

Registered Charity Number 297488

Regional Furniture Society

Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ending
31st December 2019

TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2019

The Trustees present their Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2019.

If you wish to obtain further information about some aspect of this Report or the Society in general, please write to the Honorary Secretary:

Jeremy Rycroft, Holwood House, Goosnargh, Preston PR3 2WD

SOCIETY OBJECTS

The Regional Furniture Society has recorded its aims and objectives in the 'Objects' section of its Constitution. They require the Society to:

- advance the study of the history, design, production, distribution and use of regional furniture in the British Isles and areas under British influence, and of Continental and other overseas influences on British regional furniture; and to further public knowledge and appreciation of it.

To achieve this, the Society seeks to:

- encourage the conservation and preservation of examples of all such furniture and related archives both in museums and in other collections, and their current use as sources for study.
- encourage research in all aspects of regional furniture and promote the development of interest in regional furniture in relation to social and economic life and history and in the relationship between regional furniture design and architecture and other arts and crafts.
- publish material selected by its Editorial Board, organise exhibitions and meetings alone or in conjunction with other bodies, and record and store information in appropriate institutions.
- raise funds and invite and receive contributions from any person or persons whatsoever by way of subscription, donation or otherwise, provided that the Society shall not undertake any permanent trading activities in raising funds for its charitable objects.

TRUSTEES

The trustees who served from 1 January 2019 were:

President	David Dewing
Chairman	Chris Pickvance
Secretary	Jeremy Rycroft
Treasurer	Keith Robinson
Membership Secretary	Diana Halliwell
Journal Editor	Stephen Jackson

Newsletter Editor	Liz Hancock
Bursary Secretary	Nick Humphrey
Website Editor	Ananda Rutherford
Book Sales	Gerry Coughlan
American Secretary	Daniel Ackermann
Council Officers	Crissie White
	Emma Hardy (until 14 July)
	Louis Platman (from 21 November)
Events Organiser	Jeremy Bate

OVERVIEW OF MAIN ACTIVITIES

The Society was founded in 1984. Its membership of 400 includes museum curators, furniture historians, furniture collectors, furniture makers, restorers, antique dealers, auctioneers and students.

The Society has a full programme of events which are often fully subscribed. These events provide the opportunity to visit properties and collections that are not open to the general public; residential events allow members to see a very wide range of furniture in one area, which would otherwise be difficult. Occasionally overseas visits are arranged.

The main events for 2019 were:

March	Research in Progress Day at the Conway Hall on the Regional Chair
March	Visit to a private collection of furniture and delftware in Soho
May	Visit to Pepys Library and Kettle's Yard in Cambridge
July	Annual Conference in Shropshire, including the Gilbert Lecture
September	Visit to the Oak House West Bromwich
September	Tour of Ireland, including the Ulster Folk Museum; National Museum of Ireland; Georgian House in Henrietta Street in Dublin; Carrigeen Farmhouse in Co. Offaly; Damer House in Roscrea; Donaghmore Workhouse Museum; Bunratty Castle and Folk Park; Muckcross House in Killarney.

The Annual Conference

The 2019 Conference was held in Shropshire allowing members to acquaint themselves with some of the typical woodworking styles of the Welsh Borders, including domestic furniture features and ecclesiastical chest construction and church roof boss, screen and panelling designs.

The programme included:

Visits to Dudmaston Hall, Pitchford and Benthall Halls, Stokesay Castle and Bitterley Court.

A visit to Shrewsbury including the Museum and Art Gallery and Drapers' Hall, and a town walk that focussed on building and timber work styles.

Visits to a large and varied series of local churches or chapels: Quatt; Claverley; Morville; Acton Round; Tong; Stokesay; Eaton under Heywood; Bitterley; Neenton; Pitchford; Langley; and Hughley; plus the grander St Mary's Shrewsbury and St Leonard's Ludlow.

Also included in the packed programme were a lecture on Coalbrookdale furniture, another on the local Gatacre family and the Gilbert Lecture.

The Gilbert Lecture was given by Hans Piena of the Netherlands Open Air Museum and covered Dutch ladder-back chairs. Design differences from English ladder-backs were highlighted, along with the development of the Dutch style from medieval origins through the 18th and 19th centuries to a 'historismus' style in the 20th century. Materials for frame construction and seat rushing were also covered, as were links between the Museum's collection and a branch of the Gatacre family

COMMUNICATIONS WITH SOCIETY MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

In a specialist society of this type a number of levels of communication are necessary:

Firstly, publication of the results of major or minor pieces of research in the regional furniture field is essential.

Secondly it is important to keep members abreast of Society events and developments and general Society news.

Thirdly it is important to share information about regional furniture and the Society with the wider public.

The Society has chosen three media for achieving this:

The annual Journal, *Regional Furniture*, publishes major research and is distributed to members. The Journal articles are also made available to the general public on the Society's website with a three-year time lag.

The bi-annual Newsletter publishes visit reports, short reports by members and regional museum curators on items of regional furniture and book reviews. It also provides the membership with Society news. Visit reports have an important role in allowing those unable to attend an event to share in the information and insights gained during visits.

The Website provides information to members and the wider public on activities and importantly provides an introductory guide to regional furniture for the general public.

In terms of involvement of the membership in decision making, the AGM held during the Annual Conference allows the Council's plans, policies and reports to be discussed and voted on by the membership and for Council members are elected democratically.

CONSTITUTION AS GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The Society is governed by its Constitution which was approved by the Charity Commission at its inception and has been revised periodically – in 1986, 1987, 1994 and most recently in 2017. This latest version was approved by the Charity Commission, and the Society membership at the 2017 AGM and then registered online with the Charity Commission. It is available on the Society website.

In addition, the Society follows Charity Commission guidance on appointment, clearance and briefing of trustees, reporting of serious events, risk management including governance matters, and most recently data protection, all of which are discussed by Trustees, with appropriate policies and procedures adopted at Council meetings.

The Society is an unincorporated association governed by its Council which consists of officers and members who are trustees. There are also Honorary Presidents/Vice-Presidents who may attend the Council but are not trustees. Potential new trustees are identified by Council members, who may consult or receive proposals from members. Where there is a vacancy during the year, the Council would normally co-opt the new Council member/Trustee to fill the vacancy, and this would then have to be confirmed by election at the AGM. Alternatively, the Council would nominate a member for election at the AGM. All trustees are subject to annual election at the AGM with limits on how long they can serve.

REVIEW OF CHARITABLE PURPOSE AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

The prime aim of the Regional Furniture Society, as indicated above in the extracts from the Constitution, is to promote the preservation and conservation of regional furniture and promote research on regional furniture and to publish information relating to these subjects and arrange for important information to be archived. As an educational charity, pursuing those objects is the Society's main way of providing public benefit.

The Society intervenes in co-ordination with other bodies when important examples of regional furniture are at risk of being sold or disposed of. The Society, with others, helped ensure that an important example of Devon furniture, the Landkey table, which was due to be sold at auction, was recognised and that a successful application for a grant was made which ensured that it was given a permanent home in Devon. Similarly, the Society offered support to the Judges Lodgings in Lancaster when it was threatened with closure.

Research

The Society encourages research by:

- a) offering bursaries to those carrying out research on specific areas of regional furniture, directed particularly to younger researchers;
- b) providing members who carry out their own research with a forum for encouraging and discussing results among peers, through its events and publications;
- c) holding a Research in Progress day in most years where the latest developments in regional furniture research nationally or internationally are presented and debated.
- d) running a programme of events which allow members to become familiar with collections of furniture and their regional differences, including some which are not open to the general public;
- e) since 2019, offering modest grants of up to £5,000 to facilitate more major projects, including archiving important regional furniture research or carrying out more major investigations than would be possible through bursaries.

Publications

These are a major activity for the Society. As mentioned above, the Journal is published once a year and allows major pieces of research to be presented. Many articles cover recent developments or discoveries. By publishing the Journal to members and then putting journal articles on the website with a three-year delay, members retain a significant benefit of membership but the wider public also has access to the Society's research. Articles are by members, non-members and by curators of particular collections. This is particularly useful as it can draw attention to important items of furniture that may not be well-known or well-researched and also to problems or issues with them and their conservation. It helps set an agenda for the Society.

The Newsletter has shorter articles and visit reports, both important for those who are less expert in the field of regional furniture and are trying to increase their expertise. It is hoped that the Newsletter may encourage them to do more to support the Society's objects, particularly research. The less formal style encourages debate about topics that are less well understood.

The Society's website provides a free online guide to major types of regional furniture. It is hoped that by raising public awareness of the complexity and regionality of vernacular furniture, the public's interest and concern for regional furniture will be sustained, helping the Society to achieve its objects, and helping to preserve the country's regional furniture heritage.

Finally, the Society runs a service, via its website, responding to public queries about regional furniture, which has the same aims of encouraging wider interest in regional furniture.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIETY BY THE COUNCIL

Having completed an updating of major policies in 2018, 2019 has been a year of consolidation. In particular, the Council debated both what would be priorities for the new Grants procedure and how to attract applications for them. This has borne fruit as two significant grant proposals were received by the end of the year. A further museum has expressed interest and will probably apply in 2020.

The intention is to make at least one grant a year, using both bequests and income from invested reserves. The Society is promoting legacy giving as a means of funding such grants.

Having decided to form an Investment Committee, its three members have now been identified and will meet in 2020. A detailed Archive Retention plan is in preparation. As in previous years, new Council members have been identified to take the place of those retiring and will be subject to election at the AGM.

REGIONAL FURNITURE SOCIETY TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

A modest loss of £1,396 was incurred by the Society in 2019 (2018: a surplus of £2,997) This figure excludes unrealised gains on investments.

At 31 December 2019 the net worth of the Society including reserves, unrealised gains on investments and net of creditors was £121,539 (2018: £106,624)

As in previous years, visits and events have covered their costs but a lower than usual attendance at the Annual Conference led to a loss which contributed to the overall deficit.

The Society's other charitable activities including bursaries and grants, publication of the Journal and Newsletter, maintenance of the website and the costs of governance and administration have all been met from membership subscription income, donations, event surpluses and from the balances in the current accounts. Once again, it has not, therefore, been necessary to draw down any funds from the reserves during 2019. Throughout the year cash on deposit and at the bank was at a level sufficient to meet normal expenditure for a period of three months.

All the reserve funds, including those on deposit, continued to be managed by CCLA Investment Management Limited. At the end of 2018 world markets took a downturn leading to a small unrealised loss of £297 for that year. This year the Society's investments have performed well, the total value at 31 December 2019 being £109,110 (of which £5,108 was held on deposit) giving an unrealised gain of £16,310.

Revised procedures for the granting of bursaries were agreed in 2018 and together with a new scheme for awarding major grants are beginning to bring results. Grants of just over £1,000 were made in 2019 and grants and bursaries of £3,500 have been approved during the first quarter of 2020 with further applications known to be in the pipeline.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE REGIONAL FURNITURE SOCIETY IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

This report on the accounts of the Regional Furniture Society (Registered Charity Number 297488) for the year ended 31 December 2019 which comprise the Trustees' Report, Treasurer's Report, the Statement of Financial Activities, and the Balance Sheet, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with section 43 of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act).

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and the examiner.

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Act) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to examine the accounts (under section 43(2) of the Act), follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)9b of the Act), and state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the trust and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosure in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's report

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1 Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - (a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act
 - (b) to prepare accounts which accord with those accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act.

have not been met

- 2 To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

David Kingsmill FCA
Hidcote Boyce Gloucestershire GL55 6LX

Regional Furniture Society

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds			Total 2,019 £	Total 2,018 £
		General Fund £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £		
INCOMING RESOURCES						
<i>Incoming resources from charitable activities</i>						
Subscriptions		12,500			12,500	12,020
Publications	1	991			991	288
Visits	2	6,043			6,043	3,139
Lectures and conferences	2	20,579			20,579	13,045
<i>Incoming resources from generated funds</i>						
Donations, legacies and grants	3	1,000			1,000	1,000
Investment income and interest	4	31	5		35	51
Total incoming resources		41,144	5	0	41,149	29,544
RESOURCES EXPENDED						
<i>Direct charitable expenditure</i>						
Donations and grants	5	1,047	0		1,047	0
Bursaries	6	0	0		0	0
Publication of the Journal	7	4,443			4,443	4,830
Publication of the Newsletter	7	6,343			6,343	7,287
Visits	2	4,536			4,536	1,106
Lectures and conferences	2	24,994			24,994	12,003
Governance	8	945			945	958
Other resources expended	9	238			238	69
Net incoming (outgoing) resources before transfers between funds		42,545	0	0	42,545	26,254
Net incoming / (outgoing) resources before other recognised gains and losses		-1,401	5	0	-1,396	3,290
Other recognised gains and losses						
Gains (losses) on investments						
Realised						
Unrealised	4	14,114	2,198		16,312	-293
Net movement in funds		12,713	2,202		14,915	2,997
Fund balances brought forward at 1 January 2019		94,808	11,816		106,624	103,628
Fund balances carried forward at 31 December 2019		107,521	14,018		121,539	106,626

Regional Furniture Society

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2019

NOTES

1 Income from sales of the Journal and Newsletter 101

Fees from Publishers' Licensing Services in respect of copies made from the Newsletter from the inception of the Society to the present day. 890

2 Income and expenditure table for Visits, Lectures and Conferences

	Income	Expenditure	Surplus
<i>Research in Progress day 2019</i>	923	823	99
<i>Research in Progress day 2018 accrual *</i>		1,273	(1,273)
<i>Research in Progress day 2020 prepayment *</i>		544	(544)
<i>Cambridge visit</i>	768	698	70
<i>Oak House day</i>	60	30	30
<i>Pelham Olive visit</i>	320	0	320
Shropshire Conference	19,656	22,353	(2,697)
Ireland trip	4,895	3,808	1,087
	26622	29530	(2,908)

3 Donation for work on the Cotton Archive

4 CCLA deposit account interest 29
Lloyds current account interest 7

Deposit interest received is split between general and designated funds in proportion to the 1 January 2019 holdings

General Funds	75,030	88.11%
Dewdney Bequest (designated)	9,385	11.02%
Michael Legg Fund (designated)	744	0.87%

5 No grants were made during the year

6 No bursaries were awarded during the year

7 Cost of printing and posting two editions of the Newsletter and one Journal during the year

8 Travel expenses for members of Council 745
Catering at Council meetings 96
Postage, stationery and general expenses 104 945

9 Public Liability Insurance 68
Website hosting 170 238

Regional Furniture Society
Accounts for the period 1 January to 31 December 2019
Balance sheet as at 31 December 2019

	<i>Notes</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2018</i>
Assets			
Cash and investments	1	£109,170	£95,548
Cash designated by the Trustees: Dewdney Bequest		£13,023	£10,977
Cash designated by the Trustees: Michael Legg Fund		£995	£839
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		£123,189	£107,364
Less creditors			
Sundry creditors		£1,650	£740
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		£121,539	£106,624
Reserves			
General reserves at 31 December 2018		£94,808	£91,812
Designated reserves at 31 December 2018		£11,816	£11,816
Excess of income over expenditure		£14,915	£2,997
General reserves at 31 December 2019		£107,521	£94,808
Designated reserves at 31 December 2019		£14,018	£11,816
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		£121,539	£106,624

Regional Furniture Society
Accounts for the period 1 January to 31 December 2019

Balance sheet notes

	<i>£</i> <i>Dec-19</i>	<i>£</i> <i>Dec-18</i>
1 Cash and investment balances at 31 December 2019		
Knightsbridge current account	3,961	4,618
Christchurch subscription account	8,940	7,279
PayPal account	1,177	2,696
CCLA deposit account	5,108	5,079
CCLA investment account	71,830	59,047
CCLA fixed income account	22,017	20,668
CCLA global equity account	10,156	7,977
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	123,189	107,364