MINUTES OF THE 22nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
15.30 pm 4 July 2025
British Antarctic Survey, Cambridge

The meeting was attended by approx 45 SGA members, including Committee members: Philippa Foster Back (Chair), Paul Rodhouse (Events), Pat Lurcock (Website), Sarah Greenwood (Communications), Adrian Fox (Newsletter Editor), Martin Collins, Phil Trathan, Bob Headland, Fran Prince (Secretary).

1 WELCOME

Philippa Foster Back, Chairman welcomed all SGA friends and colleagues to the meeting at the British Antarctic Survey Aurora Collaboration Space, held during the SGA Summer Event - Marine Biodiversity Meeting, Cambridge 4-5 July, 2025. Thanks were given to BAS and staff, to Dame Jane Francis, Martin Collins, Josh Holden

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes from the 2024 AGM were approved, proposed by Phil Trathan and seconded by Bob Headland.

APOLOGIES Apologies were received from members David Orchard, Ian Hunter, Nick Prentice SGHT, Jane Rumble FCDO and Committee members David Tatham, David Rootes, Pat Lurcock, Sarah Lurcock, John Mills, Alexandra Shackleton

The Chairman thanked David Drewry as past Chairman and for his massive contribution to SGA.

3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Philippa Foster Back introduced herself, now SGA Chairman since October 2024. She has previously chaired Friends of SPRI, UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, South Georgia Heritage Trust, still Chair of Antarctic Place Names Committee and now SGA.

The 2024 AGM had been part of the event at SPRI last July with thanks to Paul Rodhouse for organising this. The event had included talks from Julian Dowdeswell on Ice and Environmental Change; Andy Beharrell on Sailing a 100 year old herring drifter below 50 degrees south; Eva Marie Widmark on Captain C A Larsen; John Dudeney – Mark Belchier – Paul Rodhouse on 120 years of Antarctic marine living resources; and David Drewry on Land beneath the Ice.
In January 2025 Bruce Mair had presented an on-line talk celebrating the 250th anniversary of Cooke's landing at Possession Bay, and also on BAS geology fieldwork undertaken in the 1970s. This talk is still available online from the SGA website.

The SGA Newsletter had been published in May with excellent articles, with thanks to Adrian Fox. The newsletter is published twice per year and Adrian is keen to receive material and pictures please.

Phil Trathan was thanked for organising the speakers for this current event, and Bruce Mair for producing the booklet, a good momento of the event; and to Sarah Greenwood for running Eventbrite and liaising with the Gonville Hotel for the dinner.

A membership update had been received from John Mills. Numbers are currently 185 up from 160 last year. There are 19 new members enrolled this year; 38 are still to renew and reminders will be sent. PFB suggested setting a target increase for membership at 250 for next year.

A report from Sarah Lurcock explained the Initiative Funding had been rebranded following the generous bequest from Robert Burton to the 'Bob Burton Award'. This year there are 4 awards underway: (1) to James Burke for his project "Beyond South Georgia" (2) In October the Hope Cross was unveiled in Dundee with initiative funding to aid transportation from KEP (3) The Virtual Viola project (4) Sound Recording equipment for the SG Pipit project.
Applications for initiative funding can be made on line from the SGA Website. Members are encouraged to spread the word.

There are currently two vacancies for officers on the committee, for Treasurer and Secretary. These roles are not onerous and with no regulatory burden of the society being a Charity. The roles are outlined in the newsletter. The committee is a collaborative team, and needs more help to continue the level of support for members.

4 TREASURER'S REPORT

In David Rootes' absence Paul Rodhouse read out a summary of the Finance report. Copies of the Report were available at the meeting.
The account is in good health with £1363 surplus in 2024 of Association's membership, events and other income over expenses.
Events are a key part of the Association's activities. They are often the largest expense but can generate income from those attending. Eg the joint Endurance22 event with Friends of SPRI had total expense of £5938. Income from those attending came to £5337. The difference was easily covered by the Association's reserve.
The Committee has agreed to hold two years' worth of expenses amounting to £30,000 in a General reserve. Allowing for five-year membership payments from 2020 to 2024 and funds remaining from the Morag Campbell and Bob Burton legacies, the Association holds a reserve of available funds of £20,700.

5 REPORT FROM PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Reports from polar organisations were printed in the event booklet. We were pleased to see Laura Sinclair Willis GSGSSI and Alison Neil SGHT present at the meeting and invited any comment
LSW - delighted to be here at the AGM and to meet people in person. Impressed by the wealth and depth of knowledge given at the talks and amongst SGA members
AN - every time attending a SGA event gives the opportunity to learn something new. SGA is an important partner to SGHT and they are looking forward to working together in the future.

6 ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE
The committee was re-elected en bloc, proposed by David Drewry, seconded by John Shears.

President	David Tatham
Chairman	Philippa Foster Back

Secretary	post vacant
Treasurer	David Rootes (acting) post vacant
Membership Secretary:	John Mills
Newsletter Editor:	Adrian Fox
Communications:	Sarah Greenwood
Events:	Paul Rodhouse
Initiative Funding:	Sarah Lurcock
Website Manager	Pat Lurcock
Members:	Martin Collins, Dave Fletcher, Bob Headland, Bruce Mair, Alexandra Shackleton, Phil Trathan
Corresponding Members:	Jan Cheek (Falkland Islands) Deirdre Mitchell (South Georgia)

7 DATE OF NEXT EVENT (2025) and AGM (2026)

An on-line presentation of the Virtual Viola project by Norman Court is planned for Thursday pm November 20th 2025. This is being organised by Sarah Lurcock and will include the film of the Viola made by the project. Sarah Greenwood will be sending Eventbrite booking invitations.

The date for the 2026 AGM is yet to be planned, and will be part of a bigger summer event.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Philippa Foster Back explained to the meeting that Fran Prince is retiring as SGA secretary after 24 years. Very kind words were expressed and FP presented with a splendid artwork by Bruce Pearson.

PRESENTATION OF THE MORAG CAMPBELL MEDAL FOR 2023

The meeting was followed by the presentation of the Morag Campbell Medal to Dr Frederik Paulsen

The medal was awarded to Dr Paulsen in recognition of his “outstanding and sustained support for the ecological restoration, preservation of heritage and enhancement of scientific knowledge of South Georgia”

Fran Prince, Secretary, 7 July 2025