



Pilgrim Fathers UK Origins Association

Review of the Year to 31st March 2011

In its fifth year the Association continued to build on its objectives:

- a. to draw together and promote information on the original Pilgrim Fathers that is of interest to descendents, the local community and visitors to the area.
- b. to work with others to develop a co-ordinated infrastructure on the origins of local Pilgrim Fathers, including visitor information points;
- c. to work with others to stimulate events which highlight historical points of interest to visitors;
- d. to work with others to engage the community in the heritage of the Pilgrim Fathers;
- e. to work with others, in a co-ordinated way, to increase tourism to the area.

In furthering these objectives the Association's Management Group, which comprises representatives of interested organisations, stimulated and co-ordinated a number of initiatives.

It can be legitimately claimed that the local area provided leadership for the founding of New England in the US by the Pilgrim Fathers and the principle behind the 1st Amendment of the US Constitution (Freedom of Religious Belief) . In addition William Brewster introduced Thanksgiving in the autumn of 1621. The Association website continues to provide information, worldwide, on the area's Separatist heritage. This website continued to attract 22,000 unique visitors (over 1,800 a month) during the year. Half are from the UK and half from overseas. The website is linked to other important Pilgrim Fathers websites, including the Society of Mayflower Descendants. The Association website continues to play an important promotional role for the heritage and the area.

The Pilgrim Fathers heritage packs which were produced by Sherwood Forest Trust in 2008 continue to be downloaded from the Association website. In the year there were 72 downloads with 18 for use in UK schools, 22 for use in overseas schools and 32 for general use mainly in the US.

We are still working to organise a re-print of historian Malcolm Dolby's booklet 'William Bradford of Austerfield – His Life and Work' which was printed by Doncaster Library in 1991. It is hoped to stimulate reprinting of this booklet in the coming year so that it can be made available on the website and our associates in the US.

Last year we hoped to support the production of a drawing of the original Scrooby Hall which we know would be of interest to visitors to Scrooby and the website. This project is ongoing with the current owners of Scrooby Hall.

During the year the Chair of the Friends of Gainsborough Old Hall, Paul Howitt-Cowan, published an article which referred to observations in a book by Nick Bunker which pointed out that Sir William Hickman, the owner of the Hall in 1605, may not have been sympathetic to the Separatists and did not allow the Gainsborough group to meet at the Hall as is widely believed. We asked Dr. Jeremy Bangs to comment on the controversy and published both views on the website.

Monumental Movies from the US visited the UK in the summer of 2010 to create a film about the Pilgrim Fathers which is due for release in 2011. Jane Knight and Jane Williams, an independent television producer also visited to area to research the possibility of producing a film about the Pilgrim Mothers. Scrooby will be one of six villages featured by the BBC to support the Queen's Jubilee.

During the year we explored the possibility of establishing a small visitor centre/ museum in Scrooby with the Parish Council. We agreed that this would best be achieved by location in Scrooby Church. Working with the Parochial Council we have established contact with the Diocese and their architect has produced several drawings. We will shortly be holding meetings with the Diocese to pursue the project with a view to opening the visitor centre for summer 2012.

In the next few months we intend to research and contact all the locations in the UK who have a relationship to the heritage of the Pilgrim Fathers. In our leading role regarding the origins of the Pilgrim Fathers we will offer to promote their heritage at the proposed visitor centre with, hopefully, reciprocal promotion.

We continued to maintain contact with the Society of Mayflower Descendants and will work with them, and other important US heritage organisations to promote US Pilgrim Fathers facilities in the visitor centre and strengthen UK/ US relationships. Throughout the year novelist Sue Allan has hosted visitors to the area and has supported activities at Gainsborough Old Hall. Both Sue and the Deputy Chair continue to promote the heritage.

The Association continues to provide a valuable, co-ordinating role in helping preserve and promote the area's heritage and I am grateful to all the organisations who have provided their financial, or in kind, support in our past year. Our financial statement for the year to 31st March 2011 demonstrates this support.

I am particularly grateful to Barry Bowles, as Deputy Chair and to all members of the Management Group for their continued support.

Anthony Darbyshire - Chair