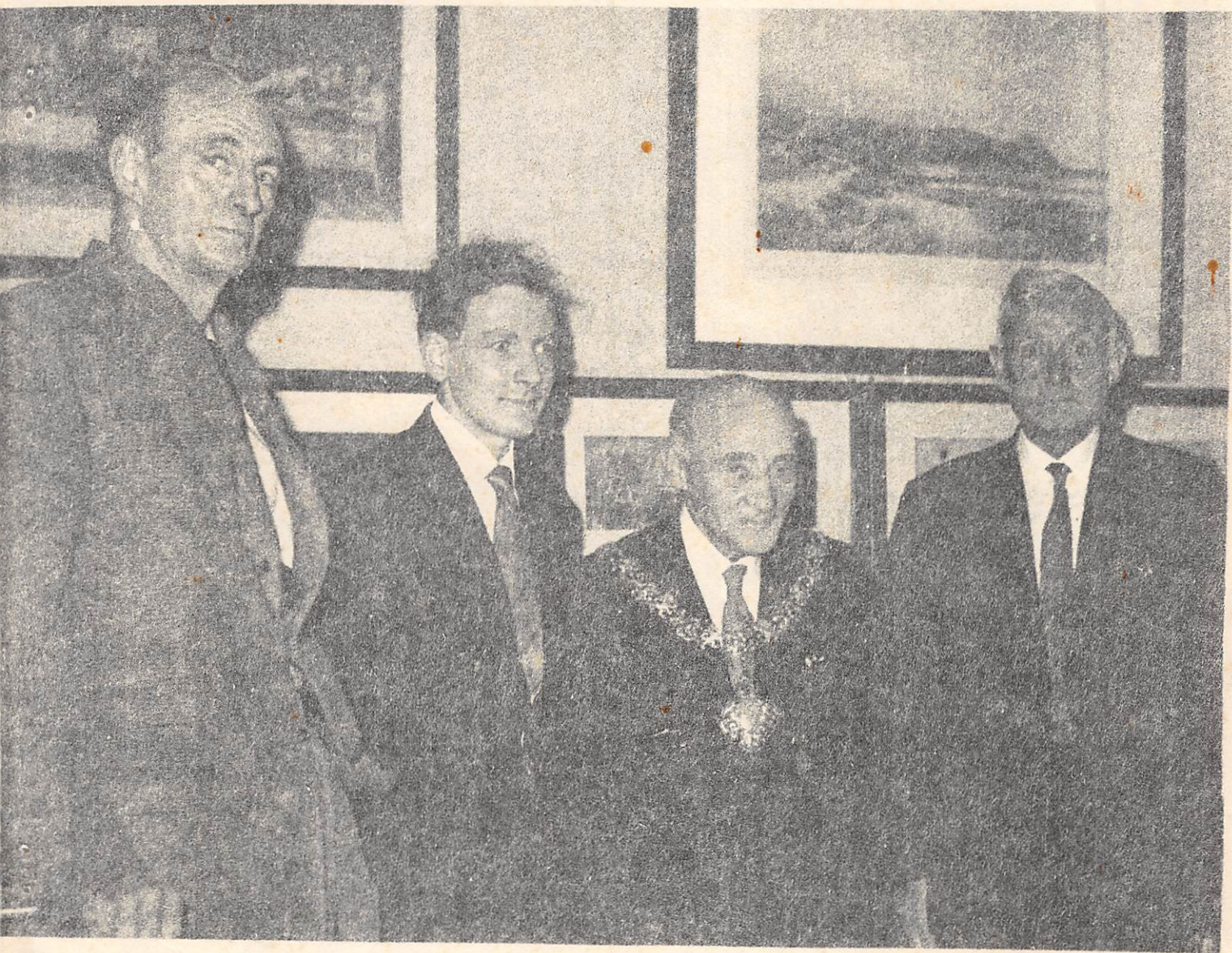


BULLETIN

OF THE THOMAS PAINE SOCIETY.

No. 2, WINTER, 1965



Council Members of the Society seen with the Mayor of Lewes, Councillor A.C.Barber, at the A.G.M. Left to right: Coun.J.G.Hoile; R.W.Marrell (Secretary); The Mayor; A.W.Thomas.

Photograph: C.brunel.

COUNCIL AND OFFICIALS OF THE SOCIETY
FOR 1965.

Chairman:

Christopher Brunel, A.R.P.S.

Secretary/Treasurer:

R.W.Morrell.

Council :

A.J.Stathan(Nottingham), J.H.Crofts(Nottingham), A.A.Rudling(Norwich),
A.Massey(Bristol), Coun.J.G.Hoile(Lewes), A.W.Thomas(Kenton),
Dr.G.A.Williams(York), R.Cobb,M.A.(Oxford), Coun.A.Francis(Dover),
F.H.Amphlett Micklewright,M.A.,F.R.Hist.S.
(London).

A N N U A L G E N E R A L M E E T I N G

Lewes, Sussex. Saturday, November 14th.
1964.

The historic first A.G.M. of the Thomas Paine Society took place in the Sussex town of Lewes on Saturday, November 14th. It was a fitting conclusion to a very active year's work and fittingly held in a town with many Paine associations.

Welcoming members and visitors to the meeting held in the Unitarian Church Hall, the Chairman, Christopher Brunel, drew attention to Paine's connections with the town. Paine, Mr. Brunel pointed out, was an excise man, hardly a profession to make him popular. But popular he was.

Following the Chairman, the Mayor of Lewes, Coun.A.C.Barber, welcomed the Society to the town. He told us how delighted he was to hear that the meeting would be held in Lewes and he welcomed the members both as Mayor of Lewes and a member of the Society. Paine had received his political apprenticeship in the town, The Mayor stated. Before concluding Councillor Barber told of the Paine discovery (reported on another page) and invited those present to visit the Mayor's Parlour at the Town Hall during the tour of the town in the afternoon.

The Chairman thanked the Mayor and then the business meeting commenced. Apologies were read from the President, Michael Foot, M.P., Mr.R.Sorenson, M.P. (Now Lord Sorenson), Earl Russell - at this point the Chairman rose to point out that at a meeting held in connection

with Paine at Lewes in 1904, a Lord Russell had sent apologies for not being able to attend, Mr. Blaydon, Mr. Cutner and Coun. Francis.

The Secretary then presented the Annual Report. This detailed the work undertaken from the foundation of the Society and the Secretary stated that while much had been achieved, the aims of the Society were far from being accomplished.

The national press had given the Society fair coverage as had many papers of a more local character. Society speakers had taken part in television programmes while others addressed meetings in a number of places. The Society published during the year a Bulletin and two leaflets.

We received enquiries from individuals engaged in research work, information and material was supplied dealing with Paine, Hardy and the London Corresponding Society, the Society having traced a copy of the rare Moral and Philosophical Magazine of the London Corresponding Society.

In concluding, the Secretary dealt with future activities. We hoped to hold many more meetings in areas where we had few if any members. We wanted closer co-operation with other bodies and he instanced that which had developed between us and the Labour, Co-operative, Trade Union and Democratic History Society.

Following the Report the financial statement was given and then came the election of Officials and Council. This was followed by a full discussion on past activities, future policy and finance. Many interesting suggestions were advanced which will be looked into by the Council.

After lunch members went on a conducted tour of Lewes, the highlight of which was a visit to the Town Hall to see the Paine signatures. In the evening a meeting was held at which Mr. Amphlett Micklewright delivered a stimulating address, this is available on tape, cost for three days loan being 5/-. The meeting brought to a close a very interesting day, one that members will long remember.

TAILPIECE

Ex-Councillor Mayes of Thetford, he resigned his Council seat over the erection of the Paine statue, failed in a bid for nomination to his former seat.

REPORT OF THE T.U.L.C. CONFERENCE, LONDON, SATURDAY OCTOBER 31st. 1964.

As mentioned in the A.G.M. Report the Society is co-operating with the Trade Union, Labour, Co-operative and Democratic History Society. This body organised a conference in London on October 31st. at which the T.P.S. was officially represented.

Including our representatives there were 26 people present. The Secretary of T.U.L.C. commenced the meeting by giving an address in which certain proposals were advanced, these were to urge the formation of a National History Centre and Museum; to promote a travelling exhibition in three sections; to stage a major exhibition in London in 1967 commemorating the 1867 Reform Act.

The meeting was then thrown open for contributions from those present and among those who took part was the Secretary of the T.P.S., Mr. R.W. Morrell. He supported the proposals and drew attention to the continual loss of important material from deliberate destruction and sale abroad. Following the morning session Mr. Morrell presented, through the T.P.S., a number of items from his own collection on permanent loan to T.U.L.C., these included Chartist material, posters, photographs, newspapers, badges and original letters from G.J. Holyoake and Robert Blatchford.

The afternoon session was chaired by Christopher Brunel, Chairman of the T.P.S. - also Vice-Chairman of T.U.L.C., who gave a short talk on the T.P.S. Later the motion to hold the London exhibition and appeal for financial aid was moved and carried.

THOMAS PAINE AND THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

A tape recording of the talk by Mr. F.H. Amphlett Micklewright under the above title given at the public meeting following the Lewes A.G.M., is available on loan. Playing at 33 and one third it lasts for over an hour. The tape may be hired for three days at 5/-, payable in advance. Organisations and individuals wishing to hire it are asked to contact the Secretary.

When Burke wrote his Reflections on the French Revolution it was Tom Paine who replied with The Rights of Man, a book as vigorous, lucid and logical as Burke's Reflections were turgid and twisted. In his time it was Paine who achieved the greater sales, in spite of prosecution and intimidation; and his is still by far the better book, though political interest and social snobbery have combined to give Burke's book the bogus title of a "classic".

George Orwell & Reginald Reynolds (Eds.),
British Pamphleteers. Vol. 1. p. 248.

PAINE DISCOVERY IN LEWES.

It has been generally accepted that the only office Thomas Paine was elected to by public vote was a seat in the French Convention. Now thanks to research undertaken by Leslie Davey of Lewes it is now known that Paine was at one time a member of Lewes Town Council.

News of the discovery was made public for the first time at the Annual General Meeting of the Thomas Paine Society. Mr. Davey on examining the Lewes Town Book, a manuscript work commenced in 1741 and containing details of the meetings of the Council of Twelve, as the Town Council was known, members of the Council added their signatures after each report. found that seven reports had Paine's signature among the others. The first signature being for September 15th., 1769 and the last, October 10th. 1772.

The book also contains the signature of Samuel Ollive, Paine's father-in-law, in 1745 he signs as one of the two Headboroughs and in 1752 as one of the two Constables. Members of the Society inspected the book when they visited Lewes Town Hall at the invitation of the Mayor.

We extend our congratulations to Christopher Hill on his election as Master of Balliol. Mr. Hill, a well known historian, is a member of the T.P.S.

THOMAS PAINE BATTALION.

During the discussion at the A.G.M., Mr. A. Hurst, told of an incident regarding the British Battalion of the International Brigade. The members of the Brigade making up the British Battalion had decided to name the Battalion after Thomas Paine. Due to the visit of Mr. Attlee, now Earl Attlee, it was at the last moment decided to name the Battalion after him.

Our Chairman, Christopher Brunel, has since contacted Lord Attlee, who states that while he has no recollection of the incident, it sounds quite likely "and would have expressed" his "sentiments."

IN DEFENCE OF THOMAS PAINE

THE FREETHINKER

THE SOCIETY IN THE NEWS

Friday, October 25th. 1963

THE THOMAS PAINE SOCIETY

Over fifty people attended the inaugural meeting of the Thomas Paine Society in Conway Hall, London, on October 6th. The meeting formally brought into being the Society electing as its Honorary President, Mr. Michael Foot, MP. Four Vice-Presidents were also elected—Bertrand Russell, OM, FRS, Herbert Cutner, G. R. Blaydon (a former Mayor and town clerk of Thetford) and Joseph Lewis.

On the motion of Councillor J. G. Hoile of Lewes, the meeting adopted the following as the objectives of the Society:

To promote the recognition of Thomas Paine's contribution to the cause of freedom.

To spread a knowledge of his works and activities with a view to encouraging the growth of a similar spirit of constructive criticism in every aspect of public life.

Joseph Lewis of the American Thomas Paine Foundation, who attended the meeting, was invited to address it, and gave a short but stimulating account of the difficulties involved in getting permission to erect a statue of Paine in London. Eventually it was decided that the statue should be erected in Thetford, Paine's birthplace, and Mr. Lewis announced that it would be in front of King's House, the local government offices, and that the unveiling would take place on Sunday, June 7th, 1964.

The meeting has received good publicity in national as well as local press, and the BBC took a recording for possible use in a broadcast feature. On the Monday after the meeting Mr. A. J. Statham, a member of the Society's Council, appeared on BBC television for an interview on Paine and the Society.

R.W.M.

Nottingham talk on Thomas Paine

Thomas Paine as a citizen of two worlds was the subject of a talk given to Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society yesterday by Mr. Christopher Brunel, chairman of the Thomas Paine Society.

He showed how Paine's writings, particularly "Rights of Man," and "The Age of Reason," influenced radical thinking in the 18th century and afterwards.

Nottingham
Evening
Post
25/11/64

Tom Paine statue

Sussex Express &
County Herald
12/6/64

A STATUE of Thomas Paine, the 18th century revolutionary and writer, was unveiled in the Norfolk town of Thetford, on Sunday, and the ceremony was attended by a representative gathering despite some local protests.

Councillor J. G. Hoile, of Priory street, Lewes, a member of the council of the Thomas Paine Society, had hoped to attend the ceremony, but was prevented owing to the illness of his wife.

A member of the Thetford Council has resigned over the decision to erect the 7ft. high statue, but the guests who accepted an invitation to attend included Sir Charles Wheeler, President of the Royal Academy, who made the statue for the Thomas Paine Foundation of America to present to Thetford; Mr. Joseph Lewis, secretary of the Foundation; representatives from the French and American embassies; and members of the Thomas Paine Society in this country.

The annual meeting of the Society will probably be held in Lewes this year.

Souvenir book

THE Thomas Paine Society has given Mrs. G. K. Kullman, of 20, New Street, Sandwich, a book called "Age of Reason" by Thomas Paine.

Her home was lived in by Thomas Paine some two hundred years ago. Mrs. Kullman is always happy to show her interest in this historic fact.

Statues of Thomas Paine, the Englishman, are in America and France. Another statue is to be placed in England—next June at Thetford, Norfolk, Paine's home town.

Kentish Express
24 Jan 1964

IT WAS strange that a man of such historical importance as Thomas Paine had not been commemorated in a way people of lesser importance had been and the erection of a statue at his birthplace, Thetford, meant that justice was now being done, Thetford Rotarians were told on Tuesday by a member of the Thomas Paine Society.

Mr. A. A. Rudling, of Norwich, said that the Society had been formed as a counterpart to the American organisation which was providing the statue, to try to rehabilitate the reputation of Paine in this country.

The statue to Paine would attract many people to Thetford, and would add lustre to the town.

He refuted charges made quite recently that Paine was a traitor. His American supporters in the American War of Independence were almost all of them of English origin. The American war was based upon the idea that people had the right to representation as long as they were being taxed. This was in an English tradition which went back over centuries of English history, he said, and Paine and his friends were continuing the actions of their ancestors.

'NO TRAITOR'

Paine was no traitor to England, nor English tradition. A great deal of blame for the whole affair, Mr. Rudling said, rested with George III and his Ministers and the English Government bore a big responsibility for the loss of the American Colonies.

Referring to the French Revolution, Mr. Rudling said that many people in England supported it and only opposed the movement when it became dictatorial. Paine at that time regarded himself as an American citizen and it was a moot point whether someone who regarded himself as American could be called a traitor to Britain.

"It was easy to throw accusations about Paine which are less than just," he said.

Whatever Paine's views on religion his beliefs were neither unethical nor immoral, Mr. Rudling said. He was far in advance of his time in social thinking and advocated free universal education, maternity benefits, national assistance as a social right and old age pensions.

He was the first man to suggest international arbitration between nations, and visualised not merely the United States but the United States of Europe. He was an advocate of social and political attitudes and institutions which today were taken for granted.

Mr. Rudling added that recent suggestions that Paine was ever tried in his absence for treason were nonsense. Legal proceedings were started against him for seditious libel after the publication of "The Rights of Man," but he sought protection by going to France.