

## **Annual Report**

### **COVID-19**

The pandemic was a dominant factor in the Society's activities in 2020 and 2021 and so it was with great pleasure that we felt able to return to holding public meetings in the Church Hall in April 2022, as we had hoped at the last AGM. For the record, membership numbers increased during the period when we used Zoom for our monthly meetings.

### **Membership**

At the end of 2022 our membership numbers stood at 375, but we know that the increase in membership fee may lead to lower renewals because it often means changing bank arrangements and that in itself may prompt some inactive members to reconsider membership. We estimate that we will start 2023 with around 340-350 members. The loss will, of course, be compensated for by the increase in fees.

### **Members' Meetings**

We held 10 meetings during the year (the AGM and March talks by Zoom) and attendance at many has been high - often involving 60-70+ members and guests. The 2023 programme is complete and details are at <https://www.bishopswalthamsociety.org.uk/meetings>. Pocket-sized programme cards will be available at the AGM.

### **Henry VIII's visit in 1522 - 500 year anniversary celebration at the Palace**

The Society was involved from the start in the proposals for and planning of the two-day celebrations at the Palace in July 2022 to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the visit by Henry VIII and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and the signing of the Treaty of Waltham. The original proposal was made by our chairman back in April 2021. Five of the Society's Trustees worked on the Planning Group - chaired by Mike Berry - for months, and many Society members participated at the event itself.

Jointly sponsored by the Society, the BW Town Team and the BW Museum Trust, the event made a small profit which enabled us to donate £1,000 to Naomi House and Jacksplace, £1,000 to English Heritage and to repay almost all of our original loan to the start-up fund. The event also won the Hampshire-wide "Community Event of the Year" Award 2022.

Educating and informing the public about local history is a key objective in the Society's constitution and we feel that this event fulfilled that aim. To celebrate, we have produced a 12 page colour 'souvenir' booklet about the 1522 Royal visit which will be distributed to all our members.

### **Planning**

During 2022 the Society has been further involved in the planning application for the new Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage Systems proposed at Lock's Farm. We objected in October 2021 based on its position and its effect on the local landscape. In September 2022 we strongly objected to the potential danger of the Lithium batteries to be used for storage. These were withdrawn from the plan shortly afterwards. We also objected to the proposals, in the new Local Plan, for the development of 100 houses on the wild woodland north of Rareridge Lane until there was a full appraisal of the potential loss of biodiversity.

On a different note we are pleased that the Society's arguments for the retention of Abbey Mill, made in late 2018, were successful. Beechcroft's final, approved application states it will be turned into flats. Copies of all the Society's relevant letters are available under 'Planning Matters' on our website ([www.bishopswalthamsociety.org.uk](http://www.bishopswalthamsociety.org.uk)). Please take a look.

## Grants and Donations

These are briefly covered in the Treasurer's report, but we are pleased that we were able to continue making donations during the year: Disaster Emergency Committee Ukraine Appeal, £75; Bishop's Waltham Oral History Group, £200; St Peter's Country Fayre Donation, £50. As one of the Sponsors of the Henry VIII Celebrations, the Society shared the £100 prize for "Community Event of the Year" Award 2022 and all agreed to donate the prize money to Meon Valley Food Bank.

As in previous years we have hypothecated our Gift Aid and so we propose to donate the £420 we received for 2022 to the same cause - the Food Bank.

## Website

Our website is designed to attract new members and to be an easy place for current members to keep in touch with what we are doing. It can be found at [www.bishopswalthamsociety.org.uk](http://www.bishopswalthamsociety.org.uk)

## Publications

No new publications were forthcoming in 2023 and our stock of existing books is now quite small. This means that this source of revenue is drying up. There are longer term plans in the pipeline but none are near to fruition yet.

## Subscriptions

Since 2020 the Society has planned to raise subscription rates from £7 (single) and £12 (couple) to £10 and £16 respectively. The Trustees left this in abeyance for 2021 and 2022, but at the 2022 AGM it was agreed that from January 2023 these new rates would apply. This will be the first increase since 2013 - ten years earlier - and reflects the increased cost of goods and services and the current rise in inflation.

## Trustees

The chairman again wishes to express his gratitude for the hard work and dedication shown by the Society's trustees during the year. The Henry VIII celebrations placed an extra burden on those trustees involved, which in turn added to the workload of those focused on the Society's affairs. We were sorry to lose Lindsay Edge as one of our number, but she faced a potential conflict of interest in her role as Secretary to the Parish Council's Planning Committee and we completely understand.

## The Future

In November our Chairman wrote to all Society members, by email, announcing his retirement at the 2023 AGM. In doing so he made a personal appeal for members to seriously consider taking over the Chairman's role, adding that the Society was also looking for three or four additional trustees.

**It is with great regret that we have to report that, at the time of compiling this report, we have had no response whatsoever. This obviously has very serious ramifications for the future of the Society.**

The Society's Charity Commission-approved Constitution makes clear that the Society cannot function without a Chairman, nor can it function with less than six Trustees (including the Officers). The current chairman will not be standing again at the AGM and two other Trustees are not planning to stand for re-election. This means that the Society can no longer operate under its Constitution. So, if nobody has stood for election as chairman, after Item 7 a) (election of chairman) on the agenda then the current Treasurer (Keith Fry) will announce, before the other Trustees have stood down (Item 8), that an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society be held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023 to start the orderly winding up process that will close the Society. To facilitate this, one of the retiring Trustees has agreed to remain in place until the end of March just to ensure that the committee itself remains quorate.

Given the Society's current membership numbers (350+) and its secure financial position (£9,000+), this is a very bleak and disappointing outcome, especially for those who, in the past and over recent years, have devoted a great deal of effort to ensure the Society's success.

We earnestly hope that there are those among the Bishop's Waltham community who will step forward to take the Society on past its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026. Please do seriously consider this, we the current trustees have enjoyed what we have been doing.

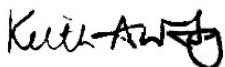
The current chairman, Tony Kippenberger, will happily have any sort of informal conversations about what is involved, and will obviously offer a great deal of help to any successor or future trustee - as will the remaining trustees.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The society's finances have been more complex this year than in previous years because the society was heavily involved with the Tudor Festival and the celebration around the Treaty of Waltham.

In order that any donors or sponsors could be better assured of the veracity of any requests for support, any funds went through the Special Projects Fund which is held by a charity, namely Bishops Waltham Society. Thus the financial arrangements and accounting need to be scrutinised by an independent examiner who can attest to their probity. This is what happened and the examiner in question was our usual examiner Paul Emmerson. However when a single account serves two purposes, namely Bishops Waltham Society and the Tudor Experience, it almost goes without saying that the two sets of funds become entangled. With hindsight other arrangements may have been better, but what was done was done. It seemed simple starting the year with start up money of £3000 in the Tudor Experience/Special Projects Fund, but money went into the wrong places which meant transfers and other complications.

The accounts which are presented to you accurately reflect the position at the end of 2023. The loss within the special projects fund relates to a small subsidy to the Tudor Experience which the Society underwrote to the tune of £1000. The loss within the main fund relates to the transfer to the special projects fund of the proceeds from the sale of the Palace Guide stock to the Museum trust.



Keith A W Fry

January 2023

### **Examiners comments on the above**

I agree that, with the benefit of hindsight, it would have been simpler and more transparent to have opened a bank account in the name of the Charity styled "Tudor Experience" (or equivalent) dedicated to recording transactions for this one-off event. However, despite the complexity of the Accounts as produced, I am entirely satisfied that the end result is correct



Paul Emmerson

January 2023

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022			BALANCE SHEET ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022			YEAR
	2022	2021		2022	2021	
	£	£		£	£	
<b>INCOME</b>			<b>ASSETS</b>			
Subscriptions	2,065.00	2,178	Income and Expenditure account	5,086.89	3,977	
Donations	137.75	558	Reserves	3,000.00	3,000	
Gift Aid	418.97	410	Total current account	8,086.89		
Meetings	239.75	0				
Changing Face	96.00	228				
WW1 Book	33.00	60				
Palace Guide	1,640.00	74				
Administration (includes Henry)	2,343.70	0				
Paypal fees	-1.34	-36				
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,972.83</b>	<b>£3,472</b>	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>£8,086.89</b>	<b>£6,977</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
Administration	804.96	751	Brought forward	6,977.47	6,216	
Grants	265.00	750	Excess of income/expenditure	-452.58	761	
Newsletters	22.50	0				
Meetings	1,670.28	936				
Changing Face	0.00	0				
WW1 Book	0.00	4				
Purchases	477.60	0				
Website	344.40	270				
Sale of Pal Guides transfer to SP	1,562.00	0				
Transfer to SP (includes Henry)	2,278.67	0				
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,425.41</b>	<b>£2,711</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,524.89</b>	<b>£6,977</b>	
<b>Excess of income/expenditure</b>	<b>-£452.58</b>	<b>£761</b>	<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>£6,524.89</b>	<b>£6,977</b>	
<b>Special Projects Fund</b>						
	2022	2021		2022	2021	
	£	£		£	£	
<b>INCOME</b>			<b>ASSETS</b>			
Henry Income	38484.00	3000.00	Bank account	2,651.12	3,000.00	
BWMT Payment in error	10.00	0.00				
Calendar sales donation	112.00	0.00				
Transfer from C/A	3840.67	0.00				
<b>Total</b>	<b>£42,446.67</b>	<b>£3,000.00</b>	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>£2,651.12</b>	<b>£3,000.00</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
Henry Expenditure	42785.55	0.00	Brought forward	3,000.00	0.00	
Transfer to C/A	10	0.00	Excess of income/expenditure	-348.88	0.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£42,795.55</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,651.12</b>	<b>£3,000.00</b>	
<b>Excess of income/expenditure</b>	<b>-£348.88</b>	<b>£3,000</b>	<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>£2,651.12</b>	<b>£3,000.00</b>	