

THE OLD EDINBURGH CLUB: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

Minutes of the Old Edinburgh Club AGM held on Monday 22nd November 2010 at 2pm in the City Chambers, Edinburgh

Around 70 members were present, and the Lord Provost was in the chair. He welcomed members to the City Chambers, noting that the Club is guardian and steward of the city's history. He is proud that the City Council are patrons of the club. He paid tribute to OEC president Dr Iain Gordon Brown at the end of his three year term of office.

Apologies were tendered by Mr H Andrew, Miss J Brebner, Rev D Browning, Mr R Craik, Mr D Glass, Mr & Mrs Mackintosh, Mr & Mrs Mitchell, Miss I Roberts, Mr & Mrs Salmond, Dr A Simpson

Minutes The minutes of the 2009 AGM were accepted as correct.

Annual Report

The president, Dr Brown, thanked the Lord Provost for his attendance and the patronage of the Club. He reported that we were happily reminded of our centenary year with the appearance in March of volume 8 of the *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*. This had conference papers and remarks from the president; as well as reflections on the Club by Graeme Cruickshank. The president paid tribute to the work of the *Book's* editor, Dr Andrew Fraser, who has begun work on volume 9.

Sadly, our former president Dr John Barclay died in April in his 101st year. He had been head of Extra-mural studies at Edinburgh University, and helped to encourage a new generation of students of Edinburgh's past.

The summer outings included excellent and well-attended visits to the Thistle Chapel, Caroline Park, and to General Register House. Special thanks are due to those who conducted the tours. The winter lecture season had again been excellent, with some lively and constructive talks. Particular thanks were due to those who had stepped in when the scheduled speaker had withdrawn: first David McClay, and then Patricia Andrew, who gave her lecture at only a few hours notice.

Alan McKinney efficiently organised the visits along with his new duties as treasurer. Along with membership secretary Allen Simpson they have recovered almost £4000 in retrospective gift aid. The club's finances are in good shape. Club membership has reached 392 (of which joint membership is 136): a considerable increase over the last few years.

Thanks are also due to all other Council members as the work of the club increases its membership. Colin Warwick produces the interesting displays at the start of meetings. His publicity endeavours and our website are helpful in drawing attention to our activities. Dr Robin Tait, our Vice President, has kept a close watch on matters concerning the city archives. Here we can be a watchdog, but also a support to the City Council. The workload of the honorary secretary Alan Borthwick has been made easier with the new membership and minutes secretaries, appointments which have helped to share the workload round.

Treasurer's report

The Treasurer, Alan McKinney, referred to some minor modifications which were to be made to the draft accounts paper which had been circulated in the AGM mailshot. The finalised version would then be signed by the accounts' examiner and then submitted to the Charities regulator (OSCR). Last year it was speculated that this year might show a deficit because of the cost of producing the *BOEC*, but costs of production and distribution have been kept down and membership has increased. Allen Simpson had been able to recover a little over £4,000 in Gift Aid funds from HMRC, and we expect £800 next year. No increase in subscription is needed.

Mr McKinney pointed out that we don't raise money to keep it in the bank but, under OSCR rules, we need to use it to further our objectives. We will have a fund of £10,000 ready to cover the production of a *BOEC* volume any time we need, but there will be other funds over and above that which we should be trying to make good use of. He also noted that we could save up to £570 a year if someone is willing to act as independent examiner of the Club accounts.

The report was noted.

Editor's Report

Dr Andrew Fraser reported that *BOEC* volume 8, issued in March, has been well received. About half the promised material for volume 9 is in hand, and all being well that volume will be produced in about a year's time. We are grateful to the anonymous donor for the funds towards the index of Vols 22-35 of the first series. We have now computerised the individual indices of the volumes. A rough and ready version of this has been lent to the Edinburgh Room, and we now have to merge the data.

Election of Office Bearers and Council

The following elections were made to unanimous approval.

President	Sheriff Andrew Bell
Vice-President	Dr Allen Simpson
Honorary Secretary	Dr Alan Borthwick
Programme Secretary	Mr Alan McKinney
Honorary Treasurer	Mr Graeme Cruickshank
Editor	Dr Andrew Fraser
Publicity Officer	Mr Colin Warwick
Membership Secretary	Dr Allen Simpson
Minutes' Secretary	Mr Graham Rule

The existing ordinary Council members (Ms Asma Khan, Dr James Irvine, Mr Douglas Glass and Cllr Charles Dundas) were re-elected; and Mr Jerry Ozaniec, Dr Robin Tait, Ms Bridget Stevens and Mr Norman Butcher were elected. Thanks were expressed to Dr Tait on his demitting office as Vice-President.

Dr Iain Brown invested the incoming president with the badge of office. In his final remarks, he stated that it had been a great privilege to have served the Club and the

city. The Club is in a good state but we always need to find new people to serve on the Council. Sheriff Andrew Bell, in taking on the presidency, remarked that while Iain had rightly said that we need younger people to serve on Council he had in fact handed over office to an older man! He drew attention to Iain's great service to the Club over many years, and remarked that he had done a huge amount of work for the centenary. It would not have been the triumph it was without his leadership. As a token of the Club's thanks for his service, he asked the Lord Provost to present Iain with a specially-bound volume containing copies of Iain's contributions to *BOEC*.

Any other Competent Business

Mr C Porteous followed up his question at the 2009 AGM, about the lack of any marker on the grave of John Playfair (1748-1819) at the Old Calton burying ground, to say that since last year, with the support of Cllr Jenny Dawe and her officials, he has received financial backing from Edinburgh World Heritage to assist with the proposed marker.

Professor David Purdie remarked that 2011 will be the tercentenary of David Hume and that there will be a conference at the University to celebrate this, amongst other events. His tomb is not in a good state of repair. He wondered if the Club would be able to assist the Hume Society in its aim to restore the tomb. Sheriff Bell noted that our 2010-11 lecture programme will conclude with a talk about Hume.

The business meeting closed at 2.55pm.

After the AGM, Professor Charles McKean, professor of architectural history at Dundee, addressed the Club, with a slide-illustrated talk: Fool on the Hill; ?'

The talk was about Calton Hill. In the late 18th century, it had arguably been little more than a hill with a failed observatory, but then it became the location for the National Monument. It could be seen as providing the terminal point of Princes Street; but the Bridewell was there, with its public hangings, so in reality what was the City Council's intention for the hill? Before the coming of the railways, Calton Hill dominated Edinburgh; but the National Monument was never completed, and instead the Mound became the new focal point for Edinburgh. A century later, however, St Andrew's House was constructed: did it symbolise a move back towards Calton Hill's centrality? – albeit it was still unfinished business. In 2008, the Council had a redevelopment brief which considered what should be the use of the Old High School. Prof McKean suggested that that was too narrow a focus, and the opportunity was there to look at the wider context: we would be foolish if we did not capitalise on the hill, a great city asset.

The President thanked him for his comments and for his intriguing address. After the address, the City Council kindly provided the tea and coffee reception that concluded the meeting.