

**MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting of THE PAST  
OVERSEERS' SOCIETY OF ST. MARGARET AND ST. JOHN WESTMINSTER**

**held in the United Westminster Almshouses, Rochester Row, London, SW1  
on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004 at 4.15 p.m.**

**PRESENT:**

Mr. Geoffrey King, Chairman  
Mr. Jack Dribbell  
Mr. Alan Bradley, Junior Custodian  
Mr. Robert Davis  
Mr. John Harris  
Ms Rachel Whittaker  
Dr. Cyril Nemeth, Senior Custodian  
Sir Robert Reid  
Lady Joan Reid  
Mr. Rodney Brooke  
Mr. Raymond Layard  
Mr. Harold Gould  
Mr. Alan Kinsey

Peter Darvall, Joint Honorary Clerk  
John Stephenson, Joint Honorary Clerk

1. **Apologies for absence:** Lord Weatherill, Mr. Brian Chappell, Mr. Peter Handley, Mr. Tony Platt, Mr. Donald du Parc Braham, Mr. Jim Kelly, Mr. David Pearl, Mr. Matthew Mitchell, Mr. Andrew Stevens, Mr. Brian Connell, Mr. Gordon Cumming, Ms. Rosalind Savill, Mrs. Winifred Normington, Mr. George Goring, Mr. John Wright, Sir Christopher Howes, Mr. Simon Mabey, Dr. Maureen Heath, Maj. Gen. David Burden, Mr. Richard Palmer, Mrs. Judith Randle, Mr. David Harvey and Rear Admiral Ken Snow.
2. **Apologies:** were presented and accepted.
3. **Minutes** of the 2003 Annual General Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2003 were duly approved.
4. **Silver Treasure:** In connection with item 5 of the 2003 Minutes, there was a brief discussion as to the progress made during the previous year on the ultimate destination of the silver in the event of the dissolution of the Society. There was unanimous agreement that the silver should remain intact and be transferred to another body, but this ultimate home of the silver was still to be decided. The Chairman said that he welcomed suggestions from members. It was not possible for the silver specifically, nor the Society as a whole, to become a charity, although the Memorandum and Articles of Association were in the process of

being updated, and a draft of the revised constitution had already been received from Charles Russell for consideration by the Committee.

5. **Westminster City Hall Treasury/Plate Room:** further to item 10 in the 2003 Minutes, Robert Davis advised the meeting that the Plate Room in City Hall was being refurbished. This work would be completed within 2-3 months. Peter Darvall asked whether a humidifier could be included within the refurbishment works. It was confirmed that re-labelling of the silver would be included.
6. **Financial Statement for the 2003 Dinner:** The Chairman gave a brief oral report. There had been 102 diners, and the event had been a great success, although, because there had been more drinking time over a relatively long evening, the event had generated only a small surplus for the Society. The dinner would be run more briskly in 2004. The Chairman noted with pleasure that the event had been well attended by members themselves as well as by members' guests.
7. **Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003:** These were presented to the meeting. There were only two current debtors, each in respect of their 2003 subscriptions. The Chairman confirmed that the photographic record shown as a cost on the accounts was a one-off, and had been carried out mainly for insurance and record purposes. Lady Reid suggested that a copy should reside at City Hall. Alan Kinsey advised that there were two copies at present, held in different places, and also three videos of the silver, again held at different places. Photographs were also on a computer digital record, which was of sufficient quality that the inscriptions could be reproduced, through enlargement, for a Powerpoint presentation if required. The transfer of £6,335 from the General to the Silver Fund was proposed by the Chairman; this and the accounts were approved by the meeting.
8. **Events for 2004:** A view was expressed that the silver was not on view sufficiently often, and the Chairman said he would welcome ideas for future occasions at which the silver could be on display. The 2004 Dinner in the House Lords on 18<sup>th</sup> November was formally announced, and the Chairman agreed to check that smoking would be permitted after the Loyal Toast at that event. **Post meeting note:** this has now been confirmed.
9. **Additional silver piece:** The Chairman advised of the need to cover the period to 2013 when the new horn tobacco box will begin the Society's fourth century. One idea of separate tobacco boxes for tables, each with one year's plaque, discussed at the Committee Meeting earlier, was floated to the meeting, and was approved. There was a suggestion that it might be of saucer shape, possibly a reproduction of the Lutyens Dish. However, there was some concern over the security of these dishes at the dinner tables, and this would be something which would have to be considered at the appropriate time.
10. **Membership and 2004 Subscriptions:** The Chairman announced that the Junior Custodian for 2004/2005 would be Robert Davis. He confirmed to the Society that the membership currently stood at 96 and members were encouraged to

recommend suitable candidates to join the Society. The subscription for 2004 to remain at £40 including a contribution to the Silver Fund.

11. **Other Business:** Sir Robert Reid asked whether poverty and vagrancy, the concerns of the original Overseers, had reduced in Westminster in the past year. Alan Bradley said that vagrancy had certainly reduced, although there was a hardcore of about 100 rough sleepers left, in his view generally of their own volition, as hostel beds were available. Rachel Whittaker reported on the liaison between the Police and City Council regarding street begging, although Alan Bradley reminded the meeting that begging was a quite different problem from homelessness.
12. John Harris said he had been endeavouring to find a record of one of the main silver pieces of the Society having been sent to New York for an exhibition at the World Fair shortly before World War II. The Westminster City Archives have large gaps during this period, but Raymond Layard said that he would check with the Library of Congress, and Alan Kinsey said that the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths might be able to help.
13. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.50 p.m.