



BRITISH SOCIETY
FOR THE HISTORY
OF MATHEMATICS

From the Honorary Secretary:
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**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the BSHM
held at Birkbeck College, London
at 1.30 pm on Wednesday 25th October 2017**

The meeting opened at 1.30 pm with the President, Philip Beeley, in the Chair. There were 20 members of the Society present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Leo Rogers, Chris Hollings, Robin Wilson, Snezana Lawrence, Isobel Falconer, Tony Royle, Brigitte Stenhouse, Alison Maidment.

Before proceeding, the President had the poignant task of announcing the names of those members who had sadly died in the last year. Members stood in respect.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on Thursday 27th October 2016

a) Approval of Minutes

There was a minor spelling correction which was immediately rectified. The motion that **these minutes be taken as a true record of the 2016 AGM** was proposed by Terry Froggatt and seconded by Nigel White. The motion was passed **nem. con.**

b) Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Officers' Reports and Accounts

These refer to the timeframe Jan 1st to Dec 31st 2016 and are collated under the BSHM Company Annual Report, filed with Companies House.

a) Ken Lord, as **Membership Secretary**, outlined his report. The membership numbers continue at just above the 300 level (where we have been for recent years). Our very popular @mathshistory Twitter feed has continued steady growth from 39,000 followers in the previous year to 50,000 at the time of writing.

The proportion of UK members who pay by direct debit has fallen to 72%, from 77% which is still fairly high and is the method most helpful to BSHM in terms of administrative time. Other methods of payment (cash, cheques and on-line) are spread over the year, and take much more time per transaction to administer.

b)

i) Nigel White, as **Treasurer** in 2016, outlined the accounts, which showed that the financial state of the Society was healthy. As a result of generous donations received in 2016, the value of the biennial Neumann Prize, for a book on the History of Mathematics aimed at a general audience, was increased to £1,000 per award. These donations, shown as restricted reserves, part funded the award in 2016 and will part fund the next four awards. There was a surplus of about £1,800 for the year in unrestricted funds. This was largely a result of negotiations with our publisher Taylor and Francis, resulting in the Society receiving increased royalties from the BSHM bulletin. The Society will also receive a lump sum of £6,500, resulting from the underpayment of Bulletin royalties in previous years, which will show up as a windfall in next year's accounts. Klaas Sijbrandij as new Treasurer would be taking the Society forward in capable hands.

ii) There was a question as to why many of the prizes, were restricted to students, e.g. the Schools and Undergraduate Prizes, although they were funded by the members' subscriptions. This was in order to encourage an interest in the History of Mathematics in the younger generation, and there was also the Peter Neumann prize for a published book. It was also pointed out that as a charity the Society is obliged to engage in outreach. There was a question on Gift Aid. This would still be in force even when signed for some years ago.

d) **Presidential Report.** The retiring President, Philip Beeley, addressed the floor and outlined his 2017 report. This will be detailed in the 'Reports and Accounts' package for 2017, filed with Companies House next year.

Key points were:

i) The Society had continued to flourish, with membership figures slightly improved on the previous year, and a pleasing increase in younger members as a focal point of the Society. The BSHM website and new publicity materials (brochure and bookmarks) had been a major factor, with the Schools Plus Competition, the BSHM undergraduate essay prize, and the Research in Progress meeting also an attraction.

ii) Financially, the Society continues to be in a healthy state. Although the costs for History of Logic meeting organized in memory of Ivor Grattan-Guinness were rather high, we felt this was entirely justified in view of the enormous debt the Society owes to its former president for the seminal role he played in developing the history of mathematics in this country. Fortunately the costs could be offset against a considerable amount of royalties that were found to be owed by Taylor & Francis.

iii) The President outlined the events of the year, ranging from Belfast to York to St Andrews, as well as Oxford and London, and explained the change in arrangements for the Gresham Lectures which would follow the AGM: at the AGM in 2016, it was decided that existing arrangements with Gresham College for the BSHM Lectures had become untenable. The Society found itself having to turn away members from attending Gresham because of the shortage of seating space in Barnard's Hall. Gresham could not have been more sympathetic to our concerns and immediately suggested the alternative venue of the Museum of London, whose auditorium seats 234 people. The undignified scramble for tickets had now become a thing of the past. The minor downside to this otherwise unqualified improvement is that members of the audience will need to get their own refreshments in the break. [Secretary's note: The 2017 Gresham lectures on 'Mathematical Constants and their Beautiful Relationship' were an unqualified success, with over 200 attending, many of them young people, further confirming the wisdom of the new format and venue.]

iv) The President addressed questions raised at the previous AGM. There had been a request for continued access to material on the old BSHM website, and we were finding a solution to this problem. Previous material is on the wayback machine, with a link from the current BSHM website. There had also been a request for a suitable conference for members to present their on-going research, especially since the Christmas Meeting had become themed. This something that the Society would like the membership to arrange, with support from Council, and suggestions would be welcome.

v) This year there had been a change of editorship. Tony Mann had made an enormous contribution to the Society since he took over from Jackie Stedall many years ago. He was now stepping down after five successful years. Tony's hard work and dedicated service has ensured that the Bulletin has not only continued to flourish but also to grow in stature. The President was pleased to say that we had found a worthy successor to Tony in Benjamin Wardhaugh of All Souls Oxford. Benjamin is committed to pursuing further the path of making the Bulletin a high quality peer-reviewed journal with a clearly defined niche within the small group of academic journals serving the history of mathematics. He thanked Tony profusely for all his hard work and achievements, and welcomed Benjamin to the role.

vi) The President also thanked two retiring Council members for their service: Rosie Cretney who had made an invaluable contribution at the design stage of the new website, including the new logo, and was an excellent source of ideas; and to Nigel While, who had brought on the financial administration of the Society, and had been a pillar of strength.

e) As **Meetings Secretary**, Jane Wess whetted our appetites with the promise of meetings to come: the Gresham Lectures later that day, the Christmas Meeting on 9th December, with a host of interesting papers; Research in Progress, 17th February in Oxford; *Spinning, Stalling and Falling Apart: Flight and World War I*, 24th February 2018 in Belfast; *The History of Computing beyond the computer*, 21st to 22nd March in Oxford;

History of Cryptography and Codes, 19th May at Birkbeck, London; *Mathematics and Patronage*, 23rd June 2018 at Rewley House, Oxford; and more to come.

f) There was some discussion about meetings, locations, and an enquiry about HIMED, which had died with John Fauvel who had put a lot of effort into it.

g) Peter Neumann pointed out some small omissions in the Annual Report, and although it was now too late to change it Nigel White observed that we could amend our own record.

The motion that **the Officers' Reports and accounts be accepted as the true record of BSHM 2016 business** was proposed by Martin Perkins and seconded by Klaas Sijbrandij. The motion was passed **nem. con.**

5. Election of Council for 2018

The names of the nominated Council for 2017 together with their biographies had been circulated to all members. No BSHM member had subsequently asked for anyone else to be nominated. They were as follows:

President	.	.	.	.	Mark McCartney
Immediate Past President	.	.	.	.	Philip Beeley
Treasurer	.	.	.	.	Klaas Sijbrandij
Secretary	.	.	.	.	Fenny Smith
Membership Secretary	.	.	.	.	Ken Lord
Meetings Coordinator	.	.	.	.	Jane Wess
Education Officer	.	.	.	.	Snezana Lawrence
Publicity and Webmaster	.	.	.	.	Isobel Falkner
Elected (ordinary) members of Council	.	.	.	.	Dorothy Leddy
					Christopher Hollings
Co-opted JMC Representative	.	.	.	.	June Barrow-Green
Bulletin Editor	.	.	.	.	Benjamin Wardhaugh

Note 1) Benjamin Wardhaugh was appointed as Bulletin Editor but not a permanent member of Council.

The motion that the **nominated Council be adopted** was proposed by Peter Neumann and seconded by AEL Davis. The motion was passed **nem. con.**

6. Appointment of Andrew Thurnburn & Co., 38 Tamworth Road, Croydon, as the Society's accountants and independent examiner

The previous Treasurer, Nigel White, confirmed that the Society's accountants and independent examiner, Andrew Thurnburn & Co, continued to prove most satisfactory and Council strongly supported their re-appointment. The motion that **Andrew Thurnburn &**

Co be re-appointed as the Society's accountants and independent examiner was proposed by June Barrow-Green and seconded by Mark McCartney. The motion was passed with the one conventional abstention of the retiring Treasurer.

7. Vote of thanks

The Secretary proposed a formal vote of thanks to our retiring President Philip Beeley, and Treasurer Nigel White, for their hard work and many achievements while in office. This was resoundingly given.

8. Any other business

Items occurring were:

a) Peter Neumann requested that names of candidates for the Undergraduate Essay Prize should be sent to himself, Chris Hollings, and Rosie Cretney.

7. The meeting closed at 2.30 pm.

Fenny Smith, Hon. Secretary
03/09/2018