



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

November 2023

In comparison to last year, this year has seen a marked change in the way we have operated. Last year we were so heavily reliant on Zoom as we slowly pulled our way out of the Covid pandemic lockdown. Now we are much more like the way we used to be with face-to-face meetings, lectures and social events but we still rely on Zoom for Council meetings.

The lecture programme at the RAF Club has resumed and the lectures, thanks to David Phillips the Programme Secretary, have been excellent and, as the year has progressed, the number of members of the society attending has increased. The Council is acutely aware that during the pandemic the lectures were Zoomed usually from the lecturers' homes and since the ending of lockdown the lectures have not, for the moment, been available to those who have not attended in person. I wish to reassure members that many of those lectures were recorded and they will be available to view via our website soon when adjustments to the website have been made and copyright checked. Members will then have the added advantage of viewing the lectures in their own time rather than at the specific time when the lecture was given.

In addition to the lecture programme there have been other social events:

In July we held a Summer Reception at the College of Arms. It was very successful and well attended. My thanks to the Chapter of the College of Arms for their permission and my thanks also to Peter O'Donoghue, York Herald and our Deputy Chairman for arranging it.

Also in July we had, despite intermittent rain showers and a train strike, a very successful Summer Outing to Hatfield House and the local church and a lunch. My thanks to our secretary, John Tunesi, for all his hard work in organizing this event.

In October we held a formal dinner at the National Liberal Club and it was very well attended. Everybody enjoyed themselves and looked splendid in their evening wear. We were very honoured to have as our special guest, David White, Garter King of Arms, who entertained us with an excellent after dinner speech. If you have not attended one before then I do recommend you do attend next time.

The Council decided that the coronation of Their Majesties The King and Queen should be marked in two ways. Firstly, an illuminated Loyal Address was commissioned from the long-standing member and excellent heraldic artist David Hopkinson, who has painted many things in the past for us before including the Corporate Heraldry Award certificates. As you will have seen from *The Heraldry Gazette* David produced a magnificent Address of which His Majesty was very appreciative. I am very grateful to David for all his hard work.

Secondly, a Heraldry Society 'Coronation Gules and Azure London Gin' was commissioned and it has proven to be a popular purchase. There are still a few bottles left and so if you are wanting to buy an unusual and unique gift for somebody for their birthday or Christmas then bottles can still be purchased via the shop on our website. My thanks to members of Council Dewdney Drew for steering this project through and to David Phillips for the artwork on the label.

I am delighted to report that the membership is continuing to increase, as most of you will have realized when reading *The Heraldry Gazette*. This is most encouraging and we must strive to not only maintain the numbers but increase it.

The finances of the society are continuing to improve but, with inflation being what it is, we must not be complacent. We are very lucky to have an excellent Treasurer, Colin Lafferty-Smith, who keeps a very close professional eye on our finances. We must carefully husband our resources and spend it wisely and carefully for the benefit of the members while complying to our educational requirement.

One worrying trend is the diminution of local heraldry societies. While they are independent of The Heraldry Society, we do wish to see them survive and flourish and not to disappear. Our Council member John Titterton has the remit to liaise with the local societies and he has tried very hard to help and advise them wherever possible but it seems to be an uphill struggle. If you do have a local heraldry society near you then I do urge you to support it if you can and if there isn't one then perhaps you could start one. Grants to help local heraldry societies are available from The Heraldry Society if assistance is needed.

Our academic publication *The Coat of Arms* goes from strength to strength and is an excellent read. My thanks go to Dr Paul Fox the editor of *The Coat of Arms* for all his very hard work.

Our magazine *The Heraldry Gazette* continues to blossom under the steady hand of Jane Tunesi who does a superb job. We are very lucky to have such an industrious editor of the Gazette.

I would like to remind all members of the society that *The Coat of Arms* and *The Heraldry Gazette* does not just happen but it relies totally upon articles submitted by members and I urge everybody to consider submitting articles for publication. Do not hold

back. There is no promise that your article will be published but please do try. These two publications are vital organs of the society.

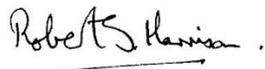
As I mentioned in my report last year, Clive Alexander has, after many years, retired as the Competitions Officer. He very skillfully oversaw the Corporate Heraldry Award and the annual Photographic Competition to make them a great success. My thanks for all his hard work over the years. Jenny Baker has succeeded him in that post and I wish her every success.

Paul Jagger, despite having very heavy personal work commitments, is still, thankfully, in charge of our Social Media. I have placed an appeal in *The Heraldry Gazette* for an assistant for Paul, but unfortunately nobody has responded yet. To say this is disappointing is very much an understatement. I would have hoped that a member, or two, would have put themselves forward to assist rather than be passive members; but hope springs eternal in the human breast....

I have mentioned John and Jane Tunesi earlier in other parts of this report. Between them they do a tremendous amount of work for the society, John as Secretary and Jane as Membership Secretary, Librarian, Shop Manager and Editor of *The Heraldry Gazette*, as well as running our stall at family history fairs. I am not convinced that the membership of the society quite appreciates the amount of work that they do. I, for one, am very grateful to them for all their hard work.

I am also grateful to our Deputy Chairman, Peter O'Donoghue, York Herald, for all his help and advice over the past year. Indeed, I am very thankful to all members of Council and the non-executive Officers for all their work and dedication.

My final thanks go to you and all other members of the society. You are the life-blood of The Heraldry Society. Thank you for your membership, try to persuade others to join or give them membership as a gift for their birthday or Christmas. But also, please do consider how you could become actively involved. It is all too easy to let others do all the work.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Harrison". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Robert Harrison
Chairman