

Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society
Charity Number 278815

Annual Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2023

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Chairman's Report 2023/24

1 Overview

The Society has continued to provide the full spectrum of its activities to its members. We regularly monitor changing national and sector developments in the light of our overall aims, as set out in our constitution, linked from the front page of our website. Again, I must thank you all, and particularly our project volunteers and our committee members, all of whom have a key role in ensuring that the Society continues to be seen as a leading organisation in family history. The Society does not employ any staff, so the huge amount of time, energy, expertise and hard work that our volunteers all give deserves public recognition. I have used the same headings for my report as in previous years; the more significant items come first.

2 New website

Our new website was launched in June 2023 built and hosted by Beachshore, and has had a major impact on many aspects of Society work. The new address is <https://www.chfhs.org.uk/>. For our members, the most significant change is that searching through our database then allows everyone to see all the transcribed information for any event, from more than four million records. The previous payment by using tokens to see the full record has been stopped. Some members do not yet seem to be aware of this change, and I hope this AGM report will encourage them to make full use of the enhanced access to further their knowledge and research. Non-members can use the search facilities to search for information and then make online purchases of downloads / CDs, books, maps and also membership so they can then receive all the member benefits listed on the website.

Other content in the members' section of the website includes policies, strategies and guidelines, past journals and newsletters, recordings of talks, member surname interests, and e-journals from other societies.

For our committee, the new website has changed the way we receive and store business information. The papers for the bi-monthly committee meetings are all filed together by meeting date and provide a permanent record of our work. Events are set up through the website, recordings made available to members. The new website has made the management of our work more transparent and easier to use. Role descriptions for committee post holders have also been updated, and a Knowledge Audit lists areas of expertise and interest for each committee member.

I should like to thank both Beachshore and our team for the huge amount of work involved in preparing and launching the new website. As with all new websites, there were initial issues that needed to be resolved, and we have worked together to solve these. There are still some issues that have held up the ongoing transcription and checking process for the final Wisbech Museum and Huntingdon records. We have applied a temporary fix, and I am very sorry for the disruption this has caused our volunteers who give their time and expertise freely.

I also need to thank ED2 for hosting the previous website for many years. Our webmaster still has access to the previous content when this is necessary.

3 Membership

The past year has seen a great increase in our membership. The new website allows us to generate daily and longer-term reports and we recruit between 30 and 50 new members each month. As with all societies, not everyone renews their membership, but the total number of members has grown by about 350 in the past twelve months, a 15% increase. A major reason for this is our increased social media presence particularly with Facebook, and the work that committee members do on a daily basis to post interesting content to a wide audience and promote an awareness of our work and encourage people to join the Society. We have written a Social Media policy to provide guidance in this rapidly growing area of our work; the policy is on the website. The dedicated telephone line number for contacting the Secretary was rarely used and the account has been dropped.

4 Exhibitions and shows

We had a booth at the online Really Useful Show hosted by the Family History Federation in November 2023. There are always new processes and procedures with online shows, and the small team staffing our booth attended several training sessions.

The number of physical family history exhibitions is starting to increase as we adjust to new ways of working. We had a stall at the Suffolk Family History Society fair in Ipswich, but most of our work has been concentrated on preparing for the Really Useful Show Live at St Ives on 20 April. The Society has been involved in two of the five working groups and the co-ordinating group. I am writing this report before the Show, and planning is nearing completion with more than 50 tables sold, the event will take place before our AGM. Several online planning meetings are held each month. This is the first family history physical event that the Federation has hosted for four years, and we are pleased that the East Anglian Group of Family History Societies has chosen a location in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. The initial suggestion for the Fair came from the meetings of the East Anglia Group, the group provides an opportunity to share practice amongst family history societies across the region.

5 Partnership work

Two member visits and tours of the Cambridge University Library and Archives took place in September and January. Both were fully booked, and several of those visiting applied for the free University Library membership offer available to our members. Both tours included displays of maps, family history sources, and a summary of the recently completed Ely and Wisbech Assizes cataloguing project, funded by the Society.

Society volunteers have just begun working on the preparation of Consistory Court records so that they are easier and therefore less expensive to catalogue. Both the Library and the Society are looking at a range of funding sources so this new large-scale project can be started.

The County Archives and Ancestry project to digitise all the parish registers in both Ely and Huntingdon Office and match these to Society transcripts is continuing. The completed work is projected to go live on Ancestry during 2024 and will have a significant impact on family history research in both Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. We have received our first annual payment from Ancestry for using our transcriptions. The Society made donations to the Archives Service to fund new laptops and we have been asked to purchase a display cabinet for the entrance foyer area at Ely. This will include a note that it was funded by the Society. The new cabinet should be ordered at the start of the financial year, although it is unlikely it will be delivered in time for attendees at our AGM in this year. We continue to monitor Ebay for potential purchases in liaison with Archives staff; sometimes the documents sell for very high prices, but successful bids are highlighted in the Archives reports to the CAGALS group at which the Society is a full member.

We have deposited older Society records including minutes of meetings and accounts in the Ely Archives office and developed a Retention Policy to provide guidance for both physical and digital content.

Continuing links with the County Library Service include using venues for surgeries and talks and the purchase of archival quality storage boxes for the Cambridgeshire Collection. Following an approach from the Society, the libraries have agreed to become a Family Search Affiliate Library. This will mean that the full range of Family Search resources will be accessible to everyone visiting the library including our members. Previously, it would have been necessary to make an appointment at a Family Search Centre for those records not freely available online for home access.

Other significant partners include the Museum of Cambridge, local museums and village societies. We attend events with these organisations on a regular basis. Our work with local schools was highlighted at the inauguration of a new community centre near Mill Road in Cambridge. The local community has continued its enthusiasm for how family history sources can contribute to an understanding of area and its history. I was one of several people interviewed by a sixth form student about the contribution that community history can make. Work is also ongoing with Stretham Primary School.

The Society has submitted a response to two recent issues – the proposal to destroy original copies of wills after they have been digitised, and the proposal to close the Bury St Edmunds Archives office and move the content to Ipswich. Many Cambridgeshire records are at Bury.

6 Projects

The final transcribing and matching work for the Wisbech and Fenland Museum parish register collection is continuing, as is the ongoing work to integrate the Huntingdonshire parish registers into the database search. As new records become available, they are listed on the home page of our website, for both members and others to see.

We have started to look at how Fenland cemetery registers can be more accessible and will be discussing this with all parties over the next few months.

7 Meetings and Surgeries

The series of talks held three times a month continue to attract our members from all over the world. The talks at March library provide an opportunity to chat with other members over a cup of tea or coffee, and the March group also organised a trip to the National Archives in Kew.

The talks at the traditional Huntingdon time are zoom only, and the Cambridge talks have now become zoom only from September 2023, as the numbers attending in person did not justify the hire costs of the venue. Most of the speakers give permission for their talks to be recorded, and these are then added to the members' section of our website. All talks are publicised in our monthly newsletters, and reports are included in each quarterly journal.

Surgeries continue to be held at Bar Hill, Cambridge, Ely, Huntingdon, March and St Ives. Numbers attending each venue vary, but feedback from those helped confirms how widely appreciated the help, guidance and advice they receive is valued. Many of those helped donate to the Society or join as a new member.

Committee members have given a series of family history related talks to local groups, and radio interviews. We were chosen as the representative for the University Library family history constituency to help understanding of the needs of all categories of users.

8 Accounts and Independent Examiner for 2023

Our Treasurer has prepared the 2023 accounts, and these are independently examined by Peter Rasberry from Clenshaw Minns. We are proposing that Peter Rasberry continue as our independent examiner for 2024.

9 Honorary Life Memberships

We have just over 20 HLM's in recognition of the significant and long last lasting work that they have done for the Society. This year, we are not proposing any new HLMs.

10 Committee nominations

Each of our committee members has a key role in Society work and has confirmed their willingness to be nominated and seconded. The split between nominated and co-opted members fits the structure of our constitution, but all committee members have full voting rights. There are no changes to our constitution.

11 Five-year plan

We have significantly strengthened our approach to research, appointing a new Research Officer who is supported by research assistants, all of whom are experienced at answering the range of enquiries we receive. The research team now has access to a Society Ancestry account as well as the Find My Past account, so that we can research more widely the enquiries we receive, many of which are challenging, as the enquirer will have undertaken much preliminary work. The plan informs our work and is on the website.

David Copsy

Chairman, March 2024

Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society
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Independent examiner's report

To: Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society

This report on the financial statements of the Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society for the year end 31 December 2023, which are set out in the Annual Report is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act 2011.

Respective responsibilities of the Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society and the examiner

As members of the Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that an audit is not required (under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to examine the financial statements following the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act), and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes considerations of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeking explanations from you as members of the Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's unqualified statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act.

have not been met; or

to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Peter Rasberry, FCCA, FMAAT

Clenshaw Minns, 24 Market Place, Swaffham, Norfolk, PE37 7QH

Dated _____

Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society
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Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Income statement

	2023	2022
	£	£
<u>Income</u>		
Membership sales	11,710.00	9,734.00
Sales, downloads and tokens	9,634.87	11,570.51
Donations	115.00	133.00
FFHS royalty income	19,306.49	12,967.49
	<u>40,766.36</u>	<u>34,405.00</u>
<u>Cost of sales</u>		
Opening stock	729.30	931.70
Bookstall purchases and expenses	-	91.30
Closing stock	(819.50)	(729.30)
	<u>(90.20)</u>	<u>293.70</u>
Gross profit	<u>40,856.56</u>	<u>34,111.30</u>
<u>Expenses</u>		
Journal printing and expenses	7,385.62	7,927.17
Printing and stationery	199.11	279.42
Advertising and publicity	-	50.00
Postage and telephone	361.02	415.98
Website	13,654.96	14,625.27
Fairs and conferences	30.00	-
Hall, speakers and branch costs	1,948.38	2,204.41
C.R.O. and other donations	12,058.09	157.50
Accountancy	810.00	810.00
Paypal and gocardless commission	515.86	556.01
General expenses and travel	1,246.40	1,070.89
Subscriptions, donations and expenses	974.99	729.08
	<u>39,184.43</u>	<u>28,825.73</u>
<u>OTHER INCOME</u>		
Interest received	3,996.45	799.87
Investment gains/(loss)		(2,316.02)
	<u>3,996.45</u>	<u>(1,516.15)</u>
<u>Net profit</u>	<u>5,668.58</u>	<u>3,769.42</u>

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Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Statement of financial position

	2023	2022
	£	£
<u>Current assets</u>		
Stocks	819.50	729.30
Cash at bank and in hand	121,666.33	115,597.95
	<u>122,485.83</u>	<u>116,327.25</u>
<u>Current liabilities</u>		
Trade creditors	490.00	-
Net current assets	<u>121,995.83</u>	<u>116,327.25</u>
<u>Capital and reserves</u>		
Brought forward at 1 January 2023	116,327.25	112,557.83
Profit for the year	5,668.58	3,769.42
	<u>121,995.83</u>	<u>116,327.25</u>

These financial statements were approved by the board of members and authorised for issue on _____, and are signed on behalf of the board by:

Mr D Copsey
Chairman
Charity Number 278815