

The Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING COVERING 2015

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at 12:40 pm on Saturday 12 November 2016 at the Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, London, W1S 4BS. There were 30 members present.

1. Acting Chairman's Introduction: The Acting Chairman, Frank James, conducted the meeting and welcomed those present. He explained that SHAC's Chairman Robert Anderson had been named as interim President of the Chemical Heritage Foundation, a role which required him to live in the USA. It had been agreed at the Council meeting held on 27 July 2016 that whilst Dr Anderson was fulfilling this role Professor James would be Acting Chairman. Under the constitution, this would not affect Dr Anderson's membership of council.

2. Apologies for Absence: The following apologized for absence at the AGM: Hasok Chang, Carolyn Cobbold, Gerrylynn Roberts and Alan Rocke.

3. Presentation of Trustees Annual Report (TAR) and Statement of Accounts (as independently examined) for 2015: The 2015 accounts for members were distributed in hard copy with annotations specifically for members. (The *unannotated* accounts had already been published on the SHAC website.) The meeting noted these accounts together with the Trustees annual report ("TAR"), also already published on the website, without comment.

4. Secretary's Report: The Secretary's Report for 2015 is included in the Trustees Annual Report (see above). The Acting Secretary provided members with a report on SHAC's activities to date in 2016.

Meetings: The Society's spring meeting was held on 11 February 2016 on "High Pressure in the Interwar Period" at the Science Museum's Dana Research Centre, Queen's Gate, London. Following papers by six invited speakers, The Morris Award was presented to Dr Anthony S. (Tony) Travis, who went on to give the accompanying lecture, "Nitrogen Capture: The Emergence of a Global Industry." Including speakers and non-members twenty-nine people registered to attend.

Publications: Two issues of the Society's scholarly journal *Ambix* have been published so far in 2016. Three articles from the August issue are available online and the issue should be dispatched in hard copy to members in early December. There have been various delays to publication and dispatch in 2016. On behalf of SHAC and its publishers Taylor and Francis, the Acting Secretary apologised for these delays and assured members that both T&F and the Society are working hard to get publication back on schedule. *Ambix* is edited by Jennifer Rampling, with Alan Rocke as deputy editor. Two issues of the Society's Newsletter, *Chemical Intelligence*, edited by Judith Mawer, have already been published in 2016, with the next issue expected in late December 2016 or early January 2017.

SHAC Graduate Network: For the seventh year, SHAC organised an international workshop to provide training on research skills and methodology for postgraduate students and early career researchers. The workshop "Colouring and Making in Alchemy and Chemistry" was hosted by the ARTECHNE research group and took place at Utrecht University on 26 October 2016. Six students gave papers and there were keynote lectures from Prof. Ernst Homburg and Prof. Tara Nummedal. Twenty-nine people attended the workshop which was organised by SHAC Postgraduate Rep, Mike Zuber, with the assistance of Thijs Hagendijk. SHAC gratefully acknowledged the financial support for this meeting from the Amsterdam School of History (University of Amsterdam), History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents (University of Amsterdam) and ARTECHNE.

Award Scheme: The Society invited applications for funding under its Award Scheme with a deadline of 31 May 2016. Following consideration by a committee of four Council members, New Scholars Awards for Research were approved as follows:

Ms Anna Gielas, PhD student, University of St Andrews, for research in Germany on Lorenz Crell's *Chemisches Journal* founded in 1778.

Dr Marieke Hendriksen, postdoctoral researcher, Utrecht University, for research in London on Boerhaave's influence on chemistry and pharmacy in the Netherlands and the Anglophone world, in particular in relation to inorganic pharmaceuticals.

In addition, two Subject Development Awards for conferences or the like were approved as follows:

Dr Fabrizio Bigotti, Wellcome Trust Research Fellow, University of Exeter, for an international conference in Pisa in May 2017, "Humours, mixtures, and corpuscles – a medical path to chemical corpuscularism in the seventeenth century".

Dr Elena Serrano, postgraduate fellow, Max Planck Institute, Berlin, for a workshop relating to the project "Domesticating the air: the chemistry, material culture, and politics of breathing safely" (from Wren onwards) aiming at a collective volume.

Partington Prize: Submissions have been invited for the 2017 Prize and the deadline for entries is 31 December 2016.

Oxford Part II Prize: The Oxford Part II Prize for 2016 was awarded to Andrew Brocklehurst of Keble College, Oxford for a thesis entitled "A scientific diet: elucidation of the structure of vitamin D and cholesterol, and related food analysis 1910-1945". It was presented by Dr Robert Anderson following the AGM.

Seminar Series: The Society supported one seminar series in 2016. Three meetings of the Oxford History of Alchemy and Chemistry Seminars took place in Trinity Term 2016 at CNRS – the Maison Française (which generously provided facilities and refreshments free of charge). Six speakers covered the following topics: Approaches to the History of Chemistry; Nineteenth-Century Chemistry and the Arts; and Early Modern Alchemy.

5. Membership Secretary's Report: SHAC's current membership stands at 274 with 170 full members, 48 retired members, 49 student members and 7 corporate members. Out of this total, 95 members are based in the UK, 65 in the US, and 87 in continental Europe. Membership in 2015 stood at 277 at the year end. Twenty-four members have joined in 2016 but a similar number have resigned or failed to renew. The Membership Secretary sadly reported the death of one of our members, Prof. Masanori Kaji – an obituary will appear in the next issue of *Chemical Intelligence*.

Any member whose subscription is due in January 2017 will receive an email reminder in December 2016. The membership secretary asked if members could pay promptly and encourage their colleagues to do the same. The membership rate for 2017 remains £40 for full membership, £30 for retired membership with 10 years' standing and £25 for student membership. Prices for 2017 and 2018 combined are £80, £60 and £50 respectively. To support early career researchers, SHAC Council has decided to extend eligibility for the student rate for renewers. Those who have held a valid student card **at any time** during 2016 are eligible now to renew at the student rate for either 2017 (£25) or 2017/2018 (£50) – *ie* even if they have now completed their studies or expect to do so during the period for which they are renewing. Members should contact the membership secretary if further guidance is needed.

6. Treasurer's Report: So far in 2016, the Treasurer had no *financially* unfavourable events to report. The reserve in the General Fund was likely to stand at a safe but not excessive level at the end of 2016. The end-2016 reserves in the two Restricted Funds (for the Morris Award and the Sources Supplement) were likely to be such that each Fund could survive its respective next foreseeable commitment without either (i) further donations from the respective benefactors or (ii) "bailing out" by the General Fund.

The Treasurer reported that in July 2016 Council had adopted a written policy for financial controls and investment, which mainly reflected previous actual practice. However, as this was now in written form, apparently unsatisfactory responses in the Annual Return to the Charity Commission in previous years

would not be repeated, provided Council reviewed the policy annually. The written policy had the additional advantage that it could be handed over from any Treasurer to his successor. The Treasurer also stated that the project to transfer the activities of the Society from an unincorporated association to a new charitable incorporated association (“CIO”) was in abeyance until someone was willing to take up the task where he had left off. In reference to the 2017 budget, the Treasurer noted that his successor would need to bear in mind that *ca* £1500 in the General Reserve might in due course be needed for solicitor’s fees relating to the CIO when the project was restarted.

Finally, the Treasurer expressed his regret that, in both 2015 and 2016, the amount budgeted by Council for the Award Scheme had not been spent. In the 2014 scheme, individual applicants had been invited to apply for up to £1000, and the scheme had been so oversubscribed that generally applicants could not be awarded the full amount requested. In 2015 and 2016, this amount had been reduced by Council to £500. The officers had decided that the Scheme for 2017 would offer grants of up to £750.

7. Election of Council Members and Officers: The Council for the Society of the History of Alchemy and Chemistry nominated Officers and Ordinary members of Council as below.

Officers: Dr Robert G.W. Anderson, Prof. Frank A.J.L. James, Dr Stephen Johnston, Dr Jennifer M. Rampling, Dr Anna Simmons, Dr Simon Werrett

Ordinary Members of Council: Dr José Ramon Bertómeu-Sánchez, Prof. William H. Brock, Prof. Hasok Chang, Dr Stephen Clucas, Carolyn Cobbold, Dr Peter J. Forshaw, Dr Georgiana “Jo” Hedesan, Dr Peter J.T. Morris, Prof. Lawrence M. Principe, Prof. Carsten Reinhardt, Prof. Alan Rocke

The nominations were proposed by John Christie, seconded by Brigitte Van Tiggelen and passed *nem con*.

8. Signatories on NS&I Investment Account

A motion to add the new Hon. Treasurer to this account was proposed by Jennifer Rampling, seconded by Robert Anderson and passed *nem. con*. Full details of the motion are available from Anna Simmons, Joint Honorary Secretary.

9. Operation of Current and PayPal Accounts

A motion to authorise the new Hon. Treasurer to operate these accounts was proposed by Jennifer Rampling, seconded by Robert Anderson and passed *nem. con*. Full details of the motion are available from Anna Simmons, Joint Honorary Secretary.

10. Other Business: The Acting Chair concluded by thanking the outgoing members of Council, Matthew Eddy, Ernst Homburg (former Hon. Book Reviews Editor), Mike Jewess (Hon. Treasurer) and John Perkins (former Hon. Treasurer) for their service to the Society. He also thanked Robert Anderson, Hattie Lloyd and Anna Simmons for their work organising the Autumn meeting.

Dr Anna Simmons, Joint Honorary Secretary, 05.12.2016