

## **SBGAS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 17 October 1998**

Members and spouses attending were in alphabetical order): Roger and Pam Bristow, Nick and Christine Burgess-Jones, Felicity and Chris Craigan, Martin Graebe, Keith and Sylvia Lister, Lesley Moores, David Nicholls, Bill Rothern, Ray and Shirley Scott, David and Gillian Shacklock, Becky Smith, Jim Sunnucks, and Sybil Tope. Celia Westlake sent her apologies for not being able to attend.

The minutes of the last AGM (Oct. 25th 1997 at Bratton Clovelly) were read. After rectifying a serious omission from that meeting by inserting a belated thank you to David Shacklock for his sterling work as the Editor for the first eight years of the Society, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the 1997 AGM.

The Treasurer gave statement of the Society's finances. Basically, the funds stood at £409.63 as at Sept. 30th, a reduction of £96 from the preceding year (£505.87). However, it was pointed out that the true state of the finances was difficult to present accurately, as some members had paid in advance, whilst, more seriously, several members were in arrears. The Treasurer felt that although the balance had fallen in the year (largely due to increased costs (f.,356) of the Newsletter), there was probably no need to raise the subscription for the forthcoming financial year. However, the situation would probably need to be reviewed in one year's time. Leading on from this was the question of membership fee for overseas members. Currently, they pay £7.50 to reflect the extra postage to send the Newsletter abroad, and also to cover the currency conversion charge that banks impose (in practice a totally inadequate sum as the conversion charge is often equal to, or more, than the total cheque). This latter problem has now been resolved as our President, Dr Merriol Almond, has agreed to accept dollar cheques from American members and to reimburse the Society with a sterling cheque.

The question of members in arrears and how to deal with the problem was briefly discussed, but not resolved. After a short discussion, it was decided unanimously that the annual membership should coincide with the Society's financial year (Oct. 1st to Sept 30th) (Proposed by Ray Scott and seconded by Felicity Craigan). What was not decided at the meeting, but which was left to the Committee to deliberate) was how to treat existing members whose membership would normally fall due at differing times throughout the year, and new members who joined part way through the financial year. After some discussion, two options emerged; firstly, those members whose current membership was 3 months or less (or new members joining within 3 months of the end of the financial year) would have their membership extended to the end of the following financial year; secondly, members joining part way through a financial year would pay the full membership (currently £6), but receive the relevant number of back issues of the Newsletter for that year. It was agreed at the meeting to let the Committee discuss the options and decide which one to adopt.

Keith Lister raised the question of selling back numbers of the Newsletter - was it Society policy, and if so, how much do we charge? It was agreed that there is no problem in selling backnumbers. As for the cost, in the past Newsletters with coloured covers have been sold at £2 each, but it was thought that £1.50 was more appropriate for those with photocopied covers. The question of discount for complete runs was discussed, but decided against. The question was then raised about building up a stock of backnumbers (no copies of most of

the earlier Newsletters exist) and how many should be produced at a time (the total cost of photocopying has to be balanced against the convenience of being able to produce several copies at a time, rather than print-on-demand). Keith would obtain a quotation for the cost of producing a complete run and then calculate how much of the Society's funds it would be appropriate to lock up in say 5, 10 or 15 full sets. Part of the difficulty is in estimating the number of copies that will be needed for new members (slowly rising at present) coupled with future sales of back numbers.

The AGM is the traditional time for members to elect a new Committee. No new names or volunteers for the Committee had been received. For the three principal posts (Secretary, Treasurer and Editor), the present holders had indicated that they were prepared to stand for re-election, but Keith Lister stated that this would be his last year as Editor. Jim Sunnucks proposed that the Committee be re-elected en bloc. This was seconded by Becky Smith and carried unanimously.

The question of the next Annual gathering was discussed. There were two principal suggestions. The first, was that we could have another meeting on the lines of Mehalah and Red Spider. In the Roar of the Sea was suggested as a possibility. Whilst an attractive idea, the logistics of organising a meeting in an area where we have no local contact is difficult. It was also felt that we had now had two consecutive meetings based on novels and, although both were very successful, the next meeting ought to have a different emphasis. 10

The second suggestion was for a meeting at Killerton House, Devon. This would have a strong emphasis on folk songs (much important SBG folksong material is held at Killerton). Examples of some of his manuscript and annotated songs could be seen and discussed. It was hoped to involve the Wren Trust to perform some of the songs. Martin would approach the Wren Trust to see if they were agreeable and if so, would then approach the National Trust at Killerton. If we go ahead with this meeting, a day in November is likely [November 13th].

The Secretary had received from one of our members, Cedric Baring-Gould, the typescript of his father's (Arthur) biography of Sabine Baring-Gould (Arthur was Sabine's half brother). It was not clear how much new material was contained in the typescript and so a sub-committee consisting of Keith Lister, Becky Smith and Roger Bristow was formed to assess its worth for publication.

Keith asked whether the Mehalah meeting had been notified to the press. It was thought that this had been done by Marianne Jones. He also raised the question of having a Society Press Officer, but no decision was taken.

David Shacklock informed the meeting that one of our members, Richard Dalby, was reprinting Margery of Quether and hoped that it would be published in time for Christmas.

Martin Graebe announced the launch of the microfiche of Baring-Gould folksong material at Killerton House earlier in the autumn.

Any further discussion was prevented by the Society having to vacate the Village Hall. The Secretary closed the meeting at 6.15pm.