The Prehistoric Society

Trustee Directors’ Report

For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

The Trustees (who are also the Directors for the purpose of Company Law) have pleasure in presenting their annual report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020. The provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice “Accounting and Reporting by Charities” (SORP FRS 102- implemented 1 January 2015) have been adopted in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Directors and Trustees

The Directors of the charitable company are also its Trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Directors and Trustees who served during the year covered by the accounts and up to the date of this report were:

President Prof C Gamble

Vice-Presidents Dr R Loveday (demitted at AGM October 2020)

Professor J Brück

Dr M Giles

Professor J Mulville

Professor L Hurcombe (elected at AGM October 2020)

Secretary Dr R Crellin

Treasurer Dr C Randall

Editor Dr J Gardiner

Editor – Newsletter Dr D Hofmann

Editor - Research papers Dr M Allen

Meetings Secretary Dr M Knight

Council Members

Dr S Adams

Dr L Bassell (demitted at AGM October 2020)

Dr R Brunning

Dr H Chittock

Dr P Clark

Dr B Gearey (demitted at AGM October 2020)

Dr J Lewis

Dr A Teather

Dr L Webley (demitted at AGM October 2020)

Dr A Zander

Dr S Harris

Dr J Cole

Dr B Roberts

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The Prehistoric Society is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 2 August 1990. The company incorporated the assets and liabilities of The Prehistoric Society on 5 February 1991. The Prehistoric Society was registered as a charity on 12 October 1990. Anyone throughout the world can become a member of the Society. Members are required to pay an annual subscription to the Society. Council reviews the annual subscription every five years. Members guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £5 to the assets of the company in the event of winding-up.

Appointment of directors and trustees

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the Articles of the company are known as the Council. The Council comprises the President, four Vice-Presidents, the Officers and the Council Members.

The President retires from office at the fourth Annual General Meeting after being appointed. At each Annual General Meeting, the longest-serving Vice-President retires from office and is not eligible for re-appointment for four years, the Officers of the company retire from office but are eligible for re-appointment, and the three longest-serving Council Members retire from office and are not eligible for re-appointment for one year.

The objectives and activities of the Society cover all prehistoric periods throughout the world. The Council seeks to ensure that this wide range of interests is reflected as much as possible in the diversity of members of Council.

After due consideration Council nominate to the members of the Society suitable persons to be President (when applicable) and Vice-President on the basis of their specialist expertise and suitable experience. The Officers usually continue in office from year to year. When an Officer retires from office, the new Officer is either co-opted from Council or, where specialist professional knowledge is required, all members of the Society are notified of the vacancy in the Society’s newsletter. The nominated President, Vice-President and Officers are elected by the members at the following Annual

General Meeting.

All members of the Society are invited to nominate potential Council Members. A notice requesting nominations is published in the Society’s newsletter and on the Society’s website. Each nomination is requested to include a short statement about the suitable expertise and experience of the proposed candidate. Based on these criteria, Council produces a shortlist of nominees to be put forward for election by the members at the following Annual General Meeting.

Trustee induction and training

New trustees are provided with an induction pack explaining the legal status of the charitable company, the obligations of trustees under company and charity law, the composition of Council, and the activities of the Society.

Risk Management

The Council has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. The significant external risk is a reduction in the total amount of member’s subscriptions, which are the main incoming resource. However, this risk is minimised because about two-thirds of each year’s subscriptions are received during the first month of the year. Internal risks are minimised by control procedures for the authorisation of external payments. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charity.

Organisation

The Council, which meets three times each year, makes the strategic decisions about the current and future direction of the charity. Sub-committees, comprising several members of Council, are created, when appropriate, to consider specific matters affecting the Society. These sub-committees report their conclusions to the following Council meeting. The Executive Committee, which comprises the President, Vice-Presidents and Officers, meets twice each year and formulates strategic and tactical policies for consideration by Council. The Officers manage the day-to-day operations of the charity.

Council members are kept informed by electronic communications of all-important actions made by Officers on behalf of Council.

Objectives and activities

The objectives of the charity are the advancement of education and interest in prehistory and all its branches and allied subjects, and the promotion of the conservation of the prehistoric archaeological heritage for the benefit of the public.

The Society’s membership at 31 October 2020 stood at 1250.

The principal activities of the charity are:

• the presentation of lectures held throughout the country, addressed by eminent prehistorians, and run either directly by the Society or in association with other archaeological organisations. Non-members may attend these lectures with no charge.

• the organisation of conferences and day schools addressed by leading prehistorians. The annual Europa conference is organised by the Society to honour a prestigious European prehistorian who is presented with the Europa Prize, a significant financial award funded by the Europa Fund, a restricted fund donated to the Society by Professor Grahame Clark

• the organisation of one-day field trips and, occasionally, longer study tours to prehistoric sites. Through its contacts with other archaeological institutions, the Society is able to arrange for leading prehistorians familiar with the sites being visited to be available to explain each site to the tour members.

• the payment of small grants to individuals to assist their research into prehistoric subjects throughout the world. Grants cover fieldwork, travel bursaries, radiocarbon dating and the study of collections in museums.

• the annual publication of the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, an internationally prestigious journal that covers all aspects of prehistory worldwide. Copyright in the Proceedings rest with the Society. Back numbers of previous Proceedings are sold each year to academic institutions throughout the world.

• the publication three times a year of the Society’s newsletter, *PAST*, which includes articles about recent prehistory projects and research, and information about the Society.

• the publication of research monographs in a *Research Papers* series.

• the publication of book reviews on-line

• presenting and debating prehistory through social media

• disseminating our knowledge and expertise through an online education blog

• making representations to appropriate government organisations, through the wide-ranging contacts of Council members with other archaeological institutions, about the conservation and protection of prehistoric sites.

The purpose of the Prehistoric Society

The Prehistoric Society, founded in 1935, is dedicated to researching, protecting and promoting the global archaeology of deep human history. The purpose of the Society is to investigate the fundamental questions of humanity; who we are, where we came from and how we evolved. Since its founding the objects of the Society have been to advance education and promote interest in prehistory in all its branches and allied subjects and to promote the conservation of the archaeological heritage for the benefit of the public Through its grants, publications, conferences and meetings, the Society supports those interested in human prehistory to discover new evidence both from the field and in curated museum archives. Through its advocacy for prehistoric heritage, the Society provides a voice to help protect landscapes, monuments and artefacts that may be under threat. Through its promotion of the value of prehistoric archaeology, the Society benefits primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as everyone with a passion for, and interest in, the deep human past.

What is Prehistory?

Prehistory describes the study of the deep history of humanity through material, rather than written, evidence. This distinctive approach to the study of the past gained traction among the northern antiquaries of Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. Today researchers employ rigorous field methods and cutting-edge scientific techniques, often in conjunction with methods from the arts and humanities, to answer a wide range of questions about communities in prehistory. These relate to their identities, economies, beliefs and are often concerned with matters such as long-term cultural stability, social change and innovation. Understanding chronology and the environments of the past are central to the work of prehistorians and it is common for research to consider millennial timescales. The theories and techniques of prehistory can be applied to all people whose history depends on the evidence of objects rather than texts and oral traditions. Deep human history starts with the first stone tools over 3 million years ago. Its legacy continues today.

The aims of the Prehistoric Society are to:

• Encourage and support research of the highest quality

• Foster the skills and expertise needed to investigate prehistory

• Disseminate widely the knowledge about our prehistoric past

• Raise awareness of the benefits and value of human prehistory

• Speak out for prehistoric heritage

Report on the year 2020

Research

The benefits of the research work of the Prehistoric Society are enshrined in our annual conference, publications and the support of research through grants. In 2020 the annual Europa was to be held in Leicester on June 19 to 21 with the support of Leicester University, Oxbow Books and Cambridge University Press. The Europa recipient would have been Professor Colin Haselgrove, but a decision was taken in April 2020 that due to the coronavirus pandemic the conference would be postponed until 2021.

From its research funds the Society supported eight projects; this year had a particular emphasis on early career researchers. The total research grants awarded were £8480 and involved fieldwork and/or archival research on a range of prehistoric sites in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Crete. Those grants for fieldwork which could not be carried out because of coronavirus restrictions have been held over for 2021.

Most members opt to receive a paper copy of our annual academic journal the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society (PPS) as well as three issues of our newsletter PAST. These are available also on-line through our publisher Cambridge University Press. They are also available more widely to non-members through library purchases. Volume 86 contained 12 papers ranging from the Mesolithic to the Late Iron Age. Contributions included; New evidence for upland occupation in the Mesolithic of Scotland; A multisensory approach to rock art; The deposition of history in prehistory: copper objects on sites and in the landscape; A new chronology for the henge monument of Mount Pleasant; and The funerary architecture of the La Tène period. One open access paper was published in this issue. Publishing in the Proceedings is open to all contributors subject to our rigorous editorial and peer review process. In addition, one volume of the Prehistoric Society Research Series of monographs was published in 2020, The Social Context of Technology: non-ferrous metalworking in later prehistoric Britain and Ireland, and The Beaker People: isotopes, mobility and diet in prehistoric Britain, was reprinted.

Skills and expertise

The Society recognises the importance of training and passing on skills and knowledge about prehistory. The Coles fund allowed two students to travel for research purposes to the rock-art site of La Marche, France and to the British School at Rome to examine dress assemblages from Gabii and Osteria dell’Osa. Conference funds of £500 allowed two early career researchers to attend the European Association for South Asian Archaeology and Art. We also seek to support the teaching of prehistory as part of the school curriculum. During 2020 the wide range of site guides and other resources produced by experts in each field and designed for use by teachers are now available free on line as a blog <https://theprehistoricsociety.school.blog/>.

The appointment of new Council members is now overseen by a committee of Council that reviews skill sets and expertise, as well as equality, diversity and inclusion before recommending names to Council for nomination. During 2020 there has been a review of all our policies. The aim has been to bring our governance further into line with Charity Commission best practice. New policies have been written and approved by Council, and remain under active review.

Dissemination

In addition to our publications and conferences we held 12 meetings and a day-school either in person or on-line during 2020. Many of these were in partnership with local and national archaeological societies and formed a wide geographical spread. This year there were inaugural joint meetings with the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, the Leicestershire Fieldworkers and the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society and the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society. We continued our partnership with the archaeological societies of Devon, London and Middlesex, Norwich and Norfolk, Yorkshire, Cornwall, Scarborough, Welwyn and the Cambridge Antiquarian Society and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Through our funds we continued to sponsor conferences and events with a strong involvement by younger prehistorians; the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Research Students’ Symposium, Iron Age Research Students’ Society, Later Prehistoric Finds Group and the Pitt Rivers Lecture at Bournemouth University. The meetings were all well attended and are an example of how the Society takes prehistory into the community.

Our day school on the theme Landscapes of the Dead, held in London on February 15th, was sold out.

In addition 2020 has seen growth in our on-line and social media presence. The Society's social media output continues to flourish with over 5,000 twitter followers and almost 17,000 people, from over 90 countries, in our Facebook group. The group welcomes professional and amateur members and topics range from the latest research in prehistory, through to descriptions of museum and site visits, requests for information and favourite prehistoric finds. The group has a strong, and enforced, Code of Conduct which ensures a safe and inclusive environment in which to discuss all aspects of world prehistory. Both channels host lively discussions of current issues affecting prehistory and archaeology more generally, and regularly provides a route to membership

Raising awareness and Advocacy

The Society has advocated for the appropriate treatment of our prehistoric heritage viasupport for the Kilmartin Museum to have its collection recognised as Nationally significant; objections to planning proposals at Old Oswestry hillfort; submission to the Australian Parliamentary enquiry into the destruction of the Juukan rockshelters, and objections to the proposed cuts to the Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury.

**Response to the Covid-19 pandemic**

The Covid-19 pandemic affected our activities in 2020 and will affect the organisation into 2021. We were able to hold our spring day school in-person, as it was slightly earlier in the year than we would normally hold it. However, as events unfolded in March 2020, we followed Government guidelines throughout. We postponed the Europa conference until June 2021. We rescheduled meetings for the autumn and moved the AGM from June to October 20th 2020. As social distancing was still in place we held the AGM via ZOOM, followed by the Sara Champion Lecture, given by our Secretary Dr Rachel Crellin.

The effect of cancelling our events programme, has been cost neutral as we only ever aim to break even on our conferences. Partner organisations which we would ordinarily support with modest financial contributions to lecture costs have also cancelled meetings which has reduced our expenditure. Most research projects and conference attendances which we were planning to support did not go ahead in 2020. Most planned research has been postponed, and some events that did not happen may no longer be relevant. At present we did not release any of the grant support which was allocated by our grants committee in February 2020. We kept the circumstances under review and will release those funds should the projects happen, whilst aiming to consider new applications as normal in 2021. We anticipated some minor delays to production of PPS, but worked to minimise these.

As the Prehistoric Society has no employees or premises we did not participate in the Coronvirus Job Retention Scheme. Neither were we eligible for any other form of UK Government business support. We have been heartened by the loyalty of our membership; no members cancelled their membership giving the pandemic as a reason. On the contrary, we recruited new members. We continue to discuss with our publishers Cambridge University Press any impact on journal sales to universities. Our agreed subscription increase, the first since 2007, will now take place in January 2021, a year later than originally planned. Our greater on-line presence resulted in more new members than expected during the year.

2020 was challenging for archaeology. Students had their courses disrupted, fieldwork was uncertain and museums shut. However, our social media provided an international meeting place for all prehistorians during the crisis and an opportunity to share experiences. The community of prehistorians remains strong and our newsletter and *Proceedings* appeared on-line and in hard copy when available.

Looking forward to 2021, we now have a stronger membership, social media presence and considerable expertise in running very successful conferences, meetings and day schools on-line. The Prehistoric Society has both adapted to and prospered from the measures we had to take due to these extraordinary and unanticipated circumstances.