

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**8th April 2025**

I'd like to start by welcoming you all to the AGM; it's good to see so many of you. I'm pleased to report again that our membership has held up well, and remains at almost 100. I express again my thanks to Simon Edkins for his excellent work as membership secretary; and my admiration also for his willingness to take on the management, and the improvement, of the website. He has been responsible for a significant step up in the quality of communications with members.

Equally important has been David Bett's work in arranging the programme of talks, which has maintained, in my opinion, a very high quality over the last year. However, more on this later.

Your Society remains in a sound financial position, which Derek Fisher will outline shortly: but for the last time, as he has now stepped down from his post as Treasurer. Derek has been a committee member for longer than I can remember, at least since 2019. He has given many years of service, not only as Treasurer, but also as previous membership secretary, and as Archivist. This simple word hides a huge contribution in safeguarding the Archive, rationalising it, and ensuring its safe transfer into the Mere Museum. Alongside this, he was also the man who took on the task of getting the Grove Building back into shape and into use after the 2 years that it stood unused and neglected during the Covid crisis. On top of this he was always the first one in to set out the chairs for our meetings. His has been a major contribution, for which I wish to express, on behalf of the whole membership, our gratitude.

## MERE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I come the future programme. This will be the last year in which David Bett will be the Programme Secretary. He has done a tremendous job; but he has done his time, and more. We now have to find a replacement.

Reluctant as I am to strike a sombre note, I am worried - seriously worried – for our future. I spoke last year of the need for some fresh blood and new people to join the Committee. Any Society depends on the willingness of people to put in a little effort to keep it going. Our Committee is too small; and it needs new people badly. In particular we need a new Treasurer now; and will need more people in a year's time to do, or to share, the arrangement of the talks programme. We will also, in a year, want a new Secretary. Some of our present Committee members are being asked to do more than they should have to. I have said before that we need more people. Tonight I wish to say this so loudly that some of you might listen. Otherwise, I think it a real possibility that in a year or two or three this Society might actually cease to function. If you can help at all, please, please, get in touch with me or any Committee member.

When I came to Mere, some 10 years ago, I was surprised and delighted to find so much community-driven activity; visitors and friends constantly tell me how impressed they are with the liveliness of Mere life. The Historical Society was – and is – to me one of the jewels. It has flourished for over 50 years now. Long may it – with your help – continue. Thank you, once again for your support in keeping our Society in good health and vigorous activity.

**Peter Landymore**