

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the
Oxfordshire Local History Association,
Saturday, 15th May 2021 at 11am.**

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

- 1. Attendances:** There were present the following Officers and Committee Members: Christopher Fance (Chairman); Simon Townley (Vice-Chairman); Liz Woolley (Treasurer, Membership Secretary and e-Bulletin editor); Chris Hall (Journal Editor); Norma Aubertin-Potter (Secretary); Malcolm Graham (Committee Member); plus another 49 members and guests (58 members and 13 guests had registered for the meeting).

Apologies: Apologies were received from Committee members Kathy Davies and Margaret Hauser.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

- 2. Minutes:** The Minutes of the AGM of 2020 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: Linda Mustill. Seconded: Tim Emptage.
- 3. Matters arising from the Minutes:** There were none.
- 4. Officer's Reports:**

(a) Chairman's Report:

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. These were temporarily suspended because of the pandemic in 2020, but one has been held recently online with the Oxfordshire History Centre.

The pandemic has slowed the completion of the project to scan the Henry Minn and the J.C.Buckle collections of photographs and drawings (conducted with the co-operation of the Bodleian Library, the Oxfordshire History Centre and the Oxfordshire Family History Society). The individual items have been scanned. They are in the process of being 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, though no grant has been made in the last year. 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 held a different type of Study Day at the online AGM in November 2020. (See the Meetings Secretary's report). Liz Woolley has continued to compile 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.

There has been one sad event. Chris Day, a former member of the committee and a very influential historian of Oxfordshire has died. Simon Townley will give a tribute later in these proceedings.

An application to the British Association of Local History to honour one of the present committee members, Malcolm Graham, was successful. Malcolm started his working career in Oxford in October 1970. He has contributed an immense amount to the history of the city and county since that date.

Question: Michael Heaton asked if there was any timescale for the finalizing of the scanning of the Buckler Collection. The Chairman said that there were still one hundred to be named but because the OHC staff had been working from home and two staff members had retired in 2020 it would be impossible to give a definite answer at the moment.

(b) Treasurer and Membership Secretary's Reports:

ACCOUNTS

The financial year 2020/21 ended on 31 March 2021. The accounts are summarised overleaf and have been examined and signed off by the external auditor Andrew Churchill Stone of Mercer Lewin Ltd, Chartered Accountants, 41 Cornmarket, Oxford OX1 3HA. The key points are:

- The Association is in a healthy position financially with £4,133 in the bank at year-end. During the financial year, expenditure (£4,270) exceeded income (£3,699) by £571.
- Subscription income (£3,261) was higher in the accounting year 2020/21 than in 2019/20 due to an increase in the number of members.
- A gift aid claim on subscriptions and donations received during 2020/21 resulted in income of £306. This was half of that received in 2019/20 because last year because we claimed not only for that year but also for the previous three years for members who had signed declarations in 2018.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, only one study meeting was organised during 2020/21 and as this conducted via Zoom, no charge was made for attendance. Hence income from study day fees was zero. Study day costs amounted to only £84, this being the cost of a Zoom licence for a month, plus the speaker's fee.

- The major expenditure during 2020/21 was on the production of the journal: £1,795 for printing and £413 for postage of copies to members.
- Probably due to the Covid-19 pandemic, only one grant application was received during 2020/21, and the committee decided not to award a grant as the project did not fall within our criteria for funding (as advertised on the OLHA website, <https://www.olha.org.uk/small-grants/>). However, we made donations of £500 to the Oxfordshire History Centre and £500 to the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust. (In addition, our 2019/20 donation of £500 to the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust was banked by them in 2020/21 and hence appears in these 2020/21 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 £152 for website hosting, domain name renewal and purchase of an SSL certificate.

Michael Heaton of the Wheatley Archive commented that the 'total accumulated' is misleading. It would be better if the change in funds was reflected in the top part balancing the receipts in and payments out with this figure of -£570.96 being the only figure needed to balance the opening and closing bank balance. The Treasurer agreed to look at this for the presentation of next year's accounts.

MEMBERSHIP

- At the end of the 2020/21 financial year we had 172 individual members; 82 societies; 10 journal only subscribers; 15 complimentary; total: 279. 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 slightly (up 5% on the previous year). We were pleased to welcome 21 new members during 2020/21 including two societies: Mixbury History Group and Ascott Martyrs Study Group/Ascott Martyrs Education Trust.

(c) Journal Editor's Report:

Volume 10, no 3 was published in August of last year. It consisted of 96 pages plus covers.

It was a particular pleasure to have received two articles for this issue from a local-history society in one village, Great Haseley. Many local societies hold well-researched material which deserves a wider audience, and it has always been one of the main purposes of the journal to provide a platform for such work. I wish more local societies and their members would offer articles for publication here.

One of the Great Haseley authors was John Andrews, and it was with great regret that I learned of his death shortly before publication of his article. (There is a short biographical note on page 70.) However, I have another contribution from him which I hope to publish in Vol. 10, no 4.

For that issue (10/4) we have among other contributions an enlightening piece from Janet Hurst of the Goring Gap Local History Society. This is an exhaustively researched house history which casts light on the gentrification (driven by capital wealth generated in other parts of the country) by which this desirable Thames-side village was transformed in the late C19 and early C20, and in which the railway link to London and elsewhere played an essential role.

Editing the journal has been only slightly affected by the restrictions imposed during the pandemic. We have been printed by the Higgs Group in Henley for nearly 20 years, and we have been especially fortunate because our work has been handled by Peter Webb, a skilled and sympathetic operator. He has been working from home for more than a year now and there have been a few consequent glitches in the editorial processes. Nevertheless Vol 10/4 is well advanced towards publication this summer, though several months later than I had hoped.

The chairman and I have continued to search for my successor, it being (if memory serves correctly) now five years since I announced a wish to hand the job on to a younger person. So far we have been unsuccessful although several potential candidates have been considered, but have withdrawn when they learned more about the nature of the job.

(d) Acting Meetings Secretary's Report (this was given by the Chairman):

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that OLHA could not keep to the normal pattern of Study Days. The first was due in May 2020 at the AGM but as the AGM was postponed from May 2020 until November 2020, it did not take place. At the AGM, held on-line, after the business had been conducted, Stephen Barker gave a talk about Oxfordshire in World War II (the topic originally proposed for the Study Day). This was well received by an audience of at least 92. The present AGM again keeps to the same pattern, being conducted on-line, with a talk to be given by Dr Malcolm Graham. The topic is the Oxford Paving Commission of 1771. This was an important landmark in Oxford's history. The committee is planning to return to the normal pattern for a Study Day on 20 November this year. The intention is to meet in Henley on Thames for two talks about the importance of the River Thames in the history of the county. Our long-standing Meetings Secretary resigned for health reasons last year and the committee is looking for someone to replace her. The duties are not onerous and the person will have the active support of the committee. Please volunteer.

(e) 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 2021) it was being sent to almost 450 recipients, (compared to 380 the same time last year), including our 82 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 by the 25th of the month prior to publication.

It was agreed to approve the Officers' reports, no objections having been received. Proposed: Michael Heaton. Seconded: Catherine Hitchins.

5. Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Officers and Committee for 2021/22:

All current members of the committee are prepared to stand for re-election:

Chairman:	Christopher Fance (proposed by Liz Woolley, seconded by Simon Townley)
Vice-Chairman:	Simon Townley (proposed by Kathy Davies, seconded by Malcolm Graham)
Secretary:	Norma Aubertin-Potter (proposed by Simon Townley, seconded by Liz Woolley)
Membership Secretary, Treasurer, E-Bulletin Editor:	Liz Woolley (proposed by Christopher Fance, seconded by Chris Hall)
Journal Editor:	Chris Hall (proposed by Malcolm Graham, seconded by Philip Morris)
Committee members:	Kathy Davies (proposed by Chris Hall, seconded by Norma Aubertin-Potter); Margaret Hauser (proposed by Philip Morris, seconded by Kathy Davies); Malcolm Graham (proposed by Margaret Hauser, seconded by Christopher Fance); Philip Morris (proposed by Norma Aubertin-Potter, seconded by Margaret Hauser)

No new members having been proposed the Current Committee were re-elected *en bloc* without any objections. The post of Meetings Secretary is currently vacant.

6. Election of Independent Examiner of the Annual Accounts: Mercer Lewin was re-elected for the year 2021/22 without any objections.

7. Tribute to Chris Day (1946 – 2021); by Simon Townley.

Simon's tribute was a shortened version of his obituary that is on the Kellogg College website. Chris joined the Victoria County History project in 1975 working on Volume 4 which is the Oxford City volume. In 1994 he joined the Department for Continuing Education as the University Lecturer in Local History, by 1996 he had joined the Department full time. Chris initiated the Advanced Diploma in Local History; and by 2004 was the Director of Studies in Local History. Kellogg College made him a Fellow in 1994. Chris's passion was teaching, an inspiring teacher and a natural communicator with a natural warmth and kindness. For 25 years he was Honorary General Editor of Oxford Record Society and President of the OAHS from 2012 – 17.

In fact the only negative thing that Simon could say about Chris was that he was dog person and not a cat person. He will be missed by so many historians.

8. OLHA's compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):

The Chairman reported that the Association followed the Government guidelines. OLHA's GDPR policy had been reviewed by the Committee in March 2021 and it had been found to be working well. Full information is on the OLHA website.

<https://www.olha.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2021/03/OLHA-data-privacy-notice-March-2018-reviewed-March-2021.pdf>

9. 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.

10. Emergency motions (at the meeting's discretion):

There were none.

The AGM ended at 11.27am, and was followed by a talk by Malcolm Graham on *Removing nuisances and creating prospects: 250 years of the Paving Commission in Oxford.*