



**THE SOCIETY for THEATRE RESEARCH**  
**MINUTES OF THE 74<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**Online: Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 6.00 p.m.**

Apologies for Absence were received from Ms Jennie Bissett, Ms Clare Chandler, Mr Peter Charlton, Mr Mark Fox, Ms Alessandra Grossi, Ms Harriet Reed, Ms Louisa Milburn, Professor Katherine Newey, and Mr Tony Rushforth.

**(1) Welcome from the President**

The President, Mr Timothy West CBE, welcomed members both present and online to the 74<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Society, of which he was honoured to be President. He expressed sorrow that he could not be present in person, but was pleased to see everyone back at the Art Worker's Guild: a welcome return not only to the venue, but to being able to conduct the AGM in-person after the challenges of the pandemic over the past two years. He described the AGM as a time to review, reflect and celebrate the Society for Theatre Research. It always impressed him how much the Committee managed to achieve, and this year seemed to be no different. Before handing over to the Committee to begin the formal part of the Annual General Meeting, he wanted to acknowledge the hard work of the Committee and give thanks to those stepping down or into new roles after many years of service:

- Mr Simon Sladen had been on the Committee for eight years, the last five of them as Chair. STR was delighted that he would be continuing to be part of the STR family as a co-opted Member representing the theatre and performance collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Society gratefully acknowledged his energy and commitment in supporting the Society to adapt to a rapidly changing future while protecting all that made it unique, and for leading its strong response to the challenges of the pandemic.
- Dr Marion O'Connor joined the Society over 30 years ago, since when she had been an active and enthusiastic member, holding several senior positions. In addition to being a long-standing member of the Committee, she was for several years an Editor of *Theatre Notebook* until she took on the huge responsibility of being General Editor of Publications, producing a wide-ranging series of books as the Annual Publication, all at the same time as being a Vice-Chair of the Society. Those who worked with her on *Theatre Notebook* and/or the Annual Publication would know of her standards, which had contributed so much to the quality of the Society's publications and the high regard in which they were held by authors and readers alike. It was reassuring to know that, although she would be leaving the post of General Editor at some point in the year ahead, she hoped to continue to serve on the Publications Sub-Committee.

- After more than 20 years, Professor Steve Nicholson had decided to step down from the STR Committee. He had expressed his optimism about the importance and future potential of the STR, and wished the Society success in the future to match its success in the past. STR thanked him for his contribution to the Society in many areas over many years, but especially as a Committee Member and as a Chair of the Research Awards (now Research Grants) Sub-Committee.
- This year also saw Mr Robin Cave leave the post of *Theatre Notebook* Business Manager after some fifteen years in the role. To acknowledge this loyal service to the Society's journal, Honorary Membership of the Society had been bestowed upon him.
- Committee Member Mr Geoff Davidson was also thanked for supporting the distribution of Publications, *Theatre Notebook*, and other 'hard copy' material.
- Thanks also go to the Society's Finance and Membership Officer, Ms Yona Lesger, for all she had achieved during her tenure, in particular: introducing improved software for financial record-keeping; moving STR's accounts onto an online system, integrating them with the 'back end' of the Website; enhancing the accuracy of the membership database; responding rapidly to members' queries; and helping to make the website a viable tool through which members can manage their membership.
- Ms Diana Fraser was stepping down as our Honorary Secretary. She was thanked for her years of service and the Society was delighted that she would be taking up a role as a Committee Member.
- A fond farewell was bid to Honorary Treasurer Mr Mark Fox, who had also been a Committee Member for many years and a much valued member of the STR family.
- And last, but by no means least, a very special thank you to Mr Peter Close, our Minutes Clerk. His attention to detail was second to none, as was his commitment to the Society and Committee. His Minutes were always so rich and informative, providing a detailed record of the Society's business and one that Mr West very much enjoy reading. In addition, he was fundamental in the preparation of material for the Annual General Meeting. STR thanked him very much for his sterling service.

The President looked forward to seeing members soon, particularly at the Society's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations which would run between 2023 and 2024. He offered his congratulations in advance to the Research Grant recipients and Theatre Book Prize shortlisted authors, all to be revealed later in the meeting. He thanked everyone on the Committee, and everyone who had played a part in organising the AGM. He also thanked the our members, without whom none of this would be possible.

## **(2) STR Committee's Annual Address**

The Chair and Members of the Committee then provided members with the following information on the Society's activities between the end of the year under review and the AGM as follows:

### **(2a) Chairs' Reports:**

#### **Co-Chair Mr Simon Sladen**

Mr Sladen said that his five year tenure as Chair had led him to reflect on what the STR team had achieved during the period and to report the following highlights:

The new website had been successfully launched and continued to develop when only a few years ago the previous STR website had been so out of date as to be no longer fit for purpose. In parallel, the Society had created the post of Communications Officer and now had a social media followership on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. There were now monthly Newsletters, and there had been coverage of the Society in *The Stage*, the *British Theatre Guide* and other press. Recorded lectures were now available on YouTube.

The Membership Survey had informed a number of developments including the decision not to continue a corporate membership of a London club and to apply the savings generated by this to maintaining and enhancing the Society's core activities. Membership cards had been reintroduced. A start had been made on the review of the Society's Constitution. Geoff Davidson had done sterling work in introducing regular and accurate financial reports to the Committee and Yona Lesger has built on this to create digital accounts. Committee papers were now deposited on Dropbox for consideration by Committee members.

STR members had contributed significantly at the APAC / STR Symposium held at the V&A in July 2019, 'Clear Sailing: Navigating the Archive', the outcomes of which were now influencing industry policy on best practice: in working with archives generally, and with collections of objects. Guidance on this appears on the APAC website. Working with TaPRA on the Fellowship had facilitated an invaluable analysis of the STR archives, now deposited at the V&A, as a research resource.

The Society had made explicit its commitment by setting up an Inclusivity Working Group, making public responses on Black Lives Matter, and establishing Covid-19 Grants. The latter had evolved into the present Practitioner Grants which were enabling a more diverse range of engagement with, for example, the Queer Community and the Global Majority. The Society had a high standard of practice in many areas, especially a robustly self-critical culture, and it was intended to consider whether to devise a formal Code of Conduct or the equivalent for the STR, and whether anti-bias awareness training was needed. As a Registered Charity, the STR should be able to demonstrate that it had rigorously addressed the issue, and that it was doing something real, and not just virtue signalling. Solutions would take account of the Charities Commission's expectations in this area and be submitted to formal scrutiny by the Legal Advisor to ensure their full alignment with correct legal principles.

Discussions had begun with the British Library about a collaboration to generate renewed adherence to the principles of the Reading Agreement, and with Showtown, the Blackpool Museum of Entertainment. These projects had stalled as a result of the pandemic but would undoubtedly be re-visited.

More recently the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama had got in touch driven by wanting to support the eco-systems of performance research beyond Higher Education through research ethics and integrity. Dr Stephen Farrier and Dr Joe Parslow noted that many independent researchers were undertaking research but that ethics and integrity, and the conversation about these issues, were often not accessible beyond research institutions. The Society would be partnering with them on a project to support independent researchers, and engage with established researchers and new members in various activities around research ethics and integrity. The project would see focus groups and other activities with STR members to produce a guidance report on ethics and integrity that would help independent researchers

in and out of the organisation. The guidance report would be freely available on STR's website and hopefully be launched at a special event.

STR also weathered the storm of the pandemic, embracing Zoom, moving committee meetings and lectures online and ensuring that the Committee kept up to date with each other and with members. Mr Sladen hoped that the Society's lectures, Annual Publication, *Theatre Notebook*, Newsletter and rich website brought members some pleasure during the darker days of lockdown.

And now STR looked forward to the next chapter in its life. At the November meeting of the main Committee in 2021 Chair Designate Professor Michael Burden was unanimously elected to serve as Co-Chair with Mr Sladen until the AGM in May 2022. Mr Sladen had been keen to ensure a seamless handover and he hoped that Professor Burden now felt at home and ready to take up this position. Mr Sladen thanked Committee members for the past five years, for all their hard work and for making the Society a success, and all members for their support and encouragement. He hoped that he and the Committee had served them well.

### **Interim Chair Professor Trevor Griffiths**

**Legal Adviser:** Professor Griffiths reported that Mr Nick Breen had been appointed to the vacant role of the Society's Legal Adviser. He was a qualified solicitor and a partner at Reed Smith LLP and would have *pro bono* access to specialist advice from other members of the firm. His services to the STR would also be *pro bono* unless a very substantial amount of legal work was anticipated. He had broad experience in the creative sector and had worked with theatre producers, music artists, managers and promoters on a broad range of matters from production, management, label and publishing agreements, to sponsorship arrangements. He was a partner in his firm's Entertainment and Media Industry Group, focusing on digital media, music, advertising, theatre and content distribution.

**Victoria and Albert Museum restructure:** Professor Griffiths further reported that the main business of his period as interim Chair had been to attempt to mobilise public opinion against the Victoria and Albert Museum's management proposals for restructuring and, in the Committee's view, diminishing the role of the theatre collections. He and the President had written a joint letter to Director of the V&A Tristram Hunt, setting out STR's opposition to the proposals and he had joined with a number of other representatives of Performing Arts organisations in writing to *The Times*, which had published the letter. The STR had also used its social media presences to encourage protests to the V&A. Some modifications to the V&A's plans had emerged subsequently but it was yet to be fully discovered how deleterious the changes might be and what effects they would have on theatre research generally and in the context of moving the collections to the Olympic Park.

### **Co-Chair Professor Michael Burden**

Professor Burden made the following Report:

**Future of the Society:** He was honoured to take on the role of Chair from Mr Sladen. He was privileged to take Looking forward, the Society had itself produced a discussion paper examining a number of broad issues including how it might address the falling membership numbers. Some of the paper's contents were now historic, but it did suggest that there were administrative matters to deal with. The STR had also appointed publishing consultant Dr Kathy Rooney to produce a report on its publishing activities and processes, a consideration which would encompass both *Theatre Notebook* and the Annual Publication. Some of the issues to be addressed had already been discussed by the Committee when considering Dr Marion O'Connor's paper of November 2021.

**Poel Workshops:** The Poel team was actively exploring options for re-launching this aspect of the Society's activities. There had been no Poel Workshops for two years in the context of the effects of Covid, but it was expected that they would be back on course in 2022-2023, with the usual event at the National Theatre and the inaugural 'North Poel' at Leeds Playhouse. It would be beneficial to develop both strands further in the future.

**Anniversary Year Celebrations:** A working group was meeting to plan a programme of events. It had been agreed that the Anniversary Year would run from the May 2023 AGM (when it would be officially launched) to the May 2024 AGM (which would offer an opportunity to look back on it). This would give the Summer for special events for members and Autumn for a themed Anniversary lecture programme in 2023-2024, possibly exploring links to the performances, personalities and themes of 1948 through various modes of delivery, including study days and rehearsed readings. There had been a range of interesting ideas put forward – at different levels of costs and practicality – and the Committee would be pursuing these in the course of the next few months.

## **(2b) Reports from the Society's Sub-Committees**

**(2b.i) Annual Lecture Programme:** Dr Valerie Kaneko-Lucas, Co-ordinator of the Annual Lecture Series, reported that as a result of ongoing uncertainties around pandemic guidance, the rest of the current series remained online except this AGM, which was also available *via* Zoom in order to reach out to the largest possible number of members. A return to 'live' plus Zoom lectures was planned for the 2022-2023 series beginning in October 2022 at STR's established Central London venues, St Ann's Church Hall and the Artworkers' Guild. The programme would, like the 2021-2022 one, offer a wide range of topics. It was intended that the next Christmas Lecture would be informative with a strong aspect of entertainment, perhaps related to Music Hall or Carnival (maybe including costumes and/or other artefacts). It was intended to link some lectures to the Society's core activities by introducing regular 'slots' each year for: the author of an Annual Publication; a *Theatre Notebook* contributor; a debut panel/lecture for the New Researchers Network; Black British / global majority theatre; and one on diversity and inclusivity (e.g. LGBTQI+, disability, neuro-diversity, or de-colonial teaching). The Chair Designate, Professor Burden, would give the Address at the 2023 AGM. Additional suggestions for lectures on the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, the achievements of the Theatres Trust, Pierrot troupes and seaside popular culture, musical theatre 'flops', special effects, and stage magic were under consideration. Suggestions from members would be welcomed for both lectures and the external trips and visits which it was intended to re-introduce.

The 2021-2022 Lecture Series offered a diverse and inclusive programme:

October 2021 'In conversation: That Other British Asian Theatre: British East and Southeast Asian Performance'  
Kumiko Mendl (Director, New Earth) and Kwong Loke (Founder Member, Stone Crabs)  
(Attendees: 27)

November 2021 'Moll Frith: in Search of Renaissance Drag Kings'  
S.L. Grange (Multi-disciplinary artist) (Attendees: 47)

December 2021 'Windrush and Beyond: Voices of Black Britain'  
Ensemble Performance  
Curated by Dr Valerie Kaneko-Lucas (Attendees: 19)

January 2022 'The Importance of Editing Noël'  
Professor Russell Jackson (University of Birmingham) (Attendees: 37)

February 2022 'London's burning: Social housing, performance and politics of fire in an overheated market'  
Dr Katie Beswick (University of Exeter)

March 2022 'Edward Stirling: Victorian actor, adapter and bigamist – with readings from his plays, including *The Cabin Boy*'  
Miss Susan Solomon (Society for Theatre Research) (Attendees: 32)

April 2022 'Theatres at Risk Update'  
Ms Clare Appleby (Theatres Trust)

Culminating in the Annual Address at this AGM from Professor Mick Wallis (University of Leeds): 'Memory Lanes: reflections on historical pageantry'

**(2b.ii) Publications:** The Report of Dr Marion O'Connor, General Editor of Publications, reported on behalf of the Publications Sub-Committee by Sub-Committee Secretary Miss Francesca Franchi. The STR Publication for 2020/21, Professor Simon Shepherd's edition of *The Unknown Granville-Barker: Letters to Helen and Other Writings, 1915-1918*, had been distributed to members in February 2022. The volume had been copy-edited by Dr Ann Featherstone, and the PDF from which it was printed had been designed by Ms Leigh Forbes. The Sub-Committee also expressed its appreciation to Mr Geoff Davidson for supporting the distribution of publications.

An updated print edition of *STR Books in Print*, the first to appear in five years, was prepared by STR Publications Sub-Committee Secretary Miss Francesca Franchi under the supervision of STR Publications General Editor Dr Marion O'Connor and with helpful input from STR Committee Member Barry Sheppard. The PDF from which this catalogue was printed had also been designed by Ms Forbes. Revision was completed at the end of November 2021, and *STR Books in Print 2021* was distributed to STR members the following month. APAC notified their members about this latest STR catalogue and invited them to request copies. Copies went to incoming Committee Chair Professor Michael Burden for conference circulation. Committee Members attending the IFTR Conference in Reykjavik in June 2022 in their personal capacities would be taking STR materials including copies of *STR Books in Print 2021* with them to distribute there. Copies were available at the AGM for those attending in person. The Publication offer to each new STR member (five books at a bargain inclusive price of £25) remained an aid to recruitment.

The STR Publication for 2021/22 would be Dr Kate Crehan's *But Will It Get a Laugh? A Biography of Doris Hare in Three Acts*. The author being Doris Hare's daughter, this biography was informed by personal insight, and it was abundantly illustrated by unfamiliar images. The proposal for it had won the 2020 Tony Lothian Prize, which was awarded to the best proposal for an uncommissioned biography by a first-time biographer. Dr Featherstone and Dr David Pattie (University of Birmingham) had served as volume editors; Professor Trevor Griffiths was copyediting the text; and Ms Forbes would be designing the volume, for which publication was planned in late summer 2022.

The STR Publication for 2022/23 would be Iain Mackintosh's *Theatre Spaces 1920-2020*. This memoir was under contract for co-publication with Bloomsbury, who had scheduled it to appear in May or April 2023. It would be copy-edited by Professor Christopher Baugh.

Wordville Press had initiated a strand called 'Performing Arts in Print'. The first title in this strand, Colin and Tedd George's *Stirring Up Sheffield: an insider's account of the battle to build the Crucible Theatre*, was published on 9 November 2021, with a launch two days later. Because

the book had longstanding links to the STR, it was publicised on the Society's website, including a blurb about *Stirring Up Sheffield*, a link to the publisher, and an invitation to the launch. Wordville Press generously credited the success of that event in Sheffield to publicity on the STR website. Wordville had a link to a 'spin-off' series of podcasts about the theatre from its own site, and had been sharing this connection with STR members through the Society's website. Wordville had indicated that 'it means a lot for Wordville to work with the STR', and there was a possibility of mutual benefits going forward.

**(2b.iii) Theatre Notebook (TN):** Professor Griffiths reported that on the publications front, the STR had moved towards publishing occasional essays on the website. The first of these had celebrated the centenary of the birth of Stephen Joseph and it was hoped that this would soon be followed by more work which fell in length between the parameters of the Annual Publication and the journal. Professor Griffiths would be interested to hear from members willing to act as referees for this material, which it was intended should be valid in research terms. It had been a paradoxical year for *Theatre Notebook*. On the one hand, it had suffered a significant loss in the resignation of its business manager Richard Cave due to ill health. He was thanked for his efforts over the years in an unheralded but vital role. It had also suffered significantly from the effects of Covid, which had so far delayed the publication of the first issue of the journal edited by the New Researchers Network from last calendar year to this year, and were currently affecting the first issue of the next volume since both he and the journal's typesetter Ms Forbes had recently succumbed to the virus. Consequent delays meant that the first issue of this calendar year was only now being printed. Things were further behind than he would like and arrangements for distribution had yet to be made following the indefatigable Geoff Davidson's decision to step back from undertaking this task. The index and preliminaries for last year awaited attention but it was thought best to prioritise the new issues. Professor Griffiths offered his apologies to members awaiting the preliminaries and the index. He would welcome any help from members in compiling a volume index. The journal web presence also needed to be updated. On the positive side for the first time in the more than 20 years that he had been an editor of the journal, there was a plethora of suitable essays accepted for publication that would take it through 2023 and beyond, with yet further material being submitted. Part of that surfeit of suitable essays was due to the NRN whose call for papers for a special issue of the journal elicited enough high quality essays to fill not just one but two special issues. He was hopeful that it would be possible to repeat that experiment in the STR's jubilee year. None of this would have been possible without the energetic commitment of my editor colleagues Professors Claire Cochrane, Gabriel Egan and Anselm Heinrich.

**(2b.iv) Theatre Book Prize:** Mr Howard Loxton said that a press release in November 2021 announcing the judges (Mr Jatinder Verma MBE, Ms Erin Lee and Mr Paul Vale) and inviting submissions had generated a lot of social media and Twitter coverage. Since Covid might have held up production or delivery of some titles, late entries had been accepted up to the end of February 2022. The Theatre Book Prize, like everything else, had been affected by the Covid pandemic, not least in this year's entries. With theatre work impossible during lockdowns a number of show business people found time to start writing their memoirs and this year's entries include a number of autobiographical and anecdotal titles that range from those of impresario Raymond Gubbay to stage door keeper San Evans along with veteran performers such as Dame Eileen Atkins, Robert Gillespie and Michael Pennington, lighting designer David Collison and actors Peter Bourke and Joseph Millson. On the other hand, fewer academic titles than usual had been received, perhaps everyone had been kept too busy running Zoom seminars and teaching on line to write books. So many people working from home had also made contact with publishers more difficult and that might have affected submissions. There had been a few books expected that did not reach the judges. There had also been a few books which had turned up which had not actually been eligible: not really about British theatre or not carrying a 2021 copyright date.

In the end there have been just under 40 books to choose from, well below the usual number, all of which were listed on the Society's website. From those books the judges chose a short list of six which appeared at **(12)** below.

The judges had yet to decide on the winner: the announcement would be made on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022. As last year the presentation would once again be a virtual event. It was intended to return to a live event for 2023 but continuing uncertainties had prevented this being arranged in time this year.

The Society thanked the judges for the time, energy and enthusiasm with which they had taken on their role. Thanks were also due to the Society members whose support and technological skills would make the online presentation possible, and to Mr Sheppard for his work on the Prize's website page. The STR was looking for someone/people who could carry the Theatre Book Prize forward. Any members interested in being involved were invited to make contact through the Society's e-mail.

### **(2b.v) Research Grants (and Practitioner Grants):**

**Research Grants:** Ms Kate Quartano Brown reported that this year after two years of online deliberations, the Research Grants Sub-Committee had pioneered a hybrid meeting, with some members physically present at the Art Workers Guild and others on Zoom. This experiment had proved remarkably successful and hopefully would be the way forward to preserve a non-London-centric pool of committee members for all occasions, as was the case at this AGM too.

Application numbers for the Research Grants were far greater than last year's and seemed to be on the way back to pre-pandemic levels, which was great news in that it showed that people were returning to active research, going to archives, conducting interviews, etc. but also meant that there had been difficult choices to make. Many applications, moreover, were not as focussed on traditional forms of research as hitherto, and it was clear that the various eligibility criteria for Research, Practitioner, and Conference Grants needed to be clarified. This had been touched on as the applications were discussed, but the topics had proved too complicated to be dealt with at that time, and there would therefore be a further meeting (via Zoom) to evolve more precise protocols and processes for the next rounds of all Grants. Revised criteria would be published on the website as soon they had been agreed.

Applicants this year included independent scholars, performers, and writers, doctoral students and established lecturers, and subjects were wide-ranging, including oral history projects, pierrots, Welsh opera and naval pageants among many other fascinating subjects. The successful recipients, some of whom would be present at this meeting, would be announced later in the proceedings (see **(11)** below).

Members were advised to keep an eye on the STR website for the occasional articles from Grant recipients which illustrated the extraordinary variety of the theatre research that the Society supported. They could be found on the Research Grants page, or by going to the News Hub and choosing the 'Grants and Awards' category. Recent articles included: a wonderful conference on costume organised by Dr Veronica Isaac and Dr Jade Halbert, looking into practical and theoretical approaches to making period costumes; Ms Felicity Brown's work on the Arthurian themes in the splendid ceremonial tournaments staged for Elizabeth I, notably starring the 'Privateering Earl' of Cumberland; and Ms Claire Harding's researches into the extraordinary life of Charles Vance, the 'last actor-manager'.

Meanwhile, following the Society's successful programme of Covid-19 Support Grants in 2020, it had been decided to offer again in 2021 a number of Practitioner Grants of £200 to support

practical research and development. There had been fewer applications this time, which was hopefully an encouraging sign that the theatre was beginning to recover, but the panel was again impressed by the energy, diversity and imagination of the projects submitted, and these reports too would be made available on the website as they came in. Particularly interesting projects from 2021 included: Ms Bella Enahoro's exploration of Ophelia (not drowned) in *Beyond Elsinore*; the Dramaturgs' Network who wrote to express their thanks for one of the Grants which they put towards one of the roundtables, '*Anti-Racist Strategies in Dramaturgy*', at their 20th anniversary event. The archived session was available online; and research and development for BadApple Theatre Company's spectacular *Elephant Rock*, a new play by Ms Kate Bramley about a crumbling seaside dance-hall and a family trying to keep it open while grappling with a family history that stretches across a hundred years and five thousand miles from the rocky coast of England to the elephant roads of Sri Lanka.

Finally, one of our Research Grants recipients, Dr Billy Rough, collaborated with the NRN and our Instagram team on a fascinating exploration of Walter Sickert and the 'dear old oblong' Bedford Music Hall, in an Instagram series which attracted enormous interest. See also **(2c.vii) Communications** below. A full list of the Awards made since their inception in 1988 was available on the website, and the range of topics and the number of familiar names demonstrated that the Grants had far more wide-reaching positive effects in enabling research than their relatively small size suggested. This year's Research Grants appear at **(10)** below.

**(2b.vi) New Researchers Network (NRN):** The NRN Committee submitted the following report. The NRN was proud of the first special edition of *Theatre Notebook* which was published at the end of 2021, and was progressing with the second edition. It was likely that once the second edition had been published, some NRN Committee members might step down as they moved on to new ventures and might not be residing in the UK. The priority, however, would initially be to put a call out for new members, working with them to ensure a smooth transition. All being well, the worst of the pandemic was over. With that in mind, the NRN would start to put together some ideas for useful events (and indeed new formats for such events) that would be beneficial and appealing to new researchers. As the 75th anniversary of the STR approached, the NRN also looked forward to playing its part and supporting in any way it could.

**(2c.vii) Communications:** Ms Harriet Reed, the STR's Communications Officer, made the following Report:

**Lecture Series:** This had been publicised across social channels and to networks such as SCUDD, TAPRA and APAC. All this year's recorded lectures were publicly available on the STR YouTube channel, and organised by year under 'Playlists'. Some audio (such as commercial music) had to be removed for reasons of copyright.

**Social Media:** STR had established a steadily growing social media followership on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Follower numbers on Twitter and Instagram continued to climb – there were currently 2,500 followers on Twitter – and Facebook numbers remained steady. Twitter in particular has been a fantastic resource for engaging with networks, researchers and other societies.

**Newsletter:** Monthly Newsletters continued to be sent out, publicising events, grants and other items of interest, which had received positive feedback from members. The 'open' and 'click' rates had remained steady which was a sign that this was still a useful tool of communication. Members were encouraged to contact the Communications Officer with any events or queries that could go in the Newsletter as the Society would very happy to support their research.

Ms Reed had also worked with the NRN on the STR Instagram account, engaging with recent grant recipients on Instagram 'takeovers', where researchers could share their research and

simultaneously promote the Society. There had been a very positive response and fifteen researchers had signed up to take part. The first 'takeover' had taken place in September 2021: Dr Aylwyn Walsh (one of the grant recipients in 2020, and Associate Professor of Performance and Social Change at the University of Leeds) had posted on the Society's Instagram account for an entire week, sharing insights into her research, workshops and live productions, and offering tips and links about arts and mental health. Most recently, Dr Billy Rough had run a takeover from 15<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022. He was the MA Combined Studies Co-ordinator at the University of St Andrews and recipient of an STR Research Grant. He had an interest in British painting and its link to the theatre, and the STR had granted funds towards his research into the music hall paintings of Walter Sickert, with a focus on exploring the history and reputation of Sickert's favourite hall, the Bedford Music Hall. Dr Rough introduced his research project and took followers on a virtual tour of the 'Sickert: Art in Life' exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. As well as its promotional value for the Society, he had made good contacts and attracted new followers to his own Instagram account. Future takeovers were being scheduled.

**(2b.viii) Financial Management:** Ms Yona Lesger, the Society's outgoing Finance and Membership Officer, said that building on Mr Geoff Davidson's sterling work in introducing regular and accurate financial reports to the Committee, enabling informed decisions to be taken there with confidence, she had moved the STR's accounts onto an online system, and integrated them with the 'back end' of the Website. The Finance Sub-Committee had confirmed that there was sufficient income for the Society to fund all planned activities in the current STR financial year, and it was therefore on track to stay within its budget. A W8 form was being created for the US Internal Revenue Service to ensure that the STR minimised its exposure to taxation on its income from America. An online HMRC account had been set up which would allow the Society to submit claims more easily in the future. Membership numbers were currently about 20 members lower compared to this time the previous year. There was a strong correlation between renewals and the reminders in the monthly Newsletters, and she thanked Ms Reed for her support with that. Since the Stock Take in November 2020, 222 Society Publications had been sold (4,370 books left) as had 50 back copies of *Theatre Notebook* (3,017 left).

### **(3) Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting in May 2021**

The Minutes had been made available to all members prior to the meeting by publication on the website and email circulation. No corrections to the Minutes had been notified. Acceptance was proposed by Professor Trevor Griffiths, seconded by Mrs Eillen Cottis, and carried nem.con. They were therefore signed as a true record by Mr Barry Sheppard as Vice-President of the Society.

### **(4) Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes that were not be dealt with elsewhere in the documentation made available to members as part of the AGM.

### **(5) Annual Report for 2020-2021**

The Annual Report had been made available to all members prior to the meeting. No comments or corrections had been notified. Acceptance was proposed by Dr Pieter van der Merwe MBE, seconded by Dr Valerie Kaneko-Lucas, and approved nem.con.

### **(6) Accounts for 2020-2021**

Accounts for 2020-2021 had been made available to all members prior to the meeting. No queries in relation to the Accounts had been notified and they were therefore deemed to have been unanimously approved.

### **(7) Appointment of Officers and Committee Members**

(a) Honorary Secretary for the year 2022-2023: the current officeholder, Ms Diana Fraser, was not seeking re-election. Dr Brianna Robertson-Kirkland was willing to offer herself for election to this vacancy, and was so nominated by the Committee for the term 2022-2023. Dr Brianna Robertson-Kirkland was elected unopposed as Honorary Secretary of the Society.

(b) Honorary Treasurer for the year 2022-2023: the current officeholder, Mr Mark Fox, was not seeking re-election. There had been no expressions of interest in this vacancy, and identifying a suitable candidate would be a high priority going forward.

(c) To elect to Committee vacancies:

Professor Steve Nicholson was not standing for re-election, creating a vacancy. Professor Michael Burden was willing to offer himself for appointment to this Vacancy, and was so nominated by the Committee, for the term 2022-2026. This appointment was proposed by Mr Simon Sladen and seconded by Mr Barry Sheppard.

Dr Michael Read was willing to offer himself for re-appointment, and was so nominated by the Committee, for the term 2022-2026. This appointment was proposed by Dr Valerie Kaneko-Lucas and seconded by Mrs Eileen Cottis.

Mr Simon Sladen was not standing for re-election, creating a vacancy. Mr Nick Bromley was willing to offer himself for appointment to this Vacancy, and was so nominated by the Committee, for the term 2022-2026. This appointment was proposed by Mr Howard Loxton and seconded by Ms Harriet Reed.

Dr Fiona Ritchie resigned from the Committee in-year creating a vacancy. Ms Diana Fraser was willing to offer herself for appointment to this Vacancy, and was so nominated by the Committee, for the term 2022-2025. This appointment was proposed by Ms Kate Quartano Brown and seconded by Professor Katherine Newey.

All the above were elected unopposed to the Committee.

In addition, Dr Marion O'Connor was not standing for re-election, creating a vacancy.

### **(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
- (b) the co-ordinating editor of *Theatre Notebook* or their representative
- (c) a representative of the Theatres Trust
- (d) a representative of the New Researchers Network.

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

### **(9) Advisers**

(a) Mr Nick Breen of Reed Smith LLP had confirmed that he was prepared to continue as the Society's Legal Adviser. His reappointment to this post was approved unopposed.

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

### **(10) To Consider the Committee's Recommendations for subscription rates for 2022-2023**

The costs of the International mailing of both the Annual Publication and *Theatre Notebook* were increasingly prohibitive (at least two and a half times the cost of posting the same items within the UK). It was therefore timely to consider increasing the cost of International membership in order to help to defray these costs. The Committee had agreed a proposal that overseas subscription, Individual and Corporate, be increased by £10 per annum. That proposal was now put forward, in accordance with the Constitution, for ratification by the membership, proposed by Professor Trevor Griffiths, seconded by Ms Diana Fraser, and approved nem.con.

### **(11) Research Grants for 2022**

Mr Simon Sladen announced the Research Grants for 2022 as follows:

#### **The Anthony Denning Award**

**Dr James Hudson, Senior Lecturer, University of Lincoln**

The British Council and the Marat/Sade Controversy: travel and accommodation to the archives in London

#### **The Kathleen Barker Award**

**Brooke Nicole Martin, PhD student, Bangor University**

Travel to Aberystwyth to look at manuscripts of Unpublished Welsh operas

Other grants were made as follows:

#### **Dr Tony Lidington, showman and independent scholar**

*Don't Forget the Pierrots* book commissioned by Routledge: image permissions

#### **Christopher Beeching writer, researcher, performer, based in Greece**

George Leybourne biography Vol II (The Heaviest of Swells): image rights from various collections

#### **Dr Jacqueline Bolton, University of Lincoln, and Dr Nicholas Holden, University of Greenwich, Lecturers in Drama**

*Beautiful Doom: the work of Dennis Kelly on stage and screen*: image reproduction

#### **Clare Chandler, Senior Lecturer, University of Wolverhampton**

Contemporary British Musicals: travel to London for interviews

#### **Madeleine Saidenberg, DPhil candidate at Oxford**

Shakespeare and the Debate for a National Theatre in Dublin, 1745-60: travel to archives in Dublin and accommodation there

#### **Helen Dallas, DPhil candidate at Oxford**

Material Afterlives: Dramatic Characters in Romantic Material Culture: travel to archives at Bristol, Cambridge, London

#### **Olivia Kershaw, Research Officer for the Ramsbottom Co-op Hall Heritage Trust**

From the Mill to the Music Hall: *The theatrical heritage of Ramsbottom Co-op Hall*: subscriptions to archives

#### **Dr Rowan Thompson, Fellow, Institute of Historical Research**

Naval Pageantry, Heritage, and Commemoration in Interwar Britain: travel and accommodation in London

**Dr Ben Walters, writer, researcher, programmer, producer**

Untitled Oral History of the Royal Vauxhall Tavern: best-practice training in the professional research techniques of oral history in the form of two courses offered by the Oral History Society

**WenYan Pu, PhD candidate, University of Exeter**

Comic Male-to-female Cross-dressing in English Pantomime and Chinese Traditional Theatre: Travel to archives in Bristol, London, and Kent

**Juliette Cook, Staff, Monmouth Theatre**

Authorised History of the Savoy Theatre, Monmouth  
Subscriptions to Archives

**(12) Theatre Book Prize Shortlist for 2022**

Mr Howard Loxton reported that the Judges been able to meet in person to agree the following Theatre Book Prize Shortlist for 2022:

*Stinging Delight* by David Storey (Faber) – a posthumous memoir from the playwright

*Brickwork: A Biography of the Arches* by David Bratchpiece and Kirstin Innes (Salamander Street) – a history of the Glasgow venue by people who worked there and ran it

*Deep Are the Roots* by Stephen Bourne (History Press) – a study of the pioneers of black British theatre

*Stirring up Sheffield* by Colin George and Tedd George (Wordville) – the story of the struggle to create the Crucible’s revolutionary thrust stage

*Towards a Civic Theatre* by Dan Hutton (Salamander Street) – which made the case for a new kind of theatre fit for purpose

*Will She Do?* by Eileen Atkins (Virago) – the actress’s honest and candid account of her earlier years as a performer

**(13) Resolutions**

It was noted that no resolutions had been submitted.

**(14) Any Other Business**

Dr Valerie Kaneko-Lucas proposed a Vote of Thanks to Mr Simon Sladen for his leadership, adaptability and virtuosity in the management of change over his tenure of Chair. This was enthusiastically endorsed and it was agreed that a live event should be organised to honour his contribution.

The AGM was followed by the Annual Address: “Memory Lanes: reflections on historical pageantry” delivered by Mick Wallis, Professor Emeritus of Performance and Culture at the University of Leeds.