

British Association of Paper Historians

Minutes of the Thirty-Fourth Annual General Meeting held Mercure Shrewsbury Albrighton Hall Hotel, Shropshire, 22nd October 2023 at 1745hrs

1. Members / Guests present:

Steve Allen, Alan Argent, Irene Campden, Daven Chamberlain (Chairman), Geoffrey Day, Richard Donkin, Barbara Dye, Ian Dye, Megan Gent, Mike Gent, Jane Giscombe, Celine Guitiérrez-Poch, Miquel Guitiérrez-Poch, Rod Morley, Fen Robertson, Neil Robertson, Hugh Stirk, Jean Stirk, Barbara Venables (Secretary), Anne Willitts, Riq Willitts.

1.1. Apologies for absence were received from:

Pam Allen, Kieren Berry, Peter Bower, Phil Crockett (Treasurer), Rod Morley, Mike Stanyon.

2. Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting 30th Sept. 2022, Maddingley Hall, Cambridgeshire

The Minutes of the thirty-third AGM had been circulated previously. No amendments were noted. There were two matters arising, both of which are dealt with below.

Vote to accept minutes as a true representation of the meeting:

Proposer: Barbara Venables / Seconder: Neil Robertson / Vote: carried unanimously.

3. Chairman's report

3.1 The Chairman's report was presented in printed format before the meeting. (Report appended to these Minutes).

4. Treasurer's report

4.1 Last year we made a huge surplus (£3867); even larger than the year before (£1914). This was aided in particular by a very productive conference at Cambridge last year which added £1918 to funds.

4.2 Membership is slightly down; usually we tend to gain as many new people as we lose, but this last year has seen more go leave than join.

4.3 There was a small discussion about raising membership fees; it was noted that the last year has seen major increases in postage and printing costs, and that we might want to reflect this raising rates. Against this it was noted the point in 4.1 – we made a larger surplus last year than for many previous; we have a reasonable amount of cash in the bank, and currently see no reason in the short term to raise rates. (However, it was noted that part of the reason that we raise money is for projects, and we hope soon to publish another book in the Studies range, where we will pay for typesetting which will take a not inconsiderable amount of money. Also, we would like to encourage new members – see the 10.1.)

Vote to accept the report as a true representation of our financial trading over the year:

Proposer: Irene Campden / Seconder: Neil Robertson / Vote: carried unanimously.

A vote of thanks was made to Phil Crockett for all his hard work on our behalf.

5. Election of Officers & Committee

The following Officers were elected to Committee:

Chairman: Daven Chamberlain

Proposer: Barbara Venables / Seconder: Neil Robertson / Vote: carried unanimously.

Treasurer: Phil Crockett

Proposer: Daven Chamberlain / Seconder: Irene Campden / Vote: carried unanimously.

Secretary: Barbara Venables

Proposer : Neil Robertson / Seconder: Jane Giscombe / Vote: carried unanimously.

The following members were re-elected to the Committee: Peter Bower, Irene Campden, Rod Morley and Jean Stirk:

Proposer: Miquel Guitiérrez-Poch / Seconder: Stephen Allen / Vote: carried unanimously.

6. Appointment of Examiner

Neil Robertson stated that he was willing to re-stand as Examiner.

Proposer: Daven Chamberlain / Seconder: Ian Dye / Vote: carried unanimously.

Those present were unanimous in thanking Neil for having acted once again as Examiner.

7. Update to BAPH Constitution (matter arising from AGM 2022)

Last year the 2002 constitution was updated in four sections to include the possibility of using digital communication methods for AGMs. However, this left the situation for EGMs unchanged, and it was requested that similar changes be enacted for these, which are detailed below:

7.1 EGM section 8a (original). An Extraordinary General Meeting may be held at any time at the request of the Committee, or on a request, in writing, signed by not less than ten (10) members. Full details for the reason for the meeting and all resolutions to be raised must be submitted with the request.

EGM section 8a (change). An Extraordinary General Meeting may be held at any time at the request of the Committee, or on a request, in writing **or by electronic communication such as (but not limited to) email, text, or via social media platforms**, signed by not less than ten (10) members. Full details for the reason for the meeting and all resolutions to be raised must be submitted with the request.

Proposer: Neil Robertson / Seconder: Stephen Allen / Vote: carried unanimously.

7.2 EGM section 8b (original). The Secretary shall notify members of the date and place of the meeting, with an agenda listing the resolutions received, at least twenty-eight (28) days in advance of any such meeting. No other business may be transacted at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

EGM section 8b (change). The Secretary shall notify members of the date and **place for a physical meeting, or date and link for a video conference meeting**, with an agenda listing the resolutions received, at least twenty-eight (28) days in advance of any such meeting. No other business may be transacted at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

Proposer: Ian Dye / Seconder: Miquel Guitiérrez-Poch / Vote: carried unanimously.

7.3 EGM section 8c (original). The Chairman, or a member nominated by the Committee in the event of his absence, shall hold the chair for the meeting. Each member present, or nominated representative in the case of a Corporate member, shall have one vote and resolutions will be passed by simple majority. Absentee members are entitled to submit votes by post and such votes should be submitted in advance to the Secretary.

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Proposer: Irene Campden / Seconder: Stephen Allen / Vote: carried unanimously.

8. Conference BAPH 2024

8.1 Barbara Venables stated that the next conference is to be planned for Oxford (to follow on from our successful event last year at 'The Other Place'). This suggestion was greeted favourably, so it was agreed to pursue the idea.

8.2 It was noted also that, as we did last year, it may be necessary to offer a financial incentive (reduce fees etc) to encourage academics to attend. Again, this was agreed (should it be necessary).

9. Future day meetings and visits 2024

9.1 Spring Meeting, St Bride Institute, is booked for 6th March 2024.

9.2 Subsequent to this meeting, it was noted that students at the City & Guilds College in London do not always attend, and that this might be worth investigating in case the usual date of the Spring Meeting (first Wednesday in March) is problematic.

ACTION: DCC

10. Any other business

10.1 At last year's AGM Neil Robertson put forward the idea of running an essay competition in order to encourage new members, get more publishable material for *The Quarterly*, and generally get more publicity for the Association.

The chairman reported that the Committee had discussed the proposal, but as yet has not come to a decision how to proceed. However, there is general agreement that the Association is indeed 'cash rich', and as such we should be prepared to spend some of our reserves on ways to benefit membership.

Neil Robertson reiterated that part of his idea was to try and attract younger clientele. Daven noted that the (younger) papermakers at Two Rivers and The Paper Foundation will hopefully be writing for us in the next year or two, but we do indeed need to look further afield to other groups (maybe conservators, archivists etc) for membership, and maybe offering a 'prize' might be a way forward.

Megan Gent noted that if we are looking to try and attract young conservators, maybe initially to meetings ahead of getting them as members, then maybe we could offer reduced (or even zero) fees for attending events such as the Spring Meeting – especially if they were to offer a presentation. This is partly because Conservation is not the best paid work area, and offering a 'student' rate for events might help attract them.

ACTION: Committee

10.2 There being no further business the meeting closed at 1834hrs.

Daven Chamberlain

Acting AGM Minutes Secretary
28 October 2023

British Association of Paper Historians
Thirty-third Annual General Meeting, Maddingley Hall, Cambridge, 30th Sept. 2022

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A summary of what the Association has achieved over the past twelve months, since our last AGM (held at the Oakhill Hotel, Cromford, Matlock on 8th October 2021), along with a short statement on the state of the UK industry.

Events

Since the last AGM we have held a single face-to-face event being the Spring Meeting of 2nd March 2022; thanks are due to Barbara Venables and Phil Crockett for its organisation. We had six speakers (one via a Zoom recording) and a programme ranging from Japanese hand papermaking to paper mill art, and conservation to air in stock. A more detailed report was published in *The NEWS* 127– inside Q123.

Publications

Four editions of *The Quarterly* and four of *The NEWS* have been published over the last twelve months, with *The NEWS* now a permanent fixture in the central section of the journal. We have continued with the same printer since our change with Q116, and the relationship is working well; and our new distribution system using a commercial mailing house is also working well. In particular the use of clear plastic wrap has so far allowed us to circumvent the reformed EU-VAT regulations (known as IOSS) when sending membership copies of journals to members situated in the EU-27 region.

Unfortunately the same is not true regarding our latest attempt to sell a book into the EU-27 block. The package was held in customs, and despite a vigorous and detailed complaint we have failed to make headway in resolving the issue. As a result, currently we have no means of selling individual publications into the EU-27 grouping.

On the subject of our journal, Mark Cropper (Chairman of James Cropper plc) has continued to supply paper for *The Quarterly* publication; he has done so since Q95 (July 2015), and we continue to be very grateful. We thank him for such generosity, particularly in the current difficult trading conditions.

Alongside our printed publications, our presence on Facebook and the Web Forum (<http://www.ukpapermills.org.uk/>) continues, and our new website went live late last year. Thanks to Chris Bennett, Steve Hill, Puneeta Sharma and Terry Wells for maintaining and updating these platforms.

Over the last year we have produced five new monographs, four of which form a series highlighting the location of over 4300 primary source records of interest to paper historians: (14) *Testamentary Records of Paper Makers 1499-1971*; (15) *Apprenticeship Records of Paper Makers 1632-1871*; (16) *Legal Records of Paper Makers 1633-2014*; (17) *Property Records of Paper Makers 1598-2012*. The final monograph (18) *Chamberlain's Miscellany*, corrects a handful of errors in the author's previous books and monographs, and adds many hundred new entries found since. The last four of these monographs are making their first appearance at the current conference.

UK Industry Overview October 2021 – September 2022

Much of this period has seen difficult trading, mainly due to the destabilising effect of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The main commercial effects have been on world commodity prices and on business confidence. In particular, in recent years much of European heavy industry has been powered by natural gas, a large proportion of which has been fed via the Russian Nord Stream 1 pipeline, with Nord Stream 2 due to come online earlier this year. However, the intermittent supply and use of energy as a weapon of war has caused major disruption to individuals and companies across Europe. In the UK the general public has been warned of a rise in the energy (electricity and gas) price cap of some 90. By contrast, there is no price cap for industry, and rises of several hundred percent have been experienced so far. This is not something that is sustainable in the long term, and we await to see how Government ideas to protect indigenous foundation energy intensive manufacturing industries (ceramics, chemicals, food, glass, metals and minerals, oil, and paper) will work in reality.

As many of you may know, paper collected for recycling (often euphemistically called ‘waste paper’) is a major raw material for both the UK indigenous industry and that based in Europe. It is also a commodity that is traded around the world. In the UK, this sector is twice the size of our paper manufacturing industry (7.1Mt as opposed to 3.6Mt). Also, it is so important that it can be used as a barometer, highlighting the health (or otherwise) of the manufacturing sector. As I write, a report has been issued stating that across Europe volumes of recovered paper utilisation are down around 15%. This means mills are taking downtime, due to the energy issues highlighted already, and to a slowdown in the manufacturing and e-commerce sectors – the latter almost certainly being a consequence of increased inflation on household budgets and to uncertainty as regards job retention.

It is against this backdrop that I can highlight some of the changes in the UK industry, starting with the unwelcome news that Portals is to close Overton Mill, which has been the centre of their banknote manufacture since it was opened in 1922. This is despite investment of £21M on PM1 as recently as 2020. Then, only last week Arjowiggins was placed into Administration, and most workers at both Stoneywood Mill and Chartham Mill were made redundant with immediate effect. Also, we have had two particularly bad fires in the UK: at Frogmore Mill (home of the Apsley Paper Trail) in January, and Smurfit Kappa SSK in Birmingham during June. Finally, turning to converting, BoxWay Packaging Group is to close its Telford plant, although it does plan investment in its other two sites, and Saica Pack is to close its Ellesmere Port site.

Having got the bad news out of the way, the rest of this report is more upbeat! The conversion of the Shotton Mill site by Eren Paper Holdings continues, with plans still being to open some manufacturing in late 2024. Industrie Cartarie Tronchetti’s (ICT) new tissue mill in Deeside, North Wales, not far from the Shotton site, is also said to be progressing well. However, the plans mooted by Metsä Tissue in late 2021 to build a huge new tissue mill in the east (around the Nottingham / Lincoln area) have gone very quiet; only time will tell whether they will come to fruition.

Over the past year the UK mills have continued to upgrade plant and equipment: DS Smith has updated the DCS and vacuum systems at Kemsley; Essity announced plans to build a new deinking plant at Prudhoe; and WEPA took delivery of a new tissue machine at its Bridgend plant. Two Rivers Paper moved site into new manufacturing accommodation in late 2021. BillerudKorsnäs sold its Beetham Mill to the newly-formed company Pelta Medical Papers. And lastly, the Paper Foundation continues to go from strength to strength and has taken on a new apprentice – not bad for the smallest mill in the UK!

BAPH People 2021-2022

As always, I end this report by noting the extensive time and effort that my talented colleagues put in to keep the good ship BAPH afloat. In addition to thanking those of longstanding participation (Barbara, Chris, Jean, Neil (for scrutinising our accounts), Peter, Phil, Puneeta, Rod, Steve and Terry) I must now include Irene Campden, who joined the committee in early 2022. Until retirement Irene worked on the Royal Collection in Windsor, and she brings a wealth of knowledge (and enthusiasm) to the core team. Thanks Irene – great to have you on board! (And don’t forget – we can always accommodate more if anyone would like to volunteer.)

Outside of the committee, I am delighted to note that Geof Nuttall received the Paper Gold Medal at a ceremony in May. This is a very prestigious award, of which several BAPH members past and present (Peter Bower 2018, Stefan Kay 1996, and Brian Attwood 1994) have also been recipients. Talking of Brian Attwood, it is with sadness that I must also note his passing on 8th July, at the age of 94; similarly, Christine Woods, formerly of the Whitworth Gallery and editor of *The Wallpaper Review*, died earlier this year. Both had been long-term supporters of BAPH.

I sign off noting that we have a happy treasurer looking after a stable bank balance; that publications and sales are still strong; and with luck, we will organise more face-to-face events next year.

Daven Chamberlain (27 September 2022)