



Annual General Meeting

12.30-1.30 June 15 2018

Peter Froggatt Centre Queen's University Belfast

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Alison Findlay, Chair of the BSA, welcomed members, old and new, and thanked them for their attendance. She explained that this AGM was taking place in June, just 7 months after the previous AGM held in November in Stratford on Avon, in order to coordinate the AGM with presentation of our annual accounts to Companies House in May.

Items arising from the minutes to be followed up in the various reports, including the request for us to make the conference programme of teachers' events as accessible as possible within the obvious constraints of conference programme and asked members for approval of the minutes. The minutes were approved.

2. Chair's Report (Alison Findlay)

AF reminded members that since our last AGM, Shakespeare in Britain has lost a trinity of great practitioners with the passing of John Barton and Peter Hall and Michael Bogdanov, whose influences have made such a distinctive mark on the way Shakespeare has been interpreted – on and off stage.

She reported that this had been a remarkable 6 months for the association; our strong financial base allowed us to finance 3 times more bursaries to this conference than in previous years, and an ongoing programme of events across the UK. Finances for this had been generated by the expansion of our membership, largely linked to conference registration.

A new phase of development is now in place: we will move to an annual conference (with host venues already confirmed for the next two years) and a strategic outreach to performance and media practitioners. AF outlined the latter.

(i) In order to increase BSA engagement with performance practitioners of all kinds, including makers of film, tv, video games the BSA will

- convene and launch a new Performance and Media Committee and publicise its activities to this constituency of Shakespeare practitioners
- offer a year's free membership of the BSA to such practitioners (with evidence of Equity membership of Company name).
- hold an event to be held in autumn 2018 in collaboration with The Actors Centre in London, entitled **Why Shakespeare?** This will be a free event open to performance practitioners of all types who work on Shakespeare, designed to encourage interactive discussions on 2 areas: 1. Why do we keep producing and performing Shakespeare on stage, screen and film? What incentives and difficulties does Shakespeare present to you as an independent practitioner or member of a company, small or large? 2. How might the British Shakespeare Association best support the community of performance practitioners? What activities would most engage them?
- A longer term aim is to conduct a national survey of all the Shakespeare being produced in theatres / by touring companies across the country and to apply for funding to compile this information as an archive and go and interview practitioners as they are in production or rehearsing. Such an archive would then be of use to theatre historians as well as practitioners seeking advice and inspiration

(ii) AF announced that the BSA had been invited to nominate people to be members of the Research Excellence Framework panels for English Literature and for Media and Theatre. Although we had put forward several nominations, none of these had been invited to join the panels in the first round.

3. Treasurer's Report (Marion Wynne-Davies)

As Treasurer, MWD reported that the BSA was in a sound financial position and circulated hard copies of the BSA's accounts to those present at the meeting. These were approved by members at the meeting.

4. Membership Officer's report (José Perez Diez)

JPD reported an increase in the total number of current members for 2017/18: **545** 60% increase over last year 339 in 2016/17 before renewals

Of which:

Full price members:	233	43%
Concessions:	135	24%
Education members:	168	31%
Free conference hosts:	5	1%
Honorary Fellows:	4	1%
Gift Aid members:	125	23%
Journal subscribers:	117	21%

Members in 34 countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South

Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

During the year, JP-D had taken advice on the impact of GDPR on our membership databases and mailing lists following PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations) <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-pecr/> and all required changes have now been made. AF thanked JP-D for completing this work.

5. Website and Communications Officer's Report (James Harriman-Smith)

(i) JH-S reported that the BSA's Twitter followers are steadily increasing but there is little material being published on the website at present so members were encouraged to send any information on activities or events.

(iii) In order to economise, the BSA's account with PayPal (for which the BSA has to pay a considerable fee) has been replaced, in consultation with the Treasurer, with a new system for payments to BSA membership / events called STRIPE.

(iv) The BSA's website has been the target of several hostile attacks and so, in consultation with AF as Chair, and JPD as Membership Officer, JHS investigated the best options for updating and protecting our website. We invested in WordFence security immediately to protect the website against hacking attempts and will undertake an upgrade of the website, which is long overdue, using webdesign company Red13. AF thanked JHS for his swift action in cleaning up the hacking problem. Since JHS's term of office ends in September 2018, AF formally thanked him for his work as Web and Communications Officer and members applauded the invaluable work he has done for the BSA.

5. Committee Reports

(i) **Events** Susan Anderson congratulated Ramona Wray on the programme for this year's conference which had attracted such a wide range of members. The next BSA conference will be in 2020, moving to annual conference and will be held 17-20 July at Swansea University. SA handed over to Dr Eoin Price who reported that the call for papers had gone live on the website and that Kim F. Hall will be one of the plenary speakers. SA reminded members that the next deadline for event proposals is 15th July and confirmed that the 'Why Shakespeare' Performance and Media event would be funded through events.

(ii) **Education** Karen Eckersall reported ongoing and increasing engagement with teacher members via Twitter and via *Teaching Shakespeare*. Teachers' involvement in the BSA conferences continues to be very difficult because of the conference fees and on teaching days. She welcomed the fact that events with particular appeal for teachers had been scheduled on Saturday 20 July with free attendance for teachers in the Swansea conference. She also noted that it was a historic moment because the BSA was honouring a school teacher as an Honorary Fellow this year.

(iii) **Fellowships** Andrew Jarvis reminded members that Roger Harcourt's work as a teacher of Shakespeare in school contexts and in a long-running series of summer camps at Stratford would be celebrated in the conferral of a 2018 BSA Honorary Fellowship and that the presentation ceremony, at which Roger would give a speech, would take place at the conference dinner. He further reminded members that nominations for 2019 were now needed and invited from all BSA members, reminding those present that lifetime achievement rather than celebrity status was the qualifying factor.

6. Journal Gabriel Egan was not present at the meeting but sent a report informing members that the BSA Journal *Shakespeare* (now published by Taylor and Francis) is going from strength to strength with three themed issues in Volume 14: one on 'Shakespeare and the Public Sphere' edited by Nigel Wood is already online. Others in the pipeline are 'Shakespeare and Marx' edited by Christian Smith and Hugh Grady, and 'Shakespeare and Riot' edited by Kate Flaherty and Edel Lamb.

There being no matters raised for immediate, general discussion, the meeting closed at 1.25 in order to allow delegates to attend the next session of the conference.