

TREASURER'S REPORT for CALENDAR YEAR 2018

15th APRIL 2019 *[as actually given]*

Good evening. I am Steve Stocks, and I took over as Treasurer following last year's AGM, which I was unable to attend as I was abroad at the time. As you will probably know, I succeeded John Martin, who had served in that capacity for many years, and I formally thank him now for a smooth handover once I returned from my trip.

For most people, accounts can be very boring, but I hope to explain briefly but succinctly what has been going on on our financial side, as light-heartedly as possible, with a peer into the near future too.

You will see from the accounts that our excess of income over expenditure – what one might call our surplus or "profit" – for last year was £345, compared to just £120 in 2017, and almost £400 in 2016. Broadly speaking, this increase of £225 over 2017 equates to our larger income at the door, a growth of almost one third. Although there was no change in our entry fees, whilst only one event in 2017 took more than £150, four talks did so in 2018. These were our talks by Diana Hughes of Aldeburgh Museum in January, Ray Whitehand in February (on Suffolk workhouses), Pip Wright in September (on Suffolk witches), and the most popular of all was Zoë Readhead, Principal of Summerhill School, in November. There were more than 40 visitors for each of those four events, and that reflects Angie Skelcher's success in finding us some interesting speakers, but also, as John pointed out last year, talks of general interest, especially about Suffolk — rather than strictly within our family-history brief — tend to attract more visitors.

Subscriptions and donations received in total were almost unchanged.

On the payments side, the grand total for 2018 was almost identical to the previous year, though the split between different types of spending did vary. For example, the total costs of talks, fees, gratuities and office expenses together are down almost imperceptibly, by £33. The 2017 purchase of a projector screen and stand, and repairs to a computer — altogether totalling £181 — were not repeated.

However, our focus moved to extending our archives, such as in the project to copy the Leiston Grammar School sports-team photos, and to the purchase of several family-history related books. We also raised our profile outside of the area by advertising in the Federation of Family History Society's "Really Useful Leaflet" series — this can stimulate family-history research questions from outside, sometimes generating donations in thanks, and certainly encouraging some interesting lines of enquiry! As John warned last year, we incurred a double charge for our website service provision, because of an accidental carry-over from 2017, but the annual charge of £36 remains remarkably low, yet the support I receive from them as Webmaster is second to none. All these "new" charges totalled £271.

Finally, the £87 "miscellaneous" charges for 2018 are almost entirely for our teas and biscuits, whilst the 2017 total also included one-off subsidies for trips to Butley and Gressenhall totalling £42.50.

Moving briefly to the financial aspects of what is happening this year — on the subject of extending and maintaining our archives, donations totalling £27 were received during our

Open Day this February for copies of the Grammar School photos, partly clawing back last year's spending. Work is starting on copying the whole-school panoramic photos that were featured in the current Newsletter no.44, which will entail some more expense. We are also buying materials for simple map cases for the 250 or so Ordnance Survey 25-Inch Maps, announced there too. Although we are a family history society, by both name and inclination, we also consider it our duty to acquire and maintain (or pass on) historical materials of local interest, especially when they would otherwise be lost or destroyed — *though some might question whether maps are strictly family history, on the committee we consider them most relevant*. So, we have so far spent some £30 making the map-cases, a figure which is likely to triple, but interestingly the overall cost per map will likely then be little different from the 6/8d original retail price of the 1904 editions!

Our bank and cash balances obviously fluctuate all the time, but are currently very close to £2000, with a running surplus since January of just £140. This reflects the disruption caused to our programme by the Co-op car-park changes, and the doubts that existed for a while over the future of this particular venue. Also, one recent talk had unfortunately to be cancelled at short notice because of the speaker's illness. Our return to a regular meeting night at the Community Centre from September should help stabilise attendances, and hence our finances — but they will still likely fall back a little over the remainder of the year, because subscription receipts are concentrated at New Year. If the cashflow profile of 2017 and 2018 is repeated, we may not break even this year, but nonetheless we have some interesting talks planned, projects in progress and acquisitions in prospect, which is what we are in this Group for!

If anyone has any general queries, I am quite happy to answer them now, but more detailed, technical questions on the accounts would probably be more appropriately taken on one side after the meeting, if there is no objection to that.

Otherwise, I hope that all paid-up Members here are happy for the Accounts for 2018, as examined, to be accepted, adopted and signed off.