



The Orwell Society

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL

STATEMENTS

Year ended 31 December 2023



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Orwell, aged 32, photographed by F.E.Fierz



The Society

The Orwell Society is a membership organisation for George Orwell enthusiasts and scholars worldwide, with a charitable purpose to promote the public understanding and appreciation of Orwell's life and work.

We aim to be one of the world's leading society for Orwell lovers and to use that status to promote Orwell's life and work to the wider public.

During 2023 and at the date of this report, the Trustees and their roles in the Society were:

Role	Trustee
Patron	Richard Blair (son of George Orwell)
Chair and Events	Quentin Kopp
Secretary	Chris Harrison
Treasurer	Zigurds Kronbergs to 11 May 2024 Mark Courtney from 11 May 2024
Research and Digital Officer	Les Hurst
Journal Editor	Masha Karp
Journalism and Legal	Ian Bloom from 11 May 2024
Education and Communities	Bruce Dear from 19 October 2024

All Trustees are elected annually by members of the Society at the AGM with the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer elected to their specific posts.

Working with the Trustees during the year were Alex Dennis (Membership Secretary), Brian Rubin (Deputy Journal Editor), Iris Mir (Online Events Manager), Steve Foulger (Website Administrator), Janet Harrison (Dystopian Fiction Prize) and Dr Jaron Murphy (Journalism awards).



Trustees' Report

2023 was an active year for the Society with a return to a full programme of activities after the COVID-19 pandemic.

A full member-events programme was held including visits to Jura and Marrakesh. A weekend of events took place in Sutton Courtenay to celebrate Orwell's 120th birthday.

The monthly virtual "George Talks" programme continued to be popular with around 50 members at each meeting. The talks covered a wide range of subjects of interest to Society members. Video recordings are available to the public via the Society's website.

Our social media channels and website continued to provide much up-to-date information on events, publications, and new research. It also published regular articles on Orwell-related issues.

We awarded bursaries, prizes and awards with a total combined value of £6,250. Details of all the competitions are carried on the web site.

- Our Young Journalist awards, in partnership with the National Union of Journalists, were won by Joshua Hoffman and Gwenno Robinson.
- Our Student Dystopian Fiction Prize was won by Mishca Burrows.
- The winner of the 2022–23 Teacher-in-School Bursary, Jonathan Pye, of the Small Isles School on Jura, completed his work.
- We established the Orwell Society Peter Davison Prize in memory of Professor Peter Davison, who died in 2022. The inaugural winner of the prize was Professor Peter Stansky.

The respected Orwell Society Journal published the planned Editions 21 and 22 in May and November 2023 respectively. The journal continues to carry high-quality original articles and is provided free to all members.

During 2023 we supported efforts to establish a memorial for Orwell in Huesca, in the Aragon region of Spain. Huesca is notable for the saying: "Tomorrow we'll have coffee in Huesca", a running joke among militiamen of the Spanish Civil



War and mentioned by Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia*. Through the efforts of members we have raised £16,351 as a contribution to the memorial which was officially unveiled in May 2024.

The Trustees have developed a new ambitious 3-year strategy for 2024-2026, which will see continuation of the existing activities and extension to some new ones.

As a registered charity, our charitable activities are funded by member subscriptions as well as donations and any surpluses on member events (which are self-funding). Membership at the end of 2023 was 547, an increase from 500 at the end of 2022.

Financial Review

The Society remains in good financial health. Society funds were £160,380 at the end of 2023, including £150,000 representing the value of the Orwell statue.

The Trustees have a reserves policy, which is reviewed annually. In previous years, the policy has been for Society funds to be maintained within a range of £8k to £12k (excluding fixed assets) to allow for charitable activities to continue if faced with an unexpected fall in income.

The Trustees have decided to increase the Society's funds to the range from £18k to £22k, in view of the steep rise in operating costs, our commitment to a portfolio of prizes and bursaries, and the potential costs which may arise from ownership of the Orwell Statue.

From 2024 the Trustees will budget in order gradually to bring reserves in line with the new policy range by the end of 2026. To this end, the Trustees have increased annual subscription rates for the first time since the Society's foundation and will be looking to make cost savings wherever possible.

Income in the year was £24,430, an increase of 19% over the previous year. The increase was partly caused by the increase in subscriptions due to membership growth but is largely attributable to the earmarked donations towards the Huesca statue, so a truer comparison with the previous year's income (also without Huesca donations) would reflect a decrease of circa 25%.



Structure and Governance

The Society is a charity registered in England and Wales (Number 1159072) and is governed by a constitution that has been approved by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and can only be changed by agreement of the members and further approval by the Commission.

The Society has in place a Governance Framework which includes:

- A trustee code of conduct which all Trustees have signed.
- Statements on equality and diversity, health and safety, and safeguarding.

The Society also has in place policies in respect of the following:

- Reserves.
- Financial controls.
- Liquidity risk and investment.
- Risk management.
- Data protection.
- Conflicts of interest.
- Complaints.
- IT security.

The Governance Framework is published on the Society website www.orwellsociety.com.

The address of the Society's principal and registered office is The Coach House, 33A Beaver Road, Manchester, M20 6SX

Charitable Purpose

The Society's charitable purpose for the public benefit, as set out in its constitution, is to promote the public understanding and appreciation of George Orwell's life and work.

The Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when deciding on their main activities which are:



- Informing members of Orwell-related events and publications regarding Orwell's life and work via regular newsletters and through social media.
- Promoting discussion of such.
- Arranging self-financing member events.
- Publishing original material on the Society's website, through social media and in a regular journal.
- Arranging academic symposia and other public educational events including through schools and higher educational establishments.
- Awarding scholarships, bursaries and other awards.
- Sponsoring prizes and original research into Orwell's life and work.
- Supporting Orwell-related educational and other activities worldwide.
- Ownership of the Orwell statue outside the BBC in London and other heritage assets.
- Any other means that the Trustees may deem appropriate.

Risks

The Trustees assess the key risks to the Society to be:

- An unexpected requirement to move or to repair the Orwell statue at the BBC in London.
- Legal action arising from personal injury or losses in relation to events organised by the Society.
- A sudden and unexpected decrease in member subscriptions.
- Loss of monies due to fraud or error.

The Trustees review these risks regularly and consider they have appropriate mitigating actions in place including insurance cover and the governance arrangements discussed on page 6.



Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Income from:			
Member subscriptions	2	12,102	10,074
Donations	2	12,197	6,185
Surplus from events	2	-	2,510
Other	2	131	1,733
Total income		24,430	20,502
Expenditure on charitable activities:			
Bursaries, prizes and awards	3	6,250	4,900
Journal	3	9,859	4,804
Other	3	20,023	2,444
Total expenditure on charitable activities		36,132	12,148
Expenditure on other activities:			
Other	3	4,702	2,768
Total expenditure on other activities	3	4,702	2,768
Total expenditure		40,834	14,916
Net income and movement in funds		(16,404)	5,586

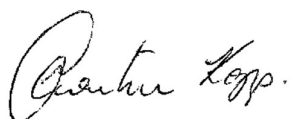


Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets:			
Heritage assets	4	152,500	152,500
Current assets:			
Stocks	6	1,020	921
Debtors	5	100	797
Cash at bank and in hand		41,146	33,567
Liabilities:			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	7,9	(28,540)	(4,802)
Net current assets		13,726	30,483
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	8,9	(5,846)	(6,199)
Total net assets		160,380	176,784
Reconciliation of funds:			
Total funds brought forward	4	176,784	171,198
Surplus/ (deficit) for year		(16,404)	5,586
Total funds carried forward		160,380	176,784
Total Funds less Fixed assets for Reserve Policy Check		7,880	24,284

The notes on pages 10 to 14 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees, authorised for issue on 19 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



Quentin Kopp
Chair



Mark Courtney
Treasurer



Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Accounting policies

Since the Society's annual income is below £250,000, the Society may produce accounts on a receipts and payments basis. However, the Society has chosen to produce accounts on an accruals basis in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)".

As the Society's income this year is below £25,000, the Society is not required to have its annual financial statements independently examined.

Accounting convention

The financial statements are prepared on a going-concern basis under the historical cost convention. The going-concern basis is considered appropriate due to the strength of the Society's balance sheet, which would allow the Society to continue to operate if there was either a significant and prolonged reduction in income or an unexpected increase in costs, or both.

Income

Income is recognised in the financial statements when the Society is legally entitled to the income, receipt is probable, and the amount can be measured with reasonable accuracy. It is deferred when it relates to future accounting periods.

Life membership

Life membership subscriptions are deferred and released to income in equal annual instalments over the remaining life of the life member, as estimated at the time of their becoming a life member.

Gift Aid

Gift-Aid receipts are recognised when a gift-aid claim is successfully submitted to His Majesty's Customs and Excise (HMRC).

Donated goods

Material donated items are valued at value estimated by the Trustees.

Heritage assets

Material heritage assets are valued at cost or value estimated by the Trustees if donated.



Stocks

Material stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Other items held for resale include past Society journals, badges and other items not considered sufficiently material to account for as stock. Sales of these items are included in income in the period sold.

2. Income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Member subscriptions	12,102	10,074
Donations	12,197	6,185
Surplus from events	Nil	2,510
Other		
Gift aid claimed	(750)	750
Bank interest	339	56
Sundry income	542	927
Total Other	131	1,733
Total income	24,430	20,502

Member subscriptions relate to a total membership of 547 at 31 December 2023 (500 at 31 December 2022). Of these 31 were life members for both years.

Surplus from events represents the surplus from member events that the Society organises. The receipts and payments in respect of these events are deemed to be on behalf of members and it is not deemed appropriate to separate the receipts and payments.

Sundry income includes sale of Barnhill Slates, Journal back issues and other Society items.



3. Expenditure

	2023 £	2022 £
Expenditure on charitable activities		
Bursaries, prizes and awards		
Young Journalist award	4,000	4,000
Teacher-in-school bursaries	500	250
Dystopian fiction prize	750	650
Peter Davison award	<u>1,000</u>	<u>Nil</u>
Sub-total	6,250	4,900
Journal	9,859	4,804
Other		
Website development	243	382
Sundry	311	2,062
Huesca monument	<u>19,469</u>	<u>Nil</u>
Total Other	20,023	2,444
Total expenditure on charitable activities	36,132	12,148
Expenditure on other activities		
AGM costs	1,645	850
Printing, postage and stationery	520	483
Insurance	266	260
Trustee-meeting room hire	1,124	249
Bank charges	430	241
Video conferencing and related expenditure	572	144
Advertising	0	265
Secretarial expenses	46	41
Alliance of Literary Societies subscription	20	15
Other	<u>79</u>	<u>220</u>
Total expenditure on other activities	4,702	2,768
Total expenditure	40,834	14,916

The Society had no employees in the current or prior year.

No remuneration was paid to Trustees in the current or prior year. One trustee was paid the cost of their trips to Jura and Marrakesh since they had attended previously and organised the trips. This cost was recovered as part of the cost of the trip for attendees.



4. Heritage assets

Heritage assets of £152,500 comprise:

- The Orwell statue at the BBC (£150,000). This is valued according to the estimated value provided to the Society by the sculptor at the point of transfer to the Society; and
- A collection of books donated to the Society in 2017 by Orwell's Complete Works editor, the late Peter Davison (£2,500). The value has been estimated by the Trustees. The collection is on indefinite loan to the Museum of Wigan Life.

5. Debtors

Debtors comprise £100 of 2023 subscriptions paid by direct debit received in 2024.

6. Stocks

The Society does not actively trade and holds some stocks mainly as "giveaways". The Barnhill Slates are valued at cost whereas other items held in stock have no value attributed to them e.g. past Journals, Orwell tapes and badges.

7. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

		2023 £	2022 £
Net Members deposits on events		Nil	4,094
Deferred income due within one year	Note 9	352	401
Huesca monument Accrual		20,375	
Other Accruals	Note 10	7,813	307
Total		(28,540)	4,802

8. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

This represents deferred income on life-membership subscriptions (see Note 9).



9. Deferred income

Deferred income is deferred life-membership subscription income.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Deferred income at 1 January	6,600	7,023
Amount deferred during the year	0	0
Amount released during the year	402	423
Deferred income at 31 December	6,198	6,600
Of which due within one year	352	402
Of which due after more than one year	5,846	6,198

10. Accruals

Accruals represent expenditure related to the year under review but payment for which was still outstanding at the year-end.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Journal	5,371	0
Purchases for resale	1,081	0
Events expenditure	216	0
Printing, postage and stationery	355	0
IT	405	
Other	385	307
Total	7,813	307