

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the International Berkeley Society

Saturday, 24 January 2009

La Forge Restaurant, Newport, Rhode Island

Officers present: Stephen Daniel (President), Lou Alfonso (Past President), Timo Airaksinen (Vice President), Amy Garrison (Recording Secretary), Maureen Lapan (Archivist). Officers absent: Nancy Kendrick (Secretary/Treasurer) is travelling aboard. Genevieve Migely (Membership Secretary) and Margaret Atherton (Philosophy Associations Coordinator) were unable to attend.

Members present: Elizabeth Alfonso, Nancy Bredbeck, Richard Chucchiara, Richard Dunlap, Joanne Dunlap, Heta Gylling, Ray Houghton, Romin Koebel, Curtis Magee, Dana Magee, Richard Parker, and Josh Wood.

Call to Order: Dr. Daniel called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and welcomed the members. Mrs. Bredbeck offered the traditional welcome to Dean and Mrs. George Berkeley, followed by a toast to the couple, who arrived in Newport on Sunday, the 23rd of January, 1729.

Minutes: The members received a copy of the 2008 minutes. Mr. Parker moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Mrs. Dunlap seconded the motion, which was passed by unanimous voice vote. Mrs. Bredbeck moved that the minutes be accepted. Mrs. Dunlap seconded the motion and minutes were accepted by unanimous voice vote.

Reports

- Secretary/Treasurer: in the absence of Dr. Kendrick, Dr. Daniel gave the report (copy attached). It was noted that Texas A&M University and Cornell College (Iowa) continue to assist the Society by covering postal costs. PayPal has been beneficial to the Society by making it easier to pay dues and make donations. Mr. Alfonso moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted, Mrs. Dunlap seconded the motion, and the members voted unanimously by voice to accept the report.
- Whitehall: Mrs. Bredbeck covered events held at Whitehall in 2008 and discussed maintenance at the property:
 - March: Actor and re-enactor Bill Hutchinson performed a one-man show, "My Playwright Friends"
 - May: Open House
 - June: IBS Conference, at which George Berkeley relation Sean Berkeley of Australia attended
 - August: Receptions for the Resident Scholars
 - October: Apple Day celebration at which various harvest events (e.g., an Indian pudding contest) were held
 - December: Christmas at Whitehall at which a guitarist played
 - Upkeep: the window frames, door frames, and posts are being repaired. This \$10,000 is being supported by a \$4,000 grant from the Newport Restoration Foundation. On New Year's Eve, the John Page portrait fell. Mr. Bill Rommel of Arnold Art is repairing damage to the frame, which was the only part of the painting that was harmed.

- Membership: Dr. Daniel submitted an oral report on Dr. Migley's behalf. There are currently 151 members. Of these, about 30 members are one or more years in arrears for dues: about a third is one year, another third is two years, and the final third is three years behind. It was noted that if those who have not paid their dues wish to rejoin the Society, they need not pay dues in arrears.

A question was raised about whether Society membership was encouraged among those attending the June 2008 conference; the president reported that Society membership was a requirement to attend the conference.

Interest in the Society is growing in Eastern Europe. The upcoming conferences in Germany (2009) and Switzerland (2010) may further increase membership. The status of the Chinese member was questioned. Ms. Lapan offered to examine the Society's records to see if a cover letter came with the books he gave some time ago. She hopes a member can give her a lead concerning the date of that gift.

Mr. Cucchiara asked if it would be possible for the Society to have a membership card. The president authorized him to design one on behalf of IBS. Mrs. Bredbeck would like to display Society membership applications at Whitehall.

Old Business

The Society's conference held in Newport in June, the first to be held in the U.S. since 1999, was a success. Thanks were extended to the many who made the event possible: Ms. Maureen Lapan, who led the bus tours; the Redwood Library, which gave the conferees a place to meet despite the reported boisterousness of some Berkeley enthusiasts, the Colonial Dames, who opened Whitehall and provided other assistance. Members who attended mentioned that the conference offerings were well worth the money and that using B&Bs rather than hotels was a popular, economical, and successful venture.

New Business

American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting, December 2008: the Society sponsored a session devoted to books recently published on Berkeley by IBS members, Talia Bettcher and John Roberts. Margaret Atherton served as the chair for the session. The Society will also sponsor sessions at the APA meeting in Chicago in February.

Several members asked if anyone knew what became of Berkeley's slaves when he left Newport. Dr. John Hattendorf, Historian at the Naval War College and the author of *Semper Eadem: A History of Trinity Church in Newport 1698-2000*, will be asked if he knows.

Conferences: Vice President Airaksinen reported on the upcoming Karlsruhe Conference. About 35 abstracts are in hand. The Society will continue to sponsor conferences and will continue to provide funds for a reception. Papers from the 2007 Helsinki Conference are being revised for publication in a volume to be edited by Bertil Belfrage and Timo Airaksinen.

Dues: It was noted that the Society's dues have not changed in its 32 years of existence. The president has been approached by a few members who wish to pay dues in advance. The

members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of multi-year payments. Dr. Houghton moved that the Society allow the president the discretion to make decisions on handling requests to pay multi-year membership dues. Mrs. McGee seconded the motion, which was passed by unanimous voice vote.

The next major conferences will be in Karlsruhe, Germany in August 2009, and in Neuchâtel, Switzerland in March 2010. The 2010 Conference will mark the 300th anniversary of the publication of Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge*. The 300th anniversary of *Passive Obedience* will occur in 2012. There are no plans for any observance yet, but there likely will be.

Mr. Alfonso suggested that the Society plan to have a conference in Newport in 2020. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

Berkeley Briefs: Dr. Daniel has produced the *Briefs* annually rather than semi-annually. Their frequency will be determined as events warrant. Questions about this should be directed to him.

Annual Business Meeting: Some members thought it would be useful to have the annual business meeting at another time (due to the harsh weather in Newport) or in another city. It was suggested that the next business meeting could be held during the 2010 conference in Switzerland. Regardless of the business meeting place and time, the southern New England members would probably continue to gather to commemorate Berkeley's arrive in Newport on 23 January 1729. No decision was reached; discussion may be continued at a future meeting.

Whitehall Resident Scholars: Mrs. Dunlop reported that 2009 program will include the following visitors:

- July 1-15: Dr. Nicholas Wade, Professor of Visual Psychology, University of Dundee, Scotland, and his wife Christine. While in Newport, Dr. Wade will also give an address at Brown University
- July 17-31: The Ven. Dr. Michael Ipgrave, Archdeacon of Southwark, South London and Surrey, UK, his wife Julia, and their son Ben
- July 31-August 9: Richard Brook, Dr. Richard Brook, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania, and his wife Susan
- August 13-31: Dr. Cynthia Grund, Associate Professor, University of Southern Denmark

Berkeley Birthday: The Colonial Dames will have a birthday party at Whitehall in honor of George Berkeley on 14 March. It was noted that Mr. Tom Ashbrook of National Public Radio may have an interest in this event. Mr. Koebel was given authority to pursue this possibility on behalf of the Society.

Closing: Mrs. Dunlap moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Bredbeck seconded the motion, which was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

(Ms.) A. L. Garrison
Recording Secretary