



The Rattigan

The Newsletter of
The Terence Rattigan Society

ISSUE NO. 17 APRIL 2016

Version

Play competition launched at Jermyn Street



The President, Princess George Galitzine, is flanked at the launch presentation by Vice-President David Suchet, the Chairman Barbara Longford and Lord Fellowes

The launch was introduced by Vice-President Geoffrey Wansell, who reminded us that the Society exists “to burnish Terry’s memory” and he felt that the great man would have been thrilled to have an award for a new play named in his honour. Vice-President David Suchet then took up the baton and, after outlining the rules of the competition (see page 6), he summed up the situation very simply and cogently by stating that “all great playwrights were once new writers”. What he personally hoped to find was a writer with a passion, who wrote from the heart, and who “dared to splash it on the page.” He hoped the winning play would be “beautifully constructed, bold and

“We seem like a secret society”, announced Lord Fellowes as he surveyed the gathering in the Jermyn Street Theatre. It was a reference to the half-lit but elegantly furnished basement performance space rather than any lack of publicity—for that was indeed the purpose of the gathering at midday on the 26th of January: the press launch of the play competition in Rattigan’s name, which has been a major preoccupation of the Committee for the past eighteen months. Lord Fellowes also vouchsafed that TR is one of his great models: “I couldn’t admire him more—he had the ability to touch something in all of us.”

adventurous, with a voice that shines through”.

Rattigan may well have been the talk of the town at 26, but this competition has no bias and welcomes entries from writers of any age, gender or ethnicity. Entrants can be first-time writers, or seasoned professionals—the only restriction is that the play cannot have been previously performed in public or have won a previous award.

Geoffrey Wansell was emphatic in his praise for the contribution to the Society of both Barbara Longford and Jean Galitzine, and he felt that this award in a sense reflected the Society’s success so far. It’s now over to the writers. 

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The Terence Rattigan Society

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Editor's note: Any views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of The Terence Rattigan Society or its Committee.

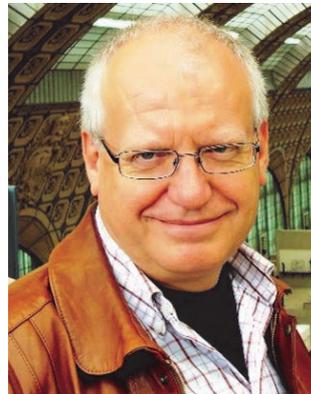
INTRODUCING Our Treasurer Andrew Kenyon

Andrew hails from the West Country and first heard the name of Terence Rattigan during a morning assembly at school in 1969 when a local amateur dramatic society were looking for a 'young lad' to play the part of Taplow in their forthcoming production of *The Browning Version*. Andrew auditioned and got the part (although he admits that he may have been the only auditionee!)

His love of theatre has gone on from there and he has directed *The Browning Version* twice since those halcyon days – the most recent being in Notting Hill a couple of years ago (which the Society attended) and which was well received.

Other plays he has directed include *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Crown Matrimonial* and Bridie's *Tobias and the Angel*. He is itching to direct *The Last Confession*, a play premiered in 2007, starring our own Vice President David Suchet, and since toured internationally.

Andrew is a trained singer (he was called to audition for the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company) and music plays a great part in his life. Musical productions he has been involved in include The Savoy Operas (singing tenor leads in most of them) and directing a full-scale production of Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow* on the Isle of Wight, which was recognised with an award. He is



passionate about Rachmaninoff, adores Italian opera, loves sunshine holidays and shares his secrets with Sooty his cat. And he shares his feelings about the Society thus:

'I was hopeless at maths at school so was somewhat surprised to be asked to consider becoming Treasurer of the TRS but it's been a rewarding and satisfying experience. Rewarding in the new friends and colleagues I have gained – I never suspected that Rattigan so was so well loved (and, sadly, so neglected but thankfully the Society is putting that right). Satisfying in that, although there's a lot of number crunching every quarter – more so at the time of the AGM – it's great to breathe that sigh of relief when the books finally balance!'

'Seeing the Society go from strength to strength is wonderful and being part of the machine that is the committee is both a pleasure and a privilege. As elected officers we all seem to gel so well and I think the membership can see this at social events and formal meetings and it's comforting to know they trust us by returning us each year.'

'The last five years have been something really special and there's no reason not to believe that the next five will be even better! Viva the TRS!'

And we all say 'amen' to that. ✂

No French windows in *French Without Tears*



Terence Rattigan finally played cricket for the Harrow XI against Eton at Lords in 1929 and scored a more than respectable 29 runs in the first innings of the two day match (opening with NMV Rothschild) which was eventually drawn. I like to think TR would have allowed himself a wry smile had he seen the light blue colours of Eton on the cricket sweaters worn by the actors in our recent production of *French Without Tears*.

Jake Reid as Lord Heybrook, who appears in the final moments of the play (above), and (right) Tom Mawson in substitute carnival costume as Kit Neilan

Finding those cricket sweaters could not have been easier, likewise a sailor suit for Kenneth and a kilt for M. Maingot, but finding an evzone (Kit Neilan's fancy dress) proved a much bigger challenge: let down in the performance week by our usually reliable costumiers, we had to come up with an alternative at short notice. Some head-scratching for the director, an internet search and a visit to the local Fancy Dress shop... et voilà... not

quite as striking as TR's inventive choice perhaps, but it was at least true to the liberated mood of the scene and the anarchic spirit of Carnival.

The generous invitation to direct *French Without Tears* for an Eton house came from my friend and colleague Andrew Robinson, who is House Master to the boys in The Timbralls.

We put on three performances in March this year enabling this director's long held ambition to be achieved. Even more generously, Andrew made his first floor drawing room available as a performance space and we had very great fun rehearsing this period piece, which still has plenty to say to boys being educated in an all male boarding school in 2016.

Peter Broad describes a performance of *French Without Tears* in a Master's drawing room at Eton College

Rattigan's lighter plays are often labelled drawing room comedies, so we could not have had a more apt setting: The Timbralls having a first floor drawing room, readers will be relieved to learn there were no entrances or exits via French windows. The space was, however, perfect for an



audience of just under fifty seated in the round. There's no hiding place for a cast when the audience is within touching distance and I like to think that, as shown in the recent (and excellent) Orange Tree production of *FWT*, the play works just as well as it does on

a conventional proscenium arch stage.

The whole Robinson family was astonishingly forbearing as we took over not just their beautiful drawing room (our stage) but their dining room too (furniture store), a bedroom (dressing room) and first floor landing (foyer).

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The Queen of Soho bows out at 95

*An appreciation of our esteemed member Elena Salvoni MBE by
Clive Montellier*

Elena Salvoni wasn't particularly keen on her unofficial title of The Queen of Soho – it was all too reminiscent of the girls who plied their trade on the streets outside her restaurants – but it's hard to think of her by any other and, as her death just before Easter at the age of 95 brings her reign to an end, it's equally hard to imagine that we will ever see her like again.

I consider myself very lucky that an odd triangulation of interests allowed me to get to know her, and privileged that she allowed Mrs M, our friend Judy, and me to spend a fascinating morning with her at her Islington home to hear at first hand her tales of Soho throughout the 50s, 60s and beyond.

To summarise her biography, Elena was born in Clerkenwell's 'Little Italy' in 1920, moving as a girl to the family home in Islington where she lived the rest of her life. She began working as a waitress in Soho restaurants in her teens, and never left, rapidly rising to become an essential maître d' at a succession of iconic venues, from Café Bleu, to Bianchi's, to L'Escargot, to L'Etoile, from where she was forcibly 'retired' on reaching ninety in 2010, only to take up residence as the host of her regular lunches first at Little Italy and latterly, right up until her final illness, at Quo Vadis.

In the course of over seventy years at the heart of London's restaurant business, she saw Soho's role as the capital's cultural melting pot evolve from cosmopolitan village, through post-War musical clubland, the mixture of seediness and diversity that marked Soho's liberal attitudes, to the harder edge of commercialism that today threatens the character of London's heartland. Along the way, she met – well, pretty much everyone who chanced to dine in one of the restaurants she presided over – nobility, politicians, artists, performers, actors. Her stories were peppered with the names that defined 20th Century Britain, told always with the professional discretion that hallmarks the best restaurateur; for every tale she told, you could be sure



Elena pictured centre, with her friends, and fellow TRS members, Paddy Holland (left) and Rosalinda Zazzera (right) who introduced Elena to the TRS. Elena had just given a talk on her war experiences to a local church group in Lancaster Gate.

Photograph by Barbara Longford

there were a dozen more that would stay secured away in the massive database of names, faces, likes and dislikes that sat within her diminutive frame.

As proud as she was of the roll call of celebrities whom she had served, it was clear that she knew them because that was the nature of a job that she loved and took pride in, not because she courted their company, and her job came second only to her family. It was equally clear, though, that it was the combination of maternal affection and stern matriarch that made her such a success, and her ability to gently support one diner, whilst putting another quietly in his place, both without fuss or embar-

rassment, was a theme that recurred often in incidents from her memoirs.

That family extended beyond home and restaurant, too, including playwright Joe Orton and his lover, Kenneth Halliwell, who lived next door to her in the 1960s. With no time for the discrimination against gay men prevalent at the time, Elena's hospitality quickly drew the boys into her circle of visitors for cups of tea, and it was from Elena's house phone that Orton conducted conversations with Terence Rattigan (also one of Elena's regulars at L'Etoile) that led to Rattigan's backing Joe's breakthrough play *Entertaining Mr Sloane*. As Elena put it, how could she resist Joe's plea "Come on Elena, I can't call Terence Rattigan from a phone box, can I?"

It was, of course, a huge shock for Elena to arrive from work late one August night in 1967 to learn from husband, Aldo, that Halliwell had murdered Orton and then committed suicide. In the days that followed, members of the press who came calling discovered to their cost that Elena's natural hospitality did not extend to those who sought to pry into the tragedy of 'the boys next door'.

Continued on back page...

A feast of Rattigan

Michael Darlow casts an eye over productions in the pipeline

This June looks like providing the biggest and most delicious feast of new productions of Rattigan's plays since the veritable banquet of productions and events to celebrate the centenary of his birth in 2011. Following hot on the heels of the recent, very successful double bill of *Harlequinade* and *All On Her Own* by the Kenneth Branagh Company at The Garrick, we can now lick our lips in anticipation of a new production of *The Deep Blue Sea* opening at the Royal National Theatre on 1st June, directed by Carrie Cracknell and starring Helen McCrory as Hester.

While she was casting, Carrie and I had a long chat about TR, the play and the events which informed its writing. What was clear was that Carrie, who recently directed a highly acclaimed production of *Medea*, has an extremely penetrating and sympathetic understanding of TR and of his work and I hugely look forward to seeing her production of *The Deep Blue Sea*. Carrie has invited Princess Jean Galitzine and me into rehearsals to meet her cast and answer their questions about TR and the background to the play. Jean, of course, was very close to TR during the period when he was working on *The Deep Blue Sea*.

On 3rd June, just two days after the opening of *The Deep Blue Sea* at the National, a new production of *Ross*, TR's little performed play about T.E. Lawrence, opens at Chichester, directed by Adrian Noble and starring Joseph Fiennes as Lawrence. Adrian Noble is well known for a huge number of brilliant, epic productions, ranging from plays by Shakespeare at the RSC to the musical *Chitty, Chitty, Bang, Bang*. It will be fascinating to see how he sets about dealing with the epic story of T.E. Lawrence, and his deep sense of personal guilt, as interpreted in TR's play. TR's take on Lawrence and the reason why Lawrence sought anonymity after the end of the First World War is certainly contentious and many experts disagree with his explanation of why Lawrence attempted to 'disappear' by adopting the name Ross. It will be particularly interesting to see how the play stands up now, with the Arab world in possibly even greater turmoil than it was in Lawrence's day, and many experts arguing that the roots of today's problems in the Middle East are to be found in the actions and decisions of Britain and France during and immediately after the First World War and in the broken promises made to the Arabs by Lawrence and his colleagues during the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire.

As if these two productions were not feast enough, on 4th June, the very next day after the opening of *Ross*, comes what could prove to be the most intriguing of all this June's new Rattigan productions – a production of *After The Dance* in Tangier, directed by Rob Ashford, the co-director with Kenneth Branagh of *A Winter's Tale* at the Garrick. As many members probably realise, TR's connection with Tangier goes back to the very start, in fact almost certainly to the moment of his conception! Although he was born in London, on 10th June 1911, his father and mother lived virtually full-time in Tangier from May 1909 until January 1912. Frank Rattigan, a rising young diplomat and a qualified Arabic Speaker, was 2nd Secretary at the British Legation in the city. In 1911 Morocco was one of the potential flashpoints in the steadily escalating tensions between Germany, France and Britain, tensions which would, three years later, lead to the outbreak of the First World War. It was therefore very important to the British government to maintain good relations with Morocco. So the fact that TR was born in London was only in part due to the fact that the wives of Britons serving overseas generally chose to return to Britain for the birth of their children. The main reason why Frank and Vera Rattigan were in London for the birth of Terence, at least as far as Frank was concerned, was that the Foreign Office had made him responsible for entertaining an important official Moroccan guest at the Coronation of King George V, which was due to take place on 22nd June 1911.

The important guest was Sid Menebhi, the ex-Grand Vizier of Morocco. In the event Frank Rattigan spent so much time making sure that he and his honoured guest attended all the best and grandest parties, and that both he and his charge had an all-round good time, that he was not only not at home for Terence's birth, he did not even officially register the birth until a whole month later.

When Frank and Vera returned to Tangier in late July 1911 it seems that baby Terence went with them and so spent the early months of his life in the city. However, what makes this production of *After the Dance* particularly intriguing is not only the intimate connection between Rattigan and Tangier, but the parallels between the international situation at the time of Rattigan's birth and at the time when he was working the play, and the parallels with international situation today, especially in the Middle East.

The final dish in our June Rattigan feast will be the production of *French Without Tears*, which is due to open at the Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond of 30th June. As tasty a dessert with which to round of a play-goers feast as any Rattigan gourmet could wish! ☺

No pastiches, please (Rattigan rules, OK?)

With input from members of the Committee and from member and former literary agent and BBC Drama director Michael Imison, here is the final version of the rules for the Terence Rattigan Society Award for a new play, as released to the press

The competition is open to persons of any nationality, age or gender resident in the UK. The award is for the best original full-length play written in English, properly typed and formatted, and submitted to the judges subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. The play shall have a running time of not less than 75 minutes, preferably with an interval.

2. It shall be performable by no more than six actors with doubling allowed.

3. In making the award the judges will take the following into account:

(i) suitability for commercial production (e.g. in the West End of London)

(ii) reasonable production costs

(iii) care and skill of dramatic construction

(iv) originality of the playwright's voice (and certainly no copies or pastiches of the Rattigan style).

4. Plays that have already won any other prize or award or have had a public performance other than workshops or readings in the course of development shall not be eligible for the award.

5. The entry shall not incorporate or be adapted from copyright material not owned by the writer unless a binding contract has been entered into permitting the use of such material, which contract shall be submitted with the entry.

6. Each writer may submit up to two entries and each entry must be submitted in both a clearly typed hard copy and an electronic copy, and must include a list of characters, a description of the setting and a one page summary of the action, together with a completed entry form to The Terence Rattigan Society. Entries will be judged anonymously. Only the title of the play should appear on the script itself without the name of the writer or any other form of identification.

7. Entry forms shall be obtainable from, and scripts shall be submitted to, The Terence Rattigan Society at both the web and postal address stated on the form. The closing date for entries for the award is 31 August 2016.

8. The awards offered shall be:

(i) A first prize of £2,500 together with a production of not less than six performances presented by the Sarah

Thorne Theatre Company in Broadstairs, Kent. Entry to the award shall constitute permission for such a production.

(ii) A second prize of £1,000 together with a public reading of the play to be arranged by The Terence Rattigan Society. Entry to the award shall constitute permission for such a reading.

The judges may at their discretion decline to award one or both of these prizes or combine the two sums to be shared proportionally between two or more winners.

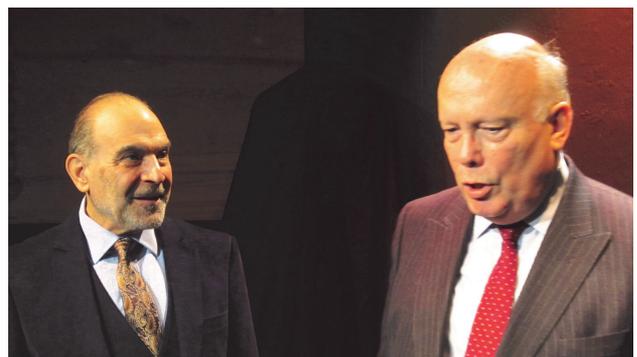
The result of the competition will be announced by 31 January 2017. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

The judges of the final shortlisted plays will be writer Julian Fellowes, director Thea Sharrock, drama professor Dan Rebellato and actor David Suchet.

It should be noted that the Terence Rattigan Society will retain production rights in any plays receiving a prize for a period of two years from the announcement of the results and, in the event of further productions in whatever medium, a percentage of the rights subject to negotiation.

Editor's note: in the interests of clarity, this means that the copyright in the winning plays remains with the author, but that in the event of any further production within two years the Society will have a royalty interest, subject to negotiation.

9. Committee members of The Terence Rattigan Society are not eligible to enter the competition (but that doesn't mean other members aren't eligible, so start sharpening your pencils!) ✂



Terence Rattigan is alive and well in South Korea

**A message from an overseas member,
and Rattigan enthusiast,
Heebon Park-Finch**

My name is Heebon Park-Finch, a Korean faculty member at Keimyung University here in Daegu, and I have been doing research on Rattigan's works on stage and screen for a few years.

I received my PhD in Drama (2012) from Bristol University in the UK, with a dissertation on Tom Stoppard's stage plays. My first encounter with Rattigan's work was when I saw the Peter Hall Company's production of *The Browning Version* at the Theatre Royal Bath in 2009. Since then, my interest in Rattigan's celebrated works has increased and I have so far published three papers in academic journals in Korea—on *The Browning Version*, *The Deep Blue Sea*, and *Separate Tables*. (See image below—with evidence of flattering taste in Rattigan reading matter... Ed.)

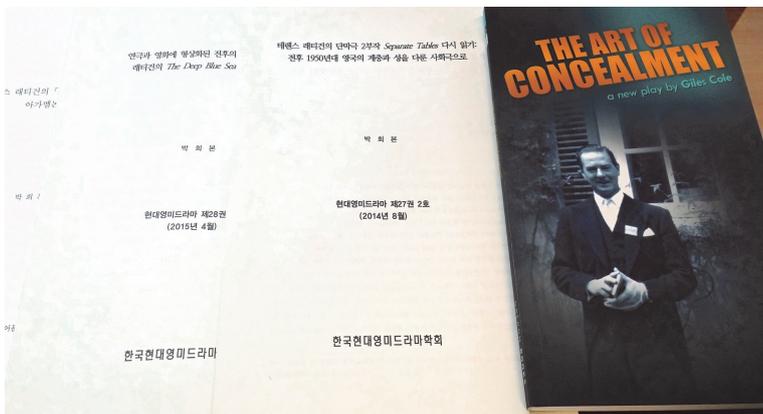
As a member of Modern English Drama Association of Korea (MEDAK), Seoul-based nationwide association of Korean professors/scholars of English drama, I have also presented papers on Rattigan's works at our conferences, which seemed to help English literature/drama scholars in Korea to have renewed interest in Rattigan. I am currently working on a paper about *The Winslow Boy*, followed by one on *Cause Célèbre*. In the future, it is my hope to write a book on Rattigan in Korean so that his life and works can be

appreciated by more Korean literature/drama scholars and students.

Thanks to the BBC Terence Rattigan Collection DVD sets, both my British husband (Andrew Finch, a professor of English Education at Kyungpook National University, and I have greatly enjoyed watching Rattigan's works. Professor Dan Rebellato's *1956 and All That* is a great book which helped me to approach Rattigan's works from different angles.

On my bookshelf, I also have books such as Michael Darlow's *Terence Rattigan: The Man and His Work*, Geoffrey Wansell's *Terence Rattigan: A Biography*, as well as Susan Rusinko's *Rattigan (1983)* and *The Rattigan Version* by B. A. Young. I would like to continue my research on Rattigan and learn more.

Editor's note: if this article has whetted your appetite for one of Heebon's studies of Rattigan plays, we are hopeful that a translation from the Korean may soon be made. We will be amongst the first to see it! Also, Heebon and her husband Andrew are planning another visit to London in the summer, so let us hope that it can coincide with a Society event or theatre visit. ☺



In a drawing room at Eton

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We all came away with huge respect for TR's dramaturgy and the precision of his dialogue, which will in turn I hope will guarantee an enthusiastic future audience for his plays.

It's not for me to say whether the production was any good, but I can vouch for the fact that each night gales of uninhibited laughter greeted both Lord Heybrook's appearance and Alan's final words: "It's a bloody tragedy!". And with no shortage of 13-year-olds in the house happy to walk on and look bemused, there was a fresh actor to play Lord Heybrook each night of the production, with the bonus of three delighted sets of parents into the bargain.

On our last night Peter Wilkins was in the audience (his son Mugamba having joined Eton and Andrew's house just last September): Peter met TR in his rooms in the Albany, produced *In Praise of Love* in South Africa and *Separate Tables* (with a cast including Robert Flemyng – who appeared as Kit Neilan in the London premiere of *FWT*) – a piece of theatrical serendipity which brought our work to a conclusion which felt both satisfying and well made. ☞

Peter Broad was Director of Drama at Eton College between 1987 and 1997, the year he became a House Master, which carries with it a sentence of thirteen years and no remission. Now semi-retired, he lives in Windsor and still directs House Plays as well as interviewing prospective new boys for the Admissions Department. We are reliably informed by those in the know that he has directed Damian Lewis, Tom Hiddleston and Eddie Redmayne - to drop but three now famous names (Ed.)

The Queen of Soho bows out

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Elena's energy and organisational skills were also put to good use for the benefit of those whose aspirations fell far below the Soho restaurant scene, and she spoke passionately about her involvement with son Louie's work to provide support for the homeless through his charity, Shelter From The Storm. Louie, who has followed into the business as a dealer in coffee (you might have spotted him in BBC4's excellent documentary on the history of coffee drinking in Britain), Aldo, daughter Adriana and Elena's grandchildren, were never far from her mind, and their photos were as

Dates for your diary

3–25 June

Chichester Festival Theatre is mounting a revival of TR's *Ross*, his dramatic portrait of the man known as Lawrence of Arabia, starring Joseph Fiennes and directed by Adrian Noble. Unfortunately this production coincides with *The Deep Blue Sea* (below) so no Society outing has been arranged, but there will be a review / report in the next issue. Members' opinions very welcome!

18 June

TRS outing to the new production of *The Deep Blue Sea* at the National's Lyttelton Theatre, directed by Carrie Cracknell, whose recent credits include the hugely acclaimed production of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* for the Young Vic.

30 June–30 July

The Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond is reviving its recent sold-out production of *French Without Tears*. Some TRS members saw this production earlier this year. *The Sunday Times* described it as "a hoot of an evening with just enough heart".

6 July

The Annual Society Dinner is being held, once again, at the Garrick Club, with renowned columnist and Rattigan aficionado Simon Heffer as the guest of honour. Details on the flyer enclosed with this issue.

13–30 July 2016

Rattigan's 1943 farce *While the Sun Shines* plays at the Theatre Royal, Bath, directed by Christopher Luscombe. Barbara has arranged a visit to the final matinee on 30 July for a party of twenty members.

proudly displayed as any of her celebrity acquaintances.

I never imagined that I would share tea and cake with someone who'd taken supper across to Ella Fitzgerald in her dressing room, and been rewarded by Ella singing lullabies to her son, nor be transported so close to Soho of the 1950s by one who'd daily passed the coffee bars and clubs I've read so much about as she went about her daily business (did she go in? 'Of course not. I finished work late and got the bus home to my family'). But to meet Elena was about more than oral history; to feel her energy and her enthusiasm, her excitement for events yet to come when already in her 90s was an object lesson in a life lived to the full.

Fortunately, Elena's raft of contacts in the literary world led to her writing not just an autobiography but also a book of favourite recipes. Copies of 'A Life in Soho' can be found fairly easily on eBay or similar. 'Eating Famously' doesn't crop up quite so often (and it's a great shame that our scheme for a reprint didn't come to fruition), but is well worth looking out for. ☞