

**AGM of the Thomas Fowell Buxton Society,
held on 29th February 2012 at 2 pm
at St Augustine's Hall, Dorchester Road**

Present: the retiring committee and members, 16 in all. This was an opportunity for further renewal of membership. Harry Walton of 'View from Weymouth' was present and took a photograph.

Apologies: Penny Harrison, John Tomblin, Alan and Anne McKechan.

Welcome: The Society's Honorary President, Mayor Graham Winter welcomed everyone to this first Society AGM.

Chairman's Report: Given by Dr John Fannon. (See Annex A).

Treasurer's Report: Given by Henry Brackenbury. The accounts of the society as at 29th February were as follows.

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
Membership Subscriptions	355.00	Postage, Stationery, Publicity	197.84
Speaking engagements	285.00	Monument Expenses	420.00
Donations	229.53	Meetings (Hire of Hall etc)	54.52
Meetings	51.25		
PayPal Verification of Acct	0.20		
TOTAL	£920.98	TOTAL	£672.36
CASH AT BANK	£248.62	INVOICES AWAITING PAYMENT	
		Weymouth College	184.00
		Albion Stone	796.00
		TOTAL	£980.00

Education Report: Given by Joyce Fannon. (See Annex B).

Election of Trustees:

The following were duly elected as trustees:

Dr John Fannon
Mr Henry Brackenbury
Cllr Bill White
Cllr David Mannings
Mrs Joyce Fannon
Mrs Marilyn Brackenbury
Mr Trefor Morgan
Mrs Elsa Fenton

Programme for the coming year

John Fannon outlined the Society's commitment to working alongside Weymouth College and Dorset Highways to complete and erect the monument on the Manor Roundabout. He referred to the need to purchase materials, hiring plant and payment of fees that may arise from the erection of the monument. He indicated that the committee had raised their original estimate of funds possibly needed from £12,500 to £25,000. He paid tribute to the generosity of Albion Stone in billing us for only 25% of the true cost of the stone, also to the generosity of Weymouth College and the many hours of hard work put in by staff and students at the Dorset Skills Centre, Poundbury, Dorchester. He extended an invitation to members to visit the Skills Centre to see the work in progress after notifying the centre.

Fund raising: discussion of ideas.

Grants:

Joyce reported that using the list of grant-awarding bodies originally submitted by Allen Rogers, Weymouth Arts Development Officer, a final choice had been made of 11. These best fitted the aims of our Society.

Grants for the Arts (Arts Council); Awards for All; Woodward Charitable Trust; Fidelio Trust (UK); Grocers Charity Grant; Skinners' Company Grants; The Co-operative Community Fund; Foyle Foundation Small Grants Scheme; Asda Foundation; Garfield Weston Foundation; the Steel Charitable Trust. James Buxton recommended the Garfield Weston Trust. Through member Richenda Wallace a grant of £1,000 had been awarded to the Society from the Noel Buxton Trust in February, 2012. Henry Brackenbury urged members to seek out other grant awarding bodies and organisations that they might know of.

Approaching National and Local Businesses:

Henry's comments led on to the local scene. The proposed Tribute Book, to be available at the Council Offices/Museum is seen as an incentive for local businesses to make a contribution. A 24-page tourist booklet could attract advertising from local businesses. However, there was a word of caution about the booklet being available at the Olympics. The Society must seek advice from Simon Williams at the Council to avoid the label of "Ambush Marketing" during the Olympics. Again the Society would need to speak to the Tourist Office at the Pavilion.

Sponsoring Stones:

John and Henry will be meeting with Rex Witts on Friday 2nd March, 2012 to discuss, among other things, the sponsoring of the 144 stones that will make up the monument. John is developing a computer image of the monument for our internet site, so that when a stone is clicked on the name of the donor will be shown. Again the Tribute Book will have the names of donors included. Families of the stone-working students, society members, and local businesses can be involved in this scheme that could raise an estimated £1,500.

The meeting agreed that the two main thrusts for large-scale fundraising were applying for grants and sponsoring of stones.

Other ideas proposed:

1. Flag Days (4 allowed per year): need for volunteers.
2. A function linked to Anti-Slavery Day (18th October, 2012). Perhaps 1 could coincide with item 2.
3. Film shows on slavery-related topics. The film “Amazing Grace” is one example.
4. Involvement in Carnival.
5. Small member-generated fundraising.

Marilyn Brackenbury had produced “Liberator Lemon Curd”, and Joyce Fannon had produced “Monumental Marmalade” for the AGM, to illustrate that **every little counts**. Monies raised from these, plus donations to teas and coffees, raised enough on the day to pay for the hire of the hall.

There was a proposal that members could hold small coffee mornings in their homes and a Thomas Fowell Buxton Information Pack could be made available on request.

6. Bill White will contact Juliet Harwood of the Quangle Wangle Choir with regard to a fundraising concert, perhaps with a Caribbean theme. The Casterbridge Male Voice Choir was mentioned by David Mannings in this context.

Support to TFB Initiatives:

1. Fundraising as above. James Buxton felt that he could help through contacting between 10-20 Buxton family members.
2. Also members were urged to bring in new members through similar personal contacts. Even bringing in one new member per person would be a great help.
3. Holding functions (see above).
4. Joining the Education team: Joyce felt that contacting the local schools soon would generate a great demand for *Thomas Fowell Buxton and Slavery* presentations that would be difficult for one person alone to meet. Trefor Morgan volunteered to become part of an educational team.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm. Attendees expressed satisfaction at a productive and interesting afternoon.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen

It has been a very busy year. Since the inaugural meeting, the committee has met monthly and there have been numerous meetings with Weymouth Council and Dorset Highways Department. We have also maintained close working relationship with Weymouth College and the Dorset Skills Centre and Albion Stone.

We held a public meeting in May last year to announce the winner of the competition – Mr Peter Loizou which passed very successfully, but soon afterwards we hit an unforeseen snag. In spite of being assured that we would not need planning permission, we found out that we did. So in the summer we began the process of making a planning application.

The planning application was further complicated by the fact that Dorset Highways owned the land on which the Manor roundabout was situated, but Weymouth Council was the statutory authority. So we had to negotiate with two organisations.

While this made for a longer process, it has had the beneficial effect that both Weymouth Council and Dorset Highways are now fully engaged with the project. Furthermore, Dorset Highways Engineers are on board so to speak, and are giving us the benefit of their advice.

We eventually achieved a grant of Planning Permission in early February.

One of the consequences of this delay has been that until planning permission had been granted we could not in all conscience approach people seeking contributions. Now we can go full steam ahead.

The other area where had to feel our way has been the issue of Charitable Status. We realised that there would be so many benefits if HMRC recognised us as a Charitable Body, that we decided that we would apply. However HMRC pointed out that our constitution was wrong and as you know, we had to canvas members very quickly in order to get agreement in a change of constitution. On receiving our reapplication, HMRC immediately recognised us as a Charitable Organisation with the following object:

- To advance the education of the public in general on the subject of the achievements of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (philanthropist and MP for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis 1818-37) and in particular his achievement of the abolition of Slavery throughout the British Empire by Act of Parliament in 1833.

Meanwhile the students at Weymouth College, Dorset Skills Centre have been getting on with the job. You may recall that Rex Witts appointed Peter Loizou, the designer as project manager and we arranged for him to meet Tony Porter of Albion Stone in July last year. Following on from this, Peter worked with Tony Porter to decided how much stone (Ashlar) was needed and this was delivered to the college last autumn.

Albion Stone have not given the material free, but have charged a cut price for it. Moreover, Tony Porter is not agitating for the bill to be paid as yet. He is content await our fund raising

ANNEX A

drive. However we did have to pay the bill for transport (carried out by a local haulage firm), which was quite substantial.

Since the turn of the year, the students have been working quietly carving the individual stones. There are 144 to do – making a grown up's jigsaw puzzle. We pop into the skills centre when we can to see how everyone is going on – and we are made very welcome. There is an open invitation for TFBS members to see how the work is progressing.

One of the areas which was worrying us during what seemed to be drawn out negotiations to achieve planning permission was the effect on the timescale. Last year at the inaugural meeting, we had hoped that we could get the monument installed in time for the Olympics. It turned out that this was always an unrealistic hope. At our meeting with Dorset Highways in December they informed us that the London Olympic Committee Organising Group had taken control of the highways and would not release them back to Dorset Highway's control until after the Olympics. So we never had a chance to achieve this. So we would hope to start work this autumn, after the Paralympics. This also helps the college as it will not interfere with their academic year.

I will mention a quick word about the website. It is now well established and if you google 'Thomas Fowell Buxton' our website comes up on the first page. It now regularly gets visited and we now have the responsibility to keep it up to date to maintain interest.

Just to give you a quick canter through the rest of the agenda:

Henry Brackenbury our Treasurer will bring you up to date the finances, and Joyce Fannon will explain the work done on educational matters. As I mentioned earlier, the prime object of our charity is to advance the education of the public in general on the achievements of Thomas Fowell Buxton. So this is the main plank in our platform.

This will be followed by Election of Trustees. Under the terms of the constitution for small charities, we are allowed up to ten trustees.

Finally we would like to discuss the programme for the coming year, which will include our known commitments, our fund raising target, ideas for fund-raising, and support to this programme.

Before ending I would like to thank our honorary President Cllr Graham Winter, the Mayor, for his continued and valuable support. I would like to pay tribute to the committee who have been enthusiastic, positive and supportive throughout the year, and to Weymouth College tutors and students without whose contributions we wouldn't have a project. Albion Stone have been particularly helpful in their advice and supplying the stone and we are most grateful to them. Finally, I would also like to thank Weymouth Planning Department and Dorset Highways who while having to work as public servants within the bounds of their terms of reference, have been very helpful and positive.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this brings me to the end of my report.

EDUCATION OFFICER'S REPORT

- Firstly I would like to say that what we in this society are doing is collectively bringing an important part of Weymouth's heritage to the attention of this generation, and hopefully handing on this same heritage to the next generation; it is an enmeshing of past, present and future.
- I am pleased that 21st century organisations, such as Purple Teardrop, Multicultural Society and Fairtrade, see the relevance of our work to theirs, as they combat modern aspects of human slavery.
- Through the involvement of Weymouth College students the provision of the monument itself is an educational reality. You have seen the work of the students posted on our web site.
- Secondly, February 2012 has seen the 30th presentation on Thomas Fowell Buxton and Slavery to local organisations since 2009. This means that some 1,000 people have actively listened and hopefully learned; this has been a face to face educational encounter.
- Then John Fannon, as webmaster, has ensured a further educational outreach with 1,450 hits on the site to date. The website has become an important educational tool for the society
- Accessing media coverage is another form of education, with 2 articles appearing in the Echo newspaper, 2 articles in the View from Weymouth, 1 in Catholic South West and 1 due soon in the Pilgrim Post; this last is the news magazine for Churches Together in Dorset. I cannot calculate the number of people these have all reached.
- Turning to the Olympics, the society plans an information A5 leaflet suitable for tourist information, 5,000 copies for 98. In addition the society is considering an option of an A4 24 page booklet (£3,000) or an A5 24 page booklet (£2,200). These prices are for 4,000 copies. The aim is for these booklets to contain articles relevant to the society and its aims, but also to attract advertising.
- I began this report with mentioning our role in passing on part of our heritage to the next generation. Already there has been a presentation to year 6 pupils at St Augustine's School in Weymouth. There is the possibility of rolling this out to more schools this year. However, an educational team is needed- one person cannot hope to meet the probable demand from local primary and secondary schools.
- Lastly, I have been informed that the new Weymouth Museum is taking shape at the Arts Centre, Commercial Road. My understanding is that it will be there for 3 years. I feel that the Society should enter into dialogue with the person responsible for this scheme towards a Thomas Fowell Buxton presence. With this thought I end my educational report.