

**NORTHUMBRIAN CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the AGM planned for Friday, September 25, 2020
at the Royal Grammar School was conducted by email rather than in person

MINUTES

Documentation circulated to members in advance (and made available on the website): Agenda; Minutes of the previous AGM (September 27, 2019); President's Report; Hon. Secretary's Report; Membership Secretary's Report; Treasurer's Report; Financial Statement for Year ending July 31, 2020; Auditor's Report.

1. Minutes of previous AGM, September 27, 2019.

Minutes of the previous meeting had been sent out to members. No comments or amendments were received and the minutes can be approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising that were not dealt with under subsequent Agenda items.

3. President's Report.

The President's report had been circulated to members in advance. A summary of the highlights is as follows: Our programme for the year began when we met as an Association at the Royal Grammar School on September 27, 2019, for our AGM and Annual Lecture. 18 members plus 7 guests attended the AGM, while 17 members plus 15 guests attended the buffet and lecture. Professor Tony Badger, former lecturer in the History Department of Newcastle University (1971 to 1991), Paul Mellon Professor of American History at Cambridge and Master of Clare College until 2014, and currently Professor of American History at Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne, gave an excellent lecture on 'The Kennedys and The Gores' and this was followed by lively questions, and a vote of thanks from Professor Ian Fells.

17 of our members and their guests attended our Autumn Concert at the Sage on Sunday, November 24, for an evening of folk music dedicated to the North East mining tradition and performed by the 'Pitmen Poets'. Thanks are extended to Heather Cordell for buying the tickets, and for making arrangements for our convivial pre-concert Brasserie dinner, which was enjoyed by 13 members and guests.

Our Festive Events, always popular, attracted more members than ever. 45 members and guests registered for our Christmas lunch on December 6 at the County Hotel, where we were accommodated in the attractive and spacious Mozart Suite for our customary 3-course lunch. The staff were attentive, and a convivial occasion was enlivened further when Heather Cordell gave out Christmas Carol songsheets and led us in communal carol singing, with the aid of her recorder. 27 members and guests also assembled in the Digital Lounge of the Tyneside Cinema on Saturday, December 14, for our annual festive afternoon tea and the showing of the classic post-war film, *The Holly and the Ivy* (1952). We also followed up our Freshers' Welcome Party at Mincoffs the previous September with a Freshers' Reunion at Revolution, Collingwood Street, on Wednesday, December 11, when members of the Committee along with Mincoffs' host, Tim Gray, were joined by two of the freshers for cocktails and mocktails.

Our Winter Outing on February 8, 2020, saw 28 of us gathered at the Discovery Museum, where, after refreshments, we were given guided tours of the building, including the archives, the majestic wood-panelled and tiled Great Hall and the costume store, followed by lunch in the Carpathia and adjacent Northumberland Rooms. All were enthusiastic about the visit.

Wednesday, March 11, 2020, was a very special evening for us, for it was then that we held our Annual Dinner at the Northern Counties Club to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Association. 30 members and guests attended. For the occasion, we had, among other things, a new banner, an anniversary cake, a display of early Minute books and a quiz relating to the Association's past events and excursions. After an excellent dinner, we were entertained by two of our Past Presidents, James Wright giving a history of the Association and Ian Fells his reminiscences of Cambridge in the 1950s. Special guest Ian Roberts conveyed the congratulations of the Cambridge Society of Edinburgh and of Cambridge University, and offered the toast to Cambridge University, and Margaret Wilkinson the toast to the Northumbrian Cambridge Association. This was an evening to remember, although it also marked the start of a six-month hiatus in our activities with the advent of the coronavirus pandemic and its resultant restrictions.

Our Spring Outing to Kirkley Hall Zoological Gardens, Ponteland on Saturday, April 18, 2020, our Spring Walk, at Raby Castle, County Durham, on Saturday, May 16, 2020, our Summer Outing, a boat trip to the Farne Islands on Sunday, June 21, 2020, our Freshers' Welcome Party at Mincoffs, Newcastle, on Monday, September 14, 2020, and our Annual Lecture, at the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle on Friday, September 25, 2020, have all had to be cancelled, and notice has just been received that our Autumn Concert (Nordic Fiddlers Bloc) at the Sage, Gateshead, arranged for Sunday, November 1, 2020 has been postponed, and our Christmas Lunch at the County Hotel, Newcastle on Wednesday, December 2, 2020, cancelled.

Nevertheless, despite the pandemic, we have had a number of memorable events in this past year, and you can see reports and photographs of these on our website at <<http://www.northumbrian-cambridge.co.uk>>, which Gilbert Cockton has been managing. We have also rebooked these cancelled events for next year, when we hope that things will have improved. Please continue to consult the website for the Association's ongoing programme.

No comments or queries have been received by email from the membership in relation to this report, and so we can accept that it has met with approval.

4. Hon. Secretary's Report.

The Hon. Secretary's Report had been circulated in advance. The following are the highlights.

Covid-19 restrictions permitting, forthcoming events, until the end of the year (2020) are as follows:

- a) **Christmas Lunch, County Hotel, Newcastle (Wednesday, December 2, 2020, 12.00-15.00; organisers, Heather Cordell & Gilbert Cockton).**

Christmas lunch at the County Hotel has become a fixture in our calendar – a testament to the food, the ambience and the efficient and welcoming service. Join us for a delicious meal, festive cheer and excellent company in the lovely County Suite. The cost of the meal will be £21.00 per person for three courses, with a glass of wine (or equivalent) included, as well as tea/coffee. The flyer/booking form was sent out with the summer mailing, and the event is advertised on our CUDAR group page. Members should return the booking forms to the NCA Treasurer, Mrs Susan Austin as soon as possible, and by Wednesday, November 25, 2020, at the latest.

Special Note: since the Hon. Secretary's report was circulated, we have received word that this event has had to be cancelled due to the latest government Covid restrictions. Our booking has been transferred, however, to Friday, December 3, next year.

b) Pre-Christmas Freshers' Reunion, Revolution (Wednesday, December 9, 2020; 17.00-19.00, organisers: Heather Cordell & Gilbert Cockton).

An invitation will be sent out to freshers as usual, if Covid-19 restrictions permit, following up the contacts made in previous years at the annual Welcome Parties.

c) Festive Afternoon Tea & Film, Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle (Saturday, December 12, 2020, 15.00-18.00; organiser, Peter Cleland).

Another tradition which has now established itself is the Festive Afternoon Tea and Film at the Tyneside. With the Digital Lounge all to ourselves, a scrumptious afternoon tea and a film of our choice. What better way to spend a winter afternoon in the run-up to Christmas! This year's film will be *Meet Me in St Louis* (1944), the celebrated star vehicle for Judy Garland. Because of our regularity, we have been given a special discounted rate of £30.00 per person. The flyer/booking form was sent out with the summer mailing, and the event advertised on our CUDAR group page. The Tyneside is currently closed, but it plans to re-open soon and be Covid-secure by December. Members should return the booking forms to the NCA Treasurer, Mrs Susan Austin as soon as possible, and by Wednesday, December 4, 2020, at the latest.

Events planned for 2021 include those that were cancelled last year, and are as follows (apart from our Winter Outing, the flyer/booking form for all these events will go out in the January mailing):

a) Winter Outing, Life Science Centre (Friday, February 5, 2021, 10.30-14.30; organiser, Heather Cordell).

Next year's winter outing, on Friday, February 5, will be to the Life Science Centre, Newcastle. The cost is £19.50 per person to include access to the museum (on one's own), a planetarium show (the time to be confirmed on the day) and a "meal deal" lunch (baked potato/chilli etc., the choice to be made from a couple of options on the day) plus a drink. We plan to meet around 9.45-10.00 for a coffee before the formal proceedings start. The flyer/booking form for this will be sent out before Christmas, with a booking deadline of January 12, 2021.

b) Annual Dinner, Northern Counties Club, Newcastle (Wednesday, March 17, 2021; organisers, Heather Cordell & Gilbert Cockton).

Next year's annual dinner of the Northumbrian Cambridge Association has been booked for Wednesday, March 17, 2021. It will be held again in the splendid surroundings of the Northern Counties Club in the centre of Newcastle, and will be a black-tie affair as usual.

c) Spring Outing, Kirkley Hall Zoological Gardens, Ponteland (Saturday, April 17, 2021; organiser(s), tbc).

Cancelled last year, our 2021 Spring Outing, on Saturday, April 17, will again be to the Zoological Gardens, part of the Kirkley Hall Campus of Northumberland College, just outside Ponteland, and there members will have an opportunity to learn about the zoo's conservation policy, to see the many exotic animals, and to participate in small group animal (petting) encounters! The programme, including lunch, has yet to be finalised.

d) Spring Walk, Raby Castle, County Durham (Saturday, May 15, 2021; organisers/leaders, Heather Cordell, Gilbert Cockton).

Our cancelled visit to Raby Castle, and its Park and Gardens, in 2020, has been rebooked for Saturday, May 15, 2021. Arrangements similar to those announced in last year's flyer (pre-tour refreshments, guided tour of the Castle, soup and sandwich lunch in the canopied area outside the Stables café, and short and long walks around the perimeter of the Castle) will be finalised in light of the Castle's prevailing Covid-security measures, and the cost will be around £24.00 per person.

e) Summer Outing, The Farne Islands (Sunday, June 20, 2021; organiser(s), tbc).

We have booked this outing again for next year, having had to cancel it this year. It will take place on Sunday, June 20, 2021. We plan to meet for lunch at 11.45 at the Olde Ship Inn in Seahouses (a menu will be circulated ahead of time so that we can notify the hotel of your choices). Following lunch, we will join a Serenity Cruises catamaran at 13.45 for a trip round the Farne Islands, with an hour's stop-off on Inner Farne to see the bird life nesting on the cliffs, the old lighthouse and St Cuthbert's Chapel. Members of the National Trust have free entry to the island; non-members will have to pay. We anticipate that the cost of the boat trip will be around £20 (2019 price).

The Secretary also reported on the following:

Newsletter

The next of our twice-yearly newsletters is due out in January 2021. Contributions are especially welcome from members and should be directed to Gilbert Cockton (gilbertcockton@gmail.com) by mid-December. Text contributions should preferably be between 200 and 500 words. Photographs are welcome, preferably in electronic form (but not necessarily – great care will be taken with prints).

Electronic Mailing

Many of our members now receive event flyers, newsletters and other communications electronically, which saves a great deal of time and money on the part of the Association. If you have an email address and are willing to receive your NCA mail this way, please make sure you email the Hon. Secretary.

Website

As mentioned already, the website [www.northumbrian-cambridge.co.uk] is being regularly improved by our Website Manager, Gilbert Cockton. We encourage you to make it a regular source for information, along with our group page on the Cambridge Alumni site [https://www.alumni.cam.ac.uk/group/northumbrian-cambridge-association].

No comments or questions in relation to the Hon. Secretary's report have been received by email from the membership, and so we can accept that it has met with approval. On behalf of the Association, we record our thanks to Andrena Telford for her work as Hon. Secretary over the years (2010-2020).

5. Membership Secretary's Report.

The Membership Secretary's report was given by the President, who in lieu of the recent resignation through illness of Judy Vigurs, our Membership Secretary, had assumed the role of the Membership Secretary, and compiled the report. He expressed his gratitude for Judy's work on our behalf over the last five years, and wished her a speedy recovery. Susan Austin, our Hon. Treasurer, would be assuming this responsibility in future.

He had updated the membership list, and would be passing it on to the new Committee, but if any members had changes of address, telephone number or email, they were asked to send these to Susan (susanmaustin@hotmail.com).

Currently, we have 178 members, including 6 Honorary members (Ian Fells, Roger Leech, Angus McDonald, Teresa Saunders, Bill Schardt, James Wright) and 5 Associate members (Betty Cooper, Fiona Douglas, Colin Ferguson, Fay Saunders, Jenny Willis). Associate members are partners of deceased NCA members who have regularly attended our events, and to whom it is our policy to offer NCA membership and continued access to events. We have 143 members on our email list, and 35 on our postal list.

Our oldest member, Dr Betty Schofield, celebrated her 100th birthday recently. We were saddened to hear recently of the death of Nick Jackson (Caius, 1958-61) on August 29, 2019. Nick was a long-time member of the Association until his resignation in 2017, and a valuable member of the Committee up until 2016. An *In Memoriam* was published in the July newsletter. There were no resignations of members to report. We welcomed three new members to the Association in the course of the year, Malcolm Duff (Peterhouse, 1962-65), David Bateman (Selwyn, MB BChir, 1969-72) and Associate member, Fiona Douglas (whose late husband was at Jesus College), and we have had an enquiry from a Cambridge graduate who has recently moved to the North East and plans to join us presently.

In consequence of our outreach to Freshers via our annual Welcome Party and reunions, and our offer of free Associate membership, we have no less than 101 students on our list, 11 from 2016, 28 from 2017, 17 from 2018 and 45 from 2019. These students are sent our biannual newsletter as well as news of our activities and it is hoped that if/when they return to the North East, they will join the Association as full members.

The Alumni Groups biennial leadership conference due to be held in Cambridge, at Jesus, on July 18th, had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. An online Cambridge University Alumni Groups' Digital Leadership Forum (AGDLF) was held instead on July 30 and August 1, which attracted 100 representatives from 60 Alumni Groups across 27 countries. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stephen J. Toope spoke, and there were sessions focussed on digital events, social media, the results of the 2019 Alumni Survey, and what Freshers' Events would look like this year. Heather (Cordell) attended a number of the online events on our behalf, and circulated to the Committee afterwards the most pertinent slides from the session on future Freshers' events.

No comments or questions in relation to the Membership Secretary's report have been received by email from the membership, and so we can accept that it has met with approval.

6. Hon. Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer's report had already been circulated, along with the Audited Financial Statement for August 1, 2019-July 31, 2020, and the Auditor's Report. Subscription income was slightly reduced this year but was broadly in line with the previous year. Membership fees are the only source of regular income and enable the Association to organise events, pay advance deposits, fund Freshers' events free of charge to attendees and cover administrative expenses. Around 80% of subscriptions are now paid by electronic means; this has been especially useful this year, given the difficulties with access to banks since the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown began in March. The costing of events is intended, as far as is possible, to result in a break-even position; over the year, small deficits are balanced out by slight surpluses on events. Where events noted in the financial statements appear to show a significant loss or surplus, this is due to some related transactions occurring in a different accounting period. Events were well supported through to the Winter Outing to the Discovery Museum in February. The pandemic has, of course, had a major impact on the programme of activities and to date, the Spring Walk to Raby Castle, Spring Outing to Kirkley Hall, Summer Outing to the Farne Islands and the Freshers' welcome have been cancelled, and the Autumn Concert at the Sage postponed. All bookings made for the cancelled events have been refunded. We are still holding the tickets purchased for the Sage concert in November and will be refunded if this does not ultimately go ahead, similarly for the deposit with the Tyneside Cinema for the Festive Tea & Film in December. We have requested Raby Castle to carry forward the deposit to next year in the expectation that that event can be rescheduled at some point. Administrative expenses are in line with previous years and the outturn for the year is a surplus of £235.75. The Association is fortunate, in view of the pandemic, in not having large overhead costs to meet and is in a sound financial position.

7. Auditor's Report.

The Hon. Auditor, Vinny Holden, had audited our accounts, and his statement to that effect had been circulated in advance. The auditor confirmed that the balance sheet and income and expenditure account presented by the Treasurer were accurate and reflected the current position of the bank account.

No comments, questions or suggestions in relation to the Association's finances were received by email from members, and the Treasurer's report, the financial statement for 2019-20 and the Hon. Auditor's report can all, therefore, be accepted. On behalf of the Association, we record our thanks to Susan Austin for her excellent work as Treasurer, and also to our Hon. Auditor.

8. Election of Officers and Executive Committee.

The President and Hon. Secretary would be stepping down from the Committee after this (email-conducted) AGM, and the President wished to thank all those who have supported them in these last years, especially his colleagues on the Committee. The Association's constitution requires annual (re)appointment of the members of the Committee at the Annual General Meeting, including the officers of the Association (President, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Auditor) and notice of this was given to all members in the summer mailing (and repeated in an email sent on September 16),

along with the Committee's nominees for President, Hon. Secretary and non-ex officio members. Fuller details of these nominees were given in the July newsletter, which was also made available on our website.

The current Committee was as follows: William R. Telford (President), Andrena E. Telford (Hon. Secretary), Susan Austin (Hon. Treasurer), Vinny Holden (Hon. Auditor), Peter Cleland, Gilbert Cockton, Heather Cordell and Colin Dunnighan. Judy Vigurs, our Membership Secretary, had recently resigned due to illness, and the President had assumed this role for the time being.

Two of our current Committee members, Heather Cordell and Gilbert Cockton, have agreed to take over as President and Hon. Secretary respectively, and they have the full support of the current Committee. The other members of the current Committee were also willing to continue. Susan Austin had in addition agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary (as well as that of Treasurer), and Gilbert Cockton to continue as Website Manager. Two further members of the Association, Robert Tindall and Andrew Young, have agreed to have their names put forward at the AGM, and also have the backing of our Committee.

The ongoing disposition of the Committee would, therefore, be as follows: Heather Cordell (President), Gilbert Cockton (Hon. Secretary/Website Manager), Susan Austin (Hon. Treasurer/Membership Secretary), Vinny Holden (Hon. Auditor), Peter Cleland, Colin Dunnighan, Arnold Fairless, Robert Tindall, Andrew Young (the constitution states that there should be not more than seven nor less than five non-ex officio members).

The President had intimated to members that, unless they informed him to the contrary, he would assume that they were happy to approve the new Committee, and give them their support. Likewise, unless he received members' comments, queries or objections by Friday, September 25, he would assume that they were happy to accept the other reports submitted as part of our AGM documentation (viz. President's Report, Hon. Secretary's Report, Membership Secretary's Report, Treasurer's Report, Financial Statement for Year ending July 31, 2020, Auditor's Report) along with the Minutes of our last AGM (September 27, 2019). Apart from the good wishes and appreciation extended to the retiring President and Hon. Secretary, no such comments, queries or objections were received by email, and so it was concluded that all the reports were approved, and the nominations accepted, *nem. con.* The new Committee, therefore, can be deemed to have been elected.

9. Any Other Business.

No other business had been brought to the President's attention, and so our email-conducted AGM could be declared over.

Dr William Telford, President
Dr Andrena Telford, Hon. Secretary