

**SAA 2013, Seminar 17 Abstracts:  
Managing Shakespeare and the Early Modern Theatre Business  
Seminar leader: Christopher Matusiak (Ithaca College)**

***“to shew him in priuate [and]. . . print him in publike”*: Robert Armin as “Blue John”  
Sandra L. Dahlberg (University of Houston-Downtown) and Peter Greenfield (University of  
Puget Sound)**

Like his fellow clowns, Tarlton and Kempe, Robert Armin developed a performative identity not defined by membership of a specific company, even while he was a featured player in the King’s Men. One of the ways Armin managed this identity was through publishing works that reflected his performing--from *Foole upon Foole* (1600) to his play, *The Two Maids of More-clacke* (1609). In the preface to the latter he focuses not on his performing of Tutch, the wise fool character similar to (and perhaps the model for) Touchstone, Feste and Lear’s Fool, but instead on the character of John i’ th’ Hospital or Blue John, a “natural” fool that Armin apparently performed both in the play and as a separate piece for private, one-man performances. Moreover, the only extant likeness of Armin is the woodcut of Armin as Blue John that Armin chose for the title page of *Two Maids*. We may be surprised that Armin does not mention his successes in Shakespeare’s plays, but what intrigues us more is that scholars have so far ignored the importance of the Blue John character to Armin’s self-presentation. Moreover, the character’s alternate names and his distinctive blue gown explicitly link him to the poor boys of Christ’s Hospital, and more generally to the visible representation of poverty on the streets of contemporary London. We thus wish to interrogate Armin’s managing his performative identity through the Blue John character and how his performances and publications speak to the portrayal of poverty on the early modern stage.

**Managing Surreptitious Performances: Shakespeare Drolls on the Interregnum and early-  
Restoration Stage  
Emma Depledge (University of Geneva, Switzerland)**

Students of theatre history are often told that 1642 marked the closing of the theatres and a halt in theatrical production. They are also told that 1660 saw the restoration of the monarchy and the reopening of the theatres, with Charles II giving Thomas Killigrew and William Davenant exclusive rights to establish and manage two theatre companies, the King’s Company and the Duke’s Company respectively. Like Susan Wiseman (*Drama and Politics in the English Civil War*), I am keen to question the status of these ‘key’ dates. I intend to do so by exploring the performance and publication of little-known dramatic texts known as drolls, or droll-humours. Drolls are short, unified performance pieces taken from the comic episodes found in plays such as *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Hamlet*, and *Henry IV*. Although originally designed for surreptitious performance during the ban on acting imposed from 1642 to 1660, I believe there is evidence to indicate that drolls continued to be performed after 1660, thus offering an alternative to the patent theatres and a less expensive (if not free) way for Restoration Londoners to enjoy Shakespeare-derived theatrical entertainment. This is an important consideration when one notes that only the upper levels of Restoration society could afford to attend the professional theatres. Drolls were likely performed at fairs, such as Southwark and Bartholomew fair, in taverns, and as part of mountebanks’ shows. My paper will therefore examine the organization of droll production, the cultivation of patrons, and the roles the actor, Robert Cox, and the printer, Francis Kirkman, played in the management of surreptitious performances of the Interregnum and early Restoration. I hope to simultaneously make a case for

seeing drolls as socially inclusive Shakespeare products that offer insight into his popular appeal between c. 1642 and 1672.

**The Master of the Revels as Theatrical “Manager”  
Richard Dutton (Ohio State University)**

Before Edmund Tilney became Master of the Revels in 1579, his office was only minimally associated with public playing companies. His predecessors had primarily been concerned to provide *in house* entertainment for the monarch and court, maintaining costumes, scenery and properties, devising (and sometimes writing) shows, and fostering amateur talent at the Inns of Court and choir schools. Tilney relied more heavily on the cheaper and more reliable resources of the professional players, adults and boys. But he continued to be more proactive in making their shows appropriate for court than is often assumed. The companies visited his old Revels Office in Clerkenwell, “where our Court playes have been in late daies yearely rehersed, *perfected*, and *corrected* before they come to the publike view of the Prince and the Nobility” (Heywood, *Apology for Actors*, E1v; my emphasis.) Indeed, the more Tilney called on professional players, and the less he was involved with the staging of masques, the more time he spent on supervising what else went on. In 1579 he claimed attendance allowance for 39 days and 21 nights, “makeinge choise of sondrye playes comodies and inventions ... aswell for furnyshinge & setting forth of sondrye of the said playes comodies and inventions”. By 1603 he was claiming “for rehersalles and making Choice of plaies and Comedyes and reforming them as for his other attendaunce for devises ... by the space of 113 days and 17 nights together”. There was also at least intermittent “shaping” of Revels seasons. 1604/5, when *The Masque of Blackness* was the highlight, opened with *Othello*. In November 1633 *The Taming of the Shrew* was followed two days later by its sequel, *The Tamer Tamed*. If not exactly managers, Tilney and his successors were the first London impresarios.

**Managing Queen Anna's Men and the Single-parent Mother: Viscount Lisle, Thomas Greene,  
Christopher Beeston and Susan Baskerville  
Eva Griffith (Independent Researcher)**

In 1997 Kathleen McLuskie and Felicity Dunsworth discussed the argument that royal and aristocratic patronage by 1615 was only a symbolic 'hangover' from a time before, and that the theatres were, by this time 'financially autonomous'. By comparing the management styles of Thomas Greene and Christopher Beeston, and seeing the economics of the early modern playhouse through the eyes of Susan Baskerville, I come to conclusions concerning the difficulties the Queen's Servants endured after the death of Greene, and in the context of Sir Robert Sidney's intervention in their affairs. I do this with a return to the *Worth v. Baskerville* case of the 1620s, and with reference to the little used interrogatories and depositions of the suit alongside the plea and answer. I also refer to new evidence concerning the whole picture. Had the economics of playhouses truly developed into a system solely centred on returns at the door, and based on *company* shares and profits? Or did the input of the Queen's chamberlain, Viscount Lisle, on behalf of Susan, have more than a little to do with their troubles, both, in the end, company and *playhouse*-centred in nature?

**Philip Henslowe at Newington**  
**William Ingram (University of Michigan)**

My paper will discuss the issues surrounding Henslowe's management of two companies at the playhouse in Newington in June 1594. We know hardly anything about this arrangement, and my paper won't add any new information, but it will highlight what all the issues are and why they're so intractable.

**Henry Haughton of the Bell and His Connections**  
**David Kathman (Independent Scholar)**

The people who owned and operated playhouses in early modern London, such as James Burbage of the Theatre and Phillip Henslowe of the Rose and Fortune, have received plenty of attention from theater historians. Much less attention has gone to the men (and women) who owned and operated the four London inns that served as part-time playhouses in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, largely because their identities were not even known until recently. My research into the histories of these inns has uncovered much interesting material about their proprietors, some of which provides potential insights into how such establishments were able to remain playhouses for so long during a time when the London city authorities were often hostile to professional playing.

This paper examines one such theatrical innholder: Henry Haughton, who ran the Bell in Gracechurch Street from 1574 to 1601 (including its entire time as a playhouse), and who had numerous connections to London's civic government. Haughton was an active member of the Saddlers' Company, where he worked alongside Edward Walker, who owned one of the other theatrical inns (the Bull) and leased another one (the Cross Keys, next door to the Bell), and Henry Tunstall, whose son James was an actor with the Admiral's Men and also a member of the Saddlers. Haughton also had a close tie to the Skinners' Company, to whom he was legally obligated to give £10 each year out of the Bell's profits to pay the schoolmaster of Tonbridge School in Kent, thanks to a provision in the will of former Lord Mayor Sir Andrew Judde. Finally, Haughton may have been related to Peter Haughton, who held numerous civic offices including alderman, lived in adjacent St. Peter Cornhill parish, and certainly knew Thomas Smythe, landlord of the Bell during most of Henry Haughton's tenure.

**Managing Pageantry at Country Estates**  
**Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich (Ohio State University)**

This essay examines evidence of progress entertainments in Renaissance England to consider how such performances were produced and managed. David Bergeron argues that lead writers generally acted as managers for civic entries, but what about the performances at country estates during royal progresses? Who organized these shows? Although we have several extant texts of Elizabethan and Jacobean country-house entertainments, we have little behind-the-scenes evidence about how these performances were arranged and rehearsed. Printed and manuscript entertainment texts convey only one perspective on the performance, usually as a means to promote certain agendas. Most surviving expense records include entries for food and other provisions, but none for actors, costumes, or dramatic properties. If we consider a manager to be the person who is financially responsible for a play, then the aristocratic men and women who hosted the monarch typically took on this role. Hosts had the most to gain or lose from a performance's relative success. They financed the most important props, the gifts given to the monarch during pageants, and they were primarily

responsible for coordinating and supervising the collaborations of professional and amateur devisers. As I encourage us to think of progress hosts as managers of dramatic shows, I consider differences among practices of individual hosts. A fair amount of evidence indicates that several Elizabethan hosts—such as Alice Egerton at Harefield (1602), Julius Caesar at Mitcham (1598), and Elizabeth Russell at Bisham (1592)—were especially involved in planning their entertainments. Those who employed an in-tact traveling troupe, such as Leicester at Kenilworth (1575) and Hertford at Elvetham (1591), might have had a more hands-off approach in terms of assigning parts and directing the performance. Finally, when Ben Jonson began writing country-house pageantry during James' reign, he positioned himself as a lead writer who stepped into a managerial role.

**Managing Revision in *Merry Wives of Windsor*  
James J. Marino (Cleveland State University)**

W. W. Greg's general theory of memorial reconstruction was built on his specific theory about memorial reconstruction in *Q Merry Wives of Windsor*, and that theory was built upon the case of Mine Host, whose lines remain largely the same in the play's widely varying quarto and folio texts. Greg took the Host's textual fidelity as a sign of piracy, condemning the actor playing the Host as the illicit reporter who remembered his own lines and mangled the rest. But Greg discounted the possibility that the semi-independent parts or scrolls into which players' scripts were divided might be liable to semi-independent revision. That some parts change more and others less might simply be a sign that some parts actually changed more than others, a sign of several strategic revisions rather than one wayward transmission.

An individual player's part can easily be altered in ways that do not effect others', as Tiffany Stern and Simon Palfrey has shown. But perhaps more importantly, a strand of two or three actors' parts with interlocking cues could be revised together while the rest were left alone, allowing for relatively sizeable revisions without requiring the entire cast to re-memorize their parts. The memorial demands of Elizabethan repertories provided a strong motive for such incremental and minimally disruptive revisions.

My paper will test whether the relative stability of the Host's part can be explained through this model of serial or "managed" revision. The relative complexity of the Host's participation in the play's cue-structure, the number of different players whom he cues or by whom he is cued within a particular scene, is a primary piece of evidence and a potential source of resistance to revising this specific role.

**Elizabeth Beeston *alias* Hutchinson: Playhouse Manager – and Royalist Agent?  
Christopher Matusiak (Ithaca College)**

An obligation among the State Papers indicates that on December 25, 1643, shortly after the outbreak of civil war, a parliamentary Committee for Examinations ordered its serjeant-at-arms to discharge from custody one "Elizabeth Hutchinson" on the condition that she remain in Oxfordshire and not return to London. It was the Committee's mandate to investigate cases of suspected political subversion, and Hutchinson, evidently no friend to the Long Parliament, seems to have been an intelligencer moving between the city and the king's court at Oxford. The question that interests me is whether this document records an incident in the career of Elizabeth Beeston, a professional theatre manager who often used the *alias* "Hutchinson."

Although typically overshadowed by the better known actors and impresarios in her family, Beeston *alias* Hutchinson was a pioneering figure in theatre history. In 1638 – three decades before

Lady Mary Davenant managed the assets of the Restoration Duke's Company – Beeston *alias* Hutchinson inherited the Cockpit in Drury Lane from her late husband, becoming the first woman to own and operate a purpose-built commercial theatre in London. The playhouse remained in her possession until 1656, a period of nearly twenty years. Between 1642 and 1646, she married Sir Lewis Kirke, a Caroline naval captain, royalist soldier, and one of Oxford's military governors in 1643. Her possible arrest and suspension from London that year raises questions about the extent to which Beeston *alias* Hutchinson viewed the Cockpit's management ideologically when she reopened the venue between 1646 and 1649. As the royalist war effort collapsed, was the motivation to stage plays such as *The Bloody Brother* in Drury Lane primarily economic or political?

**Records of Early English Bearbaiting (REEB)  
Alan H. Nelson (University of California, Berkeley)**

We know a great deal of how Philip Henslowe managed theatrical activity at the Rose, thanks to his “diary” and other surviving papers. We know less about Henslowe's management of his bearbaiting enterprise. Once that enterprise is better understood, it may be possible to make comparisons and contrasts with his theatrical management, and with management practices of Shakespeare's company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men, later the King's Men. So this paper will begin with factual detail, and will end with speculation. Seminar members should understand that Sally-Beth MacLean and I have been thinking jointly about bear-baiting practices in Bankside, Southwark, Surrey. I will try not to intrude on her discoveries. My side of the research begins with occupations recorded in the registers of St Saviour's parish, which includes Bankside, and proceeds to the identification of masters, sergeants, and yeoman of the royal bears and mastiffs, and to the letters patent by virtue of which they held their office from about 1540 to 1660.

**“[S]end vs word if this motion, will satisfye you”: Early Modern Theater Management through Letters  
Kara Northway (Kansas State University)**

As a theater-manager, Edward Alleyn has been described as a “*pater familias*.” But studying his *methods* of early modern theater management reveals practices that were less clearly always top-down. The important work of Tiffany Stern and Grace Ioppolo has led theater historians to reevaluate manuscripts as an overlooked form of evidence about ways of sharing information in the theater. My paper extends this scholarly project by focusing on playhouse manuscript letters. Using James Daybell's approach, which analyzes not only material features of letters, but also social relationships encoded in adherence to and departures from epistolary conventions, I argue that letters to, from, and between managers defined the idea of the manager. These “real,” off-stage letters not only textualized the relationships and values of a specialized discourse community, but also enabled the activities needed to run the theater. For example, the undated letter of actor William Birde to Edward Alleyn about the dishonest doorkeeper John Russell has traditionally been read as evidence for the existence of gatherers. But when considered as a letter, it shows that Birde attempted to negotiate power by manipulating the letter's spacing, creating artful openings/closings, appealing to logic and friendship, and excluding Alleyn from the in-group of actors to prevent embarrassment on either side. Instead of a call to take command, Birde's letter reaffirms a social network with shared professional ethics. Management by letter, therefore, had certain advantages. While Birde still sought “approval” (also through epistolary means) for reasonable decisions, his letter allowed some self-management for the actors. Alleyn benefitted from a release from what Birde suggested were

undesirable management duties: making micro-decisions, playing the bad guy, or being physically present—in fact, Birde’s letter implied Alleyn’s habitual absence. Simultaneously, this letter outwardly acknowledged a theatrical hierarchy that constructed an image for Alleyn as *pater familias*.

**The Politics of Revision in the 1610 quarto of *Mucedorus***  
**Anna Pruitt (Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis)**

This paper studies the additions to *Mucedorus* as performed for the court by the King's Men, focusing primarily on the references to the 1608 disbanding of the Children of the Blackfriars. By looking at the additions to *Mucedorus* alongside the lawsuits that accompanied the King's Men's takeover of the Blackfriars Theatre from the Children of the Blackfriars, the paper considers possible motivations for these revisions. This paper also asserts that the evidence reveals a number of conflicting views of the power structure and management of the boys' company, and demonstrates the ways in which revision could function as a vital political strategy for early modern theatre companies, albeit one that could potentially be as dangerous as it was helpful.