

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The Teddington Theatre Club
Limited held on Monday 28th November 2016**

DRAFT MINUTES PENDING APPROVAL AT THE 2017 AGM

Apologies: Gerald Baker, Simon Bartlett, John Buckingham, Roberta Cole, Keith & Murial Collins, Laurie Coombs, Juliet Corbett, David Cornwell, Liz Eliot, Katie Eliot, Steve & Michelle Hood, Tracy Frankson, Joann Fuller, John Gilbert, Simon Lane, Dawn Lacey, Jen Laney, Betty Leppink, Michael & Bridget Norman, Roger & Jane Smith, Danny Wain,

Present Clare Henderson Roe (Chairman) and 37 full members

Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2015 were approved.
Proposed Mike Elgey Seconded Jeremy Gill.

The Chair read a short statement from our President Roger Smith apologising for his absence due to recuperation from a recent operation.

The Chair presented her report for the year

Good evening and welcome to the 2016 AGM. I am going to speak for a few minutes reflecting on the last year at Teddington Theatre Club and Hampton Hill Theatre and will leave the artistic side of thing to Joolz who will speak next. Diane Salkild will present the financial report and we shall follow the agenda for the formal part of tonight's meeting. After the main meeting and a break there will be some short presentations by members of the Board and YAT and the opportunity for discussion of TTC matters.

I have been reflecting on the range of productions we provide. I will not steal Joolz' thunder but suffice to say that in the last year the quality of our shows has once again stepped up a gear and this was reflected in our success at the Swan Awards in September. TTC has done two plays by the playwright Hugh Whitmore and we were honoured that he and his wife attended both productions and met with the casts. What a lovely memory not just for us but also, I hope, for him, as both shows were wonderfully presented. Throughout our productions we have welcomed new members and this shows people want to get involved and are, I hope, proud to be members of a theatre club that strives for excellence in all areas.

YAT have presented great shows in the last year and I have enjoyed them all very much. I also enjoy spending time with members of YAT who are polite, enthusiastic and have so much to bring to the world of theatre. YAT members continue to also join TTC and this is healthy for our future. Lizzie Lattimore will be giving us an update about YAT in the second half of this evening.

This year we took part in the 'Golden Thread' Exhibition, celebrating Arts Richmond's 50th Anniversary. There was a lovely display of TTC memorabilia and my thanks to

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Stuart Turnbull and his team for sorting through the archive and to Gerry and Wes for putting together the TTC section of the exhibition which represented us very well and was stylishly presented.

All Board members have continued to work extremely hard on behalf of TTC and HHT. Joolz Connery has overseen the season and manages any queries that arise along the way. I think this role is perhaps the most challenging and Joolz also has had the sometimes tricky task of balancing this with work that often takes her overseas. Diane Salkilld has a mammoth role as Finance Director and works tirelessly to ensure our finances are meticulously maintained. Gerry McCarthy continues to ensure our publicity is of a good quality and with her team, markets and sells our productions effectively. This year we were pleased to welcome two new members of the Social Media Team, Steph von Weira and Becky Tarry. Barry McDonald has met regularly with John Gilbert to keep up to date with all things HHT and has a good knowledge of the TTC and hires balance needed in order to generate the income required to maintain our finances. Vicky Horder works with the BAT team and together with Harry Jacobs keeps us abreast of all matters Building and Technical. Harry has also completed several sound-related jobs throughout the year and will provide an update of Building and Technical happenings in the second part of this evening. Graham Titcombe assists wherever needed, has been supportive and made useful contribution to our meetings, plus completed occasional interviews for the magazine. With Sue Bell as our Company Secretary and Barry Hill, our Minutes Secretary we are lucky to have a wealth of experience and a team that has worked well together, always willing to express their points of view and we have positive and constructive monthly meetings. I count myself very lucky to volunteer alongside such a strong and committed team, who strive for what is best for TTC and HHT. Joolz and Graham are standing down this year and my sincere thanks to them both for all they have done in their time on the Board and to all my fellow Board members for their unfailing commitment and support.

The increase in business and social hires seen last year has continued and we have a busy schedule that keeps our Theatre buzzing. My thanks to John Gilbert and Wes Henderson Roe for all the hard work they do to manage this so well. My thanks also to everyone who is involved in ensuring that rooms and equipment are set up, the bar is staffed and that our hirers are made to feel welcome and provided with the help and support they need when at HHT. Wes will give us an overview of the outside hires in the second part of this evening.

This year saw the passing of an amazing man, Tony Eva. Tony joined in 1949 and had been involved in so many areas and was a proud and loyal member of TTC. He had been our President since November 2013 and always showed a keen interest in all that was going on. He was a gentle man who had a great understanding of people. As many have said, it really was the 'end of an era' with Tony's passing and we shall not see his like again. I am glad and proud to have known him.

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In the last year we have also lost Chris Hurles, a great actor and designer, whose laugh was infectious and who brightened up life, and then Paul Bowen who, prior to his retirement to Portugal attended productions regularly, wrote press reviews and always had a keen interest in TTC. On a happier note, we have had two additions to the TTC fold. To Jenny and John Winterburn, a daughter Tabitha and to Steve and Nella Shepherdson a son, Isaac.

This year the Board considered the appointment of a new Honorary President and also a Vice President, and were delighted when Roger Smith and Sue Bell accepted these appointments respectively. Both have been active members of TTC since 1972 and have demonstrated a great commitment to all things TTC and HHT. They are great examples of people who, whilst enjoying the glamour of acting in productions also recognise the importance of all aspects of the theatre and have volunteered in many different areas and continue to do so. We wish Roger a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him soon.

I find myself once again appealing for more volunteers. Each of the departments do not run themselves and it is important that everyone in TTC understands that realistically, without more volunteers we will struggle in the future. We advertise regularly in *Theatre* magazine and get very little response. This year we were only able to attend two external events to market TTC. I need everyone to consider where they might be able to offer a few hours to help ease the burden on the small band of people who do volunteer. I say this every year and we need TTC members to listen and act, please, or we will be at risk of the voluntary structure that underpins all we do as TTC destabilising, which will have a knock on effect on our productions. Without box office and front of house we cannot put on a show, it is as simple as that, and without the bar and ice creams the social side of coming to the theatre would be less inviting. I have tried in previous years to say this gently and now I am saying it with firm conviction - please, come forward and help us maintain our teams of volunteers so the future of our productions is guaranteed. To those of you who already volunteer my sincere thanks, and I hope that this time next year I will be able to speak about the increase in our number. We are currently on the lookout for a new Box Office Manager. Roberta Cole has fulfilled this role for six years and has done a fantastic job. The sooner we can get a new person or persons in post then Roberta can train them up and provide the support and guidance needed to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to perform the role with confidence.

Looking forward to the rest of 2016 I should mention that we have two social events planned. We are having a Life Members Afternoon Tea and I am so looking forward to meeting up with everyone and enjoying good company and conversation, not to mention lovely food! My thanks to Betty and Jojo Leppink who have volunteered with great enthusiasm and talent to do the food for the event. Then on New Year's Eve we have a TTC Members Party and Joolz is using her expertise to head up what

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promises to be a very jolly evening and I look forward to seeing many of you there – the event has been advertised in *Theatre* magazine.

And finally I am very pleased to announce that the Board has agreed a Life Membership. This goes to a person who flies the flag high for making TTC a friendly, happy place to be. During her years at TTC she has directed shows, served on the play selection committee and has also been the artistic link on many productions. She has been a rehearsal prompt and a regular props mistress and the sentence 'I think I know where I might be able to find that' when asked for something obscure has comforted many a director! She writes constructive reviews for TTC and YAT productions and is also seen volunteering for bar and front of house. She is part of the welcoming face of TTC for prospective and new members and rarely misses our monthly Saturday Open Mornings, always happy to show people around our wonderful theatre and enthuse them to join. She has also been part of our Youth Mentoring scheme by sponsoring young people to become members of TTC, and knows all too well how vital the next generation is to ensure TTC continues to go from strength to strength. With someone as cheerful and welcoming as she, whose quiet commitment to TTC shines gently, who is a voice of reason that, if bid, can be relied on to provide honest, fair and wise counsel, I hope you will all agree that Heather Morgan is a worthy recipient.

To receive and adopt the Chair's Report
Proposed Stuart Turnbull Seconded Nick Osorio

The Artistic Director presented her report for the year.

As you know this is my last Artistic Report as I'm stepping down this year. After 2 years as PSC Chair and 3 as AD, I think it's probably time for someone else to bring some new ideas to the theatre, as I personally believe, that's the way we will stay successful and not become staid or boring. Along with the PSC, we have worked very hard over the past few years to raise the standard of what we do at TTC. It's not been easy and at times it's not been very friendly BUT it has been worthwhile. It's an incredibly hard job when you have to keep saying no to people - especially when what they consider a great idea for a play or production and what has been a personal goal of some for such a long time - just doesn't fit into the season or with what we are trying to achieve. I found over the years that it's not about personal opinion - there are some plays that we've put on over the past 5 years that were just not up my street at all - but it's not all about me - it's not about any individual. It's about what's good for the theatre, financially, theatrically and most importantly what will help us grow in the years to come. And I have been ruthlessly true to this and not been afraid to make tough decisions at times, when the outcome was never going to be received favourably.

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What I have also been really pleased with, is the amount of new members we've had join over the years and also the continuing amount of newbies who have attended our auditions. Only last night we were auditioning for *The Cat's Meow* and it's always so pleasing to see a real mix of both long term members and people who have come along, not only because they've just found TTC but also because we're putting on plays they really want to be in.

Since my last report, we've put on some wonderful productions both in the studio and the main house. We've put on a couple of stinkers too but it's always going to be a case of hit and miss when you take chances. Audiences are like the rest of us, they all have opinions and some things they like and will come and see and some things they don't and will stay at home. For me it's been about finding a season which hopefully at least half of what we are offering, will appeal to them. And judging from the great box office figures that we've had in the last 12 months, I know that we've been doing a good job.

I think what has definitely changed over the past couple of years, is the fact that it's not a case of do I or do I not like this play - it's been a case of - well, I know if I go, I'm going to see a really good production, so let's go anyway. That's the standard of the plays we now put on and that's why our box office figures are so good. The TTC board have been instrumental in investing in our productions of late too, I went to them a while back and said that if you want me to put on great productions then I'm going to need more money to do it - and the response was Yes. When I then went back (on a couple of occasions) and said I want this production not to be great but to be fantastic and need an additional x amount, again I was told YES (with a number of caveats) but I did get a yes. So the board also see how vital it is to invest in what we are doing.

There are a number of people at TTC (I would say approx...30) that hold this place together, they are always there, they are always available and they are always around to help out. If it wasn't for these people then the theatre just wouldn't run as efficiently as it does. My plea here today is if you don't think you're one of the 30, then please think about perhaps being one. Believe me, we are getting close to wearing some people out and the constant pleas for bar staff and duty managers seem to go unheard. I can do all I can to make the productions fantastic but if we don't have the support people around us, then the plays just won't go on.

So for my final section I'm going to ask that you indulge me just a little. I had a look back at the last 3 years since I became AD and picked out just a few of the shows that I was most proud of. In 2014 we had *Blackbird* and *Brimstone & Treacle* in the studio, both of which were difficult subjects but so expertly handled. In the main house we had *The Rise & Fall of Little Voice* - who can forget Aggie's stunning performance as Little Voice and we also had *My Boy Jack* (which I'll come back to). In 2015 in the studio my favourites were *Colder Than Here*, *Proof* and *Side by Side* by

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Sondheim and in the main house we had the unforgettable *Equus* - a fantastic production in every single way and my absolute highlight of that year. And in 2016 we've had *Betrayal* and *Stevie* in the Studio and the outstanding *Breaking the Code* and *RENT* in the main house.

I did try to think of my absolute favourites from my time as AD and it was really hard, it was like trying to pick your favourite child but to me there are 4 that stand out.

My Boy Jack - directed by Wes Henderson Roe and Jen Laney. This was the first production for a long time that physically moved me to tears. When Peter Hill was describing how Kipling's son was standing in the field, his jaw had been shot off and he had a tear rolling down his face - it was incredible, especially when he added that he couldn't go and comfort him because he was an officer and it wasn't the done thing. To me this is what theatre is all about. It's about a moment - for that moment, I could see everything Peter was describing - it was as if you were right there - and that is something that stays with you for a very long time. I won't ever forget that moment.

Equus - directed by John Buckingham. Everything about that production was outstanding. From the performances - to the horses - the costumes (or lack of them in some cases) to the bespoke music, created solely for the production. A well-deserved Swan Award for Best Production and again some really touching movements. The end of the play, when Alan blinds the horses and you had the mix of the horses bolting, Alan screaming and the music playing - quite incredible and if you shut your eyes you can see it now as clear as day.

Breaking the Code - directed by Nigel Cole. The first of the bigger budget productions but oh it was worth it. The combination of fantastic performances coupled with the high tec imagery made *Breaking the Code* something that TTC hadn't seen or done before - and the audiences loved it. It is this kind of willingness to do something different which enables us to keep the standard of what we do so high. Nigel Cole noted that our in house equipment wasn't going to be adequate enough to get what he wanted on the screen, so he didn't come asking for more money, he offered to pay for higher end equipment himself to ensure his production was going to be excellent. Says a lot about Nigel doesn't it. (He didn't have to pay by the way; we found the money and with Gary's involvement secured an improvement to our projection capabilities for future productions). Again, Peter Hill's performance was something to treasure and it would be the second time he moved me to tears during one of his speeches.

And finally for me *RENT* - directed by Dane Hardie. This was a real challenge. Not only is *RENT* not a main stream musical, it's a rock opera and was it perhaps a step too far for TTC who don't do many musicals? Whilst we were led to believe *RENT*

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would have a cult following, we did wonder just how far and wide this would reach. I think we had our answer at the auditions, over 50 people turned up to audition ... many of whom we had never seen before but had come to audition just because it was *RENT* - extraordinary. *RENT* was outstanding. Again the performances were fantastic, the set and staging brought everything to life and everyone seemed to appreciate the fact that it was a wonderful production, despite whether you liked the story line or not. So again something to be proud of and something I found myself crying at the end of - again. I'm starting to think I might be too emotional!!

When I looked back at my four favourite productions, there seemed to be a number of coincidences - Peter Hill gave outstanding performances in both *My Boy Jack* and *Breaking the Code*. Nigel Cole directed *Breaking the Code* and was the psychiatrist Martin Dysart in *Equus*. Dane Hardie was Nugget the horse in *Equus* and directed *RENT*. DON'T let these people go!!!

And to top it all off in September not only did we win Best Production for *Breaking the Code*, we also won Best Musical for *RENT*. A fantastic achievement for any club and not something I think we will see again for a very long time. So well done to everyone involved.

I hope I have left 2017 in a good position to continue our success. We have the wonderful *A Streetcar Named Desire* coming up after the panto, following which you will be able to see a double bill by our much beloved local playwright Jimmie Chinn and coming soon after that John Buckingham (remember *Equus* and *Betrayal*) will be back again, this time with *Jerusalem*. I'm booking my tickets now!!

So I would like to leave by thanking everyone that has supported me and given me support throughout my tenure, the TTC board, the PSC and the fantastic directors, casts and crew. It's not goodbye from me, just bon voyage, as I hope to be back treading the boards at some point in the not too distant future.

I do wish TTC and everyone in it the very best of luck for the future. I hope my legacy continues in the very safe hands of Lottie and most importantly you (and our audiences) keep coming back time after time to experience what we create.

I have always adopted a mantra (stolen from Noel Coward) which says

**"Work hard, do the best you can, don't ever lose faith in
yourself and take no notice of what other people say
about you"**

... it seems to work!

Thank you!

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To receive and adopt the Artistic Chair's report
Proposed Bill Compton Seconded Mandy Matthaie

The Finance Director presented the Auditor's report and audited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016.

The full version of the Annual Report and Accounts is available to view on the TTC website under the section 'About Us'. The report is 21 pages in length and if anyone does want a full paper copy to read please let me know. However my report to you tonight will be a summary of the information.

As in the previous years since I became Finance Director the figures are being presented to you again in pie chart form which I think gives you a better representation of the accounts. Thank you once again Graham Titcombe for preparing them for me (I will miss your contribution)

I will start with the good news that in the financial year ending 31st March 2016 we made a small surplus of £7,191 and if you would like to look at the Income chart you will see a breakdown of the income we have received. The main area to point out to you is the income from the Box office which was an amazing £82,670 (36%) of our total income up from 30% on the previous year. Box office sales have been growing and when we come on to the production returns you will see how most of our shows have sold between 73% and 100% with only two shows dipping below 40% sold. Although, I am only here to report on the previous financial year, these box office sales have continued this year. Income from the bar and outside hires remain strong; the only area that is declining is Subscriptions. This has decreased from 10% in 2014-2015 to 7%. Subscriptions continue to fall year on year and this also has an impact on the gift aid that we can recover from HMRC. Donations were £2,000 mainly due to a match funding initiative and donations for use of costumes and props.

The second chart analyses the day to day running costs of the building which equates to approximately £269 a day and shows the main areas of insurance, utility costs, cleaning, maintenance and depreciation. This is a reduction of 1% on the previous year which is mainly due to a reduction of our costs for water, light and heat as we switch over to LEDs and also to the contracts that I am renegotiating as they come up for renewal. We have changed our gas supplier and our electricity supplier has now installed a smart meter which enables us to check and only pay each month for what we use rather than estimated bills in the past. Insurance costs have increased but this should also be less next year as we went out to tender and have changed insurers. The largest area of spending continues to be on cleaning and maintenance.

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The third chart shows the cost of our day to day activities from the production costs of shows, bar purchases and the costs involved in obtaining and servicing outside hires. All areas have increased slightly although their overall percentages really have not changed. Payments to duty managers have decreased slightly (down 1%) but the income from outside hires was slightly less so the need for duty managers is in line with that change. Production costs have increased too, mainly due to the increased costs of Performing rights but their percentage of the overall expenditure on activities remains the same at 19%. The other sheet that you have is in table form and shows the same headings for Income and Expenditure but gives you a comparison between 2014-2015 and 2015-2016.

Before I move on to the Production returns I would just like to mention some of the purchases that have been made this year for the theatre. With the bequest from the late Jim Tickle the foyer lighting was completely replaced with LED lights which I think everyone agrees is looking great. Other purchases this year have been a silent fridge for the upstairs bar, a new message board for the box office, LED monitors for the Stage management, a new coffee machine and hot plate, a new key safe for the bar and a new security video recorder.

The final sheets are the TTC Production Returns which analyses the costs of each production along with the ticket sales shown as money and percentage of house sales. Last year I updated this return to reflect the contribution that each production makes towards the cost of running the theatre and I would remind members that this table does not include the day to day running costs of the theatre but only specific production costs as shown on the return. It does not include marketing costs, only the cost of the banner that goes outside the theatre and does not include the use of occasional outside rehearsal space or the costs incurred through the sale of tickets. It only includes the cost of programmes if we have had to have them printed elsewhere.

My team has remained the same this year and so I would like to thank the following:-

Ann Beauchamp - our Production Accountant who deals with all of the expenses of the TTC productions and bar purchases and Sandra and Kevin Brady who work on the Box Office Accounts and reconcile each show's ticket sales both on and offline.

I would also like to thank Ed and Chris Dapre who continue to deal with the bar tills and Laurie Coombs for the analysis of bar sales. My thanks also go to Roberta Cole and her team for the running of the box office, Sue Bell for the Membership accounts, Robin Legard for maintaining the membership database and also John Gilbert and Wes Henderson Roe for producing the invoices for all of the outside hires.

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Appointment of auditors

Weldon Turnbull, as in previous years have audited the accounts and prepared them in the format that has been presented and will go to Companies House. I understand that we have had the same auditor although the company name has changed) for at least as long as we have had the theatre. However the audited accounts are being prepared by them later and later each year and the signed accounts only became available to go on the website less than a week ago and five months after I left all the accounts with them. I have met with a firm of auditors called Taylorcocks of Farnham. I believe they will be more helpful when it comes to the annual audit and will give me the same level of telephone support. Their charges are approximately £1,000 less and their fee will remain the same for the next 3 years although there is no obligation for us to stay with them for those 3 years.

I would therefore recommend that we change our auditors to Taylorcocks, initially for the next audit and I will report back at the next AGM.

This concludes my report. If anyone has any questions please ask them now or see me later.

Proposed Berni Messenger Seconded Ann Beauchamp

Appointment of Auditors

To resolve that Taylorcocks of Farnham be appointed as Auditors for the year ending 31st March 2017.

Proposed Wes Henderson Roe Seconded Barry Hill

Remuneration of Auditors

It was resolved that “the Board of Directors fix the remuneration of the Auditors for the year ended 31st March 2017”.

Proposed Nick Eliot Seconded Ken Mason

Re-election of Directors

Graham Titcombe and Joolz Connery are standing down this year. Nominations to replace them have been received from Berni Messenger and Lottie Walker respectively.

It was therefore resolved that the under listed be appointed as Directors of the Company to serve until the next annual general meeting or sooner as the members may decide: Unanimous vote.

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Clare Henderson-Roe as Chairman
Diane Salkilld as Finance Director
Vicky Horder as Premises & Equipment Director
Lottie Walker as Artistic Director
Barry MacDonald as Operations Director
Gerry McCarthy as Sales & Marketing Director
Harry Jacobs as Non-Executive Director
Berni Messenger as Non-Executive Director

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.50.

Teddington Theatre Club

**Minutes of the discussion session after the Annual General Meeting held at
Hampton Hill Theatre on 28th November 2016**

1. Computer safety

The following paper by Jeremy Gill was presented by Joolz Connery:

It wasn't long ago when hardly a day went by without some sort of spam email coming our way, sometimes using the hijacked email account of somebody we knew. In a club like ours, with so many of us known to each other, this was probably inevitable. But technology moves on and spam blocking is now so efficient that many of us now do not ever see a spam message in our inbox.

Result! Surely?

You might think so but there must have been a point to all these attempts to elicit information from our computers and there was indeed. Now a much bigger threat has evolved that utilises this and all the other information available online about all of us these days.

It is called the 'Fake Support Scam'. It is another step further than the fake alerts we're used to seeing on our computers, which are fairly random by nature and just try to con us into giving them money. This is different as it uses a few basic real facts about ourselves to establish a dialogue, usually by phone. Quite sophisticated social engineering techniques are used to apply pressure and trick people into downloading remote access software. This allows them to take over your computer.

They will appear to keep your desktop busy installing more 'optimisation' programs and other so-called 'free' software and while you are distracted by this they will be

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filleting your computer for passwords, banking details, anything. Then comes the demand for money, either for something legitimate-sounding, like a new router, or a direct attempt at extortion by saying they'll delete stuff, or that they'll tell the authorities you have illegal content on your computer. One victim reported having their attention diverted by this method for over an hour.

Several TTC members were recently affected by the Microsoft fake support scam, several more by the fake BT support scam and more recently at least one person falling for the fake TalkTalk support scam.

Can you see where this is going?

To avoid being fooled by this you need to recognise and take on board the following:-

No legitimate organisation will ever phone you to tell you there is something wrong with your computer. They have no way of knowing if there is or isn't.

In reality Microsoft do not telephone users, ever. Nor does any other reputable computer or Internet company.

If you receive an email supposedly from your bank asking you to disclose or verify your account PIN and password it is a fake. If in doubt, call the bank.

Similarly if you receive something along similar lines from your Internet provider you can log in to your account online and contact them.

Keep your anti-virus software updated and make sure you actually run a full system scan every now and then. Don't rely on scheduled scans. Do it yourself just to be sure. If you don't know how – find out. Also make sure you have at least one form of malware scanning software such as Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (free).

If you do Internet banking, read the terms, conditions and instructions about avoiding fraud very carefully. If you find them difficult to understand try 'googling' any terms or conditions you don't understand.

These scams all rely on information obtained about you and then tricking you into voluntarily giving away your financial details or even allowing them access to your bank account. Your bank or credit card company may not always be able to protect you.

If this has happened to you it is quite likely that your computer was already infected by a virus or trojan and it is this that has sent out enough information to make the scam caller sound convincing.

The biggest point to make here is this: - If you have any doubts about your security, change your passwords (and do not keep all your passwords in a file or folder on

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your computer called 'passwords'). If your computer is compromised, use somebody else's to change your account passwords.

So think on anddon't have nightmares.

Diane Salkilld remarked that scammers could not open attachments so that if bank or other sensitive details were to be sent it was best to include these in an attachment rather than in the body of the message.

2 TTC Hires

The following paper by John Gilbert was presented by Wes Henderson Roe:

A very busy year at the Theatre has seen an uplift in business and social hires income.

Business and training meetings in particular have kept the Coward suite, and often the foyer as well, busy month in month out. Allen and Allen insurance held all their recruitment interviews here for their new call centre in Sunbury. Having now moved the business out of Hampton Hill we lose a good client but wish them well in their new home.

Paragon Housing have been holding their resident consultation project group meetings here throughout the year as have a new client, the contractor Willmott Dixon, which holds both their staff meetings and first aid and safety training sessions here each month, many requiring a very early start for our duty managers.

Another new business client is Toucan Diversity Training which also uses the Coward Suite for training away days.

We are, as always, grateful to our 'regulars' including Hampton Ladies PROBUS & The Hampton Society, for their ongoing repeat business.

Youth Groups remain the backbone of our regular daytime hire income.

The Step on Stage Academy continues to be our biggest client and in addition to holding weekly classes on a Saturday morning, they have held two show productions, two summer schools, LAMDA examinations and several other workshops in the last year. Other local groups, Dramacube, run by ex-YAT Stephen Leslie and On-Stage Now from Sunbury also now hold summer schools and workshops at the theatre.

The Coward Suite remains as popular as ever for wedding anniversary parties and events such as christenings and children's parties.

The Garrick Room hosts a regular morning bridge class. This booking initiated as a one-off term but we are now coming into our second year with two classes per week.

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With the building being twice as busy as it was five years ago, naturally there are tighter margins of time between hires and more pressures on the theatre diary. John would like to thank all the show directors, PAs and stage managers for coping admirably with their rehearsal room allocations. Despite being so busy the need for casts to rehearse outside has still been rare.

A small reminder to those rehearsing that at all times it is important to leave rooms as you find them. Return borrowed equipment to its rightful storage space and so on. When rushing to set up a room at 7am with 60 builders due any minute for their meeting it's always easier when everything is in place or easy to hand.

Next year will prove more challenging with some clients now having finished their cycle of meetings here, and with increased maintenance activities also adding to the mix.

John Gilbert would like to thank his duty team and the bar team for their hard work and also propose a special thanks to Ken Mason for his voluntary time given to keeping the office in good order.

Thanks also to Barry Buttenshaw for his work as our regular cleaner over the past few years. Barry has retired from this job just this month.

The last year has seen a consolidation in theatre hires with companies like Boundless Dance and Drama Cube becoming regular users of our spaces. Smaller professional companies such as The Gin Chronicles and Pie Face Productions continue to pick up occasional days that become available on an ad hoc basis.

We saw a welcome return of the Variety Music Hall, and several top comedy names with Outside the Box. Jack & Jill School returned after a short absence and are booked again for 2017 along with the Richmond upon Thames College.

We continue to host our regular local musical theatre, drama, and dance companies on both an annual and biennial basis according to their needs, and without exception all our hirers really value and appreciate our facility here and regularly comment on the helpful and pleasant staff they come into contact with.

3. Technical improvements

The following paper was presented by Harry Jacobs:

So what are some of the main things we've done and are doing since the last AGM, in terms of the fabric of the building and its technical facilities?

The front of stage main curtains have been renewed, the backstage kitchen has been partially refurbished with a new sink unit and taps, and we've added a dishwasher of the mechanical kind rather than relying on the human variety.

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You may have noticed that the seats are missing from the side aisles and that's because we're just at the start of a project to have all 197 of the auditorium seats recovered in batches. This will be completed by the end of April next year.

We've added a large TV screen behind the bar area to replace the small TV that just showed the security cameras. The new TV serves three purposes, it still displays the security cameras, but additionally FOH staff can see and hear a show in the auditorium, which is useful for them - so they know when the audience are about to come out to the foyer for the interval and the end of a show. Also, during the times the audience are in the foyer the screen has a slide show about forthcoming attractions and other promotional material about the theatre.

Just behind the bar we've also installed a small tablet that shows the current and upcoming bar rota and gets updated information via its connection to the internet. You may remember that last year the foyer ceiling was re-tiled and re-lit with LED lighting to help save on electricity costs for that area. In the long term other areas of the theatre will also undergo a similar exercise.

In terms of the theatre lighting, some of the auditorium stage lighting and general lighting has been changed to LEDs. Apart from electricity cost savings there are many operational advantages to doing this. For example the LED lights that now light the rear cyclorama are multi-coloured and therefore rather than physically changing lighting gels or rigging multiple sets of lights for different effects – they can be easily programmed for different colours on the lighting desk. Another advantage is that LEDs don't dissipate as much heat as tungsten lighting, and budget permitting were planning additional LED stage lighting stock next year. Where practical we're using wireless connections to control what a light does, which saves a lot of cabling, and again - rigging time.

On the sound side the main project has been the installation of digital cabling between the control and other positions to the stage and the pit. This will eventually simplify the rigging for shows that have a band, with all audio circuits going up and down a single cable rather than a heavy, thick multicore cable.

Several TTC productions this season - both in the auditorium and the Coward room - have relied heavily and with great effect, on computer controlled projected images. To this end we've invested in new projection equipment for use in both these areas.

Currently we're looking at various options to further improve both the speed and wireless internet coverage throughout the building, and also our telephone system. None of us particularly want to go down the fully automated telephone system path; however we do get an increasing number of calls related to outside hirer's productions, so we do need to look at a more efficient way of passing those onto the relevant parties. Another project is to improve communication during a Coward room production, by providing a cue light system between the Yardley, Coward room and much used Coward stairwell.

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Of course whenever possible we try to sell redundant equipment, or at least pass it on to some other organisation that can make some use of it. Likewise we're always grateful to receive useful donated equipment. This year we've had various theatre lights donated to us by ACS – Cobham international school, and an ex-broadcast TV camera from Wildside Productions. This replaced the surveillance style camera that looks at the stage for the SM and control position TV monitors.

But when it comes to improvements, maintenance or new technical facilities – really our greatest asset at TTC is the number of members who have both the skills and time to build, install or maintain not only these new facilities, but look after just about everything within and outside the building. This is something the whole of the board really appreciate and certainly don't take for granted.

Vicky Horder requested an additional headset be obtained for stage management

Ken Mason wished to record congratulations to Harry Jacobs and his colleagues for the 'fantastic improvements' made to the technical facilities of the club over the last year. This was unanimously endorsed by the meeting

4. Youth Action Theatre

The following paper was presented by Lizzie Lattimore:

Just a short update on YAT and what we've been up to this past year.

We managed to put on five productions this year, starting with an abridged version of *Twelfth Night*, directed and produced by two current members of the group, JoJo Leppink, and Becky Tarry. This was set in London's swinging 60s and played in the Coward room for four nights to great audiences.

Our next production *Tom's Midnight Garden* directed by Bill Compton was our main house spring offering. With this we were trying to cater to a younger audience, and included a matinee performance, something we hadn't done for a while. Again, this production was received brilliantly by audiences.

Both of these productions gained Swan nominations, and the fabulous original music composed by James Hall for *Tom's Midnight Garden* was lucky enough to be awarded the Adjudicators Award at The Swans this year.

For the summer, we managed to squeeze in two productions with short rehearsal periods. The first one being *The Trial of Hansel and Gretel*, played in the open air setting near The Pheasantry Café in Bushy Park. This was incredibly well attended, and we managed to raise around £500 for Great Ormond Street Hospital. A great achievement, by cast and crew. The second was a very disciplined and intricately performed production of *The Erpingham Camp* by Joe Orton, again in The Coward room.

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Both of our summer productions were directed by two of our recently aged-out members, Emily Moss and Lucy Hanneghan. Both did excellent jobs, and it is so heartening to see that these young people still want very much to be involved and support our productions and the group as a whole.

At the start of this year we on the committee were starting to worry about membership numbers dwindling and (believe it or not) found it difficult to cast some of the female roles in *Twelfth Night*. However, those of you who came to support our latest offering *Titanic* in the auditorium at the beginning of this month will have seen the 31 strong acting members on this stage, nine of whom were new to YAT, with a further three new members on the technical side as well.

So we are very pleased to say that YAT is continuing to grow!

Whilst we are still have money issues, (after the council cut our funding over two years ago, which was used for rehearsal space) we are constantly looking to other funding streams, and are trying to cover as many of our running costs as possible within our production profits, whilst still making this wonderful group free to all who join.

Unfortunately, during the last year we lost our longstanding rehearsal space at Collis School in Fairfax Road. This venue was synonymous with YAT, and after over 40 years we have had to look for another home.

Thankfully we have been fortunate enough to gain some preferential rates from St. Peters and St. Pauls Church in Teddington, and whilst the rehearsal space there is a little tricky size wise, it is great to be able to have somewhere we feel welcome.

So, on to the forthcoming year – we will have another new director working with us, as Josh Clarke (one of our current members) takes on this year's spring production of *The Government Inspector* ably assisted by Michael Bishop, another recent YAT graduate. With the Edinburgh Festival venue already booked up in August, and another musical set for next autumn, YAT are continuing to go from strength to strength, with a diverse and challenging selection of productions for our young people to get their teeth into.

Many thanks from the YAT committee and its members must go to Clare (and Wes) for your constant, unwavering support and to the board and to the whole of TTC for your continued assistance, either in helping us hands-on with our productions, for helping us with emergency rehearsal space, and to those of you who came and bought a ticket for a production this year. This is still very much the best way you can help to support this incredibly worthwhile and important group.

Nigel Cole wished to record his appreciation of YAT, having recommended it to a young man with Asperger's Syndrome who had joined and found it of very great benefit.

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Barry Hill wished to record the thanks of the Club to Lizzie Lattimore, Jenna Powell and Sarah Dowd for their excellent work in running YAT. This was unanimously endorsed by the meeting.

General discussion

5. Play Selection Committee and Artistic Director

Lottie Walker thanked the PSC for their valuable work since she had been chairman, and Joolz Connery for her support and for her successful period as Artistic Director.

6. Paying for play scripts

A discussion took place on whether play scripts should continue to be given to cast and crew at the expense of TTC or whether they should be paid for by the individuals concerned. It was noted that free scripts were voted for a couple of years ago, but that most similar groups not only asked members to pay for scripts but also charged a performing fee to actors. It was also suggested that actors with small parts and backstage crew should not be expected to pay for scripts.

Heather Morgan suggested that some scripts might be made available on loan from the script library if available as multiple copies of some plays were held.

It was also noted that *The Open Book* shop in Richmond offered very advantageous discounts for multiple copies of scripts which could be obtained in 24 hours.

This matter was left unresolved with a suggestion that it might be put to a members vote.

7. Cost of temporary membership tickets

It was suggested that the differential in cost between members and non-members tickets be raised to maybe £5 to encourage more people to join as audience members, but it was thought debatable that this might reduce ticket sales rather than increase membership.

8 Stewarding

Rosemary Brett mentioned that it was becoming very difficult to find stewards for all performances, and pointed out that without stewards performances could not take place. Her request for volunteers for the forthcoming opening performances of *Cinderella*, was, however, successful with members present at the meeting agreeing to fill the vacancies.

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9 Votes of thanks

Particular votes of thanks were proposed and unanimously endorsed for the following members:

Rosemary Brett and **Adrian Limerick** for front-of-house duties without which performances could not take place.

Joolz Connery for her success as Artistic Director.

Clare Henderson Roe for her sure guidance as Chairman.