Minutes of the Anglo-German FHS 35th Annual General Meeting

Held on Saturday 10th June 2023

1. Welcome

Peter Towey welcomed members to the 2023 AGM.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Noële and Paul Barnfield; Eluned Eidmans; Sue Weston; Eva Lawrence; Lynn and David Burling.

3. Minutes of last AGM 11th June 2022

The previous minutes had been published on the AGFHS website and were accepted by those Members attending the meeting.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairperson's Report

Good afternoon. I would firstly like to apologise that I cannot be present at the AGM, especially as it is the first one the society has been able to conduct in person since the outbreak of Covid 19 in 2020.

Our original plans to resume in-person meetings last summer were thwarted by train strikes (still a problem today) but I am very pleased to say we eventually managed to get together again and have had some excellent meetings, with extremely interesting speakers.

Covid forced us into using Zoom meetings but, although this has caused considerable extra work (and headaches) for Jeremy, in fact this turned out in many ways to be beneficial, as it has meant that members who, for whatever reason, are not able to travel to King's Cross, can now log-in to meetings. Jeremy has since gone to great efforts to make sure that the talks are recorded and available to people, and recently he has also managed to sort out the technical difficulties so that the talks at King's Cross are also available 'live' on Zoom.

Our bookshop, which was a postal service only for 2 years, is also now usually available at meetings, which is a great benefit to members.

I also want to remind everyone again about our Facebook page, if you are not yet a subscriber. This has been up and running over 2 years now, since March 2021, and has been a great success.

Sadly in the last couple of years several very long-standing members have passed away, I will mention in particular Betty Landrock, who died in early 2022 and Rose Mint who passed away in April. I know they were both very great supporters of the AGFHS and are sorely missed. Thankfully I was able to attend the funerals of both these ladies.

As always, I would now like to give a very special vote of thanks to all the committee for their work and support 'behind the scenes'. Everyone has continued to do their part in order help to keep the Society going, Jeremy and Ann who have taken on much more responsibility in arranging and setting up the Zoom meetings, liaising with speakers, facilitating the

showing of illustrations and dealing with the inevitable technical issues etc. as well of course as Jeremy being Treasurer. I would also like to thank our Vice-Presidents, Peter and Jenny for taking on the majority of the admin for our Facebook page and answering the many queries that have resulted (which has also led to more members) as well as Jenny being Bookshop Manager and continuing to run the postal bookshop etc. Thanks too to Jennifer Taylor and all the editorial team who have continued to produce the Blatt and occasional papers, Betty our Membership Secretary, Sue, our Minutes Secretary, Paul our Internment Curator, who also runs the bookshop at meetings and Gwen our Secretary, KGL coordinator and Regional Meetings Coordinator. Apologies if I have missed anyone out.

With the added burden of ever spiralling costs for everything there are still difficulties to be faced but overall, I hope you will agree we are still an interesting and very worthwhile society. I would ask you all to continue to bear with us, as we strive to do our best for you. In the meantime, please continue with your membership, keep up your research and if you cannot attend the in-person meetings, keep logging into the Zoom meetings, the website and the Facebook page.
Thank you.

Noële Barnfield – Chairperson June 2023

6. Treasurer's Report for Year Ending 31st March 2023

As you will see from the accompanying accounts, we finished the financial year with a significant decrease in total funds of £2586 with respect to assets at the end of 2021-22; and with the Deposit Account standing at £12805, compared to £14278 at the end of the previous financial year.

With respect to income over the year, the significant differences compared with 2021-22 are:

1) A very modest £225 (or approximately 3%) increase in membership subscriptions, accompanied by a corresponding increase in donations of £65 (approx. 8%). These figures reflect the continued drop in membership numbers, partially offset by the increase in subscription fees which was introduced in 2022. I would like to thank members for their continued generous donations which they include with their subscription payments.

2) Sales from the bookshop and the bookstall at the bimonthly meetings in London have shown a significant increase, amounting to £994 (up £272 or 38% on 2021-22).

3) With the restarting of in-person bimonthly meetings at King's Cross there has been receipt of £107 in the sale of raffle tickets. The traditional raffle has been replaced by the issue of a ticket with the newly introduced entry fee of £2 for members and £3 for non-members. This helps offset the rental fee for the hall.

4) With bank interest rates still remaining very low, the interest earned on the Deposit Account has been a modest £27.

All other items remained approximately in line with last year.

With respect to expenditure, the significant items are:

1) The figure of £1188 under Other Printing for a reprint of the New Members Welcome Pack. This is expected to be sufficient stock to cover the next 5 years.

2) With the return to in-person bimonthly meetings at King Cross, there is now the cost of room rental included in Expenditure of £695. From April of this year, the Methodist Church has significantly increased the rate from £30 to £55 per hour and also now requires that the fee be paid at least 2 weeks in advance, so the April 2023 booking fee of £275 has appeared in the 2022-2023 financial accounts.

3) To enable the recording of speakers' talks, a combined webcam/microphone has been purchased at a cost of £136 (itemised under Equipment). With a successful trial of a Zoom transmission from the Church in April using a mobile broadband signal, we will hopefully also be able to allow more distant members to participate in meetings, both live and *via* recordings.

All other items remained approximately in line with the previous year.

The estimate of the value of the Society's assets shows a decrease of £554, due to decrease in the Bookshop inventory through sales.

In summary, it has been another year where we have seen a significant reduction in funds, partly due to the reprint of the Welcome Pack, but also due to a decrease in membership and to the return to normality of the in-person bimonthly meetings at King's Cross and the concomitant increase in the rental fee. This has only been partly offset by the increase in the membership rates introduced in 2022. Thus, I would predict the Society to run at a loss again this year, even without any additional unplanned expenses. The committee has been looking at additional ways to reduce annual expenditure and ensure we only need to take modest or, ideally, no further withdrawals from the Deposit account. After discussions with Jennifer Taylor, I have proposed that the Occasional 'Blatt is only published every two years, at a maximum. As its name implies this was always intended to be produced only when suitable articles were submitted of a sufficient detail to fill a complete magazine. In fact, the Occasional 'Blatt in 2022 was only able to go ahead after the last-minute receipt of an appropriate article. Looking at the summary accounts, it can be clearly seen that the Society subscriptions alone (£8114) are not currently sufficient to cover the costs of three regular and one Occasional 'Blatt per annum (£8545). This reflects the drop in membership over the last 10 years and the fact that there are fixed production costs, independent of the number of copies printed. I am also in discussions with the Editorial team, looking at cheaper and more sustainable alternatives to the current editorial website that they use for compiling the regular editions of the 'Blatt.

As always, I would like to finish by thanking John Short for his advice, and the meticulous auditing of the accounts and dealing with the masses of paperwork that he has to sift through.

Jeremy Gilmore – Treasurer, June 2023

The financial statements for 2022 -23 were agreed by those members attending the AGM.

7. Other Reports

a. Secretary

It was great to meet many of you when I gave my talk on my husband's von Walthausen ancestry in April. Sadly I cannot attend today's AGM. I am always pleased to get emails / letters from members, particularly in response to my "Notes". This year I have had some correspondence from members of the Catholic FHS as I act as the point of contact for any German interest they might have. Please do get in contact with me about any King's German Legion questions or anything else I may be able to help with. I would like to finish by thanking all the other committee members who do a really good job. Most of whom have many years' service to the Society.

Gwen Davis – Secretary, June 2023

b. Membership Secretary

The Society's membership unfortunately continues to fall and now stands at 473. The total number of new members joining since the last AGM was 18 considerably less than previous years. However the number leaving was 48 compared with over 80 last year. The number of renewal reminders sent out was also considerably less 58 compared with 150 last year.
On a more positive note the Facebook page now has 369 members and Jenny Towey recently posted a note to encourage more members to join the Society and so far two have joined. Plus there is a new series of WDYTYA which commenced on the BBC last week, in the past this has produced new members.
Once again I wish to remind members that renewal time is here and you will find the renewal form in the Summer edition of the Blatt together with a Standing Order Mandate. Those who prefer to pay by credit or debit card can renew at either the Parish Chest or Genfair.
And finally I would like thank you all for your kind donations

Betty Anderson – Membership Secretary, June 2023

c. Programme Organiser

This report will be a reminder of the talks we have had over the last year. But first, if you would like to do a talk about your ancestors, please get in touch with me. Also, if there is some topic related to social history or family history of either Germany or the UK which you would like to hear a talk about, also get in touch. I am also happy to book talks about German speakers from other areas than strictly Germany, so we have had talks about German-speaking people in Poland, Austria, Australia, North America, and Africa. Or, if you know of a particular speaker whose talk you would like to hear, get in touch and I will see what I can do. Contact details for all of our Committee members are on the inside covers of the Blatts. But please (and this is crucial)…when writing to anyone on the Committee, please mention AGFHS or tracing German ancestors or something clearly related to our society in your subject or we may think your note is spam and delete it without reading it! I think our membership secretary, Bette, is probably the most likely Committee member who can recognise the e-mail addresses of most of our members—the rest of us will know far fewer. And if you would like help putting your illustrations into a PowerPoint presentation, Jeremy is happy to help you do that and has done so for some of our members in the past.

Now, what talks have we heard over the last twelve months? The talk last year in June was *A Beginners Guide to Genealogy in North Rhine-Westphalia* by member Jeanette R. Rosenberg OBE. She is one of the world experts on tracing German Jewish ancestry, and the added bonus for all of our members is that while continually looking for more sources for tracing German-Jewish ancestry she keeps finding sources which any of our members can use to

trace their ancestors, whether they were Jewish or not. I ask Jeanette to do a talk for us every couple of years since more and more sources are appearing.

In August 2022 the first talk was *The Women's Work Collection at the Imperial War Museum* by member Sarah Paterson. The Imperial War Museum has a surprising amount of information about working women in wartime, as well as the things you might expect to find in a war museum. The second talk in August was *The Lusitania Disaster and its Consequences for German Communities in Britain* by Dr. Colin Chapman. This talk was a bit of a diversion from his usual topic for us which is about various camps across the UK during WW1 where POWs were based while they were doing various much-needed work around the country.

In October, we heard about *'Finished' in the Fatherland': Germany's Pre-war Schools for English Girls* by historian Mike Paterson—a fascinating look at a little-known subject. The second talk in October was *"The Lost Café Schindler: One family, two wars and the search for truth"* by author and lawyer Meriel Schindler. She told us about her charming but unreliable father and about his parents who ran a café in Innsbruck before and during World War Two.

In December, Dr Colin Chapman talked about *German Lives Gleaned from the Letters of WW1 Civilian and Combatant Prisoners*. These were letters and postcards from civilians and POWs who were held at Pattishall and its satellite working camps during the war, messages sent home to Germany which held fascinating snippets of information, giving us a glimpse of what life was like for them here, and for their families back home. December's second talk was *The Women Who Helped and Healed: The Story of the Parish Sisters at St George's German Lutheran Church* by historian Anette Jäger. She has been extensively studying the history of St George's German Lutheran Church in London's East End. Their German deaconesses worked in the area around the church as pastoral assistants, district nurses, welfare officers and youth workers in the German community there from 1903 until the 1980s. Some of our members are descended from Germans who went to that church. For those who may not know about it, St George's is the oldest surviving German Church in the UK. The church is not used regularly as a church now, but it has an interesting organ, hosts a series of talks and concerts, and has a dedicated friendship group associated with it. The church is now cared for by the Historic Chapels Trust and their website has photos of the church and of the other chapels which are looked after by them. Our society held meetings there for many years, both in the school next door and later inside the church.

In February this year we had talks from two members of our society. Bronwyn Klimach's talk was *Some East Prussians Moved Even Farther East*. This was about her husband's Prussian ancestors who moved east in about 1800. Bronwyn has done extensive research into the history of the part of Poland to which her husband's ancestors travelled. The second talk in February was from member Christopher Rawlins. His talk had the title *Catch me if you can! The strange but fascinating story of Alexander Mede;* Mede who was one of Chris's ancestors. Alexander had an amazing knack for disappearing and reappearing, used several different names, and jumped ship at least once, escaping successfully. I cannot wait to hear the next bit of the story once Chris has done a bit more research.

In April this year we heard from two more members of our society. The first talk was by Gwen Davis about her husband's ancestor--her title was *Capt. von Walthausen of the King's German Legion (and a Murder Mystery in the Family?)* Gwen has spent many years researching Capt. Von Walthausen and the King's German Legion and if you think your ancestor was involved with the KGL, Gwen is the go-to person to learn more; and you can buy her books on the KGL from our bookshop.

April's second talk was from member Alison Jones. Her talk was titled *The Centre for WWI Internment at Knockaloe, Isle of Man: How we can help descendants of internees to research*

the lives and stories of their ancestors using the resources we hold --Alison is the Curator there. During WWI, the camp at Knockaloe held more internees at its height than any other internment camp in the UK, some 22,000. These were all civilian internees, men of working age, who had been living and working in the UK before the war and who were thought to present a possible internal threat. Some of our members have ancestors who were held at Knockaloe and/or at other camps around the UK, and over the years we have had many talks about such camps. Alison and her husband are the mainstays of the Centre and she is the person to consult if you think your ancestor may have been held at Knockaloe. You can also buy books about the camp from our society's bookshop.

After the AGM today and before the tea break (if this AGM is not too long!), we will have a short demonstration from Jenny Towey of how DNA passes characteristics from one generation to another, with sweeties standing in to represent the genes. Then after the tea break Jenny will give us a talk on *DNA For Beginners*. I hope you will stay for that, whether or not you feel particularly scientifically inclined—just think back to the sweeties you are about to see and remember that they show how genes can become distributed down through the generations and that is the essence of the thing.

Finally, a few thanks—first to Jeremy for handling the tech needed for the talks and our meetings. If you would like to help with that occasionally, it would be greatly appreciated.
Also, thank you to those members who have given or suggested talks for us. However, if you have suggested a talk or speaker and heard nothing since, please remind me—I receive many e-mails daily and they can disappear quickly from the first page.

Ann Sternberg Gilmore – Programme Organiser, June 2023

d. Mitteilungsblatt Editorial

In the past year we have maintained the schedule of three issues per annum plus one occasional issue. The Editorial Team is happy to say that we are well and truly over the covid period and members have now been more forthcoming in providing contributions. The advantage is that we have more material from which to select in order to provide our readers with a range of topics, but on the minus side it does mean than contributors may have to wait a little longer for their work to appear in print. Your patience in this regard is appreciated. At this point I think it is appropriate that I thank our Vice-Presidents, Jenny and Peter Towey, for supplying so many articles for the *Blatt* during the period when our members were reluctant to contribute.

You will have heard this afternoon that our membership is shrinking, and so is our income. As a consequence, for reasons of economy, the occasional issue will in future no longer be published on an annual basis, but will truly be occasional. As mentioned in the summer issue of the Blatt, there are plans for an occasional issue this year, but next year, 2024, there will be no occasional issue. However, if you have extensive material on one topic which would be suitable for an occasional issue, the Editorial Team will still like to hear from you so that the next issue can be prepared.

It must be stressed that the production of the Blatt is a team effort. In addition to the Editorial Team there is a team of proof readers who eliminate errors and typists who digitise the hard copy submitted by members and, last but not least, the publishers who give the final manuscript a professional finish. Thanks are due to all these people.

Jennifer Taylor - Editorial Team, June 2023

e. Publications

There is not much to say on publications as there have been no books in the pipeline this year, and none expected in the near future.

Irene Cowan – Book Production Team Organiser, June 2023

f. Bookshop and Facebook

For those of you who don't know me I am Jenny Towey: a founder member, VP, Facebook administrator and Postal Bookshop Manager.

The Society's Facebook page now has 363 (May 17th) members – a few are joining the Society, a few are buying our publications and many are getting good responses from me and other members about their questions.

The postal bookshop is very slow: I'm receiving a few online orders, via either GenFair or Parish Chest, and even fewer postal requests. The cost of our publications have not gone up - it's the high cost of postage which pushes the prices up and we have no control over that.

We took the Society's stand to our local FHS (which is WsM & District)'s 40th anniversary Open Day on May 20th.

We invite volunteers to take over the postal bookshop…you don't have to take the stand to FH Fairs but we would be delighted if you did – and we would come along to offer help where we can.

Peter and I are holding a Regional Meeting in our home next Saturday for anyone who lives near Weston-super-Mare: the bookshop is available, plus the Names Index, a chance to peruse our research books, to natter and to ask questions.

If anyone would like to host a Regional meeting then please let me know as, within reason, we will also attend.

Jenny Towey, Vice President, June 2023

g. Name Index Officer and FEEFHS Liason

I look after the Name Index on behalf of the Society. It is a major source for research into people of German ancestry in UK and is available to all members. This has been a very quiet year on the Name index front; I am not sure why.

The Index includes the information from the church registers of virtually all the German churches in UK and these often include information that you will not find in British certificates or, pre-civil registration here, in British parish registers.

In the welcome pack you will have received, there is a form, "The Name Index", No 5: for adding your ancestors to the Index and also a search form, No 6: "Name Index Search Form". The Index does <u>not</u> just include the information members have input!

Another leaflet in the Pack is Leaflet No 9: "German genealogy research Service". The Society holds a large number of German family history research sources in book form or on CD-ROM. The leaflet lists them.

As the leaflet also says, I can search these for you and spend 30 minutes researching your family online and advising you how to proceed with your research. The leaflet explains the procedure but, in general, you need to write to me with what you know about your family and tell me what you wish to know.

A search in the books or CD-ROMS costs £2.00 and the advice costs £5.00. If you are lucky enough to find an ancestral family in one of the published sources, it may run to 10 or pages or more, in which case I would email you to warn you how much the postage would be. Postal charges now being a major issue!

Please read the leaflet! If you have lost or misplaced these leaflets, please send me a stamped self-addressed envelope and tell me which ones you want. If you live outside the UK, please email me and we will work something out!
My email is in the Blatt and I am happy to deal with any general research enquiries gratis.

Peter Towey, FSG, Vice-President and Name Index Officer, June 2023

h. Website

The website has been running smoothly over the last year, up until about 3 weeks ago, when the menus bar at the top of the Home page suddenly went awry. Although just about usable on a PC to navigate around the site, the menus have totally disappeared on the mobile version viewed on a smart phone or tablet. I have contacted our hosting company who have promised to sort this out next week, but this will be part of a planned major upgrade of the Joomla Content Management System that is used to design the website and that I use for editing. I am awaiting a quote with some trepidation, this being one of those unplanned expenses that as Treasurer I mentioned could put us further in the red this present financial year.

I would like to take the opportunity to remind new members that there is a Names of Interest section on the website where members can post the family names they are researching in the hope that they may be able to make contact with others with useful information. However, this is independent of the names of interest that are published in the 'Blatt when a person first joins the Society. If new members wish to add these names to the website, they need to contact me (at website@agfhs.com), but please remember that this is open to the general public and you will need to give contact details, whether an email, address or phone number.

Jeremy Gilmore, Website Editor, June 2023

8. Any Other Business

AGFHS member, Andrew Güntert, kindly offered to join the committee. His offer was willingly accepted.

9. Election of Independent Examiner

John Short confirmed that he was happy to continue in this role. The members present voted their agreement to this.

There being no other business, Peter Towey thanked everyone for attending the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

ANGLO GERMAN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Receipts and Payments for the year to 31st March 2023

2021/22	**Receipts**	**2022/2023**	*20201/2022*	**Payments**	**2022/2023**
7889	Subscriptions	**8114**	1427	Fees (Insce etc)	**1320**
778	Donations	**843**		Donations & Presentations	**20**
722	Sales - Bookshop	**936**	8283	Mitteilungsblatt Printing	**8545**
	- Bookstall	**58**	1751	Other Printing	**1188**
	- Fairs			Social Events	**6**
210	Postages	**150**	24	Bookshop	
73	Research		502	Postage & telephone	**324**
1	Bank Interest	**27**		Venue Hire	**695**
	Social Events			Fairs	
	Raffles	**107**	485	Speakers	**525**
	Adverts		130	Stationery	**26**
				Equipment	**136**
				Committee Expenses	
				Refunds	
			17	Travel	**36**
9673	**Total Receipts**	**10235**	12619	**Total Payments**	**12821**
2946	Excess payments over receipts	**2586**		Excess Receipts over Payments	
12619	**Total**	**12821**	12619	**Total**	**12821**

ANGLO-GERMAN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Cash position and Statement of Assets as at 31st March 2023

2021/2022		**2022/2023**	2021/2022		**2022/2023**
18969	Opening Balance 1st April	**16023**	1579	Bank Current Account	**466**
			14278	Bank Deposit Account	**12805**
-2946	Excess Payments over Receipts	**-2586**			
	Excess Receipts over Payments		146	Cash items held - Treasurer	**146**
			20	- Bookshop flc	**20**
16023	Balance in Hand	**13437**	16023		**13437**

Hon. Treasurer's estimate of values of Society Assets as at 31st March 2023

2021/2022		**2022/2023**	2021/2022		**2022/2023**
0	Computers nominal		500	b/fwd	**609**
	Extra Equipment	**109**	5024	Society Publications	**4361**
0	Projectors nominal		300	Other Sale Items	**300**
500	Microfiche/CD Roms	**500**			
500	sub-total c/fwd	609	5824	**Total**	**5270**