

ANNUAL REPORT



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 9th May 2019

The 71st Annual General Meeting of Members will be held at St. Anne's Church, 55 Dean Street, Soho, London, W1D 6AF, on Thursday 9th May 2019 at 7.00 p.m.

followed at 8.15 p.m. by

THE ANNUAL ADDRESS

Yvonne Brewster OBE



c/o Department for Theatre and Performance, Victoria and Albert Museum, Blythe House, 23 Blythe Road, London, W14 0QX

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AGENDA

1	To approve the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
2	Matters Arising from the Minutes
3	To receive the Annual Report for 2017-2018
4	To receive the Accounts for 2017-2018
5	Election of Officers and Committee Members:
a	To elect an Honorary Secretary for the coming year: Ms Diana Fraser is nominated by the Committee.
b	To elect an Honorary Treasurer for the coming year: Mr Geoff Davidson is nominated by the Committee.
c	To elect to vacancies: The following members now retire from the Committee in accordance with the Constitution: Mr Howard Loxton, Ms Kate Quartano Brown, Ms Harriet Reed*, and Mr Simon Sladen*. All four are willing to offer themselves for re-election, and Mr Loxton, Ms Quartano Brown, and Ms Reed are so nominated by the Committee for the term 2019-2023, and Mr Sladen for the term 2019 to 2022.
d	In addition Dr Christopher Abbott retires from a Co-opted Membership of the Committee. He has expressed a willingness to stand as a full member, and is so nominated by the Committee, for the term 2019-2023.
6	Co-options: Approval is sought, in accordance with the Constitution, for the following Committee nominees to be co-opted by the Committee for the ensuing year:
a	A representative of the theatre collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum
b	The Co-ordinating Editor of <i>Theatre Notebook</i> or his representative
c	A representative of the Theatres Trust
d	A representative of the New Researchers Network
e	Dr Moira Goff

	f	Dr Anselm Heinrich
7	Advisers	
	a	To appoint an Honorary Legal Adviser for the ensuing year: Mr Lee Hargreaves is nominated by the Committee
	b	To appoint an Honorary Independent Examiner: Mr Paul Barron is nominated by the Committee
8	To consider the Committee's Recommendation for subscription rates for 2019-2020 (attached)	
9	To receive the announcement of the Society' Research Awards for 2019.	
10	To consider any resolutions that may be submitted.	
11	To transact any other business.	

*This rectifies an administrative error made in May 2018 when the regulation governing the transition of Co-opted Members of the Committee to full Membership thereof was incorrectly applied.

Any resolutions should be sent to the Honorary Secretary of the STR either by email to contact1@str.org or in writing c/o Department for Theatre and Performance, Victoria and Albert Museum, Blythe House, 23 Blythe Road, London, W14 0QX by Thursday 2nd May 2019

At 8.15 p.m.: The Annual Address: Yvonne Brewster OBE



THE SOCIETY for THEATRE RESEARCH
MINUTES OF THE 70th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Tuesday 8th May 2018 AT 7.00 PM

Mr Timothy West CBE, President of the Society, in the Chair

The Chair welcomed members to the 70th Annual General Meeting of the Society.

(1) Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.

Mr Neil Watson proposed that the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting should be signed as a true record. This was seconded by Mr Howard Loxton and carried unanimously.

(2) Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

(3) Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting.

It was proposed that the Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting should be signed as a true record. This was carried unanimously with none present dissenting.

(4) Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

(5) Annual Report for 2015-2016

This had been made available to members in attendance and would be posted on the Society's website. The Chair reported on more recent developments under the leadership of the new Chair, Mr Simon Sladen, and some of the STR's future plans.

Dr Sarah McCleave had decided to relinquish her post as one of the editors of *Theatre Notebook*, having decided to reduce her commitments for health reasons. She had been invited to join the journal's Board of Advisors so that it would still be possible to access her expertise in performance over the long eighteenth century. Gratitude was expressed to her for her contribution to *Theatre Notebook*.

Professor Richard Foulkes had indicated his intention to step down from the Committee at the end of his present period of office. The Chair had written to him on behalf of the Committee to thank him for his contribution to the Society as a past Chair, Committee Member, and for his twelve year tenure as General Editor of STR Publications.

The 2017-2018 Annual Lecture Series offered something for everyone:

Geoffrey Marsh, Director of the V&A's Department of Theatre and Performance, had spoken about 'Shakespeare In St Helens'; Dr Bridget Escolme, Head of Drama, Queen Mary University of London, had talked about 'Masks of Whiteness: Costume, Race and Power in The Tempest on Stage'; the Christmas Lecture, facilitated by the STR New Researchers' Network, gave insights into the work of two Early Career Researchers; consulting iconographer Keith Cavers talked about the written and pictorial evidence for historical ballet productions in 'Digging Up Giselle'; 'The Curtain Will Remain Up:

Naturalist Theatre & The Problem of Pornography', was described by Professor Dan Rebellato, Professor of Contemporary Theatre, Royal Holloway College, University of London; and Dr Oliver Double, Research Centre Director of Comedy and Popular Performance, University of Kent, talked about 'Alternative Comedy: Its beginnings told through unpublished documents from the British Stand-up Comedy Archive'.

Ms Harriet Reed was thanked for working tirelessly to put together this programme from leading experts in the field. She had also: identified an excellent new venue for future lectures, the Community Hall of St Anne's, 55 Dean Street, Soho, which would be trialled for a number of talks in the 2018-2019 Series; added the STR Lectures currently available on YouTube to the secure digital storage platform at the V&A; and prepared a new form so that speakers could specify whether their talks could only be archived or whether they could appear on the STR's new website. As in previous years the work of the NRN and Ms Rachael Nicholas in livestreaming the Lectures had been invaluable.

As 2018 was the 200th anniversary of the publication of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, Miss Sue Solomon intended to redact Richard Brinsley Peake's *Presumption; or, the Fate of Frankenstein* (first performed in 1823) to a duration of about 40 minutes as a rehearsed reading for the 2018 Christmas Lecture.

On Monday 29th October 2018, Mr West and some colleagues would be presenting a lightly-staged rehearsed reading of Terence Rattigan's forgotten and once censored comedy *Follow My Leader* at the V&A, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the abolition of stage censorship. The reading would be followed by a Q&A with Mr West and Professor Steve Nicholson of the University of Sheffield. Mrs Eileen Cottis, Mr Ian Herbert and Ms Reed had assisted in securing the rights from the Rattigan Estate and liaising with the V&A.

The Society had been approached by Mr David Vaughan, son of Anthony Vaughan, whose critical biography of Hannah Pritchard, *Born to Please*, was published by the Society in 1979. 2018 was the 250th anniversary of Mrs Pritchard's death, and her memorial, at Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, had just been restored. Mr Vaughan had arranged for a small ceremony at the Abbey, followed by a reception at Dr Johnson's House in Bloomsbury on Tuesday 4th September 2018. Ms Reed had supported him in the development of this proposal and with identifying a guest speaker to present a short talk on Mrs Pritchard's career.

As the new website neared completion, the Society was continuing to source images from the V&A (either illustrative or as background) for it which would be available to the Society without charge. The pages and their backgrounds would be lavishly illustrated and able to be updated to complement the text / subject matter on the page. Each page would be a hub fore-fronting its subject, and members would be able to update their interests. When it went live the website will be a vast improvement on the current version, a huge opportunity for the Society to reach out to a wider public, and key to enhancing its public profile, and maximising its appeal and therefore its potential for growth.

In parallel with the development of the new website, a lot of work was going on behind the scenes to enhance the Society's public profile by putting greater impetus behind getting more and better press, for example by targeting key publications. The Society did so much and it was essential to get the message about all its activities 'out there'. The STR was looking for someone within or external to its network to draft press releases and work on their optimal placement, as well as someone to help with social media.

The Society had also introduced a new approach to building relationships with our Associated Organisations, introducing a Newsletter to keep them apprised of the Society's activities, and inviting their representatives to specific meetings of the STR Committee on a regular cycle with a view to drawing them in, getting to know them, and engaging in a richer dialogue. This is already bearing fruit. The Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) had offered to ensure that its Historical

Research Society produces regular updates on its activities, expressed willingness to help the Society with contacts from the ABTT's huge network, and to make its publicity materials available at ABTT events. The STR Annual Lecture Series was already publicised on the ABTT website, and our new website will link to the ABTT's. The Association of Performing Arts Collections (APAC) had been sent the call for papers for Ma(r)king Time (the STR 70th Anniversary edition of *Theatre Notebook*), and approached to initiate discussions about a collaborative project or projects which would benefit both participating organisations, the scholarly community, and the wider public. In relation to the Theatres Trust, the STR had agreed to spread the word about its archive and database, and the Theatres at Risk Register. If Members had a connection to a specific theatre, because it was local to them or relevant to their research, the Trust would be able to help with information. A lecture in association with the Theatres Trust based on archival materials relating to theatre architecture and / or the Theatres at Risk Register was on the list for the 2018-2019 Annual Lecture Programme.

In collaboration with the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA), the STR was joint sponsor of the 2018-19 STR/TaPRA Fellowship Scheme designed to provide a funded research opportunity for a post-doctoral Early Career Researcher (ECR) who had not yet secured a long-term contract or permanent employment. The scheme would fund a period of research in the Society for Theatre Research Archive held by the Victoria and Albert Museum. The principal outcome of the Fellowship would be a journal article for publication in an agreed peer reviewed journal. Other possible outcomes could include: enhancing catalogue records for the Society for Theatre Research Archive; creating a Finding Guide for STR journal *Theatre Record*; writing a V&A Theatre and Performance blog; delivery of a lecture as part of the STR Annual Lecture Series; and delivery of a Conference paper at TaPRA's 2019 Conference.

The Society had heard from Mr Adrian Livingstone on behalf of alumni from the first years of the Drama Department at Manchester University who were profoundly influenced and inspired by Stephen Joseph in the 1960s. They were seeking to celebrate his life and legacy in 2021, the centenary of his birth. Mr Sladen had met Mr Livingstone to discuss what the Society could do to support this initiative as it developed.

The New Researchers' Network (NRN) had held a successful publishing afternoon event on the 4th February 2018 at the V&A which had provided fantastic insights into a range of publishing practices, including traditional methods such as journal and book publication, and some less traditional methods including digital and artisanal publishing. Good feedback was received from participants, as well as from those who engaged with the event on Twitter. Planning was underway for the NRN's summer Symposium, to take place on Sunday 8th July 2018, which had the provisional title: 'Practising Research; Researching Practice'. It was anticipated that the theme would appeal to those working and researching theatre history and practice, as well as those engaged in forms of practice-as-research. The NRN Blogs continued to be a rich resource: recent posts include tips for those just embarking on PhD research; a showman with a 30 year performing career talking about his journey to a PhD; and a post-doctoral research fellow reflecting on his journey to that position.

Although the Society was saving the big celebrations for its 75th in 2023, the Society's 70th Birthday in 2018 would not go unmarked. The New Scholars Prize (to be awarded at the end of May 2018) had linked the 2018 Essay Prize to the celebration of this anniversary. There will also be the special edition of *Theatre Notebook* mentioned earlier with the theme of 'Ma(r)king Time', building on the theme of the NRN's 2017 annual symposium. The Society's financial contribution to the 2018-19 STR/TaPRA Fellowship Scheme referred to above also formed part of this celebration. Mrs Cottis and Mr Sladen had given an interview to the archive section of *The Stage*, reflecting on both the Society's history and its plans for the future, which would appear to coincide with the launch of the new website, itself the key event in this special year.

Under the leadership of Mr Richard Williams, the 2018 Poel Workshops had selected 12 participants from more than 50 applicants. The first session, at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (RCSSD) on Wednesday 11th April 2018, offered workshops from: Georgina Sowerby, Artistic Director

of Dirty Market, a theatre company specialising in creating work using personal responses, montage, and multiple performance styles; Daron Oram, RCSSD's Head of Voice; RADA acting tutor Annie Tyson; and director David Thacker. The second day took place in the rehearsal room at the National Theatre on Friday 27th April 2018, with workshops from: Jon Lee; Alex Bingley (Voice); the National's Head of Voice, Jeannette Nelson; Dame Harriet Walter; and Peter Knapp (breathing). Permission was given for photographs to be taken on the set of the National's *Macbeth*, and the resulting images would be used on the Society's website and on social media.

John McCormick's *The Holdens: Monarchs of the Marionette Theatre*, was likely to be the subscription volume for 2017-2018. Jean Baker's, *'Extravagant and Illegal Pleasures': Sarah Baker and her Kentish Theatres, 1737-1816*, the biography of an eighteenth-century provincial theatre manager would follow for publication in 2018-2019. The STR was indebted to Dr Marion O'Connor, as General Editor of the Society's publications, and Ms Leigh Forbes, as designer of the volumes, for the high standard of all their work for us.

Arrangements for the Theatre Book Prize for books published in 2017 were in progress. This year's judges were Mr Paul Miller, Artistic Director of the Orange Tree Theatre, theatre critic Ms Sam Marlowe, and Professor Jeffrey Richards, author and Professor Emeritus at Lancaster University. The consideration of more than 60 eligible titles was well under way, and it was hoped to hold the presentation at Drury Lane in June 2018. Mr Howard Loxton had done an amazing job putting all this together.

The Society was often approached with interesting problems and two recent examples follow. Ten years after the Henry Irving Correspondence went on line it was visited by an average of 60 people a day, use seemed to be growing, and the database was still being added to. Unfortunately, funds were almost exhausted, and Society Chair Simon Sladen had been able to refer this to the Head of the V&A's Theatre Collections, and APAC, with a view to identifying a new host so that this database remained a live resource for scholars. On a lighter note an enquiry was received about 'Walter Plinge', that pseudonymous feature of past programmes and posters, which gave rise to such a flurry of reminiscence and esoteric lore that it would be written up for the 'Notes and Queries' section of a future edition of *Theatre Notebook*.

The Society was especially grateful to its Membership Secretary, Dr Kirsty Sedgman, whose departure was reported somewhat prematurely last year, for kindly agreeing to remain in post, keeping the work going and cleansing the data on the Membership database in preparation for integrating it into the new website. This role was being re-thought to establish complementarity with the STR's emerging media and communications strategy.

The STR was thankful to have received a legacy of some £5,500.00 in the Will of Mr James Steele, a long-time member of STR who had been stage-manager and subsequently production manager with Northern Dance Theatre (later Northern Ballet Theatre) when it was founded in Manchester in the early 1970s.

The Society was in the process of finalising an arrangement with John Goode Limited, the major publisher of theatrical programmes, for advertisements for the Society designed to attract new members to be published *gratis* to fill any unsold advertising space in their programmes. There was also a need for a more general review of the potential of advertising as a tool for both recruitment of new members, and for raising the profile of the Society, and strategies for this were under consideration by the Committee. In parallel there would be a Membership Survey to find out what could be done to enhance and add value to the offer to members: questionnaires would be sent out towards the end of summer 2018.

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) would become law at the end of May 2018. There were heavy penalties for non-compliance but the Society was in a good position to build the changes required seamlessly into the development of the new website. It would be seeking detailed advice on achieving compliance from its legal advisors, Harbottle & Lewis. This would include the drafting of the mandatory Privacy Policy, and (optional but desirable) Terms & Conditions available to website users to govern the terms on which a user would engage with the site, and govern the terms on which a user subscribed for STR membership.

(6) Accounts for 2016-2017

Copies of the Accounts had been made available to members in attendance and would be posted on the Society's website. It was proposed that the Accounts should be adopted. This was carried unanimously with none present dissenting.

(7) Election of Officers and Committee Members

(a) Honorary Secretary for the year 2018-2019: the current officeholder, Ms Diana Fraser, was willing to offer herself for re-election, and was so nominated by the Committee for the term 2018-2019. Ms Fraser was elected unopposed to the Honorary Secretaryship of the Society.

(b) Honorary Treasurer for the year 2018-2019: the current officeholder, Mr Geoff Davidson, was willing to offer himself for re-election, and was so nominated by the Committee for the term 2018-2019. Mr Davidson was elected unopposed to the Honorary Treasurership of the Society.

(c) To elect to full-time vacancies: It was noted that Professor Steve Nicholson, Dr Marion O'Connor, and Dr Michael Read now retired from the Committee on the expiry of their tenure. All three were willing to offer themselves for re-election, and were so nominated by the Committee for the term 2018-2022. All three were re-elected unopposed to the Committee for the term 2018-2022.

(8) Co-options

The Committee sought approval, in accordance with the Constitution, for the following persons to be co-opted to the Committee for the coming year:

a representative of the Theatre Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum;

the co-ordinating editor of *Theatre Notebook* or his representative;

a representative of the Theatres Trust;

a representative of the New Researchers' Network;

Dr Moira Goff;

Dr Anselm Heinrich

These co-options were approved unopposed for the coming year.

(9) Advisers

(a) Mr Lee Greaves of Harbottle and Lewis had confirmed that he was prepared to continue as the Society's Honorary Legal Adviser. His reappointment to this post was approved unopposed. He was thanked for the guidance he had given The Chair and the Committee.

(b) Mr Paul Barron had confirmed that he was prepared to continue as the Society's Honorary Legal Adviser. His reappointment to this post was approved unopposed.

(10) Research Awards for 2018

This year the Research Awards Sub-Committee had considered 31 applications (up from 26 last year), none late and all complete. It was noted that there had been a surprising number of applications for help with doctoral research and very few from independent scholars. Of the 31 applications submitted, 17 had been Research Awards and one was given a special award from the President's Fund, as was a small conference grant application that came in shortly before the meeting of the Sub-Committee. The totals awarded were £5,200.00 from the Awards funds, £300.00 from the Craig Fund, and £400.00 from the President's Fund, making £5,900.00 in all.

Thanks were offered to the members of the Research Awards Sub-Committee, especially to its outgoing chair Professor Steve Nicholson, to Dr Bill MacDonnell (another long-serving member retiring this year), and to Ms Kate Quartano Brown for her always impeccable administration of the Awards.

The Awards were distributed as follows:

- (a) The Anthony Denning Award of the Society for Theatre Research to **Cathy Brigden** of the School of Management, Melbourne. Towards travel to Manchester from Melbourne for research into the Manchester Unity Theatre. Articles to be published in due course.
- (b) The Kathleen Barker Award of the Society for Theatre Research to **Anthony Binns**, actor, musician, playwright. Towards travel to the Pelissier family archive in Gloucestershire, and to the V&A and British Library, for research into the life and work of H G Pélissier, Edwardian impresario, comedian, composer and author; investigation of uncatalogued items and eventual publication of articles.
- (c) The Stephen Joseph Award of the Society for Theatre Research to **Tom Cornford** of the RCSSD. Towards travel and image costs for research into 20th Century theatre ensembles – completion and publication of a monograph for Routledge.
- (d) An Award of from the **Craig Fund** was made to **David Coates** of Warwick University, towards research in Edinburgh on the scattered archive of the May family of theatrical costumiers.
- (e) A Research Award to **Robert Kenny**, retired Fellow at Leicester University, for an amanuensis to prepare for publication his book on *The Inimitable Monsieur Francisque*.
- (f) A Research Award to **Katie Power**, Southampton University, towards travel and accommodation in New York and Washington for PhD research into Yiddish Theatre in London.
- (g) A Research Award to **Laura Higgins**, Oxford Brookes University, towards the image costs for an article in *Shakespeare Quarterly* on The Queen in *Richard II*. The V&A possessed certain images which might be suitable and which would be offered to Laura for no fee.
- (h) A Research Award to **Barry Houlihan** of NUI Galway as a contribution towards publication of *Navigating Ireland's Theatre Archive*, in respect of those elements dealing with theatre in Northern Ireland and pre-1922 Ireland.
- (i) A Research Award to **Deborah Jeffries**, University of East London, towards travel and accommodation in Nottingham and Leeds; PhD research into the licensing of Music Halls post 1843.
- (j) A Research Award to **Elizabeth Tavares**, Pacific University, towards travel and accommodation at the Huntington Library for her research into Genghis Khan on the Elizabethan Stage; for an article.
- (k) A Research Award to **Robert Whelan**, author and editor, towards website expenses for a further tranche of his online catalogue of performances at Drury Lane 1852-1862.
- (l) A Research Award to **Adam Hansen**, Northumbria University, towards travel and accommodation in Stratford-upon-Avon, for his research into Shakespeare's relationship with 'folk' music; for an article for the journal of the British Shakespeare Association.
- (m) A Research Award to **Eleanor Bloomfield**, University of Auckland, towards travel and accommodation in York for PhD research into the modern significance of the re-enacting of the York Mystery Plays.
- n) A Research Award to **Beatrice Ashton-Lelliott**, Portsmouth University, towards a trip to the Circus archives in Sheffield, for her PhD research into Victorian conjurers and an article in a 19th Century Gender Studies journal.

(o) A Research Award to **Harry McCarthy**, Exeter University, towards travel and accommodation in Stratford-upon-Avon for his PhD research into Early Modern Boy Actors.

(p) A Research Award to **Emily Garside**, recent PhD from Cardiff University, towards image costs for her monograph on *Angels in America* to be published by McFarland. These are photographs of the world premiere of the work at the National Theatre in London and its recent revival there.

(q) A Research Award to **Sarah Reynolds**, Leeds University, towards case studies for her research in evaluating the role of regional arts centres in British theatre today.

(r) An Award from the **President's Fund** to **Harriet Reed** of the V&A to enable her to attend the SIBMAS conference in Paris, in recognition of her work for the STR.

(s) An Award from the **President's Fund** was granted to **Rebecca Fraser** to enable her to give a paper at the University of Surrey conference on Women's Suffrage and the Arts.

(11) Resolutions

It was noted that no resolutions had been submitted.

(12) Any Other Business

Annual Lecture Programme: Several members raised the late distribution of the schedule for the 2017-2018 Annual Lecture Programme. Mr Sladen explained that although the schedule had been distributed on time electronically, hard copy information had been sent out late as a result of the over running of a pilot scheme to achieve more cost-effective communication (postcard replacing enveloped leaflet). Now that this had been established as an effective process an earlier distribution would be achieved for the 2018-2019 series. A member raised the late cancellation of one of the lectures. Mr Sladen explained that this had occurred during the unprecedented cold weather. The lecturer had embarked on her journey to the venue but had unfortunately been unable to continue as a consequence of adverse weather conditions at a time by which only electronic communication of cancellation was practicable.

Library: A number of London-based members indicated that they were very happy with the access to Library's facilities conferred by STR membership. Mr Sladen said that they should comment on this in the forthcoming membership survey. The intention was to review membership benefits with a view to identifying those which were of optimal value to the greatest number of members.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and support; the Meeting was then declared closed.

The Society for Theatre Research

71st ANNUAL REPORT

1st OCTOBER 2017 – 30th SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESIDENT: Mr Timothy West, CBE

VICE-PRESIDENTS: Mrs Eileen Cottis, Mr Derek Forbes,
Dr Neville Hunnings, Mr Barry Sheppard

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2017 – 2018

CHAIR: Mr Simon Sladen

VICE-CHAIRS: Dr Marion O'Connor, Professor Trevor Griffiths

JOINT HONORARY SECRETARY: Dr Christopher Abbott and Ms Diane Fraser

HONORARY TREASURER: Mr Geoffrey Davidson

HONORARY LEGAL ADVISER: Mr Lee Greaves

MINUTES CLERK: Mr Peter Close

COMMITTEE

Professor Christopher Baugh

Mrs Jennie Bisset

Ms Kate Quartano Brown

Professor Richard Foulkes

Mr Mark Fox

Mr Ian Herbert

Mr Howard Loxton

Professor Steve Nicholson

Dr Michael Read

Ms Harriet Reed

Miss Sue Solomon

Dr Pieter van der Merwe MBE

CO-OPTED:

A representative of the Theatre Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum

A representative of the Editors of Theatre Notebook

A representative of the Theatres Trust

Dr Moira Goff

Dr Anselm Heinrich

Dr Christopher Abbott

At the 70th Annual General Meeting of the Society on Tuesday 8th May 2018 the retiring members of the Committee, Professor Steve Nicholson, Dr Marion O'Connor, and Dr Michael Read, offered themselves for re-election, and were re-elected unopposed to the Committee for the term 2018-2022.

Ms Diana Fraser was elected unopposed to the post of Honorary Secretary of the Society for the year 2018-2019.

Mr Geoffrey Davidson was elected unopposed to the post of Honorary Treasurer of the Society for the year 2018-2019.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

Annual Lecture Series

This offered, as always, a wide-ranging bill of fare from speakers who were prominent academics and / or practitioners: Geoffrey Marsh, Director, Department of Theatre and Performance, V&A, talked about 'Shakespeare in St Helens'; Dr Bridget Escolme, Head of Drama, Queen Mary University of London, spoke on 'Masks of Whiteness: Costume, Race and Power in *The Tempest* on Stage'; The Maggie Collins Christmas Lecture was an Early Career Research Panel in collaboration with the New Researchers Network; in 'Digging Up Giselle', Consulting Iconographer Keith Cavers gave us a lavishly illustrated account of historic performances of this ballet; Dan Rebellato, Professor of Contemporary Theatre, Royal Holloway University of London, lectured on 'The Curtain Will Remain Up: Naturalist Theatre & The Problem of Pornography'; Dr Oliver Double, Research Centre Director of Comedy and Popular Performance, University of Kent, gave a talk on 'Alternative Comedy: Its Beginnings Told Through Unpublished Documents from the British Stand-Up Comedy Archive'; and culminated at the AGM in May 2018 when Lola Chakrabarti was in conversation with our Chair about her career as playwright and actress. This programme attracted some three hundred attendees plus those watching the livestreaming.

The March Lecture had unfortunately had to be cancelled at the last minute as the speaker was unable to continue her journey to London as a consequence of adverse weather conditions. The talk has been re-scheduled for the 2018-2019 series. Audiences are steadily increasing for livestreaming of the lectures. Feedback received from attendees has included thanks for the livestreaming of the talks, described as so helpful for people not in London or those with caring roles and / or disabilities who could not attend in person.

St Anne's Soho Community Hall: Dr Chris Abbott had identified this as a high quality venue in a premier location which would merit further investigation as a possible venue for Society events (including some of the Annual Lecture Programme). It was both considerably less expensive and significantly better equipped than some current venues.

In addition the 2018 Edward Gordon Craig Lecture took place at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama on Wednesday 27th June 2018. Internationally renowned theatre director and scenographer Oliver Frljic had spoken about 'The Representational Weaknesses of Democracy and Theatre in the Early 21st Century'.

Ms Harriet Reed was thanked for all her hard work in putting together and managing the delivery of such an exciting programme, and Ms Rachael Nicholas for her support of the livestreaming.

New Researchers Network

In 2017-2018 the New Researchers Network (NRN) hosted two main events. The winter event, on the topic of publication skills for Early Career Researchers, took place in February 2018 at the V&A. It was a great success, with insights given into a range of publishing practices, including traditional methods such as journal and book publication, and some less traditional methods including digital and artisanal publishing. Participants had provided positive feedback, as had those who engaged with the event on Twitter. The NRN's summer Symposium: 'Practising Research; Researching Practice' took place in July 2018 at Kings College London. The theme had appealed to those working in and researching theatre history and practice, as well as those engaged in forms of practice-as-research. Dr Naomi Paxton, a long-time supporter of the NRN (recipient of an STR research award, and a speaker in the Lecture Series) was the keynote speaker, and spoke eloquently about putting her research into Suffrage plays to use in practical ways to engage the public.

New Scholars Prize

The 2018 Prize had been linked to the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Society's foundation. The competition is open to postgraduate students, academics with an institutional affiliation, and independent scholars (but not undergraduates), who have had no more than one article previously

published in a refereed journal. Exceptionally, the 2018 New Scholars Essay competition, celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Society's foundation, was split between two recipients: Holly Dayton (currently studying for an MPhil in Modern British History at Trinity Hall, Cambridge University) for "Lady Randolph Churchill's 'Tremendous, Ridiculous, Costly Hats': A Material Culture Approach to *His Borrowed Plumes*"; and Tomochiko Sato (part-time lecturer at Kyoritsu Women's University and Hosei University in Japan) for "Studying the Composition of Theatre Audiences: An Examination of Fatality Records following the Fire at the Theatre Royal, Exeter in 1887". The judging panel comprised distinguished academics Professor Siobhan Keenan and Professor Jane Milling, chaired by Professor Griffiths. In this anniversary year the winners received a special award of £125.00 each, as well as a one-year subscription to the STR, a selection of STR books, and the guarantee that their essays would be considered for inclusion by *Theatre Notebook* under its normal guidelines.

Poel Workshops

The Poel Workshops took place on 11th April 2018 at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (RCSSD), and at the Royal National Theatre (RNT) on 29th April 2018. The Workshops were organised by Mr Richard Williams in his first year as Poel Co-ordinator. Workshop leaders included: Ms Georgina Sowerby from Dirty Market Theatre Company; Mr Daron Oram, voice teacher from RCSSD; Professor Peter Knapp (Professor of Voice at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire); Mr David Thacker, former artistic director of The Young Vic, resident director at the Royal Shakespeare Company and Professor of Drama at Bolton University; Ms Nona Shepphard, director and currently consultant to the Lir Academy drama school in Dublin and senior lecturer at RADA; and Barrie Rutter OBE, founder of Northern Broadsides Company. Some fifty candidates were auditioned. The overall standard was considered to be higher than in previous years. The resulting group of 12 was evenly divided male/female. The responses from the participants were unanimously positive.

Publications

The 2016-2017 subscription volume, Matthew Morrison's *The Soho Theatre 1968-81*, was distributed in November 2017. It had received a favourable review in the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) from John Stokes, the TLS's senior contributor on modern English theatre. The subscription volume for 2017-2018 was John McCormick's *The Holdens: Monarchs of the Marionette Theatre*. The Society continues to be indebted to Dr Marion O'Connor as General Editor, and to Ms Leigh Forbes as designer of the volumes, for their contributions which maintain the outstanding quality of the Society's publications.

Research Awards

The Research Awards for 2018 may be found in the enclosed Minutes of the 70th Annual General Meeting of the Society. We are indebted to Ms Kate Quartano Brown for the care and commitment with which she leads the administration of the Awards.

Theatre Book Prize 2018

The Presentation of the Prize had taken place on the 21st of June 2018 at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane (courtesy of Really Useful Theatres Group). The judges for the prize for books published in 2017 were Mr Paul Miller, Artistic Director of the Orange Tree Theatre, theatre critic Ms Sam Marlowe, and Professor Jeffrey Richards, author and Professor Emeritus at Lancaster University. They shortlisted the following six titles from the more than 60 submitted for consideration:

Balancing Acts by Nicholas Hytner (Jonathan Cape)

Black British Drama - A Transnational Story by Michael Pearce (Routledge)

Child Actors on the London Stage, c 1600 by Julie Ackroyd (Sussex Academic Press)

Costume in Performance by Donatella Barbieri (Bloomsbury)

London Theatres by Michael Coveney and Peter Dazeley (Frances Lincoln)

Shakespeare on Stage: Vol 2 Twelve Leading Actors on Twelve Key Roles by Julian Curry (Nick Hern Books)

The distinguished actor Mr Rory Kinnear made the presentation to this year's winner, *Balancing Acts* by Nicholas Hytner. Mr Howard Loxton, Chair of Judges and organiser of Prize was thanked for his unswerving commitment to its continuing success.

Theatre Notebook

Professor Trevor Griffiths as co-ordinating editor, editors Dr Gabriel Egan and Dr Sarah McCleave, and Editorial Manager Mr Robin Cave continue to make *Theatre Notebook* a rich and varied journal of the history of British theatre, and a platform for the work of independent scholars as well as those from the academy. Through its ongoing collaboration with Project Muse, the online database of academic journals, and other online providers, *Theatre Notebook* continues generates income of at least £10,000 each year for the Society.

Other

Associated Organisations

We continue to maintain links with the Association of Performing Arts Collections (APAC), the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR), the Garrick Club, the International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR), the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA), the Theatres Trust, the University of Bristol Theatre Collection, and the V&A Department of Theatre and Performance. The new approach to maintaining and enhancing our relationships with these organisations *inter alia* by inviting their representatives to attend, where possible, meetings of the Society's Committee on a cyclical basis to facilitate more in depth discussion is yielding ancillary benefits, for example, a lecture in association with the Theatres Trust on the Theatres at Risk Register to take place in the 2018-2019 lecture series.

Finance

We are very grateful Mr Geoff Davidson, the Honorary Treasurer, and the Chair for their commitment for resolving the ongoing issues with the Society's Accounts. We now have a firm foundation for the introduction under their stewardship of a more robust budget-setting process and enhanced financial controls which will enable us to plan with confidence initiatives for the future of the STR.

Governance

The Society's current Constitution has not been reviewed for some time and a working group comprising the Chair and Vice-Chairs has been set up to establish whether further changes to the Constitution are necessary and, if so, their nature and extent. We have established that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which came into force in May 2018, will not be unduly burdensome for the STR to implement, as the nature of our activities is not such that specific opt-ins would be required from members in order to be able to continue to communicate with them. However, the online database which integrates with the new website necessitate our informing members what the STR would be doing with their data, and seeking their consent for any subsequent changes thereto. An opt-out to communications such as the newsletters will also be offered.

Our People

Professor Richard Foulkes has stepped down from the Committee. The Society is grateful for his contributions over the years as a past Chair, Committee Member, a twelve year tenure as General Editor of STR Publications, and thereafter as a Member of the Publications Sub-Committee. Professor Donald Roy has resigned from the Publications Sub-Committee and we are grateful for his many years of sterling service. Dr Ann Featherstone has re-joined the Publications Sub-Committee. Dr Sarah McCleave has relinquished her post as one of the editors of *Theatre Notebook*, but will be joining the journal's Board of Advisors so that it would still be possible to access her expertise. The Committee expressed its gratitude for her contribution to *Theatre Notebook*. Dr Anselm Heinrich of the University

of Glasgow, a Member of the STR Committee, had been appointed to the vacant editorial position. Thanks were also expressed to Ms Emily Jenkins, the outgoing Poel Co-ordinator, for her significant contribution to the Workshops. Professor Steve Nicholson and Dr Bill McDonnell had stood down from the Research Awards Sub-Committee. Their contribution over many years had been greatly appreciated and they will be much missed.

The Society's 70th Birthday

The Society's first meeting, and therefore the 'official' date of its foundation, took place at the Old Vic on 15th June 1948. It was agreed this 70th Anniversary would be appropriately acknowledged through a special edition of *Theatre Notebook*, the TaPRA / STR Fellowship, and the special awards for the 2018 New Scholars Essay competition. The TaPRA / STR Fellowship, co-funded by the two organisations for one year only, supports an Early Career Researcher (ECR) to undertake some twelve weeks academic work on a topic chosen by the funders. Dr Hannah Manktelow has been appointed to the Fellowship from October 2018, and will be undertaking some work on the Society's Archive, deposited with the V&A.

Website Development

Work on this continued throughout the year under the leadership first of Dr Kirsty Sedgman, and then, from January 2018, Ms Kate Quartano Brown, supported by your Committee. The project subsumed a review of the Society's visual identity and branding with the aim identifying a font, house style and palette which could be used across the STR's activities and in printed materials as well as on the website itself. That this took longer than originally envisaged had no financial implications and we believe that the decision to take the time to get it right was entirely justified by the high quality of the outcomes. Our thanks are due to Dr Sedgman for her contribution, and especially to Ms Quartano Brown for her total commitment and endless patience.

Other Initiatives

Hannah Pritchard Anniversary: Ms Harriet Reed had supported Mr David Vaughan, son of Anthony Vaughan, whose critical biography of Hannah Pritchard, *Born to Please*, was published by the Society in 1979, in organising events to commemorate the 250th anniversary of her death: a ceremony at Westminster Abbey, where Mrs Pritchard was buried, was followed by a reception at Dr Johnson's House in Bloomsbury.

Stephen Joseph Legacy Celebration: The Society had heard from representatives of alumni from the first years of the Drama Department at Manchester University who had been profoundly influenced and inspired by Stephen Joseph in the 1960s, and were seeking to celebrate his life and legacy in 2017, the 50th anniversary of his death, and also the centenary of his birth in 2021. The Chair had offered support and advice to the organisers of the Stephen Joseph Legacy Celebration.

Walter Plinge

In response to an enquiry from a member of the public, Committee Members provided much information about that formerly ubiquitous denizen of lists of *dramatis personae*.

Administration

The Society's postal address is: c/o The Theatres Trust, 22 Charing Cross Road, London, WC2H 0DU

Acknowledgements

As in previous years the Society acknowledges with gratitude the work of its officers and its Committee, and the invaluable advice of the Honorary Legal Adviser.