

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND, 3rd July, 2023

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Minutes of the Last Annual General Meeting, 27th June 2022, 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 several global factors.

Report

This is the fifth time I have written a Chair's report for the AGM. It always feels a bit like I should start by saying 'the state of our union is good...' Clearly, I have not lost all vestiges of my American heritage. Despite the cliché nature of the statement, I am pleased to report that the PEF remains in good health after another active year.

For the first time in years, we have had a period of activity that proceeded uninterrupted by public health concerns. As the rest of the officer reports will indicate, this has meant a great deal of activity around the PEF. Perhaps most importantly, it has meant a great deal more events for our members and regular attenders. Many of these have been in Greenwich, with live-stream or recorded options. It has been wonderful to welcome so many people into the building, and to reach so many others digitally. This is a brave new world for PEF, and one where I believe things will continue to develop and grow in the future.

This year I am able to say again that the PEF is in good health financially. I am even more pleased to say that Amy Hitchcock, our Honorary Treasurer, can provide far more details about this than me. After a time of much transition in that post, and many changes in how our investments are managed, we have now reached a settled state on both. Amy brings so much expertise to the role, and the Board has benefited greatly from it already. I'm sure you will see in her report here why, and will benefit from it too. Regarding the investments, we have experienced similar challenges to others invested in the market as inflation, interest rates, and war have impacted the economy. Such vicissitudes are part of PEF's norm now. That said, I am confident we have a sound, long term investment strategy that will allow us to deal with those realities well.

This year sees one retirement from the Board as my term as Chair ends. During the year Bjørnar Storfjell stepped down as Editor of the Palestine Exploration Quarterly. His term was an immensely successful one. We are now in the sure hands of Charlotte Whiting as PEQ editor. She is off to a flying start. Due to some mid-term departures over the past few years, we hope to welcome two new Board members this year. This AGM also will confirm Prof John MacDermot's appointment as the new Chair. I have spent time working on this transition with John over the past 12 months, and I can say that the process of having a Chair-elect has made the handover far smoother. I believe this process will stand the Fund in good stead going forwards.

It seems amazing that five years have passed since I was elected as Chair. Attempting to recount even the most important and memorable events of my term here would be a fool's errand. I will simply say that despite many unplanned and tragic events, it is clear to see that the PEF has made progress in nearly every area of its activities in the past five years. As evidence, one only need recall that when I assumed the chair, we still resided in 2 Hinde Mews—something that seems somehow part of the distant past now! I have been thrilled to be a part of PEF's work in this role, but I must give all the credit for our progress to the staff, volunteers, and other Board members of the PEF. They have made my work enjoyable and productive, and saved me from a litany of errors that extends even beyond the long list I can conjure.

This AGM will not be goodbye, but farewell. I look forward to re-joining the ranks of PEF members - and perhaps using some of my additional free time to do some actual research in those alluring new archives and library shelves in Greenwich!

Casey Strine

3. HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

This has been the first year of 'normality' for the staff – at least in terms of working arrangements! – as they have started to realise the full potential of our premises in Greenwich. The impressive number and range of talks and events, volunteers, visiting researchers, and links with external partners are all down to the hard work of our wonderful staff, working very much above and beyond. I should particularly like to mention the PEF's involvement as a founding member of the Greenwich Heritage Network, a group of local heritage and culture organisations, various efforts to develop resources and outreach activities for schools alongside members of the board, notably Ray Bruce, and a very fruitful examination of our ethnographic collections led by Omar Nasser-Khoury.

Staff reviews

- **Felicity Cobbing** and I held her annual appraisal in October 2022, reflecting on her achievements last year. We set short- and medium-term aims for her in her work. Felicity's leadership, endless enthusiasm, and exceptional expertise are very much the glue that holds the Fund together, and the achievements of the past year would not have happened without her steady hand on the tiller. We also had the great joy of toasting Felicity in 2023 as she marked an incredible 25 years with the PEF – here's to many more!
- Whilst Felicity held her own reviews with the staff within the PEF's organisational structure, she generously again allowed me to have my own formal and informal discussions with **Avantika Clark, Ivona Lloyd-Jones, Elisabeth Sawerthal, and Yasmeen El-Khoudary** to reflect on the past year and to discuss their needs and visions. These discussions proved incredibly helpful in understanding the opportunities and challenges in their roles, and have resulted in the staff working on some impactful projects under Felicity's guidance. I look forward to our next reviews in the Autumn.

Staff activities

- Felicity and Ava have continued to make progress with the museum accreditation process.
- Felicity has continued 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, as always, worked wonders with the PEF's day-to-day operations, helping to ensure we remain in a sound financial position.
- Ava's work on a decolonising framework for the Fund has resulted in a well-considered statement that was presented to the Board for discussion and consideration. This is an important and challenging piece of work, and a credit to Ava's hard work on this initiative.
- Ava has stepped up in almost every aspect of the job in the past year, including more supervision of volunteers and work with collection provenancing.
- Yasmeen continues to do a superb job with our social media platforms, growing our following on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- The PEF has applied for an important grant related to maritime archaeology in Gaza, in collaboration with the Universities of Southampton (Dr. Andrea Georgiou) and Ulster (Dr. Julia Nikolaus) in the UK, and the Alexandria Centre for Maritime Archaeology in Egypt, The Islamic University in Gaza, and the Libyan Department of Antiquities. If successful, the project will be managed by Yasmeen at the PEF, and overseen by Felicity. Putting the bid together was a real team effort, with many hours of hard work invested by all those named above, as well as our CEO Felicity Cobbing, our President, Jonathan Tubbs, and our new Honorary Treasurer Amy Hitchcock, who somehow managed to provide invaluable and detailed budgetary know how and spreadsheets from a night bus in Cambodia! Here's hoping that the grant awarders make the right decision!
- Elisabeth has fully resumed her rightful position behind the library desk on the first floor and, with the help of volunteers, is making excellent progress on working through our rare books collection and identifying conservation issues.
- As well as her job and everything else, Elisabeth also recently passed her doctoral viva with flying colours- so that will be **Doctor** Sawerthal to you from now on!

Volunteers

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

- John MacDermot – uncovering and cataloguing the PEF office archive, an important project on the internal history of the PEF that he has nearly completed, and for which we are very grateful.
- Julian Bowsher – sorting and recording the PEF's coin collection.
- Penny Butler – Sorting and organising the Nigel Hepper Archive and copy-editing various PEF annual titles.
- Richard Hills – working on the production of our YouTube videos, and supplying technical support for staff working on the Website.
- India Bishop (UCL) – Garstang Photographs
- Omar Joseph Nasser-Khoury – working on our Ethnographic collection.
- Charles Key (Brown University), Indexing the BSAJ Archive for a joint agreement with the CBRL.
- Celeste Covington (UNC Chapel Hill), Indexing the BSAJ Archive for a joint agreement with the CBRL.
- Matt Foster, Valentina Prunas, & Alessandra Guardeniri, (Birkbeck College): Database projects: resolving identified issues & errors in the system.
- Georgios Gkatzoflias (University of Cardiff) – as above, and adding specialist detail to the archaeological records for our Byzantine material
- Sam Ashdown (University of Greenwich student) – working on a variety of activities related to cataloguing and conservation, and rendering the PEF premises and Tell El-Hesi in MineCraft as a school resource as a part of this third-year work placement.
- Olivia Tarditi (University of Greenwich student) – working on ethnographic items containing Ottoman-era coins for her second-year project.
- Kian Rhys-Evans (University of Greenwich student) – assisting Elisabeth in cataloguing and conserving the rare books collection and other library duties.
- Freddie Cox (University of Aberdeen), Sorting, rehousing and listing the Mankin Archive.

Events

Many events were held at the PEF's premises in 2022 and 2023. Where possible, these talks are available to view at your leisure on our YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQUegUpcDcO AQN7ou8qto4A>

2022

6th July: Jointly with CBRL in memory of Andrea Zerbinì: *Challenging the Kyl-Bingaman Amendment: opening access to satellite imagery over Israel and Palestine.*

Michael Fradley, University of Oxford & EMEANA

13th October: *The Inheritance of Christ: Christian Pilgrimage in the Holy Land before the Crusades, c.800-c.1099.*

Dan Reynolds, University of Birmingham

15th November: *The Notorious Parker Expedition to Jerusalem & the Search for the Temple Treasures.*

Graham Addison, independent author.

15th December ONLINE ONLY: "You Can Always Tell a Jaffa by its Juice!" *How Jaffa Oranges Conquered Britain.*

Anne Caldwell, University of Aberdeen

2023

12th January: *130 Years of Archaeology in the Levant: The Site of Tell el Hesi from Petrie to the Present.*

Jeff Blakely, University of Wisconsin

19th January: *Ancient Landscapes of Zoara - Surveys and Excavations South of the Dead Sea.*

Konstantinos D. Politis Hellenic Society for Near Eastern Studies.

22nd February: *Exploring the Explorers: Curiosities and Peoples in the Ethnographic Collections of the Palestine Exploration Fund.*

OmarJ Nasser-Khoury, designer.

16th March: *Nine Quarters of Jerusalem*.

Matthew Teller, author.

19th April: *Mapping and Malaria: The Palestine Exploration Fund and the seeds of Malaria elimination in the first quarter of the 20th century*.

Anton Alexander, independent researcher.

2nd May: Jointly with The Albright Institute in Jerusalem:

The Antiquities Trade in Israel and Palestine: Same as it ever was?

Morag Kersel, De Paul University, and Michael Press, University of Agder.

4th May: *A Sea of Fragrance: The Sensory Experience of Jaffa in British Travel Writing*.

Anne Caldwell, University of Aberdeen.

10th May: *How to buy Antiquities in 19th Century Palestine*.

Michael Press, University of Agder.

I would like to finish this report by thanking Felicity, Ava, Ivona, Elisabeth, Yasmeen, and all our volunteers for their hard work and dedication to the Fund this past year, and I am very much looking forward to working with them even more closely next year.

Michael Talbot

4. HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

This has been my first full term as Treasurer following on from Casey's excellent work as interim, it has been exciting to see the work the PEF has managed to complete within the year even with tighter budgetary constraints.

As predicted it has been a tough year for PEF financially. A return to pre-pandemic levels of activity has brought with it increased costs across the board with inflationary increases taking its toll. This, in addition to a reduction in government support schemes has caused expenditure to increase at a rate not matched by income.

A large portion of the PEF income is received from investments, global financial insecurity caused by various external factors including the war in Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis etc. has meant that investment income has remained flat on previous years. Although it is a positive that there was no decrease here, due to the higher costs mentioned, this has caused expenditure to increase higher than income in the 2022 financial accounts. It should be noted this was a planned and expected deficit and despite this the accounts show PEF in a strong financial position, these have been shared for your approval.

This instability in the markets is expected to continue further into 2023 and the PEF staff and committee have been proactive in ensuring expenditure has been reduced and new income streams explored to ensure PEF is in a good place going forward whilst continuing all the exciting work.

Amy Hitchcock

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

PEQ achieved 23,316 downloads in 2022, which although a slight decrease compared to 23,656 downloads in 2021, represents a +54% increase compared to 2019's downloads, showing an overall growth in readership numbers over the past four years.

In terms of alternative metrics, *PEQ* was mentioned 518 times on social media in 2022, including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. It also received 10 mentions in news outlets and blogs.

The number of articles submitted remained stable, with most coming from Israel, the United Kingdom and the USA. Each of the four issues of *PEQ* 150 in March, June, September and December 2023 were published online and in print as scheduled.

At the end of 2022, T&F ended the practice of volume page budgets. This change was made to better reflect today's digital publishing environment. Instead of the number of pages, articles are used as the unit of content measurement. As such, an annual article minimum was introduced.

The minimum article benchmark for the 2023 volume of *PEQ* is 27 articles, comprising research articles and grant reports.

At the March 2022 Board Meeting the new editor of the *PEQ* was announced, Charlotte Whiting. The new editor shadowed the editorial process through 2022 and took over the task of bringing out the journal from Bjørnar Storfjell in January 2023.

Charlotte Whiting

6. HONORARY CHAIR OF PUBLICATIONS REPORT

My role of Lead Curator on the British Museum exhibition *Luxury and power: Persia to Greece* has prevented me from engaging in my commitments to the PEF as Series Editor. I would like to acknowledge the phenomenal work of Penny Butler and Felicity Cobbing in keeping the Annual publications progressing smoothly and achieving its aims.

PEF Annual XVIII (2022)

Politis, Konstantinos D. (2022) *Ancient Landscapes of Zoara II. Finds from the Surveys and Excavations at the Ghor as-Safi in Jordan, 1997 – 2018*. With contributions by Anthony Grey, Anette M. Hansen, Louise Joyner, Kalliope I. Kritikakou-Nikolaropoulou, Louise A. Martin, Rula Shafiq, Peter Edwell, Georgios A. Papaioannou, & Aliza Taft.

This volume was published in December 2022 as the PEF Annual XVIII. It provides the companion volume to PEF Annual XVII: *Zoara I. Survey and Excavations at the Ghor as-Safi in Jordan, 1997-2008*, by Konstantinos D. Politis, which was published earlier in 2022.

Kudos to my predecessor Chiara Fiaccavento who served as Series Editor through the preparation of most of the manuscript, Penny Butler who served as copyeditor extraordinaire, and especially to Dino himself for completing two excellent volumes. Note that the 2020 and (then-impending) 2022 volumes were lauded at the ICHAJ conference in Jordan in August 2022 (International Conference for the History and Archaeology of Jordan) as rare examples of timely and high-quality field publications. Both add lustre to the PEF Annual Series.

PEF Annual XIX (2023-4)

Gilmour, Garth (in preparation). *The Excavations on the Hill of the Ophel by R.A.S. Macalister and J. Garrow Duncan 1923–1927: A catalogue and examination of the finds in the collections of the Palestine Exploration Fund*. With contributions by Anna de Vincenz, William Zimmerle and Nitzan Amitai-Preiss (*Preliminary title only).

The preparation of the above volume is proceeding well. The manuscript has passed a comprehensive peer review, matters arising from which have now been addressed by the author. Penny Butler continues her outstanding work as copy-editor, and is corresponding with Dr Gilmour regarding queries for several chapters and some sections of the prelims arising from the editors at Taylor and Francis. Dr Gilmour is now in South Africa, and will expedite these edits on his return in late June. The illustrations are being worked on in the US, although we are unsure when they will be ready.

A mid-2024 publication date is anticipated, given the many small but time-consuming edits that Penny and Garth and working through.

PEF Annuals XX+ (2024 -)

The Turkowski manuscript concerns preparation of the ethnographic work by Lucjan Turkowski. The manuscript continues to be prepared by Carol Palmer, Director of the Council for British Research in the Levant. Progress is slow but steady. Carol submitted the first five chapters (with images) in May, which Penny is working through. With some dedicated time now being made available by the CBRL Board to work on the manuscript, Carol hopes to submit in mid-late 2023.

The Fund has a healthy selection of other prospective titles on which to draw following *Ophel* and *Turkowski*. These include:

Sarah Irving's "*The Foreman of the Works*": *Yusif Kana'an, archaeology and ethnography in Ottoman Palestine* is in preparation, but unlikely to be completed in the short term.

James Fraser's *The Archaeology of Olive Oil: Excavations at the EB IV site of Khirbet Ghazlan in Jordan*. Writing will commence in September after the exhibition's closure.

Holly Winter has submitted her completed PhD for review as potential publication, titled *Death Sets a Thing Significant: Funerary Palaces of the Middle Bronze Age Southern Levant*. The PhD was awarded from the University of Sydney in March 2023, and the PhD is under review as a potential Annual. Note that Dr Winter has published initial versions of one chapter as articles in PEQ and BASOR.

James (Jamie) Fraser.

7. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE GRANTS SUBCOMMITTEE

General Matters and Membership

Jen Baird took over as subcommittee chair as of the June 2022 meeting. The committee now also includes Dan Reynolds, John Ritzema, Zeina Klink-Hoppe, as well as Ava Clark and Felicity Cobbing. We have revised the Terms of Reference for the committee for the purposes of clarity and reporting.

PEF Grants

We have updated and clarified the Grants notes and the Grant application form, to try and streamline the process

We have also begun tracking our awards applications with applicant's location, gender, institution, etc, so that we can gain a more clear picture of the projects we support over time, which we hope to use to inform the PEF Decolonisation committee.

In light of current financial constraints, the committee had £6k to award, a reduction from previous years which we hope to be able to reverse in the future. The grants committee met on March 16th and grants were awarded to the following (out of 9 applications).

- Worsfold, PhD Student at Leeds, *British Women in Palestine*, £900
- Routledge, University of Liverpool, *Tell Dhiban*, £453
- Connick, PhD Student at University of Amsterdam, "*If the house could speak*": *Imagined Spaces of Nationhood in Nahr al-Bared*, £1529
- Al Saud, An-Najah National University, Nablus, *The Prominent Palestinian Archaeologists in Twenty and Twenty-first Centuries*, £2000
- Suriano, University of Maryland, & Ghool, University of Newcastle, *The Monolith of Silvan: Integrating Silvan Narratives into Historic Photographs*, £1150
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Grants will reopen in December 2023.

2023 PEF/Albright Institute Fellowship

From a strong field of six applications, the 2023 PEF/Albright Institute Fellowship was awarded to *Madaline Harris-Schober*, a PhD candidate at The University of Melbourne. Madaline's project, *Ritual architecture, Material Culture and Practice of the Philistines* was selected for the strength and its use of PEF's material, as well as those at the Albright. We are proud to be supporting this excellent early career scholar in making the best of our collections.

In view of the current budgetary constraints upon the PEF, a decision has been taken to pause this excellent but expensive initiative for the coming year. The Albright fellowship will likely open for the next round in Sept 2024.

Davies Award

There were only two entries in the current round and decision was taken (in consultation with the chair and secretary) to roll over the award to the next year, with increased advertising and promotion.

Jen Baird.

8. ELECTION OF JOHN MACDERMOT (CHAIR-ELECT) AS CHAIRMAN, TO SERVER FROM 2023 TO 2028.
ELECTION OF NIKKI ELVIN AND RICHARD HILLS AS ORDINARY BOARD MEMBERS, TO SERVE FROM 2023 TO 2028

M. Talbot announced the results of the postal ballots for the above elections. There was approval for all appointments. C. Strine welcomed the new members to the Board. He was very pleased to see John MacDermot elected as Chairman. J. MacDermot thanked the membership for the trust they had placed in him.

9. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2022

M. Talbot announced there had also been approval in the returned postal ballots for the 2022 Report and Accounts.

The Chairman referred the members to the Annual Report and Accounts for 2022, 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 2022.

10. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR JUNE 2023 - JUNE 2024

C. Strine thanked the PEF staff and Honorary Treasurer, and in particular 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 2023 – June 2024. The proposal was **Approved** by the Membership.

11. SUBSCRIBERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Mr. Christopher Glover enquired if he was correct that the gain or loss on the investments detailed on Pg 14v of the Audited accounts referred to the PEF's Investments Portfolio. C. Strine replied that this was the case, and that thought the value had gone down this was unrealised as no shares had been sold, and interest continued to be earned on them. It was worth noting that the figures dated to December 2022 and they would be different today.

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 thanks all the board members and PEF staff for their support throughout his 5 years as Chairman, and he encouraged all to visit the PEF in Greenwich by arranging a visit with F. Cobbing and/or Ava Clark.

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