# Friends of the Georgian Society of Jamaica 2021 AGM Report

HELD ONLINE WITH ZOOM

10 June 2021

Agenda

1. Chairman's welcome: Peregrine Bryant
2. Apologies : Alexandra Valmarana
3. Adoption of the Report from the 2020 AGM: Peregrine Bryant
4. Chairman's Projects report: Peregrine Bryant
5. Activities Committee report: Alexandra Valmarana
6. Membership Report: Steve Porter
7. Treasurer’s report: Alison Dawson
8. Presentation of the Annual Accounts for the financial year ending on 30 September 2020: Alison Dawson
9. Re-appointment of directors/trustees: Peregrine Bryant
10. Any other business

**Chairman’s Welcome**

*Peregrine Bryant, Chairman, made his welcome remarks for the AGM.*

**Chairman’s remarks for FGSJ AGM 2021**

Dear Friends – What a year it’s been - and I am very sorry that for the first, and hopefully the last, time our AGM is being held virtually, sans talk, sans rum punch, sans patties but not, I trust, sans the spirit and enthusiasm we share for the conservation of Jamaica’s heritage.

The 2020 AGM was the last occasion that I saw Patsy Robertson, our President and co-founder of FGSJ in 1994 with Pamela Beshoff, who had pre-deceased her in 2019. Patsy died on 20th August last year and we will all continue to miss her wonderful spirit and lively conversation – and be ever grateful for her launching the Friends and being its President to the end. We have yet to resolve whom we might invite as our new President. Patsy is a hard act to follow! We would really welcome suggestions.

Last year we just managed to squeeze in not only our AGM but, by the skin of our teeth, a visit by a group of us to Jamaica including fellow trustees Andrew Smith, Rosie Dodd and member Douglas Blain. We were joined by Brent Fortenberry then at Texas A&M University but now about to move to Tulane University in New Orleans as well as Rene Rice of Cliveden Conservation and Tony Minter of Bulmer Brickworks

You will have read about the busy time we had on the island in the recently issued FGSJ magazine, so I won’t elaborate further here, but I would like to pay tribute to the immense amount of work that Sue Jones put into the production of this publication and indeed thank all our contributors

Whilst in grateful mode I would like indeed to continue by thanking my fellow trustees for endeavouring to keep us on the straight and narrow – Alison for keeping our financial affairs in order, Alex for carrying out vital secretarial duties and, with Rosie, organising our events and Clive and Andrew for regular sage advice. I would also like to thank Myrus Smith who once again have audited our accounts with charge.

Sincere and heartfelt thanks also to all member or our Activities Committee. Although through these difficult times we have not met as often as of yore we would have liked we hope soon to be able to do so and face to face!

Last but by no means least I would like to thank Steve for continuing to be our membership secretary – a vital task.

May I take this opportunity to encourage members to step forward and consider joining our Activities committee or becoming a Trustee.

Now I would like to turn to one or two other matters. We have prepared a questionnaire which we will be circulating in the next few days which we hope will help clarify members’ views on a number of issues including:

* The period of buildings we should support
* If we broaden this beyond the long Georgian period – should our name change to reflect this e.g. Friends of Jamaica’s Heritage?
* Should other activities relating to conservation beyond buildings be eligible for FGSJ grants – e.g. training/archival research/recording of buildings etc
* Suggestions of specific buildings or projects for support
* Are you happy with the general scope of our talks and/or what other subjects would you like to see covered?
* Where would you like talks to be held?
* Ideas for fundraising

And one or two other questions.

It would be really valuable if members could complete this form.

Answers will inform what kind of projects we should be supporting with grants from FGSJ – for that after all is our raison d’etre.

In 2020 the Friends paid for the visit to Jamaica of Rene Rice from Cliveden Conservation who advised on the conservation of plaster and stone monuments and Tony Minter from Bulmer Brickworks. They also took part in the ‘Bricks and Mortar Symposium in Spanish Town and Tony gave advice to Ivor Conolley on setting up a brickworks – which is slowly taking shape. We also gave a grant to Ivor and his fellow archaeologists to assist with expenses for the initial excavation of Fort Stewart, a building identified and located by Robert. There is more to do but it has already been a fascinating exercise. In due course I hope Ivor will give us a talk on the result of the excavations.

You will remember that Robert Barker on his much-mourned death left a very generous legacy to be administered by FGSJ but his principal intent was that it should used for the recording of Jamaica’s heritage and involve education and the training of students. An ad hoc committee has been established including Brent Fortenberry, Ke Vaughn Harding, Prof Louis Nelson, Rosie Dodd, Alex and myself. Brent and Ke Vaughn have been pushing forward on this and talking to UWI. We are looking for a date when they can update us on progress and we can agree next steps. The result of this research and recording will most likely be a digital archive but could, in due course end up in printed form. But that is very much for the future and not an immediate ambition.

Looking to the future I aim, if circumstances allow, to visit Jamaica with others in October or November. I know Rosie has plans to visit in November and Brent is thinking about those months it would be good to coincide if we can.

To quote Tennyson:

*‘Tho' much is taken, much abides;….’*

And what yet abides certainly deserves our support. We will continue to give it in any way we can and need your help.

**AGM Apologies**

*Alexandra Valmarana,Secretary announced the apologies*

*John and Felicia Pheasant by proxy*

*Caroline Carver*

*Lachlan Rhodes by proxy*

*Lady Budd*

*Cecile Goorney*

*Andrew Rudolf*

*Doreen Morrison*

## Chairman’s Projects Report

*Peregrine Bryant gave his Chairman’s Report as below.*

Almost a year ago Andrew Smith and I were at Kingston Airport, about to leave for London after a very interesting couple of weeks on the island, which you can read about elsewhere in the Newsletter in the description by Brent Fortenberry. Brent and I had been planning to go on to a Conference at UWI in Barbados organised by the Caribbean Heritage Network, where with Clive Dawson, who was due to fly in from the UK, we were going to make a short presentation on conservation challenges in Jamaica. The spread of the pandemic was by then becoming all too evident and the conference was cancelled – or we hope just postponed (though until when, who knows!). But I do remember the increased confusion getting away and Andrew and I were probably lucky to leave when we did. But that of course was only the beginning, as we have discovered during this roller coaster of a year.

You will be all too aware of the cancellation of any live FGSJ events though we just managed to squeeze in last year’s AGM at the High Commission before the lockdown. There we were able to enjoy a very interesting talk by Antony Maitland on his family’s involvement with Jamaica ‘From Privateers to Pen Keepers’ which was followed by an excellent Rum Punch concocted by David Chapman, delicious patties and much convivial conversation. Sadly that was the last occasion that I saw Patsy Robertson, co-founder of FGSJ with Pamela Beshoff in 1994. Patsy died on August 20th last year and we will all continue to miss her wonderful spirit and lively conversation – and be ever grateful for her launching the Friends and being its President to the end.

I would like to mention a few other things. The first is an archaeological dig at Fort Stewart, referred to in Brent’s article. This was carried out towards the end of last year and led by Ivor Conolley and has yielded interesting evidence of its form – and that it had a basement storey. The work was carried out on a voluntary basis but FGSJ made a grant of £1,000 to help towards expenses. A full report will be published in due course.

*Illustration of the excavation and 18th century image of the Fort*

Secondly, many members may already know, but the Friends received a very generous legacy of £35,000 from the Estate of Robert Barker, a long standing and much valued member, who passed away in 2019. After much discussion, particularly with Rosie Dodd, who was a dear friend, it has been decided to dedicate this legacy to research and cataloguing of historic buildings in Jamaica, the group organising this will be led by Professor Louis Nelson, supported by Brent Fortenberry, Ke Vaughn Harding, Rosie Dodd and Alexandra di Valmarana and will involve student bodies in Jamaica, for education was a key interest of Robert’s. The outcome is intended to be an online guide to the buildings, based on the three counties. We hope it will also be possible also to publish at least a distillation of buildings – called the Barker Guides.

Then there has been a recent flurry of activity spurred by an alert from Chris Lue in Jamaica about a charming late 19th/early 20th century iron building on Orange Street, Kingston. This is about to be demolished to make way for a parking lot. This has no statutory protection but the owner has expressed a willingness for it to be dismantled and taken off site. At going to press we are hopeful that, through the good offices of Blaise Hart, a saviour for the building has been found and it may be re-erected elsewhere in Kingston. In passing it is worth noting that this building was fabricated at the Saracen Foundry and shipped out. It prompts us to think it would be good to start a catalogue of buildings using cast iron from the UK (e.g. the bridge at Spanish Town, The Naval Hospital in Port Royal, Albert George Market in Falmouth etc.). Other suggestions from members would be welcome!

*Illustration of Orange Street Building*

Finally I would like to express sincere thanks for all the hard work of my fellow Trustees and the Activities Committee though the last year, including Sue Jones for editing and putting together the Newsletters. I would encourage you to volunteer to join us!

Who knows what this year may bring, but we hope that before long travel to and from Jamaica will once again become possible and that we will be able to meet for talks, raise a glass and enjoy the odd pattie together. Until when I wish all members a very happy and healthy 2021.

**PROJECTS**

**Fort Stewart**

FGSJ helped to fun the first archaeological dig at Fort Stewart. This was carried out towards the end of last year and led by Ivor Conolley and has yielded interesting evidence of its form – and that it had a basement storey. The work was carried out on a voluntary basis but FGSJ made a grant of £1,000 to help towards expenses. A full report will be published in due course.

**Advocacy Cast Iron Building Orange Street**

FGSJ advocated through social media, research and investigation and structural advice to save this late 19th c cast iron building from demolition.

**Monument Restoration, Spanish Town-**The Spanish Town Cathedral monument and St. Peter’s Church in Port Royal both have broken memorials, which are in desperate need of repair. FGSJ have funded transportation for Cliveden Conservation to advise and assist with repairs. Cliveden Conservation have donated their time and labour to FGSJ.

**Bricks and Mortar Symposium-** FGSJ hosted a Bricks & Mortar’ Symposium organised through the good offices of Bill Poinsett in Spanish Town in the Council Chamber of the Old Assembly Building on Emancipation Square on the morning of 9th March 2020, as described previously. Tony Minter of Bulmer Bricks will be visiting the island to develop brick making works. His time has been generously donated and his transportation funded by the FGSJ.

**Barker Guides**

Through funding by Robert Barker’s legacy a committee has been established to coordinate the documentation and publishing of historic Georgian structures of Jamaica.

Potential Projects

**Moulton-Barrett House, Falmouth-**The Usaine Bolt Foundation has bought the Manse and Moulton-Barrett House, which recently suffered a devasting fire, and want to re-develop it as a Museum of Sport. A scheme has been suggested to rebuild M-B House. The building had previously been surveyed by Falmouth Heritage Renewal and the University of Virginia. Tyrone Deans, of Deans Hanson, a Jamaican Architect in UK may be able to help.

**WARE**

The Wattle and Red Earth (WARE) Collective is a nonprofit organization which advocates for and seeks to preserve Jamaica's built heritage. Limestone and red earth structures in a timber frame (Spanish walling), the burning of lime kilns, sisal weaving, thatch weaving, wattling and basketry are communal craft forms which span over 200 years. Southeastern St. Elizabeth is a critical site where uniquely Jamaican traditional structures and knowledge of crafts and art forms is being lost. Contemporary concrete building construction is accelerating in this region. The abandonment of Jamaica’s vernacular architectural history, lack of care and active destruction of traditional structures and craft forms is significant for the country’s national development. To address these issues, the WARE Collective mission is to promote the preservation and appreciation of historic structures, traditional building methods and art forms.

## Activities Committee Report

*Alexandra Valmarana presented the Activities Committee Report as follows.*

The FGSJ Activities Committee is pleased to report the following activities of the FGSJ in 2019.

**ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Steve Porter, Alexandra Valmarana (chair), Rosie Dodd (co-chair), Anne Powers (co-chair), Douglas Blain, David Chapman, Jenny Mein, Sue Jones

The FGSJ would like to formally thank its committee members, without whom the events for the year and the main source of income for the charity would not be possible. Special notes of thanks this year are extended to Anne Powers, Rosie Dodd for the website, MailChimp and other marketing and event organisation, Sue Jones for the newsletter, Steve Porter for his role as Membership Secretary.

**EVENTS HELD**

Below is a summary and list of events held in 2020 by the FGSJ with their location and dates. Our last AGM was the last event were able to host all together in person. Although the Covid-19 Pandemic meant a slow start to the year, we are pleased to say, the Activities Committee was able to fairly quickly adapt to online webinar hosting and hosting 8 events since the last AGM.

Notwithstanding the pandemic, we have had a series of fascinating webinar talks thanks to the diligence and hard work in particular hard work of Rosemary Dodd and we are indebted to Sara Crofts for hosting these talks through ICON. These have included:

* A discussion with Richard Atkinson about his fascinating book ‘Mr Atkinson's Rum Contract’ focusing in particular on his eponymous ancestor
* KeVaughn Harding spoke about the archaeological excavations at the Enslaved Workers Village on the Good Hope Estate and his interpretive reconstruction Archaeology and Reconstructive Illustration of Life there
* For Black History Month Ivor Conolley spoke on *Life Between Brutality and Rebellion*
* Richard Smith gave us a very interesting talk on *Jamaica’s Role in the First World War*
* Then to get us into the Christmas spirit Matthew Blain told us in ‘A Passion For Rum’ about his splendid Runaway Bay Rum – and how to adulterate it and make a delicious cocktail!
* This year has started with an absorbing talk by Christine Walker on a little known aspect of enslaved lives on the island: Jamaica Ladies: Female Slaveholders -Creation of Britain’s Atlantic Empire

So in spite of lockdown we have not been starved of events and they have had the advantage of allowing attendance across the world, not least the Jamaica and the US, although we have of course missed meeting each other face-to-face.

Last year’s AGM was our last UK live event with a fabulous talk from member, Anthony Maitland, at the High Commission. This was followed soon after with a Bricks and Mortar Symposium hosted by the FGSJ in Jamaica. Several Trustees and members donated their time to host this successful event, which was well attended. When the lockdown began, we luckily we were in the process of integrating Mailchimp, Eventbrite into our systems and the pandemic gave the AC the opportunity to jump start these new media resources.

Webinars have proven to be very well attended by people from around the world, although predominately from the UK. Attendance was on average 57 people, which is significant up from live events and our largest event had 104 attendees. Of the attendees, 24 were on average non-members. The webinar has enabled us to ask international speakers that would not normally be able to attend in person. Unfortunately, revenue from these online events is not nearly as much as live events, especially as in the beginning the webinars were free to all. Total income from events was £1015.50 The live events income totalled £496. Donations of £285 were made through Eventbrite. The first two webinars were completely free as they were experimental and for subsequent webinars non-members were charged.

With Anne and Rosie, we have developed the Members area of the website and can offer members videos of events they missed. We feel the webinars are a positive element for the future and opens our educational events to a new audience, where we hope to entice new members and an enables us to get new speakers from abroad. However we are keen to get back to some live events.

**Proposed Events in Progress for 2021**

We have an exciting programme for 2021 year ahead and hope you will join us for the events and fundraisers we have planned. Please share with us any ideas or suggestions you have for talks or events.

We are investigating talks on London buildings owned by planters, comparative buildings in the US and Jamaica, and 18th century art. We also hope, Covid allowing, to organise a trip to the Black Cultural Archives with a tour in the footsteps of the Windrush generation.

**Tour of the Brixton and The Black Cultural Archives-**Through the eyes of the Windrush Generation combined with a tour and visit to the Black Cultural Archives and lunch in a Jamaican eatery. The Black Cultural Archives is the only national heritage centre dedicated to collecting, preserving and celebrating the histories of African and Caribbean people in Britain. This will be a daytime tour.

**Talk by Matthew Smith**, newly appointed director from Jamaica for The Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership at UCL.

**Lady Nugent’s Breakfast:** We hope to be able to host this in person- pandemic rules permitting. A brunch in the Oxford area has been suggested. Suggestions for venues needed. A few members have generously donated a number of excellent items for an auction to be carried out at an event this year. Please do step forward if you have items to donate so we can begin to put together an online auction. Please contact us with ideas and thoughts!

**VOLUNTEERS**

The FGSJ is run solely by volunteers, but due to illness and many of our committee living abroad, our Activities Committee is actively recruiting new members. Should we not be able to recruit further volunteers, FGSJ will need to consider paying someone to carry out Administration and Social Networking services to maintain and broaden the appeal of the FGSJ, so please volunteer to help our Activity Committee and Fundraising efforts.

We would welcome any volunteers or members:

1. Who have ideas or suggestions about events or fundraisers
2. Who enjoy writing articles for the newsletter
3. Who have any experience with editing, Mailchimp, Eventbrite or WordPress, and/or would like to learn these skills.

Who can help with catering during the events and Audio visual setup at events. We would like to consider offering those who volunteer at events to have a free ticket to the talk.

**Membership Report**

We are continuously grateful to Steve Porter, who continues as membership secretary and for all his efforts over so many years. He reports the following for to the year ending 30 September 2020.

*Steve Porter presents his Membership Report to the AGM.*

Membership numbers continue to slowly decline, partly due to deaths of six of our long-term members, a few resignations and some who have not paid up after a three-year period. Against this there were four new members.

Information in terms of numbers, is as follows:

Paid members 83

Members in arrears 21

Life members 28

**Total members 132**

**Total subscription payments received £2,137**

Vs 2019 Total subscription payments received £2,452

Donations to FGSJ funds £ 90

Donations to FHR (Falmouth Heritage Renewal) £ 30

Donations to the Bursary fund £ 50

Life subscriptions £ 0

**Grand total received £2,307**

Vs 2019 £ 3,387

(About half pay by standing order and four of these were at old rates)

**In Memoria, during 2020**

Mrs. Christine Noble (10 Jan), Brian Whitty, USA (8 March), Les, husband of

Jane Clark (25 April), Jean, wife of Commr. Lister Hickson (May) and sister of

late Dr. Pamela Beshoff, Mrs. Patsy Robertson, President (18 Aug), Mrs.

Sheila Bennett (Oct)

**Treasurer’s Report**

*Alison Dawson presented the 2020 accounts and her Treasurer’s Report.*

The FGSJ held a significantly reduced number of events during this financial year due to the Covid pandemic. We were able to hold just three events in person with an excellent presentation on Poor Relief and Philanthropy in Jamaica and Barbados in November, a lively Christmas party" and then our AGM held at the Jamaican High Commission where we enjoyed a presentation entitled Privateers to Pen Keepers. All of these events were revenue generating for the FGSJ. Our thanks must go to the ever efficient activities committee for making these events a success.

Our funds have been very significantly amplified by an extraordinarily generous legacy from the late Robert Barker. Robert had a passionate interest in the historic properties of Jamaica and his legacy is being held in a restricted fund and will be dedicated to the recording and publication of details of buildings and landscapes in Jamaica.

The restricted fund stands at the year end at over £37,000. No funds have been dispersed from the restricted funds in this financial period to Falmouth Heritage Renewal or for educational purposes. The FGSJ finishes the year with an increase in funds over the previous financial year of £35,105.

The accounts have been independently reviewed, signed copies of the reviewed accounts have been provided to members in advance of this meeting and are available on the FGSJ website.

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 Cees Brouwer at Hogan Lovells who kindly assists and advises us on Legal Matters and to my fellow trustees.

**Administrative**

The Friends of the Georgian Society of Jamaica was successfully re-registered as charity.

Company Limited by Guarantee ~ Registered in England and Wales No. 3447992

Registered Charity No. 1074915 ~ Registered Office: 21 Holborn Viaduct, London EC1A 2D

Patron: His Excellency Mr Seth George Ramocan, High Commissioner of Jamaica

President: To be appointed due to sad death of Patsy Robertson

Vice-Presidents: Anthony Moulton-Barrett and Laura Facey

TRUSTEES for 2020 and PROPOSED for 2021

Peregrine Bryant, Chairman

Alison Dawson, Treasurer

Alexandra Valmarana, Secretary

Clive Dawson, Trustee

Andrew Smith, Trustee

Rosie Dodd, Trustee proposed

**Appointments**

*Peregrine Bryant to allow members to vote on appointments*

Peregrine Bryant and Alison Dawson are by rotation up for re-election to the Board of Trustees. Rosemary ‘Rosie’ Dodd is proposed as a new Trustee. Members unanimously voted on these and re-elections appointments.

**Any Other Business**

Members were generally in favour of the Webinar and are looking forward to them continuing provided they can be financially viable.