



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

November 2022

In so many ways, this last year has been very similar to the previous year. The persistence of the Covid pandemic has forced us to rely very much on the internet for lectures, Council and sub-committee meetings. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel as we are now starting to meet again face to face but the meetings via Zoom are here to stay because I am very keen that we do not lose the contact with those members who cannot attend the London meetings for reasons of distance.

The Council has met regularly throughout the year via Zoom and the members all are busy with their allocated areas of duty. This year we co-opted and welcomed Tony Willenbruch as a new member of Council, who very kindly offered his services.

Last year I reported that we had halted the tide of falling membership and decreasing finances. Now our finances are going from strength to strength, mainly thanks to the overhaul of the membership subscriptions by our immediate past Treasurer, Michael Fowle, and his very able successor Colin Lafferty-Smith. The continued increase in membership and the enforced meetings via Zoom (rather than pay for venues), have all helped to ensure that our finances are now on a sound footing.

We have increased the amount of our grants to local heraldry societies and I am grateful to John Titterton, our liaison to local societies, for all his work.

Our lecture programme has continued to be only online via Zoom and it continues to be a great success thanks to the very hard work of our Programme Secretary, David Phillips. The subjects of the lectures have been extremely diverse and, without exception, interesting. The possibility of holding hybrid lectures has been discussed in Council but it was felt that until the Covid threat was much reduced we should err on the side of caution. We now feel that it is possible to safely meet and we held our very first face to face lecture in October and it proved very popular. It was to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Heraldry Society and we were very pleased to welcome Professor Anne Curry, Arundel Herald Extraordinary, the leading expert on the battle of Agincourt to talk about the heralds on that campaign and at the battle. The lecture will be possible to view via our website. We will experiment with hybrid (ie face to face and via Zoom) lectures in the immediate future. We also now have a Christmas Quiz which is great fun and raises money for a charity so please do join in.

The Council decided to commission a new digital version of the society coat of arms in order for it to bring our artwork into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and bring uniformity in branding in many formats and David was at the forefront of achieving this for us.

Our academic publication *The Coat of Arms* is held in high esteem in the heraldic world and in August at Cambridge University at the international congress of the Confederation Internationale de Genealogie et d'Heraldique, the Heraldry Society was awarded the Prix Son Eminence le Cardinal Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, which is the confederation's highest award for a heraldic publication. Our thanks go to Dr Paul Fox our editor of *The Coat of Arms* for all his very hard work.

Our other publication *The Heraldry Gazette* continues to thrive under the editorship of Jane Tunesi who does an excellent job. It is always a fun and colourful read and I am so grateful to her for all her strenuous work.

I would like to remind all members that *The Coat of Arms* and *The Heraldry Gazette* rely upon articles submitted by members and I urge everybody to consider submitting articles for publication. There is no guarantee that your article will be published but please do try. These publications are vital to the wellbeing of the society.

The Festschrift in honour of Dr Adrian Ailes was launched at the College of Arms in May. *Status, Identity and Authority – Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Archives and Heraldry* is a superb collection of essays and it is published by the society. I strongly recommend it to all members and it is available at a remarkably low price from our bookshop (see our website). I am very grateful to Steven Ashley for seeing this publication through.

The slide collection has now left its storage facility in London and has been deposited in the Hertfordshire store. Dr Andrew Gray is still doing an excellent job in converting the slides into the image library and cataloging it all. We are very lucky to have such a dedicated and knowledgeable member in charge of it.

Our website is still proving to be very popular, and my thanks go to our webmaster Graham Bartram for all his work and advice.

Martin Davies has worked very hard on revising, updating and modernizing the Articles of Association and I am very grateful to him for all his hard work, expertise and patience.

The Corporate Heraldry Award and the annual Photographic Competition have been a great success thanks to the ever cheerful and able Clive Alexander. Clive has decided to stand down at the AGM after many years of administering the awards. He will be sorely missed. I would urge members to consider joining in the fun and submit entries. The winner of either competition will receive one of one of David Hopkinson's superb hand painted certificates. My thanks to Clive and David for their help and support with the competitions.

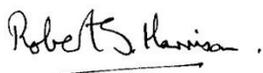
The society examinations officer, Richard Baker, will have completed his term on Council and therefore will be standing down at the AGM. He will, however, continue to be the examinations officer and report back to Council. I am very grateful to Richard for all his help and advice over the years.

Paul Jagger is our expert on the subject of Social Media and his is very active in this sphere. Thanks to him we have a very active presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other social media platforms. These have proved very worthwhile for encouraging the recruitment of new members. Paul has also been at the forefront for arranging the change and increase of our “cloud” storage for our electronic data, a subject that bewilders me and so I am thankful to him for all his hard work.

Where would we be without John Tunesi, our Secretary and Jane Tunesi our Membership Secretary, Librarian, Shop Manager and Editor of *The Heraldry Gazette*? They do so much work behind the scenes, from secretarial work, to book sales (which are increasing), membership administration (membership is now up to around 800 from around 400 four or five years ago), to running the library, to attending family history fairs and running our stall, they have been remarkable and so hard working. I am very grateful to them.

I am also grateful to our Deputy Chairman, Peter O’Donoghue, York Herald, for all his reasoned and sagacious advice in Council. As the vital link between the society and the College of Arms his guidance is greatly appreciated.

My final thanks go to you and all other members of the society. Without you there would be no Heraldry Society. Thank you for your membership and please do consider how you could become actively involved. It is a great way to meet like-minded heraldic buffs and make new friends.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Robert Harrison  
Chairman