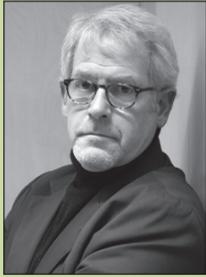


Tim Tate



I am the author of 18 published non-fiction books, and an award-winning investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker.

My first book was published by Methuen in 1988; my most recent work was published by Transworld/Penguin in May this year. Several of my books have also been published internationally; one has been translated into 14 languages and is on bookshop shelves in 18 countries.

In the 33 years since I began writing publishing has changed radically. Today, with the absorption of previously independent imprints by major global publishing conglomerates, and with Amazon's overwhelming domination of online sales, authors – the lifeblood on which this industry depends – need a strong trade union more than ever.

Publishers sometimes exploit their power and impose unfair – and unnecessary – restrictions on authors' ability to earn their livings. Royalty rates – especially in the growing audiobook sector – can vary wildly, and contracts all-too-frequently require authors to sign over international and other ancillary rights to the publisher, with no guarantee that these will ever be exploited and no automatic right of reversion if they are not.

In our need for collective strength, however, also lies a great opportunity. If elected, I would want the SoA to champion the adoption of an industry-wide Code of Practice, which would set out fundamental, baseline rights and responsibilities for both authors and publishers. (Nothing, of course, would prevent publishers going beyond this benchmark and offering more favourable terms.)

In the early years of the independent television market, the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT) persuaded the UK broadcasting industry to sign up to exactly this sort of Code of Practice. In doing so it ensured that its members' most important interests were safeguarded, and also cemented its position as an organisation whose input was vital in consultations over legislative and trade changes.

By midwifing a similar publishing industry Code of Practice, the Society would likewise protect its members, bring a measure of uniformity (as well as baseline standards) to the market, and re-entrench its vital role in the UK's priceless cultural sector. The SoA's imprimatur would provide, in essence, a 'kitemark' guarantee of a publisher's compliance with basic standards.

As a member of the Management Committee I would bring to the table my lifetime of working with publishers, my lengthy track record as a successful author and my experience of conducting patient negotiations, earned over decades in the television industry, to bring about advances which benefit all parties.

Nominated by Andrew Lownie and Katharine Quarmby

Mata Haggis-Burridge



I have been a writer for video games and online/broadcast animations for over 20 years, including innovative mediums such as augmented reality and virtual production technologies, and I am in the submission process of my first novel. I have been active in both the SoA, presenting to the AGM in 2017 and writing for *The Author*, and in the WGGB's [Writers' Guild of Great Britain] video game committee.

I grew up in south London, but I now live in the Netherlands, where I am a professor at a Dutch university. I take part in several regional, national, and international organisations who promote culture and sustainable incomes for creatives, and I regularly speak at international conferences.

If you choose to elect me, I will bring knowledge of the underrepresented area of writing for video games to the SoA board. I am also an advocate for LGBTQ+ visibility (being bi/pansexual myself) and I try to apply a broader intersectional approach to inclusion, beyond queer communities, considering aspects of class, race, age, location, physical/neurodiversity, and more.

In my years as a member of the SoA, I've seen our wonderful work representing writers and would like to be a bigger part of this. In times of change, through epidemic and politics, institutions such as the SoA take on greater importance for providing support and stability for the workers who sustain culture.

While I hope to bring value and insight to the Management Committee, I am also interested to learn. I hope that being part of the committee will allow me to get a deeper look at the lives of other writers and the business of writing beyond my digital field. Through sharing our knowledge, we can become a stronger voice for change.

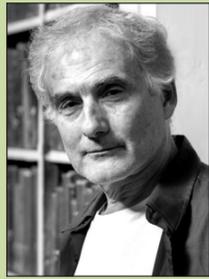
Nominated by Joanne Harris and Woodrow Phoenix

Photo credit: Jo Haggis-Burridge

CANDIDATES' ELECTION STATEMENTS

Election to the Management Committee 2021

Please read carefully before casting your vote.

Charles Harris

I suspect that it's always been an important time for authors, but never more important than now. Libraries are still being closed, or underfinanced and stripped of books; newspapers are closing or shedding staff; free speech is under attack across the world, while at the same time we are becoming more and more aware of the effects of our words; and politicians are keeping us divided and angry. I hardly need add that Covid is not going anywhere soon.

Although we authors are a solitary lot, I believe we do best when we work together and the Society of Authors is the best place for us to do it.

Writers need supporting and defending. We have a crucial role in helping mend the world – or even just making living more tolerable. The written word has never been more central to our culture, from social media to blogs, magazines and books. Self-publishing is becoming accepted mainstream practice and physical books are selling well again, even if Amazon and its rivals represent a decidedly mixed blessing.

As for myself, I have gained a great deal from the SoA's services – from networking to contract advice. I'm also proud of the way the SoA stepped up to help authors during the pandemic. I would like – to use the old but true cliché – to give something back in my turn.

I am a full-time author. I have had two novels and three non-fiction books traditionally published, and have self-published a non-fiction book and a collection of short stories. Before that, I worked in film and TV as script editor, screenwriter, director and producer, winning awards for my work.

I co-founded the London Screenwriters' Workshop – which was the first screenwriters' workshop in the world – now called Euroscript, was on the board of directors of the New Producers' Alliance, and served as co-chair for three years.

So I have seen the job of writing from just about every side and feel that I can offer useful skills to the committee.

And if things get really heated, I'm a black belt in Aikido.

Nominated by Simon Cann and Samantha Collett

Photo credit: Donna-Lisa Healy

Vesna Main

I am a writer of fiction, with publications including three novels, a novella, a collection of short stories and many stories published in print and online. I have been a member of the Society of Authors for 13 years. Prior to focusing on writing, I was a university lecturer in literature and also worked as a journalist. In addition, I used to run a charity that took writers into primary schools to support teachers in engaging pupils to read. For the past year, I have been co-hosting a local writers' group.

My work has been published by independent publishers, whose budgets are tight when it comes to publicity. National media rarely review fiction published by independents; consequently, books are not stocked in bookshops and sales remain low. However, independent publishers are often the ones prepared to take risks and they have a crucial role to play in pushing formal boundaries and creating literature for our time.

I have two ideas I would like to pursue. First, I would like to investigate the possibility of a pairing scheme whereby a better-known novelist would take a less well-known one under their wing. The pairing would be based on stylistic affinity between the two writers. The scheme would be voluntary but, if a pairing worked, the more famous person could, for example, mention the other in interviews or invite them to contribute to a reading event.

The second theme would be to resume my connections with schools both in terms of engaging children with books and by encouraging creative reading and writing. As someone who follows closely the French literary scene, I have been very impressed by a scheme supported by French ministry of education, whereby secondary school students take part in reading aloud excerpts from any literary text of their choice. For the competition, they are coached by writers and actors and the finals take place on television in front of a jury of authors. Many of the students come from underprivileged backgrounds and start reading only while taking part in the scheme. As they often acknowledge, the competition opened their eyes and changed their lives. I think a similar project to nurture the readers of the future would work well in England and I would be happy to play a role in making that happen.

Nominated by Barry Walsh and Ken Wilson

Hugh Roberts

I joined the Management Committee of the Society of Authors in 2019 and have learned a lot since about the workings of the SoA. My authorship is modest compared with other members (3 non-fiction titles to date on both academic and popular themes) but I bring 40 years of large firm consultancy business experience in urban development and infrastructure up to Board director level to my contribution to ManCom. I have worked in 30 countries across all 6 (permanently inhabited!) continents and thus with multiple cultures and human aspirations.

I have been a member of the Finance Sub Committee since joining and more recently both the Members Sub Committee and the recently established review team for *The Author*. Last year as the Covid crisis took hold, I contributed actively to the audit processes around how we would make awards to authors under the Emergency Fund. More recently I assisted in the interviews and selection for a new Customer Relations Management partnership.

Our finances are in a good state since we completed the successful move to Bedford Row during 2019, and thanks also to our returns from a judicious investment policy. I believe we are achieving a balance between member benefits and subscription rates.

If I am re-elected, I would hope to continue contributing to our success as a union seeking to deliver to member expectations. My focus would be to continue to achieve a judicious balance between maximising member benefits with what we can afford. Thanks to good financial management, these benefits are already wide-ranging, yet our plans are ambitious and exciting.

Nominated by Joanne Harris and Vanessa Fox O'Loughlin

Juliet McKenna

I joined the SoA in 1997, when I was offered my first publishing contract and benefited immediately from expert advice. I have found membership invaluable ever since in dealing with the vagaries of this business through decades of constant change.

I'd had vague hopes that an agent or editor would take on my novel until I worked for Ottakar's as a bookseller in 1994/1995. Seeing the realities and

practicalities of all aspects of the book trade showed me how much I needed to learn. I binned the book I'd been endlessly tinkering with and started again with a fresh idea and a far more professional approach. I have now had 21 novels published by mass-market and independent publishers, along with several novellas and numerous short stories in magazines and anthologies.

I joined Ottakar's with the Net Book Agreement in its death throes and when the impact of deep discounting by retailers was just starting to be felt. That showed me the importance of writers staying informed about changes in publishing and bookselling. Since then, I have seen it is vital to keep up-to-date with new technologies which offer authors new options when publishers' and retailers' decisions serve their own interests but adversely affect writers. For example, I declined the paltry terms initially offered for my ebook rights and opted to work with an independent publisher to re-release those titles for much better returns. That income has offset the royalties I lost as a mid-list writer when retailers stopped stocking backlists after publishers stopped accepting such books as returns.

In late 2014 new VAT regulations on digital sales were announced to ensure multinationals like Amazon and Apple paid fair taxes. Seeing the unintended consequences would be disastrous for small scale ebook sellers, I helped to found the EU VAT Action campaign with five women from other sectors reliant on direct e-commerce which the regulators had not even realised existed. We gathered data from thousands of affected businesses, and lobbied the UK government, the European Commission and the European Parliament, making numerous trips to London and two visits to Brussels. I sat on HM Treasury and HMRC committees as the campaign was quickly awarded consultative status. After 18 months, the campaign got the regulations changed across the EU. This showed me it is essential for authors to advocate for themselves at the very highest levels, as well as finding effective ways to do so.

I primarily write SF and Fantasy as Juliet E McKenna, as well as historical crime fiction as JM Alvey. These genres benefit from expert small presses as well as active engagement with enthusiastic and knowledgeable readers. I have been involved in organising and taking part in initiatives and events supporting readers and writers in both genres for many years.

I hope to offer my varied experience to assist other authors as a member of the Management Committee.

Nominated by Joanne Harris and Mary Hoffman

Photo credit: Lou Abercrombie Photography

Please see over