

International Gothic Association

IGA Advisory Board Electronic Meeting 2006:

Participants: Fred Botting, Benjamin Brabon, Steven Bruhm, Jodey Castricano, Charles Crow, Carol Davison, Ben Fisher, Michael Gamer, Kenneth Gelder, Nancy Gillespie, Jason Haslam, Jacqueline Howard, Bill Hughes, Jerrold Hogle, Avril Horner, Allan Lloyd Smith, Gilles Menegaldo, Robert Miles, David Punter, Andrew Smith, John Whatley, Anne Williams, Angela Wright, Sue Zlosnik.

Minutes

Item 1: Approval of previous minutes of the 2005 meeting (circulated on e-mail)

- Minutes approved

Item 2: Business arising from the minutes

- No further business

Item 3: Chairs' Report for 2005-6

Some of our plans for increasing membership and offering opportunities for fuller participation in the Association have been put on hold because of ongoing difficulties with the current arrangements with MUP. We have allowed time for the new system for subscription and distribution, through Marston, to be put into effect, having been assured by MUP that this would address all the problems identified in the last meeting of the Board. We regret to report that this has not been the case. In fact, the situation is now worse: difficulties with subscriptions and in ascertaining an accurate membership list not only continue but have been exacerbated by Marston's insistence that because of the Data Protection laws they cannot divulge the names of subscribers and such information must therefore come from MUP. Angela has found it impossible to extract from MUP both this information and the £1,000 arrears owed to the Association.

We have therefore taken the step of entering into negotiations with Taylor & Francis/Routledge who have expressed an enthusiastic interest in adding Gothic Studies to their list. On 31st August, we met with Jane Thurgood, who has responsibility for all Taylor & Francis journals. It is clear that their administrative systems, including those relating to distribution and marketing, are on a much larger scale and far more efficient than those of MUP. Although membership would still be tied to journal subscription, under any arrangement entered into with this publisher it would be the IGA who controlled the membership list and subscriptions. Members would pay the membership fee directly to the IGA who would then supply Taylor & Francis with the names of institutional and individual members. This would entail the Membership Secretary maintaining a database. Members would receive Gothic Studies from Taylor & Francis who would invoice the IGA annually. This means that finally we would be in control of

information concerning members and of all financial transactions. Another benefit of moving to Taylor & Francis would be that the journal would not be confined to two issues a year. On the contrary, they would be looking for growth and were impressed to hear that there was such a long waiting list of quality material for publication. They were also impressed by the truly international profile of the Association and its current membership (despite the fact we were not able to show them up to date membership lists). Although we shall need to look carefully at contractual matters, we now seek approval in principle from the Board to continue negotiations with Taylor & Francis.

The Board will be pleased to know that arrangements for the 2007 conference in Aix en Provence are well advanced. We have been working with our French colleagues and are grateful to them for all the effort they are putting into the planning process. Please contact one of us with any suggestions for further publicity. We hope you will encourage all those of your acquaintance who might be interested to join us in June. Aix is one of the gems of Europe, a beautiful medieval town near the Mediterranean and a noted centre of culture. Not only is it served by the international airport at Marseilles, it also has excellent train links to Paris, being only three hours from the capital by TGV (very fast train!). IGA 2007 promises, like its predecessors, to be a truly memorable event. We have just participated in the biennial conference of the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE), held in London this year. It is very apparent that interest in Gothic studies is beginning to burgeon in mainland Europe. It is thus timely that the 2007 IGA conference will be the first it has held on the continent. A progress report on the event will be available for discussion when we reach Item 8 of the Agenda.

We feel that a change of publisher for Gothic Studies should be accompanied by an international publicity campaign directed at all university departments in which Gothic is taught. When we reach this point, we shall be seeking to set up a small working party to put this into action.

It is clear that interest in the Gothic has never been greater. We talked to a number of publishers during the ESSE conference who assured us that there is considerable demand for their growing Gothic lists. We must ensure that everyone working in Gothic will, in future, regard IGA membership as indispensable!

Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik

1. There is unanimous approval for discontinuing the relationship with MUP, although our contractual position is yet to be checked out. No one has any negative comments about Taylor and Francis. There are a range of positions relating to membership without journal subscription but a general feeling that we should pursue the T & F opportunity and perhaps create different categories of membership once (and if) the journal has moved.
2. T & F were suggesting to us that we run our own membership lists, setting and collecting Association subscriptions. We would give them regular information about who had subscribed and they would distribute journal issues to them as they were published. They would then invoice the IGA annually for the cost of the

journals, giving us some allowance for editorial costs. I have made an enquiry this week about any arrangements for reduced subscriptions they might have but Jane Thurgood seems to be away and I haven't had any reply from her designated stand-in. This will indeed mean more work for the IGA officers but I believe it's worth it. I rather think that some of the problems of subscribing in different currencies might have easier solutions than they did in the early days of the IGA. T & F is a large organisation with effective marketing. They see increasing the number of issues as a way of boosting membership rather than as being dependent on its growing. I would see institutional subscriptions being handled directly by them. Another benefit would be the accessibility of the electronic version of the journal. I was disappointed to find, having acquired the journal with its electronic version for our library, that it's only accessible at the University's IP address. There is no password protected web access with MUP. For those of us using VLEs in our teaching, this is really frustrating.

3. There was a unanimous support to pursue the negotiations with Taylor & Francis.

Item 4: Treasurer's report (Angela Wright)

The IGA's account currently has £1033.53 in its bank account, with a further £1000 to come from MUP for the 2005-6 subscriptions. It has proved to be increasingly difficult to extract the dues from MUP. Sue Zlosnik and I have kept up the pressure on MUP to pay the arrears since February, and it is only during this last week that I have received a fax from their finance department, suggesting that they would like to pay the arrears by BACS. The payment of these arrears should provide the association with over £2000, which will mean that we are in a good position to offer at least two graduate bursaries for the Aix conference, if not more.

We continue to offer conference underwriting to the tune of £100, for small one-day conferences organized by members of the IGA. Last year, we underwrote Nancy Gillespie's 'Gothic Remains' conference at the University of Sussex to this tune.

Fiscally, then, the association will be in a pretty healthy financial shape once the £1000 has been paid by MUP, and it will mean that we have a 'dowry' to take to Taylor and Francis, should one be necessary.

Membership-wise, however, I'm sure that you won't be surprised to hear that the IGA has declined due to the ongoing problems with MUP. Last year, Matthew Frost informed us that because of the outsourcing of the distribution list for the journal to Marston Books, the problems with subscribing would be ironed out. If anything, this situation has worsened, and we now have absolutely no access to our subscription list. When I attempted to liaise with the contacts at Marston in order to get an up-to-date list of memberships for this meeting, I was informed that due to data protection acts, I could not be given the list of

subscribers, and that instead MUP could forward it to me. This was over two months ago, and despite asking MUP three times for an up-to-date list over these two months, none has been forthcoming. This is a dire situation indeed, when we have no information about our own members. I cannot update my membership database, and suspect that many people simply lose interest due to never receiving any mailings. In addition, I have received complaints from several prospective members that no one at Marston responded to their subscription queries, something that Carol Margaret Davison's panel members at ACCUTE experienced when they attempted to subscribe. The move to Marston has underlined the fact that MUP's subscription/membership arrangement is an impossible one to manage. Because they are only interested in journal revenues, they really do not understand, nor seek to comprehend, the significance of the membership of the IGA. Therefore, in light of a very frustrating beginning to 2006 for the Association, I would also fully support the move to Taylor and Francis.

Angela Wright

- Motion to accept Treasure's report, seconded.
- Angela thanked for her work

Item 5: Bill Hughes' report on the state of *Gothic Studies*

*Report on Gothic Studies
From August 2005–September 2006*

Introduction

This report is concerned primarily with the quality and productive aspects of Gothic Studies in the period following the Montréal conference. As Managing Editor I maintain a regular contact with Manchester University Press, though that contact tends to be primarily with the production and copy-editing team, particularly Ms Stephanie Matthews. Following the transfer of the Press's subscription and distribution services to Marston's I have minimal contact with the subscription arm of the operation, though I do continue to field occasional queries from subscribers or potential subscribers – in many cases directing them to Matthew Frost for comment. From an editing and production aspect, the relationship with the Press is extremely healthy, and I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Ms Matthews and the team based in Manchester, which has now fully recovered from its internal reorganisation last year. I understand, though, that subscriptions and the payment of monies from the Press to the Association have been an issue this year, and I would recommend that this be addressed by the Secretary-Treasurer, who has more experience of the new regime.

The Year's Production

This has been another successful year for Gothic Studies, with three issues physically produced in the period, and a fourth one currently at the printer's. The year's production comprises the whole of Volume 7 and the first part of Volume 8, the second part being at present in press:

7/1	<i>Gothic Ex/Changes, ed. Terry Phillips & Sue Zlosnik</i>
7/2	<i>Queering Gothic Films, ed. Michael Eberle-Sinatra</i>
8/1	<i>Italy and the Gothic, ed. Massimiliano Demata</i>
8/2	<i>General issue (8 pieces)</i>

Though we have experienced some problems of late production, in part due to delayed receipt of copy, revisions or proofs, we are now on schedule and Volume 8/2, a general issue under my (anonymous) editorship, should be released on time in November.

This second part of Volume 8 will be rather a large one, as the journal has accumulated a significant amount of accepted unsolicited material in the period following the last general issue, 6/2, in November 2004. The issue of how we handle this material, which has already begun to accumulate in readiness for the next general issue, is one which is raised later in this report. We continue to commission around 25% of unsolicited material, and I would like the Board to note that the authors of rejected pieces frequently e-mail me, thanking the readers for their detailed responses and annotated manuscripts. This level of detail and support even for those who ultimately are not commissioned, which should be seen as a commitment to fostering scholarship, is one of the most distinctive features of Gothic Studies.

Overall, I am delighted to confirm that the quality of material either submitted or commissioned remains extremely high, and that a good balance between the canonical and the ground-breaking has been achieved. Our panel of readers, which after nine years is a large and truly international one, works hard in the best interests of both the journal and Gothic scholarship more broadly. I can only offer my thanks and applause for their diligence, not merely in the current year but throughout my tenure as editor. Similar thanks are due to the remainder of the team – our two reviews editors, particularly, and also the guest editors who handle what can be a quite weighty mass of commissioning, correspondence and proof-reading before their work is turned over to me for final copy-editing.

Production for the Coming Year

We have a number of special issues already commissioned, and in some cases submitted and awaiting typesetting by the Press. These include the following firm issues:

9/1	<i>Post-feminist Gothic, ed. Ben Brabon & Stephanie Genz</i>
9/2	<i>Gothic in Contemporary Popular Culture, ed. Catherine Spooner</i>
10/1	<i>General issue (6 pieces already commissioned)</i>

and the following, which are currently at the commissioning stage:

10/2	<i>Material Gothic</i> , ed. Stephen Shapiro
11/1	<i>Poe Bicentenary Issue</i> , ed. Ben Fisher
11/2	<i>Stevenson and the Gothic</i> , ed. Richard Walker
12/1	<i>British Gothic 1880–1940</i> , ed. Nick Freeman & William Hughes
12/1	<i>Gothic and Addiction</i> , ed. Carol Margaret Davison

The volume allocation numbers are, as always, provisional – the order of issues sometimes has to be changed to maintain the size of the overall volume (libraries prefer to bind at a standard size), or when copy arrives later than scheduled.

As the guest editors will confirm, there can be a substantial delay between submission and final appearance of copy. This is a consequence of the journal having moved from three to two issues per volume in 2002. A return to three issues per volume would see the current material exhausted in just over two years. The current schedule will see it exhausted in just over three years. A return to three issues a year would decrease these often frustrating periods of waiting, and would allow us to produce more general issues based upon unsolicited material. The risk is, though, that an enhanced pressure on guest editors to select, edit and submit, might imperil the extremely high standards that have been achieved using what are often very generous deadlines. Three issues, too, might bring a practical reduction in length per issue, which might mean fewer articles are published under each part number, even where the total expanse of material has increased across a volume.

One recent development has been the issuing of a standard contract from the Press for material commissioned by guest editors. This clearly outlines issues such as retention of copyright, and allows clear decisions to be made when requests for reproduction (which to date have never been refused) are received. The contracts will be issued progressively from this year. We have experienced some difficulty with authors not submitting abstracts with their finished works. Though this does not slow down production of the hard copy, it does make work less easily accessible to internet-based subscribers within academic institutions, as many of these use the abstracts to locate new thought relevant to their research, teaching or writing.

To conclude, though, this has been a very positive year in terms of both research achievement and quality of output. The position of Gothic Studies as a major player in the critical market beyond Gothic is now well established – for example, we have begun to receive requests to licence republication of articles in edited collections beyond our own generic field, and we are fielding more enquiries from researchers who might not class themselves as Gothicists. We have also now been added to the MLA's index, and back issues have been sent in order to facilitate searching of matter published before 2005. I am grateful for the assistance I have received from the Board in connection with this particular development.

Encouraging Further Subscriptions

No matter what the level of subscription, we would always be advised to be ready to encourage further interest, particularly amongst potential institutional subscribers. As editor, I attempt to do this by including fliers for Gothic Studies in all correspondence relating to the Gothic with anyone I know not to be a subscriber. I also try to circulate fliers at any conference I attend (and quite a few that I don't manage to attend). We have experienced some success in picking up individual subscriptions through this route, though it might be more effective if other members of the Board considered doing the same thing. I can supply either a hard copy or a scanned version of the current flier if any member of the Board would like one. Fliers, incidentally, are always sent out with the contributors' copies, with a letter inviting both a personal subscription and an institutional one. I would be more than happy to include fliers for other Gothic-related books or conferences with these contributors' copies – please forward hard copies to me, and I will do the rest.

Institutional subscriptions, though, remain the most substantial form of income, and thus the greatest source of security, for the Journal. Again, I would ask all members of the Board to check whether or not their institution has a subscription. If it does not, a personal recommendation, stressing that Gothic Studies covers material from the eighteenth century to the present, and has an interdisciplinary premise that has seen us discuss cinema, sculpture and popular culture in addition to literature, theatre and poetry, may well secure us a valuable subscription. Colleagues in other faculties, currently unaware of the breadth (or even existence) of Gothic Studies, may well lend their support. I would be happy to write directly to your institutional librarian, enclosing a sample copy, if required. I would also ask you, finally – are you actually receiving a copy of the journal? Have you taken out a personal subscription yourself?

Conclusion

I submit this annual report to the Board for its consideration. In closing, I would like to thank the Joint Presidents of the Association, the Secretary-Treasurer, our Past Presidents, the two Reviews Editors and the individual Board members for their support across the year. Gothic Studies is a tribute to your commitment.

*William Hughes
Editor, Gothic Studies*

4 July 2008

- Bill was thanked for his report, and for his ongoing hard work with 'Gothic Studies'.

Item 6: 2009 conference and beyond

- An offer to host the 2009 conference at Lancaster University in the UK led by the familiar figures of Catherine Spooner and Fred Botting was put forward. There is general agreement that a US venue is a priority for 2011.

Item 7: Web report by Jason Haslam

As mentioned in Montreal, after several quick moves, the website is now settled on Dalhousie University's server, at <<http://gothic.english.dal.ca>>. There's not much new from last year, re. the layout or look of the website--besides general updates--so I'll give a brief report on how people are finding the site (based on the counter and tracker that I use on the home page). Most of the links other sites have to ours have been updated in the past year, and I've recently added links to the IGA site on a few central wikipedia entries related to the gothic ("gothic novel/fiction/literature", etc., and "gothic art"), and these immediately started generating several hits per day. Additionally, hits are increasingly from people doing general searches on "gothic," which indicates that our web presence is increasing. In general, there are between three and four dozen hits per day, literally from around the world. Some of these are repeat visitors, but many also seem to be new visitors, who may not have heard of us before. While I haven't added counters to the rest of the site (yet...), and so can't map out an average visitor's activity, it is obvious, based on when people come back to the home page, that many people are spending time looking through the material we have.

As per some discussion in Montreal, I have updated the prominence of the Gothic Studies link on the homepage in the hopes of drumming up subscriptions. I also added the Marston contact information when it became available, and cleared up that page a little for navigation purposes. (Matthew F. told me a while ago that a Pay Pal subscription option from Marston was on its way, but I haven't heard anything since, so the "coming soon" announcement for that has been on the Gothic Studies page of the website for quite a while.) Of course, without our membership list, it's hard to say what, if any, effect these changes have had on subscriptions. Given the number of hits, and their global scope, I think the website could be a great resource for generating memberships and subscriptions, esp. if our publisher, whoever that may be in the future, has easy electronic subscriptions.

The "calls for papers" page seems to have become more important for members of late, with several calls being placed on it over the past year, ranging from ongoing book series and new journals to special journal issues and conferences, and so on, so I've added a little bit of structure to that page to make it more reader friendly. If we can make this page a central clearing house for gothic cfps, we should be able to make new visitors into regulars. As always, though, the website is a "nothing in, nothing out" venture, so please make sure to send me your cfps or links, and so on, otherwise they won't appear--and make sure to bug me if an update you send doesn't go up in a reasonable amount of time. And, tied to that and as always, please send me updates for the "members publications" page.

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Jason was unanimously thanked his hard work.

Item 8: Re-election of advisory board

- Unanimous approval of the current membership until Aix.

Meeting was adjourned on the 22nd September, 2006.

Franz Potter