

THE SHAW SOCIETY

Founded 1941

Registered Charity in England and Wales No.1200279
www.shawsociety.org.uk contact@shawsociety.org.uk

80TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on Zoom

Sunday, 17th July 2022 at 6pm BST (1pm EST, 10am PST)

Present: Carla Bossenbroek, Jonas Cemm, Maureen Clark-Darby, Mary Constance Crane, Evelyn Ellis, Brian Freeland, Philip Hagemann, Jesse Hellman, Malcolm Homes, Marc Hutchinson, Alexis Leighton, Lorenzo Mason, Paddy O'Keeffe, Tereza Pultarova, Judith Quillard, Jean Reynolds, Elaine Ridealgh-Bradshaw, Murray Rosenthal, Yulia Skainaya, Christine Stevenson, Helen Tierney, Chris Wallace, Penny Wallace, Michael Waters, Christine Wise, Anne Wright, Martin Wright.

Apologies: Cornelia Reyes Acosta, Toni Kanal, Richard Digby-Day, Sylvia Coll-Vinent, Philippa Parker, Siobhan O Donovan, Sula and Dikki Gleeson

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the 79th Annual General Meeting of the Society held on 24th July 2021 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair.

2. Chair's Report

The Acting Chair of the Society, Maureen Clark-Darby, presented her report for 2021/22:

2021 was going to be a year of celebration: it marked the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Shaw Society, and the previous November had been the 70th anniversary of Shaw's death when his works came out of copyright. Building on the success of the 2019 "Arms and the Man" tour, the Society was planning to tour "Mrs Warren's Profession". It was also planning monthly readings and performances at various venues throughout the UK.

Instead, 2021 was yet another year of lockdowns and restrictions. With nearly every theatre closed, and social-distancing regulations prohibiting even the smallest of gatherings, the Society turned to Zoom, sponsoring additions to SHAW2020's series of 'Talking Shaw' cameos of Shaw's characters and plays, with readings from Shaw plays and personal tributes by Shavian notables - all to be found on the SHAW2020 YouTube Channel, with a link from the Shaw Society website. Available on the Shaw Institute website (<https://shaw-institute.com>) is the Farewell GBS series of tributes and memories of Shaw which were broadcast at the end of 2020.

In March 2021, the Society, in association with SHAW2020, celebrated St Patrick's Day on-line with a performance of "O'Flaherty VC" coupled with a highly informative talk by Professor Jim Moran of Nottingham University. The performance was introduced with a nostalgic Irish contemplation, devised, and compiled by Jonas Cemm, with original posters, illustrations and film backed with Irish music. This is also still available online from the Society website. In the Summer, as restrictions eased, the Society sponsored an entry to the Camden Fringe with a performance of "Village Wooing" by SHAW2020, directed by Jonas Cemm. Out of 269 events taking part, the theatre press singled out *Village Wooing* for special mention:

“...bringing a touch of class to this year’s Camden Fringe...” as one reviewer put it, getting five-star reviews, and much-sought after awards. The performance was so successful that the same award-winning production is now going on tour, again sponsored by the Society. At the same time, our website has been totally revamped and modernised. It is still very much a work in progress – our next task is to enable new members to register and pay online. This is our priority. If you have any news you think members would like to read or see, please do send it to us – the email address is on the website.

This brings me to what we planned for this year, 2022. The main task was to complete the application to register the Shaw Society with the Charity Commission. This application has now been submitted and we await a response. We are extremely grateful for the invaluable guidance we received from one of our members, Marc Hutchinson. We will keep you updated on this issue.

In the Summer we are planning a **Shaw Crawl** – a chance to visit parts of London that were so familiar to Shaw accompanied by related Shaw readings, to take place on bank holiday Sunday 28th August, open to members and non-members alike. The plan is to keep it light and friendly, and we hope to make it a regular event; there is no shortage of places in London that were special to Shaw.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr Anne Wright, our former chair, for the invaluable work she did in keeping the Society going through difficult and challenging times. Anne’s academic knowledge of Shaw and her artistic writing skills helped the performance element of our events go from strength to strength. Her full-length play “Affectionately Ellen, Ever GBS” was extensively researched and centred on the unpublished letters between Shaw and one of his favourite actresses and Former President of the Shaw Society, Ellen Pollock. The success of a one-off fully staged performance at the actors’ centre, one of our last in person events, gave Anne the inspiration to adapt her own work for our new “tech savvy” age. A cut down, short film version expertly edited by Martin Wright, entitled “Darlington 1950” was pièce de resistance of our Farewell GBS tribute.

Dr Wright steered the Society’s ship into new unknown waters and I am proud to have taken over from her as Chair and encouraged that she remains a valuable part of our community as she continues as editor of The Shavian and takes on the new role as the society’s Academic Adviser, a role that has already proved extremely important, as questions and enquiries from students, scholars and writers have increased tenfold with the establishment of our new website. So once again I would like to say to Anne, a heartfelt thank you from all your Shavian colleagues.

3. The Shavian

Editor Dr Anne Wright emphasised the importance of the journal and its outstanding record of original research. The Spring 2021 issue included a detailed examination of Shaw’s last appointment diary which had recently been returned to Shaw’s Corner “by a member of the public”. Celebrations for the 70th anniversary of Shaw’s death, the end of copyright on his works, and the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Society were prominently covered in both 2021 issues of The Shavian. Still in lock-down, many of the commemorative events were held remotely by zoom, with just two live performances: Village Wooing’s award-winning production at the Camden Fringe, and the UK premier of Philip Hagemann’s operatic adaptation of *Passion, Poison and Petrification*.

4. Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer delivered the following Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2021.

The major items of difference between the Society’s 2021 Financial Statements and those for 2020 was the Society’s donation Income, which was down by 77% during the year. In 2020, donations had been received for Talking Shaw and Sharing Shaw on-line presentations. These items could be seen on the face of the Statement of Financial Activity

which had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Membership had reduced slightly, Subscription income did not include Gift Aid in 2021, whereas it did in 2020. The Gift Aid element would be claimed in the coming year and should be approximately £1,600. There were no paying events and meetings during the year, due to Covid.

During 2021 the Society's general expenditure exceeded income by £4,213; This deficit was in the unrestricted fund.

The Society's running costs increased by 17% year on year. This increase was due to the publication of 2 Shavian Journals in 2021, and 1 in 2020 and consultancy costs of £1,000 in 2021. The Society sponsored a live performance of Village Wooing in 2021, compared to *Talking Shaw* and *Sharing Shaw* in 2020 which were both on-line.

The Trustees had reviewed the Society's accounting policies and decided no changes to these policies were required. On 31 December 2021, the Society's capital and reserves were in a satisfactory position, standing at £4,292; £3,873 was held in unrestricted funds and £419 in restricted funds.

The annual subscription rates would remain the same as those for 2021. In other words, no increase proposed.

Tony Ghilchik FCA was appointed Independent Examiner.

RESOLVED that the Reports and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021 be adopted.

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

Officers:

Maureen Clark-Darby - Chair
Elaine Ridealgh-Bradshaw - Treasurer
Evelyn Ellis - Secretary

Trustees:

Jonas Cemm
Cornelia Reyes Acosta
Tereza Pultarova
David Grapes

Resignation:

Dr Anne Wright announced her resignation as Trustee and Chair of the Shaw Society at the end of 2021 due to pressure of work. She confirmed that she would continue to edit the Society's journal *The Shavian*, would take on the new role of Academic Advisor and continue to run the Shaw Institute.

6. Vice-Presidents:

The Chair announced the appointment of the following Vice-Presidents:

Dame Judi Dench CH DBE FRSA, Professor Richard Dietrich, Professor Richard Digby Day, Michael Friend, Bonnie Greer OBE, Harry Hadden-Paton, Toni Kanal, Hayward Morse, Michael Rosen and Sam Walters MBE.

RESOLVED: The appointment of Vice-Presidents was ratified.

The meeting ended at 6-45pm and after a short break was followed by a pre-recorded chance to meet the cast of the award-winning performance of *Village Wooing* as it was about to go on tour around the country in 2022. This was accompanied by a live discussion with the director and cast chaired by Dr Anne Wright, Academic Advisor to the Society.