

**RECORD SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE  
COUNCIL REPORT, 2018**

The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire was founded in 1878. It aims to advance public education primarily by the transcription, editing and publication of original historical documents relating to the two palatine counties. It is a registered charity, no. 500434.

**VICE PRESIDENTS OF THE SOCIETY**

Mr G. Higgins  
Dr C.B. Phillips (from 18/06/18)  
Dr B.W. Quintrell (from 02/05/18)

**COUNCIL AND OFFICERS, 2018**

President	Dr C.B. Phillips (resigned 18/06/18) Dr M.R.V. Heale (co-opted 18/06/18)
Secretary	Dr Dorothy J. Clayton
Treasurer	Mr J.R.H. Pepler
General Editor	Dr Fiona Pogson
Membership Secretary	Mr J.C. Sutton
Webmaster	Dr P.Z. Cotgreave
Other Members of the Council	Dr I.J. Atherton Dr P.H.W. Booth (resigned 18/04/18) Dr A.G. Crosby Mr J. Davies-Colley Mrs Diana E.S. Dunn Dr M. R. V. Heale (until 18/06/18) Dr B.W. Quintrell (until 02/05/18) Mr S. J. Roberts (co-opted 31/10/18) Professor D. Szechi Dr Sonja Tiernan (resigned 31/10/18) Professor T.J. Thornton

***Council***

During 2018 the Council met twice in full session: on 18 April at Lancashire Archives, Bow Lane, Preston; and on 31 October at 46 Fountain Street, Manchester. The Council gratefully acknowledges the support of Mrs Jacquie Crosby of Lancashire Archives and Mr R. Roberts of Fountain Street, Manchester, for the provision of accommodation.

2018 has seen the resignation of three of our most senior members of the Council. Dr Paul Booth stepped down at the 18 April AGM. He has edited three of the Society's volumes (vol. 125 with A.D. Carr; vol. 138; and vol. 140 with J. and S. Harrop), and been influential in bringing another five volumes to print (vols 146, 148–51). Dr

Booth joined the Society in the 1970s and was first elected to join the Council in 2007.

Dr Brian Quintrell has been on the Council of the Record Society for over fifty years, serving as Treasurer between 1965 and 2000. Unfortunately he is no longer well enough to serve on the Council and he has moved to be nearer his family in the south of England. The Council unanimously agreed to make Dr Quintrell a Vice President of the Society.

Dr Colin Phillips resigned from the Council in June 2018. Following over twenty-five years of service as a Council member, Dr Phillips became President of the Record Society in 2013. He held office for five years, performing this role with vigour and dedication, presiding over and driving forward a number of important initiatives. These included new procedures for an Annual General Meeting for society members, featuring a public talk on some aspect of the history of Lancashire and/or Cheshire; the organisation of the Society's archives, and collection of a master set of volumes; regular book launches to promote and celebrate its publications; the much-needed creation of a website for the Society; and the initiation of a major project for the digitisation of its past volumes, in order to make them freely and widely available to the public. For the digitisation project alone, Dr Phillips devoted a great deal of time to investigating the different options for format, software and platforms, to enquiries relating to copyright and permissions, and to preparing volumes for digitisation. This was a mark of his passionate commitment to the Society and its aims, and his concern to ensure that it continued to thrive in the future. While preserving its rigorous scholarly standards, Dr Phillips's legacy as President will be to have brought the Society into the digital age, and to have made its publications far more accessible to the general public. The Council is delighted that Dr Phillips has agreed to be a Vice President of the Society.

The Society wishes to record its sincere thanks to Dr Booth, Dr Quintrell and Dr Phillips for their distinguished service over many years.

### **2018 AGM**

This was held on 18 April at Lancashire Archives, Preston. Following the short business meeting, Emerita Professor Penny Summerfield, formerly of Lancaster and Manchester Universities, gave a public lecture entitled: 'Historians and the Diary: Cases from the Home Front in the Second World War'. The content of the lecture was particularly apt, given the publication of *A Londoner in Lancashire, 1941–1943: The Diary of Annie Beatrice Holness* (vol. 153, 2016). The Society has hosted some excellent public lectures in recent years and we hope that with increased and targeted advertising, we will attract Society members and the general public to such events.

### **Membership**

At the end of 2018 the number of individual members stood at 105 and the number of institutions and libraries was 79. As some institutions have multiple subscriptions, the total number of institutional subscriptions was 91.

The decline in membership of the Record Society over the past decade is a matter of considerable concern to the Council. In February 2018 Mr Jim Sutton, Membership Secretary, wrote to all individual members seeking their support in recruiting new

members and asking if any member might like to stand for election to the Society's Council. Although Mr Sutton received only six responses, these all contained some helpful suggestions for improving the Society's profile and increasing membership. One of the respondents, Mr Stephen Roberts, was co-opted onto the Council from the 31 October meeting.

At the October meeting, the Council had a full discussion about this matter, working from a useful summary of the position set out in advance by Mr Sutton. It was agreed that there were five key suggestions which we would endeavour to implement as soon as possible: 1) Produce a 'vision and purpose statement' for the Society; 2) Appoint a Publicity Officer; 3) Produce an annual 'Newsletter'; 4) Liaise with other comparable societies; 5) Consider our range of published editions, and seek out more nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts. Council members are working on each of these suggestions and significant progress has already been made: Dr Martin Heale, our new President, has set up an online working party to devise a 'vision and purpose statement'; and Mr Roberts has kindly agreed to be the Society's Publicity Officer and will be nominated for that position at the 2019 AGM.

### ***Website***

The Society's website, now in its fifth year of operation, continues to attract new users. Between 1 April and 16 October 2018, there were 1,042 unique users. This compares with 850 during the same period last year, an increase of 22%. During 2018 68% of views were made from UK computers, 10% from the US, 6% from South Korea, 3% each from Australia and Canada, and the remaining 10% from various other countries. The following cities account for most of the UK users, in descending order: London, Liverpool, Manchester, Stoke-on-Trent, Preston, Birmingham and Chester.

As agreed by Council in late 2017, Dr Peter Cotgreave, Webmaster, commissioned a graduate student, with a good knowledge of digital communication platforms, to carry out a survey of the websites of a group of kindred societies in order to see what this Society might learn from its peers. It was felt that the information gathered would help address the issue of a decrease in subscriptions. The resulting report compared our website with 15 others which the officers had suggested had similar aims and objectives. It was shown that, compared to the peer group, our site does comparatively well. Dr Cotgreave also met with the Head of Digital at the Institute of Historical Research, Philip Carter, together with three of his team. Mr Carter kindly wrote up a report of the discussions. The contrasts between the two reports are interesting. For example, whereas the graduate student noted the lack of a Twitter account, the IHR team strongly recommended that we should not try to establish a Twitter account, which would require us to come up with things to say more regularly than is credible.

Dr Cotgreave believes that it should be possible to combine the best of both reports and we have agreed to look in the first instance at the following: 1) Make the website more visually appealing; 2) Produce a single list of titles, rather than separate lists of titles 'in print' and 'out of print', and link each title appropriately – to a digitised version and/or a list of volumes available to purchase; 3) Widen the contributor base for the blog; 4) Incorporate a map and/or timeline to show content in a more user-friendly format; 5) Create a Wikipedia page about the Society; 6) Reorganise the website's home page.

**GDPR**

During the year the Council has considered carefully the new General Data Protection Regulation which came into effect in May 2018. A policy statement has been posted on our website.

**Digitisation**

The large amount of work undertaken by the Society in relation to digitising our past volumes has been mentioned above under *Council*. Dr Phillips masterminded our digitisation project, and the first phase was completed in March 2018, with the mounting of volumes 137–146 on the Society’s website. The feedback received has been very positive, and Council determined to press ahead with the next phase of the project. Thus, in late 2018 a second tranche of our back volumes were digitised, and Dr Cotgreave has uploaded these volumes recently (February 2019). We are pleased to report that 122 of our back volumes are now available to view digitally on our website.

**Publications**

*The Diaries of William Lloyd Holden, 1829 and 1830*, ed. Jonathan Pepler, was published in December as RSLC vol. 155, the 2018 subscription volume. William Lloyd Holden (1805-87) worked as a field surveyor for William Andrewes Bryant. The diaries’ entries are mainly concerned with the work of topographical surveying, but also cover the social life and activities of a young single man at the time. The edition reproduces the diaries in full, and places them in the context of nineteenth-century mapping and surveying. This is the first volume prepared for publication by Dr Fiona Pogson who became the Society’s General Editor in 2017.

**Financial Statement and Policy on Reserves**

The total net assets of the Society at 31 December 2018 were £58,572.07.

The Council has implemented its decision of last year to invest a significant proportion of its reserves in an equity fund approved by the Charity Commission, in order to make up for the shortfall arising from falling interest rates. This decision has been vindicated since the fund has delivered income of more than £1,900 compared with little more than £500 in 2017. The capital sum has been affected by the volatility of the stock market particularly in the latter part of the year, but is showing signs of recovery.

Dorothy J. Clayton  
Secretary  
February 2019