

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the  
Oxfordshire Local History Association,  
Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 11am.**

**Due to the Covid-19 pandemic this meeting was held by Zoom.**

- 1. Attendances;** There were present the following Officers: Christopher Fance (Chairman); Simon Townley (Vice-Chairman); Liz Woolley (Treasurer, Membership Secretary and e-Bulletin editor); Chris Hall (Journal Editor); Norma Aubertin-Potter (Secretary); Kathy Davies (Committee Member); Margaret Hauser (Committee Member) , plus 75 members and guests. (84 members and 17 guests had registered for the meeting.)

**Apologies:** Had been received from Philip Morris (Committee Member); Wendy Archer; Diana Power; Jeremy Gibson; John Steane.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

- 2. Minutes:** The Minutes of the AGM of 2019 had been distributed. No objections were received to the Chairman signing them as a correct record. This will take place when Covid conditions allow. Proposed: Daniel Tarzey. Seconder: Simon Townley.

- 3. Matters arising from the Minutes:** There were none.

- 4. Officers' Reports:**

**(a) Chairman's Report:** As you know, 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 holds regular liaison meetings with the management of the Oxfordshire History Centre and the Bodleian Library and occasional *ad hoc* meetings with local government officials. These have been temporarily suspended because of the pandemic.

The project (conducted with the co-operation of the Bodleian Library, the Oxfordshire History Centre and the Oxfordshire Family History Society) to scan the Henry Minn and the J.C.Buckler collections of photographs and drawings is nearing completion. The individual items are in the process of being scanned. Later, they will be named and put online in Picture Oxon, where the images will be able to be seen without any charge.

OLHA's programme of small financial grants continues and awards have been made to local history groups and other bodies. We also continue 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.

During the past year, OLHA has held two study days, one at Shipton under Wychwood and another in New College, Oxford. These were both very capably organized by Vicky Jordan. Sadly, Vicky found it necessary to resign from the committee in March 2020 because of a health issue. I would like to stress what a wonderful contribution Vicky made to the OLHA committee and to the membership over many years. She organized dozens of successful, enjoyable and informative study days. She did all this with great modesty, good humour and little fuss. We are all very much in her debt.

Liz Woolley has compiled the very popular monthly eBulletin of news and events relevant to local historians and Chris Hall has been working on the latest edition of our journal.

#### **(b) Treasurer and Membership Secretary:**

##### **ACCOUNTS**

The financial year 2019/20 ended on 31 March 2020. The accounts are have been examined and signed off by the external auditor Andrew Churchill Stone of Mercer Lewin Ltd, Chartered Accountants, 41 Cornmarket, Oxford OX1 3HA and were presented to the meeting. They are also available on OLHA's website. The key points are:

- The Association is in a healthy position financially with **£4,704** in the bank at year-end. During the financial year, income (**£4,535**) exceeded expenditure (**£3,193**) by **£1,342**.
- **Subscription income** was slightly higher in the accounting year 2019/20 than in 2018/19 because some subscriptions for 2018/19 had been received early and were banked in 2017/18.
- A **gift aid claim** on subscriptions and donations received during 2018/19, and in the three previous years from members who signed declarations in 2018, resulted in income of **£611**.
- Vicky Jordan organised two successful and well-attended **study days**, in Shipton-under-Wychwood and at New College, Oxford. The former made a surplus of **£174**, £50 which we donated to the **Wychwoods Local History Society**. The latter made a loss of **£52**, mainly due to the high cost of room hire and refreshments at New College.
- No edition of the journal was produced during 2019/20, and so printing costs were zero, and overall postage costs amounted to only £19.
- **Grants** were awarded to the **Shrivenham Heritage Society** towards the erection of a memorial at RAF Watchfield (£250); celebrations of the **175th anniversary of the Great Western Railway's Didcot to Oxford line** (£500); and the **Aston History Group** for publication of a book, *The History of Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney* (£200). In addition we made our usual **donation** of **£1,000** to the **Oxfordshire History Centre**. (Our usual donation of £1,000 to the **Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust** was banked in 2020/21 and therefore does not appear in the 2019/20 accounts).

- **Miscellaneous expenditure** included £75 for our annual subscription to the British Association for Local History (BALH), £150 for the auditing of the previous year's accounts, and £93 for website hosting and domain name renewal.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

- At the end of the 2019/20 financial year we had 161 individual members; 80 societies; 10 journal-only subscribers; 15 complimentary; total: 266. We estimate that on average Oxfordshire local history societies have a membership of c. 40, so OLHA represents about 3,400 Oxfordshire local historians.
- Overall membership has grown slightly (up 4% on the previous year). We were pleased to welcome 20 new members during 2019/20 including six societies: Harwell Parish History Group, Charney Bassett History Group, British Modern Military History Society, Oxfordshire Buildings Record, Shrivenham Heritage Society, and Kirtlington & Bletchington Historical Society. In addition the Oxfordshire Library (at Westgate, Oxford) has re-joined as a complimentary member, and the Guildhall Library has rejoined as a journal-only subscriber.

### **(c) Journal Editor:**

As of May 2020 when this AGM was due to be held, Vol. 10/3 of the journal was waiting for our printers to re-open. And when they did there was a further wait for the operator, who regularly and very efficiently prepares our copy, to come out of furlough and do the job, which eventually he did. But he was working in cramped conditions from home, and this resulted in a few blemishes such as I do not normally tolerate. Members no doubt spotted them but have not complained. I appreciate their silence. The issue which did emerge was printed and distributed after much tedious queuing and social distancing in post offices; it consisted of 96 pages plus cover, i.e. slightly fewer than Vol. 10/2 (104 pp plus covers). I apologise for the very long gap between these two issues, which was attributable to some poor health on my part (not to mention old age) and considerable editorial problems with some contributions (no names, no pack drill). I was especially pleased to publish articles (pp 25-38) by John Andrews and Jim Baldwin, both members of the Great Haseley History Group, an active and enterprising society. These resulted from the appeal which Liz Woolley published in the e-bulletin (and has now repeated): in it I asked for more research material from members of local societies which could be presented as articles in the journal. In the next issue, which is now as the saying goes 'in active preparation', I plan to publish at least three more pieces of similar genesis. The journal has always been intended as primarily a platform for the work of local and usually amateur historians. Their contributions always welcomed and carefully edited.

### **(d) 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 (31 March 2020) it was being sent to just over 380 recipients, including our 80 society members, many of whom forward it to their own members. Feedback on the e-bulletin has been positive. The editor was grateful to committee members Margaret Hauser and Norma Aubertin-Potter for producing the e-bulletin and dealing with enquiries during her absence in February and March 2020. The editor welcomes items of news and

notices of forthcoming events; text and images can be sent to membership@olha.org.uk by the 25th of the month prior to publication.

**(e) Meetings Secretary (this report was given by the Chairman):**

During the period since the last AGM, two Study Days were organised by Vicky Jordan. The first was held in Shipton under Wychwood in May 2019, the subject being Wychwood: The Forest then and now. Simon Townley gave an overview of the history of the forest covering the period 800-2000. The second speaker was Neil Clennell, the Chief Executive of the Wychwood Project, who explained the scope of the project. In the afternoon, members of the Wychwoods Local History Society conducted a tour of the village, spending a good deal of time in the Wild Garden.

The second Study Day was held in New College, Oxford, in November 2019, to show how Manorial Records could be used in Local and Family History and to inaugurate the launch of the National Archives Manorial Documents Register for Oxfordshire. There were four talks in the morning. Liz Hart from the National Archives explained how the Register works, Virginia Bainbridge explained the scope of the Oxfordshire records, Barbara Allison from Charlbury explained how they could be utilised for local history purposes, and Jennifer Thorp, the New College Archivist, gave an introduction to the documents on display in the afternoon's exhibition in the college. After this Liz Hart and staff from the Oxfordshire History Centre launched the Oxfordshire Manorial Documents Register.

The third Study Day, combined with the AGM, was in process of being organised in Bampton for May 2020 to cover aspects of World War Two when two events happened. The first was the COVID-19 lockdown. The second was the unexpected resignation of Vicky Jordan from the OLHA Committee and from the post of OLHA Meetings Secretary. This was due to health problems.

The OLHA Committee is looking for a volunteer to take on Vicky's role.

No objections to the acceptance of the Reports were received. Proposed: Martin Wellings. Seconder: Trevor Davies.

5. **Election of Officers and Committee:** Christopher Fance was re-elected Chairman, and Simon Townley re-elected Vice-Chairman – no new members having been proposed the current Committee were re-elected *en bloc* without any objections. Proposed and seconded at the March 2020 committee meeting by Christopher Fance, Malcolm Graham and Liz Woolley.
6. **Election of Independent Examiner of the Annual Accounts:** Mercer Lewin Ltd was re-elected for the year 2020-2021 without any objections. Proposed: Liz Woolley; Seconded: Chris Hall.
7. **General Data Protection Regulation:** The Chairman reported that the Association followed the Government guidelines. OLHA's GDPR policy had been reviewed by the committee in March 2020 and it had been found to be working well. Full information is on the OLHA website.
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:** There were none.

**9. Emergency motions (at the meeting's discretion)** There were none.

The AGM ended at 11.23am, and was followed by a talk by Stephen Barker on *Oxfordshire in World War 2*.