

## **SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP**

### **MINUTES OF THE 42<sup>ND</sup> AGM HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2011**

#### **AT THE GORING HEATH PARISH HALL, WHITCHURCH HILL AT 2:00 pm**

CHAIRMAN FOR THE AGM Nancy Nichols

MINUTES Michael Vincent

#### COMMITTEE 2010-11

President	Hazel Williams	Ordinary Members	Susan Sandford
Vice President	Ian Clarke		Michael Green
Chairman	David Oliver		Keith Lowndes
Vice-Chairman	Nancy Nichols		Rebecca Morrison
Hon. Secretary	Michael Vincent		Peter Stapleton
Hon. Treasurer	John Gibbs		

28 Members of SOAG were recorded as present

#### 1) Welcome from the President

Hazel Williams welcomed all to the meeting, as the new President. SOAG had sadly lost Cynthia Graham-Kerr and several other founder members, and that was reflected in the full agenda. Presentations in memory of Cynthia Graham-Kerr and describing the Pat Preece Landscape Archaeology Fund would follow the business of the AGM

David Oliver was attending his son's wedding and Nancy Nichols, Vice-Chairman, had agreed to chair the meeting.

#### 2) Opening remarks by the Chairman of the Meeting

Nancy Nichols welcomed everyone to the AGM and moved straight to item 3.

#### 3) Apologies for absence

These had been received from Brian Williams, Ruth Gibson, David Oliver, Pat Preece, Ann Strick, Pat Day, Val Knight and Becky Morrisson

#### 4) Adoption of the Minutes of the AGM held on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Proposed Mike Fulton      Seconded Sue Sandford      Adopted, with corrections

#### 5) Matters arising from the minutes of the 2010 AGM

None

#### 6) Adoption of Reports of Officers for 2010

##### 6.1) Chairman's Report

Mike Fulton noted that a precedent should not be set whereby future project leaders should be seen to have "to dip into their own pockets".

Proposed Mike Fulton      Seconded Margaret Westwood      Adopted without dissent

##### 6.2) Treasurer's Report

Mike Fulton asked about the cost of speakers, which he was told were typically £40. Mike Green observed that core activities (publishing etc) match membership income, and little of the field archaeology expenditure was actually met from subs and acknowledged the project leaders' contributions.

John Gibbs highlighted how excellent David Nicholls had been in obtaining funds for his projects.

Proposed Phillippa Wray    Seconded John Hefferan    Adopted without dissent

7) Adoption of the examined Accounts for 2010

Proposed Mike Fulton    Seconded David Cox    Adopted without dissent

8) Appointment of Mrs Trudi Kidd as Examiner for the 2011 Accounts

Proposed David Cox    Seconded John Hefferan    Adopted without dissent

9) Election of Officers and Ordinary Committee Members for 2011-12

Nancy Nichols thanked Sue Sandford for the wonderful job she had done as Bulletin Editor over many years, but was now standing down. John Hefferan would take over the Bulletin role.

Nancy introduced John Hefferan, David Jobling and Peter Stapleton, the new committee members.

Mike Fulton requested that a list of the new committee be attached to the minutes.

Vote for the Officers and Ordinary Committee Members

Proposed Alistair Graham Kerr    Seconded Sue Sandford    Adopted without dissent

10) Confirmation of Pat Preece and Margaret Westwood as Honorary Members

Hazel Williams gave a glowing résumé of Margaret's dedicated work for SOAG, including excavations at Newington and Abingdon in the 1980's, early fieldwork at Gatehampton and her 12 years as Honorary Secretary. (See citation below)

Nominated by Hazel Williams and approved without dissent

Sue Sanford spoke eloquently about Pat's contribution to SOAG since the mid 1970's, 5 years as chairman, and throughout dedicated to establishing Landscape Archaeology as an integral part of field research. (See citation below)

Nominated by Sue Sandford and approved without dissent

11) Any Other Business

1. The Ascott Park "country park" at Stadhampton was now open. SOAG had visited it both while excavations were in progress in 2009, and as a summer event in 2010, and had been asked to consider carrying out further geophysics for further analysis on the site.
2. Following on from David Nicholl's work for VCH Oxfordshire at Bix, VCH has invited SOAG to be a Partner and to be involved in the work now commencing on the "Ewelme Hundred".
3. Lecture venue: a move to a more accessible urban location has been discussed. This had been raised in the Messenger; only two comments had been received and the Committee would both welcome more feedback after the AGM and further consult the membership.
4. Alistair Graham Kerr confirmed that his mother's will contains a bequest to charities, which he would very much like to include SOAG, but this would be dependent on SOAG becoming a charity. Mike Vincent was researching into charity status for SOAG.

The meeting closed at 2:33 pm

## COMMITTEE 2011-12

President Hazel Williams  
Vice President Ian Clarke

### Officers:

Chairman David Oliver  
Vice-Chairman Nancy Nichols  
Hon. Secretary Michael Vincent  
Hon. Treasurer John Gibbs

### Ordinary Members:

Michael Green  
Keith Lowndes  
Peter Stapleton  
John Hefferan  
David Jobling

### Citation: Pat Preece, by Sue Sandford

“It is with real pleasure and a deep sense of gratitude that SOAG today is awarding Honorary Membership to Pat Preece.

New members may be unaware that Pat, who joined SOAG in the mid seventies, served on the committee for nearly 30 years and was for five years its chairman. ‘Always reliable, determined, ready with sound advice, and able quickly to cut through nonsense:’ this was how fellow former chairman Ian Clarke described her six years ago. But he was right to add that ‘kindness and humour’ were, and are, some of her other characteristics.

However, Pat’s major contribution to SOAG has always been through her research. For nearly 40 years, often with her great friends Mary Kift and Marian Fallowfield, Pat has been investigating the history of South Oxfordshire using as her primary sources the landscape itself, the memories of local people, and historical maps and documents. While working full-time in the Health Service, she studied Medieval Latin, Medieval handwriting and Old English, and in 1985 completed the three-year Oxford Certificate in Local History, taught by Joan Dils.

Pat’s combination of documentary research, interviews with working and retired woodmen and sharp-eyed observation has led to her becoming an acknowledged expert on local woodlands. She has contributed 41 articles to the SOAG Bulletin, fifteen concerning woodlands, as well as contributing to other journals, including Oxoniensia.

Pat has been inspired by our local countryside, usually beautiful, often enigmatic and intriguing; and by the writings of W.G. Hoskins and Oliver Rackham, who taught us how to read and understand the woods and hedges, banks and fields, tracks and paths in the landscape. Again in Ian’s words: ‘her determination to show that archaeology is not just about digging artefacts out of holes in the ground, but is about people, the way they lived, and the way they shaped the landscape around them, has been an inspiration to us all. Landscape Archaeology is the modern archaeology – Pat was in at the start of this pioneering movement.’

It gives me great pleasure to thank you, Pat, on behalf of the President, the Committee, and the Members for your past work in helping to run the organisation, but also for your dedication to establishing Landscape Archaeology as an essential and integral part of field research in the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group.”

Citation: Margaret Westwood, by Hazel Williams

“I am sure that like me you are very pleased that SOAG is today awarding honorary membership to Margaret Westwood.

Margaret had a career as a teacher of art in London girls schools before moving to Goring in the early 1980s. She met Cyn at the local yoga class, found her friendly and welcoming and joined SOAG. She already had an interest in historic buildings and had taken part in the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings National Barn Survey in the 1970s.

She and her husband, John, became keen members of SOAG, participating in most of the projects, large and small, that the SOAG group were involved in over the next 28 years. The first excavation they took part in was at Newington, the project that was recently re-excavated and was the subject of the January lecture by Gwilym Williams. Margaret has many fond memories of that excavation, so do have a word with her if you would like to hear more about the site.

Margaret also took part in the major excavation of the anglo-saxon monastery site at Abingdon in the 1980s where SOAG worked with Oxford Archaeology.

Following this, Margaret was one of the group that worked with OA on the Thames Water site at Gatehampton, and went on to do extensive fieldwork in the area in the late 1980s. A number of trial trenches were dug and I have an archive photo of Margaret, alone in a large ploughed field, obviously dressed for cold weather – the diggers were more hardy in those days – with trowel in hand, kneeling in front of a small 1m sq trench. It is thanks to the efforts of Margaret and the other early members that we have this project that has been so important to SOAG over many years.

But I think Margaret’s most important contribution to SOAG has been her 12 years as Hon Secretary from the early 1980s to the mid 1990s.

She mentioned to me that already the minute book was an historical archive of SOAG activity over many years. Margaret continued the meticulous recording by hand of the SOAG minutes and administration, before the days when personal computers became available.

SOAG was an active and social group and although Margaret downplays her role somewhat, crediting Cyn with organising activities, I’m sure that Margaret was equally responsible for the smooth running of the group over these many years. A lot of work was involved in the arranging of lectures, visits and social events – summer parties were held every year at the Oratory School in the late 80s.

After stepping down as Hon Sec, Margaret very kindly continued to help organise tea and coffee at lectures for several years. She and John have continued to be enthusiastic supporters of all SOAG activities and are still regulars at lectures and events, taking a keen interest in the various projects, I was pleased to see her at Gatehampton recently.

It is with great pleasure that we thank you, Margaret, for your past work as Hon. Secretary of the group for twelve years, for your participation in fieldwork on SOAG projects large and small over 28 years and for your continued and loyal support of all the SOAG’s events, projects and lectures.”