

MINUTES OF THE 190th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SHAKESPEARE CLUB OF STRATFORD UPON AVON HELD AT THE SHAKESPEARE INSTITUTE, CHURCH ST., STRATFORD UPON AVON ON 9th SEPTEMBER 2014.

Approximately 35 members attended.

1. Dr. Susan Brock was elected Chairman of the meeting.
2. Apologies were received from Sylvia Morris, Eileen and David Geldard.
3. The minutes of the last AGM were circulated at the meeting and accepted as a true record.
4. Matters arising.

None not included in the main agenda.

5. Treasurer's report.

The Treasurer submitted her report for the year ended 23rd April 2014:

Membership stood at 98, slightly down on previous years but recruitment for 2014/5 was currently doing well with a number of new members. There were only 38 visitors in the past season (compared to 45 in 2012/13) so members were urged to bring friends to meetings. The takings from the raffle and the bar were in line with previous years and the Treasurer encouraged members to support these fundraising activities.

Lecturers' fees, travel, entertainment and accommodation costs were greatly reduced because speakers were more local than usual and even the president, Professor Michael Dobson, was on the spot. The hire of the hall and public liability insurance rose only slightly and there were savings on post and printing.

Gifts and flowers might be seen as an indulgence but it seemed appropriate to mark the 60th wedding anniversary of the Club's Chairman, Jean Lawrance, to send best wishes to Committee member Mary Reardon during her prolonged hospital stay, and to say thank you for the help received from Rebecca and Stephen at the Shakespeare Institute.

There was no reason to increase the cost of membership. Subscriptions had been held at £15 for nine years and the Treasurer hoped to make that ten by encouraging existing members to introduce new ones, to bring visitors and to spend more at the bar and in raffles.

Rob Bowen of H.L. Barnes continued to audit the accounts each year free of charge.

The Chair thanked Lady Follett for her comprehensive report and the accounts were unanimously approved.

6. Election of President. 2014/15.

The Chair reported that as a result of the moving of the date of the AGM the nomination of a president had been anticipated but she thought there would be no objections to the actor Mr Jeremy Irons. He had accepted in principle subject to ratification at the AGM. The nomination was made by Mary Reardon, seconded by Janet Anslow. The invitation to Mr Irons was supported unanimously.

The Committee had taken the liberty of scheduling the Presidential evening for 11 November. As it was expected to be a popular event, the meeting would be ticketed to ensure seats for members. Each member could bring a guest at the usual visitor fee of £3. Members were asked to collect tickets in advance from the Treasurer.

7. Election of Honorary Treasurer.

Lady Follett was proposed as Treasurer of the Club by Susan Brock, seconded by Bryan Palin. She was re-elected unanimously.

8. Appointment of Honorary Auditors.

H.L. Barnes and Son were approved as Honorary Auditors. Lady Follett would send a letter of thanks.

9. Election of Committee.

Last year's Committee was as follows: Susan Brock, Jean Lawrance, John and Mary Cunningham, Mary Reardon, Eileen Geldard, Lady Follett, Sylvia Morris, Paul Edmondson, Janet Anslow. Dr Paul Edmondson would be standing down. All other committee members were willing to stand again.

Susan Brock, Jean Lawrance, John and Mary Cunningham, Mary Reardon, Eileen Geldard, Lady Follett, Sylvia Morris and Janet Anslow were re-elected unanimously.

Dr Paul Prescott was proposed as a Committee member by Susan Brock and seconded by Lady Follett. He was elected unanimously.

11. Report on programme for next season.

The Chairman, on behalf of Mary Reardon, the Programme Secretary, reported on the arrangements for the coming season as follows:

2014

September 10– John Wyver: From Stage to Screen: Producing ‘RSC Live’ from Stratford

October 7 – Nicholas Fogg: ‘Get thee glass eyes’: A View of Shakespeare and Politics

November 11 – Presidential evening

December 9 – Carol Chillington Rutter: ‘Hear the ambassadors’: Henry Wotton in Venice

2015

January 13 – Tiffany Stern: ‘O bitter black and tragical’: Tragic Performance on the Shakespeare Stage

February 10 – Eugene Giddens: Amicability in Jonson and Shakespeare

March 10 – Sophie Duncan: Shakespeare and the Suffragettes

April 14 – Shakespeare Aloud! A Shakespearian Entertainment

The Chair thanked Ms Reardon for her hard work in putting this excellent programme together.

12. Changes to the Schedule of meetings and general arrangements

The Chair reported that the Club Committee proposed that the recent arrangement of having refreshments before the meeting should cease and that refreshments should be served after the meeting.

A vote was taken and there was one vote against.

It was suggested from the floor that the bar could be open from 7.30 before the meeting and afterwards and it was agreed to try this arrangement. Volunteers to staff the bar were encouraged.

The Chair reported that the committee had considered the proposal that meetings should be started earlier and had decided that the start time of 7.45 be continued to allow members from a distance to attend.

The proposal was agreed unanimously.

13. Shakespeare Club web site

The Chair reported on behalf of Sylvia Morris who was unable to attend the meeting: For much of the past year the website www.stratfordshakespeareclub.org has been down. It came back on line over the summer and in the next few weeks it will be updated to include more information about the club and its activities. If any members have ideas about what they would like to see on the site Sylvia would be delighted to hear from them.

14. Celebrating Shakespeare 2016

The Chair reported that the Committee proposed two special Club events and asked for members to indicate their support:

1. special members’ outing to a Shakespeare-linked destination
For: 18; Against: 0
2. members’ evening party at the Town Hall

For: 22; Against: 0

The Chair reported that she and Sylvia Morris were considering publishing a small book on the history of the Shakespeare Club, for which they would seek external funding.

The Chair reported that Sylvia Morris proposed that, as a tribute to Shakespeare in 2016, the Shakespeare Club should replace the missing bronze quill from the Gower Memorial statue. This would be appropriate for the Club, as in the 1830s it was the first organisation in Stratford to take responsibility for the preservation of the memorials to Shakespeare in Holy Trinity and other monuments.

After some discussion about how to prevent further theft of a quill, it was agreed that the Committee should explore this possibility.

The Chair reported that members of the Committee had met with Nick Walton, Executive Secretary of the International Shakespeare Association, to discuss how the Club might contribute to the World Shakespeare Congress which will be held in Stratford-upon-Avon and London in August 2016, the year of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. The following ideas were discussed and members were asked to express their support or otherwise:

1. Hosting a tea at Holy Trinity for invited delegates on the first Monday (4pm 1 August 2016) of the conference
Willingness to make cakes:
For: 8; Against: 0
2. Club members be invited to provide B&B for delegates who were receiving ISA grants.
For: 8; Against 0
3. Susan Brock and Sylvia Morris to propose a panel on Shakespeare Clubs.

15. 2014/15 Raffles

The Chair reported that the Committee proposed to organise a raffle of Shakespeare books and wine in January as in previous years. John and Margaret Cunnington had kindly offered to make the arrangements. Members able to donate raffle prizes please bring them to the November and December meetings.

In addition, as agreed at the 2013 AGM, from the October meeting the Committee would raffle each month a book or DVD linked to the meeting's speaker.

16. AOB

The Chair reminded members that the October meeting would be on the first Tuesday of the month, 7 October, owing to the availability of the speaker, Mr Nicholas Fogg.

There was a short break before the regular meeting at 7.45: Mr John Wyver, 'From stage to screen: Producing RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon'.