



**AGENDA FOR SVBWG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT
JOHN SINCLAIR HOUSE, 16 BERNARD TERRACE, EDINBURGH
ON WEDNESDAY 12th OCTOBER 2016 AT 10.30AM**

Present: Louise Baker, Paul Bishop, Simon Blackett, Bob Clark, Hugh Dinwoodie, Frances Dunn, Munro Dunn, Leslie Fraser, Veronica Fraser, John Gerrard, Dorothy Kidd, John Knight, Niall Logan, Chris McGregor, Margaret Mackay, Harry Mantell, Norman Middleton, Jenni Morrison, Patricia Newton, Ian Temple, Mark Watson, Crissie White

1. Apologies for absence were received from Eve Boyle, Peter Burman, Sara Crofts, Piers Dixon, Hugh Fearn, Iain Fraser, Abigail Grater, John Harrison, Dave Hutchinson, Jill Hutchinson, Charlotte Lythe, Carol Primrose, Marion Roberts, G Justin Willey, Pat Woodley, Andrew Wright
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held at Cowane's Hospital, Stirling on 3rd October 2015 at 10.30am. Correction – Paul Bishop was omitted in error from the list of those present. Crissie White proposed approval of the minutes and Paul Bishop seconded this.
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
Items 3 & 11 Bruce Walker became our President during 2015, and with his death we have a vacancy; John Harrison has kindly agreed to succeed him, and we can formally record that under item 11 on today's agenda. As he put it: "I cannot pretend to the expertise of Sandy or Bruce. However, if Council feels that I can 'fit the bill' and do something useful, then I will 'give it a go'."

Item 3 Resignation of Ronnie Robertson; Ronnie was our Conference Secretary and Vice Chair before resigning due to ill-health; we propose that the position of Conference Secretary be dropped, rather than always appearing as having a vacancy, especially as we no longer hold formal, residential conferences. Conference Secretary is not listed as an office in our constitution. However, that still leaves us without a Vice Chair.

Items 4, 5 & 10 The thatch event mentioned last year, and planned for 29th September at Culloden Baptist Church, was cancelled because it was undersubscribed.

Item 5 Paul Bishop stressed the importance of updating both the information on the SVBWG website and its design.

4. Chairman's Report

Welcome to the SVBWG AGM and Conference 2016.

You will know, from the newsletter and other sources, of the death of Bruce Walker, a founder member of the Group and recently our President, at the end of February. He was profoundly influential in our field, and made a huge contribution to the Group and its interests. It is our intention to publish an appreciation of his life and work in the next issue of *Vernacular Building*; we would appreciate any personal reminiscences from members that might contribute to that.

Another important loss to our field, in October 2015, was the death of Ron Brunskill. He was the leading authority in study and appreciation of vernacular architecture within the UK and very influential overseas. When the Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group (CVBG) was founded a few years ago he became its first patron. Fellow Council member Crissie White and myself attended a joint meeting of CVBG, SVBWG and the North East Vernacular Architecture Group in the ancient Dacre Hall at Lanercost Priory, Cumbria in October last year. It is intended that the groups have a joint meeting – probably looking at bastles in south-west Scotland next summer.

Activities in late summer this year were a Group visit to Auchindrain Township, Argyll, and a study day at Bennet House, Culross. Bennet House is an 18th-century edifice – with much earlier origins – that lies derelict and at risk. It is being rescued by the National Trust for Scotland's Little Houses Improvement Scheme, and is being used as a

“Study House” to demonstrate conservation in action. Both events were announced to members by email; advertisement through our website was unfortunately hindered for some days by the website being down. It is prohibitively expensive to inform all of our members of such events by post, so if you feel that you are missing out, I make my annual plea to let us have up-to-date email addresses, so that we can let you know of forthcoming events. I am sure, however, the people here today are not the ones to make this plea to.

A further activity, a thatch event in late September – already referred to – was unfortunately cancelled. This was to be a shared meeting with Historic Environment Scotland and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; we hope that there will be future opportunities to collaborate with SPAB. Despite this disappointment, I am pleased that we have managed to hold some field meetings this year – we plan some more next year – and that we will be hearing about the nation-wide thatch survey this afternoon.

I conclude by thanking fellow members of Council, especially Veronica Fraser, Secretary, Dorothy Kidd, Treasurer, Munro & Frances Dunn, Publication Sales, Hugh Fearn & Abigail Grater [*in absentia*] respectively Membership Secretary and *Vernacular Building* Editor, and Crissie White and Mark Watson. I also thank Philip Graham, who is still working on our updated website, which we hope to launch soon.

5. Secretary’s Report Veronica had the sad duty of informing members of the death of Bruce Walker; many responded with their memories of Bruce. Veronica met Lucy Stewart, SPAB Scotland Casework Office in January to discuss possible liaison. This may possibly be most fruitful through the SPAB/HES thatch project. Veronica had received an enquiry from HES colleagues researching the tradition of concealing objects within the walls of traditional buildings; there are plans to incorporate copies of such items in the walls of the Engine Shed, the HES conservations centre due to open in 2017; SVBWG members were extremely helpful and generous in their responses. Liaison continued with Philip Graham on the SVBWG website, however the creation of HES and Philip’s subsequent move to the University of Edinburgh has slowed things down. Veronica had mostly been dealing with publication and subscription enquiries, passed on appropriately, as well as matters relating to the AGM and conference. Further email addresses for members have been received,

with 67 being held at present out of 203 members. More members submitting their email addresses will allow for quicker, easier and cheaper communications. Thanks to Mark, a Flickr account where images can be posted and discussed has been set up for SVBWG; this can be accessed through Yahoo.

6. Treasurer's Report Dorothy thanked all those members who have updated their subscriptions following the recent rise, and also thanked Hugh for his work in liaising with members about payments in arrears. The 2015 AGM and conference in Stirling made a loss, and more careful budgeting of conferences will be done in future. Dorothy presented the 2015-16 accounts to the meeting; she pointed out a small surplus due to a year off paying for insurance which is not needed when fieldwork conferences are not occurring. A new insurer has been sourced. An invoice for storage of book stocks has yet to be received. Mark Watson proposed the accounts and Margaret Mackay seconded them. Dorothy thanked Deirdie Dunlop who completes the accounts.
7. Membership Secretary's Report Membership stands at 203 (of which ** are corporate). A new leaflet has been drafted. Membership issues this year have included members paying old rates, and not updating their standing orders in line with the new rates.
8. *Vernacular Building* Editor's Report *Vernacular Building* 39 was published and distributed in September; Council have congratulated Abi on another excellent volume. Full and short articles are invited for *Vernacular Building* 40. Niall asked for anyone with suggestions for review volumes to contact him. There was discussion regarding the cost implications of using more colour photography within the volume; Veronica will consult Abi about this. Making pdfs of publications available on the website will also be looked into.
9. Publication Sales Report In the year 2015-16 books were sold to the value of £500 which is an increase on the previous year. This was due to the efforts of Iain Fraser and Niall at conferences, also Pat Newton has been selling volumes on the Isle of Man, and Orkney Council are selling relevant volumes. Sales will be lower for this current year.

10.Meetings: Forthcoming events include an invitation to view thatching at Auchindrain in early November, members wishing to attend should contact the museum in advance.

Cumbrian Group – proposed joint meeting next year as mentioned in Chair’s Report.

The Engine Shed conservation centre, Stirling; this is now set to open early in 2017, and we will explore the possibility of a meeting there as soon as is appropriate.

The Historic Farm Buildings Group are meeting in Cumbria in the third week of September 2017; further details will be circulated.

Scottish Industrial Heritage Society; Mark will supply information on events where relevant.

11.Election of Office Bearers and Council members Election of Office Bearers and Council members; Constitution allows for 10 ordinary members, and we have only 6; we strongly encourage members to consider putting themselves forward for Council. John Harrison was proposed for President by John Knight and seconded by Crissie White. The existing Council was proposed for re-election by Margaret Mackay and seconded by Paul Bishop. Bob Clark was proposed for Council by Dorothy Kidd and seconded by Veronica Fraser. Paul Bishop was proposed for Council by Crissie White and seconded by Mark Watson. The vacancy for Vice-Chair remains.

12.AOCB Liaison between SVBWG and the AHSS, particularly for lectures, was suggested. Bob Clark will explore possible liaison with the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Liaison with the Scottish Traditional Building Forum will be explored.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.15.

President	vacancy
Chair	Prof Niall A Logan
Vice-chair	vacancy
Treasurer	Dorothy Kidd
Secretary	Veronica Fraser
Membership Secretary	Hugh Fearn
<i>Vernacular Building</i> Editor	Abigail Grater

Publications Sales
Council members

Munro and Frances Dunn
Mark Watson, Crissie White