

The Society for Old Testament Study

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on 8th January 2014

at Collingwood College, Durham
under the presidency of Professor John Day

1. Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed four new members to their first Business Meeting of the Society. Apologies had been received from Graeme Auld, Joseph Blenkinsopp, David Chalcraft, Graham Davies, Cheryl Exum, Anthony Gelston, Alec Gilmore, Anselm Hagedorn, Elizabeth Harper, Ann Jeffers, Karen Langton, Alan Millard, Michael Thompson, Ian Wilson.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous Business Meeting (24th July 2013), 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 Outgoing President**, Dr Eryl W. Davies, reported that since his last report to the Society in July 2013 there had been no particular issues outside the Society that have required him to work on its behalf. He noted with regret the death of Professor Ernest Nicholson, a former President of the Society, in December and reported that he had written a letter of condolence on behalf of the Society to Professor Nicholson's family. As his term of office was coming to an end he wished to thank all the officers of the Society for their support during 2013 and particularly to the Secretary and Hospitality Secretary for facilitating the arrangements for the Summer Meeting at Bangor. He also wished to express his gratitude to all those who read papers during the Winter and Summer Meetings under his presidency and others who helped in various ways to ensure the success of both Meetings.

(b) **The Treasurer**, Dr Alastair Hunter reported on the financial affairs of the Society as follows:

BANK & INVESTMENT ACCOUNT BALANCES

As at 8th December 2013

Barclays Current A/C	£12,474.11
Barclays IAS (Business Premium) A/C	£111,009.56
TOTAL	£123,483.67

The final figure included income of about £10,000 in respect of the Winter Meeting which would be paid out in due course. The audited accounts for the year ended 31st October 2013 had been displayed on the notice board throughout the Meeting and Alastair Hunter made some explanatory comments. In general terms, the non-meeting expenditure of the Society (accounted for in the main by the production of the Book List and the costs involved in mailings to members) exceeded subscription and other income by about £2100, an increase of £700 from this time last year. Available assets (other than the legacy funds of about £58,000)

were in the region of £55,000. While this was an encouraging reserve, it was not growing, and bank interest was effectively zero (interest for the year on £110,000 amounted to £56). The President asked the Meeting to formally approve the 2013 accounts, and this was carried unanimously.

The final accounts for the winter meeting in Cambridge and the summer meeting in Bangor had been finalised and had been on display during the Meeting. Allowing for the subsidies from the bursary fund, the former showed a small loss (£485) and the latter a modest surplus (£476). The aim is for the meetings to be cost-neutral; in part, the loss at the winter meeting resulted from a higher level of refunds. There were currently seventeen members in arrears with their subscriptions, and eight new members who had not yet arranged for payment. A few of the former were now in the third year of default, and would be deemed to have lapsed at the end of this year. The Treasurer recorded his particular thanks to James Patrick as Hospitality Secretary, who had the major responsibility for the finances of the meetings, and Viv Rowett, who kept a firm grasp of the membership list.

(c) The Secretary, Dr Hilary Marlow, reported that she had received little news of Members of the Society. There had been no deaths of which she was aware, other than that of Professor Ernest Nicholson, already noted by the President. She had however written on behalf of the Society to express condolences to Ora Lipschitz the widow of Simcha Friedman, whose death was noted at the Summer Meeting 2013. She reminded Members to continue to bring items of news about Members of the Society, both sad and celebratory, to her attention. She thanked Officers, ordinary members of the Committee and Members of the Society for their willing assistance in the work of the Society.

(d) The Secretary for Honorary Members, Professor Lester Grabbe, reported that both Carol Newsom and Martti Nissinen had gratefully accepted the Society's invitation and had been welcomed as Honorary Members. He had seen Professor Newsom at the SBL meeting in November and she hoped to attend a SOTS meeting in the near future. Also, Professor Nissinen had expressed his desire to attend a winter meeting in the not-too-distant future. He was hopeful of being able to find contact details for two honorary members: Menahem Haran and Eduard Nielsen following helpful leads from John Day and Hans Barstad.

(e) The Membership Secretary, Ms Vivienne Rowett, reported with great pleasure that the total membership of the Society now stood at 502, a net gain of 14 over the previous year. The male/female ratio was 356/147 (a gradual movement to greater equality). The number of Life Members had increased by 5 to 143, meaning that 32% of the membership (Honorary Members and Life Members) were at least 52 years of age. She would continue to monitor the age profile of the Society. She reported that 485 copies of the Book List were mailed to members this Summer, meaning that only 18 were not sent copies. She thanked members of the committee with whom she worked closely, SOTS members who continued to send in

news and corrections, and for the many good wishes she had received in a year of personal difficulties.

(f) The Hospitality Secretary, Mr James Patrick, reported that the Meeting was running smoothly and numbers were high, with a maximum of 125 present at any one time. He would be drawing to the attention of Collingwood College a number of minor problems with the accommodation and meeting venue. He thanked his team of helpers who had contributed to the smooth running of the Meeting.

(g) The Book List Editor, Dr Deborah Rooke, reported that this year's issue would be her fifth issue of the *Book List*, and depending on progress in finding a successor, her last. It had been both satisfying and frustrating, trying and immensely fulfilling, to produce each year's issue. But she hoped to have done a good job, and would certainly never regard books and publishers in the same way again nor have such a wide view of the publications available in the field. She offered a sincere thanks to everyone who had supported her over her tenure of the *Book List* editorship. She urged members to complete any outstanding reviews by the extended deadline of 25th January so as to facilitate editing of this year's issue. Having had a bumper year last year she did not anticipate such a large issue this time. She had contacted Sage about the possibility of an extension to the page budget so that the same situation did not arise this year as last year, where 50 reviews had to be held back because of lack of space in the *Book List*, and discussions on that were ongoing. She apologised that there had been no circulations of lists of review books this year, really for reasons of time. She thanked her extraordinarily efficient assistant Holly Morse for providing the headers, and for packing up the books in preparation for the meeting.

The President asked for the support of the meeting for Deborah Rooke to continue as Book List editor for a further two years should it not prove possible to find a successor now. This support was granted.

(h) The retiring Information Officer, Dr James Aitken, reported *in absentia* that he was making some final modifications and corrections to the website before handing over to his successor. Dr Jonathan Stökl. The Members' section remained popular and he was regularly asked for the log-in details. As an example of statistics, in the previous week the website had received 16 visits on average per day (109 for the week) for an average length of 1:55 minutes. Each visitor on average visited 3.1 pages. There had not been much progress with the Wiki project, but he hoped to work closely with Walter Houston on it over the coming months. The incoming Information Officer reported that he was currently looking for a new web hosting facility as it was no longer possible to do this through the University of Cambridge.

(i) **The Archivist, Dr Eryl Davies** reported that since taking over as SOTS Archivist he had received a list of all the holdings relating to the Society which were currently in the Bangor archive. He had recently visited the widow of his predecessor, Ed Ball, to retrieve some of the material which was in his possession and at the same time had presented Daphne Ball with a copy of the volume *The Unconquered Land and other Old Testament Essays: Selected Studies By Rudolf Smend* which had been co-edited by Ed and Margaret Barker and which was of course the final book published in the Ashgate SOTS monograph series.

4. Election of New Members

A list of persons proposed for membership had been displayed, and the following were duly elected to membership of the Society: Professor John Ahn, Mr Kengo Akiyama, Miss Penelope Barter, Prof. Thomas M Bolin, Mr Daniel Crowther, Revd Megan Daffern, Ms Michele Freyhauf, Dr Angela Harkins, Mr Samuel Hildebrandt, Mrs Brittany Melton, Dr Alexander Prokhorov, Miss Tiffany Webster, Miss Katie Woolstenhulme.

5. Centennial Exhibition

Dr Jonathan Stökl reported that as yet there had been no decision from the Ashmolean Museum about hosting the proposed exhibition. He invited members to contact him with suggestions of other venues that might act as an alternative or as a co-host for the exhibition.

6. Future Meetings

The forthcoming Summer Meeting would take place at St Hilda's College, Oxford on 21st-24th July 2014 and would be followed by a special day conference on 24th July at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, in honour of Professor John Day. The Winter Meeting 2015 would take place at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge on 5th-7th January 2015.

There being no further business, the President thanked those who had contributed to a very successful Meeting and declared the Business Meeting closed

Signed: *Date:*