

SOUTH WALES RECORD SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 700285

The **Annual General Meeting** was held at the Glamorgan Archives, Clos Parc Morgannwg, Leckwith, Cardiff CF11 8AW on Saturday 11th May 2024

MINUTES

Chair's opening remarks – all were welcomed to the meeting.

A tribute was paid to the passing of Professor Chris Williams in April 2024, a former longstanding General Editor. He was also described as one of the leading Welsh historians of his generation. A minute's silence was observed by all present.

Present: David Jenkins (Chair), Jeff Childs (President), Ben Curtis (General Editor), Sian King (Secretary), Louise Miskell (Vice-Chair), Madeleine Gray, Elisabeth Bennett, Katrina Legg, Kim Collis and about 12 members.

1. Apologies for absence

The Secretary gave apologies for absence from Lisa Snook, Annie Owen, Richard Allen, Andrew Dulley, Laura Cotton, Tony Hopkins, Peter Watts.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2023 at Glamorgan Archives were presented. The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

4. Annual Report 2023-2024

The Chair summarised the activities of the year. The main event was the publication of our 36th volume, *The Middleman at Middleton Hall: the letters of Thomas Herbert Cooke*, edited by Dr Lowri Ann Rees of the History Department at Bangor University. This volume appeared and was distributed just before Christmas 2023, and has since then enjoyed two launch events. The first of these was on 23rd March 2023 at the National Botanic Garden of Wales – the site of the former Middleton Hall and estate – where Lowri gave a short lecture on her book. Thomas Cooke's great-great-grandson was also present. Interestingly, Lowri also revealed that she had been brought up on a nearby farm that was once part of the Middleton estate. About thirty people were present including some members of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society who joined us.

Last Wednesday, 8th May 2024, the second launch took place at Bangor University where Lowri took part in a Q&A session on her book with Dr Shaun Evans, Director of the Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates (ISWE) at the university. Again, some thirty people were present including old friends such as Neil Evans and Nia Watkin Powell.

We were also delighted to hear that, partly on the strength of our publication, Lowri is about to sign a contract with a firm of London historical publishers to write a new history of the Rebecca riots.

The Annual Report was approved.

5. Treasurer's Report 2022-2023

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Chair gave the report on her behalf. He presented a summary of the Society's accounts for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 which had already been circulated to members. He mentioned the generous anonymous donation of £10,000 which will ensure financial security for the Society in the medium term.

The Society thus finished the year with a healthy balance of £3,213.72 in the HSBC account and £18,145.94 in the Monmouthshire Building Society account – a total of £21,359.66. The accounts were approved.

The Chair noted that the Membership Subscription had now increased following approval at the 2023 AGM, and now stood at:

Ordinary members: £25/year

Overseas members: £30/year

Institutional members: £30/year

6. Publications: General Editor's Report 2022-2023

The General Editor, Ben Curtis, gave a report on past and future SWRS publications:

The Society's volume for 2023, *The Middleman at Middleton Hall: The Letters of Thomas Herbert Cooke, Land Agent in Rebecca's Carmarthenshire, 1841–1847* (edited by Lowri Ann Rees) was published at the end of the year and is the Society's thirty-sixth volume. It was formally launched at a successful event in March 2024 at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. There was also a launch at Bangor University last month, where Dr Rees is based.

The Society's next volume, to be published later this year, is edited by Kirsti Bohata and is provisionally entitled *Amy Dillwyn's Diaries, 1863–1917*. Amy Dillwyn is a figure of historical importance: a rare female industrialist, a novelist of considerable importance in the canons of Welsh writing in English and lesbian literature. Her journals are also an important example of a more confessional style of life writing, making them a valuable resource for those interested in Victorian women's history, LGBT history and literary history. This volume will present an abridged and annotated edition of her diaries and selected letters. The diaries span 1863–1917, though after January 1875 the entries are very occasional. Nevertheless, the later period provides key information about the development of her industrial concerns. The volume's typescript is in the process of being finalised and I anticipate receiving it imminently. I will then send it for academic peer review straightaway, after which in due course the editor and I will ready the volume for publication.

There are other potential volumes in the pipeline for later years, for which the committee has given its provisional approval. These are:

- *The Hafod Estate under the 4th Duke of Newcastle, 1832–1846* (ed. Richard Gaunt). The Hafod estate in Ceredigion was made famous by Thomas Johnes (1748–1816) who developed its woodland walks, open fields, and watercourses, along picturesque principles of landscape design. Most of the existing scholarship on Hafod has concentrated on Johnes's ownership and legacy, but little attention has been paid to its sequel: the estate's purchase and subsequent ownership by Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham Clinton, 4th Duke of Newcastle under Lyne (1785–1851), between 1832 and 1846. The purpose of this volume is to reproduce, in their entirety, the duke's own account of his ownership of Hafod, as recorded in his voluminous personal diaries.

These extracts have never been published before in their entirety and have largely been absent from the scholarship on Hafod. Bringing together the material in one volume will allow the importance of this period to become more apparent, and will help to restore it to its proper interest and significance.

- *'These old soldiers of the mine, some of them with mutilated bodies, some minus a limb': Industrial Disability and Injury in the South Wales Coalfield, 1901–1931* (eds Ben Curtis and Steven Thompson).

In addition to these there exist several other possibilities for future volumes, which are in the process of receiving consideration. Notwithstanding these, as ever, the committee would welcome any further suggestions from members in this regard.

Following this report, there was some general discussion about the cost of printing the SWRS publications. A member asked whether the usual print run of 200 could be increased. The Chair and members of the Committee explained that printing cost were very high, and the Society had to be very careful to keep within budget, as well as avoiding the problem of storing unsold copies. A reprint of *The Commonplace Book of John Gwin of Llangwm* was highly desirable, owing to demand, but the high cost of setting up rendered this unfeasible for the Society. The Chair mentioned that different printers might be investigated by the Committee. He added that the definition of “South Wales” had been discussed, and now, for the purpose of acceptable volumes, included Ceredigion and Powys south of the former border of Montgomeryshire.

7. Election of officers and ordinary members of the Committee

The five officers of the Committee were willing to continue for a further year.

There have been two resignations during the year:

James Phillips (January 2024)

Kim Collis (April 2024)

The Chair gave a vote of thanks to Kim for his long and devoted service to the Society where he had served as Treasurer and Sales Officer.

The Chair announced that his 3-year term of office had concluded, but he was willing to undertake a further term. This was approved.

He also reported that the SWRS President, Jeff Childs, had completed his three years in office, and we would be seeking a new President. Jeff would continue as a valued member of the Committee and a Trustee.

During the year, we were delighted to co-opt a new Committee member, Elizabeth Bennett, and she is now formally nominated to complete the full complement of Committee members (14). All approved.

(A full list of the current officers and Committee members can be found at the end of these minutes.)

8. Appointment of Trustees

There were currently 4 trustees of the charity:

David Jenkins

Jeff Childs

Lisa Snook
Sian King

It was agreed that these should continue.

9. Any other business

The Chair reported that Haydn Davies, the widower of former Secretary Rosemary, is now in a position to hand over the archives of the Society, and arrangements would be made to collect these from his home in Cwmbran.

SK 24.05.24

South Wales Record Society (Registered Charity No. 700285)

Officers 2024-25

President: Vacancy
Chair: David Jenkins
Vice-Chair: Louise Miskell
Treasurer: Lisa Snook
Secretary: Sian King
General Editor: Ben Curtis

Other Committee Members 2024-25

Jeff Childs
Richard Allen
Madeleine Gray
Andrew Dulley
Tony Hopkins
Laura Cotton
Dylan Foster Evans
Elisabeth Bennett
Katrina Legg