

equity



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MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2019

Why HMRC are
getting out of control

First union deal
with Netflix

Local casting campaign

WHY ACTIVISM MATTERS

Kobna Holdbrook-Smith
on the importance of Equity

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REPORT

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EQUITY UNDER ATTACK BY HMRC

Union members are being targeted by tax office in a move that could end self-employed status

EQUITY IS UNDER SIEGE in defending its members against the ruthless approach of the tax authorities. A co-ordinated attack is underway that could lead to entertainment professionals losing their self-employed status and the associated blow of causing producers to think again about investing in the UK entertainment sector.

The union recently lost a test tax case that was led by Robert Glenister, pictured, on behalf of hundreds of members. It was a technical case regarding national insurance where the HMRC unethically exploited a loophole that will now put Equity members at risk of losing their homes. Robert Glenister called it “a cynical cash grab” and the protracted case has led him to take medication for depression; read his views on page 20. Unfortunately this is just the beginning of an assault by HMRC that could damage all our members. The tax office has delivered draft guidance for the entertainment sector to Equity that is a complete disaster and were it to be adopted would effectively mean the ending of members’ self-employed status.

Equity’s General Secretary Christine Payne said: “If this new guidance becomes official engagers would have no choice but to put most of our members on to PAYE not just in film or TV but also in theatre. All engagers would face spiralling costs and administrative complications. HMRC are on the verge of being out of control. They cannot – and must not – be allowed to try and overturn decades of consensus and precedent on tax status in the creative industries.” The union is determined to fight back, read more about this from Christine on page 7.

PAUL STEWART

IN BRIEF



Stalking guidance

STALKING IS A CRIMINAL MATTER and should be reported to the police. You can also contact the National Stalking Helpline on 0808 802 0300. The union can actively help in some circumstances and we have created a guide that you can find online here:

www.equity.org.uk/bullying

Charity Poker Tournament

THE ANNUAL EQUITY poker tournament was held on 5 May in London, with all proceeds going to charity. This year the event raised £1,206 for Mary’s Meals, which is enough to provide school meals for 87 children for a whole year.

Bullying article

THE SPRING 2019 issue of the magazine contained an article regarding bullying and the ‘company culture’. Some members in the production alluded to in the article have contacted Equity to disagree with the version of events described. Equity wants to emphasise that it will listen to and support all members who believe they have been bullied.

You can contact the union via the Bullying and Harassment helpline on: 020 7670 0268.

Glasgow office move

OUR GLASGOW OFFICE has now moved to its new location. If you want to pop in and see Lorne, Adam or Marlene here’s the new address:

Cambridge House
4th Floor

8 Cambridge Street
Glasgow G2 3DZ

All other contact details remain the same and can be found at the back of the magazine.

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT IN THE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

EQUITY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS open on 5 June. Enclosed with this magazine you will find a booklet of election statements from the candidates, a ballot paper and a prepaid envelope to send your votes back to us. Voting closes at noon on 12 July.

We have three industrial committees — Screen & New Media, Stage and Variety, Circus and Entertainers — with the authority to conduct negotiations. These committees, made up of members with recent experience of relevant work, are at the forefront of improving pay and conditions for members. Supporting them are five specialist committees — Audio, Dance, Singers, Stage Management and Directors & Designers — all made up of members with recent working experience. There are also committees of members in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, four equality committees — Deaf and Disabled; LGBT+; Minority Ethnic; and Women — and a Young Members’ Committee.

Voting will also be possible online from 5 June. Some candidates have supplied video statements that will be available on our dedicated Youtube channel when voting opens: <https://bit.ly/2HGkmlW>

CLASS NETWORK LAUNCHED

VICKY MCCLURE, JULIE WALTERS AND JULIE HESMONDHALGH are backing the union’s new class networks that recently launched in Liverpool and London. The aim is to address working class representation in the entertainment industry.

Grassroots interest in setting up the networks has been growing and members are joining together to share experiences and to campaign with others around measures that will help to address the considerable barriers facing working class creative practitioners accessing work and making progress in the sector.

These events have generated testimony and ideas that will be fed into the Performers’ Alliance All-Party Parliamentary Group’s inquiry into the class ceiling in the creative sector. At the launch in Liverpool, opened by Equity’s President, Maureen Beattie, Ricky Tomlinson called for working class performers to be given the chance to appear in the many TV shows and films that get made locally and Amy Stout shared her experiences of the prohibitive cost of auditioning for drama schools.

Stephanie Greer, Northern Area Councillor, who led the event said: “We just want to be treated fairly - to have the same opportunity to prove ourselves as our wealthy counterparts do. Let me in the room - if I don’t get the job, fine - at least I was given a chance”.

Paul Fleming, industrial organiser for theatre, added: “By being a new point of access to the union’s democratic structures, as well as a dynamic place to campaign for working class artists, this exciting, grassroots initiative will keep & grow the voice of working class members at the heart of Equity’s work.”

For further information, please email classnetwork@equity.org.uk

EU COPYRIGHT DIRECTIVE: NEXT STEPS

➤ LAST MONTH, the Copyright Directive was formally endorsed by the Council of the European Union, clearing the final hurdle of its rocky path through the EU's legislative process.

The starting gun will soon be fired on a 24-month period by which time EU countries must implement the new rules into domestic legislation; whether the UK is required to do so depends on the nature of the UK's departure from the EU.

In any Brexit scenario, Equity will urge the UK Government to implement it, advocating for this legislation as we did throughout its passage with The International Federation of Actors (FIA) and many other partners across the entertainment industry.

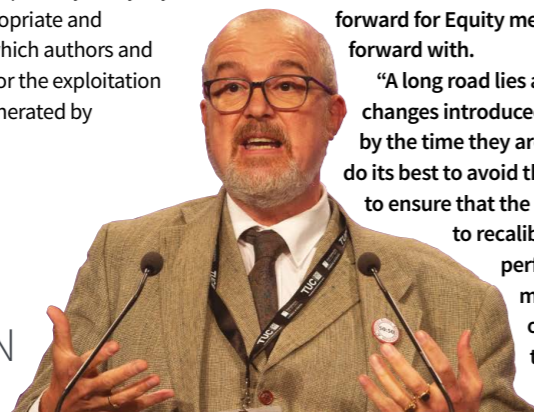
This legislation marks a critical step forward for performers and authors in getting fairer remuneration for use of their work – including provisions for better contractual terms and transparency in royalty accounting. For example, the “principle of appropriate and proportionate remuneration” in Article 18, by which authors and performers will be able to seek compensation for the exploitation of their work, proportionate to the revenues generated by

their material, rather than based on a flat rate. While Equity already negotiates performers' exclusive contractual rights to get secondary use and additional payments, this may provide some protection against buyout contracts (where authors are forced to abandon all rights and entitlements, before there is any way of assessing how well a programme will perform) and will assist with developing collective agreements in areas without them.

Stephen Spence, Deputy General Secretary – Industrial and Organising, said:

“The passing of the directive by the European Parliament marks the end of four years of protracted tussle over its contents, which was nearly derailed completely by the big tech giants. While we inevitably achieved less than we set out to achieve, we took some critical steps forward for Equity members that we are determined to push forward with.

“A long road lies ahead. As we've seen in the past, important changes introduced at EU level can be considerably diluted by the time they are implemented into UK law. Equity will do its best to avoid this and will be lobbying hard with others to ensure that the UK implements the goals of the directive to recalibrate current protections in favour of performers and other rights-holders, to ensure members are properly remunerated from online revenues that are generated from the content on which they depend”.



IT IS A CRITICAL STEP FORWARD IN GETTING FAIRER REMUNERATION



Cast It Here is our new local casting campaign, find out more on page 24

Fighting for our future

If HMRC's suggested guidelines for our sector are adopted it will have catastrophic consequences for all our members and the entertainment industry as a whole. This is a fight we cannot afford to lose



Christine Payne
General Secretary

The HMRC are wilfully undermining the incredible success story of the UK's creative industries. Our industries made a record £100 billion contribution to the UK economy in 2017, generating 5.5% of the UK economy, and accounting for 1 in 11 jobs – more jobs than in the financial services.

This success story is now under attack by HMRC. Tax officials are trying to demolish the consensus that was reached with the industry in a ruthless grab for revenue that appears to be driven by forces that do not understand our sector.

We recently lost a Test Case in the Upper Tax Tribunal. This was a complicated case involving high profile Equity members that had been going on since 2011. HMRC are trying to recover large sums

of national insurance including employers' national insurance from these members – members who HMRC have always accepted are self-employed for tax.

They did this by exploiting a loophole created by a conflict between two sets of regulations – one of which was a set of categorisation regulations set up expressly to enable our members to claim contributory benefits. We believe this approach to be totally unethical and contrary to the spirit and purpose of the legislation concerned.

The case has caused great stress to many of the members concerned – with some now at risk of losing their homes or being declared bankrupt. I really want to thank our member Robert Glenister for agreeing to be the lead in this test case. He put his head above the parapet on behalf of all the members concerned. Read about his view of the case on page 20.

However, this is only part of what's been happening with HMRC – the effect of their approach is spreading and – if we don't stop it – it has the potential to affect all our members and all those who provide work to the industry in TV, film, theatre, radio; across the business.

Since November 2017 our Tax and Welfare team have been working closely with SOLT and UK Theatre to try and agree new tax guidance for actors and performers, which includes other workers – stage management, directors, designers and choreographers and role players.

This was intensive work, but by September last year it looked like we had achieved agreed wording with HMRC and it just needed to be signed off by its legal team. It was

good guidance because it generally preserved the current self-employed tax status of our members while recognising their status as workers for employment rights. After months of delays by HMRC, on 5 April this year we received their final draft of the guidance and it was completely different from what had been agreed in September.

The new guidance is a complete bodge and a disaster.

It gives lots of weight to factors that simply don't apply to many of our members, such as the ability to substitute or provide equipment, and it totally omits the importance of collaboration and the creative input of performers, which is so much a part of the established consensus.

If this new guidance becomes official, engagers would have no choice but to put most of you on to PAYE – not just in film or TV but also in theatre – and all the advantages of your dual status would be lost.

All engagers would face spiralling costs and administrative complications, which would put new production at risk. HMRC are on the verge of being out of control, so – what are we going to do about it?

I am now making representations across government about the damage this guidance would have on the industry and we have been in contact at the highest level with HMRC. But we need the engagers to get on board – BBC, ITV, SKY, Netflix – as well as trade associations like the BFI, BFC, PACT, SOLT, UK Theatre, and ITC. To change this injustice we need their full support.

There will be more lobbying in the weeks and months to come and we will need your support with this.

Meet the membership

KOBNA HOLDBROOK-SMITH

Actor Kobna Holdbrook-Smith talks about winning an Olivier award, supporting ERA 50:50 and the importance of the union

Q You've just won an Olivier Award for your portrayal of Ike in Tina; the Tina Turner Musical, which was your first Musical Theatre role. How did you find making the leap into Musical Theatre?
I felt totally enhanced by my year in a musical. The stigma about musical theatre is sort of about shine over depth but that's breeze. The work is taxing and complicated. But maybe it's a victim of its own excellence because musicals are usually so enjoyable. And also because the best professionals in any industry make their work look easy.

Q Before playing Ike you'd mainly played good guys - has the experience made you want to play more damaged characters?
Ha. I'm definitely all about the bad guys, now. I think there's more detail to feed on. Or perhaps I'm just in love with detail. Kinder, friendlier characters seem to have fewer obstacles to play against. Wait. Maybe I'm playing them too plainly!

Q Have you got any upcoming projects you are particularly excited about?
Nothing I can talk about yet but then I'm completely clear. Literally nothing for the latter half of the year. So I can wait for something extra specially phat.

Q Have you seen anything recently that has really stuck with you?
I've been out of the loop for a year, so really haven't seen much but... the recent film Mary Queen of Scots was very lovely, and I was lucky enough to catch Downstate at the National. Both very 'adhesive'.

Q Who's been an inspiration in your career?
So very many people. Just for this, just for now, just citing Brits, here is a massive list of people whose work I've stanned and/or bitten outright: Henry [Sir Lenworth], Hunter [Kathryn], Ejiofor, Oyelowo, Varla, Rylance

[Mark], Terry [Michelle], Wong [Benedict], Kwei-Armah, Amuka-Bird, Turner [Lindsay], Gough, Warren and Lloyd [Adrienne and Phyllida], Whishaw, Kaluuya, Ahmed [Rizwan], Niles, Noble [Cecilia], Heap [Mark] and tucker green. And tucker green again, because she's that special. And August Wilson even though he's not a Brit. That was too long an answer. Don't @ me.

Q You wore an ERA 50:50 campaign ring to the Olivier Awards. What's the campaign about, and why do you support it?
E. R. A. Stands for Equal Representation for Actresses. They advocate for 50:50 gender-balanced approaches across our work in the industry - casting, directing, programming and staffing. 'Statistical frequency' shouldn't and doesn't indicate human value but, in this case, it's a damn fine starting point. I support the campaign because it's [very] right. The benefits of patriarchy and supremacism are narrow and false ones.

Q You've recently spoken in response to The Stage's report on diversity in the West End. Have you noticed much change over the course of your career?
I honestly don't feel qualified to make pronouncements... but... I have heard changes made in rhetoric and policy and outlook but the real world shifts seem too slow in coming. I'm truly glad conversations are happening, though. But they are all literally just air until people also act.

Q As well as supporting ERA campaign you have in the past been a member of Equity's Screen and New Media Committee and Vice Chair of The Act For Change Project. Have you experienced an increase in activism in the industry in the last few years?
The short answer is 'yes' but I only sense that

PERHAPS THE ORIGINAL
ACTIVISM IS FORMING OR
JOINING A UNION

rather than know it beyond dispute. Basic ways of making active changes are becoming the norm and it seems people increasingly want changes of all sorts, but don't feel that can always be left to randoms to figure out. Perhaps the original activism is forming or joining a union.

Q Equity Committee Elections are coming up - what would you say to people unsure about whether to vote?

If they don't vote they might not even read this! I'd say: "You know that you are your union, right?"
Real talk, Equity is not perfect. Fine. But how can it be? By people joining it and engaging with it. What other choice could there possibly be? 🙌



PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL STEWART



SHUTTERSTOCK

FIRST EVER UNION AGREEMENT WITH STREAMING GIANT

EQUITY HAS negotiated the first direct union agreement with Netflix. This agreement is a side letter to the Pact Television Agreement and covers all productions made by Netflix for exclusive use for the Netflix platform. The streaming giant wants to make more productions here in the UK and it is believed they are close to securing a 10-year deal to lease space at Pinewood Studios.

John Barclay, head of the recorded

NETFLIX WANTS TO MAKE MORE PRODUCTIONS HERE IN THE UK

media department said: "We are delighted that after months of negotiations we have signed off on the first ever agreement with a leading streaming platform. This ensures that members will be protected. We worked closely with Equity's Screen & New Media Committee along with our colleagues in the agent community."

This is a three-year agreement with a minimum weekly fee of £715, which allows for three months use on the platform and then there are additional percentages to cover either a period of 10 years or 15 years of availability on Netflix. The minimum rates will be increased by 2% for each year during the three-year term.

Discussions are continuing with Netflix to deal with issues around exclusivity provisions for leading roles. Equity is also in conversation with a range of new streaming platforms who also wish to produce in the UK.

CLARENCE DERWENT AWARDS

THIS YEAR'S winners of the Clarence Derwent awards are Michelle Fairley for her portrayal of Cassius in *Julius Caesar* at the *Bridge* and Irfan Shamji for three performances: as Harry, in the *Mayfly* at the *Orange Tree* in Richmond, John in *One for Sorrow* at the *Royal Court* and Luke in *Dance Nation* at the *Almeida*. The Awards were presented in February at the *Prince of Wales Theatre, London*.

The Clarence Derwent Awards are given annually by Equity for the best individual male and female performances in a supporting role for work done during the previous year on a London stage.

The UK awards date back to 1948 and have an illustrious history of rewarding some of the most respected names in British theatre – including familiar names such as Sir Ian McKellen, Timothy West and Dame Judi Dench – but also many other actors whose contributions to British theatre is most highly prized by their peers.

The judges were producer **Thelma Holt**, critics **Kate Bassett**, **Susannah Clapp**, and **Matt Trueman**, plus Equity vice president **Ian Barritt** and director **Jonathan Munby**.

Equity also takes this opportunity to present its student and young member bursaries. The four bursaries are worth £500 each. The Student bursaries went to **Elizabeth Hammerton**, studying at **LAMDA**, and **Vincent Rosec** studying at **East 15**. The Young Member Bursaries went to **Jonny Grundy**, a circus artist, and **Constance Wookey**, who is using the money to take a show to the Fringe.



The Clarence Derwent winners with Maureen Beattie



Almost 200 people gathered to put faces to voices



AUDIOBOOKS EVENT GETS THE INDUSTRY CONNECTED

EQUITY ORGANISED another audiobooks event sponsored by Audible bringing together producers, publishers, readers, agents and authors in March. It was held at the BFI Stephen Street Kitchen & Bar and was attended

by almost 200 people. It was a great opportunity for the industry to get together and for members to network and have the chance to catch up with those who do this type of work. This work can be quite a solitary existence at times

and everyone really enjoyed and appreciated the night bringing the industry together. Member **Penelope Rawlins** said: "A massive thank you to you for Thursday evening. It was so lovely to see so many work friends under one

roof, and how lucky to have so many chums from work, lovely to re-connect, and even connect face to face with folk one knows so well through email! A reminder of how lucky we are to do what we do, thank you so much."

EQUITY BURLESQUE NETWORK LAUNCH

EQUITY FORMALLY launched its Burlesque Network on 24 April with an event at Guild House organised by Variety, Circus and Entertainers Councillor **Red Sarah** and variety organiser **Michael Day**. The event was structured so that there could be group discussions, educational presentations as well as networking. The group discussion covered some of the pertinent issues affecting burlesque performers such as recognition and understanding of the art form, diversity, social media, professional standards and rates. There were presentations from **Holli Mae Johnson** on marketing and branding; **Tempest Rose** on how to produce and make opportunities; **Wildvixen Mama Jojo** (Jo King) on her career in the industry.

The topics for the group discussions were identified at the meeting when members were asked to state the best



Above: Variety Organiser Mike Day with the founders of the new Burlesque Network



thing about burlesque to them and something that needs to be improved.

By far the most common theme that emerged that performers liked about the art form was the freedom of artistic expression and autonomy. Rates of pay were identified as a big issue which prompted the biggest discussion.

The Network will build on previous work that Equity has done with burlesque such as the dispute in Camden about licensing of burlesque and a similar issue in Hebden Bridge as well as the development of standard contracts. The Network will now look at tackling some of the issues affecting the industry that were raised and it is intended that further meetings outside London will be arranged in the future. Burlesque practitioners wishing to get involved with the Network should contact **Michael Day** on mday@equity.org.uk for more information.



CONTRACT ENFORCEMENT SECURES £11M FROM HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

➤ **EQUITY HAS** been working closely with two major studios to recover record amounts in royalties for performers who have worked on Equity film and television contracts. Through the union's contract enforcement role, Equity ensures that all royalty payments are calculated in accordance with the formulae set out in Equity's collectively bargained agreements – ensuring that performers share in the gross receipts realised from the sale or licence of a production. Equity scrutinises reporting, identifies deficiencies, and makes challenges on our members' behalves.

These efforts with two studios alone resulted in a pay-out, via Equity's Distribution Services, of an incredible £11 million in Equity royalties, plus late payment penalties. Productions involved included *Outlander* (pictured). Additionally, thanks to ongoing dialogue, the relevant studios and payroll companies have tailored their systems to ensure future compliance with Equity methodology. Finally, we are also pleased

to announce that we have recently initiated a new round of audits across the major studios.

Equity's in-house Distribution Services paid out more than £24 million in royalties to more than 19,000 performers in the first 18 months of operating. Advice and FAQs on Royalties are available in the "At Work" section of our website, including a newly launched online service offering support with Royalties and Contract Enforcement queries. These developments and recoveries would not be conceivable in the absence of a powerful union representing performers' collective rights. Please support us in our aim to achieve 100% membership on film and television sets by speaking with your fellow performers about the value and importance of being part of Equity.

The stronger our membership and profile in the industry, the better we are positioned to bargain with the major studios and television companies to achieve and enforce fair compensation for the exploitation of performers' work.

Equity annual exchange meeting

EQUITY AND ACTORS EQUITY ASSOCIATION (AEA) met in London in April for the annual face-to-face review of the Exchange Agreement between the two unions. The Exchange Agreement is codified in the immigration regulations of both countries. As part of the meeting in London, Equity officers and officials hosted our American colleagues at the Olivier Awards Ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall.

The meeting between the unions was followed by the annual Exchange discussion with the Society of London Theatre (SOLT) and the Broadway League representing UK and US producers.

As well as reviewing Exchanges between the West End and Broadway the four organisations examined other Exchanges, International Status applications over the year and the potential implications of Brexit on Exchange arrangements. In addition the unions reminded engagers that stage management are eligible to be included in Exchange applications and underlined why diversity is an important principle within the Exchange agreement process.

The next face-to-face will be held in New York in June 2020.

Photo l-r: Christine Payne, General Secretary, Maureen Beattie, President, Mary McColl, Executive Director AEA, Stephen Spence, Deputy for the General Secretary, Ira Mont, AEA Vice President, Kate Shindle, AEA President & Geraldine Fitzgerald, Equity member



CREATIVE WORKSHOPS FOR YOUNG MEMBERS

AT THE END of 2018 Equity's Young Members' Committee successfully applied for just under £5,000 from the union's Unknown Funds to run a series of events in collaboration with The Mono Box, a London-based not-for-profit collaborative network that caters for actors and theatre-makers, founded by actor Joan Iyiola and movement director Polly Bennett.

Polly and Joan worked with Jessica Bastick-Vines, Vice-Chair of the Young Members' Committee, to devise Creative Acts, which Joan describes as "an essential programme celebrating power and practice for theatre makers from all disciplines. The collaboration between The Mono Box and Equity's YMC attracted a wide range of contributions from our leading industry professionals, and created a focal point for activism and empowerment across London, Cardiff and Manchester. The industry has benefited greatly from this exploration."

Thanks to Creative Acts, the Young Members' Committee has met new young



From left to right: Emily Francis (ERA 50:50), Steven Kavuma (The Diversity School), Cherrelle Skeete (Blacktress), Joan Iyiola (The Mono Box), Jessica Bastick-Vines (Equity YMC), Tom Ross-Williams (The Advocacy Academy), Victoria Emslie (ERA 50:50)

Equity members and fellow creative workers looking for new ways to engage with the union, recruiting new people into membership and encouraging existing members into activity. Jessica said: "We wanted to give space for young members to share their views on the world, to discover how interchangeable our skills are as creatives and activists, to open conversations, and give tools to take forward into action to affect change"

– a process that will continue now that Creative Acts is over. As Polly explains, "we are keen to build on the conversations and ideas exposed by Creative Acts to make sure we work in response to what people are experiencing in and need from the industry today."

You can find out more about The Mono Box on their website: www.themonobox.co.uk, where you can also read blogs from Creative Acts participants.

Equity wins case for magician

➤ **WHEN MAGICIAN** Simon West learnt that he had been accepted to perform on board a cruise ship in 2017, he was absolutely delighted.

"I was thrilled because I really wanted to get into performing in the cruise industry as I had heard so many good things about the experience," he said.

That stint on a cruise ship in 2017 led to an offer of further work in 2018 through well-known talent agency PEEL entertainment.

He signed the contract in early 2018 and was set to

work that summer for a fee of nearly £4000. However, the job was abruptly cancelled as the cruise ship decided they no longer wanted a magician to perform.

That left the problem of Simon's contract.

"I was upset about the cancellation of the contract as I had obviously had to plan my other work and family life around the months I was due to be away," he said. "It was to be an extensive period of my time doing the job."

When PEEL refused to pay Simon for the late cancellation,

he turned to his union Equity for help.

"Simon's case is unfortunately one of many that we see," said Dominic

GIGS CAN BE CANCELLED AT SHORT NOTICE SO A CONTRACT IS VITAL



Bascombe, Equity's North East Regional Organiser. "We sought payment of his fee but eventually had to take the matter to the small claims court."

At the hearing in Skipton County Court, the judge ruled in Simon's favour and he was awarded his full fee.

"This is a great example of how contracts protect our members," said Bascombe. "Many lose out on their fees when performances are cancelled at the last minute. Having a contract in place is vital."



Games are an increasing source of employment for our members

WOMEN IN GAMES LEVEL UP

IN CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 8 March, Equity's Women's Committee and Screen & New Media Committee co-hosted Equity's first Women and Games event.

The afternoon featured a panel of some of the top women in the UK games industry, including Dr Jo Twist, CEO of UKIE (the UK games trade organisation), and representatives from BAFTA, Creative Assembly, and OMUK.

The event was a great success, with productive discussions around some of the industry's most pressing issues, including the challenges faced by women working in the sector. Equity looks forward to building on this and strengthening our involvement with the games industry, which is an increasing source of work for our members.

For more info email: games@equity.org.uk



Union takes action for models

EQUITY HAS STEPPED IN to protect models' fees after the collapse of a modelling agency. In January 2017 FM London Model Management (FMMA) went into voluntary liquidation owing large sums of money to models.

It was subsequently discovered that there was a risk to models' fees as they could be treated as part of the general funds to be distributed to FMMA's creditors rather than being ring-fenced as money held on trust for the models.

This resulted in lengthy correspondence with the liquidators and almost 12 months of legal proceedings. On 10 May 2019, the High Court made an order concerning how the money should be distributed. The court accepted the main arguments of Equity's legal team had advanced, resulting in the most favourable outcome that could be expected.

As a result of the court order, those models who have yet to make claims to the liquidators for the fees owing to them, must now do so by 4pm 28 June 2019. For further information on the case and how to claim you can contact Equity's Legal Officer Martin Kenny on mkenny@equity.org.uk

Vote for the industry you want

There are lots of ways to support Equity, but voting is a key part of being a member of a trade union

AT the time of writing this column the nominations for those wishing to stand for one of Equity's committees are about to close. It's too late now for me to use this chance to speak directly to the whole membership of the union (or at least those who read our multi-award winning magazine!) to encourage, cajole, beg you to stand, but it's not too late for me to encourage, cajole and beg you to VOTE!!

The members who win places on each of our committees will be making incredibly important decisions about your livelihood - how you put bread on your table - so wouldn't you like to make sure they are people you approve of?

I know I've banged on about this before and no doubt will again, but at the risk of sounding like a broken record here's something Michelle Obama said at a recent event to publicise her autobiography - "It's time for us to roll up our sleeves and, if we are not happy with the state of things, then in democracies we have votes. We have to pay attention and we have to be engaged and we can't take our rights and liberties for granted."

Many of the battles Equity's activists and staff are engaged in are ongoing and we cannot afford to take our eyes off the ball.

Our membership in all its glorious diversity is a microcosm of the wider world outside of our union, and when the Sultan of Brunei introduces new laws mandating the stoning to death of gay people, or Donald Trump announces that transgender people are now banned from serving in the armed forces of the US, or a UKIP candidate refuses to apologise for saying that he "wouldn't even

rape" a female Labour MP and states that "feminism is a cancer", or, or, or... it impacts on all of us and our rights. The work of our equalities committees in particular does not happen in an Equity bubble only affecting the lives of our members when they are working within our industry, but has implications wherever the communities they serve exist.

Members who win places on our committees will be making decisions about your livelihood

IN FEBRUARY this year we had an event to celebrate one year on since the launch of our Agenda for Change and Safe Spaces campaign. That very same Labour MP mentioned above, Jess Phillips, was one of our fantastic speakers and she praised Equity for the work we have been doing towards eradicating bullying and harassment from our industry. I don't have any data as yet, although there are plans for a member-wide survey on this subject, but it seems to me that our campaign and the affirmation that goes along with it (see the Safe Spaces page in the diary) are becoming more and more widespread and are making a very real difference. Of course there is much still to do and we must remain ever vigilant, but for me this is a great example of Equity staff and activists working together to affect real change for the better and it fills me with pride. VOTE!!!



Maureen Beattie
Equity President

PROFESSIONALLY MADE PROFESSIONALLY PAID

Our low and no pay campaign relaunches with an emphasis on small scale tours, immersive theatre and the creative team



EQUITY launched our Professionally Made, Professionally Paid campaign in 2014, bringing together all of the efforts we had made over the years on tackling low and no pay in the entertainment industry. In the five years since then, the work we have done to enforce members' rights to statutory minima such as the National Minimum Wage, holiday pay and other entitlements, alongside the continuing efforts we've made to bring new venues, →

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIM BRADFORD



producers and other engagers onto Equity agreements has resulted in more than £3m worth of payments being delivered into the pockets of members and fellow industry professionals. That's no small achievement.

Our campaign is a prime example of how Equity's organising work can deliver real, tangible change for professionals in our industries. Across the UK, members have enthusiastically embraced this work and delivered real results in partnership with Equity Officials, whether by supporting staff to identify engagers who should be using a union agreement and facilitating conversations between them and the union, or by resisting unpaid work, or in conversations with fellow professionals about why what we do matters and how working together means we can deliver the changes we so badly need.

We wouldn't have achieved what we've done were it not for individual members and Equity branches working together to drive this through. Collectively, we can be proud of what we've achieved so far - proud of the contribution we have made to the wider conversations happening in our industries about what good terms and conditions look like, and how paying people for the work they do is a vital part of ensuring that performers and creative workers can access long-term, fulfilling and sustainable careers in their chosen profession.

THIS is not to say that achieving the National Minimum Wage should be the limit of our aspirations - far from it. Over the five years Professionally Made, Professionally Paid has existed, we have worked with engagers to improve the rates of pay they offer as their companies and productions grow. We are clear that our members and their fellow professionals deserve to be paid far in excess of statutory minima. But the reality of the industries we work in - with the continual pressures of funding, misunderstandings about employment status, and proliferation of so-called 'opportunities' - mean there are real challenges in securing even these most basic of workers' rights.

Ultimately, this campaign is an ongoing process, not a one-off event - and it's now time for us to move this work forward, to expand the union's campaigning priorities and continue to tackle the real issues we

know exist on the fringe and beyond.

In a 2018 survey of those who have worked on a Professionally Made, Professionally Paid job since the campaign was launched, members identified the areas they wanted to see us expand into. Firstly, there is a strong demand for the union to do more on encouraging minimum standards on small scale tours. As Equity Stage Management Councillor Adam Burns explains,

"Small scale tours have been hot beds of exploitation for Equity members for too long. Issues such as excessive driving hours, non-payment of the National Minimum Wage and serious health and safety breaches are all too common." This can (and must) change, and as Equity member Melissa Stanton points out, would be positive for the engagers and audiences too: "union contracts are so important for everyone involved. The audience will never get the performance they deserve if the company have not had any proper rest, or food. Producers who take care of their team will ultimately be protecting their own investment and reputation. It just makes good business sense."



MEMBERS HAVE ENTHUSIASTICALLY EMBRACED THIS CAMPAIGN



ANOTHER area members have identified as a priority is immersive theatre. We've established a new Network for members working in immersive theatre, who are sharing their experiences of bad practice in a sector dominated by producers with limited wider industry experience. Equity member Charlotte Newton John works in immersive theatre regularly, and says "The immersive sector is a fairly new form of theatre, and as such, doesn't always get treated in the right way. Safety is a big issue. As performers, we are right in the thick of things in a way we never usually are when on stage, and because you are inviting in an audience to play and leave their inhibitions at the door, we are vulnerable. Too many shows have alcohol available and that coupled with close proximity to the audience can leave performers exposed to many forms of abuse." Through the Network, we are looking at common issues members experience with the aim of making improvements across the board. As Charlotte says "immersive theatre needs its own set of standards drawn up by Equity and people who have been doing it since its inception. And I mean the performers and creative team, not the producers.

People who have a real working understanding of the genre."

Current Equity Fringe Agreements apply to performers and stage managers, but not to creative team members. This is because performers and stage managers are classified as workers for the purposes of employment rights, and are therefore entitled to the National Minimum Wage and holiday pay. Creative team members, by contrast, tend to more often be genuinely self-employed - and are therefore excluded from the range of rights afforded to workers. That being said, a third priority for the campaign's next stage will be the establishment of a Creative Team Fringe Agreement. Robbie Butler, a lighting designer who sits on Equity's Creative Team Committee has already begun working on this in conjunction with Equity staff. He explains: "A fringe agreement for the creative team is important because it sets a baseline of acceptable working standards in the area of our industry where exploitation is most likely to occur. It acts as an educational guide to emerging producers and artists alike as it sets out the basic minimum they should be expecting of one another in professional environments. We need to be careful however and recognise that the fringe is not exclusively a playground for emerging talent. Many theatres and companies thrive there and are commercially successful. We need to ensure they're paying proper rates and not the bare minimum."

ALTHOUGH it is right to say that these three priorities represent a new direction for Professionally Made, Professionally Paid, it's also true that in many ways this work represents the expansion and continuation of what we've done before. The purpose of trade unions is the promotion, protection and extension of workers' rights, and in Equity's 90th year we're doing the work we've always done to change our industries for the better. That work will continue, and will develop and expand as the industries we work in and the activities of the engagers develop and expand. Through this campaign and our wider organising work we have achieved a great deal because we have worked together in the pursuit of common goals and positive change. As Brecht said, "because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are." The union's job is to change those things - and together, we'll do just that. 🙌

How you can be involved

If you want to join our Immersive Theatre Network, email cbence@equity.org.uk

There are surveys on immersive theatre & small scale tours live on the Equity website. Fill them in if you've worked in either sector, and encourage your fellow professionals to do so.

Creative Team? Please keep an eye out for the details of two open meetings on fringe contracts in the Summer, and email cbence@equity.org.uk if you'd like to be involved in this work.



“IT’S BEEN A CYNICAL CASH GRAB”

Robert Glenister represented a large group of Equity members in a protracted, technical tax case that is proving to be the first of a sustained attack by HMRC

PHOTOGRAPHY PAUL STUART

The HMRC have remorselessly pursued me and many other members for hundreds of thousands of pounds on a case which all sides agree is a highly technical interpretation of national insurance rules.

I don't earn millions, I'm a jobbing actor with a bit of profile but I'm now (like many others) at real risk of losing my home. This case has put me under enormous pressure resulting in my being prescribed medication for depression and it has become clear to me that HMRC are potentially targeting a great many in the entertainment industry: my case is just the beginning.

In 2004 my wife and I were advised to set up a company to handle our financial affairs as two self-employed people doing two different jobs.

I challenged the idea at the time wanting reassurance that this was legitimate practice and was duly told by my then accountant that it was.

I trusted this advice along with many other members who were advised similarly and like them set up a limited company in good faith to simplify our financial affairs, not to seek unfair advantage. →

I'M A JOBBING ACTOR THAT IS AT REAL RISK OF LOSING HIS HOME



The stress of the case caused Robert to pass out during a performance of Glengarry Glen Ross

HMRC SHOULD ACT LIKE
A GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT, NOT
A BUNCH OF GANGSTERS



I first became aware of HMRC's investigation in 2010. A number of high profile members and their representatives met at Equity to discuss the issue. The potential losses were a shock, but the explanation of how technical HMRC's argument was, caused some of us to believe that it was unlikely to come to much.

At that stage it was agreed by both HMRC and Equity that a test case should be selected to take to 1st tier tax tribunal.

However after some considerable time (I'm talking years not months, and bear in mind that HMRC are legally entitled to charge interest at 3% on all deemed payments going back in this case, to 2004) the tax authorities decided that the case selected didn't suit them and that another should be chosen. Again, after another ridiculous wait my company was selected by HMRC to be the test case and having discussed with Equity I agreed, knowing that if we lost it would be my name that appeared in the media probably under the banner of 'TV Conman Tax Avoider' (guess what, we did and it was). The test case process meant that I was effectively representing 60 if not hundreds of members with similar financial set ups to mine who would be pursued for many thousands of pounds, as they now have been or will be shortly.

The union is aware of unwell, elderly performers who are having to deal with huge bills from HMRC at the end of their careers after paying their dues all their working lives.

Why are HMRC pursuing this case and others that Equity are working on with such extraordinary zeal, while at the same time letting some of the largest and wealthiest companies and individuals get away with not paying their fair share? It's because we are an easy and vulnerable target or as my now accountant says, "low hanging fruit".

I have never sat down with a tax official in nine years; I want an explanation from the horse's mouth as to why they are taking such an aggressive approach.

The unregulated power and anonymity of those attempting to ruin us is worrying to say the least. Do individual tax inspectors get a cut of whatever monies he or she manages to claw back? Just a thought.

The psychological effects that this whole enquiry has had on those targeted individuals must be considered.

As I mentioned, I am on medication for depression and now also for high blood pressure having passed out during a performance of Glen Garry Glen Ross in 2017 not long after we lost the first tier tribunal. I believe that both of these conditions are a direct result of HMRC's actions. I'm delighted that the importance of mental health well-being is being recognised in our industry and in wider society, but is clearly not part of the tax-man's agenda though they maintain (of course) that it is!

My case, and therefore that of many others has come to its conclusion, legally at least. However, there is still I believe a strong moral and ethical argument to be had.

I'm grateful that Equity stepped up to defend the group of members affected by the test case, but it is clear that this is just the start of a cynical and unprincipled cash grab. Our industry is one of this country's great success stories and this government, such as it is, needs to wake up and take control of HMRC, regulate it and ensure that it behaves in a manner that befits its status as a government department, rather than that of a bunch of boorish gangsters seemingly intent on making people's lives a misery. 🙄

HMRC has our industry firmly in its sights

IT HAS BECOME CLEAR to Equity that HMRC are targeting the entertainment industry and this case is just one part of a concerted attack. This case involved the alleged non-payment of Class 1 national insurance. The dispute revolved around the use of the Categorisation of Earners Regulations ("Cat Regs") to impose a Class 1 NIC liability under the Intermediaries legislation for those operating through personal service companies in the period prior to 2014 when the Cat Regs were repealed in so far as they applied to entertainers. The dispute has been litigated through the mechanism of an informal test case in the Tax Tribunal and, following an appeal, reached the Upper Tax Tribunal on 11 March with many other performers awaiting the outcome of the lead case. Judgement was released on 9 April and the judges found in favour of HMRC's argument. The sums involved are very considerable indeed and apart from the financial penalty members stand to suffer potentially huge reputational damage.

Equity has throughout backed our members in challenging the approach of HMRC to this case and we continue to believe that it runs contrary to the spirit of what was agreed with HMRC and DCMS. Parliament never intended the Cat Regs to do anything other than assist low paid entertainers access contributory benefits.

As Equity's General Secretary Christine Payne said: "HMRC have exploited a loophole created by a conflict between two sets of regulations - one of which was a set of categorisation regulations set up expressly to enable our members to claim contributory benefits. We believe this approach to be totally unethical and contrary to the spirit and purpose of the legislation concerned.

"We were absolutely right to fight this case because we knew what the consequences of HMRC's approach could be - the case has caused great stress to many of the members concerned particularly to Robert Glenister for agreeing to be the lead in this test case. We know it's been incredibly stressful at times, especially with the distortions about the case in the press."



Member-led casting campaign launches



FILM IS THE NEW MAJOR INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

WE ARE RELAUNCHING our campaign to highlight the benefits of local casting. This is a member-led campaign, with members from all the Nations and Regions having their own specific experiences to bring to the table.

We spoke to Ian McElhinney to find out about the benefits Game of Thrones has brought to Northern Ireland: "Overall there were around half a dozen major parts and probably another twenty parts cast from local talent, so the province has done pretty well out of it.

"The knock-on effect is that a lot of other productions are coming in now - and there's more being shot here - they're just looking at the talent base available and seeing if anybody is suitable. It's a case of, well there is a talent pool here, so let's look at it.

"Historically it used to be that if they came to Ireland to cast they would go to Dublin. So if you were an Irish-based actor you were having to go to Dublin to be seen. That at least has gone. We now have a strong casting agents here who has been pretty influential in building up the visibility of the talent base. There's a lot more possibility that you can be cast and be living here, and not have to move from here in order to do so.

"The entertainment business is the new major industry. Lots more productions are coming in here than was the case historically. If you'd said twenty years ago there'd be a film industry in Belfast people would have laughed. Even when we were making Troubles stuff we went away."

Equity will be providing materials to branches to take to local venues or studios, put up on noticeboards or whatever the branch members feel will work best in their specific area. This is

a campaign where local expertise is at the centre of both the campaigning and the campaign itself.

You can find more information and campaign materials at www.equity.org.uk/cast-it-here



AGENDA FOR CHANGE

IN FEBRUARY, the one year anniversary of Equity's landmark report into sexual harassment in the entertainment industry, we hosted an event to reflect on the progress made and challenges ahead.

Maureen Beattie, Equity President, chaired the event and speakers included Jess Phillips MP, member of the Women & Equalities Parliamentary Committee whose report on Sexual Harassment in the workplace has helped to shift Government thinking, and actress Helen Vine, who won a claim of sexual harassment with Equity's help and gave a powerful testimony about her experiences. Stage manager Jess Richards spoke about the work the National Theatre of Scotland is doing to encourage



safe spaces, while LGBT+ Committee chair Giovanni Bienne, Deaf and Disabled Committee member Natalie Amber and comedian Sameena Zehra all provided insight into different perspectives of the problem.

Positive news includes:

The successful launch of Equity's Safe Spaces campaign that aims to tackle the fear of reporting harassment and bullying and includes a dedicated helpline - 020 7670 0268. Productions have been encouraged to read a Safe Spaces statement before work begins. A video of the statement



Clockwise from the far left: Labour MP Jess Phillips, Helen Vine, Sameena Zehra



featuring David Tennant and Rosalie Craig was unveiled at the event and is available online.

Following Equity's evidence that Non-Disclosure Agreements can intimidate workers from pursuing sexual harassment claims, even where they cannot legally be enforced, the government accepts this and has promised a consultation on their use.

Equity has lobbied hard to increase the window of being able to take an Employment

Tribunal in sexual harassment cases from three months to six months and, again, the government has promised further consultation on this.

Equity has worked with employers and casting professionals on new sets of principles and guidance for sexual harassment and bullying.

Maureen Beattie said: "We are striving to make our sector one that is leading the way in best practice. We believe there has been a shift in perception among our members. In recognising bad behaviour and harassment for what it is, and in our resolve as an industry not to tolerate it, and that you will be believed if you come forward and Equity will have your back when you do."

Virgin Trains voice 'prize'



IN MARCH, VIRGIN TRAINS posted a competition on social media offering members of the public the chance to become the voice of their new toilets. What was presented as a 'fun competition' swiftly caused outcry among Equity members, particularly those who work in the voice over/audio industry.

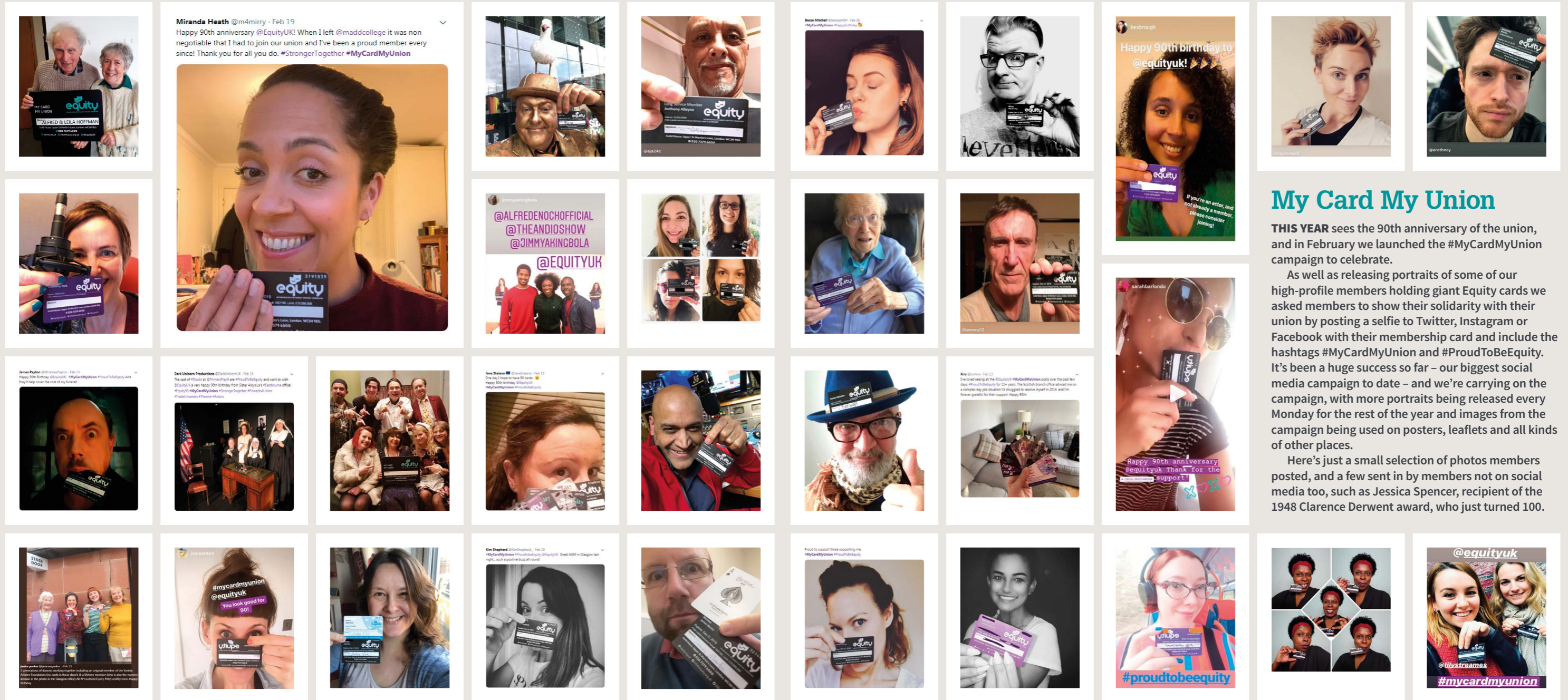
Writing to the Managing Director of Virgin Trains, Equity General Secretary Christine Payne pointed out, "Your social media team have argued that if people were offered the opportunity to present the Oscars they would not ask for payment. This argument is egregious in the extreme, not least because presenters

at The Oscars and other similar awards ceremonies are in fact compensated for the work. More fundamentally, you are tax payer subsidised, multimillion pound train company - not, in fact, an entertainment industry awards ceremony. This attempt at comparison is at best ill-judged, at worst offensive, and again underscores the company's lack of understanding or appreciation for the entertainment industries."

Following the letter Virgin Trains agreed to a meeting where a constructive and satisfactory discussion was had. We received assurances that any future voice work would be paid at industry rates. →

#ProudTo BeEquity

Thank you to all the members who have taken part in the #MyCardMyUnion campaign



My Card My Union

THIS YEAR sees the 90th anniversary of the union, and in February we launched the #MyCardMyUnion campaign to celebrate.

As well as releasing portraits of some of our high-profile members holding giant Equity cards we asked members to show their solidarity with their union by posting a selfie to Twitter, Instagram or Facebook with their membership card and include the hashtags #MyCardMyUnion and #ProudToBeEquity. It's been a huge success so far – our biggest social media campaign to date – and we're carrying on the campaign, with more portraits being released every Monday for the rest of the year and images from the campaign being used on posters, leaflets and all kinds of other places.

Here's just a small selection of photos members posted, and a few sent in by members not on social media too, such as Jessica Spencer, recipient of the 1948 Clarence Derwent award, who just turned 100.

MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM

Equity's Honorary Treasurer Bryn Evans remembers his predecessor, who passed away earlier this year

MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM was a Welsh actor who worked in repertory companies around the UK and for the Welsh Theatre Company based in Cardiff. He also played a season with the company at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre in Scotland.

Michael was elected to the Welsh National Committee in 1977 and served as Chair of that Committee from 1987. He was first elected to Equity Council as Councillor for Wales in 1990 and served continuously for 20 years until 2010.

Michael was Honorary Treasurer of Equity from July 1998 to December 2003. His five and a half years as Honorary Treasurer were a difficult time for Equity; in most years expenditure outstripped income, leading to an operating deficit. This was not down to Michael in any way; he had inherited a Union that was extremely reluctant to increase subscription rates for its members. One of Michael's last acts as Honorary Treasurer was to persuade his fellow Officers to embrace a strategy that would increase the minimum subscription rate from £66 to £80 and then a year later to £90. As his successor, my first task in February 2004 was to present this strategy to Equity Council for its approval.

The fact that subscription revenue is now properly recognised as the core funding of the Union flows from Michael's willingness to grasp



EQUITY OWES HIM A TREMENDOUS DEBT OF GRATITUDE

this particular nettle. Equity owes him a tremendous debt of gratitude. It was entirely appropriate therefore that he was awarded Honorary Life Membership for his services to the Union.

After standing down as Honorary Treasurer, Michael continued to serve on Council and on the Financial Stability Working Party until his retirement in 2010. He was an outstanding Councillor whose contributions to debate were always well argued. He was respected and much loved by his colleagues.

AMY SHAW

An Equity Variety Councillor from 1994 - 1996, Amy passed away last year at the age of 90

AMY STARTED LIFE in Bolton until her father died in 1931. Her mother Susan decided to move to Halifax to be nearer family and negotiate the depression.

A scholarship to attend Princess Mary High School gave Amy a sound education, opportunities to play netball and led her into clerical work. After the War she married Willey Habbergham when he left the RAF.

Amy had become involved with Forest Cottage Community Centre Drama Group and the RAFA pantomimes at the Halifax Playhouse. Amy began singing on the Northern Club Circuit and was in instant demand. Her rise to fame was suddenly halted when she suffered severe injuries in a car accident, which left her technically dead for 5 days in 1961. Her indomitable spirit saw her through an unexpected recovery. Support from clubland comrades and friends helped her recovery

and she was able to resume some singing work. This was often at benefit concerts and for charities.

In 1974 Amy gained her Equity card, which allowed her to branch out into TV and advertising work. Her experience in clerical work also helped in her being voted as secretary for Equity. Amy's most interesting, ongoing and satisfying role was that of Dame Thora Hird's stunt woman in Last of the Summer Wine. Other credits include: In Loving Memory, Coronation Street, Heartbeat, Albion Market, City Central, Emmerdale, Juliet Bravo and Crimewatch and many others including photo shoots and advertising. She was the face of Manchester Buses for a number of years.

Amy leaves three children, six grandchildren, six great grandchildren and one great, great grandchild. Some of these are involved in pantomime, shows and singing.



HER INDOMITABLE SPIRIT SAW HER THROUGH



The Ralph and Meriel Richardson Foundation was established by Lady Meriel Richardson in 1998 to relieve the need, hardship or distress of established British actors and actresses.

Information and Application form online:
The Ralph and Meriel Richardson Foundation

or by post:
5, Stratford Place, London W1C 1AX.

In 1882, the great actor manager Sir Henry Irving founded the **Actors' Benevolent Fund** with a promise to help actors, actresses and stage managers experiencing hardship due to accident, illness or old age.

Over a century later, the Fund remains true to that promise.

If you are in need of support please visit our website, or call us to find out about how the Fund might be able to help you. All enquiries are treated in the strictest confidence.

020 7836 6378
actorsbenevolentfund.co.uk

Registered charity number 206524

✗ Do you work on stage, backstage, front of house, on camera, behind camera? ✓

✗ Are you unable to work due to illness or injury? ✓

✗ Are you in financial difficulties? ✓

If you have answered yes to all these questions call The Royal Theatrical Fund.

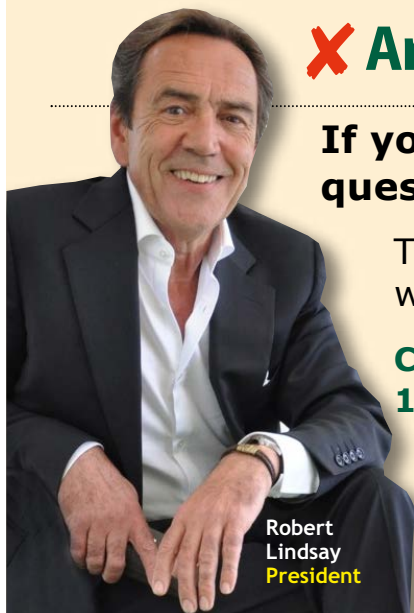
The Royal Theatrical Fund is here to help all who have worked professionally in the World of Entertainment.

**Contact us on: 0207 836 3322 ✓ admin@trtf.com ✓
11 Garrick Street, London WC2E 9AR
www.trtf.com ✓**

All applications are treated in the strictest confidence.

Reg Charity No 222080

The Royal Theatrical Fund



Robert Lindsay
President



Pádraig Murray, President of Irish Equity, was the guest speaker



Equity General Secretary Christine Payne told representatives about the HMRC's attack on the industry



Equity President Maureen Beattie opened the conference by reading the union's Safe Spaces statement

Belfast opens its arms to Equity

Union conference discussed issues including casting, education and cross-border co-operation

EQUITY'S annual representative conference (ARC) is the forum where Equity activists from branches, committees and Annual General Meetings get together and debate the issues that will affect the industry for the coming year.

It took place on 18-20 May at the Europa Hotel in the very welcoming city of Belfast. The ARC always has its social aspects, where members can informally network together, and the main event for this is the traditional Sunday evening dinner. This year an extra trip to Belfast's famous Dockers Club was arranged on the Saturday night and representatives thoroughly enjoyed their evening in the legendary variety venue.

The serious business of debating the motions to improve the entertainment industry began on Saturday, with the Conference opening with a speech

by Equity President Maureen Beattie. She began by reading the Safe Spaces statement that was created as part of the union's Creating Safe Spaces campaign. She went on to discuss the importance of good mental health in the entertainment business and the difficult realities that often lie behind "a happy, successful surface".

Equity's General Secretary Christine Payne was next to the podium and briefly outlined the good news for the union: a membership that continues to grow and is now at a record high, improved agreements and millions of pounds paid to members through the union's new distribution service.

However, she spent the main part of her speech detailing the bad news of how HMRC is targeting Equity members. She said: "Tax officials are trying to demolish the consensus that was reached with the →

Members vote to change industry

Equity's 2019 Conference carried 47 motions and here is the complete list

Motion 1: Ensure accessible communication methods are used

Motion 2: Initiate urgent discussions to tackle discrimination against BAME performers

Motion 3: Conduct an audit of LGBT+ theatre companies/venues/production companies

Motion 4: Conduct an inquiry into members' experiences of inappropriate behaviour at auditions/interviews

Motion 6: Initiate a sustained campaign to unionise members of the variety profession

Motion 7: Redouble efforts to publicise to singers that Equity is their union

Motion 8: Raise awareness of the tipping point streaming services are creating for residual payments

Motion 9: Create a Low Budget Film Agreement, similar to the Fringe Theatre Agreement

Motion 11: Mount a campaign to secure adequate funding for drama on BBC Radio

Motion 12: Subscription rates up by 3.03% from January 2020

Motion 13: Put to a referendum changes Rule 3

Motion 15: Put to a referendum changes to Rule 15

Motion 16: Agree a change to Rule 28

Motion 18: Establish a working party to fully review the format of the ARC

Motion 19: Examine further the GDPR "lawful basis for processing" criteria

Motion 20: Give serious thought to Equity's GDPR policy

Motion 21: Investigate reinstating the circulation of online joining codes to non-members

Motion 23: Ask First Act Insurance for monthly direct debits to be possible for add-on insurances

Motion 25: Investigate how the Union has arrived at a position in which democratic parity is not afforded to all members

Motion 27: Place the local branch opt-out tick box in the welcome pack rather than the application form

Motion 28: Increase communication between the Council and branches when a motion is opposed

Motion 30: Make maintenance of the CTA central to Equity's arguments in the current political uncertainty

Motion 31: Appeal to the govt. to safeguard members rights to short term EU contracts and provide UK-based EU nationals with a hard copy proof of Settled Status

Motion 32: Make every effort to safeguard the residency rights →



Giovanni Bienne, chair of the union's LGBT+ Committee



Stephen Spence, Deputy for the General Secretary, spoke about the union's success in live performance and recorded media

industry in a ruthless grab for revenue that appears to be driven by forces that do not understand our sector." Read more from Christine on this issue on page 7.

Motions on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion were then taken and Dan Edge from the Deaf and Disabled Members Committee took to the podium to ask the union to review how accessible its communications are, which was passed. As was the motion from the Minority Ethnic Members Committee that requested "urgent discussions to tackle the blatant structural discrimination that blocks genuine career progression" for BAME members. Abigail Matthews from the Women's Committee spoke about their motion concerning auditions and interviews. The motion said it "can be one of the most vulnerable and exploited aspects of our members' working lives" and requested an inquiry into performers' audition experiences among other measures, this was passed unanimously. Although not

every suggested proposal was agreed by the representatives, over the course of the Conference 47 motions were passed. These also included a motion from the Liverpool and District General Branch asking Equity to "promote the essential nature of arts in the curriculum" so that, as branch chair Martin Williams said, the industry does not "become a playground of the rich". Emma Manton from the Stage Committee proposed their successful motion concerning commercial touring producers not being allowed to benefit from theatre tax relief unless they are using union contracts.



Meanwhile Red Sarah spoke about the Thames Variety Branch motion on backstage facilities at events and the "shocking lack of respect shown to variety performers".

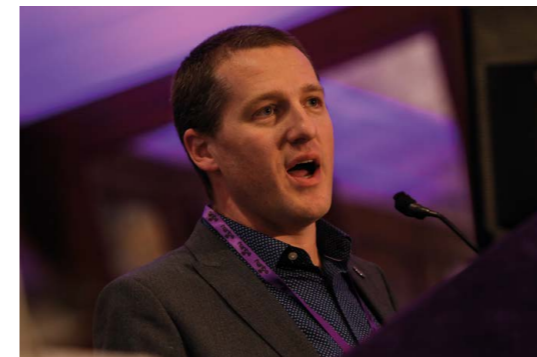
One of the highlights of the Conference was the address by Equity's guest speaker Pádraig Murray, President of Irish Equity. Pádraig is an actor and he has worked in both Ireland and the UK. He has been a member of Irish



Abigail Matthews from the Women's Committee, above, and Councillor Dawn Hope, below

Equity since the early 1980s and has been President for the past eight years. He emphasised how work in Ireland happens, and flows, across the border to the great benefit of everyone. "It is more important than ever that we continue our close relationship with Equity UK as we both face the uncertainty of Brexit," he said. "The things we are achieving and aspire to achieve are not done alone. In just the past 12 months we have held two successful events together with Equity UK. This is very much a family - our union, your union and the international unions."

A regular element of the conference is



Assistant General Secretary Matt Hood spoke about the industry not showing the proper respect to Equity members

the awarding of the union's highest prize - Honorary Life Membership. This year two recipients were chosen: John Gillett, a member for 48 years, a tireless campaigner and chair of the North East General Branch. Unfortunately he could not attend conference so the Council will present his award at an upcoming meeting.

Roxanne James, secretary of the Northern Ireland Variety Branch for more than 20 years was there to collect her award, see the picture on page 40. She has been an active Equity member for 28 years and kept the variety branch alive through turbulent times in Belfast. 🍷

and employment security of members

Motion 33: Repeat Council's previous statement that Remain is in the professional interests of members

Motion 34: Continue to work closely with Irish Equity to nurture cross-border cooperation

Motion 35: Join forces with non-party political organisations campaigning against Universal Credit

Motion 36: Provide funds, support and signposting when members find themselves homeless

Motion 37: Advocate for the inclusion of creative arts subjects in all education systems

Motion 38: Campaign for the inclusion and essential nature of the arts within the national curriculum

Motion 39: Lobby the Secretary of State for NI to gain commitment that ACNI will be better resourced

Motion 41: Establish a UK-wide member-led Nations and Regional Production & Casting campaign in 2019

Motion 42: Support the merger of the NI Variety Branch into the NI General Branch

Motion 43: Engage in dialogue with clubs and promoters who do not prioritise guaranteed professional fees for performers

Motion 45: Ensure all Equity contracts make provision for appropriate changing/toilet facilities

Motion 46: Lobby the govt. to make TTR only available to producers using a union agreement

Motion 47: Clarify the status of members in relation to workplace pensions

Motion 48: Advise panto producers of Equity agreements and rates of pay

Motion 49: Establish industry standard definitions for the responsibilities of Assistant, Resident and Associate Directors

Motion 50: Call symposia on protecting creative team members working in fringe theatre

Motion 51: Campaign to secure best practice for the engagement of dance artists in museums and galleries

Motion 52: Redouble efforts in actively promoting the #ProfessionallyMadeProfessionallyPaid campaign

Motion 53: Campaign to address the parlous state of some north-west regional producing theatres

Motion 54: Affirm the rights of members to play-act, pretend, make-believe in theatres and places of entertainment

Motion 55: Investigate US Equity's labs agreement and further conclusions industrially

Emergency motion: Interpret and use Articles 18, 19, 20 and 22 of the EU Copyright Directive in future negotiations

Emergency motion: Lobby the Welsh and Westminster govts in defence of members indicted by the Turkish government

STATEMENT OF EQUITY COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE SUMMARY ACCOUNTS

Equity Council is responsible for preparing the summary accounts on the basis described in the “basis of summarisation”. The summary accounts are intended to be consistent with the full annual accounts.

Basis of Summarisation

The summary accounts comprise the summary statement of comprehensive income and the summary statement of financial position. These include the key figures from the full annual accounts which were approved by equity council on 29 January 2019.

The full annual accounts are available online at www.equity.org.uk. Requests for paper copies of the full accounts should be sent to nbarker@equity.org.uk

The independent auditor, BDO LLP, has issued an unqualified opinion on the full financial accounts for the years ended 31 December 2018 and 2017.

The summary accounts do not constitute the full financial statements for the financial years ended 31 December 2018 and 2017 but represents extracts from them. These extracts do not provide as full an understanding of the financial performance and affairs of the union as the full annual accounts.

The headings and amounts reported in the summary accounts agree with the corresponding headings and amounts reported in the full annual accounts.

Report of the Honorary Treasurer on the Summary Accounts

In 2018 our total Income increased by 8.33% to £8,031,698 and our total Expenditure rose by 6.91% to £7,745,591.

The difference between these two figures - Income and Expenditure - leads to an operating surplus, before pension liability, of £286,107.

Contained within these figures, our subscription income rose by 5.36% to £5,556,406 and our income related to members and other performers increased by 23.63% to £1,688,465. Equity's distribution services, previously undertaken by BECS on our behalf, distributed a total of £8,829,154 to performers.

As at 31 December 2018, our membership figures had risen to 45,575 and our Net Assets stood at £11,614,138. Equity's financial position therefore remains strong and I commend these summary accounts to you.

Report of the Independent Auditor to the Members of Equity

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary Statement of Comprehensive Income and the summary Statement of Financial Position, are derived from the audited financial statements of Equity for the year ended 31 December 2018.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements on the basis described on page 1.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon. The summary financial statements and the audited financial statements do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on the audited financial statements.

The Audited Financial Statements and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements for year ended 31 December 2018 and 2017.

Executive Council's Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

The Executive Council are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements as described fully in the Statement of Equity Council's Responsibilities on page 1.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (revised) - Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Use of our report

This statement is made solely to the members, as a body in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Executive Council those matters we have agreed to state to them in this statement and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Executive Council as a body, for our work, for this statement, or for the opinions we have formed.

BDO LLP

Statutory Auditor
London
07-Feb-19

BDO LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales (with registered number OC305127)

Summary Statement of Comprehensive Income

	2018	2017
Total income	8,031,698	7,413,951
Total expenditure	7,745,591	7,244,714
Operating surplus before pension adjustments	286,107	169,237
pension adjustments	-223,000	-260,000
investment gain / (loss)	-1,538,290	1,031,755
tax credit / (charge)	252,152	-7,115
actuarial gain / (loss) on the pension scheme	-1,618,000	1,574,000
Total comprehensive income/ (expense) for the year	-£2,841,031	£2,507,877

Summary Statement of Financial Position

	2018	2017
Tangible fixed assets	7,778,422	7,269,025
Investments	13,239,549	15,285,570
Current assets	25,465,430	19,951,303
Current liabilities	-26,276,701	-20,919,859
Provision for liabilities	-744,562	-998,870
Net assets excluding pension liability	19,462,138	20,587,169
Pension liability	-7,848,000	-6,132,000
Funds employed	£11,614,138	£14,455,169

Have your say

Tricia Hawkins

Tricia Hawkins was a long time member of Equity. She was a talented performer but never did the work to fulfil her potential and few people will have heard of her.

However, life is more than work and she was a loyal, loving and gifted wife, sister, aunt, great-aunt and friend. She achieved so much despite COPD and IBS but couldn't face another year and died

peacefully in hospital on 31 December. She was my friend for 50 years and made me a better person. She touched so many lives and I would like the Equity Journal to mark her passing in recognition that rank and file members can also be exceptional people who make an incredibly positive contribution to society. RIP Trish, you deserve it, and I will try to live up to your memory.

Diana Hampson

National Diversity Awards

I feel very humbled and honoured to have been nominated for the lifetime Achievers award at this year's National Diversity Awards. I have been in show business for over forty years and an Equity member since 1978.

As a star of Channel 4 television's groundbreaking The Comic Strip Presents alongside Rik Mayal, Jennifer

SOCIAL COMMENT

The #MyCardMyUnion campaign prompted brilliant stories and lovely words from members. Here are just a few examples:

Proud

My trade union Equity is 90 this year and I'm proud to be part of its fight for better, fairer and more equal pay and conditions, safe workplaces and for investment in the arts.

@IanMcKellen

Break a leg

30 years ago, taking the theatrical phrase "break a leg" a bit too literally, I had an accident at work. British Equity was there to help.

@hughbon

Inclusivity

I joined @EquityUK around 1990 (I

think) and have been backed up by them throughout my working life. Happy 90th to our union which stands for inclusivity, diversity & fairness. It champions our work at home & across borders. Proud to be equity..

@j_merrells

Gig Economy

Acting is the original gig economy job so it was always great to know my union had my back. Happy 90th @EquityUK!

@TracyBrabin

Only as strong as our members

Equity is 90 this year! I've been a proud member since 1992 and they've always had my back, not least since my transition in 2003. As a union we are only as strong as our members. If you're not a member YOU SHOULD BE!

@rebeccaroot1969

Injury

2018 ended not quite the way I had planned. Equity have been unbelievable helping me through my injury - don't know what I'd have done without them. Happy 90th @EquityUK. May you long prevail.

@karaalberts

Polish the craft

In my 18 years as an actor @EquityUK has provided guidance and fought my corner when I needed them most. Their support has enabled me to continue doing what I love. #ThankYouEquity

@KieronAttwood

Supportive

I'm #ProudtobeEquity they helped me get money I was owed from a rotten company some years back & were very supportive & reassuring. Happy 90th birthday

@Nik Wood-Jones

> GET IN TOUCH

Have you got something to say about your experience of Equity or the contents of the magazine? We want to hear from you.

Please email or write to the editor via the contact information below:

The Editor, Guild House, Upper St Martin's Lane London WC2H 9EG

> **Email:** editorial@equity.org.uk > **Web:** www.equity.org.uk

> **f t @EquityUK**

Saunders, Dawn French and Keith Allen, I was the first ever person of colour and Queer non binary personality on British Television. As a high profile, rather unique artist in the 80s that cut quite a dash, my persona played a huge part in the debate regards diversity in the arts and in highlighting the inequalities of race, non gender conformity and disability. I am glad that my presence has helped to encourage the justified scrutiny associated with questions of social mobility and class in an industry that seems to be all about Archetypes and possessing the correct social currency, which I have never possessed.

How glad and grateful then am I to be a member of a brilliant union that has totally understood my intersections and stood by me throughout my entire career. I've had to fight as a working class, non white, pink proletariat person that a so-called liberal glittering industry was prepared to use, abuse and then marginalise, and then to price the likes of me out of the written artistic landscape.

I feel so indebted to Equity and its absence of prejudice and judgement in fighting my corner and playing a huge role in making the entertainment industry work for everyone regardless of class, creed, colour, sexual orientation and gender identities.

Lanah P

Self-Tape support

Nailing self-tapes can be tricky, and acting can be an isolating and discouraging business, wherever you live. I came to live in Sheffield a little over two years ago, and knew no other actors. What I wanted was to have a small group who could get

to know one another socially as well as professionally, so that when those last minute auditions came along we would have a group we could call on, knowing we could create a scene together at the drop of a hat. By word of mouth, a small group of experienced actors from different genres came together. We set up a Whatsapp group to connect quickly, share resources and celebrate our successes, naming ourselves C.A.S.T. (Connecting Actors for Self-Tapes).

That was just a year ago. In that time we've established a group of six actors who are available for self-taping, and meet regularly together. About once every couple of months, sometimes more often, we share our skills on and off camera, including directing, setting up the shot and basic editing. Each get together has a different focus, and is hosted by a different member of the group.

What has been most important of all to me, is the increasing sense of being part of an on-going, supportive and personal group, which meets face to face. It has given me the chance to find my "tribe" within an unfamiliar city. Online networks can fulfil a need, but only up to a point. It has been the small group and personal interaction which has made the real difference for me - having help available at short notice for auditions when it's needed, and also having the chance to give mutual support. Initiating small clusters of actors meeting to support one another, for self-taping in particular, can deepen a sense of community. Small, active clusters of actors, like C.A.S.T, may be one of the ways we can foster that.

Lisa Armytage

IN MEMORIAM

With regret it is recorded that since the publication of the last edition of Equity magazine we have learned of the deaths of the following members:

John Gordon Ash, Robert Ashby, June Barrie, Richard Bond, Paula Bott, Gordon Bowker, Terence Brown, Graham W Bryant, Jennie Buckman, Olga Cammilleri, Seymour Cassel, Michael Chandler, Harold Clurman, Ian Cognito, Greg Cook, Mary Daly, Raymond Dalziel, Sidonie Darrell, Magenta Devine, Carmen Duncan, Buddy Elias, Gerald English, Ethel Ennis, Diana Fairfax, Morris Farhi, Albert Finney, Bruno Ganz, Paula Gareya, Patricia Garwood, Nigel Genis, Clinton Greyn, Doug Gritton, Jeremy Hardy, Alick Hayes, Katherine Helmond, Del Henney, Victor Hochhauser, Michael Hope (aka Albie Keen), Peter Hughes, Paul J. Hughson, Clive Hurst, James Ingram, Anfield Iron, Jill James, Paul James-Scott, Zofia Kalińska, Sylvia Kay, Alan Kay, Edward Kelsey, Gypsy Kemp, Carla Lehmann, Karl Liebl, Barbara Lincoln, Wilma Lipp, Julia Lockwood, Sam MacCready, Andrew MacLachlan, Tania Mallett, Peter Mander, Liza Martin, Orlando Martins, Dorothy Masuka, Bronco McLoughlin, Serge Merlin, Jeanne Mockford, June Monkhouse, George Charles Mossman, Nina Mulhall, Brian Nissen, Bill O'Connor, Peggy O'Shea, Robert Page, Muriel Pavlow, Leonard Pearcey, Luke Perry, Johnny Pierce, Richard Poore, Sandy Ratcliff, David Rayner, Nadja Regin, Lee Reynolds, George Rick-James, Shane Rimmer, Ruth Roberts, Peggy Salmon, Edna Savage, Margaret Scott, Carole Shelley, Jon Skolmen, Carolyn Soutar, Denny Spence, Stromboli, Graham Sutton, Clive Swift, Jeffrey Talbot, Michael Thomas, Marshall Thomson, Kenneth Tyllsen, Patricia Varley, Hans Von Borsody, Scott Walker, Georgina Ward, Geoffrey Webb, Frances Wells Robertson, Margot Werner, Brian West, Jan Whiteley, Mark York, Peter Zander

In some cases it may be possible that another member may have used the same or a similar name subsequent to the passing of the above members

Membership offers

Equity membership entitles you to a wide variety of discounts, from photos to the Phoenix club; see below for a selection. Go online for a full list: www.equity.org.uk/discounts

Alexander Technique

Individual lessons at Gilbert Street, near Bond St, London. 30% discount to members. Thirty years of teaching performers; supporting improved poise and confidence, preventing backache and vocal strain. For info phone Kate Kelly 0845 3479389 www.alexandertec.net

Cinema tickets

Discounted tickets when showing Equity card: Queens Film Theatre Belfast, Pictureville Bradford, Watershed Bristol, Cinema 3 Canterbury, Robert Burns Centre Film Theatre Dumfries, Edinburgh Filmhouse, Hull Screen, Adam Smith Theatre Kirkcaldy, NFT.

Pineapple dance studios

Equity members get £75 off annual membership to Pineapple Dance Studios in Covent Garden, London (usually costs £200). Additional benefits of membership include 25% off all full-price clothing at the Pineapple store opposite the studio in Covent Garden. Members can visit the studios at any time for classes or to meet friends and colleagues. Two photographs are required. Claim in person with your Equity card at Pineapple Dance Studios, 7 Langley Street, London WC2H 9JA. Tel 020 7836 4004. www.pineapple.uk.com

Hair removal

Pulsar-permanent hair removal and skin treatments. Pigmentation, spots, photo-rejuvenation and more. IPL-intense pulsed light therapy. More advanced than laser: never shave again. For men and women – all skin and hair types. 10-20% discount for Equity members. Minimum fee applies to house visits. Contact Dr Succar on 020 8848 8288 or www.natura.org.uk
Ping Pong

Ping Pong is offering Equity members eating at their dim sum restaurants 15% off their total bill. www.pingpongdimsum.com

Photography

> HCK Photography is offering Equity members headshots/publicity shots for £95, a saving of £155. For more information contact Kit at: 020 7112 8499. www.hckphotography.co.uk/equityoffer
> Scotland-based photographer Aly Wight is offering a 10% discount off headshots and location shots to members, see www.alywight.com

Phoenix Artist Club

Equity members save 50% on annual membership at this award-winning, private members' club and licensed bar for professionals in the entertainment industry and their guests, open Mon-Sat 10am-2.30am (last entry 1am). Dinner served in the Brasserie until 9.30pm. Sunday open 12 noon-1.30am. "London's best kept secret" (The Independent). Annual membership is £200 reduced to £100 for paid-up Equity members. Phone the club during the day to join. Located beneath the Phoenix Theatre, 1 Phoenix Street, Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 8BU. Tel 020 7836 1077

www.phoenixartistclub.com

Rex restaurants

Chris Corbin and Jeremy King are keen supporters of the theatre and they have arranged for all members to receive 10% off any bill at their London restaurants. These are: The Wolseley, The Delaunay, The Counter at The Delaunay, Brasserie Zédel and Colbert. See the Rex Restaurant website: www.rexra.com for details of the different eateries. The offer is for an Equity member and up to three guests (i.e. four people in total). You need to show a valid Equity card as proof when you arrive at the restaurant.



Sheffield Theatres

Sheffield General Branch has negotiated a huge 50% off the price of tickets on-the-day for Sheffield Theatres' own productions. Touring productions from independent companies are not included. This applies across all its theatres: the Crucible, Lyceum and Studio: www.sheffieldtheatres.co.uk

Stage newspaper

Equity members can have 10% off any subscription to The Stage. This is available on print, digital and web-only editions. Go to the website: subscriptions.thestage.co.uk and select the version you require. Remember to include the code EQU1 in the Promotional Code box.

Travelodge

Travelodge offer 5% discount on bookings through its Business Account Service. To register set up an account, go to www.travelodge.co.uk Click on the Login/Sign up button on the top right of the menu. Choose Business and then follow the Sign Up steps quoting Equity as the Business name.

Q-Park

Equity and Q-Park have teamed up to provide Equity members with discounted parking in London and other major cities. The rates represent a 20% discount across the day, or a special product that gives 9 hours of parking for £7. To take advantage of the Equity discount you need to pre-book your parking. Follow this link to do this: www.equity.org.uk/parking

Please note: Equity does not endorse the third-party services provided in these membership offers. They are made available on the request of the vendors.

MEET THE EQUITY TEAM



Marlene Curran

JOB TITLE: Recruitment & Retention Organiser for Scotland and N. Ireland
STARTED AT EQUITY: June 2010
OUTSIDE OF WORK? I have an 11-year daughter and a 3-year-old dog who keep me on my toes with their activities and busy social lives! When not running around after them I like reading crime thrillers even if I then have to triple check the locks before sleeping! Binge watching TV boxsets, I see it as supporting and researching our members!
CONTACT: mcurran@equity.org.uk

What did you do before you joined Equity?
I was a Civil Servant working for Jobcentre Plus in various different roles. Regardless of the job title the main aim was identify and overcome the barriers long-term unemployed people faced to ultimately assist them gain sustainable employment.

Can you describe your current role?
I serve members in all areas of Scotland and Northern Ireland. A major part of my job is meeting our members face to face in cast visits for TV, film and theatre productions. My role requires flexibility to make sure I work my visits around the needs of the production, but also persistence. Sometimes this means standing for long periods in the lovely Scottish weather to make sure we check in when members are working! It is all worth it if you can look at a cast list and see that membership is 100%.

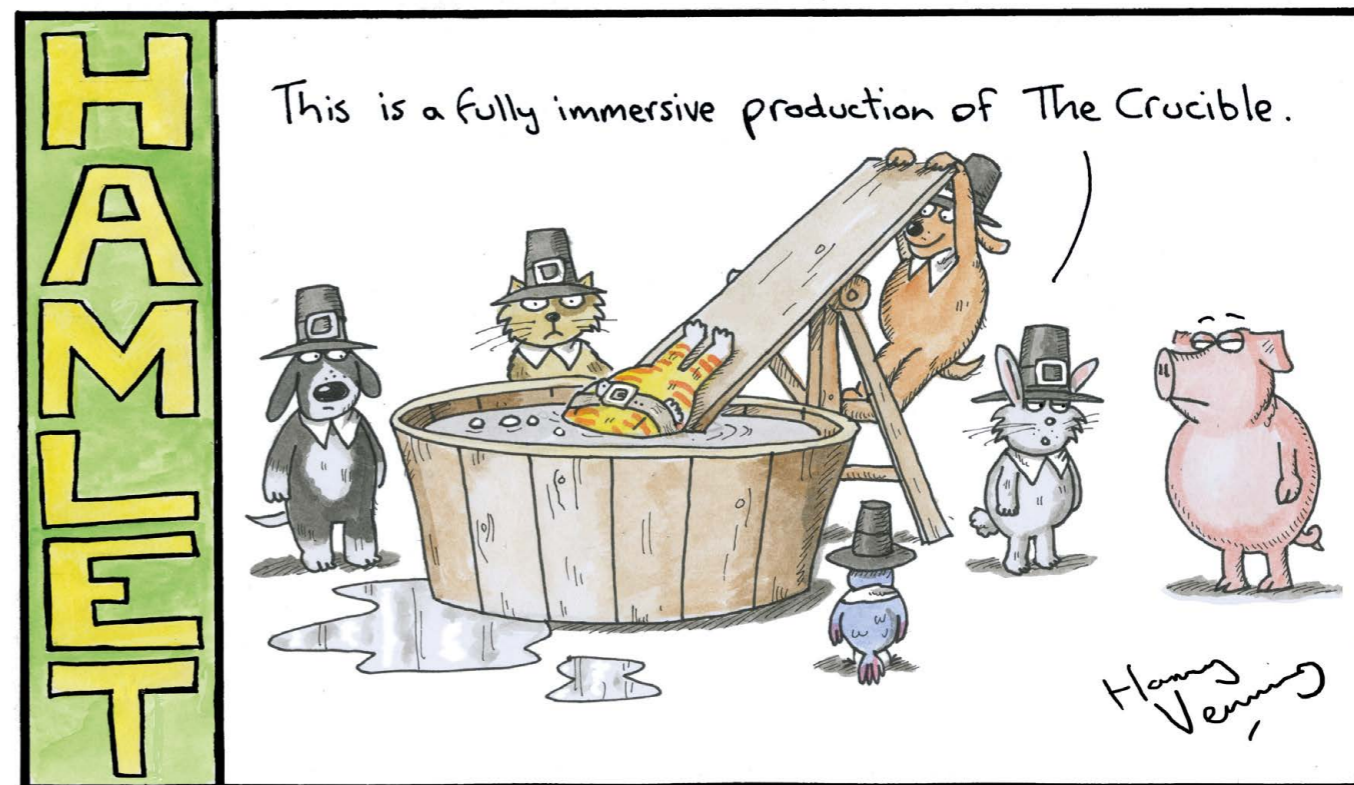
I also support our National Committees and Branches to help them grow membership and their events.

Why did you join Equity?
My Granda always said "Never work for

an employer who doesn't recognise a Trade Union." Both my Granda and my Dad were shop stewards for the Transport and General Workers Union during their time working for Goodyear Tyre factory. Both were instrumental in a dispute over a shorter working week which resulted in a 13-week strike. The dispute was won by the workers. My Granda also spearheaded a campaign to have a Social Club for workers. The factory closed in 1979 but the club is still going strong!

When I started work for Jobcentre Plus I immediately joined PCS Union and later went on to become a union representative. When the job with Equity came up, I couldn't think of a better way to build on my union experience. It's earned me the status of favourite Grandchild, just don't tell the others!

Which union activities are you most excited about?
We set up a drop in helpdesk at the Edinburgh Fringe and conduct cast visits throughout the whole festival. It's good to be part of a team that ensures members can access help and support at an important time in their careers.





N.IRELAND

Northern Ireland General

Date of next meeting: TBC **Contact:** northern-ireland-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Northern Ireland Variety

Date of next meeting: TBC **Contact:** northern-ireland-general-branch@equity.org.uk

SOUTH WEST

Bristol & West General

Date of next meeting: For all info on meet ups and gatherings, please register to receive newsletter and check website. **Contact:** bristol-west-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Devon & Cornwall General

Next meeting: 30 June, 2pm. Fringe Theatrefest, Barnstaple. Details online shortly. **Contact:** devon-cornwall-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Dorset General

Next meeting: 3rd Thursday of the month, 7pm, Wessex FM, Poundbry House, DT1 2PG **Contact:** dorset-general-branch@equity.org.uk

West of England Variety

Date of meeting: 2nd Monday of every month, excl. bank holidays. Summer break until 9 Sept. Somerville Club, Somerville Road, Bristol. Completely accessible venue. All

SHUTTERSTOCK

welcome. **Contact:** Mary Lane, 07900 848003, west-england-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

WALES

Cardiff & S. Wales General

Date of next meeting: 2nd Wednesday of every month, 7.30pm. Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff **Contact:** cardiff-general-branch@equity.org.uk

North Wales General

Next meeting: TBC **Contact:** north-wales-general-branch@equity.org.uk

South Wales Variety

Next meeting: 4 June, 7.30pm, TYN Y TWR TAVERN, SA12 8AU **Contact:** south-wales-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

SOUTH EAST

Brighton & Sussex General

Date of next meeting: 2nd Saturday of the month, 10.30am. Friends Meeting House, Ship St, Brighton BN1 1AF unless otherwise advertised **Contact:** brighton-general-branch@equity.org.uk

East Anglia Variety

Next meeting: 2nd Monday of the month, 7.30pm. The Canary Club, Thorpe Road, Norwich **Contact:** east-anglia-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

Essex General

Date of next meeting: 7 Sept, 10.30 for 11am, The Link, Trinity Methodist Church, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford **Contact:** essex-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Home Counties West General

Date of next meeting: TBC **Contact:** home-counties-west-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Kent General

Date of next meeting: 8 June, 11am. The Marlowe Theatre, The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS **Contact:** kentgeneralbranch01@gmail.com, 07703 207 878

Oxfordshire General

Date of next meeting: TBC **Contact:** oxfordshire-general-branch@equity.org.uk

SCOTLAND

East of Scotland General

Date of next meeting: 5 June 7:30pm, Festival Theatre **Contact:** Torya Winters, east-scotland-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Scotland Variety

Date of next meeting: TBC **Contact:** Linda Rifkind, 0141 639 6969, scotland-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

LONDON

North & East London General

Next meeting: Second Saturday of every month, 10.30am. The Park Theatre, Finsbury Park **Contact:** north-east-london-general-branch@equity.org.uk

North West London General

Date of next meeting: 6 July, 11.30am. Royal Central School of Speech and Drama **Contact:** north-west-london-general-branch@equity.org.uk

South & SE London General

Next meeting: 2nd Monday of the month, 7pm, Upstairs at the Young Vic **Contact:** south-south-east-london-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Thames Variety

Date of next meeting: 2nd Monday of the month (excl. August), 2pm. Guild House, WC2H 9EG **Contact:** Nick Putz, 020 8808 3802, thames-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

West & SW London General

Next meeting: 12 June, 7pm. Seven Dials Club, 42 Earlham St, WC2H 9LA **Contact:** west-south-west-london-general-branch@equity.org.uk

MIDLANDS

Birmingham Variety

Date of next meeting: 26 June, 7.30pm. The Austin Sports and Social Club, President Suite, 30 Tessall Lane, Birmingham B31 2SF **Contact:** Alec Powell, 07831 115448, birmingham-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

Birmingham & West Midlands General

Date of next meeting: TBC **Contact:** birmingham-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Coventry & Leicester Variety

Date of next meeting: 16 Sept, Stoke Private Members Club, 7 Stoke Green CV3 1FP **Contact:** coventry-leicester-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

East Midlands Variety

Date of next meeting: First Tuesday of the month, 8pm. The Headstocks NG6 8SF **Contact:** Clive Bumstead, 07815 951 798, east-midlands-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

NORTH EAST

Humberside Variety

Date of next meeting: 1 July, 1.30pm. The Railway Club, 723 Westborough, Scarborough YO11 1TN **Contact:** Christie Clifford, 01482 848031, humberside-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

Leeds & Region General

Date of meeting: June, to be arranged **Contact:** Pete Keal, 01422 885 211, leeds-general-branch@equity.org.uk

NE of England General

Date of next meeting: TBC - Please follow 'Equity NE Branch' on FB & Twitter for updates **Contact:** north-east-england-general-branch@equity.org.uk

North East Variety

Date of meeting: Last Tuesday of every month (excl. Dec), 7.30pm. Alberta Social Club, Railway Street, Tyne & Wear **Contact:** Steve McGuire, 0120 723 8258, north-east-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

N&W Yorkshire Variety

Date of next meeting: Third Monday of every month, 7.30pm. George 4th Pub, 770, Bradford Road, Birkenshaw. BD11 2AH **Contact:** Valerie Jean Mann, 07778 450 759, north-west-yorks-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

Sheffield General

Next meeting: 1 July, 7pm. Adelphi Room, Crucible Theatre, Sheffield **Contact:** sheffield-general-branch@equity.org.uk

South Yorkshire Variety

Next meeting: TBC **Contact:** Anthony Blakesley, 07816 963 400, south-yorks-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

NORTH WEST

Blackpool Variety

Date of next meeting: First Tuesday of every month, 1pm. Blackpool Cricket Club, Stanley Park FY3 9EQ **Contact:** Denis Askham, denisaskham@yahoo.com

Gtr Manchester & Region

Next meeting: 31 July, TBC **Contact:** manchester-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Isle of Man General

Date of next meeting: 18 June, 6.30pm, Archibald Know Inn, Onchan, Isle of Man **Contact:** isle-of-man-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Liverpool & District General

Next meeting: 5 June, 6.30pm. Unity Theatre, Liverpool, L1 9BG **Contact:** liverpool-general-branch@equity.org.uk

Manchester & District Variety

Date of next meeting: 18 June, 8pm. Monroe's Hotel, 38 London Road, Manchester M1 2PF **Contact:** Yvonne Joseph, 0161 792 2035, manchester-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

Merseyside Variety

Date of next meeting: 2nd Monday of every month, 7pm. Adelphi Hotel, Ranelagh St, Liverpool, Merseyside L3 5UL **Contact:** Chris Dale, 07703 301621, merseyside-variety-branch@equity.org.uk

North Lancs & Cumbria General

Next meeting: TBC **Contact:** north-lancs-cumbria-general-branch@equity.org.uk

FOCUS ON

N. IRELAND

The Northern Ireland branches are merging, and offer local members support in a variety of ways

THE NORTHERN IRELAND General Branch is a valuable forum for members to engage with key industry contacts and to meet fellow creative arts professionals.

In the last year, the Branch has hosted mental health support events and welcomed guest speakers from the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM), the BBC NI Commissioning team and Rose Bruford College. Members were also involved in organising and participating in seminars

on the NEROPA casting tool and the impact of Brexit. The Branch held picnics and cabaret nights as part of the year's social activities.

The NI Branch campaigning activity includes support for local casting, demanding an increase in funding and resources for the arts in Northern Ireland and marching in solidarity with fellow ICTU unions for marriage equality.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our branch meetings!

> **EQUITY BRANCHES** are your local meeting place to discuss the industry, share insights and influence the direction of the union. Find your local branch at www.equity.org.uk/branches

Subscription Enquiries 020 7670 0207

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