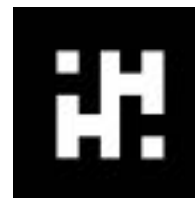


THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY  
38th AGM 2019 | Chair's Report  
Wed 11 March 2020



Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the 38th Annual General Meeting of the Herne Hill Society, and a special welcome to any new members who are here. If you don't know me, I am Colin Wight, Chair of the Society. Do come and talk to me during the break.

A word about Coronavirus. I am sure you are fed up with hearing about it, but it is a genuine threat. No handshakes please and please wash your hands before or during the break. Toilets are on the right of this room as you leave through the doors and also through the door behind me. Tea and coffee will be free tonight.

Do we have any apologies for absence?

John Conway  
Frances Lamb  
Carolyn Weniz  
Keith Ball  
etc.

If I may begin on a personal note, this will be the last AGM at which I will present the Chair's report. I decided a year ago that, mainly for family reasons, I would have to give up a role that I have thoroughly enjoyed. We have, I think, achieved quite a lot during the last seven years - although I would be the first to say that we have not always been as effective as we would have liked. Standing here this evening I have mixed feelings but enough is, as the French say, *un oeuf*. However I am intending to stay on, if elected, for the first part of the year before handing over to another Committee member. You will hear more about our plans from **Pat Roberts**.

I have an important notice before we go any further. Many of you will be aware that our Honorary President, **William Kirby**, passed away just a few weeks ago, at the age of one hundred. Even during the last year of his life, Bill tried to attend every meeting of the Society. I got to know Bill when visiting his flat to record an interview about his life. This is available on the internet. He was a great man: very open-minded and expressive. He possessed an enviably clear memory. He used to call me "my boy", which I did not object to. Although increasingly frail after the death of his wife Irene, he always remained positive and cheerful in company. He was described in a recent obituary as "sharp as a button"! No doubt Bill would have chuckled at that. Perhaps we can celebrate his life with a round of applause.

And so to the main business of the evening. If you don't have a printed copy in front of

you, tonight's Agenda is up on the screen. You should also have sight of the Draft Minutes of last year's AGM as well as the Accounts for 2019. Are there any amendments to the Minutes? This is the time to remind everyone that only paid-up members of the Society can vote on any motion. Could two people please propose and second a motion to accept them as a true record? Are there any matters arising from the Minutes?

I am going to mention just a few of last year's key activities. Then our Treasurer, **Martyn Hall**, will give his financial report. After that, **Pat Roberts** will present our thoughts on the Future of the Society. The current Committee will stand down. It's important that everyone stays until we resume after the break when **John Brunton** will conduct the Election. We'll finish with the Raffle Draw and Any Other Business.

We finished 2019 with our numbers down by 10 - hardly significant considering that we did not run a recruitment campaign last year. But we still have a long way to go with renewals, as we only have 231 paid-up members today, despite adding a total of 10 new people this year so far.

I have a number of people to thank: principally, everyone on the Committee who worked so well together, and there are many other people who supported us throughout the year, including:

**Sophia Marsh**, for designing the magazine

**Bil Harrison**, our Transport expert

**Robert Holden**, for maintaining the public noticeboards and leading three history walks

**John Conway**, for technical work on the website

**Jeff Segal**, for preparing successful bids to Southwark's CGS fund

Plus everyone who served on the brilliant Planning Group and the team who helped distribute the magazine, and of course everybody whom I have failed to mention! There is one person more than anyone who has made the Society the success it is today:

**Laurence Marsh**. I am delighted to say that Laurence will be standing again as Vice-Chair.

For a small Society, we achieved a fair bit last year. For example:

- we published three issues of Herne Hill Magazine
- we made a number of Small Grants, totalling £1,500
- we made a fuss over local hero John Ruskin, by sponsoring two concerts and inviting **Jon Newman** to give the Thomas Lynn Bristowe Lecture
- and we worked with Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees to hold an important and very well attended meeting

But above all, the year was notable for our First World War project, which resulted in an online database with descriptions of the lives and deaths of more than 550 of Herne Hill's residents. There is a huge amount of information there.

The most tangible output of the project is the stone plaque, made by **Mark Brooks** and paid for by Southeastern Railway, now installed in the Ticket Hall of the Station. We were delighted that **Helen Hayes MP** was able to unveil it at our Remembrance Sunday commemoration. I must thank Laurence, once more, for carefully choosing the wording.

Finally, Christmas TV was enlivened by the rather unexpected sight and sound of our own **Jim Davidson** doing his Freddie Mercury impersonation in the Visa High Street TV advert.

Martyn will now present his Financial Report for 2019.

**C.M. Wight**