



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2025

The online meeting was opened at 10.38 am (BST) on Monday 29 September 2025, with President Patricia Pulham (PP) presiding.

1. Welcome and Report from the BAVS President

PP thanked the members present for attending. PP expressed gratitude to outgoing members of the committee – Dinah Birch (Past President), and Alicia Barnes and Harriet Thompson (ECR representatives) – for their service.

PP noted a variety of highlights from the 'British Association for Victorian Studies Annual Report, November 2024 to September 2025'. These included:

Membership and Events

- The growth of the organisation's membership to 1361 members.
- The success of the BAVS 2025 conference hosted by Helen Small and colleagues at the University of Oxford, culminating in the Past Presidents' Panel.
- BAVS Talks 2025, hosted by the Centre for Victorian Studies at the University of Leicester.
- PP also noted one anniversary event still to come, involving representatives from several different international Victorian Studies associations as part of an online panel.

Awards and Prizes

- BAVS has awarded £7502.94 in its Spring and Autumn funding rounds, making 5 Research Awards, 5 Event Funding Awards, and 2 Public Engagement Awards.
- BAVS has awarded 2 annual prizes (agenda items 6 and 7), piloting the new Rosemary Mitchell Prize for the Best PhD Student's Paper Presentation.
- 2024–25 Nineteenth-Century Matters fellow, Amy Waterson, organised a very successful event at Royal Holloway on 'Nineteenth-Century Legacies' on 3 June 2025.
- Yasmin Akhter has been appointed the Nineteenth-Century Matters fellow for 2025–26, hosted by Gerald McKeever at the University of Edinburgh.

Communications and Community

- COVE (Collaborative Organisation for Virtual Education) continues to go from strength to strength and members are reminded of the opportunity to access this resource for free as part of their membership.
- The BAVS Newsletter appears 3 times a year; since the last AGM we've covered 19 book reviews; an exhibition review; 3 GLAM reports; and 4 BAVS funding reports – submissions and reviewers welcome!

- The Victorianist – run by our PGR reps – has published 108 blog posts and 2 research articles.
- PP also noted that a major website revamp project was in the works.

2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting on 13 November 2024 were approved without correction.

3. Annual Report of the Executive Committee

The Annual Report of the Executive Committee, circulated prior to the AGM, was approved without correction.

4. BAVS 2026: Call for Conference Hosts

PP noted that BAVS were looking for annual conference hosts for the next three years and asked members to get in touch with the Secretary in the first instance to express an interest.

5. Plans for Review of the BAVS Constitution

PP noted plans to review and revise the BAVS Constitution. The membership will be consulted on changes before a vote of approval.

6. BAVS Rosemary Mitchell Book Prize

PP noted that the winner of the 2025 prize was Maria Damkjær for *Fiction on the Page in Nineteenth-Century Magazines* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

Honourable mentions went to:

- Paul Fyfe, *Digital Victorians: From Nineteenth-Century Media to Digital Humanities* (Stanford University Press, 2024).
- Mary Shannon, *Billy Waters is Dancing: Or, How a Black Sailor Found Fame in Regency Britain* (Yale University Press, 2024).

PP noted that the second monograph prize was designed to support mid-career members of BAVS and encouraged eligible members to submit second monographs (published between 18 February 2025 and 17 February 2026) for the 2026 prize.

7. Rosemary Mitchell Prize for the Best PhD Student's Paper Presentation

Prize coordinator, Claudia Capancioni (CC), noted the process involved in piloting this award, including development of a set of criteria and assessment of 39 individual conference papers.

The winner was Chandrica Barua (University of Michigan), for 'Plantation Commercial: Advertising tea, empire, and racialized labour'. The runner-up was Claudia Sterbini (University of

Edinburgh), for ‘Nonsexuality and “The Real Demi-Vierge”: George Moore’s “John Norton” (1895) as a Sexological Case Study’. Both noted that they had found the external recognition valuable.

Going forwards, it was suggested that PhD students ‘opt-in’ for the prize when registering for the conference and that there is an announcement at the start of the conference that winners will be declared after the final panel.

8. Welcome and Handover to Martin Hewitt, Incoming President

PP said that it had been a privilege to serve as BAVS President and thanked CC, Briony Wickes, Vicky Mills, and Claire Wood (CW) in particular for their support during her tenure.

Martin Hewitt (MH) thanked PP for her service, noting that it had been a challenging period in Higher Education, making PP’s achievements – alongside a demanding leadership role – even more impressive.

MH noted that it was a great honour to be appointed President, having been involved in setting up BAVS 25 years previously, and seeing how much progress had been made. MH noted that as an historian, he was particularly interested in continuing to support the interdisciplinary membership and culture of BAVS. He also planned to continue the rich tradition of collaborating with other scholarly associations and hoped to explore ways for the Association to offer more funding support. In the coming weeks, he will meet with committee members individually, to hear more about priorities in individual areas.

CW raised a vote of gratitude for PP.

9. Any Other Business

Ann Heilmann asked whether an international conference would be considered. MH noted that a likely host was in place for 2026, but that this suggestion would be kept on the agenda in considering future hosts.

Daný van Dam asked about the timescale for judging the BAVS Rosemary Mitchell Book Prize; Vicky Mills noted that this could be discussed as part of planning for the 2026 round.

Francesca Arnavas asked whether the deadline for the November funding round could be moved to October; this is subject to further committee discussion, but could be introduced from Autumn 2026.

No other business was raised.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.16 am (BST).