

**The Martineau Society**  
**(Registered Charity No. 1064092)**

**Minutes of the 22nd Annual General Meeting: 28 July 2017, Britannia Royal Hotel,  
Hull**

The meeting took place between 11.30 and 12.30, and was chaired by John Vint,  
with about 14 members in attendance.

**1. Apologies for absence:**

Rob and Ruth Watts, Barbara Miller, Lesa Scholl, Shu-Fang Lai, Margaret Marks, Tom Gidlow, Maiko Ohtake Yamamoto, Valerie Doulton, Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, John Drysdale, and Carol and Bruce Chilton.

**2. Approval of Minutes of 21st Annual General Meeting, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Eaton Hotel, Birmingham:** The Minutes were approved by the meeting and duly signed by the Chair.

**3. Chair's remarks – John Vint:**

John opened with a brief report on Bruce and Carol Chilton (prevented from attending conference, as a result of a traffic accident). A 'get well' card was circulated for participants to sign and Lyn Holt to deliver.

He then went on to identify notable features of the past year's work viz.

- (a) Elisabeth Arbuckle's agreement that the Society will publish – in an online version - her biography of Harriet Martineau – long-awaited and destined to become a classic.
- (b) The publication of *Harriet Martineau and the Birth of Disciplines: Nineteenth Century Intellectual Powerhouse*, (Routledge, 2017), edited by Society members, Valerie Sanders and Gaby Weiner;
- (c) Shelagh Stephenson's play *Harriet Martineau: Dreams of Dancing*, which was staged in Newcastle upon Tyne. The script is available on the website and also to purchase (see website).
- (d) Valerie Sanders' contribution to a Radio 4 programme on 8th December, 2016 about Harriet Martineau (as part of the In Our Time series, introduced by Melvyn Bragg);
- (e) The seminar held on International Women's day, led by Stuart Hobday, serving as a taster for his forthcoming book *Encounters With Harriet Martineau* (available as an e-book (Kindle) and as a paperback: ISBN no: 9781911586210).
- (f) Stuart Hobday's organisation of the annual Harriet Martineau lecture, held at the Norwich Forum and this year given by two of Mexico's finest journalists, Lydia Cacho and Anabel Hernández.
- (g) The introduction of Harriet Martineau's work to schools in Norwich by actor, and Society member, Georgette Vale.

John concluded by pointing to other books currently in preparation by Society members that will undoubtedly continue to raise Harriet's profile.

#### 4. Secretary's Annual report – Sharon Connor:

Sharon reported that:

- (a) Membership is currently at 68, but is likely to reduce slightly as annual members who have not renewed are deleted from the membership list.
- (b) The Committee has remained active throughout the year and special thanks are due to Valerie Sanders for her organisation of the Hull conference.
- (c) Thanks are also due to Valerie for the distribution, from Hull, of the six-monthly newsletters (Nos. 39 & 40) edited and produced by Bruce Chilton. The AGM was also requested to report to Bruce (in his absence) that the Newsletter is becoming 'better and better'. Regarding the distribution of the Newsletter, Valerie raised questions about its links to Hull University. She was encouraged by the meeting to 'carry on as before'.
- (d) **Links with other Societies:** The Martineau Society is a member of the Alliance of Literary Societies and the Friends of Key Hill Cemetery and contact is also maintained with the Harriet Martineau Sociological Society and the Carlyle, Gaskell and Brontë literary societies. Further electronic links include English Heritage, Unitarian Historical Society, Friends of Highgate Cemetery, The Huguenot Society, The Gaskell Society, The Bronte Society, The Carlyle Society, The Wordsworth Trust and BAVS (see website).

#### 5. Treasurer's report – Dee Fowles:

Dee presented the accounts for 2016 (included in the conference folder). She commented as follows:

- (a) Since many of the figures arise from annual variations in conference expenditure, they are not always strictly comparable from year to year.
- (b) Overall, the accounts suggest that the Society's finances are in a healthy state with, moreover, a small increase in funds over the year (viz. £168.52).
- (c) That the annual conference registration fee should be retained (AGREED by the meeting); and
- (d) Finally, the Society's thanks were due to Max Wild for carrying out his independent inspection of the accounts.

#### 6. Administrator's report – Gaby Weiner:

Gaby reported:

- (a) that a closed members section had been created on the society's website and that interested members should email Sharon or Gaby [gaby.weiner@btinternet.com] for the necessary password.
- (b) In the first instance, the closed section will include a selection of photos taken at recent Martineau conferences. Later it is hoped to devote website space to a bibliography of online sources linked to Harriet (and perhaps James) Martineau.
- (c) The Charity Commission has, unexpectedly, asked for the Society's annual report, something that small societies are now not expected to provide. She is currently clarifying this anomalous situation.

- (d) The next Gift Aid claim will be made in 2018 (it is required at least every four years).
- (e) Gaby has amended the Society's list of trustees to include Stuart Hobday; and it was AGREED that no further changes are needed to the list of trustees.

#### **7. Newsletter Editor's report – Bruce Chilton:**

[Not available owing to Bruce' unplanned absence from the conference.]

#### **8. Election of officers and committee:**

By popular acclaim, the 2017 committee was elected as follows:

President: Elizabeth Sanders Arbuckle

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: Valerie Sanders, Beth Torgerson (North America), Ruth Watts and Stuart Hobday.

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

- (a) 2018: It was AGREED that the 2018 annual conference should take place in London (organised by Gaby Weiner and Stuart Hobday). Should a London venue prove too costly, attention will be switched to Manchester (with John Vint as organiser).
- (b) 2019: Since this would be the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Society's inauguration, it was AGREED that it should take place either in Ambleside or Norwich.

#### **12. Any Other Business:**

- (a) It was AGREED that the remaining copies of the Harriet and James Martineau Miscellanies (currently stored by Stuart Hobday) should be distributed *gratis* to new members, with some others discarded.
- (b) It was AGREED that John Vint would arrange for the collection of the Martineau Society files currently in the possession of Jane Bancroft.

The Chair closed the meeting at 12.30 pm.

Signature of Chair:

date:

## ACTION CHECK LIST

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Responsibility</b>                          | <b>Task</b>  |
|-------------|--|--|
| 3           | Lyn Holt                                       | Delivery of get-well card to Bruce and Carol Chilton                                 |
| 3a          | Gaby Weiner,<br>Valerie Sanders<br>et al.      | Arranging online publication of Elisabeth Arbuckle's biography of Harriet Martineau. |
| 6c          | Gaby Weiner                                    | Clarification of submission of Charity Commission report                             |
| 12          | Gaby Weiner<br>Stuart Hobday<br>(or John Vint) | Organisation of 2018 conference in London (or Manchester)                            |
| 12b         | John Vint                                      | Retrieving Martineau Society papers from Jane Bancroft                               |