



THE SHAW SOCIETY

Founded 1941

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78TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

via Zoom on

Saturday, 26th September 2020 at 6pm BST (1pm EST, 10am PST)

Present: Anne Wright (Chair), Maureen Clark-Darby (Treasurer), Evelyn Ellis (Secretary) Carla Bossenbroek, Jonas Cemm, Esme Chandler, Barry Cusack, Richard Dietrich (ISS), Bernie Dukore (ISS), Laura Fitzpatrick, Brian Freeland, Robert Gaines (President ISS), Dikki Gleeson, David Grapes, Jesse Hellman (ISS), John McInerney (ISS), Abbey Norman, Michael O'Hara (ISS), Philippa Parker, Colin Pinney, Glenda Silvester, Yulia Skalnaya (ISS), Christine Stevenson, Helen Tierney, Christopher Wallace, Penny Wallace, Oryan Wilson, Martin Wright.

Apologies: Len Conolly, Frances Hughes, Marc Hutchinson, Vivian Rivlin, Cara Saul, Wan Jin, Alexis Ward.

MINUTES

1. Welcome

The Chair, Anne Wright, welcomed members from all over the world including the US and Russia.

2. Approval of the Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes of AGM held on 3rd June 2019 was proposed by Evelyn Ellis, seconded by Bernard Dukore. The motion was carried.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising not otherwise appearing in the Agenda.

4. Chair's Report

The Chair briefly highlighted activities during 2019 :

Spring season: *Village Wooing*; *Bernard Shaw's Postmistress* (with Len Conolly); *Affectionately Ellen*

Summer: *An Evening with Bonnie Greer*; *Arms and the Man* Tour by SHAW2020, Michael Friend Productions and Split-Shift Theatre.

Autumn: dramatisation by Frances Hughes of extracts from Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw correspondence; *'Publishing Shaw'* with Brad Kent, and *Three Rare Playlets*

Two editions of *The Shavian*

Playreading group with Alan Knight

She went on to thank the Trustees, the Executive Committee, speakers, directors and contributors to the Shavian. Finally the Chair paid tribute to those members who sadly died during 2019: Stanley Weintraub, Sue Morgan, Philip Riley, and Mike Burgess volunteer at Shaw's Corner; and in the earlier part of this year Jeremy Trafford and Barbara Smoker.

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Maureen Clark-Darby explained that the major items of difference between the Society's 2019 Financial Statements and those for 2018 was the Society's donation Income, up by 41%. This income was mainly ringfenced for the SHAW2020 productions. There was also an exceptional item of expenditure in 2019, which was a donation made to Shaw2020 of just over £7,200, of which the Society donated, from its reserves, just over £2,300. These items can be seen on the face of the Statement of Financial Activity, which was distributed in advance, and is now available on the website.

Membership was sustainable. Subscription income, including gift aid, is down by 6% year on year due to timing differences. During 2019 the Society's general expenditure exceeded income by £1,365; this deficit was in the unrestricted reserves. The Society's running costs were down by 28% year on year. This decrease is due to the reduction in the Shavian publications in 2019, from 3 publications annually to 2.

The Trustees reviewed the Society's accounting policies and decided no changes to these policies are required.

On 31 December 2019, the Society's capital and reserves were in a satisfactory position, standing at £8,949 of which; £8,534 was held in unrestricted funds and £419 in restricted funds.

The annual subscription rates remain the same as those for 2019. In other words, no increase proposed.

She went on to propose a new subscription type, called a Student Subscription, at a rate of £12 pa which, if adopted at this AGM, will come into effect from January 2021.

A Motion to approve and adopt the 2019 Accounts, proposed by Maureen Clark-Darby, seconded by Richard Dietrich, was carried unanimously.

A second Motion, to adopt the worldwide student membership rate of £12 per annum, proposed by Maureen Clark-Darby, seconded by Brian Freeland, was carried unanimously.

6. Adoption of the amended Constitution

The Chair explained that the purpose of this item was to approve amendments to the constitution, and to adopt the amended constitution with immediate effect. She explained that currently the Shaw Society is an unregistered charity, with charitable status recognised by HMRC. If and when the Society meets the criteria for registration with the Charities Commission, which depend on the Society reaching a specific sustained level of annual turnover, the amended constitution will be submitted with an application for registration. Once the Society is registered with the Charities Commission, the annual accounts will need to be submitted to them each year, as well as to Companies House.

Secretary Evelyn Ellis pointed out the key changes from the Constitution adopted in 2014, mainly the right to pay actor-members of the Executive Committee for acting commitments or production of performances. There were also slight changes to the maintenance of names and addresses of members in accordance with laws of data protection, and the reduction of the minimum required number of Trustees from six to four, which, she said, is more proportionate to the scale of the Society.

A Motion to adopt the amended Constitution was proposed by Evelyn Ellis and seconded by Abbey Norman. The motion was carried unanimously.

7. Election of Trustees, officers and members of the Executive Committee:

The following candidates were proposed for election:

Chair: Anne Wright proposed by Evelyn Ellis, seconded by Dikki Gleeson

Vice-Chair: Maureen Clark-Darby, proposed by Evelyn Ellis, seconded by Anne Wright

Secretary Evelyn Ellis, proposed by Anne Wright, seconded by Helen Tierney

Treasurer: Elaine Ridealgh-Bradshaw, proposed by Evelyn Ellis, seconded by Abbey Norman

Trustee: Jonas Cemm, proposed by Evelyn Ellis, seconded by Bob Gaines

The Trustees, officers and members of the Executive Committee were duly elected.

8. **Resignations:** Alan Knight, a former Chair of the Society, and Mark Egerton, a former Secretary, have resigned as Trustees. The Chair and Trustees would like to thank them both for their generous contribution and support over many years.

9. **Future plans:**

The Chair outlined plans for the autumn season, which include a series of online events under the banner *Sharing Shaw*. The first event, which followed immediately after the AGM, was a presentation by SHAW2020 of three rare playlets. The next will be in November entitled "*Farewell GBS*": a new show devised and presented by Helen Tierney and Alexis Ward, to mark the 70th anniversary of Shaw's death. This will be preceded by a brief curtain raiser, "Darlington 1950", based on extracts from "*Affectionately Ellen, Ever GBS*", a full-length play written by Anne Wright. In December the *Sharing Shaw* event will be a film by Michael Friend, putting together 'first; and 'last' writings of Shaw on the theme of marriage, to include a dramatised scene from the early novel *The Irrational Knot*, scenes from *Overruled* and from Shaw's last play *Why She Would Not*.

All three events will include introductions and panel discussions, with opportunity for audience participation, taking a similar format to past events at the Actors Centre but with the added benefit that with Zoom, many more people will be able to participate from all over the world. The *Sharing Shaw* series will complement SHAW2020's ongoing YouTube series *Talking Shaw*, which presents cameos of Shaw characters and monologues by celebrity Shaw enthusiasts.

The next issue of *The Shavian* will be published around the end of the year and will also highlight the 70th anniversary of Shaw's death and the end of copyright over his works.

The Annual General Meeting concluded at 6-45pm and was followed at 7-30pm by a live production of *Three Short Plays by Bernard Shaw* performed by members of SHAW2020.

SHAW SOCIETY CHAIR'S REPORT 2019

Shaw Society events

2019 was a year of major development for the Society, in conjunction with the SHAW2020 company as well as Michael Friend Productions. New programmes of script-in-hand performances combined with distinguished guest lectures combined to provide a stimulating series both in London and other venues.

The year's events opened with a delightful production by SHAW2020: a fully staged *Village Wooing* at the Actors Centre, directed by Jonas Cemm, with actors Maryann O'Brien and Paul Thomas. This was the first of a 'triple bill' of linked events. It was followed by Professor Leonard Conolly as narrator presenting dramatised extracts from his newly-published book *Bernard Shaw's Postmistress: the Memoir of Jisbella Lyth as told to Romie Lambkin*. Anne Wright read the part of Jisbella, Julia Faulkner was Romie Lambton, and Jonas Cemm played Shaw as well as directing the programme. Romie Lambton's son Blaise Bullimore and family were present. Jisbella Lyth 'recognised' herself and her post office in *Village Wooing*, and saw three actresses in the role: Sybil Thorndike, Brenda Bruce and Ellen Pollock. Ellen Pollock was the link to the third of the triple bill, in the premiere of Anne Wright's full-length play *Affectionately Ellen, Ever GBS* based on her correspondence with Shaw from 1932 when she played Sweetie in *too True to be Good*, through to his death in 1950. Jonas Cemm directed and played Shaw, and Laura Fitzpatrick was Ellen Pollock. The play was performed in the presence of Ellen's son Michael Hancock and his family. The performance at the Actors Centre on May 12th was preceded the previous evening by a second presentation of *Bernard Shaw's Postmistress* in the Palladian Church at Ayot St Lawrence (this time with Vicky Ogden reading Romie Lambkin), forming a weekend mini Shaw Festival.

This set the scene for the summer celebrations, with a successful touring production of *Arms and the Man* by Michael Friend Productions, SHAW2020 and Split-Shift Theatre. The production was sponsored by the Shaw Society and individual donors, and the premiere was preceded by a fundraising evening with Vice-President Bonnie Greer in the beautiful setting of Lauderdale House in Highgate. Bonnie in interview with Jonas Cemm shared reflections on her life and career, interspersed with readings from *Pygmalion* and some of her own plays. Lauderdale was also the first venue of the tour, in the beautiful setting of the grounds of the house on a perfect summer evening. The production then went to Ayot, again in the church, for the birthday celebration, and on to two further venues: the Sarah Thorne theatre in Broadstairs, Kent, and Harlington Manor in Bedfordshire.

The autumn season saw two more successful presentations. On 30 September longstanding Shaw Society member Frances Hughes narrated readings from Ellen Terry's correspondence with Bernard Shaw, with Jonas Cemm reading Shaw and Lainey Shaw reading Ellen Terry. Then on 28 October Professor Brad Kent, on a research trip to London from Canada, gave a preview of his forthcoming landmark Worlds Classics edition of Shaw, due for publication in 2021. Professor Kent's talk was followed by three short playlets taken from Dan H Laurence's Bodley Head edition of 1975: "A Skit for *the Taptaft Revue*", "The Girl with the Golden Voice", and "Beauty's Duty".

Two other events of importance for the Society were Philip Hagemann's short opera *The Music Cure* presented by Pegasus Opera at the Royal Academy of Music in April, and Jonas Cemm directing a production of *Pygmalion* at the Attic Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Shavian

Two editions of *the Shavian* were published (although the second was delayed by family circumstances and appeared shortly after the end of the year). In addition to features on the Shaw Society events, they included original articles of research. Philippa Parker wrote about an early staging of *The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet* by C B Purdom in the garden city of Letchworth; and John Dixon wrote about Shaw's influence on the writing of activist Brigid Brophy.

Play Reading Group

The play reading group continued under the leadership and direction of Alan Knight, with sessions including *Tales of New York* by J.P. Donleavy, *Night Must Fall* by Emyln Williams, *La Ronde* by Arthur Schnitzer, *Dear Brutus* by J.M. Barrie and *Cause Celebre* by Terence Rattigan

Obituaries

The society paid tribute to the passing of Professor Stanley Weintraub, distinguished biographer, historian and Shaw scholar; Sue Morgan, House Manager of Shaw's Corner and member of the Society's Executive Committee; Philip Riley, former Editor of the *Shavian*; and Mike Burgess, one of the longest serving volunteers at Shaw's Corner; and in the earlier part of this year Jeremy Trafford and Barbara Smoker.