MINUTES of the 84th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of THE STAIR SOCIETY held in the Mackenzie Building, Old Assembly Close, Edinburgh at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday 16 November 2019.

The President, the Honourable Lord Stewart, in the Chair. The President apologised for his lateness. Apologies for absence had been received from the Vice President, Professor Hector MacQueen, who was in Milan.

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the 83rd Annual General Meeting, which had been held on 17 November 2018, were approved and signed by the President.

**Matters Arising**

There were none.

**Report and Accounts to 31 March 2019**

The Secretary and Treasurer presented the Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019, which had been independently examined and found to be in order, and which had previously been circulated to members.

Investment income had again increased a little, and subscription income had again decreased slightly. Mr. Burrow encouraged members to be more active in recruiting new members, especially amongst postgraduate and undergraduate students, to improve the demographic profile of the Society.

A very small surplus was recorded. Boosted by unrealised gains on investments, nearly £30,000 had been added to the recorded funds of the Society.

There being no questions, the Report and Accounts were accepted by the meeting on the motion of Mr. Graham Burnside, seconded by Mr. Tom Drysdale.

**Literary Director’s Report:**

Professor Godfrey presented his report. Volume 66 was at the mailing house and would shortly be sent to members. This was a very significant contribution to legal scholarship and had been a complex volume to produce. He suggested members would appreciate that when they had a chance to peruse it. The Society was fortunate to have an excellent production team who set and maintained high standards for the Society’s publications, and on behalf of the Society he thanked Lawrie Law and Ivor Normand once again for their support. As Ivor Normand was at the meeting, he was delighted to have the opportunity to acknowledge his scholarly values, professionalism and expertise.

A good series of volumes remained in prospect. He was pleased to announce that Council had just accepted a proposal for a new edition of *Regiam Majestatem.* This promised a transformation for investigations of medieval Scottish legal history.

Professor Godfrey also advised that the likely next volume would be a *Miscellany*, for which he already had a good number of articles promised.

There were no questions. The President thanked Professor Godfrey, commenting that the publishing programme appeared to be in robust health, and the report was approved.

**Election of Office Bearers and members of Council**

The President reported that he had advised Council of his desire to stand down as President. He had been hugely honoured to have served, his father and grandfather having both been members. He had appreciated the support of the Office Bearers and Council, especially Tom Drysdale, Alistair Burrow, David Sellar, Hector MacQueen, John Cairns and John Ford.

He invited the Chairman of Council, Professor John Ford, to propose the new President. Professor Ford thanked Lord Stewart for his service as President, commenting that he had led a number of notable changes, including a change of venue to the current one, and the introduction of a question and answer session after the annual lecture. He proposed that the Hon. Lady Wolffe, a Senator of the College of Justice, be elected President of the Society. He was seconded by the Vice Chairman, Mr. Graham Burnside, and Lady Wolffe was elected by acclamation.

The President intimated that the Vice President, the Chairman of Council, and the Vice Chairman were all willing to continue in office, and these appointments were approved by the meeting.

The Secretary and Treasurer and the Literary Director being willing to continue in office, these appointments were also approved by the meeting.

Ceit-Anna MacLeod and Dr. Thomas Green retire from Council by rotation and the President thanked both for their contribution to the Society during their term of office. Council proposed that Philip Hannay and Dr Lorna Macfarlane, as set out in the Annual Report, be elected as members of Council and this was approved.

In closing the meeting, the President noted the award of a C.B.E. to Professor MacQueen in the Birthday Honours List and the meeting recorded its congratulations. He also asked that the meeting record its condolences to Winifred Coutts on the recent passing of Gordon Coutts, and to the family of the late David Sellar who had also passed away during the year.

**Address**

There being no further business, the President called upon Professor Jørn Sunde, Professor of Legal History in the University of Oslo, to address the meeting. The title of his address was *“Birds of a feather flock together? A comparison of the legal order in the Norwegian and Scottish realm in the 13th century.”* It was very much appreciated by the members present, and there were a good number of questions. The Chairman of Council expressed the thanks of those present for a very stimulating address and looked forward to seeing the results of Scots legal historians looking in the Norwegian mirror.

The President closed the meeting in the usual way.