The Martineau Society

(Registered Charity No. 1064092)

**Minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting,
28 July 2016, Eaton Hotel, Birmingham**

The meeting commenced at 11.30 and was chaired by John Vint,
with about 18 members in attendance.

1. **Apologies for absence:**

Howard Hayes, Margaret Miles, Iain Crawford, Jane Bancroft, Margaret Edwards, Maiko Yamamoto.

1. **Approval of Minutes of 20th Annual General Meeting, 24th July 2015, George Hotel, Norwich.** The Minutes were approved by the meeting, following correction of minor errors. The corrected minutes were duly signed by the Chair.
2. **Matters arising from the Minutes not otherwise on the agenda:**

It was AGREED that flowers be sent to retiring committee member Sophia Hankinson and that her place as a trustee would be taken by Stuart Hobday.

1. **Chair's remarks – John Vint:**

John used this opportunity to identify notable features of the 2016 conference. Hethanked Stuart Hobday and Sharon Connor for their excellent choice of the conference venue and for the smooth organisation of the programme. He welcomed new members to the conference, including representatives of the Birmingham branch of the family - James and Jeremy Martineau. And he concluded by congratulating Gaby Weiner and Valery Sanders (editors) on the forthcoming volume of Essays: *Harriet Martineau and the Birth of the Disciplines* (Routledge, 2016). Eight of the fourteen chapters have been written by Society members.

1. **Secretary’s Annual report – Sharon Connor:**

Sharon reported that:

1. almost all committee business is now conducted by email;
2. membership has fallen slightly, but conference attendance has increased.
3. The society’s website is used successfully as a notice board but is in perpetual need of fresh information and ‘news’ supplied by members.
4. Independent lectures have also featured over the past year: Deborah Logan lectured on *Strong Minded Abolition Women: Harriet Martineau, Maria Weston Chapman and America’s Martyr Age* at Harlaxton College, a study-abroad centre for American Universities near Grantham. Linton Kwesi Johnson gave the 4th Harriet Martineau lecture in Norwich and Stuart Hobday talked on ‘The Martineaus of Norwich’ at the Forum in Norwich.
5. Issues 37 and 38 of the Martineau Society *Newsletter* have been published since the last conference.
6. The Martineau Society is a member of the Alliance of Literary Societies and the Friends of Key Hill Cemetery. Contact is also maintained with the Harriet Martineau Sociological Society and the Carlyle, Gaskell and Brontë literary societies. Further electronic links include English Heritage, the Unitarian Historical Society, Friends of Highgate Cemetery, The Huguenot Society, The Gaskell Society, The Bronte Society, The Carlyle Society, The Wordsworth Trust and B.AV.S.
7. **Treasurer's report – Dee Fowles:**

The statement of accounts from January to December 2015 to the end of December was included in conference folders (with equivalent figures for 2014). In addition, Dee reported:

1. delays in receipt of invoices may account for differences between annual statements.
2. the current state of membership as 21 life members, 41 annual members and 4 institutional members.
3. Max Wild’s work in validating the 2015 accounts, for which the meeting added its unanimous thanks.
4. **Conference fees:**

Arising from the treasurer’s report, Gaby Weiner asked why no conference fee had been charged for the last two conferences. As a result, there has been no conference ‘float’ to pay for extras such as audio-visual equipment. Members responded by saying that the auction provides such funds and that members might be charged when they arrive at the conference. It was AGREED to trial this last proposal for the 2017 conference.

1. **Newsletter Editor's report – Bruce Chilton:**

Bruce reported that while two issues of the Newsletter had appeared since the 2015 conference, there had been some slippage in the publication dates. He also urged contributors to send manuscripts before the end of August – to ensure that the next newsletter would appear before the end of 2016. Valerie Sanders also reported that Hull University Printing Office had not (yet) charged the Society for the postage of Newsletter to members.

1. **Election of officers and committee:**

 By popular acclaim, the 2015 committee was re-elected as follows:

Chairperson: John Vint

Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Dee Fowles

Secretary - Sharon Connor

Administrator- Gaby Weiner

Newsletter Editor: Bruce Chilton

Minute Secretary: David Hamilton

Other Committee members: Elisabeth Arbuckle, Valerie Sanders, Beth Torgerson (North America), Ruth Watts (in her capacity as President). Stuart Hobday was also unanimously elected to the committee.

1. **Adminstrator – Gaby Weiner:**(a) *Website:* Following the upgrading of the society’s website, Gaby reported that it seem to be well used (at least by members) but lacked general newsworthy contributions from members.
2. *Gift-Aid:* Submission of the next claim is planned for 2017.
3. Annual *Report to Charities Commission:* submitted at the beginning of 2016.
4. *Trustees:* Stuart Hobday was proposed and accepted as a Charities Commission trustee, replacing Sophia Hankinson*.*
5. *Conference photographs*: Gaby agreed to contact the website designer regarding the possibility of creating a closed section of the web site where, for instance, conference photos could be viewed.

**11.** **Future venues of Martineau Society conference:**

It was AGREED that the 2016 annual meeting should take place in Hull, during July, and be organised by Valerie Sanders.

1. **Any Other Business:**

It was suggested that, in the interests of publicising the existence of the Martineau Society, the email contact details of conference paper authors be included in the conference programme (and, therefore, online).

Harriet

The Chair closed the meeting at 12.30 pm.

Signature of Chair: date:

ACTION CHECK LIST

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| **Item**  | **Responsibility** | **Task** |
| 3 | Bruce Chilton | Flowers for Sophia Hankinson |
| 9 | Gaby Weiner | Investigate making conference photographs accessible to members (e.g. via website) |
| 11 | Valerie Sanders | Arrange 2017 conference in Hull and notify Gaby (for Society’s website) and Beth Torgerson (for UPENN website) regarding dates, location and conference fee. |
| 12 | Gaby Weiner & Sharon Connor | Contact details of conference paper authors to be inserted on website. |
| 10 | Gaby Weiner | To replace Sophia Hankinson with Stuart Hobday as trustee |