

Annual Review – 2017

This year's Cheese and Wine Evening and AGM was held in November 2016 at the home of Norman & Margaret West. It was attended by thirty-one members and guests. During the evening the Society held its AGM, and elected a new committee: Michael Waters (Chairman), Peter Veal (Secretary & Treasurer), and further members Andrew Coomer, Barrie Jervis, Jeremy Kenyon, Carol Rowe, Kevan Scholes, Norman West. Geoff Wilkinson resigned after a number of years on the committee. Sir Hugh Sykes had agreed to continue as President.

In January, forty members and their guests went to see Irving Berlin's sensational musical 'Annie Get Your Gun' at the Crucible Theatre. The show was a light hearted extravaganza with a stand out performance by Anna-Jane Casey as Annie. She was a small bundle of energy and fun, not to mention having a wonderful singing voice. We were pleased to be joined by several members of our sister Society in Derbyshire. As usual, there was an excellent private reception beforehand in the Adelphi Room, for drinks and nibbles, also enabling us to store our coats through the show, and a place to congregate during the interval .

Towards the end of February, the Annual Dinner of the Cambridge Society Sheffield was held at Whirlowbrook Hall, as in the last couple of years. Thirty-one members attended the event, which began with drinks in the reception room after which we proceeded to dinner. After a good dinner, Professor John Parker, director of the Cambridge Botanical Gardens from 1996 to 2010, gave us a most interesting talk on the origins and history of the gardens, and their place in the development of gardens internationally, including aspects of their design and horticulture, and his interest in the ideas of its founder, Professor John Henslow. It was a most stimulating talk evidencing Professor Parker's passion for his subject, and motivated many of us to revisit the gardens next time we find ourselves in Cambridge.

In March, the Society held its Annual Guest Lecture. The collapse of the USSR, electric cars, big data, David Blunkett's ID cards, fake news, terrorism, identity, immigration, photo ID, sociometrics, Donald Trump - after a relaxing buffet at Whirlowbrook Hall these were some of the issues discussed with thirty-three members and guests by Professor Paul Wiles, the Biometrics Commissioner, alumnus of Trinity Hall, former Professor at the University Sheffield and resident of Eyam! Paul laid down the challenge of seeing technical developments, such as new biometrics, in the wider context of the social and political changes faced by citizens. He urged us all - and especially politicians - to encourage a much more public debate about the kind of society we want to live in. In particular the balance between public and private (personal) interests we would like to create for the future. Only then can we decide how to use and constrain the use of biometric data.

CAMBRIDGE SOCIETY SHEFFIELD

In June, in the only dry interlude of the day, fifteen members and guests enjoyed a five mile walk in upper Lathkill Dale. As well as the stunning scenery of the valley we were lucky to see the rare wild flower Jacob's Ladder in full bloom. The return route was via the old miners' track back onto the limestone plateau enjoying extensive views of the countryside. We were then joined by four more members for an excellent lunch at the Bull's Head in Monyash.

July saw fourteen members and guests of the Society visit Haddon Hall in Derbyshire - described by Simon Jenkins in "1000 Best Houses" as "the most perfect house to survive from the middle ages". We had an entertaining and informative guided tour of this magnificent fortified medieval manor house. After lunch there was a further opportunity to explore the house and beautiful terraced gardens which descend down to the river Wye.

As last year, in September the Society held its Cambridge Freshers Event for those in Sheffield about to become Freshers. This was the second time that Sheffield has hosted a Cambridge Freshers' event. Building on last year's experience we saw a big growth in attendee numbers to 22 Freshers and 14 Alumni, current students and guests. After brief introductory comments from Kevan Scholes and Andy Hogben the evening consisted of mingling and chatting which was the purpose of the event. Contacts were established between students from the same college or course. Particularly noteworthy this year was the huddle of five Mathematicians and a Computer Scientist! Once again thanks are due to Sheffield Business School (at Sheffield Hallam University) for allowing us to hold the event in their spacious Deli area. As with last year's group we plan to keep in contact with the students through their 1st year at Cambridge and follow last year's cohort into their 2nd year.

The Autumn walks of the Cambridge Society Sheffield were held in October. The weather was kind to us all. The longer walk, from the Gate Inn near Linacre reservoirs was the starting point for the party of eight. The route was through varied countryside and we circumnavigated the reservoirs. A party of thirteen met at Nona's coffee shop at the Hollingwood Hub near Chesterfield before walking part of the towpath of the towpath of the Chesterfield canal. We all then repaired to the Gate Inn for lunch where we were joined by our president and his wife. Special thanks must go to Geoff Wilkinson who has led the shorter walks for many years and is now standing down to become a "meals only" walker.

Also in October, the Society went on a guided tour of Sheffield Cathedral, including the Shrewsbury Chapel, tombs and other 16th century historical aspects. Eight people attended the visit, which was a fascinating historical tour organised by our former Society Secretary, who is also a leading light in the lay organisation and a renowned Sheffield Cathedral historian.