

The Martineau Society
(Registered Charity No. 1064092)

Minutes of the 29th Annual General Meeting held at the Westgate Chapel, Lewes, 14.00-15.00 Wednesday 27th June, 2024

1. Present: Sue Brown, Iain Crawford, Dee Fowles, Keiko Funaki, Jeremy Martineau, Josephine McQuail, Valerie Sanders, John Vint, Gaby Weiner, Ellie Smolenaars, Geraldine Locise, Michael Hill, Julie Donovan

2. Apologies: Bruce Chilton, Carol Chilton, Sharon Connor, Valerie Doulton, David Hamilton, Stuart Hobday, John Martineau, Victorine Martineau, Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, Suzie Grogan, Beth Torgerson, Shu-Fang Lai

3. Minutes of the 27th AGM (held at Merchant House, Norwich on Wednesday 29th June, 2023) were ACCEPTED with a minor alteration (misspelling of Alison Stone's name) and will be submitted to Valerie Sanders (chairperson) for her signature and safe keeping among the Society's records.

4. Chair's Remarks: Valerie Sanders welcomed everyone, including both longstanding UK members and participants from overseas. She thanked Gaby Weiner and David Hamilton for organising the 2024 conference in Lewes and Sharon Connor, as the Society's Secretary, for maintaining the member network and keeping the membership up to date.

5. Secretary's annual report: Sharon Connor shared the following report of the Society's work in 2023-4.

(a) **Membership:** We currently have a total of 71 members. Enquiries and membership applications to the Society are received by the Treasurer, who then sends regular updates to the Secretary and newsletter editors. Particular thanks are due to the Treasurer (Dee Fowles), for smoothing the transfer of these updates.

(b) **Committee and Conference Planning:** The working of the Committee is largely conducted by email. Particular thanks are therefore due to this year's conference organisers, Gaby Weiner and David Hamilton who have created an exciting programme.

(c) **Internet Website:** Gaby Weiner manages the site and continues to encourage members to keep her updated on anything relevant to The Martineau Society and its members. Thanks to Gaby and Valerie for their continued editorial work on Elisabeth Arbuckle's biography of Harriet Martineau which, chapter by chapter, is being added to the Martineau Society's website.

(d) **Links with other Societies:** The Martineau Society is a member of the Alliance of Literary Societies (their newsletter is distributed to members via email) and the Friends of Key Hill Cemetery. Further electronic links exist with English Heritage, Unitarian Historical Society, Friends of Highgate Cemetery, the Huguenot Society, the Gaskell Society, the Bronte Society, the Carlyle Society, the Wordsworth Trust, the British Association for Victorian Studies, the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals, the Huguenots of Spitalfields Society, the Blake Society and the Browning Society. Sharon also raised the question: Should the Martineau Society seek stronger links with the Alliance of Literary societies (e.g. by being represented at its annual conference).

(e) **Events and Publications:**

* Shaun Gallagher (University of Memphis, University of Wollongong) gave the James Martineau Annual Memorial Lecture, University of Tasmania

* Publication of Stuart Hobday and Gaby Weiner book, *Reintroducing Harriet Martineau: Pioneering Sociologist and Activist*, Routledge, 2024

* Annual Harriet Martineau Lecture, due in May 2024 but postponed to the Autumn.
Speaker Val McDermid

(f) Martineau Society Journal (formerly Newsletter): The latest issue (No. 49) was distributed at the beginning of 2024. It has been challenging for editors to get this issue out due to illness. Thanks to Valerie Sanders and Stuart Hobday for their help with this.

(g) Public Benefit: 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.

6. Treasurer's Report: Dee Fowles tabled the Society's account for 2023-4. The report indicates that the Society's capital has been reduced by a further £1600 in addition to last year's deficit of just over £2000. This arose because, as noted last year, the fixed costs of conferences have increased substantially. As a result annual subscriptions were raised to £25 and it was also agreed that subscriptions in the form of life membership should be suspended. It was AGREED that John Vint should write to current life members inviting them to consider making an additional donation to the Martineau Society.

7. Newsletter editor and administrator's report: It was reported that the present editor Bruce Chilton had undergone a protracted period of illness, and therefore the most recent newsletter/journal had been put together by Valerie Sanders. It was AGREED to contact Bruce to see if he wanted to continue in the role. Until a reply had been received, it was also AGREED that Valerie would continue to take responsibility for journal production this year, although long-term, the process required two people to be involved. It was further noted that while copies of the newsletter/journal were sent to the British Library Copyright section, the Martineau Society has no formal archive. It was therefore AGREED that when Jeremy Martineau met with Wolfson Research Centre (and/or Cadbury Research Library) staff in the following week, he would raise the possibility of a Martineau Society archive being lodged there.

8. Society's Administrator's Report: Gaby Weiner reported that her work embraces: (1) maintaining contact with the Charity Commission; (b) keeping the list of Trustees up to date; (c) submitting the Society's Gift Aid claim; (d) maintaining the 'living' status of the Society's website (with the technical help of Brian Homer) and keeping track of website usage. The most recent Gift Aid claim was completed at the end of 2023. It was AGREED that Ellie Smolenaars would take over from Gaby as website editor asap.

9. Election of officers and committee: the following posts were confirmed

President: John Vint

Chair: Valerie Sanders

Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Dee Fowles (in consultation with Max Wild)

Secretary (incl.Minutes Secretary): Sharon Connor

Administrator: Ellie Smolenaars (to take over website duties from Gaby Weiner)

Newsletter Editor: To be decided

Other Committee members: Beth Torgerson, Josie McQuail and Stuart Hobday.

10. Annual Conferences: It was AGREED to explore the possibility of going to Tynemouth for the 2025 conference (Valerie to investigate) in late May or early June. The final decision would be taken by the committee. In addition it was AGREED to investigate a rather longer term possibility of a meeting in the US, organised by Michael Hill.

(11). Any Other Business: There was none.

Signature of Chair:

date:

ACTION CHECK LIST

Item	Responsibility	Task
5c	Gaby Weiner & Valerie Sanders	Editing the last few chapters of Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle's biography of Harriet Martineau with each edited chapter posted on the Society's website.
6	John Vint	Appeal for donations to life members
7	Valerie Sanders	To contact Bruce to see if he wants to continue role as journal/newsletter editor
9	Ellie Smolenaars and Gaby Weiner	Handover of website duties
10	Valerie Sanders	To explore possibility of conference in Tynemouth in 2025.
10	Michael Hill and Committee	To investigate possibility of a future meeting in the US

Gaby Weiner/29-06-2024