Minutes of Annual General Meeting  
Saturday 23 October 2004  
New Cavendish Club, 44 Great Cumberland Place, London W1

Present: Michael Barber, Gill Beddow, Dr Christine Berberich, Dr Nicholas Birns, David Butler, Jill Chalmers, Patric Dickinson, Dr Derek Hawes, Stephen Holden, Michael Jay, Dr George Lilley, David Lowis, Geoffrey Markham, Dr Keith Marshall, Noreen Marshall, Dr Derek Miles, Barry Pike, Prue Raper, Tony Robinson, Bob Rollason, Jean Rollason, Elizabeth Savidge, Victor Spouge

Apologies: Julian Allason, Pamela Marshall Barrell, Liza Bennett, John Doyle, Sue Frye, Peter Haley Dunne, Jan de la Hayze, Dr Catherine Hoffmann, Chris Hoskin, Cheryl Hurley, Kevin Jewell, Hans Johansson, Eileen Kaufman, Dr Peter Kislinger, Andrew Lambert, Jeffrey Manley, Catherine Mansel Lewis, Hugh Massingberd, Nigel Maxwell, Simon McArthur, John McClatchey, Tom Miller, Hon. John Monagan, John Monaghan, Philip Murphy, Robin Nicholson, Maggie Noach, John Powell, Stephen Pyskoty-Olle, Jeanne Reed, Regina Rehbiner, Carol Rothkopf, Carolyn Soule, Prof. George Soule, Prof. Michael Swash, Elwin Taylor, Lt-Col PE Taylor, Dr Allen Warren, Nick Weller, Dr CB Wynn Parry, Prof. Ian Young

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence
A. The Society Chairman, Patric Dickinson, welcomed everyone to the meeting.
B. The Hon. Secretary, Keith Marshall, indicated that he had received apologies for absence from those members listed above together with 20 proxy votes to be cast in favour of all the motions.
C. The Hon. Secretary read the following message from the Society’s Vice-President, John Monagan:

October 10 2004
To Annual General Meeting
I send the proxy voting form herewith with regret that the physique is not up to a London trip but with best wishes for the success of the meeting and all centenary activity and congratulations on the devoted work which has guaranteed the full vigor of the Society. “The Essence of the All is the Godhead of the True.”
John S Monagan

2. Minutes of 2003 AGM
A. The minutes of the 2003 AGM had been circulated in advance of the meeting.
B. There being no matters arising the minutes were approved unanimously and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Receive the Annual Report & Accounts
A. The Annual Report 2004 had been circulated to members in advance and was presented to the meeting by Keith Marshall.
B. The year 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 was a milestone year with all the highlights right at its beginning: the Second Biennial Conference at Oxford, the granting of charitable status and the publication of John Monagan’s monograph The Master and the Congressman.
C. The Oxford conference was a great success with almost uniformly positive feedback from delegates. Thanks were recorded to Stephen Holden and the University of Arts London for the research grant towards printing the conference proceedings, which were finally published in August 2004.
D. The Society gained 29 new members during the year but 20 had been lost, with a similar number not renewing their membership in the current year. This is a concern which is receiving focus from the Executive. Facilities such as Standing Orders and Direct Debits for payment of subscriptions are not feasible as the numbers are currently too small. The Society does have facility to process recurring credit card transactions for annual subscriptions and other payment facilities are always being explored.
E. Prue Raper asked about the possibility of subscription discounts for long membership. Keith Marshall replied that this is currently under discussion by the Executive Committee.
F. The Executive Committee are still working on the ideas generated by last year’s members’ survey.
G. The Society has four active local groups (London, NE USA, Great Lakes USA and Sweden) which meet regularly.
H. The Newsletter continues to thrive and expand under Stephen Holden’s editorship.
I. Looking ahead, 2005 is Anthony Powell’s centenary year. In addition to the Centenary Conference on 2/3 December, the Wallace Collection are putting on a major exhibition devoted to Powell (to which the Society has made significant input). Other exhibitions are being planned for Cambridge, New York and Washington. Other events (eg. possibly at the Traveller’s Club and Royal Society of Literature) are being discussed. The Society is investigating an annual biography award.
J. Keith Marshall expressed thanks to all the members of the Executive Committee for their hard work again this year.
K. The Annual Report 2004 was accepted unanimously.
4. Accounts 2003-2004
A. In the absence of the Hon. Treasurer, Keith Marshall briefly presented the accounts for the last period.
B. The Society made a loss of £1620 in the last financial year, as was expected. This was due to the timing of the Oxford conference, where the majority of income fell in the year 2002-3 while the majority of the costs fell in 2003-4.
C. The Oxford conference itself, however, made an unexpected surplus of £4800 as a number of anticipated costs did not accrue. This surplus has been put aside to underwrite future conferences. The Society’s other surplus funds are also being moved into a high interest account.
D. Aside from the conferences, the largest single cost is printing and mailing the quarterly Newsletter.
E. In response to a question, Keith Marshall responded that the electronic distribution of the Newsletter is kept under review. However a number of factors have to be taken into account: (a) only about 50% of members have email, (b) reducing the print run by 50% would make the printing uneconomic and (c) the perceived value to members of receiving the Newsletter through their letterbox. Back issues of the Newsletter are posted on the Society’s website roughly three months after publication (ie. when the next issue is published). The consensus view of the meeting was that this delay is about right, although it was suggested a six month delay may be preferable and encourage people to join in order to receive the current Newsletter.
F. Jean Rollason suggested that, in order to attract and keep members, the conferences should be annual. Keith Marshall responded that we do not have the resources, or probably the speakers and delegates, to support this.
G. Geoffrey Markham commented on the Society’s high bank charges. This is largely due to the cost of the credit card facility. He offered to give the Secretary details of a possibly cheaper credit card facility, which the Secretary promised would be investigated.
H. Over 75% of UK members have signed a Gift Aid declaration; the tax rebates have yet to be reclaimed.
I. Despite a healthy surplus there is no room for complacency especially as many members have paid 2-3 years subscriptions in advance, so we have an ongoing liability. Nonetheless subscriptions should remain at current levels for at least short to medium term.
J. There being no further questions the accounts were unanimously approved.

5. Amendment of the Constitution
A. The Executive Committee asked members to authorise an amendment to the Constitution to change the normal date of the AGM from September to October. The rationale is to permit AGM papers to be circulated with the Autumn Newsletter (in early September) and allow overseas members sufficient time to return proxy votes. This timing will remove the need for a separate AGM mailing, thus saving the associated postage and mailing costs.
B. The proposed new clause P(1) read: *There shall be an annual general meeting of the Charity which shall be held in the month of October in each year or as soon as practicable thereafter.*
C. The Executive Committee’s intention is that the AGM will be held on the fourth Saturday in October.
D. The revision to clause P(1) of the Society’s Constitution was approved unanimously.

6. Election of Executive Officers
A. The incumbent officers were nominated as the Executive Officers for the forthcoming year. There being no other nominations received by the due date of 6 August 2004 the officers were duly elected:
Chairman:  Patric Dickinson
Hon. Secretary: Dr Keith C Marshall
Hon. Treasurer: Kevin Jewell

8. Election of Executive Committee Members
A. The incumbent committee members were nominated as the Executive Committee Members for the forthcoming year. There being no other nominations received by the due date of 6 August 2004 the six candidates were duly elected: Dr Christine Berberich, Dr Nicholas Birns, Leatrice Fountain, Stephen Holden, Antony Robinson, Prof. Ian Young.

9. Questions from the Floor
A. Patric Dickinson reported that Tristram Powell had recently presented a complete set of the new Dictionary of National Biography to the London Library in memory of Anthony and Lady Violet Powell.
B. The transfer of Powell’s typescripts, accepted by the nation in lieu of Inheritance Tax, from Eton College to the British Library was noted.
C. The meeting sent greetings and good wishes to the Society’s Patron and President, both of whom were unable to be present.
D. Following the constitutional amendment, the dates for the next two AGMs are planned as: Saturday 22 October 2005 and Saturday 28 October 2006. Venues will be announced in due course.

The formal business of the meeting was followed by

Writing about Anthony Powell: Perspectives on Writing about a Writer
with contributions from Dr George Lilley, Michael Barber, Dr Nicholas Birns and an open discussion chaired by Dr Christine Berberich
The three talks will be published as a Society monograph with an introduction by Dr Christine Berberich.