

Scottish Society for Northern Studies

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 22nd November, 2008 at College Room South, David Hume Tower, George Square, Edinburgh

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The President, Ian Fisher, welcomed members to the AGM. He reminded the Society of Dr. John Bannerman who had passed away during the past year and Dr. M. Mackay agreed to pass on condolences to Mrs. Bannerman. The Society also passed on good wishes to Dr. Doreen Waugh who was ill.

Apologies for absence had been received from: Kristjan Ahronson, John Appolinari, John Faid, Christine McKay, Bill Nicolaisen, Mark Solly, John Swan, Ian Keillor, Ann Garfield and Martin and Wendy Axford.

The Magnus Magnusson prize was awarded to Linda Andersson Burnett of Edinburgh University for her essay on 'Abode of Satan: The Appeal of the Magical and Superstitious North in Eighteenth-Century Britain.'

2 Minutes of the 2007 AGM

Dr. Barbara Crawford asked that a reference to meetings at St. Andrews be corrected. The minutes were considered and approved as an accurate record, moved and seconded by Mr. John Baldwin and Dr. Margaret Mackay.

3 Matters Arising not already on the Agenda

There was discussion about the closure of Norwegian consulate in Edinburgh and the loss of the ferry link which were disappointing to members.

4 President's Report

The President presented his report. There had not been a residential conference in the spring but a one day conference had been held at Pictavia near Brechin commemorating the work of the late Davie Adams. Most of the organising had been done by Dr. Crawford and Mrs. Gillian Zealand who also spoke about Davie's research on fisheries. An interesting film had been shown and Margaret Middleton, whose family had been involved in fishing, had given a commentary. Mr. Fisher had led a visit to Brechin Cathedral and round tower and Sarah Thomas had spoken about Davie's work on the church at Snizort.

Mr. Fisher thanked Dr. Crawford for her article in *History Scotland* celebrating forty years of the Society, which had attracted several new members. The article had been compiled from the papers which David Finlayson had held and were now with the Strathmartine Trust. Dr. Crawford suggested that the Society should consider compiling full records.

Volume 40 of *Northern Studies* had been published and Mr. Fisher thanked the editors and also the members of the committee.

5 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Alan Calder, presented his report. In 2007 the accounts had been presented in draft as it had not been possible to complete them because of difficulties obtaining some information. They had since been completed and signed off and there was nothing controversial in them. They were available for members on request.

This year's accounts were presented. They had yet to go to OSCR. Mr. Baldwin pointed out a misprint under 'GA Bond'. Mr. Calder said that we had to highlight to OSCR what the Society does and this year the balance had actually reduced. Mr. Alex Woolf suggested that perhaps the Society could be more generous with the essay prize. Another suggestion was that the Society should offer bursaries for residential conferences. Dr. Mackay referred to the need to ensure funds were available to cover publications.

Mr. Woolf proposed that the accounts be approved, seconded by Dr. Crawford and this was accepted.

6 Publications

Mr. Calder reported that since last year he had been in correspondence with Booksource about charging and they now accepted that they had overcharged by nearly £800. However the charges were still high: £15 for every 4000 books plus £1.50 for every title, a total of about £100 a month. This cost would need to reduce. Without volume 40 there were 1307 copies of *Northern Studies*, the only volumes missing were 1, 20 and 7/8. These did not sell but the conference volumes sold slowly.

Discussion followed about how to reduce volumes in storage. It was proposed that the committee be empowered to offer to sell sets of *Northern Studies* to new members, send sets free-of-charge to new institutions such as UHI and arrange scanning. This was proposed by Dr. Mackay and seconded by Mr. Baldwin and agreed. The Committee would also investigate ways of reducing the conference volumes, perhaps using a remainder bookseller and offering volumes at cheaper rates if they were used for courses and also identify the cost of scanning conference volumes.

7 Editorial Report

Dr. James Fraser, joint editor with Alex Woolf, reported that volume 40 of *Northern Studies* had been published early in the year. For the next volume Professor Laerum's Herman Pálsson lecture had been submitted last year and Mr. Graves lecture would also be available. There were also two other submissions with the referee and another submitted in principle. So with perhaps one more article, he was hopeful that it would be possible to publish volume 41 in 2009. Perhaps the ranking of journals by the European Science Foundation, which had not included *Northern Studies* and did not rate Scottish journals highly, had discouraged contributors. This ranking was being challenged by various bodies. No papers had been received from the 2007 Aberdeen conference. The Magnus Magnusson prize had attracted four entries plus a late one which had been held over until 2009. After some discussion about the amount of the prize, it was agreed to leave it at £100 and Mr. Baldwin suggested that the Committee should review it annually.

Dr. Steve Murdoch had expressed his willingness to join the editorial team, particularly in respect of post-mediaeval contributions. Dr. Crawford proposed this offer be accepted, Mr. Baldwin seconded and this was agreed.

Dr. Crawford asked whether there was any chance that the first Herman Pálsson lecture by Paul Bibire would be published. Dr. Fraser replied that he had asked for it without success. Dr. Crawford undertook to contact Dr. Bibire again.

8 Amendment to Constitution

The Committee proposed an amendment to the constitution in relation to audit provisions. This had been flagged up at the 2007 AGM and due notice given to members. By changing the requirement the Society could have the accounts scrutinised by an independent person rather than a full audit by an accountant. This had been suggested by OSCR and many societies were making similar changes. Mr. Baldwin proposed the changes be agreed, seconded by Mr. Woolf and this was agreed. It was also agreed that the Society would continue to ask Gary Hedridge to scrutinise the accounts.

9 Election of Committee

The President said that the present committee were all willing to be re-elected. They were: Alan Calder, Treasurer, Linda Riddell, Secretary, James Fraser and Alex Woolf, editors of *Northern Studies* and Molly Rorke. In addition he proposed Sarah Thomas and Steve Murdoch who, as had already been mentioned, would be joining the editorial team. Dr. Mackay proposed that Dr. Alan Macniven also be elected. Mr. Baldwin proposed that these nominations be accepted, seconded by Dr. Mackay and this was accepted.

10 Conferences

Dr. Fisher said that it had not been possible to organise a conference in Bute for spring 2009 because of hotel costs. He had been following up Dr. Mackay's suggestion of a conference at Glasgow University over one or two days either around 28th March or 18th April. This would focus on new research and include younger as well as more established scholars. Ms. Janice Robertson said that she hoped the conference would be longer as for people coming from a distance who had to stay overnight in any case. A one day conference would be disappointing. Dr. Mackay said that the residential conferences had value in disseminating knowledge in and about different localities. It would be good to have a variety of conferences. She suggested that it might be possible to include a visit or a guided tour next year.

It was suggested that, if cost was the issue, the Society could subsidise the conference and Mr. Woolf pointed out that this had been done for students in the past. He suggested that the Society could have a three day conference, perhaps biannually, and call for papers. This would allow debate which was useful and enjoyable.

Mr. Baldwin said that, if there was interest in going back to the North Mainland he would suggest Loch Inver or Inchnadamph which had both a hostel and hotel with a variety of pricing options. Mr. Fisher was asked if he had looked at school hostels and replied that student accommodation was not usually available at Easter. Miss Sarah Thomas said that longer conferences with short papers were more likely to encourage younger participants. Perhaps in 2009 the conference could be on both Saturday and Sunday. Mr. Fisher said the Committee would take these comments on board.

11 AOCB

Dr. Mackay invited members to the launch of two books in the series *Scottish Life and Society: A compendium of Scottish ethnology; Boats, Fishing and the Sea* and *The Working Lives of the Scots*, on 8th December at 5 p.m. in the Raeburn Room of the Old Quad.

Mr. Baldwin congratulated the Committee on their hard work and the successful day conference.

Scottish Society for Northern Studies
Annual General Meeting, 28th November, 2009

Agenda

- 1 Welcome and apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the 2008 AGM
- 3 Matters arising not already on the agenda
- 4 President's Report
- 5 Treasurer's Report
- 6 Editors' Report and Publications
- 7 Election of Committee
- 8 Conferences
- 9 AOCB