



**THE SOCIETY for THEATRE RESEARCH**  
**MINUTES OF THE 75<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**In-Person at the Art Workers' Guild and Online**  
**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 6.00 p.m.**

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Valerie welcomed Michael Burden, new Chair and Time West, President.</b></p> <p><b>Welcome from the President</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tim West: Presented a positive history of the STR over the last 75 years to open the event.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Conflicts of Interest (standing item)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Michael Burden (MB): There are no conflicts of interest.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting in May 2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MB: One correction – Louisa Milburn is actually Laura Milburn.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MB: There are no matters arising.</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>STR Committee's Annual Address:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MB: The last year has been challenging for all of us both politically and economically. One of the major downs for us of course has been the loss of Barry Sheppard. As our own obituary said, he was a stalwart person, wise, calm, insightful, and the figure of continuity, which I think is something that we valued through all the changes of recent years. Barry was a graduate of the University of Bristol's drama department and had spent much time in theatre management, notably at the Manchester Theatre, University Theatre, Manchester, and at the Oxford Playhouse. He worked in arts funding organisations and in the Theatrical Management Association. Barry's institutional knowledge was immense, and is something that we all miss.</li> <li>- We also lost another long-standing member of the society, Robin Cave. Robin succeeded Geoff Davidson as an editorial manager of Theatre Notebook in 2009, and in his understated effectiveness in that role as best summed up by Trevor Griffiths, he was a prime example of someone who worked tirelessly for the good of the society and for the satisfaction of a job well done. Rather than an expectation of kudos or wider recognition, he recognised his was an unglamorous role, which he formed unobtrusively and effectively to the great benefit of the journal and its readers. Robin studied at Worcester College, Oxford, where he stage-managed productions of Alves.</li> </ul>

	<p>After Oxford, he spent much of his career with Unilever. But he also lived in Islington, where he soon found a relationship with the Tower Theatre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Another loss was Elspeth Dennison, who worked at the Art Workers' Guild for some 43 years. She looked after the society whenever we met. Reading the various tributes to her is to be brought face to face with someone who was warm hearted, humorous, and eccentric. There is a fabulous picture of her online in a witch's hat.</li> <li>- MB announced that Eileen Cottis has turned 90, encouraging a round of applause. She joined the STR in 1956 and was dragooned by Sybil Rosenfeld into doing the minutes. And then she was our honorary secretary for 20 years.</li> <li>- Stepping down from the committee is Geoff Davidson, who has worked tirelessly for the STR for many years.</li> <li>- Also stepping down this year are Eilidh Innes and Alessandra Grossi and we thank them for their service.</li> <li>- Although the STR has in the past supported institutional purchases in part at the V&amp;A itself, the Royal Opera and Bristol, it is not something that the STR has undertaken on a regular basis. However, STR in the last year has received 2 generous benefactions and, as such, has used these to purchase the Clemence Dane's autographed manuscript (in the name of our benefactors). We hope this will be viewed as a lasting and meaningful tribute to both. Gerald Smith (one of the benefactors) had little contact with the society, but we and other theatre groups were offered generous sums from his estate.</li> <li>- There is a need to serve our theatrical community, in part caused by our non-professional subscription base, which means people do not need to be part of the STR to do their profession. However, STR are committed to continuing to serve the theatre community and staying relevant in the process.</li> </ul>
<b>6a</b>	<b>Chairs' Reports, Professor Michael Burden</b>
	<p><b>Constitution amendments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MB: Highlighted the three documents online that outline changes to the constitution. What the committee is recommending is that we adopt the amended constitution as amended by Reed Smith, which is available to view on the website. Charity law is changing, and as such the constitution is becoming outdated as a result. Reed Smith complimented the constitution noting it had been well-maintained and regularly updated, but required amendments to ensure it continued to be robust in the current climate, and to ensure we are not at risk going forward.</li> <li>- The reason why we need to consider corporation now is because moving through this process will take more than 9 months. Adopting the altered constitution now will cover us until we go through the process of becoming a corporation.</li> <li>- MB called for questions.</li> <li>- There were no questions.</li> <li>- Geoff Davidson proposed.</li> <li>- Trevor Griffiths seconded.</li> <li>- The general meeting unanimously agrees to adopt the amended constitution for STR as outlined in the red line document.</li> </ul>
	<b>Proposal in principle for Incorporation</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MB: The second motion that we are looking to put before you this evening is to adopt the wording of a motion put before us by the solicitors which says this general meeting approves the proposal that a charitable company limited by guarantee be constituted to continue this, our society's objectives and that upon or following Charity Commission registration of the new body, the committee be authorised to stipulate a legal transfer date of the societies operations, assets and liabilities to the replacement vehicle. The reason there is no date is to allow for maximum flexibility for the process and to avoid continuously coming back to you to update the date.</li> <li>- MB: Are there any questions?</li> <li>- There are no questions.</li> <li>- Proposer: Trevor Griffith</li> <li>- Seconder: Kate Quartano Brown</li> <li>- The general meeting unanimously agrees to move toward charity incorporation status.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Anniversary Year Celebrations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rolling the book prize and 75-year birthday celebration into one event, with Jed Wentz acting an appropriate melodrama. There are two things to mention.</li> <li>- Partly to encourage possible membership, we are going to give away 75 free memberships to graduates and early career members with the hope that they remain members after their free year.</li> <li>- The practitioner grants have now become part of our annual roll out of prizes, and we wish to announce a fundraising effort to support these grants at the celebration.</li> <li>- We will have an open-subject theatre conference, welcoming proposals on any subject, 18-21 July 2024 at Wills Hall, University of Bristol. This is still in the planning sessions.</li> <li>- These are a taste of the ideas we have in play to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.</li> </ul>
<b>6b</b>	<b>Reports from the Society's Sub-Committees</b>
<b>6b.i.</b>	<p><b>Annual Lecture Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Valerie Kaneko-Lucas: The programme content has expanded to reflect STR's EDI statement. Within the lecture series there is one lecture reserved for a new researcher and one reserved for a researcher focusing on EDI. We are organising a study day with the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts next year on popular culture and its impact on contemporary theatre. And just to let you know, the last lecture, not within what I'm curating, but Simon Sladen has asked us to be mindful of the Edward Gordon Craig Lecture, which will be on the 1st June at the Central School of Speech and Drama next year, our AWG speaker will be our very own Michael Burden. Also upcoming is Christopher Beeching, who will be talking to us about his work on 'Champagne, Charlie and the musical and Music Hall'. So, thank you very much. We look forward to seeing you either at St Anne's, or at the Art Worker's Guild, or online.</li> <li>- MB: Can we record a vote of thanks for Valerie on the lecture series, which is a huge amount of work.</li> <li>- The membership formally thanks Valerie Kaneko-Lucas.</li> </ul>
<b>6b.ii</b>	<p><b>Publications and <i>Theatre Notebook (TN)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trevor Griffiths: I took over from Marion O'Connor and I would like to pay tribute to her inspirational stewardship over publications.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have also started to deal with the question of how we deal with our contributors. We commissioned a report from a publishing consultant to address consistent questions that keep arising regarding contracts etc. It may not make a difference to what readers see, but it will make a difference to contributors.</li> <li>- I should also say that last year's Doris Hare biography has been nominated for the Theatre Book Prize. Now, you may say, 'Oh wasn't that published by the STR and isn't it the STR Book Prize?', and the answer to that is yes, but it is judged by completely independent judges and they independently decided to name it as one of their six shortlisted books, so we're very pleased about that.</li> <li>- We are making slow progress on website essays, but we do intend to publish a website essay soon on an account by David Wood of the Whirligig Company.</li> <li>- Theatre Notebook is continuing. We have published 1 issue, 1 is in proof, and we have material for a 3rd issue in September.</li> </ul>
<b>6b.iii</b>	<p><b>Theatre Book Prize</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MB: We're going to skip the book prize at this point, because it has got a slot later in the in the agenda.</li> </ul>
<b>6b.iv.</b>	<p><b>Research Grants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kate Newey: Kate Quartano Brown is really the person who keeps us in order. Later in the agenda, we have the celebration and announcement of awardees. We considered 28 applications, and we awarded 12 research grants. 5 of those 28 we sent to the practitioner grant, and we are pleased in the way those two grant schemes are working together. We hope the practitioner grant scheme grows. The mix of applications we receive to both schemes is wonderful: researchers, new scholars, professionals, and dedicated amateurs.</li> </ul>
<b>6b.v.</b>	<p><b>Practitioner Grants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See report</li> </ul>
<b>6b.vi</b>	<p><b>New Researchers Network (NRN)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Laura Milburn (read by MB): We were delighted to publish a second edition of Theatre Notebook. I would once again like to thank STR for its support and Trevor and the wider editorial team of the Journal for their support and patience with us throughout the process. We very much look forward to hopefully publishing another edition next year in celebration of the STR 75th.</li> </ul>
<b>6b.vii</b>	<p><b>Communications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harriet Reed: We have had another wonderful year with publicity and communications, publicising events via social media, TAPRA, and our other networks. Just a reminder as well that all the lectures which have been recorded on zoom are available on our YouTube channel, so you can catch up on any that you might have missed on our social media accounts. We're continuing to build our followers month on month, which is absolutely fantastic, and that's continued to be a really great resource for communicating with our Members and the general public. The newsletter continues to go out every month with news on events and grants, other items of interest, conferences which we know are popular topic to communicate with our membership. We also encourage our members to let us know if they want us to send out any information about their own</li> </ul>

	<p>research. Finally, our publicity for the society has expanded so we've done a bit of advertising with the British Music Hall Society and we were also an official sponsor of the stage awards this year. This is an awards ceremony which supports contemporary theatre companies, buildings and practitioners and our logo was promoted on their banners. The website was included in the print and digital editions of the winner's edition of the newspaper, and that was a great way of getting the logo out there. We also attended the ceremony, and I was talking about the society to lots of people there, so that was a great opportunity as well. We look forward to building on these next year and thank you for your support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kate Quartano Brown: Website – We keep the website up to date, but remember it is your website, and you can post your own notices with upcoming events etc.</li> </ul>
<b>6b.viii</b>	<p><b>Financial Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Irena Cholij: Yona stepped down and we are grateful for her work, particularly in the new system she set up. Our main income for the year, which was from subscriptions, was a little lower than the previous year. We earned about £33,500, and we spent just under £32,000. In line with general market trends our investments fell in value. However, the income from these investments actually was £1000 more than the year before, so we still received £17,000. They have subsequently recovered some of their previous value.</li> <li>- Due to changing systems MB mentioned, we were unable to receive royalties from Project Muse. Geoff did a huge amount of work on this and recovered £9750 for one year, which will be included in next year's accounts.</li> <li>- We were actually very lucky to receive a legacy of £70,000 and another of about £50,000. I've kept a little bit of that back in our account, but we have invested most of that sum.</li> <li>- Membership fees will be discussed later, but I would like to highlight that they've remained the same for the last couple of years. We're aware that the Brexit related increases to postage costs may mean we need to think about revisiting the membership package. At this stage, I recommend that we don't increase costs at the moment. We want people to come and we're very conscious of the general financial pressures in the current economic climate. Thank you.</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Annual Report for 2021-2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MB: The document is on the website, labelled 'draft' until it is approved at this meeting. It is not a perfect document and may require amendments.</li> <li>- Can we adopt the draft?</li> <li>- Francesca proposed.</li> <li>- Pieter seconded.</li> <li>- The general meeting unanimously agrees to approve the annual report for 2021-22.</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Accounts for 2021-2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MB: The document is on the website, labelled 'draft' until it is approved at this meeting. It is not a perfect document and may require amendments.</li> <li>- Can we adopt the draft?</li> <li>- Howard proposed.</li> <li>- Harriet seconded.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The general meeting unanimously agrees to approve the Accounts for 2021-22.</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Appointment of Officers and Committee Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retain Brianna Robertson-Kirkland as secretary.</li> <li>- Mark proposed.</li> <li>- Diana seconds.</li> <li>- The membership approved.</li>   <li>- Honourary treasurer, Mark Fox.</li>   <li>- Kate proposed.</li> <li>- Adam seconded.</li> <li>- The membership approved.</li>   <li>- President, Timothy West.</li> <li>- Pieter proposed.</li> <li>- Francesca seconded.</li> <li>- The membership approved.</li>   <li>- Vice president, Eileen Cottis</li> <li>- Pieter proposed.</li> <li>- Francesca seconded.</li> <li>- The membership approved.</li>   <li>- Vice president, Ian Herbert.</li> <li>- Kate proposed.</li> <li>- Diana seconded.</li> <li>- The membership approved.</li>   <li>- Vice president, Neville Hunnings.</li> <li>- Mark proposed.</li> <li>- Pieter seconded.</li> <li>- The membership approved.</li>   <li>- Vice president, Pieter van der Merwe.</li> <li>- Mark proposed.</li> <li>- Kate Newey seconded.</li> <li>- The membership approved.</li> </ul>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Co-options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We will write to everyone to invite people to come and join the committee.</li> <li>- Representative of the Theatre Collections at the VA</li> <li>- Representative of the Theatres Trust</li> <li>- Representative of the NRN</li> </ul>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Advisers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reappoint Nick Smith (lawyer) and Paul Barron (accountant)</li> <li>- The membership approved by a show of hands.</li> </ul>
<b>12</b>	<p><b>To Consider the Committee's Recommendations for subscription rates for 2023-2024</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- MB: Considering the subscription rates Irena has made in her case briskly at the end of her speech. Does anyone wish to comment or have any discussion about that?</li><li>- There were no questions or comments.</li><li>- MB: Can I put before the membership the motion to keep the rates as they are?</li><li>- Mark proposed.</li><li>- Kate Newey seconded.</li><li>- The membership approved.</li></ul>
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**Research Grants for 2023: Award Winners**

The grants were awarded to the winners by Timothy West, assisted by Kate Quartano Brown.

The Anthony Denning Award was given to:  
Caroline Radcliffe (Reader in Drama and Performance, Birmingham) towards the cost of image rights from the Pierpont Morgan Library to accompany the first volume of her edition of *The Dramas of Wilkie Collins*

The Kathleen Barker Award was given to:  
Helen Keen (PhD research student 4th Year, Exeter)  
for travel to Kent and Edinburgh) to research her project on *Laugh And The (Neurotypical) World Laughs With You*

The Stephen Joseph Award was given to:  
Deirdre Osborne (Reader in English Literature and Drama, Goldsmiths)  
towards travel and accommodation in Manchester to conduct interviews and research on her forthcoming monograph on *SuAndi's Performance Poetics* (commissioned by Cambridge University Press)

and a grant from the Craig Fund was given to:  
Emma Chapman and Rob Halliday (Lighting designers)  
towards image rights for their forthcoming book *Theatre lighting design: conversations on art, craft and life* (to be published by Methuen).

Other grants were given as follows:

Siobhan Keenan (Associate Dean, Research & Innovation, Faculty of Arts, Design and Humanities, De Montfort University)  
towards costs of a series of archival visits relating to the two final chapters of her forthcoming monograph: *Richard Burbage and the Shakespearean Stage: A 'Delightful Proteus'*

Siobhan was given the Anthony Denning award for another aspect of this research in 2020.

Note that people may apply up to three times for a research grant, though it has to be for a different project or a different part of the same project.

Rachel Walker (Independent scholar)  
towards travel costs for Research to complete a monograph on history of the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Rachel received the Kathleen Barker award for another aspect of this in 2021.

Louise Peacock (Associate Professor in Drama, De Montfort)  
towards travel costs for her book to be published by Routledge 2024: *Present Laughter/Past Laughter: The Longevity of Stage Comedy Techniques*

Kelly Jones (Senior Lecturer in Drama, University of Lincoln)  
towards travel and accommodation Lincoln – York – London to research her project *Staging the Ghost Story*



Lucy Thompson (PhD Student, University of Cambridge)  
towards travel to New York and Washington to research Stepping in Time and Space with Circum-Atlantic Performance: A Cultural and Historical Geography of Tap Dance'

Sophie Horrocks (PhD Student, Durham)  
towards travel and accommodation Durham – London – Lille etc, researching The circulation of English theatre troupes in Northern France, 1815-1820

Geraldine Biddle-Perry (Lecturer Cultural Studies, UAL Central St Martins)  
towards travel and accommodation in Bristol to research her project Hair and the Art of Stagecraft: Performance, Practice, Production

Mary Kate Connolly (Writer and Researcher)  
towards colour image rights for a projected book: Smithereens: An Encounter with Fabric Ghosts – Adventures in the Costume Archive of The Cholmondeleys & The Featherstonehaughs

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<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>Practitioner Grants for 2023: Award Winners</b></p> <p><b>Caroline Astell-Burt</b> (puppeteer) towards costs for her project <i>A Very British Imagery for Pre-School Audiences</i></p> <p><b>Bogdan Mihai Florea</b> (independent researcher and theatre maker at Nu Nu Theatre) towards preparation costs to enable the realisation of the project <i>'Practising second language English through theatre-making'</i></p> <p><b>Matthew Hahn</b> (freelance theatre director and facilitator) towards covering costs to enable ensemble training workshops in Folkestone</p> <p><b>Emma Lindsay</b> (performance artist) towards costs associated with her project <i>'Miracle Fish: an expanded performance poem that dances with fortune telling, anxieties, letter writing and folklore'</i></p> <p><b>Sarah McCourt</b> (senior lecturer in Drama at Wolverhampton University and freelance actor and theatre-maker) towards the cost of a handheld projector for her project <i>'Monstrous Love Revisited'</i></p> <p><b>Stuart Macbeth</b> (musician/writer) towards sundry expenses and travel to the British Library and National Jazz Archives for <i>'The Maxine Daniels Story'</i>, telling the story of Maxine Daniels, a forgotten figure in British Jazz.</p> <p><b>Hollie Miller</b> (freelance artist and performer) grant to help with funding rehearsal space for her show <i>'Leda and the Swan'</i>, to be premiered at The Palace Theatre in London</p> <p><b>Elizabeth Mounter</b> (actor) grant for travel expenses to Sheffield and consultation with history scholar Michael Braddick for the play <i>'Freeborn John'</i> that is in development</p> <p><b>Pedro Andrés Pérez Rothstein</b> (teacher, theatre practitioner, PhD researcher) towards travel costs for participants on the project: <i>'Dramaturgies of Mental Health: Stories from a Community Theatre Group at Arcola Theatre'</i></p> <p><b>Annabelle Revak</b> (composer and lyricist) towards workshop development of a new historical, feminist musical <i>'Train on Fire'</i></p> <p><b>Sarah Sigal</b> (freelance writer) to hire dramaturg Alice Malin for the project: <i>'Daniel Deronda: the process of adapting C19th literature and social values for the contemporary stage with a focus on British-Jewish identity'</i></p> <p><b>Alys Williams</b> (theatre artist) to subsidise BSL training for the Lead Artist in the show <i>'The Light House'</i></p>
<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>Theatre Book Prize Shortlist for 2023</b> Howard Loxton announced the shortlist: <i>An Actor's Life in 12 Productions</i> by Oliver Ford Davies (Book Guild) <i>But Will It Get a Laugh</i> by Kate Crehan (STR) <i>Inside the Rehearsal Room</i> by Robert Marsden (Methuen Drama)</p>

	<i>Pinter and Stoppard</i> by Carey Perloff (Methuen Drama) <i>The Playwright's Manifesto</i> by Paul Sirett (Methuen Drama) <i>The Club on the Edge of Town</i> by Allan Lane (Salamander Street)
<b>16</b>	<b>Resolutions</b> - None
<b>17</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> - If people would like to go to the book prize event, there is no cost, but we do need to record you are coming. Please register on the website.
<b>18</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity Issues relating to agenda items (standing item)</b> - None raised.
	<b>END</b>

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