

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

**Minutes of the 24th Annual General Meeting: 25 July 2019,
Chancellor's Hotel, Manchester**

1. Present:

Sue Brown, Bruce Chilton, Carol Chilton, Sharon Connor, Valerie Doulton, Dee Fowles, Keiko Funaki, David Hamilton, Stuart Hobday, Geraldine Locise, Josephine McQuail, Victorine Martineau, Michael Purches, Valerie Sanders, Beth Torgerson, John Vint, Gaby Weiner, Lyn Holt, Ann Peart, Peter Waterman, Pamela Woof.

2. Apologies:

Apologies have been received from: Deborah Logan, Jennifer Arzate, Jeremy Martineau, Margaret Marks [who was spresent for the final session], Rob and Ruth Watts, Kinsey Potter, Ellie Smolenaars, Shu-Fang Lai and Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, and John Drysdale. The secretary indicated that a get-well card should be sent to John Drysdale who is recovering from ill health.

3. In Remembrance:

The sad news of the deaths of Sophia Hankinson and Elizabeth Sanders Arbuckle was conveyed to the conference. Several members paid tribute to Sophia and Elisabeth's contributions - as founder members - to the subsequent success of the Martineau Society. Further tributes will appear in the society's Newsletter and website. David Hamilton indicated that he will search his photographic record of the Society's annual conferences for suitable portraits of Sophia and Elisabeth; and Bruce Chilton announced that a memorial meeting for Sophia Hankinson will be held at the Octagon Chapel, Norwich on September 9th, 2019, 11am.

4. Minutes of the 23rd Annual General Meeting: 26 July 2018, Dr Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, London. The Minutes were approved by the meeting and duly signed by the Chair. [They are stored with the Society's papers currently in the possession of the chair, John Vint.]

5. Chair's remarks – John Vint:

John opened with his own tribute to the scholarship and other contributions to the society made by Sophia Hankinson and Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle and, particularly to Elisabeth's biography of Harriet Martineau (see below). He also welcomed members – old and new – to the conference and, in particular, thanked the secretary (Sharon Connor) and treasurer (Dee Fowles) for their work in organising and publicising the conference and securing the successful registration of participants.

6. Secretary's Annual report – Sharon Connor:

Membership: We currently have a total of 71 members. Enquiries and membership applications are received by the Treasurer, who then sends regular updates (e.g. addresses) to the Secretary and newsletter editors.

Committee and Conference Planning: The Committee successfully operated during the year predominantly by email. Thanks are due to John Vint and Dee Fowles who organised the programme of this year's conference.

Website: Gaby continues to encourage members to keep her updated on all events and news relevant to The Martineau Society.

Links with other Societies: The Martineau Society is a member of the Alliance of Literary Societies and the Friends of Key Hill Cemetery (where Harriet is buried). 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 B.A.V.S. We now also have a good working relationship with RSVP (Research Society for Victorian Periodicals) The Huguenots of Spitalfields Society, The Blake Society and The Browning Society.

Meetings and Events: Stuart Hobday gave a talk about his book, *Encounters with Harriet Martineau*, at Dragon Hall Norwich in September 2018.

October 2018 Georgette Vale and Stuart Hobday talked on Harriet's writings at the *Huguenots of Spitalfields Festival*.

Nov 2018 Stuart Hobday was invited to discuss his book at the Richmond Literary Festival.

May 2019 the Annual *Harriet Martineau Lecture*, partly sponsored by the Martineau Society, was given in Norwich by the popular author, Sarah Perry. The podcast and transcript of Sarah's talk can be found at <https://nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/article/sarah-perrys-harriet-martineau-lecture/>.

Newsletter: The 42nd Martineau Society Newsletter was published in November 2018. Our thanks go to the Editor, Bruce Chilton and the Newsletter Administrator, Valerie Sanders who have ensured its high standard of publication. As always, the editor has a recurrent need for new material.

Public Benefit (as befits a charitable organisation): The Society continues to provide an important information source, particularly through its website, annual meeting and newsletters, for students, scholars and members of the public in general, interested in the history, culture, and social movements and campaigns of the nineteenth century.

7. Treasurer's report – Dee Fowles:

Dee presented the accounts for 2018 which included a comparison with the 2017 figures. 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) Mindful of the risk that membership figures might erroneously include deceased life members, Dee has given particular attention to the membership database in light of recent legislation about the institutional retention of personal information. Accordingly, she has arranged for the society's postal circulars to include sufficient information for them to be returned.
- (c) There has also been a small reduction in institutional subscriptions to the Newsletter.
- (d) Overall, the accounts suggest that the Society's finances are in a healthy state with, nevertheless, a small decrease in funds over the year. The fact that the society has £5857.52 in a deposit account was also noted during the general discussion of the Treasurer's report. The general feeling was that since such funds yield little by way

of financial benefits they might be invested in furthering the Society's aims (cf. sponsorship of the Annual Harriet Martineau Lecture, Conference bursaries etc.).

- (e) Funds have been used in 2019 to finance a conference bursary for Josephine McQuail (Tennessee Technology University).
- (f) Concluding her report, Dee thanked Max Wild for carrying out his independent inspection of the accounts.
- (g) In discussion, Geraldine Locise requested that members who pay an annual subscription should receive due notification of their subscription renewal date.

8. Newsletter Editor's report – Bruce Chilton:

Bruce reported:

- (a) That effort to increase the appearance of the Newsletter had been successful – a view also endorsed by members present at the AGM.
- (b) That, as always, there is a recurrent need for articles for inclusion in the Newsletter.

9. Newsletter Administrator – Valerie Sanders

Valerie circulated copies of the 43rd Newsletter (July 2019) and apologised for the minor layout mistakes in a few copies. She also recognised, with the Society's administrator, that the indexing of the latest Newsletters is overdue.

10. Administrator's report – Gaby Weiner:

Gaby reported that:

- (a) The website was being maintained as a 'living' site (i.e. with new information constantly added).
- (b) The next Gift Aid claim will be made before the next AGM (it is required at least every four years).
- (c) She will review the current list of trustees.

11. Election of officers and committee:

Prior to the AGM, two events affected the course of the elections: First, the death of Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle meant that the President's position had become vacant and, secondly, Ruth Watts no longer wishes to serve on the Society's committee. Following the nomination of Valerie Sanders as President, the following 2019-20 committee was elected by popular acclaim:

President: Valerie Sanders

Chairperson: John Vint

Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Dee Fowles

Secretary - Sharon Connor

Administrator- Gaby Weiner

Newsletter Editor: Bruce Chilton

Newsletter Administrator: Valerie Sanders

Minute Secretary: David Hamilton

Other Committee members: Beth Torgerson (North America) and Stuart Hobday.

12. Future venues of Martineau Society conference:

Following extensive discussion, it was AGREED that:

- (a) The original idea for the 2020 conference - Dublin – is no longer feasible (owing to the uncertainties surrounding Brexit and the growing weakness of the Pound against the Euro). Nevertheless, Dublin should be kept as a post-Brexit possibility.
- (b) The growing cost of organising transport for conference outings - sometimes described as ‘trails’ - places restrictions on the return to previous years’ venues.
- (c) It was reasonable to identify a conference hotel easily reached by public transport.
- (d) Scarborough was identified as a possibility, with Valerie Sanders and Gaby Weiner charged with identifying a suitable hotel and possible ‘trails’.
- (e) The 2018 idea of London for the 2021 conference becomes uncertain because Dr Williams’s Library will be closed for a 3-year refurbishment programme.

13. Any Other Business:

- (a) *Harriet Martineau Biography*: Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle’s son (Michael Arbuckle) was present for some of the 2019 conference. In discussion with Valerie Sanders and Gaby Weiner he agreed with his mother’s decision to publish her biography of Harriet Martineau on the Society’s website and, in addition, locate a copy in the British Library. Michael will send the first 5 of 55 chapters to Valerie and Gaby who will organise its introduction and website publication.
- (d) Stuart Hobday thanked the Society for sponsoring the 2019 Harriet Martineau Lecture in Norwich. He felt that it raised the profile of the society and it was agreed to contribute another £500 to the 2020 lecture.

Signature of Chair:

date:

ACTION CHECK LIST

Item	Responsibility	Task
2	John Vint	Get well card dispatched to John Drysdale
3	David Hamilton	Extraction of photos of Sophia Hankinson and Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle
7	Dee Fowles	Notification of annual membership renewal
9	Valerie Sanders & Gaby Weiner	Indexing and uploading of most recent Newsletters.
10	Gaby Weiner & Dee Fowles	Gift Aid application to HMRC, trustees review (Gaby)
12	Valerie Sanders & Gaby Weiner	Seek hotel for 2020 Conference (e.g. Scarborough).
13	Valerie Sanders & Gaby Weiner	Introduction and online publication of first 5 chapters of the Arbuckle biography of Harriet Martineau