**John Galt Society**

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at 7 University Gardens, Glasgow on 30 April 2016

1. Introduction

The Chair, Professor Gerard Carruthers, welcomed 17 members to the first AGM of the Society.

1. Secretary’s Report

The Secretary, Ian McGhee, gave a report on various Galt-related activities which had happened since the Society’s inauguration in December 2014. The Chair had spoken at the unveiling in March last year of the newly restored Galt bust on Greenock Promenade. He also spoke at Irvine Burns Club’s commemoration of Galt’s birthday.

The Society held its own commemoration at Galt’s grave in Greenock followed by lunch at the Tontine Hotel, generously hosted by Hon. President Andrew O’Hagan, who spoke about what Galt meant to him. Professor Douglas Gifford then spoke about Galt’s development as a novelist.

In April Vocamus Press in Guelph published a new edition, by David Knight, of Galt’s play *The Star of Destiny* and short story *The German’s Tale.*

Professor Gil Stelter, also in Guelph, is nearing completion of his biography of Galt and hopes to publish later this year.

As General Editor, Professor Angela Esterhammer in Toronto has embarked on the *The Edinburgh Edition of the Selected Works of John Galt.* It is projected to comprise 15 volumes of fiction, potentially supplemented by *The Autobiography of John Galt* and/or *The Literary Life*. She expects, this summer, to engage in preparatory background work with research assistants on manuscripts, early print editions, and other archival materials available locally at the University of Toronto, the University of Guelph, and the Archives of Ontario.

The Editorial Advisory Board for the project consists of Gerard Carruthers (Glasgow), Ian Duncan (Berkeley), Penny Fielding (Edinburgh), Suzanne Gilbert (Stirling), Regina Hewitt (South Florida), Alison Lumsden (Aberdeen), and Katie Trumpener (Yale).

Members of the John Galt Society who are interested in the project are invited to contact the General Editor ([angela.esterhammer@utoronto.ca](mailto:angela.esterhammer@utoronto.ca)) or the Editorial Advisory Board.

Dr Gerard McKeever will shortly publish an article on *The Entail*. Details on how to access it will be put on the website when they are available.

Professors Carruthers and Kidd should by now have received contributions for their *Galt Companion* which is scheduled to appear next year.

Contact has been made with Greenock Philosophical Society and with Inverclyde Council to explore ways of working together to promote Galt’s work. We have not yet had a substantive reply from either.

Finally, the Society should record its gratitude to Craig Lamont for his sterling work in setting up and maintaining our website and to Scottish Literature at Glasgow University for their support in providing meeting rooms and catering for our meetings.

1. Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer reported that to the year ended 31st March 2016 the Society had 40 paid up members providing subscriptions of £400, plus a donation of £5 and bank interest of £1.28, giving a total income of £406.28. The only item of expenditure had been £50 for the room booking at the Tontine Hotel. The Society’s funds at 31 March were therefore £356.28.

He also reported that most members had renewed their subscriptions for the current year and that he would send a reminder to the remainder in the next few days.

1. Election of Committee and Office-bearers

Professor Carruthers agreed to serve as Chair for at least another year and Ian McGhee also agreed to continue as Secretary and Treasurer. Ross McGregor had had to resign from the Committee because of a change of job but Bill Nolan of Irvine Burns Club and Annie Small of Irvine Lasses Burns Club agreed to join the Committee. This means that the Committee for this year is:

Honorary President: Andrew O’Hagan

Chair: Gerard Carruthers

Secretary & Treasurer: Ian McGhee

Committee: Douglas Gifford

Regina Hewitt

Sandro Jung

Colin Kidd

Gerry McKeever

Ralph McLean

Marguerite Nesling

Jean Scollay

Christopher Whatley

Annie Small

Bill Nolan

1. Future Activities

The Society’s website is contained within that of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies and Craig Lamont suggested that the Society might wish to consider having its own internet domain explaining that it could be done for a reasonable outlay. The Chair said the Centre had become an umbrella under which other related literary topics could gather but that there might be merit in having an independent presence on the web. The Secretary agreed to seek further details and to consult the Committee.

The Chair suggested that there might be scope for a Galt excursion. The Society might hire a coach and visit sites in the west of Scotland associated with the author.

Colin Kidd thought that it might be worthwhile to make contact with “The Book Collector”, an organisation which brings together bibliophiles of all descriptions. He felt that a link to such a body might spread awareness of the Society and increase both interest and membership.

The Chair said that he hoped to persuade Greenock Philosophical Society to reinstitute, in conjunction with the Society, their annual Galt lecture. It had been delivered throughout the 1930s and, with a break for the War, into the 1950s but had thereafter been discontinued until he had spoken in 2014. He hoped that with cooperation between the two bodies not only that the lecture would restart but that it might be possible to collect for publication the previous lectures, many of which had been the work of distinguished authorities on Galt. He intended that he and the Secretary would make a visit to Greenock within a few weeks to discuss these ideas with the Philosophical Society and with Inverclyde Council.

The meeting felt that all of these suggestions had merit and asked the Secretary to pursue them as appropriate. The Chair emphasised that further ideas would be welcomed and that it was not necessary to wait for an AGM to bring them forward. He urged members to contact the Secretary with any suggestions for Society activities.

1. Honor Rieley, who is completing a PhD at Oxford, gave a talk on Galt and emigrant literature.
2. Professor Ian Campbell was billed to talk on “Galt as Predictor” but unfortunately he had had to go abroad. Instead, Ian McGhee talked about how Galt had become involved with Canada and how his experiences had informed the two novels with significant North American settings.

It is intended that texts of both of the talks which were delivered will be put on the Society’s website.

1. Conclusion

The Chair thanked both speakers and the members for attending. He felt that the Society was beginning to find its feet and that there were now a number of proposals which could be taken forward to help spread awareness of Galt and his work.

Members then enjoyed a buffet lunch provided courtesy of the Scottish Literature department at Glasgow University.

May 2016.