

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND, 27th JUNE 2022

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Minutes of the Last Annual General Meeting, 14th June 2021, having been previously published on the PEF website, were taken as read, and there being no corrections, the Chairman proposed that the AGM accept them as a true record. The motion being carried, those Minutes were electronically signed by C. Strine, in anticipation of an ink signature being added in the future.

2. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND REPORT

The Chairman of the Fund, Casey Strine, welcomed members to the AGM, after what had been another unusual year due to the ongoing pandemic and other global factors.

Report

It has been another peculiar year in all our lives as we have started to emerge from a pandemic, only to find various other unplanned disruptions and challenges in our lives. Things have been no different for the Palestine Exploration Fund than for us personally.

Once again, most plans have been interrupted or changed over the year. That said, we have had our first in person events again in Greenwich, and it was a joy to see people back in the building and engaging in conversation once more. While public activities have been curtailed, internal work has continued hardly without respite. Activity includes work on the collection, our collection database, the library, and publications. Some of the fruits of these labours will be hard to see now, but we hope they will become visible to all of you sooner rather than later. We sincerely hope that the wider climate will allow more in person events, more visitors to the collection, and a more complete programme of research and dissemination between now and June 2023.

I can yet again report that the PEF is in good health financially. Of course, we have experienced similar challenges to others invested in the market, and our money does not go as far as it did even 6 months ago, but we remain on solid footing. Ivona Lloyd-Jones deserves particular praise as she has continued to ensure the Fund benefits from all the COVID-19 relief funds possible. It is a popular joke among the Board—though based in much truth—that Ivona has actually found the magic money tree those in Westminster have been seeking all these years.

This year sees several retirements from the Board. Dr Cat Quine (Grants Chair), Dr Chiara Fiaccavento (Publications Chair), and Sara Polak all have had to end their terms early for various reasons. We are sad to see each of them go—not only for the contributions they have made to the Board, but because of the way they have personally contributed to our *esprit de corps*. Bjørnar Storfjell is with us a bit longer, but will step down as Editor of the Palestine Exploration Quarterly in December. We are immensely grateful for his service, and for the great health in which he will leave the journal for his successor. This means that we will welcome a slate of new candidates to the Board—including a nominated successor for me as my term will conclude with the 2023 AGM.

It seems amazing that four years have passed since I was elected as Chair. I remember well that AGM in the lecture theatre at the British Museum as we conduct yet another virtual AGM. What is lost in the absence of being together is, we believe, made up in the access the online AGM allows to our membership far and wide. I hope many of you, from all corners of the globe, will read this report and join us for the AGM this year. I hope too that it will be the last one where I, or any other Chair of the Fund, has to provide a report indicating that COVID-19 has played a role in changing the Fund's aims and accomplishments for the year. Inshallah.

Casey Strine

3. HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

This year has been a year of transition for the PEF, not least as I have attempted to step into the rather roomy shoes of my predecessor, John MacDermot, in my first year in the role. It has also been a period of transition for the team at the PEF as they have emerged from the lockdowns and returned to our beautiful premises at Greenwich. The staff and our volunteers have done an absolutely outstanding job in getting the building up and running again, welcoming back researchers and visitors and holding our first in-person events in some time. As with many workplaces, the pandemic has shown us the value of more flexible working arrangements, and although the staff have been back in the office, they are able to work from home or remotely as they need.

Staff reviews

- **Felicity Cobbing** and I held her annual appraisal in October 2021, following which we set short- and medium-term aims for her in her work. The PEF is so incredibly fortunate to have someone as knowledgeable and dedicated as Felicity in this role. Her kindness, support, and leadership were crucial in getting the team through the pandemic period and back towards normality, and her plans for the PEF's future are very exciting indeed.
- Whilst Felicity held her own reviews with the staff within the PEF's organisational structure, she generously allowed me to have my own formal and informal discussions with **Avantika Clark**, **Ivona Lloyd-Jones**, **Elisabeth Sawerthal**, and **Yasmeen El-Khoudary** to help me learn the ropes and settle into the role. These talks were invaluable in helping me to learn more about the workings of the PEF, but most importantly to understand and recognise the hard work of the team. I was really enthused by the ideas and visions each of them had for the future direction of their own roles and of the PEF as a whole.

Staff activities

- Felicity and Ava have made significant progress in advancing the museums accreditation status for the PEF premises in Greenwich. Although this is in the very early stages, the potential for the PEF's engagement with the local and wider community through this process is significant.
- Felicity has been working on the laborious but crucial task of rationalising the fields and terms for the PEF's databases. This will make a significant impact on research within our collections.
- Ivona has worked her usual magic with the PEF's day-to-day operations, but she has also continued to find grants and support for the PEF that have made a significant difference to the PEF both during and after the lockdowns.
- Ava has established and run a decolonisation sub-committee, which held its first meeting in February 2022. This is an important step in confronting some important issues in the PEF's past and in its collections, and I am grateful to Ava for her hard work and vision on this.
- Yasmeen has done a superb job with our social media platforms, growing our following on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Analysis of followers show strong interest from the region (Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Egypt) which is encouraging for future directions.
- Yasmeen has also been heavily involved in the ongoing and important work of the Google Arts and Culture project.
- We have been extremely happy to welcome Elisabeth back to Greenwich this year, and thanks to the support of our volunteers the library was in good shape for her return. Elisabeth has some exciting plans for the collections, especially the rare books.
- Elisabeth has also been the reviews editor for the *PEQ*, and has helped to arrange some very interesting and thought-provoking contributions.

Volunteers

We have been extremely fortunate to have had the support of a number of volunteers this year. This includes student volunteers from the University of Greenwich and the University of North Carolina Charlotte who have undertaken placements at the PEF as part of their undergraduate studies. I am very grateful to Felicity and Ava for looking after and supporting our volunteers in their work.

- India Bingham (Institute of Archaeology, University College London) – cataloguing and scanning of the Garstang photographic collections.
- Penny Butler – work on the Hepper archive and editing work on the *Annuals*.
- Evie Cranbridge (University of Greenwich student) – organising the storage and emergency plan provision for important maps, plans, and paintings, and cataloguing a previously uncatalogued part of the casts collection.
- Richard Hills – developing and support the new PEF website and the PEF database, support with all things technological, including the production of videos of talks for our YouTube channel.
- Baekhanna Lee (University of North Carolina Charlotte) – work on the Google Arts and Culture project, especially on the architectural plans, scanning the Henry Phillips photographs, and contributions to the social media output.
- John McDermot – uncovering and cataloguing the PEF office archive, an important project on the internal history of the PEF.
- Viktorija Stankute (University of Greenwich student) – work on the Elizabeth Murray archive.

Events

- ‘The Landscape of Umayyad Khirbat al-Mafjar in the Jericho Oasis’, interview of Mahmoud Hawari by Felicity Cobbing, 23 August 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2iI2loinCw>
- Remembering and Forgetting at Dura-Europos’, talk by Jen Baird, 23 August 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSYL2Q2wcSk>
- ‘Bethlehem’, interview of Lorenzo Nigro by Jonathan Tubb, 14 November 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39wisrxavPU>
- ‘Under Jerusalem: The Story of Archaeology in the Holy City’, talk by Andrew Lawler, 14 April 2022, at the PEF premises in Greenwich – to appear on our YouTube channel shortly.
- ‘Sacred Architecture: An Exploration of al-Aqsa Mosque’s Complex History and Landmarks’, talk by Bashar Tabbah, 26 May 2022, at the PEF premises in Greenwich. to appear on our YouTube channel shortly.
- In addition, the PEF has been involved in the exceptional ‘Unsilencing the Archives’ lecture series run by the Bade Museum at the Pacific School of Religion. This series was developed from an online exhibition project on the Tell en-Nasbeh excavations, for which a 2021 Research Grant awarded to Melissa Cradic and Samuel Pfister. The exhibition and the lecture series shared aim is to explore the often-overlooked contribution of Palestinian individuals and communities to the excavations of the inter-war years. The excavation focusses on the 1930s Tell en-Nasbeh excavations, whilst the lecture series looks further into Palestine and beyond. The exhibition can be enjoyed by clicking on this link : <https://www.psr.edu/centers/bade-museum/museum-exhibits/current-upcoming-exhibits/>
The lectures can be accessed by this link to the Bade Museum’s YouTube channel: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8FR0R2Rs1D4NZrUsjJED2D4KbmHXj1mbz>
- Those of you who have been able to visit the PEF’s premises recently will have seen the fantastic new audio-visual system that has been installed. This has already been used to great effect in our two in-person talks, and the system throughout the building allows for recording and streaming to social media, and conferencing facilities in the Reading Room upstairs.

I would like to finish this report by thanking Felicity, Ava, Ivona, Elisabeth, Yasmeen, and all our volunteers for their hard work this past year – we really could not ask for a more dedicated and generally lovely bunch.

Michael Talbot

4. ACTING HONORARY TREASURER’S REPORT

This year I have served as the Interim Treasurer for the Fund. As with prior years, our planned income and expenditure were broadly in balance, but the end result was massively impacted by the pandemic. Since most lectures and talks did not occur and many research grants were not paid out as planned, we once again found the end result a surplus. The 2021 accounts indicate the strong financial position in which the PEF stands, and I commend them for your approval in line with what the Board has concluded. It is almost certain 2022 will see a manageable deficit in the accounts, in no small part due to various delayed payments finally occurring. There is, of course, also a relatively uncertain market for our investments, but that will be a bigger question for 2023 than for 2022. This situation was one already forecast last year, and so it comes as no surprise. Nonetheless, rest assured the Board and staff are working carefully to ensure the deficit is not an ongoing issue, and that we will cut our cloth accordingly going forward. It remains worth saying once more that while there are reasons to watch our finances closely and to remain vigilant about them, we are in a far, far stronger position in the present circumstances than if we remained in Hinde Mews, with its issues and financial constraints.

Casey Strine

5. HONORARY EDITOR'S REPORT ON THE *PALESTINE EXPLORATION QUARTERLY*

The economic pressures facing higher education worldwide is reflected in the decrease of nearly 5% of the libraries receiving the *PEQ* from 2,839 in 2020 to 2,706 in 2021. But in spite of this small decrease there has been an increase of 12.6% of downloaded *PEQ* articles from the T&F website which shows that the decrease has not affected the overall academic use of the *PEQ*.

There was a 10% decrease in the number of articles submitted to the *PEQ* in 2021. The rejection rate has remained stable with a slight increase of nearly 1% in 2021. Most submissions came from Israel with the United Kingdom seeing the second highest submission rate. Jordan and the USA had about the same number of submissions.

The total number of pages allocated for the *PEQ* by our publisher, T&F, was 352, and the total number of pages used for volume 153 was 352. Each of the four issues were published more or less on time on 15 March online and 22 March in print, 25 June online and 2 July in print, 13 September online and 28 September in print, and 19 November online and 24 November in print.

At the December meeting of the PEF Board of Directors the editor of the *PEQ* announced his intention to step down at the end of volume 154, December 2022. As of the March 2022 Board Meeting the new editor of the *PEQ* was announced, Charlotte Whiting (a brief bio-sketch follows). Dr Whiting is already shadowing the editorial process and will gradually take over the task of bringing out the journal. Dr. Whiting's Candidate Statement is included in the nominations listings.

J. Bjørnar Storfjell

6. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

PEF Annual XVII, *Ancient Landscapes of Zoara I. Survey and Excavations at the Ghor as-Safi in Jordan, 1997-2008*, by Konstantinos D. Politis was published in 2020. A second volume on Zoara excavations and findings will be published in 2022 as PEF Annual XVIII, with the title *Ancient Landscapes of Zoara II. Specialized Studies from Excavations in the Ghor as-Safi in Jordan, 1997-2008*.

Future proposed publications for 2023 and beyond include a volume by James Fraser on his excavations at Khirbet Gozlan in Jordan, Carol Palmer on the ethnographic work of Lucjan Turkowski, Mahmoud Hawari on his survey and excavations at Khirbet Al Mafjar in Jericho, and "The Foreman of the Works": Yusif Kana'an, archaeology and ethnography in Ottoman Palestine", edited by Sarah Irving.

Chiara Fiaccavento

C. Strine reported that C. Fiaccavento had resigned from the Board as Chair of Publications in the sprint, after moving back to Italy. The rules of the PEF constitution require Board members to be resident in the UK. He issued her thanks for her excellent work during her time as Chair of Publications. He reported that James Fraser had consented to replace her in this role, and looked forward to his appointment being approved by the membership later in this meeting.

7. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GRANTS COMMITTEE

NB Jen Baird will take over as Grant subcommittee chair as of the upcoming June 2022 AGM meeting
C. Quine stood down in February; Casey Strine stood in as chair for March meeting.

I. PEF Research Grants.

The Grants Committee met on 17th March 2022. This year had a smaller number of grant applications. The allocated budget for this year's Grants is £10,000. The PEF had received 5 applications, with a total sum applied for of £11,640.

Awards are as follows:

- James Donaldson, University of Queensland - *The Shellal Mosaic: Archaeological, Textual and Visual Traditions*, £1,400
- Micaela Sinibaldi, CBRL, *Towards a chronological framing of the two mosques of Islamic Baydha*, £1,550
- Mariana Ribas Albuquerque & Gwendolin Maurer, Iof A UCL, *Investigating changing socio-economic landscapes from the Early Bronze I-III in the Levant through Zooarchaeology*, £1,700

- Loay Abu Alsaud, Dept. Tourism & Archaeology, Faculty of Humanity, Nablus, *Contribution of Twentieth Century Palestinian Archaeologists, Yosra Al-Hajfaweyeh, Naşr Dwekat and Ibrhim Al-Fanni, to the Development of Archaeology in Palestine*, up to £3,500

Summary posts for the successful projects will be published on the PEF blog when they are received, along with any other updates from our grant recipients. Formal research reports will also be published in the PEQ.

II. The Joint Albright-PEF Fellowship

2022-23 was the third year of our joint fellowship scheme with the Albright Institute in Jerusalem, in which £3000 is awarded to a scholar undertaking research which requires a stay in Jerusalem and London, utilising the collections of both Albright and PEF.

Following reviews by both Albright and the PEF Grants Committee, the award was Margaret Freeman (MIT) for her project *Explorers, Archaeologists, and the Bedouin in the Built Environment of Late Ottoman Palestine*.

III. The Routledge Philip Davies Early Career Researcher Publication Award 2021-22

This award was established in memory of Prof. Philip Davies. Acting on a suggestion by the previous Chair of Grants, Cat Quine, it has been decided to re-schedule this award to the beginning of the academic year in September. This will spread the grants better throughout the year, and will better fit into the academic calendar. The successful applicants for 2022 will be reported at the 2023 AGM.

Jen Baird and Casey Strine

J. MacDermot asked if the amount being allocated to grants would rise in light of ongoing global inflation. C. Strine replied that it would be a welcome development, but one which needed to be considered in light of the PEF's own financial burdens in what was looking to be a challenging year, and also the additional monies put aside for the Albright-PEF Fellowship. A return to the former grants budget of £12k after a slight reduction in recent years would be a welcome first step.

All Officers Reports were accepted by the members present.

8. ELECTION OF RAY BRUCE AND DANIEL REYNOLDS AS ORDINARY BOARD MEMBERS, TO SERVE FROM 2022 TO 2027.
ELECTION OF AMY HITCHCOCK AS HONORARY TREASURER, TO SERVE FROM 2022 TO 2027.
ELECTION OF JOHN MACDERMOT AS ORDINARY MEMBER FROM 2022 to 2027 AND CHAIRMAN-ELECT FROM 2022 TO 2023.
RATIFICATION OF CHARLOTTE WHITING AS MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE FROM 2022 TO 2027, & EDITOR-ELECT OF PEQ FOR 2022, TO ASSUME THE EDITORSHIP IN 2023.

M. Talbot announced the results of the returned ballots. There was 100% approval for all appointments: Ray Bruce and Daniel Reynolds as Ordinary Board Members, Amy Hitchcock as Honorary Treasurer, John MacDermot as Ordinary Board Member and Chairman-Elect, and Charlotte Whiting as Ordinary Board Member and Editor-Elect. The Appointment of existing Board Members Jen Baird and James Fraser to serve as Chair of the Grants Committee and Chair of Publications from 2022 to 2027 respectively was Approved by the members present.

C. Strine welcomed the new members to the Board, and thanked them and the new Officers for taking on their respective responsibilities.

9. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2021

M. Talbot announced there had also been 100% approval in the returned postal ballots for the 2021 Report and Accounts.

The Chairman referred the members to the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021, copies of which had been sent by email to the membership in advance. This document is also available for consultation at the PEF office.

The members present **Approved** the Report and Accounts for 2021.

One of the members present, Nick Brett, asked what the original term of the lease on the PEF's premises was, and if it was for the land or the building. F. Cobbing confirmed that the lease as signed in 2018 was for 999 years. C. Strine conformed that the lease was for the PEF's property alone and the developers, Galliard, retained the freehold on the whole building and the land itself.

10. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR JUNE 2022- JUNE 2021

F. Cobbing introduced Daniel Chapman, as representative of our Auditors, Hartley Fowler Llp.

C. Strine noted that there had been some delays with the Audit this year, due to staff changes at the auditors, Messrs Hartley Fowler, but that this was likely to be a unique set of circumstances. He also thanked Ivona Lloyd-Jones for her tireless and exceptional work in preparing the accounts for the Auditors to examine.

M. Talbot reported the unanimous vote in the postal ballots in favour of reappointing our Auditors, Hartley Fowler Llp for the forthcoming year.

The Chairman proposed the appointment of Messrs Hartley Fowler as Auditors for the year June 2021 – June 2022. The proposal was **Approved** by the Membership.

11. SUBSCRIBERS QUESTIONS

F. Cobbing reported no questions had been received prior to the meeting. There were no further questions in the meeting.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

J. MacDermot proposed a vote of thanks to C. Strine for serving as Interim Honorary Treasurer so diligently, with the expert guidance of I. Lloyd Jones as the PEF's Administrator and Financial Accountant, despite his considerable existing obligations. Members present concurred in this vote of thanks.

F. Cobbing noted that many members missed the PEF's lectures at the British Museum, and that enquiries were being made to see if these could be reinitiated. She was however aware that things were taking some time to get going in the Events Department at the British Museum, and some patience may be required.

Jonathan Tubb asked if there might be some mileage in republishing the original series of PEF Annuals to enable libraries to gain access to these valuable publications. Rachael Sparks suggested that E-Books might be an option. C. Strine had discussed the option of open access publications with C. Fiaccavento. The royalties coming to the PEF from the Annuals series was relatively modest, so an open access option e-book version would not necessarily affect our income significantly, and might generate additional interest in the paid for hard copy versions.

With no further questions, C. Strine closed the meeting. He thanked subscribers for voting and attending, and for continuing to support the PEF through their subscriptions and involvement. He encouraged all to visit the PEF in Greenwich by arranging a visit with F. Cobbing.

13. DATE OF THE NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Membership would be informed of the date of the next Annual General Meeting when it was known.

Casey Strine

Chairman, PEF