

Minutes

Annual General Meeting International Gothic Association Friday 29th June 2007 Aix en Provence, France

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of the IGA AGM held in Montreal in August 2005.

- Minutes approved

Item 2: Business arising from the Minutes

- No further business

Item 3: Chairs' Report

- The Chairs reported that they met with Jane Thurman and Paul Telford of Taylor&Francis in August 2006 to discuss transferring *Gothic Studies* from MUP to Taylor&Francis. Despite Jane Thurman's positive interest in the transfer, this possibility fell into abeyance when she left to take up a position elsewhere and was replaced by Cathy Burton. Cathy Burton expressed the opinion in 2007 that the journal was too 'niche' for Taylor&Francis to consider adding it to their journal list at the moment but that they would reconsider the matter in a year's time.
- Sue Zlosnik reported on several meetings with MUP during the last year.
- The Chairs expressed the opinion that IGA 2007 had been a landmark conference in opening up the IGA membership in mainland Europe. It was agreed that the conference had been a great success and particular pleasure was expressed that it had attracted delegates from 4 continents and 22 countries (including over 30 delegates from France). The Chairs, on behalf of the meeting, expressed warm thanks to the organisers of IGA 2007, Professors Max Duperray and Gilles Mengaldo as well as to the Scientific Committee (Professor Marc Amfreville, Francoise Dupeyron-Lafaye and Professor Catherine Lanone) and (in her absence) to Penny Tribe of Kingston University for all the hard work they had put into making the event run so smoothly. Particular thanks were conveyed to the student team who assisted Professor Duperray in the run-up to the conference and during the event itself: Magali Falco; Tanya Tromble; Guillaume Bauer and Vaagn Gouchtchian.
- The Chairs informed the meeting that postgraduate bursaries had been awarded for IGA 2007 to Patrycja Antoszek (Poland) and Carmen Serrano (United States)

Item 4: Treasurer and Membership Secretary's Report, 2007 (Angela Wright)

I am sorry to be missing this year's IGA conference and the EAB meeting. Unlike Coleridge, I have no 'lime-tree bower' to call my prison, but I will be thinking of you all from my convalescent sofa in Sheffield.

I am equally sorry that I am unable to write a more positive outgoing treasurer's report, but as Sue and Avril will both confirm, the financial relationship with MUP has become increasingly fraught over the last two years. First to the finances: the IGA account currently holds the modest sum of £400.56. This is due to Manchester University Press now owing three years of payment arrears (now £1500 for 2005, 2006 and 2007). The arrears place the account at its lowest ebb since I took over as treasurer. Not only have we missed the money itself, but we have also lost the interest that would have been accrued during these three years. Despite the executive's best efforts to chase up the money, which has been promised now for almost two years, it has not been forthcoming from MUP. Sue is to be particularly commended for her efforts to recoup the money, but as of the 21st June it has not been paid into the IGA bank account. This is a serious and difficult situation for the association, particularly as the arrears will impede future efforts to distribute small-conference grants and postgraduate bursaries for conference attendance. Due to this major difficulty, I fully support all efforts to uncouple membership from journal subscriptions. This will make the job of future treasurers more cumbersome, but will ensure the ongoing health of the association.

As to memberships, the picture here is also pretty bleak. Since MUP moved the management of their subscriptions to Marston Books two years ago, I have been unable to procure an up-to-date list of subscribers to *Gothic Studies* (and thus members) due to 'data protection'. Marston refuses to pass on information, and despite promising to supply it themselves, MUP has not been forthcoming with any updated subscriber list. So the association is now in the difficult position of not knowing its own membership. I rely upon initial enquiries about joining, and an outdated membership distribution list for passing on any messages. Again, these difficulties can be remedied by an uncoupling of journal subscription from membership.

Ending on a more positive note, despite the financial difficulties of the past three years, the association has again been able to award two postgraduate travel bursaries for the current conference. These were given to Patrycja Antoszek from Poland, and Carmen Serrano from the States. Their abstracts were chosen from some 21 postgraduate submissions. Both candidates have now received the banker's drafts, and are looking forward to attending the conference. These bursaries are an important aspect of the IGA which we started with the Vancouver IGA conference in 2001. For Antoszek in particular, this bursary is what enabled her to attend this year's conference. The small-conference grants (of £100) also provide additional funding opportunities for members of the IGA who wish to run one-day conferences. Since the executive established these grants (again in 2003, I think), we have only paid out one bursary for Nancy Gillespie's 'Gothic Remains' at the University of Sussex. Nonetheless, it would be good to retain this opportunity for future small conferences to ensure research dissemination.

To close: I have really enjoyed serving as the treasurer and membership secretary of the IGA and corresponding with so many different members from around the world. In spite of recent difficulties, it has always been a pleasure to serve.

In Angela Wright's absence, the meeting registered a vote of thanks for all the work Angela has undertaken during her period of office and agreed that she

should be sent some flowers from the IGA as a gesture of appreciation and thanks in September. It was also agreed that she should continue as a Member of the Advisory Board. The above report prompted a response from Matthew Frost of MUP, which publishes *Gothic Studies*. This is reproduced below:

Addendum to the Treasurer's Report - IGA - 21st June 2007 (Matthew Frost)

1. The £1500 fee has at last been authorised. The £1000 two-year payment would have been sent in 2006, but the new University of Manchester finance system was taxing all payments at source. It took discussions lasting six months to override this. Apologies for the delays. (Any MUP authors would have experienced this first hand.)

2. Memberships. Despite my hopes, and the promises of Marstons, the regular print outs of the subscribers list, the overseas subscription facility and the easily accessed 'up-to-the-minute information' was not forthcoming. However, I am now receiving reasonably complete figures and names at the beginning of each month (addresses are incomplete). The June list was sent to the editors.

I have urged Marstons – again – to install the promised Paypal system and expect to hear from them next week. This would allow anyone with a credit card to subscribe from any country. Further to this, MUP is also signing up to Ingenta, an independent online service provider. It is essentially a portal, but will allow people to subscribe to the paper versions of all of our journals.

3. However, as the Treasurer's report makes clear, by far the preferable option is to uncouple the membership and the subscriptions. A conjoined membership / subscription hasn't worked, despite the best wishes of both parties. This is exemplified by the current conference; attendance of the Aix-en-Provence conference was apparently dependent on membership / subscription, but only 60 individual subs exist, with attendance projected at 150; people plainly haven't been signing up - and Marston's are reasonably able to take people's money.

Having spoken informally with Sue Zlosnik and William Hughes, it is obvious that the IGA needs to have complete control over the individual members / subscriptions. MUP (via Marstons) would still cater for the institutional or non-membership subs. I have attached a possible format whereby the IGA would take complete control of the membership list, this list being given to MUP once (or twice) a year, MUP would then invoice the IGA, and send all the journals out to the IGA membership.

4. MUP are committed to the IGA and to Gothic Studies. Institutional subscriptions have grown year on year (in a similar manner to other 'start up' journals taken on in the last decade). It is a slow process. Uncoupling the membership means that the IGA would be in control of their membership, and *Gothic Studies* could continue to act as one of the main attractions and advertisements of the Association.

Possible format

The IGA would become an Agent, MUP the Publisher.

The Agent would supply the Publisher with the names and addresses of all subscribers in a data file in an acceptable form once a year. A good date would be a month before the May issue is despatched.

The Agent would receive a 30% discount on all copies sold / subscribed. An immediate advantage would mean that the IGA would have control of their own finances, and would be able to be more flexible with members - including being able to give postgraduates a lower subscription, for example.

The Publisher would invoice the Agent thirty days after the first annual issue, on thirty day credit terms.

On publication of each issue, the Publisher would despatch direct from the printers all copies to people on the Agent's list of subscribers. This would mean that the IGA would have to ensure that members are keeping in touch about change of addresses.

Twenty-five free copies of each issue would be supplied for any new subscribers.

The Publisher would cease to provide ANY individual subscriptions. All enquiries will be referred to the Agent (the twenty-five copies would allow you to retain the monies from new subscribers).

To be discussed

Free issues for editors / contributors needs to be determined

Annual fee from MUP to be reviewed

Advertising /sponsorship to be reviewed (i.e. any sources of income)

Item 5: Gothic Studies Report (William Hughes)

Context

This report is, by definition, primarily concerned with the day-to-day management of Gothic Studies over the past twelve months rather than with financial matters, membership and the relationship of the journal to the Association as a whole. These matters, though, are relevant, and will be discussed later in the report.

Statistical Overview

Since the last physical meeting of the Board in Montréal in 2005 we have published five issues of the journal, covering three volumes (7, 8 and 9), with the second part of volume 9 currently in the hands of the publisher and scheduled for release in November of 2007. This gives us, by November 2007, a total of 44 original articles published (including introductions), plus reviews. None of this would be possible without the hard work of our two reviews editors, Andrew Smith and Anne Williams, and the dedication of what is now a sizeable grouping of specialist readers, many of whom take tie-break material at short notice. I would like to record my gratitude to all who have supported *Gothic Studies* across the years at this earliest stage of my report. The issues published since 2005 are as follows:

GS 7/1	May 2005	Gothic Ex/Changes, ed. Phillips & Zlosnik
GS 7/2	Nov 2005	Queering Gothic Films, ed. Eberle-Sinatra
GS 8/1	May 2006	Italy and the Gothic, ed. Demata
GS 8/2	Nov 2006	General issue, ed. Hughes
GS 9/1	May 2007	Gothic in Contemporary Popular Culture, ed. Spooner
GS 9/2	Nov 2007	Postfeminist Gothic, ed. Brabon & Genz

Information on projected issues will be found towards the end of this report.

The Intellectual Balance of the Journal

The ratio of general issues (which the managing editor edits) to guest-edited issues has noticeably decreased somewhat over this period, from one in three to one in six. This does leave us with a significant backlog of material awaiting publication, and a less than ideal gap between submission and publication. This is almost certainly a cause of frustration, particularly for younger academics seeking a first publication, but it is unavoidable whilst we are publishing two rather than three issues each year. If subscription levels – specifically institutional subscription levels – were to rise, then we would be able to return to our pre-2002 format (though, I would point out, this may mean slightly shorter volumes).

Guest edited issues, though, are undoubtedly an asset to the journal. As the Publisher will confirm, they are attractive to libraries, course tutors and individual researchers, and thus they are economically as well as intellectually profitable. With regard to the intellectual ‘profit’, dedicated issues such as many of those released in the past by *Gothic Studies* have set the debate on a specific topic for several years, becoming a reference point for later researchers. This ensures, in turn, that the journal remains in the public eye. It is very clear that we are leading the debate not just in Gothic (which is, after all, appropriate to the IGA’s aspirations) but also significantly shaping it in other areas such as film studies, queer studies and popular culture. Guest edited issues also facilitate the journal’s access to critics currently beyond the Gothic and the IGA. The Editor always includes a subscription form and a letter of invitation when mailing contributors’ copies to authors who are not IGA members, or who are employed by institutions whose libraries do not yet subscribe to *Gothic Studies*.

Commissioning

With regard to general issues, the balance between material accepted and material rejected has remained relatively unchanged, the proportion being closer to 1:4 than 1:2. We do receive a sizeable proportion of material deemed unprintable by readers, often from graduate students and early-career academics, and full (but anonymous) reports are always returned to the author in question. A small number of graduate students, though, continue to be published by the journal, in both guest-edited and general issues, and *Gothic Studies* has often proved to be a place where early publications prefigured subsequent monographs – most recently, Max Fincher (*GS* 3/3) has published *Queering Gothic in the Romantic Age* (Palgrave), Diane Mason (*GS* 2/2) has submitted *The Secret Vice* (MUP), and Stéphanie Genz and Benjamin Brabon’s *Postfeminist Gothic* (Palgrave) is intimately connected to *GS* 9/2.

Though we now have a sizeable panel of specialist readers, we still do sometimes experience difficulty in finding readers for an unusual, interdisciplinary or innovative submission. I am very grateful for the recommendations often forwarded by readers who cannot themselves undertake to act as reader on a specific project. It would help, though, if we could reduce the time-lag between delivery and response in a few cases: on occasions, we have had a work on the books for in excess of twelve months, with a very small minority readers either not completing the reading or failing to respond to requests for information. This can lead to author frustration, as well as us losing some potentially very good material.

We continue to commission some excellent guest-edited issues, and are making use of editors (or editorial teams) that often embody researchers located in Europe and the US, or working in geographically diverse institutions in Canada, the UK or the US. The richness of subject matter here must be celebrated as one of the assets of *Gothic Studies*, and the networking skills of our editors are truly impressive.

I am pleased to note that editors (and indeed authors) are increasingly familiarising themselves with the *Gothic Studies* style sheet before submitting the MS to the editor. This cuts down editorial work a great deal, and in consequence means that the issues move more rapidly and more smoothly between editor, publisher and printer. The team at Manchester University Press, most notably Matthew Frost and Stephanie Matthews, have been exemplary in their handling of MS queries, MSS and proofs, and the journal has begun to appear close to the cover date following a time when editorial delays (at my end of the line, it has to be said) sometimes saw it appear a month or so later.

Forthcoming Issues

In addition to at least one general issue, the following special issues have been commissioned (and, in some cases, copy has already been received by the Editor). Issue numbers are projected, though may be subject to change.

GS 10/1	General issue, ed. Hughes [copy received]
GS 10/2	Material Gothic, ed. Shapiro [copy received]
GS 11/1	Gothic and Addiction, ed. Davison [copy received]
GS 11/2	Stevenson and the Gothic, ed. Walker
GS 12/1	Theorising the Gothic, ed. Hogle & Smith
GS 12/2	British Gothic, 1880-1940, ed. Hughes & Freeman
GS 13/1	General issue [probable]

Some areas might be developed for future work: for example, we could probably do with a specifically eighteenth-century orientated special issue, and we are under-represented in studies of televisual Gothic and non-Anglophone Gothics. With the centenary of Bram Stoker's death approaching in 2012 I would hope to commission for a special issue on that author – though other authors, or groupings of authors, might make for popular issues too.

Finances

As usual, I am not presenting a balance sheet for *Gothic Studies* as sundries such as postal costs, paper and computer consumables are met for the most part by my faculty.

Final Thoughts

The membership issue, along with the financial and administrative difficulties raised by the Secretary-Treasurer do need to inform this report, even though its focus is primarily the day-to-day running of *Gothic Studies*. Clearly the journal will not survive without subscriptions, and we do need to ensure that we are employing the data we hold as efficiently as possible. I think that Matthew's addendum to Angela's report ought to inform our discussion at Aix. I think, also, that if we take control of the membership list, we will be providing Angela with a significant increase in administration. I would certainly argue for the election of a separate and dedicated membership secretary, with the Secretary-Treasurer's role retained in its present form.

This has been, though, a good twelve months for *Gothic Studies*. We have seen some excellent and original work published, have maintained the high standards set by previous issues, and are developing a challenging and lively range of future issues that will see us through to the next conference. Thank you, one and all, for your support and hard work across the year.

The AGM here agreed to ratify the decision of the IGA Executive Board to change William Hughes's title from 'Editor' to 'Editor in Chief' of *Gothic Studies*. The president(s) of the IGA will no longer carry the title 'Editor in Chief' and Manchester University Press will be notified of this. This decision recognises the fact that William Hughes is entirely responsible for the editing of the journal.

Item 6: Web Report (Jason Haslam)

I'm sorry to be missing the meeting and the conference. There is not much to report regarding the website. The recent addition of links to the website on different Wikipedia pages that are related to the Gothic has greatly increased our hits, especially during the main academic terms (what that possibly says about student research habits is best left unexplored...). Whether that will lead to more members is unclear, but more eyes on the Association can't be a bad thing. During the Fall and Winter terms, we averaged (as a rough estimate) approximately 50+ hits a day, sometimes reaching into the 90+ range for several days at a time. So far this Spring/Summer, those numbers have fallen to around 30+ hits per day. Our scope is still global: people come to our site from countries around the world, and we have regular hits from every continent except Antarctica.

A few areas of the site need updating: notably, the minutes from the 2006 electronic board meeting haven't been posted. As I write this I've been searching my email files, but don't seem to have those minutes anywhere (I don't think I received them, but it's been a hectic year, so anything is possible. If it is my fault, I apologize). They may have just disappeared into the electronic ether, too, but in any event, as soon as I have them and the minutes from this year, I'll make sure to post them quickly.

Item 7: Uncoupling of IGA membership and Subscription to *Gothic Studies*

The meeting agreed to accept Matthew Frost's proposal (see item 4) that IGA membership should be uncoupled from subscription to the MUP journal *Gothic Studies*. It was agreed that this should be effected as soon as possible. It was also agreed that:

- Individual full membership will continue to comprise both IGA membership and journal subscription but that this will be handled by the Treasurer/Membership Secretary according to Matthew Frost's proposal above.
- Institutional subscriptions will still be handled by Marston (MUP's agent)
- Associate Membership (a new category created for the IGA 2007 conference) will be £5 p.a. (free for postgraduates and unwaged) and will entitle members to the following:
 - (a) £5 reduction of the IGA Conference fee (this does not apply to postgraduates and unwaged members who will be offered a reduced conference fee)
 - (b) Access to, and inclusion in, a PDF file containing names, contacts details and brief research profiles of other IGA members
 - (c) Access, via a password, to a discussion room on IGA website
 - (d) Ability to advertise conferences, publications and workshops/events connected with the academic study of the Gothic on the IGA website
 - (e) Ability to post Calls for Papers concerning conferences/academic events relating to the Gothic on the IGA website
 - (f) Ability to apply for bursaries for travel to IGA conferences (postgraduate members only)

Item 8: Membership of Advisory Board: Election of 2 New Members

Two IGA members were elected to the IGA Advisory Board:

- Glennis Byron (proposed by Robert Miles; seconded Steven Bruhm)
- Mariaconcetta Costantini (proposed by Gilles Menegaldo; seconded Bill Hughes)

Item 9: Nomination of Treasurer/Membership Secretary

The meeting ratified the decision of the IGA Executive Board to appoint Sue Chaplin as Treasurer/Membership Secretary to replace Angela Wright, who is stepping down in August. David Punter suggested that, given the new responsibilities now associated with this role, the title be changed to Executive Officer to the IGA. The meeting agreed this suggestion.

Item 10: 2009 Conference and Beyond

The meeting ratified the decision of the IGA Executive Committee to accept Dr. Catherine Spooner's offer to host IGA 2009 at Lancaster University, England. The co-presidents will liaise with Dr. Spooner over the next two years concerning the organisation of the conference.

Mariaconcetta Costantini offered to host IGA 2011 at the University of Chieti-Pescara in Italy. This offer was received with thanks and will be considered at the Executive Board meeting and the AGM of the IGA 2009 conference.

It was also noted that offers had been received to host IGA 2011 in Thailand and in Mexico City.

Some members expressed the opinion that IGA 2011 should be held in the United States since the IGA contains many American members but an IGA conference has not yet been held there. Jerry Hogle and Steven Bruhm said they would liaise with colleagues in the States who work at universities where the climate would be suitable for such an event in the summer.

Item 11: Re-election of co-presidents

The meeting ratified the suggestion of the IGA Executive Committee that Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik should continue as co-presidents of the IGA for the period 2007-9.

Item 12: Nomination of Postgraduate Representatives

Nancy Gillespie will continue as a Postgraduate representative on the IGA Advisory Board Committee but Ben Brabon (formerly elected as a Postgraduate member) is now in a salaried academic post. (He will continue as a member of the IGA Advisory Board.) We therefore now have a vacancy for a postgraduate representative. The meeting agreed that nominations for a new postgraduate member should be sent to Avril Horner (a.horner@kingston.ac.uk) and Sue Zlosnik (s.zlosnik@mmu.ac.uk) by end September 2007. It was suggested that in future postgraduates should be asked to nominate others when such a vacancy occurs before the next meeting of the IGA Executive Committee.

Item 13: AOB

- It was agreed that publications resulting from the conference will be managed and overseen by Professors Duperray and Menegaldo who will liaise with a small advisory group in the U.K. as appropriate.

July 2007