guest of Honour. We were delighted by what he had to say to us in a short speech, clearly appreciative of the work of the FGSJ and the challenges we face. We know that some members would like to return to a lunch party for Lady Nugent, but it is not easy to arrange this in London so we would welcome suggestions for a country setting and especially welcome help in organising such an event.

This coming year promises to hold equally attractive occasions for all our members. In March a talk on the Welsh connections with Jamaica to be given by Dr Marian Gwyn and in May a visit to the National Archives at Kew to see some of their Jamaican documents. Plans for other talks are in the offing, including one on the story of James Robertson, the Scotsman from the

Shetland Islands who created the beautiful and very detailed maps of Jamaica published in 1804.

You will all have received our latest *Newsletter*, most ably produced by Sue Jones, who has taken over from Felicia Pheasant as editor. I think she has done a splendid job and we are most grateful to her for all the hard work entailed. Our *News Update*, which goes out not only to members, but also to friends of the Friends, so to speak, will continue to keep us up to date and, of course, there is our website. Please encourage all and sundry who show the slightest interest in the FGSJ to take a look at this – and do keep an eye on it yourselves.

Last year, two of our members discovered a manuscript about John Tharp and his estates that was researched and written in Jamaica in 1959 as a doctoral thesis but was never published. The author carried out extensive research in various archives in Jamaica and Britain, stayed with the Tenisons at Good Hope, and lectured at the then University College of the West Indies. It is the best study of Tharp and his estates that we have ever come across; we have been working with the author and intend to publish the edited paper on our website with illustrations later this year.

Membership numbers are approximately stable again, consisting of a core of supporters supplemented by others who join enthusiastically but lose interest after about 3 years when they are removed for non-payment of subscriptions. On the other hand, new applications just about keep the balance right, but unfortunately never seem to increase.

Apart from 25 Life Members, there are 89 paid up members to 31 December 2017, but hopefully numbers will increase, from some of the 40 others still on the books. Total subscriptions received are £2,117, plus donations to the FGSJ of £95 and to Falmouth Heritage Renewal of £30.

We have gained two members of the AC, as I said, but we are also losing two, the incredibly capable John Pheasant, and myself. This means a new Chairman is needed, but pending his or her appearance, Rosie Dodd and Anne Powers have kindly agreed to take on various practical roles and the team is in good heart. Of course we should be only too pleased if one or two others would step forward to help with the vital work of supporting the Trustees and keeping the FGSJ going. Do not hesitate to contact us if you could spare a little time and lots of enthusiasm.

As usual I will end with thanks – first, to Jan Howard and Jermaine Berchie and the other staff at Hogan Lovells who do so much to make our events here a success. Then to all the members of the Activities Committee who are so dedicated to the work of the FGSJ, and to our Trustees likewise. On a personal note, may I say how much I have appreciated your support in my role as Activities Committee chair. And finally to you, our members, who often ask me what more can be done to help. Come to our events and please book early! Also, tell us what else you would like to have happen and tell others all about us.'

6. Treasurer's and Independent Examiner's Reports

The Chairman asked Alison Dawson, the Treasurer, to make her report.

An updated version of the accounts was tabled at the AGM and circulated to those in attendance. This was due to a review being carried out by the accountants who work for Peregrine Bryant and their suggestion that the accounts should be reported in a revised format. Copies of the updated accounts, signed by the Independent Examiner will be circulated to all members with the AGM minutes.

Alison reported:

‘Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to provide a short overview of the accounts for the year ending 30 September 2017.

Income in this financial year was higher than that seen in 2016. The FGSJ held a number of successful events in this accounting period with income before costs of almost £9,500 pounds from Lady Nugent’s supper with silent auction, lectures on Heraldry, Ralph Turnbull, an outing to the Bodleian in Oxford and a very well attended lecture by Louis Nelson in June. Credit must go to Helen Holland and her team of the activities committee for a varied programme of events that have swelled the coffers of the organisation and brought enjoyment to many.

With a higher number of events, expenditure was higher than in 2016, however again the Society has not made any grants to conservation work in Jamaica in this financial period, though we hope to identify a supportable project in the coming year.

The balance at the bank at the end of the year of just over £53,000 includes £2,310 of restricted donations that have been made for bursaries or for Falmouth Heritage Renewal. The Society finishes the year with an increase in funds over the previous financial year of £6,800 pounds.

I would like to thank all those who have assisted me in my duties as treasurer, especially to Steve Porter for his diligent work in handling the membership subscriptions, to Beatrice Berglund who has prepared and submitted Charity commission and Company House filings on our behalf for a number of years and to my fellow trustees. Particular mention must be made of three individuals who are retiring at this AGM, Felicia and John Pheasant and Helen Holland who will be sorely missed.’

7. Presentation of the Annual Accounts for the Financial Year to 30 September 2017

Under the Articles of Association, the accounts are approved by the directors/trustees and then presented to members at the AGM. The Chairman reported that the accounts to 30 September 2017 had been approved by the directors/trustees at their meeting on 14 December 2017 subject to the receipt of a positive report by an Independent Examiner. A new Independent Examiner was required due to the illness of the previous appointee and the need to find a replacement which had led to the delay in being able to share these with members.

There were no questions about the revised accounts.

A question was raised with regard to the process for approving the accounts. John Pheasant noted that the approval of the accounts was a matter for the Trustees; adoption by the membership is not necessary.

8. Retirements and New Secretary

The Chairman recalled that Felicia and John Pheasant were retiring as directors and trustees and that John was retiring as Secretary at this meeting and that the directors/trustees had unanimously appointed Sara Crofts as the new Secretary at their meeting in December.

The Chairman asked the Secretary to take the chair for the remainder of this item. The Secretary explained to the meeting that the Chairman and the Treasurer both retired by rotation in accordance with the constitution but had agreed to stand for re-appointment. On a show of hands, the resolutions re-appointing Peregrine Bryant and Alison Dawson were duly passed nem con.

The Chairman recalled that Felicia and John Pheasant were retiring as directors and trustees and that John was retiring as Secretary at this meeting and that the directors/trustees had unanimously appointed Sara Crofts as the new Secretary at their meeting in December.

9. Any Other Business

A vote of thanks to Peregrine Bryant, as Chair of the FGSJ, was proposed from the floor and warmly endorsed.

As the High Commissioner had joined the AGM during the meeting the Chair extended a further welcome to His Excellency and also gave his thanks for his support. His Excellency acknowledged the welcome and commended the work of FGSJ.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members present and declared the meeting closed.

Signed

Peregrine Bryant, Chair