

Joint Christian Science Reading Room UK
Charity number 1143776

Chairman's report for the JCSRRUK 2024 AGM

The Joint Christian Science Reading Room UK has had another busy year, and I hope to capture for you some of the activities that have kept us busy.

1. Reading Room Shop

The Joint CS Reading Room which we operate with our fulfilment team at MyWare House are based in Milton Keynes. Following the resolution of shipping problems last year, we are pleased to report all Reading Room products are now fully stocked and updated. An agent now successfully manages the technical paperwork that HMRC requires following the UK's departure from the European Union. All the currently available Books, CDs, cards, and markers available from the Christian Science Publishing Society are available through our online portal at spirituality4.me.

As it is the 150th anniversary of the publication of Science & Health we are expecting the CSPA will be producing some detailed publicity material, and we look forward to celebrating this important anniversary.

2. Hybrid lectures

The second strand of activity has been the 11 hybrid lectures part sponsored by TrustBrit-Westminster fund with churches and societies across the UK. We are grateful for this support. The sponsoring churches will continue to pay the lectures fee and their associated travel costs.

Initially ten (10) lectures were proposed but, in the end, there were requests for eleven (11) supported lectures, which the Trust agreed to support. It has been a privilege to work with the churches and societies lecture committee and boards and the lecturers. The JCSRRUK prepares the advertising materials for both digital and traditional paper flyers, sets up the recording venue with the help of the local members and prayerfully supports the lecture. The lecture is broadcast live and is then often made available for a period on both the church/societies and our site. We also provide statistics relating to views during and after the event. In addition to these 11

sponsored lectures we also supported 1st church London with its lecture series this spring.

It would help considerably with the staff workload if churches who are considering hosting a hybrid lecture with the JCSRRUK to consider having a lecture at the beginning of the lecture year (autumn-winter) rather than at the end of close of the lecture year.

3. Shop Window Display screens and Websites

For several years, we have been assisting branch churches with developing and creating websites to support their local outreach. We have worked with three churches on their websites this year and these are now live. In addition, we have assisted in the installation of single and double faced ultra bright display screens in Reading Room windows. The screens have continuous displays giving local church details and more generic Christian Science inspiration and are designed and managed by our staff and contractors.

Other activities

a. Technology for sharing Christian Science services

Currently there are three Christian Science churches offering an online service using equipment supplied through the JCSRRUK: High Wycombe, Carlisle and Scarborough. Edwin continues to support these churches with upgrades and training.

b. Concerts

Two music concerts were support by the JCSRR this past year. These concerts and readings were organised between Andrew D Brewis, Edwin and Helen de Leon. The first was from High Wycombe (Christmas) and second Poole (Easter). These events continue to be well received.

Staff

We have four part time staff members who run the whole operation from their homes; they include Annabel (Reading Room and admin), Helen (Treasurer and admin) and Margaret (design and social media) with Louis (IT & computer support when required). The office staff meet on zoom weekly for around 1.5 hours a week and attend some of the trustee meetings. They have a dedicated office package which allows them to monitor and share progress on the wider range of the Reading Room

activities. The office was closed on two occasions this year, Annual meeting and during Focus Camp at Rydal Hall.

In addition, we have several contractors who provide the technical support for which we are most grateful. They are Edwin (recording and livestream lectures and all-round tech support to the office staff), Mike (IT manager) and Irene (graphic design and alterations).

We count ourselves very fortunate to have such a dedicated, hardworking and talented team.

Trustees

After more than fifteen years John Lardge has decided to step aside from not only being our chairman but also from the JCSRRUK, which he helped set up. The staff and the organisation are indebted to John for his vision, energy enthusiasm and commitment. John has kindly agreed to continue to offer support to the trustees going forward. Edwin stood down as a trustee in the spring. Edwin worked closely with John Lardge bringing live-streaming technology to our churches for service, lectures and concerts.

Fortunately, we continue to be able to count on his services as a contractor. His dedication and technical wizardry with not only recording the lectures but dealing with all the glitches that occur on the day and on uploading the final edit is invaluable.

We are delighted to welcome Hilary Evans as a new trustee joining us this year. Hilary Evans from Poole church and has a wonderful desire and appreciation of all things reading room. The trustees have worked very hard this year updating policies and staff contracts which are required by the Charity Commission and HMRC. The trustees try to meet monthly either as a trustee group or jointly with staff.

Funding

The trustees are hugely grateful to the members of Glasgow Christian Science Society who nominated the JCSRRUK for a generous donation. This has assisted us with financial planning going forward.

We also would like to acknowledge the invaluable financial support from TrustBrit and the Westminster Fund who in 2024/25 made possible the live

streaming of 11 lectures and whose ongoing financial support for 2025/26 is funding a further 12 lectures and equipment updating.

We are also especially grateful to all the members, societies and churches who continue to make regular contributions to the work of the charity. You are a wonderful source of inspiration and dedication to the Christian Science movement in the UK. We are so grateful for your support and encouragement.

We always welcome emails from members of the Joint Christian Science Reading as **all** UK churches, societies and informal groups according to our rules are members and have the option of participating at the AGM.

Newsletters are circulated to branch churches, societies and those who have chosen to subscribe. We have updated our database of contacts so please do be in contact if your membership has an idea which might be of wider interest to the UK field.

John Houston, Chairman 14 August 2025