

The Society for Old Testament Study

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on 4th January 2013

at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge
under the presidency of Dr Eryl W. Davies

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Professor Graeme Auld, Professor John Barton, Dr Diana Edelman, Dr Katie Edwards, Mr Simcha Friedman, Dr Anthony Gelston, Mrs Karalina Matskevich, Professor Alan Millard, Ms Eva Pinthus, Professor Francesca Stavrakopoulou, Dr David Tollerton, Revd Paul Winchester, and Ms Julie Woods.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous Business Meeting (18th July 2012), which had been displayed, were approved by the meeting and signed by the President. There were no Matters Arising not already covered under the Agenda.

3. Reports from Officers

(a) **The out-going President**, Professor George Brooke, reported on the successful joint meeting with the OTW (together with ISBL and EABS) in Amsterdam in the summer, further details of which had been given in the 2012 Bulletin. The Proceedings of the joint meeting were in an advanced stage of editing (by himself and Pierre van Hecke) and should be published in *Oudtestamentische Studiën* in 2013. On a visit to Jerusalem in October he had been able to mention to colleagues at the École Biblique et Archéologique Française the Society's intention to mount an Exhibition on Jerusalem in Oxford in 2017. He expressed his gratitude to all the officers of the Society, past and present, for their support throughout 2012; their commitment to all aspects of the life of the Society contributed greatly to its ongoing academic strength and its overall health and happiness.

(b) **The Treasurer**, Dr Alasdair Hunter, reported that the transfer of information and legal responsibility to him from his predecessor as Treasurer, Dr Janet Tollington, was nearly completed. The Accounts for 2011-12 had been prepared and independently examined and had been on display during the Winter Meeting. The Treasurer presented these to the Business Meeting for formal approval and this was agreed *nem. con.*

The outgoing Treasurer, Dr Janet Tollington, provided a written report that was not available until after the Meeting and this is summarised here:

“SITUATION REPORT AS AT 2nd January 2013 and REPORT TO BUSINESS MEETING BANK & INVESTMENT ACCOUNT BALANCES

Barclays - Current A/C	15683.99
Barclays Instant Access Savings A/C	110952.17
Total	126636.16

The Society remained in a healthy position financially and subscription income was at a stable level, however, the Society's assets showed a small decline during the past year. Continuing low interest rates meant that the Porter legacy funds were not growing at all and the Hart legacy was gradually being drawn down to meet SOTS centennial planning expenses. Dr Tollington encouraged any who were able to Gift Aid their annual subscriptions to do so. Royalties from the Monograph series and the online volumes with OUP continued to decline. These amounts support the bursary funds as in the previous year, as do subscription donations from Life members. Conference income of about £11K for the Winter Meeting was included in the above totals which would have to be paid out in due course but all other payments had been made and all cheques had been cleared. Subscriptions for 2013 were now due and 202 members had already paid £4726 via Standing Orders. About £1K would be claimed before the end of the month from members who pay by continuing credit card authorisation. 13 members were in arrears with their subscriptions at the end of 2012. The accounts for the Summer Meeting in Manchester, July 2012, had now been finalised. The meeting produced a profit of £113.69 apart from the conference grants and low income subsidies that were offered (totalling £984). The subsidy facility was achieving its intended purpose but in 2012 the expenditure from the fund exceeded by £755 the income to the grant/subsidy fund."

(c) The Secretary, Dr Hilary Marlow, expressed appreciation to the Faculty of Divinity for sponsoring the Reception on the first night of the Winter Meeting and informed the Business Meeting that she would be writing a formal letter of thanks on behalf of the Society. She noted with regret the deaths of Professor Frank Moore Cross and Rev John F. X. Sheehan SJ. The following news of members had come to her attention: i) Professor Yvonne Sherwood had moved to the University of Kent with her New Testament Colleague, Professor Ward Blanton, to set up a new Biblical Studies undergraduate and graduate programme, including a postgraduate Centre for Religion and Critical Theory; ii) Professor David Chalcraft had been invited to hold a visiting Professorship at UTC Bangalore in 2014. He had suggested that the Society should formally congratulate the Indian Biblical Studies Society on its centenary and the President had agreed to write on behalf of SOTS. The Secretary thanked members of the Society for their support and encouragement as she took up her new responsibilities.

(d) The Secretary for Honorary Members, Professor Lester Grabbe, reported that, following the death of Honorary Member Professor Frank Moore Cross, he had written to the family to express condolences but had not yet received a reply. The current list of Honorary Members stood at 17 out of a possible total of 20 and Professor Grabbe invited nominations for election to Honorary Membership. He reminded the Business Meeting that Honorary Members should be scholars of international reputation, though not necessarily at the end of their careers, and should have something of value to contribute to the Society.

(e) The Membership Secretary, Ms Vivienne Rowett, reported a current membership figure of 488 and noted that female membership now makes up more than a quarter of the total (the male/female ratio now standing at 72%/28%). She reported that she now had email addresses for over 80% of the membership. In the light of the increased cost of postage, the Committee recommended moving to a system whereby the twice yearly mailings of the Society would be sent electronically to those members who use email. This would be phased in, with Spring and Autumn mailings for 2013 being sent both by email and 'snail mail', and thereafter only

by email except to those who requested postal copies. This was agreed by the Business Meeting. The possibility of having the ability to book and pay for meetings on the SOTS website was raised from the floor and would be investigated.

(f) The Hospitality Secretary, Mr James Patrick, reported that the Winter Meeting was running smoothly and that Fitzwilliam College was a good venue. He noted that a total of 130 delegates were booked for the Meeting, 18 of whom (including two members) were there for the first time. Twenty-six delegates were not yet members of the Society.

(g) The Book List Editor, Dr Deborah Rooke, reported that the 2013 edition of the *Book List* looked like being a bumper edition, with over 500 books already received, some of which had been distributed to members during the course of the Winter Meeting. She reminded reviewers that their reviews were due at the latest by 21st January 2013 and apologised that she had not yet acknowledged all the reviews already received. In her capacity as Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee, Dr Rooke reported that the new SOTS Monographs series would be launched in 2017. The Committee proposed that Dr Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer be appointed editor of the new series and this was agreed by the Business Meeting. There was a request from the floor that the series be given a new name. Dr Rooke reported that the Publications Sub-Committee had been unable to come up with a suitable alternative name, but would consider any serious suggestions from members. The first in the new series of OT Study Guides (*Ecclesiastes* by Dr Katharine Dell) was due for publication in February 2013 and further volumes were in progress.

(h) The Information Officer, Dr James Aitken, reported *in absentia* that he continued to maintain the website and expressed his gratitude to those who had indicated areas that needed updating. One issue had been raised regarding the Members' area since it is not possible to log out of the page (a feature of the standard htaccess password system: it is browser-based authentication) and the login only expires after some time. This could lead to vulnerability on public computers, and the implications of this required further consideration.

Work was continuing with the Wiki project, and details of this had been presented in a workshop at the Winter Meeting. Dr Aitken was in the process of finalizing a budget and confirming the costs of the platform hosting. Once an editor had been appointed the WIKI team would be in a position to confirm the list of entries that they regarded as the base for the project, working on the assumption that people willingly add other entries themselves.

4. Elections

a) The President invited nominations for membership of the SOTS committee and of the Programme and Publications Sub-Committees. These should be emailed to the Secretary in the next few weeks.

b) New Members

A list of persons proposed for membership had been displayed, and the following were duly elected to membership of the Society: Dr Iain Hepburn, Dr Nicholas Lunn, Dr Jonathan Morgan, Mr Paul Moore, Professor Gary Rendsburg, Dr Ellen White.

5. REF 2014

Professor George Brooke reported that there had been little formal activity so far in the REF Panel, but he expected criteria to be thrashed out in a series of meetings starting later in January. Following a request from HEFCE in the autumn, he had asked the SOTS Committee to suggest further User-Assessors, but no names had been received. He anticipated that the sub-panels of User-Assessors will be further expanded by HEFCE and invited members to email him with suggestions.

6. Centennial Exhibition

Dr Jonathan Stökl reported that the exhibition committee had produced a substantial narrative document, which was in the process of final revisions (to meet the proposal formatting guidelines of the Ashmolean Museum) and would be submitted to them early in the New Year. He reiterated the call for members of the society to contribute suggestions of both ancient and modern materials relating to Jerusalem which might be included in the exhibition as well as suggestions regarding potential sources of funding. In response to questions from the floor regarding fundraising, Dr Stökl reported that i) the exhibition would cost in the region of £500,000, but that the Ashmolean's fundraising team would help with raising this figure; ii) SOTS members were welcome to pledge or donate money to the exhibition fund and, once the arrangement with the Ashmolean is confirmed, an email will be sent out by the Membership Secretary regarding this.

7. Future Meetings

The forthcoming Summer Meeting would take place at the University of Bangor, 22nd-25th July 2013. Venues and dates were confirmed for 2014: a Winter Meeting to be held at Collingwood College, Durham on 6th-8th January 2014, and a Summer Meeting to be held at Oxford University on 21st-24th July 2014. It was noted that the following Winter Meeting 2015 would be held in Durham.

8. Any Other Business

Following a suggestion from Dr Jim West, the moderator of the SOTS Facebook page, the Secretary proposed that the number of Facebook moderators be increased to three, including Dr West. One of these would be the current Information Secretary; Dr Jonathan Stökl had offered to be the other. The Business Meeting agreed to this proposal.

There being no further business, the President thanked Professor George Brooke, Dr Hilary Marlow and Mr James Patrick and all those who had read papers at the Winter Meeting. He declared the Business Meeting closed and wished members a safe homeward journey.

Signed: Date: