



WORTHINGTON 17th-CENTURY PROJECT

5 December 2006

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

The first annual general meeting of the Worthington 17th-Century Project was held in the Board Room, Quality Hotel, Wigan, Lancashire, UK, at 11.00am on Tuesday 5 December 2006.

Those present were:

Stephen Read (in the chair)
Robert P. Worthington
Dr Sidney Worthington
William Worthington
Philip M. Worthington (secretary)

Voting papers had also been received from:

Sir Knight John E. Shearer
Patricia G. Ward
Addison Worthington
Janet R. Worthington
Judith S. M. Worthington
Philip G. Worthington
Stuart G. Worthington
William C. Worthington

These papers, together with the proposals and comments received from members, were placed on the table and referred to as appropriate during the meeting.

William Worthington put to the meeting papers on: (a) Distribution of Worthingtons in Great Britain at the time of the 1881 census; (b) Distribution in more detail of Worthingtons between Lancaster in the north-west and Derby in the south-east at the time of the 1881 census; (c) List of Worthington Wills available at the Lancashire Record Office; and (d) List of printed parish registers of Yorkshire available in the Harris Library, Preston, Lancashire.

Apologies for absence were received from the chairman, Janet R. Worthington. It was agreed by all present that, in her absence, Stephen Read should take the chair.

Minutes of the inaugural meeting

The minutes of the inaugural-general meeting held at The History Shop, Library Street, Wigan, Lancashire, at 11.00am on Thursday 24 November 2005 were approved.

Membership of the Project

It was noted that, as at 31 October 2006, there were 22 members of the Project. Five of them had joined since 14 October 2005 – the date of the List of Members considered at the inaugural meeting.

IT WAS RESOLVED that each of the 5 applicants for membership of the Project who had joined since 14 October 2005 be elected a member.

These members were welcomed.

Much discussion took place on ways of increasing membership. It was agreed that either Janet Worthington or Philip M. Worthington, or both jointly, should write a paper on the Project and offer it to “Family Tree” for publication. Also, briefer statements could be offered to “Ancestors” and a large number of other genealogical magazines, designed to inform and attract potential members. Also, as minuted at the inaugural meeting, appropriate information should be sent to the secretaries of family history societies in English-speaking countries.

It was also suggested that the secretary should endeavour to get from Phillimore & Co. Ltd., a list of buyers of “The Worthington Families of Medieval England”, and then write to such people offering membership.

Finance

The Project’s “Accounts for the Quarter Ended 30 September 2006”, being the year-end accounts, were considered and accepted. The action of the treasurer-UK in moving the UK bank account to the Cooperative Bank was welcomed and approved.

It was noted that, for Project purposes, the rate of exchange had been taken at US\$1.80 to £1.00 sterling throughout the first year. The mid-market rate of exchange had recently moved closer to US\$2.00 to £1.00.

IT WAS RESOLVED that, as from 1 October 2006, the assumed rate of exchange for Project purposes would be US\$2.00 to £1.00 sterling.

Subscriptions

It was considered that either the subscription rate in US\$ should increase, or the rate in £ sterling should decrease to reflect the new Project rate of exchange. After discussion, and bearing in mind that some inflation has occurred since the inaugural meeting, it was agreed that the US\$ subscriptions should increase.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the annual subscription rate, as from 1 October 2006, should be £25 for supporters or £100 for sponsors if paid in £ sterling, and US\$50 for subscribers or US\$200 for sponsors, if paid in US\$. Where a subscription for the second or a later year has been paid in advance during an earlier year, the rate of exchange applicable at the time of payment shall be used.

IT WAS ALSO RESOLVED that a new member on joining the Project in the second or a later year shall contribute an entrance fee equal to the total subscriptions for all former years of the Project in addition to the annual subscription for the current year. In the case of entrance fees paid in US\$, the rate of exchange used shall be that applicable for Project purposes at the time of payment.

It was agreed that a new member would then be entitled to receive all past-publications of the Project.

Publication of the Register of Worthington References

It was noted that 232 pages of text of the Register of Worthington References had been produced by 15 November 2006, and that 135 of those pages either had been, or were in the course of being, indexed and distributed. This rate of progress during Year 1, and the quality of research and production, were regarded as excellent.

At the inaugural meeting it had been agreed that the Register should be produced in 3 sections – the 16th century, the 17th and the 18th. Since then, each of these sections has been subdivided into 2 parts, namely Part 1 – Church Records, and Part 2 – Other Events. That practice was adopted because it became convenient and natural to list Church Records taking a church at a time, while listing Other Events in date order. A further problem has emerged more recently – the high cost of printing, binding and distributing a volume several times as it grows. To avoid this cost it was agreed that each part should be further divided into individual volumes, each having no more than 100 pages of text (excluding the preliminary pages and the index). When 100 pages is reached, the volume should be closed, indexed and distributed to members as a final edition, while a new volume is opened.

IT WAS RESOLVED that each member shall have the choice of receiving a completed volume in bound paper format or on CD or floppy disk.

It will be important that all members working on Phase 2 of the Project should have access to the whole Register, duly indexed, from 1 October 2007.

IT WAS RESOLVED that all parts of the Register not already distributed to members by 30 September 2007, shall be indexed and made available temporarily on disk or in unbound paper format as required.

The final edition of the 17th-Century Register – Part 2, Other Events, Volume 1, will be distributed to members in the New Year. It is hoped that another complete volume of 100 pages of text will be distributed before the end of Year 2.

IT WAS RESOLVED that a budget of up to £450 be allocated for expenditure on printing and binding volumes of the Register and distributing to members during Project Year 2.

This budget includes £104 already paid for the printing and binding of the 17th-Century – Part 1, Church Records – an incomplete volume which was issued to members during October 2006.

Phase 1 – research in Year 2

Members' responses to the "Questionnaire for Volunteers" received before the meeting were considered. Members present at the meeting then considered in what ways they could best contribute to research during the Project Year 2. The researchers and the fields in which they will operate can be summarised as follows:

Dr. Frank A. Brimelow	CDs and Lancashire Record Office
Dr. Donald E. Gradeless	Fort Wayne Library for visitations, etc
Stephen Read	State Archive Wills and Lancashire Record Office
Addison Worthington	State archives of Maryland, etc
Robert P. Worthington	Cheshire Wills and Cheshire Record Office

Stuart G. Worthington	CDs and internet
William Worthington	Lancashire Wills and Harris Library
Philip G. Worthington	Calendars of State papers at National Archives

It was noted that 5 CDs had been kindly donated for use by the Project – one of the Victoria County History of Lancashire and 4 of church records relating to Lancashire and Westmoreland. They proved to be efficient and reliable sources for research, as evidenced by crosschecks with earlier published sources. Many more CDs are available from organisations such as Ancestry.com, especially of parish records in other English counties.

IT WAS RESOLVED that a budget of up to £400 be allocated for expenditure during Year 2 on CDs and other sources of material for the Register of Worthington References.

Phase 2 – pedigrees

According to the Prospectus dated August 2005, the development of pedigrees (Phase 2) was due to start at the beginning of Year 2. However, consideration was given to a proposal that Phase 2 be delayed, so that the Project can continue to focus on research and the building up of the indexed Register.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the start of Phase 2 of the Project be postponed until 1 October 2007.

It was felt that such delay would not harm the overall programme, as 3 years had been allowed for Phase 2, while 2 years should be adequate.

In preparation for Phase 2, the secretary was asked to establish a register of members who volunteer to develop the pedigrees of particular Worthington lines in Phase 2. A discussion then took place on how the authenticity of the pedigrees should be established.

IT WAS RESOLVED that a pedigree developed by a member shall be accepted by the Project only after examination and approval by 2 other members appointed as examiners by the chairman.

A paper on “Draft Methodology” for producing pedigrees was put to the meeting by William Worthington. It was considered that the paper provided valuable models both for developing pedigrees and for their examination.

It was agreed that the standard of proof shall be equal to that normally required by the College of Arms. Unlike the College, a category of “probable” connections will be acceptable provided that the lack of certainty is clearly stated.

IT WAS RESOLVED that a “probable” link shall be acceptable in a pedigree provided only that the member developing the pedigree and each of the 2 examiners concerned consider the likelihood to be at least 90 percent. In such a case, the link on the pedigree shall be shown with broken lines.

A discussion was held on the cut-off date for pedigrees – that is to say the last generation to be shown on each pedigree. Agreement was not reached, and it was decided to postpone the matter until the next general meeting. In the meantime, the cut-off date of 1730 for research for entry into the Register of Worthington References was re-affirmed.

Website

It was reported that the Project's old website, www.worthingtonhistory.com, had run for a year and then been allowed to lapse on grounds of cost-saving, and because it had not produced any enquiries from potential new members. The website had made a simple statement of the objects of the Project, but had not been kept up-to-date with Project news or progress.

After the lapse, Dr. Donald Gradeless offered to design a new website and keep it updated. Its address is <http://worthington17.gradeless.com/>. There is no cost to the Project, as Donald kindly offered to run it as a department of his own website. The existence of this new website was welcomed.

Election of officers for Year 2

A discussion took place on the constitutional aspects of retirement from office and election to office. It was agreed that, in keeping with the present customs of the Project: (a) each officer should retire at each annual general meeting, but may stand for re-election; (b) any member or group of members may propose any member for election to an office at any general meeting.

No proposals for the appointments of new officers having been received prior to or in the annual meeting, all the former officers were duly re-elected.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the following officers of the Project be elected for Year 2:

Chairman	Janet R. Worthington
Treasurer-UK	Stephen Read
Treasurer-USA	Patricia G. Ward
Editor – Phase 1	Stuart G. Worthington
Indexer – Phase 1	William C. Worthington
Webmaster	Dr. Donald E. Gradeless
Secretary and archivist	Philip M. Worthington

The secretary said that he would welcome a volunteer to take over the responsibilities of archivist. Although archives are being carefully preserved, sorting, indexing and filing are not proceeding because of other priorities.

Plans for the 2007 annual general meeting

Addison Worthington's proposal that the second annual general meeting be held at Annapolis was considered. It was noted that replies to the "Questionnaire for Planning the Annual General Meetings" dated 1 September 2006 had shown good support for the option to hold the meeting in Virginia or Maryland.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the 2007 annual general meeting of the Project be held at Annapolis, Maryland, USA, on a date in or near November 2007 to be agreed between Addison Worthington and the chairman.

It was also agreed that an informal meeting of members should be held in England prior to the annual general meeting. This meeting would not be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Project, but would be free to make recommendations which could be forwarded to the annual general meeting.