

# International Margaret Cavendish Society

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## *Minutes of the MCS General Meeting Paris, France, 12 June 1999*

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Meeting called to order at 5:20 PM, Saturday 12 June in B1 Lecture Theatre, Universite de Paris 8

Members in attendance: Nancy S.Weitz, Emma L.E. Rees, Alexandra G. Bennett, Susannah Quinsee, Deborah Burks, Brandie Siegfried, Stephen Clucas, Hilda Smith, Mihoko Suzuki, Anne Shaver, Lee C. Khanna, Elaine Hobby, Gweno Williams, Susan Fitzmaurice, James Fitzmaurice, Sophie Tomlinson, Gloria Italiano Amsilotti, Karen Raber

1. Nancy S. Weitz reported on the official registration of paid-up members (47: 8 lifetime members, 23 regular members, and 16 concessions) and the treasury holdings of the MCS (\$1,800.83 US). Since the MCS Newsletter has been funded until now by Ohio State University's Center for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, the dues recently installed for membership will be needed to maintain newsletter operations. She mentioned that if the Treasurer position moves out of the United States, appropriate conversions into the relevant currency will take place, and there is a possibility that arrangements might be made for credit-card payments of dues for overseas members.

2. Several modifications to the Governing Board of the MCS were proposed. The Board would be comprised of:

- a) Executive Board. Rotating offices: President (2-year term), Immediate Past President (2-year term), Secretary/Next President (2-year term). Non-rotating office: Treasurer (renewable 2-year term)
- b) General Board: Newsletter Editor (no fixed term), E-List Manager (no fixed term), Website Manager (no fixed term), Next Conference Organizer (2-year term), Regional Representatives (no fixed term) for UK, US, Canada, Australia/ New Zealand, Continental Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America.

Weitz, Rees, and Bennett explained that the idea behind these alterations to the Board was to ensure that the streamlined Executive could deal with most of the day-to-day work of the Society and thus allow the members of the General Board to accomplish their duties. These changes would also make getting in contact with necessary officers easier, since everyone's duties were

more clearly specified. At the inaugural General Meeting of the MCS, some concern had been expressed about adequate international representation on the Governing Board, so it was suggested that the Regional Representatives cover larger geographical regions rather than being Members-at-Large from specific countries as had been previously maintained. Representatives should cover the important duties of providing a liaison between their regions and the Board, distributing the Newsletter to local groups and interests, planning local events and conferences, and providing news of the MCS to potential members.

Gweno Williams suggested keeping the Regional Representatives independent of the Executive and of no fixed term of service in order to maintain established networking links and continuity of representation, and these emendations were so noted.

No further discussion being forthcoming, Anne Shaver moved to accept these modifications. Susan Fitzmaurice seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**3.** It was proposed that the MCS Executive Board be rotated effective today, with Nancy S. Weitz becoming Immediate Past President, Emma L.E. Rees becoming President, Alexandra G. Bennett becoming Secretary/ Next President, and a Treasurer to be elected by the attending members. Anne Shaver moved to accept, Jim Fitzmaurice seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Jim Fitzmaurice then suggested that all Past Presidents should become ex officio members of the General Board so that their experience could be called upon when necessary. Deb Burks moved to accept, Susannah Quinsee seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**4.** It was proposed to allow the current General Board members to continue in their roles for a two-year term. Jim Fitzmaurice would remain as E-List Manager, Susannah Quinsee as Website Manager, Brandie Siegfried as US Regional Representative, Gweno Williams as UK Regional Representative. Deb Burks announced that she would not be seeking another term as Newsletter Editor. Anne Shaver suggested that other Members-at-Large of the former General Board be notified of the changes proposed and allowed to remain on the Board for the same two-year term, so that no Board member would be 'forced' off the Board. Deb Burks moved to accept these suggestions, Jim Fitzmaurice seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**5.** Nominations and elections were then held to fill the open positions in the Governing Board:

**a)** Nominations were sought for the position of Treasurer. Hilda Smith volunteered to serve, and was enthusiastically acclaimed by all present (Jim Fitzmaurice officially moved to accept her, and all members seconded the motion).

**b)** Line Cottagnies volunteered for the position of Regional Representative for Continental Europe. Anne Shaver moved to accept her, Mihoko Suzuki seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**c)** For the position of Regional Representative for Australia and New Zealand, Sophie Tomlinson suggested that the Board check with Jo Wallwork, who has been performing those duties since the last GM. Susan Fitzmaurice seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**d)** For the position of Regional Representative for Asia, Jim Fitzmaurice suggested checking the extant email databases to see if one would be necessary given the current membership. Similarly, it was suggested that the Board should communicate with the extant Members-at-Large from Canada to determine if either of them wished to become the Regional Representative. Gweno Williams moved to accept these ideas, Brandie Siegfried seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

e) For the position of Newsletter Editor, Susannah Quinsee volunteered to take on those duties as well as those of Website Manager. Deb Burks and Nancy Weitz Miner expressed some reservations about time constraints as well as the potential awkwardness of having the Treasurer and Newsletter Editor in different countries, since transactions in different currencies to mail the Newsletter could prove awkward. Jim Fitzmaurice asked if the Newsletter could be produced in the country and then copied and mailed in the US, provided that a photoready copy could be mailed to the Treasurer. Susan Fitzmaurice suggested publishing the Newsletter on the Website itself; Deb Burks expressed some reservations about its availability under those circumstances. Nancy S. Weitz asked Susannah Quinsee if it would be possible to get some institutional funding to cover mailing costs; Gweno Williams suggested that an institution could cover domestic postage in exchange for a byline on the Newsletter. Mihoko Suzuki observed that members with access to the Web could deal without a hard copy of the Newsletter; Susannah Quinsee suggested creating an email version instead. Emma Rees noted the advantages of having a hard copy, and Deb Burks remarked that the MCS can afford to produce one, given the Society's dues system. Finally, it was proposed that Susannah become Newsletter Editor with the responsibility of producing the Newsletter and forwarding a photoready copy to Hilda Smith, who, as Treasurer, would send it to her institution's print shop and mail it to members through a bulk rate distribution system. Deb Burks remarked that a heavy weight of paper (70 lb. bond) was necessary for producing the Newsletter, and all agreed that the colour of the paper should be left to Hilda's discretion. Brandie Siegfried moved to accept these proposals, Susan Fitzmaurice seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

For the position of Book Review Editor for the Newsletter, Jim Fitzmaurice volunteered to continue performing these duties, and was acclaimed in his role.

6. On the subject of a location for the 2001 Margaret Cavendish Conference, Susan Fitzmaurice moved to ask Susanne Woods to organize the conference in Wheaton, Massachusetts. All were in favour, and Anne Shaver agreed on Susanne's behalf to host the conference. Loud cheers and appreciation were expressed from all present.

7. Other business:

a) Gweno Williams expressed some concern about the timing of the conference, noting that European term schedules are not necessarily conducive to a June meeting and that July might be a better time. Elaine Hobby noted that the Australia/New Zealand winter break tends to occur around the middle of July so that a mid-July meeting might be possible. Anne Shaver agreed that Susanne Woods would take these remarks under advisement in setting the conference time.

b) Emma Rees volunteered to write a 200-300-word conference report for the next Newsletter, since Line Cottagnies had abstracts of everyone's papers. Line remarked that such a process could be time-consuming, and also observed that the editor of the journal *InBetween* might be willing to publish the abstracts themselves. Karen Raber suggested an online journal at Yale might be interested in early conference proceedings, and others remarked that Jo Wallwork's journal *Lateral* might be another choice. Gweno Williams suggested publishing a summary of the conference papers in book form, akin to *Attending to Early Modern Women* from the University of Delaware

Press. Nancy S. Weitz noted that presses might express some caution in getting involved at this stage, and suggested that arrangements might be made in advance for the next conference. Line Cottegnies proposed that all presenters at the Paris conference submit a revised 10-line summary of their work to her so that these could be included in the Newsletter and possibly be submitted to interested journals (Elaine Hobby mentioned *-Restoration.*, while Lee Khanna suggested *Prose Studies*, and others mentioned *Utopian Studies*). Elaine Hobby moved to accept Line's motion, Gweno Williams seconded it, and it passed unanimously.

c) Nancy S. Weitz moved to thank Line Cottegnies officially for having organized such a successful conference, and the motion was acclaimed amidst loud applause.

No other business being presented before the members, Emma Rees moved to adjourn the meeting. Jim Fitzmaurice seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Alexandra G. Bennett  
Secretary/ Next President, MCS

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