

From: **Master Aircrew Richard Bratley**
Secretary



Royal Air Force Theatrical Association

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President: Air Vice-Marshal Graham Russell
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Patrons: Sir Peter Hall CBE
Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey
KCB CBE AFC RAF (Ret'd)
Mr Stephen Daldry CBE
Gillian Plowman

"Improving Theatre
in the Royal Air Force"

To all RAFTA Members

06 January 2017

MINUTES OF THE 42nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE THEATRICAL ASSOCIATION HELD AT THE WHITE SWAN HOTEL, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON ON 29 OCTOBER 2016

Present	Air Vice-Marshal Graham Russell Wing Commander Andrew Mitchell Group Captain (Ret'd) Rob Tripp Mrs K Breen Plus 6 Fellows and 21 Members of the Association Master Aircrew Rich Bratley	President Chairman Adjudication Coordinator 200 Club Officer Secretary	Chair Sec
Apologies	Mrs Gillian Plowman (Patron), Sqn Ldr (Ret'd) Simon Barnes (Fellow), Mrs Peggy Reading (Fellow), Sqn Ldr (Ret'd) Christopher Bartle (Fellow), Mrs Iris Bartle (Fellow) Mr Daryl Bennett (Newsletter Manager), Mr Nigel Skull (Ext Comms), WO Julie Roche (Mem Sec), Maj Mitch Wilcox (Treasurer), Flt Lt Tom Goble (Vice Chair), Air Cdre (Ret'd) Noel James, Mrs Jenny Armstrong, Mr Derek Benfield, Mrs Amy Ranger-Pitt, Mrs Pam Whalley, Mr Ian Whalley, Mrs Emma Furness, Mr Andy Collis, Mrs Sally Collis, Mr Chris Rackham, Mrs Karen Barnes, Mrs Frances Iles, Mr Robert Iles, Flt Lt Lissy Mason, Mrs Janie Ranger, Mr Keith Reading, Mrs Moya Strachan, Mr Ray Wood, Mrs Su Toogood, Mrs Carolyn Truss, and Mr Philip Goudal.		

Item 1 – President's address

1. The President welcomed the assembled RAFTA members to the 42nd RAFTA Annual General Meeting at Stratford upon Avon.
2. He gave a brief overview of events affecting the RAF as a whole, noting the recent changes of command in senior military posts and at ministerial level. He remarked that the new team of ministers and the Prime Minister

Action

appeared to be very supportive of Defence. He also indicated that changes to the way Defence estates were run meant that Single service commanders now had control of the maintenance budgets for units which he felt could only be good news for RAF Theatre clubs. However, he also informed the meeting that Defence estates continued to be rationalised to save money, including the announcement that RAF Henlow would soon close. He hoped despite this, that Henlow Amateur Theatrical Society would continue to exist and would remain affiliated to RAFTA.

3. Turning to RAFTA events he noted that it had been a busy 12 months for RAFTA and he commented on three of the highlights of the year. RAFTA Project 15, Animal Farm had been a challenging project which had received praise from the audiences and he was particularly pleased to have welcomed the Chief of the Air Staff to one performance. CAS had thoroughly enjoyed it and expressed a wish to attend One Act Play Festival. Unfortunately he was overseas on the date of OAPF and could not attend. OAPF was very enjoyable and successful and he expressed thanks to the team at Defence Academy (DA) Shrivenham for hosting RAFTA again this year. He also noted the welcome return of the yearlong play competition this year and was pleased that there had been sufficient plays performed and adjudicated to enable the competition to be held once again.

4. Finally, he thanked the Committee for keeping RAFTA on the straight and narrow over the last 12 months, paid particular thanks to Committee members finishing their tenure and wished the committee good luck for the next 12 months improving theatre in the Royal Air Force.

Item 2 – Minutes of the last meeting

5. The minutes of the 41st AGM¹ required endorsing by the membership.

6. **Decision.** The minutes were proposed as an accurate representation by Mr John Gray and seconded by Wg Cdr (Ret'd) Malcolm Jones. The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true and accurate record of AGM 2015.

Item 3 – Matters arising from the last meeting

7. **[Regarding the number of RAFTA Full/Affiliated Clubs] The Mem Sec did not have the figures to hand and would provide them as a post meeting addendum (Item 6 para 21).** Mem Sec provided the required information as requested. **Action closed.**

8. **The Committee would reinstate Membership Cards (Item 15 para 51).** Membership Cards had been produced and the Committee began to distribute them at One Act Play Festival 201. Barring some issues with

¹ 41st AGM Minutes dated 28 Aug 16.

incorrect Membership numbers the reintroduction had been successful.

Action closed.

9. **The committee would discuss the issue further and clearly state the purpose of the Club membership fee. (Item 15 para 53).** The committee discussions were summarised by the Chair in the following statement - The Club Membership Fee contributes towards RAFTA's wider funds that allow us improve theatre in the RAF, i.e. they contribute to the funding pool which allows adjudications, currently a free good to receiving clubs and supports Project and other endeavours that RAFTA pursues. Paying the fee shows a statement of intent for that club being part of RAFTA and opens that club up to adjudications and advice. The fees are not set aside for specific use but are combined with other income streams to achieve the aims of RAFTA. **Action closed.**

10. **The Committee would book a suitable [AGM] venue and publicise it in due course. (Item 19 para 63).** The 42nd AGM venue had been booked and publicised. **Action closed.**

Item 4 – Chairman's report

11. The Chairman began by welcoming the President, Fellows and attending members.

12. The committee had met 6 times this year, either in person or via Skype video conference. The committee were relying more on Skype to ensure that the majority could attend meetings as it was becoming increasingly difficult to convene meetings in person due to distances and work pressures.

13. The OAPF was held 27-29 May at DA Shrivenham for the second year running. Eight clubs performed eight plays, adjudicated by Ben Humphrey. He was an enthusiastic adjudicator and clearly enjoyed attending the Festival; the Committee had decided it would invite him to be an honorary member of the Association.

14. The Stage Technical course held at DA Shrivenham on 6/7 August was run by the Treasurer and was a low cost to the Association. The Chair noted that one of the success stories of the course was a Cranwell member who had no experience of lighting and sound but was about to do it for their next production; having completed the course they returned to Cranwell feeling more confident.

15. He informed the meeting that selection of Project 2017 had not been held and this had been for a number of reasons. Firstly the Committee decided to take a break from the Project cycle, which some members had been heavily involved in all aspects of continuously over some 10 years. Secondly, the Committee had undertaken to conduct a review of the Project process and this had required additional time to complete.

16. That review had now been conducted. Among the considerations that had been deliberated were whether Project was still a valid vehicle for RAFTA's aims, how Project compared to the 'peripatetic' mini-project 'Macbeth', what was actually needed for the initial proposal process and what financial limit of liability RAFTA should set for Project.

17. The Committee had concluded that Project still met the RAFTA aims and that both Project and Mini-projects had a valid place in RAFTA's activities. The details of the proposal process had been reviewed and these would be published on the RAFTA website as part of the Project 2018 invite. Finally, after review by the Chair and the Treasurer, the Project limit of liability was set at £5295. This would ensure that Trustees of the Charity (the Committee) could maintain the operation of the Charity should events transpire that would prevent Project making any income once funds had been committed. It was also agreed to allow Project production teams to propose a higher budget provided that they agreed to personally underwrite costs beyond the RAFTA limit.

18. The Chair also noted that because mini-project or similar ideas were seen as a positive for RAFTA, funds had been set aside for grants/minor endeavours. Whilst a detailed framework had not been established as yet, the Committee would consider such activities on a case-by-case basis.

19. The Chair was asked whether the Committee had considered the original three pillars of RAFTA Project – the opportunity for members to form a touring company performing in a professional receiving theatre, the opportunity to work with RAFTA members beyond an individual's club, and to perform something different that would not normally be attempted at club level. In response the Chair stated that these pillars had been considered; due to the budget constraints for RAFTA and the high cost of theatre hire it had been decided that the first pillar be modified to allow more flexibility and creativity in choosing the performance space. Regarding the second pillar, he commented that during his RAF career, often on postings away from major stations with theatre clubs, he had benefited from the inclusivity Project provided, therefore this remained a key component. Finally, he regarded the third pillar as still valid, but the Committee had agreed that should a proposer show sufficient passion and innovation for a project that could be performed at club level then it would be considered as suitable. The Chair also noted that whilst not every project proposal might satisfy all three pillars, this would not necessarily make it any less valid.

20. The possibility of RAFTA taking a production to the Edinburgh Festival was raised by Mavis Gray, who noted that one of the original goals of Project when it was first conceived was to act as practice/preparation for the Edinburgh Festival. RAFTA could seek to align a Project with the Edinburgh Festival, or else could hold a shorter-term mini-Project to take to the Festival. For example, casting could occur 3-4 months prior to the Festival then all cast would meet for a week's intense residential rehearsal then conduct a week's Edinburgh run (eg a 2-week period absent from work). Whilst the Committee had no firm plans to take RAFTA to the Edinburgh Festival, any such proposals would be welcome.

21. A further question was raised regarding the proposal to invite Ben Humphrey to become an Honorary Member and whether the Membership should have been consulted on the decision. The Chair noted that the Constitution was clear that the Committee were permitted to make these decisions on behalf of the Association. He also informed the meeting that the original proposal had been to offer Mr Humphrey a patronage, but after discussion and a close vote it had been agreed to change this to honorary membership initially. The Chair then offered to open this to a vote if the Membership felt strongly that a patronage should be offered.

22. The offer of patronage was proposed by Rob Tripp and seconded by Jim Brown. The vote stood at 20 for, 2 against and 5 abstentions. Motion carried, Ben Humphrey would be offered the position of Patron of the Association. **Post-AGM note: Ben Humphrey accepted the Chair's invite and became a Patron of RAFTA on 14 Nov 16.**

23. Discussion of Ben Humphrey's patronage led to discussion of the service that RAFTA had had from GODA over the years, noting that some adjudication experiences had not been as satisfactory as others. The Chair re-assured the Membership that RAFTA had a great relationship with GODA and that RAFTA actively provided post-Festival feedback to GODA which was helpful to GODA's work on adjudication standardisation.

Item 5 – Treasurer's report

24. **RAFTA Accounts.** The balance sheet for the year to 30 September 2016 was presented. This showed income of £6,989.11 and expenditure of £6,802.74, which led to a net increase in RAFTA's funds of £186.37. The RAFTA funds at the end of the RAFTA Financial Year stood at **£12,369.72**. A detailed view may be found at Annex A.

25. Financial plan 2016– 2017.

- a. The financial plan for 2016/17 had to be agreed.
- b. The proposed fees and rates payable for the year 2016/17 were presented with no changes from the previous year:
 - (1) Life and Annual membership remains at £50 and £10 respectively.
 - (2) Club affiliation remains at £30.
 - (3) All mileage claims retain the 45p per mile rate.
- c. Cost of OAPF and courses will be advertised with the invitations to attend and calling notices; these will be charged at separate rates for RAFTA members and non-members to continue to incentivise membership.

26. **Decision.** The financial plan was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr Martin Truss and unanimously approved.

27. The income and expenditure for Project 2015 were presented. Income stood at £2324.34 and expenditure at £4736.94, resulting in a cost to RAFTA of £2412.60.

Item 6 – Membership Secretary’s report

28. Membership of the Association stood at 351 Life Members, 1 Annual Members, 6 Honorary Members, 4 Patrons and 9 Fellows.

29. RAFTA records indicate that the number of RAFTA clubs stands at 10; 8 Full clubs (1 with paperwork outstanding) and 2 affiliated clubs. See Annex B.

30. Martin Truss queried the number of affiliated clubs as he believed that Buccaneer Players, RAF Honington had closed (and not renewed) and that the newly formed Stalham Players had applied for affiliated membership.

31. **Action.** The Membership Secretary would be tasked to investigate and update the records as required.

Mem Sec

32. **Playwriting Competition.** The Committee had undertaken a review of the Playwriting Competition, entries to which had been declining over a number of years. The rules were felt to be overly complex and off-putting; the new rules (available on the website) lifted some of the old restrictions that were felt to be stifling the main aim of the competition to encourage creativity within RAFTA.

33. The revised rules removed the restrictions on the performing of the entered play, the winning of other awards, and made the use of a nom de plume optional. After consultation with former judges of the Playwriting Competition it had been decided that one act and full length plays would be judged in the same competition. Guidelines had been set for the carry-over of a play in the event of a competition not being held.

Item 7 – Newsletter Manager’s report

34. **Noises Off!** The newsletter continues to be published quarterly and currently 231 members subscribe to receive Noises Off! by e-mail. There had been issues with members not receiving communications; this had been traced to inadvertent unsubscription via the ‘unsubscribe’ link attached to each edition. The Newsletter Manager was looking into ways to avoid accidental unsubscription in the future. He was also considering a new format that would be less ‘wordy’ and direct members toward the website for full articles and details. The autumn edition would be delayed to include news from this AGM.

Item 8 – Adjudication Coordinator’s report

35. The Adjudication Coordinator’s report can be found at Annex C.

Item 9 - Festival, courses and workshops

36. **OAPF.**

a. OAPF 2017 would be held on the BH weekend of 28-30 Apr 2017 and once again would be hosted by Academy Players at the Charles Grace Theatre, Defence Academy Shrivenham.

b. The GODA Adjudicator for next year’s OAPF would be Mrs Jan Palmer Sayer.

37. **Courses and workshops.**

a. **Stage Combat Course.** The Committee had planned to hold a Stage Combat course in November 2016. However, the course had only been confirmed in October and the Committee felt that there was insufficient time to adequately advertise it. The course would be run by an RSC fight director and it was felt that RAFTA members should be given every opportunity to participate in a course of this quality. Therefore a decision was made to delay the course until 2017 (perhaps spring).

b. **Action.** The date of the course would be confirmed shortly.

c. **Dance Course.** A dance course would be held in March 2017, dates to be confirmed shortly. The course would be run by a RADA dance teacher who specializes in historical dance. The course would cover 3 historical periods of dance and offer insight in how to incorporate these into performances.

**Newsletter
Manager**

Item 10 – Report on 200 Club

38. The 200 Club Coordinator informed the meeting that 193 numbers were currently owned by RAFTA members.

39. Following a draw the new owner of number 200 for the next year was Air Cdre (Ret’d) Noel James.

Item 11 – Committee Objectives for 2016/17

40. The Chair stated four objectives for the next year:

- a. Hold One Act Play Festival 2017.
- b. Run a selection process for RAFTA Project 2018.
- c. Run a Dance course.
- d. Run a Stage Combat course.

41. The Chair took the opportunity to announce that after 10 years on the committee, including 5 years as Chair, he intended to serve for 1 more year before retiring from the Committee. Whilst he had held discussions with some individuals regarding succession plans he asked the Membership to encourage individuals they thought might be interested in joining the Committee to approach him.

Item 12 - Election of 2016/2017 Trustees and Officers

42. The Board of Trustees (BoT) and Officers for 2016/17 had to be elected.

43. The structure of the proposed BoT and Officers was presented; no posts were contested. The Committee included Trustees and Officers.

- a. As Trustees of the Charity:
 - (1) Chairman – Wing Commander Andrew Mitchell.
 - (2) Vice Chairman – Flight Lieutenant Thomas Goble.
 - (3) Treasurer – Major Mitch Wilcox.
 - (4) Secretary – Master Aircrew Richard Bratley.
 - (5) Membership Secretary - WO Julie Roche.
 - (6) Newsletter Editor – Mr Daryl Bennett.
 - (7) Adjudication Coordinator – Mr Michael Caffrey.
 - (8) 200 Club Officer – Mrs Karrie Breen.
- b. As Officers of the Charity:
 - (1) Internal Communications – VACANT.
 - (2) Website Manager – Mr Nigel Skull.
 - (3) Courses Co-ordinator – VACANT.
 - (4) Archivist – Mr Paul Foot.
 - (5) OAPF Co-ordinator - VACANT.

44. **Decision.** The Committee was proposed by Gp Capt (Ret'd) Rob Tripp and seconded by Mrs Kerry McNally. The 2016/2017 BoT and Officers were unanimously elected.

Item 13 – Any Other Business

45. No AOB items were notified prior to the AGM.

Item 14 - Arrangements for 43rd Annual General Meeting 2017

46. **Date.** After some discussion it was decided that the 43rd AGM should be held on a date in autumn 2017 to be de-conflicted with school half term holidays and the Remembrance weekend.

47. **Venue.** The venue would be decided by the Committee once a date was set.

48. **Action.** The Committee would set the date and venue as soon as possible and publicise the details no later than One Act Play Festival 2017.

Sec

49. **Sec Note.** Based on research of autumn half term dates for 2017 it has been decided to hold the 43rd AGM on **Saturday 4th November 2017**. Venue confirmation to follow.

Item 15 - RAFTA Annual Awards

50. The President, Air Vice-Marshal Graham Russell, presented the following awards:

a. **The Triplar Trophy for the Best Pantomime Stage Presentation.**

(1) **Runner up.** Henlow Amateur Theatrical Society for 'Dick Whittington and his Cat'.

(2) **Winner.** Brize Norton Theatre Club for 'Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood'.

b. **The Theatre 101 Trophy for Best Pantomime.**

(1) **Runner up.** Joint Runners up Henlow Amateur Theatrical Society for 'Dick Whittington and his Cat' and Brize Norton Theatre Club for 'Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood'.

(2) **Winner.** Cranwell Amateur Theatrical Society for 'Hoodwinked'.

- c. **12 Month Play festival – Best Play Stage Presentation**
 - (1) **Runner up.** Henlow Amateur Theatrical Society for ‘Blythe Spirit’.
 - (2) **Winner.** Henlow Amateur Theatrical Society for ‘Prescription for Murder’.
- d. **12 Month Play Festival – Best Play**
 - (1) **Runner up.** Henlow Amateur Theatrical Society for ‘Blythe Spirit’.
 - (2) **Winner.** Henlow Amateur Theatrical Society for ‘Prescription for Murder’.
- e. **The RAFTA Premier Trophy.**
 - (1) **Runner up.** Brize Norton Theatre Club.
 - (2) **Winner.** Henlow Amateur Theatrical Society.
- f. **The Freddie Westcott Award for Endeavour.** Not awarded.
- g. **The Glynn Leaney Award for Commitment.** Not awarded.

R Bratley
Master Aircrew
RAFTA Secretary

Annexes:

- A. RAFTA Club Membership List as at 03 May 2016.
- B. RAFTA Balance Sheet as at 30 September 2016.
- C. Adjudication Co-ordinator’s Report.

**Annex A to
RAFTA AGM 2016 Minutes
Dated 06 Jan 2017**

RAFTA CLUB MEMBERSHIP as at 3 May 2016

Club Membership				
	Station Name	Club Name	Club Status	Type of membership/Date renewed
1	RAF Brize Norton	Brize Norton Theatre Club	Active	Full - 16 Mar 16
2	RAF Honington	Buccaneer Players	Active	Full - 20 Mar 16
3	RAF Lossiemouth	Buccaneer Theatre Club	Active	Waiting for paperwork and payment
4	RAF High Wycombe	Command Performers	Active	Full - 1 Mar 16
5	RAF Cranwell	Cranwell Amateur Theatrical Society (CATS)	Active	Full - 30 Mar 16
6	RAF Halton	Halton Theatrical Society	Active	Full 6 Apr 16
7	RAF Henlow	Henlow Amateur Theatrical Society	Active	Full - 18 Mar 16
8	London area	Post Script Players	Active	Affiliated Club - SO set up for May 16
9	DMS(W)	PostBox Players	Active	Full
10	Lyneham (closed)	Herculean Players	Active	Affiliated Club formerly Lyneham Stage Club

**Annex B to
RAFTA AGM 2016 Minutes
Dated 06 Jan 2017**

RAFTA BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2016

Expenditure Details 2015/16

Description	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Total
Adjudications		135.00			101.70	87.30							324.00
Project 15	927.34				1667.71								2595.05
AGM													0.00
Website/Information													0.00
NDFAs Subs													0.00
Float Adjustment													0.00
NDFAs Insurance										425.05			425.05
Refunds													0.00
One Act Festival									3439.20				3439.20
Postage & Stationery			19.44										19.44
Course 1 (Tech)													0.00
Play Writing Comp.													0.00
Course 2													0.00
Misc													0.00
RAFTA 40th													0.00
200 Club													0.00
	927.34	135.00	19.44	0.00	1769.41	87.30	0.00	0.00	3439.2	425.05	0.00	0.00	6802.74

-2412.60 Cost to RAFTA of Project 15

Not processed in this year due to absence and awaiting bill from Def Ac

Delayed to Nov

Awaiting Bar Money

Awaiting Monies

186.37 Annual Movement

Income Details 2015/16

Description	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Total
Adjudication													0.00
200 Club													0.00
Windfall													0.00
Interest			8.17			8.41			7.43			7.53	31.54
Project 2015		2324.34											2324.34
Club Affiliation		10.00				90.00	30.00	60.00			90.00		280.00
													0.00
Life Membership		50.00									100.00		150.00
Annual Membership													0.00
Playwriting Comp									10.00				10.00
MacBeth		478.43											478.43
One Act Festival								150.50			3564.30		3714.80
Course 1 (Improv)													0.00
Transfer Investments													0.00
Charity Money (process)													0.00
Donations													0.00
Loan Repayment - Command Performers													0.00
	0.00	2862.77	8.17	0.00	0.00	98.41	30.00	210.50	17.43	0.00	3754.30	7.53	6989.11

275.60 OAPF Profit

RAFTA ADJUDICATION COORDINATION – REPORT TO AGM 2016

Mr President, Patrons, Chairman, Fellows, and RAFTA Members,

1. For many, many years, at AGM, OAPF, in 'Noises Off' I have encouraged clubs and individual members to have each and every one of their productions adjudicated. The Committee still considers that adjudication is a cornerstone of RAFTA's desire to improve theatre in the Royal Air Force, providing a benchmark against which we can assess how we, as individual clubs are doing, as well as how we are doing in comparison with the other RAFTA affiliated clubs. I have covered the historical status of adjudications in previous reports and do not propose to do this again, unless you have any questions. Instead I will concentrate on the past year and the new season.

Status of adjudications

2. **2015/16.** This year has seen a resurgence of requests for adjudication. We have had 5 pantos and 3 plays adjudicated, plus Henlow's roll-over of 'Blythe Spirit', so 5 pantos and 4 plays have been in competition for today's family silver. Unfortunately, we lost the adjudication of another play due to the adjudicator falling sick within hours of curtain-up. I made the offer to provide an adjudication the following week, but, for understandable and purely practical reasons, the club (Command Performers) was unable to take up this offer; once again, Command Performers, I apologise. The awards will be made after the AGM proper.

3. **2016/17.** The new season is off to a reasonable start with one panto seeking adjudication as at 29 October. I encourage you to make good use of this invaluable facility. If you are planning a panto, then please get your request in as soon as you can. Adjudications remain completely free to clubs, bar the requirement to provide overnight accommodation and a modest supper if the adjudicator cannot reasonably get home that night.

Adjudicator availability

4. We have a pool of 13 trained adjudicators, but of that pool 7 have placed some limitations or caveats on their use. This may be because of geographical restraints, or a desire only to be used in extremis. However, I think that we are in a good position for the number of adjudications we usually see. My successor will, no doubt, monitor the situation.

Review of awards

5. I have now completed the identification of the OAPF and Annual Awards – some have caused me the odd headache and I thank the old and bold and current holders for their assistance. I have provided the Committee with a list of all Annual and OAPF awards, which includes a photograph and some identifying features and comments such as 'gopping', a 'spittoon' 'keep in downstairs loo'!

And so, into the void

6. President, Patrons, Chairman, Fellows and Garden variety, but not common, RAFTA Members that is the Adjudication Co-ord brief for this season and for my tenure. I can now handover the role of Adjudication Coordination to Mike Caffey with almost a clear conscience. However, I remain available to the Committee to be used and, as usual, abused as they see fit. Meanwhile: I 'Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night', but merely 'exit, pursued by a bear!

