

British Association of Paper Historians

Minutes of the Thirty-Fifth Annual General Meeting held New College, Oxford, 23rd August 2024 at 1805hrs

1. Members / Guests present:

Peter Bower (President), Irene Campden, Daven Chamberlain (Chairman), Phil Crockett, Geoffrey Day, Richard Donkin, Megan Gent, Mike Gent, Colin Harris, Paul Jackson, Evelyn Jardine, Ewen Jardine, Céline Guitiérrez-Poch, Miquel Guitiérrez-Poch, Sandy Malcolm, Rod Morley, Alison Muir, Fen Robertson, Neil Robertson, Len Rosenband, Reeve Rosenband, Barbara Venables (Secretary), Anne Willitts, Riq Willitts.

1.1. Apologies for absence were received from:

Pam Allen, Stephen Allen, Barbara Dye, Ian Dye, Hugh Stirk, Jean Stirk.

2. Minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting 22nd Sept. 2023, Mercure Shrewsbury Albrighton Hall Hotel, Shropshire

The Minutes of the thirty-fourth AGM had been circulated previously.

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

Proposer: Peter Bower / Seconder: Neil Robertson / Vote: carried unanimously.

3. Matters arising from 34th Annual General Meeting

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

Having looked at the dates, there does not appear to be a clash, so the non-appearance of students at the event does not appear to be due to the date. Peter Bower then commented that the present head of Paper Conservation was disinclined to inform students about the meeting, which would certainly explain why we tend to get very few at the event.

Note also 9.2 below, where for 2025 we have changed to the first Tuesday in March, because our usual room was booked for the Wednesday.

10.1 At the 2022 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.

This highly meritorious suggestion has been discussed on and off for almost two years. Finally, at our last committee meeting prior to this AGM, we spent considerable time looking at the pros and cons. We concluded that although it has possibilities, there is no one on the committee with sufficient time to progress it.

A call was made at the AGM to see whether anyone would like to join the committee and take on the task of organising such a competition; there were no takers. However, Len Rosenband commented that there is plenty of interesting research work being undertaken on the European continent, particularly in France and Italy, and if such a competition were to be opened to them he was sure that some would write. He offered to provide names and contact details for which he was thanked. Peter Bower then commented that French scholars might not want to publish in an English-language publication, especially since they have a high quality French-language equivalent.

4. Chairman's report

4.1 The Chairman's report was presented in printed format before the meeting. (Report appended to these Minutes). Since it was only supplied to those attending moments before the meeting commenced, the Chairman then proceeded to give a short summary of what it contained. There were no comments, nor questions.

5. Treasurer's report

5.1. The Treasurer's report was presented in printed format before the meeting. (Report appended to these minutes.) Phil Crockett then read the report, the most salient point being that in the last year we made a loss of almost £1700, against a profit of almost £3900 the year before.

Vote to accept the report as a true representation of our financial trading over the year:
Proposer: Peter Bower / Seconder: Miquel Guitiérrez-Poch / Vote: carried unanimously.

5.2 As part of his report, Phil Crockett noted that we have not raised subscription rates since 2020, and with the shortfall noted above, we should consider an increase, his proposal being for Individual UK member rates to go from £48 to £52 (a rise of about 7-8%), with Individual Overseas rates rising similarly. This was put to a vote:

Proposer: Neil Robertson / Seconder: Peter Bower / Vote: carried unanimously.

5.3 Phil Crockett then noted that we can do nothing about Corporate subscription rates this coming year, because he has already published those for 2025 to the subscription agencies. But for the following year we should raise rates similarly by 7-8% (although no actual figures were suggested to those present). This was put to a vote.

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

6. Election of Officers & Committee

The following Officers were elected to Committee:

Chairman: Daven Chamberlain

Proposer: Geoffrey Day / Seconder: Irene Campden / Vote: carried unanimously.

Treasurer: Phil Crockett

Proposer: Daven Chamberlain / Seconder: Megan Gent / Vote: carried unanimously.

Secretary: Barbara Venables

Proposer : Phil Crockett / Seconder: Rod Morley / Vote: carried unanimously.

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

Proposer: Daven Chamberlain / Seconder: Barbara Venables / Vote: carried unanimously.

7. Appointment of Examiner

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

Proposer: Phil Crockett / Seconder: Peter Bower / Vote: carried unanimously.

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

8. Annual Conference 2025

A discussion was held about what to do regarding a conference next year, since to date the Committee has had no such discussion. It was noted that numbers attending have in recent years (including this) fallen below 30, which is considered a minimum for Hotels to consider as a viable event. Therefore, Barbara Venables noted, we have trouble getting accommodation at reduced group rates.

It was noted that we have not visited a paper mill since before the COVID pandemic, and that such visits tend to encourage attendance. Daven Chamberlain noted that since the pandemic, mills have become noticeably more insular.

A proposal was put forward that, instead of having a 3-day weekend event, that we consider having a second 1-day meeting in London, at St Bride Institute. There was little comment, either way, about this suggestion.

One suggestion from the floor was to try the Lake District, visiting Mark Cropper at the James Cropper mill in Burneside, and The Paper Foundation which is on the site of the family home nearby. This will be considered.

After much discussion it was decided that the Committee will revisit this subject at their next meeting, and will communicate with the membership in due course via the journal and email.

9. Future day meetings and visits 2024/5

9.1 Autumn Visit, Lambeth Palace Library, is booked for 25th Sept. 2024 at 2pm.

9.2 Spring Meeting, Passmore Room, St Bride Institute, London, is booked for Tuesday 4th March 2025. ***NOTE THE CHANGE TO TUESDAY FROM WEDNESDAY ***

10. Any other business

10.1 There was only one item of AOB, produced by the Chairman, regarding another minor update of the constitution.

This suggestion emanates from our experiences booking the New College venue, and relates in particular to their view on whether or not to charge VAT on certain aspects of the booking. The proposal is to remove the possibility that, were the BAPH to be dissolved, that any funds would be disseminated to the membership. Rather, it means that any remaining funds would go to a body similar in outlook and aims as BAPH (meaning members would not be beneficiaries).

Currently the constitution reads:

10. Dissolution

c. Any dissolution shall take effect from the closing date of the postal vote and the Committee shall be responsible for the winding-up, the discharge of all liabilities and the distribution of the proceeds from the disposal of any remaining assets equally among members.

It was proposed that this be changed to:

10. Dissolution

c. Any dissolution shall take effect from the closing date of the postal vote and the Committee shall be responsible for the winding-up, the discharge of all liabilities and the distribution of the proceeds from the disposal of any remaining assets to other Associations, Groups or Organisations (charitable or otherwise), identified by the BAPH Committee as having aims compatible with those of BAPH.

Proposer: Neil Robertson / Seconder: Sandy Malcolm / Vote: carried unanimously.

10.2 There being no further business the meeting closed at 1850hrs.

Daven Chamberlain

Acting AGM Minutes Secretary

29 August 2024

**British Association of Paper Historians
Thirty-fifth Annual General Meeting
New College, Oxford, 23 Aug. 2024**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A summary of what the Association has achieved over the past twelve months, since our last AGM (held at The Albrighton Hall Mercure Hotel, Shrewsbury, 22 Sept. 2023), 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 6 Mar. 2024; thanks are due to Barbara Venables and Phil Crockett for its organisation. We had six speakers and a programme covering (1) Balloons, Papermaking, Riots and Revolution, (2) Conversations about Shifu, Woven Paper Cloth, (3) Infrared Light Sheets, (4) The Paper Foundation Collection and TH Saunders' Illustrations of British Paper Manufacture, 1885, (5) Mount Stewart's Felted Paper Bed-hangings, and (6) John Dickinson & Co., the General Strike, a Masonic Group and The House of Dickinson. A more detailed report was published in *The NEWS 135* – inside *Q131* – and we hope that some presentations may be offered for publication in due course.

Publications

Four editions of *The Quarterly* and four of *The NEWS* have been published over the last twelve months. Mark Cropper continues to be our sole benefactor with regards to providing paper for these, our premier publications – something he has done since Q95 (July 2015) – and we remain very grateful for this unbridled generosity.

Aside from our printed publications, the Web Forum (<http://www.ukpapermills.org.uk/>) continues to flourish, thanks to the dedication work of its creator Chris Bennett. Meanwhile, the website continues to maintain excellent, up-to-date coverage of our presence – all thanks to Terry Wells. Finally, we maintain a watching brief on Facebook, although Steve Hill has stood down as our administrator – so we would be pleased to hear from anyone who wants to offer help with social media on our behalf.

UK Industry Overview September 2023 – August 2024

The last year has (fortunately) been less eventful than the previous 12-month period. To date we have seen no mill closures. That said, **Essity** Oakenholt closed their aged PM1 in early 2024, and there is talk of them closing a mill, although nothing has yet been published. Meanwhile, **Kimberly-Clark** has published plans to close the entirety of their operations in Flintshire, being the Flint and Coleshill Mills, although if they go ahead, it will not be until 2025. These two mills (on a single site) make wet-wipes, diapers and toilet tissue; the company blames the UK Government directive that all wet-wipes should be plastic-free by 2025. They say that they will be unable to meet this deadline, and closing the wipes manufacturing line will make the site uncompetitive; so, we will lose a tissue site as collateral damage.

That said, the amount of tissue manufacturing capacity mooted to be installed in the coming few years is so large that it is possible that these companies would have closed these machines or sites anyway. For those keeping count, **Eren Papers** plans three tissue machines in Flintshire (capacity 210,000tpy), **ICT** two machines in Flintshire (capacity 140,000tpy), **Northwood** one machine in Disley (capacity 70,000tpy) and **Metsä Tissue** four machines over a number of years in Goole (280,000tpy). The eagle-eyed may notice that I have missed out **Accrol** in Blackburn, who announced plans to enter the manufacturing arena last year; however, they were acquired by **Navigator**, a Portuguese manufacturer, earlier this year. Since Navigator has a large and quite newly-installed manufacturing base in their homeland, it seems unlikely that they will go ahead with installation of new (and expensive) manufacturing capacity in the UK. Finally, **Fourstones Paper** installed a new tissue machine (to make wiper grades) at their Sapphire Mill in Scotland (capacity 60,000tpy), and **Essity** had the combustion system of its TAD machine in Prudhoe Mill upgraded by Andritz Novimpianti.

Aside from the tissue sector, a lot has been going on in the rest of the industry. Firstly, turning to the corrugated sector, the world's largest producer of corrugated, **Smurfit Kappa**, which is headquartered in Ireland, agreed to merge with **Westrock**; **Smurfit Westrock** has a combined capacity of 23 million tons, from 63 paper mills and 500 converting facilities spread across 40 countries. Soon after this was agreed, **DS Smith**, Europe's largest producer of corrugated, headquartered in the UK, agreed to a takeover bid from **International Paper**, the largest producer of corrugated in the US (13.8 million tons). As regards other deals, **DS Smith** divested some of their recycling operations (where paper is collected and sorted) to **Veolia**; they launched 'R8' Research & Development (R&D) and Innovation Centre near Birmingham; announced a £48m investment in a new drum pulper for PM3 at Kemsley; and undertook collaborative research with **Nafici Environmental Research** in Sussex, aimed at incorporating straw pulp into their corrugated product.

Elsewhere, **James Cropper plc** received a government grant to investigate raising steam using electricity, in a bid to reduce their carbon footprint, and **Sonoco** had their drive system rebuilt by Sael of Italy, and their vacuum system upgraded by Runtech. Also, **Woodfree**, an entrepreneurial start-up in Wales, is using a UK Transformative Technologies grant to further their experiments to use coconut coir as a raw material for making 'Eco-Pulp', which is aimed at textile and paper manufacture.

Since we are a historical association, it is also important to note that **UPM Caledonian Mill** celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2023, and **DS Smith Kemsley Mill** its centenary. The latter has produced a book as part of their celebrations.

An overview of the sector is not complete without a look at the area of converting. Here, Scottish corrugated sheet and packaging producer **McLaren Packaging** has acquired Bathgate-based **Glenhaze Ltd.**; **Saica Pack** has upgraded their flagship packaging manufacturing facility at Livingston, West Lothian, Scotland, and is considering similar for its Hartlepool site; and **Van Genechten Packaging (VGP)** has acquired 100% of its UK joint venture with **Cartoncare Group**, and taken a minority share in **Ribble**, the UK corrugated cardboard company.

As I finish this Annual Survey of BAPH Activities and the UK Industry Overview, I am pleased to report that the Association remains in excellent order, both financially and operationally, while our Industry sector is on the brink of very significant capacity installation.

Finally, as always, I must pay tribute to my colleagues on the BAPH committee: Barbara, Irene, Jean, Peter, Phil and Rod. Without all of their hard work, most of which goes on behind the scenes, much unnoticed, BAPH would not run so efficiently.

Daven Chamberlain
(17 Aug. 2024)

Treasurer's Annual Report. Year April 2023 to April 2024

Presented at the AGM, 23 August 2024

Financial Position – BAPH Funds

I'm afraid that the accounts show a deficit for the year of **-£1,779**; last year we had a surplus of £1,685. After adjustments for this year's conference deposit and an early payment to our printers the deficit drops slightly to **-£1,681**. This compares with a profit of £3,867 last year.

The deficit was partly due to refunds to members who had to cancel at both the Cambridge and Shrewsbury Conferences. The refunds totalled £1,190 and have all come into the 2023/24 accounts. Mailing costs have increased by £500 but printing costs have remained about the same. Sales of our publications and back copies of The Quarterly have done well. Individual membership receipts have dropped £932 though Corporates have increased by £335.

On the Payments side the Admin costs are largely Daven's expenses for publications and their postage. The Admin. costs do include £90 membership of BALH to cover insurance and £84 website expenses.

The conference this year is unlikely to make a profit because of the high costs involved and our numbers have dropped a bit.

Membership

Our revenue from Individual and Corporate members was £7,173 this year and £8,776 last year after making corrections for early payments, so once more down on the previous year.

Our Individual Membership has dropped again with only one new member. This is largely natural wastage, we do need some more younger members.

Corporate Members are reasonably steady. We kept on some who did not pay through Covid and have now resumed paying their subscriptions.

Deposit Account

Our deposit account now stands at £11,668; having earned £156 in interest, up from £41 last year. At this time we have no specific plans for using our savings. This year we have helped some conference speakers with their expenses and this may come out of the deposit account in due course.

Examiner

The accounts and bank statements have been examined by Neil Robertson who has duly signed them. I should like to express my thanks to him.

Subscriptions

Our examiner suggests we put up membership fees by about 7% because of inflationary pressures especially on mailing costs. We have not raised our fees since 2020 so I am proposing to raise UK Individual Membership from £48 to £52 for 2025 and the others a similar proportion. Corporate Membership will go up the following year because the publication agencies already have our current prices in their systems.

PRC 22 August 2024.

British Association of Paper Historians

Accounts for Year Ending April 5th 2024

2023-24		2022-23
£	<u>Receipts</u>	£
131	Individual Members	135
36	Corporate Members	36
	Conference	10,375
	Dep. + interest from Willersly Hall	281
	Meetings	407
	Sales of Quarterly	8
	Sales of Oxford and Exeter papers	
	Interest	41
	Donations	13
	Jean's Book	23
	Inman's Book	10
	Gavin Book	25
	Book & Paper Sales	79
	Monograph Sales	103
	Video Sales	12
	Simmons Papers	108
	BAPH Anniversary Paper	55
	Papermaking in 18C	49
	Papermaking in 19C	
	Fire Insurance	
	Venables of Cookham	
	Payments via PayPal	-18
	Total	19,565
	<u>16,646</u>	
	<u>Payments</u>	
	Conference	8,003
	Meetings	831
	Quarterly & NEWS	6,506
	Mailing Costs for Q. & NEWS	1,732
	Other book sales	
	Admin., insurance & website	808
	Bank currency charge	
	PR - Directory	
	Study Group Monographs	
	Members' refunds	
	Total	17,880
	<u>18,425</u>	
	<u>-1,779</u>	
	<u>Excess of Receipts over Payments</u>	<u>1,685</u>
	Advance Subscriptions (prev. year)	1,294
	Advance Subscriptions (next year)	-512
	Conference deposit (prev. year)	
	Conference deposit (next year)	500
	Early payment to Upstream(2023)	900
	EarlyPayment to printers(2024)	
	<u>True Profit on the Year</u>	<u>3,867</u>
	<u>-1,681</u>	

