



Minutes of the 5th General Meeting

Tuesday 8 June 2021

Present: all members of the Committee except Christopher Chippindale and Titus Bicknell who sent their apologies and Nick Ray who hoped to attend but who did not get the Zoom code (apologies).

Graham Avery
Marcus Bicknell
Renchi Bicknell

Susie Bicknell
Vanessa Bicknell
Alison Lester

Geoff Bicknell, former
Treasurer was also
present,

- 1) **2020 financial accounts** from Marcus Bicknell, as approved by the treasurer Vanessa Bicknell 29th May 2021) were presented in writing with comments as follows:
 - a) "I present herewith the accounts of our Association for the calendar year 2020, which I would describe as satisfactory even if the number of members is low.
 - b) "The income statement above shows that the Association was in modest profit (£449) for the third year in succession. The earned income of £671 was lower than in 2018 (£1102.81) and in 2019 (£1063.32) due to fall in membership numbers and book sales. Our profit enabled us to show a balance sheet at about zero, i.e. the Association's assets equal our liabilities. The only liability is the loan from the Bicknells, which we are paying down year by year.
 - c) "We had 23 paying members in 2020 (down from a peak of 29 in 2018). We continue to consider this a worrying sign of the function the Association provides to its community and we will be assessing individually now and at our General Meeting in 2020 how to improve what we offer them and thereby to increase membership numbers. The income from that small number, at an average of £20, is enough to pay basic costs like the web site, but if the numbers drop off then the Association as a going concern would be under threat. In 2020 we awarded several supporters to the status of Companion of the Clarence Bicknell Association to keep the momentum moving forward.
 - d) "The stock levels of Clarence Bicknell books and merchandising are attached for the first time to the accounts."

Notes and full figures available at...

https://clarencebicknell.com/wp-content/uploads/accounts_2020.pdf

Geoff pointed out there was cashflow is weak. He and Vanessa wondered how membership levels (and therefore income) could be increased. Marcus said the accounts were healthy enough, as in fact the Association had gradually been paying back its £7000 debt to Marcus and Susie: now only about £500 owed. The Balance Sheet stood very close to zero at the end of 2020, i.e. assets equal liabilities.

- 2) **Report on the activities of the Association** (Marcus Bicknell) Following the work-intensive efforts from 2013 through 2018, the Centenary of Clarence's death, work has focussed on
 - a) publishing papers on the web site (notably Graham Avery, Gisella Merello, Daniela Gandolfi, Mauro Mariotti, Helen Blanc-Francard, Maddalena Cataldi, Elena Grafova, Renchi Bicknell, Susie Bicknell, Marcus Bicknell and other archive documents which have come to light),

- b) appointment of Companions of the Clarence Bicknell Association (see Annex),
- c) supporting related research by third parties,
- d) planning in principle future events and circulating relevant info on social media and email.
- e) After the last General Meeting our Association honoured, by electing them as Companions of the Clarence Bicknell Association, a number of important people who have contributed to recording and publicising the work and culture of Clarence Bicknell around the world,
- f) The conversion of our website, under Titus's beady eye, from the Joomla programming GUI to the more-widely-accepted and robust WordPress platform, with the help of a web-crafter in the Indian sub-continent sourced via Fiverr. We expect this to cost a couple of hundred pounds but to save us much more in host crash costs in the future. There is still some work to do by Marcus in linking the downloads on the documents page.

Motion 1: The General Meeting approved unanimously by a show of hands the report and accounts as presented. No votes against and no abstentions.

3) Election of officers of the Association

Committee members.

Chairman **Marcus Bicknell**, Clarence relation, researcher, writer, coordinator of Clarence activities, webmaster. Based northwest of London, UK

Vice-Chairman **Graham Avery C.M.G** Fellow of the Linnean Society, Honorary Director-General of the European Commission. Based in Oxford and Florence.

Secretary **Susie Bicknell** Writer, researcher. Based northwest of London, UK

Committee member **Christopher Chippindale**, Archaeologist, writer, researcher. Based Cambridge

Committee member **Alison Lester** Clarence relation, daughter of the late Valerie Lester, writer. Based in Droitwich UK.

Committee member **Helen Blanc-Francard**, Writer, researcher, garden expert. Based north of Paris.

Committee member **Titus Bicknell**, Television production and distribution, exhibitions, conferences and new media professional, Washington DC.

At the last General Meeting, in 2020, **Graham Avery** was elected as Vice-Chairman¹ for a period of 2 years; **Susie Bicknell** was elected to Secretary for a period of 2 years; **Vanessa Bicknell**, was elected to the post of Treasurer. Their re-election is not needed at this meeting. **Marcus Bicknell** was re-elected in 2018 as Chairman for a period of 4 years². His tenure lasts until the General Meeting of 2022.

Motion 2: The other committee members stood today for re-election. The General Meeting approved the re-election of the committee members for the periods shown above.

¹ "Officers will normally serve a term of two years" (Statutes III.4).

² The Chairman shall "a) till the end of 2018 shall be a family relation of Clarence Bicknell and b) shall serve a term of four years. The Chairman may be reappointed for further terms" (Statutes III.4). Provision (a) is no longer relevant.

4) Membership drive

The participants discussed the means by which more value could be given to members of the Association and thereby how to increase numbers.

Geoff Bicknell had noticed the huge interest along American members of the Bicknell family for the new initiative the Bicknell Family Association which has no direct link with the Clarence Bicknell Association. The chairman is Derek (Del) Bicknell, a distant cousin of Marcus, and he runs the website www.bicknell.net (which Marcus helped build) and the Facebook page "The Bicknell Family" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2364011029>). The most interesting initiative in the creation of the group is the All-Bicknell family tree on Ancestry.com, as one tree rather than several trees linked. Because Marcus has helped Del with creating a new website and is on his committee, there is an opportunity to promote the Clarence Bicknell Association to Bicknell family members under his wing.

Geoff suggested that the resource of thousands of US Bicknells should be tapped: maybe a travel agent could set up a European tour that would feature Clarence as a key element with a visit to Bordighera and Casterino? Nothing like a famous Bicknell to get them making a detour or extending their stay in Bordighera, the Vallée des Merveilles, Casterino and even the Hanbury Gardens and related sites. Marcus will put words to such an initiative and suggested that some of our supporters in Clarence's part of the world could be enlisted as guides or a welcome party.

Susie said the use of extra funds from increased membership depended on the Association's future plans, which we continued to discuss...

Exhibitions

Helen suggested putting Daniela Gandolfi's Museo Bicknell 2018 exhibition on tour as she had all this material: Marcus doubted Daniela would cooperate constructively and all this would be very expensive. This would make Clarence's work available to a wider public in the geographical sense. We discussed co-operation with other like-minded associations for example with the George McDonald Association at their upcoming celebrations of 2024 (his birth bicentenary is coming up in 2024 and whose following was largely in the US).

Renchi said the Association must keep focussed on Clarence, and develop the aspects of him that were relevant now. Marcus and Graham applauded the proposed paper by Annalisa Giovannini of the *Consiglio per la Ricerca e la Sperimenta* (floricultural research dept) in Sanremo comparing flora identified by Clarence at the end of the 19th century compared to the same plants today.

Webinars

We discussed webinars on various subjects associated with Clarence such as botany, archaeology, watercolour drawings, Esperanto, and his philosophy which continues to impact today in the sense of internationalisation and a "desire to share". Alison said that the Covid experience had made zoom, webinars, and other internet community communication workable for many people. The Association did not necessarily need more financial resources to continue to raise Clarence's profile, which surely was the basic aim? She explained how her book "*Absolutely Delicious*" had opened up an on-line world on the experience of death and dying. Aspects of Clarence's personality (Botanical art, Esperanto, vegetarianism, internationalism) could all be targeted with on-line resources. She suggested

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his botanical art could be very popular: another botanical artist could be found and a joint webinar organised. She offered to look into this. Having a webinar 6 times a year would be good. We agreed that each webinar should be at a time of day which enables United States president to participate easily.

Helen agreed this should be explored and described the great success of her husband's recent Literary Festival in Brittany on-line, which had had as many participating as it used to have for the usual live festival.

Marcus said Titus and Nancy, with their Virtual Museum experience would surely give input.

Graham made 3 points: 1) he had always believed the Guest book in Esperanto to be one of Clarence's most important works as it was both visual and historical and would be happy to give financial support to its publication. 2) He had noticed that areas such as the Fontanalba Valley had been mentioned in Rambling magazines: maybe this was a sphere to be explored for promoting Clarence 3) he stressed how good our 18 minute film The Marvels of Clarence Bicknell (www.vimeo.com/clarencebicknell) is at communicating what he achieved and his nature. We agreed that the webinar should begin or end with a showing of the movie for the benefit of those who do not know much about Clarence.

When Mr Zoom so rudely cut us off, Marcus was about to propose that we continue these very useful meetings every six months on the first Tuesday of June and of December at 2 pm London time. Therefore please note in your diary:

**Tuesday 7th December 2021 and
Tuesday 7th June 2022 (Annual General Meeting)**

Marcus Bicknell, Susie Bicknell
9th June 2021

Information release, 28 August 2020

The Clarence Bicknell Association is proud to announce a new honour, Companion.

The Committee of the Association decided at its meeting of 28th July 2020 to honour a number of important people who have contributed to recording and publicising the work and culture of Clarence Bicknell around the world. We are pleased to announce today that the persons listed below have been elected as Companions of the Clarence Bicknell Association.

Each Companion has the right - but not the obligation - to cooperate closely with us by conducting research, writing papers for publication, participating in seminars, and other activities. We hope that each will continue to forge lasting ties with fellow Clarence-lovers, see light shone on their expertise and find a platform to share their insights with a wider audience. The input of new voices such these Companions will greatly increase the international visibility and impact of the Clarence Bicknell Association.

Among our new objectives is the aim to bring Clarence's life and work into the digital age. Many cultural activities in the "post-Covid-19" era will be conducted by means of internet, Zoom, websites, virtual tours and other innovative applications. As funding becomes more and more difficult for museums and other cultural institutions, we believe that we can help to sustain and add value to them by inviting the public - worldwide - to enjoy the possibility of virtual access to Clarence's heritage in various localities.

We also want to extend our field of interest by linking Clarence to other personalities who influenced the creative environment in his time - in Bordighera, the Riviera, Liguria, the Maritime Alps, and elsewhere. Topics could include George MacDonald, Ellen Willmott, Reginald Farrer, Fritz Mader, Emile Burnat, the British Tennis Club, Edward Berry, Charles Garnier, Jane Morris, Louise Jopling, Italy's Queen Margherita, Britain's Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and others.

We believe, as Clarence did, in sharing all our research publicly. Our website is a precious resource and we will continue to improve it. We plan also to increase our use of social media.

Signed on behalf of the Committee of the Clarence Bicknell Association,

Marcus Bicknell

Chairman



Giuseppe Bessone, Bordighera: engineer, art collector, historian, writer and expert on Clarence Bicknell.

Julian Bicknell MA, London: architect (<http://www.julianbicknell.co.uk>), writer, worked with the Prince of Wales Institute of Architecture between 1990 and 2000, previous Master of the Artworkers' Guild (www.artworkersguild.org)

Mark Bicknell MA, Nettlebed, UK: Retired engineer, philanthropist, art collector

Sue Bicknell, London; supporter of Clarence Bicknell initiatives including the prospection of significant financial contributions from donors in the USA who have remained anonymous..

Dr. Raffaella Bruzzone MA, Genova and Nottingham: Research associate at the School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies, University of Nottingham, previous Marie Curie Fellow there, writer on botany, landscape and Clarence Bicknell.

www.clarencebicknell.com/downloads

Maddalena Cataldi, Paris: archaeologist, graduate student and writer at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre Alexandre Koyré, Paris, expert on the Vallée des Merveilles and Clarence Bicknell. www.clarencebicknell.com/downloads

Jean-Félix Gandioli, Nice, France: Master of Science, researcher and writer on botany, micro-climates, conservation and the history of botanists at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Nice, curator of the 2018 exhibition *Les Botanistes au Sommet* featuring Clarence Bicknell.

Dott.ssa Daniela Gandolfi, Bordighera: Director of the *Istituto Internazionale di Studii Liguri* and of the Museo Bicknell which it owns, archaeologist including a specialisation in marine sites, writer, museum curator, team leader Clarence Bicknell 2018 Centenary, expert on Clarence Bicknell and his work on the rock engravings of the Vallée des Merveilles. www.clarencebicknell.com/downloads

Caroline Hanbury, at the Hanbury Gardens at la Mortola, near Vintimiglia, Italy, organiser of the 2019 conference on *Victorian on the Riviera* which examined the relationship between Hanbury and Bicknell.

Prof. Mauro Mariotti, Genova. Professor of Botany at the University of Genova, UNIGE · Dipartimento di Scienze della terra, dell'ambiente e della vita (DISTAV), curator of the most important collection of Clarence Bicknell botanical watercolours, plant samples and archaeological records, director of the Hanbury Gardens, expert on Clarence Bicknell. www.clarencebicknell.com/downloads

Elisabetta Massardo, Genoa and Vernante (Italian Maritime Alps): mountain walker, amateur botanist, photographer, translator into Italian of *MARVELS – The life of Clarence Bicknell* by Valerie Lester. www.clarencebicknell.com/downloads

Gisella Merello, Bordighera: historian, researcher, writer (for example the architect *Charles Garnier e la Riviera*, history of Bordighera and its buildings and people, The British Royal Family in Bordighera, Bicknell's nephew Edward Berry), President of the Jury of the annual cultural award Parmurelu d'Oru, member of the Sezione Intemelina dell'Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri, team member Clarence Bicknell 2018 Centenary, member of the Associazione Amici di Winter. www.clarencebicknell.com/downloads

Nick Ray MA, Cambridge, UK. Architect, writer (*Alvar Aalto* (2005), *Rafael Moneo* (2015), *Architecture and its Ethical Dilemmas* (2005), and *Philosophy of Architecture* with Christian Illies (2014).), long-time Assistant lecturer at Cambridge University, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge University, Honorary Visiting Professor in Architectural Theory at the University of Liverpool, Syndic of the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge 2015-2020. Descendant of Clarence Bicknell's father.

Claudia Roggero, designer and PR specialist: worked in visual communication at the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Padua, and in Coordinated Image and Exhibit Design at the European Institute of Design in Cagliari, member of the Committee for the restoration of the church of S. Ampelio, Bordighera, member of the Friends of the Clarence Bicknell Library and Museum, worked on the 2018 Clarence Bicknell centenary with the Istituto Internazionale di Studii Liguri.

Giovanni Russo, Bordighera: Expert librarian and researcher at the Istituto Internazionale di Studii Liguri, expert in Clarence Bicknell's writings, art and the collection at the Museo Bicknell, Bordighera. www.clarencebicknell.com/downloads

Ursula Salghetti Drioli Piacenza, La Mortola: botanical expert in Italian plant and garden associations, president of the *Associazione per la Diffusione di Piante fra Amatori.*, council member of the Amici di Villa Hanbury and owner/garden director of the neighbouring Villa Boccanegra.

Humphrey Tonkin, Hartford, Connecticut, USA. President & University Professor of the Humanities, Emeritus, University of Hartford, USA. President of the Universal Esperanto Association 1974-1980 and 1986-1989. Expert on Clarence Bicknell's Esperanto hymns, poems, translations and activities in the Esperanto movement. www.clarencebicknell.com/downloads

Tamsin Treverton Jones, St Leon sur Vezere, France: writer and poet, formerly Head of Press at the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Court Theatre and Bath Literature Festival. She has produced and presented features for radio, programmed literary events for digital broadcast and published two oral histories for The History Press. *Windblown* (2017) commemorates The Great Storm which struck Britain in October 1987.

Selby Whittingham, London: art expert specialised in the work of J.M.W. Turner, consultant to museums and institutions, secretary and founder of The Independent Turner Society and author of a number of books about art and museums. Expert on Clarence and his father, art-collector, Elhanan Bicknell.

The past and present committee members of the Clarence Bicknell Association are also Companions, as follows.

Marcus Bicknell	Chairman, Clarence Bicknell Association since 2013
Graham Avery	Vice-Chairman, Clarence Bicknell Association since 2013
Susie Bicknell	Secretary, Clarence Bicknell Association since 2013
Geoff Bicknell	Treasurer, Clarence Bicknell Association, 2013-2018
Christopher Chippindale	Committee Member, Clarence Bicknell Association since 2013
Maria Pia Luly-Jones	Committee Member 2013-2017
Helen Blanc-Francard	Committee Member, Clarence Bicknell Association since 2013
Vanessa Bicknell	Treasurer, Clarence Bicknell Association
Titus Bicknell	Committee Member, Clarence Bicknell Association
Renchi Bicknell	Committee Member, Clarence Bicknell Association

Valerie Browne Lester (1939-2019), Committee Member 2013-2019 † In Memoriam,