



The Rattigan

The Newsletter of
The Terence Rattigan Society

ISSUE NO. 13 DECEMBER 2014

Version

Posing for a passer-by in theatreland



This year's AGM took place in the sleek and elegant surroundings of Sheekey's famous fish restaurant just off St Martin's Lane. This enabled members to carouse in an appropriately well-behaved manner whilst being served a special Sunday lunch by a waiting staff who swished silently around like extras from the set of *Hello Dolly!* It also expedited the business of the day, which had all the appearance of two rather agreeable post-prandial speeches by our Chairman and our Secretary with an occasional raising of hands. I'm sure we were all paying rapt attention, and the proposal to seek charitable status

was swiftly approved; then almost before we knew it, your Committee had been re-elected and were later to be found posing in the street as a gallant passerby took a picture to mark the occasion. Also, centre, were honorary founder member Adrian Brown, new honorary member Judy Buxton (*see p 2*) and her husband, the thoroughly delightful Jeffrey Holland. In her speech, Barbara Longford announced the decision to organise a TR Society award for a new play, of which there will be fuller details in due course next year. With the Oxford Conference and other events, all bodes well for 2015. ✂

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The Terence Rattigan Society

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INTRODUCING Judy Buxton

For someone who had played Juliet for the RSC with Anton Lesser, Lady Teazle at the Haymarket with Donald Sinden, and everything in the modern canon from Noel Coward to Ray Cooney, it was somewhat daunting for Judy Buxton to have to admit that she had never played Rattigan.

Nevertheless, when she was cast in *The Art of Concealment* at Jermyn Street Theatre in 2012, to play not only TR's mother, the redoubtable Vera, but also TR's own imagined character of 'Aunt Edna', it was as if she were to the manner born. She "loved every minute". She has since proved her Rattigan worth twice more with her contributions to the Society's entertainment *An Evening on Terence Rattigan* at the V&A and the English-Speaking Union, performing scenes from *Separate Tables*, *The Browning Version* and *In Praise of Love*. When asked which Rattigan character she might now feel she could—or should—play, it was Lydia from *In Praise of Love* that rose most readily to mind. She has the requisite qualities of stoicism and fragility, and—ssh, don't whisper it abroad—she is probably about the right age, though you'd never think so, as she still retains that *gamine* quality that stood her in such good stead early in her career.

But if Rattigan somehow didn't come her way there was no shortage of other major work: Jessica



in *The Merchant of Venice* with our own David Suchet as Shylock; Schnitzler's *La Ronde* with John Nettles; Lee Langley's *Baggage* with Gerald Harper; and then there were all the TV appearances: *On the Up* with Denis Waterman;

General Hospital with Lynda Bellingham; *Rising Damp*; *Next of Kin*; *Chance in a Million*; *Bergerac*; and *By the Sword Divided*, the series about the Civil War in which she was married off to the late great Robert Stephens—although rehearsals were often minus Mr Stephens, who had a habit of disappearing into the pub next door.

It was Ray Cooney who, in a sense, introduced her to her husband Jeffrey Holland, perhaps still best known for sitcoms such as *Hi-de-Hi!* and *You Rang, M'Lord?*; Jeffrey played the lead many times in Cooney's long-running West End hit, *Run For Your Wife* and he and Judy were then cast together in *Out of Order*. They married in 2004.

It is with a slight twinge of regret (very slight, surely?) that Judy found herself playing 'nice' parts when young (always the Good Fairy in panto) and she now feels she has progressed to the older schemers or eccentrics - as evidence of which her next role is the elderly spinster Miss Bourne (complete with parrot) in Arnold **Cont. on p 8...**

Looking at Rattigan in 2015

by Dr Peter Wolfe

I beat big odds when I joined the Society. Though I taught modern drama for 40-odd years at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, I never put TR on my required reading list. It would have been hard to squeeze him into a roster of necessities that, starting with Ibsen, included Chekhov, Pirandello, Brecht, Beckett, and Pinter. Money was another constraint. Because TR's plays don't appear in anthologies, I'd have been forced to ask my students to spend \$12-15 on a DPS or Samuel French acting edition that would keep us busy for less than a week in a 16-week semester.

Thankfully, others outside the academy have found room for the man whose work Kenneth Tynan found snobbish, underpowered, and irrelevant. *The Browning Version*, TR's "serious comedy," has been screened twice since its 1948 stage debut. *The Winslow Boy* won many new friends for TR with its popular 2013 runs at both the Old Vic and on Broadway. Friends, both old and new, piled up. Calling him "the master of suspense," Lloyd Evans of *The Spectator* found *Cause Célèbre* (1977) "absolutely riveting" in a revival that honored his centennial, 2011, the same year that saw a hit screening of *The Deep Blue Sea* (1952). But perhaps the greatest tribute came in David Mamet's film version of *The Winslow Boy*. Notorious for strewing his many plays and films with F-Bombs, Mamet both adapted and directed TR's 1946 play for general movie audiences.

Was this attention misguided? Or does TR live as Bird and Elvis are said to live? Actor/directors like Olivier, Gielgud, Guinness, and Margaret Leighton all turned their skills and energies to TR because they saw values in his work that transcended low-pulsed commercial drama.

Meanwhile, Tynan's favorites, like Osborne, Delaney, and Wesker got less and less fanfare after ditching the outcasts and misfits of their earlier kitchen-sink work in favor of the well-heeled middle class.

It's even tempting to say that these Angries, and

Simon Gray with them, switched places with TR. Yes, his stage debut, *French Without Tears* (1936), dealt with the idle rich at their most idle. But, reversing field, its immediate follow-up, the 1942 *Flare Path*, many of whose people are serving in the military, takes place during WWII. Postwar austerities account for the drabness, grimness, and steely conformity permeating daily English life in *The Deep Blue Sea* and *Separate Tables* (1954).

TR kept in tune with reality. There's enough psychodrama in the canon to delight legions of today's self-indulgent, zonked-out egomaniacs. The cash-strapped woman of breeding in *Variation on a Theme* (1958) also appeared to great acclaim in Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* and *The Night of the Iguana*. Sex-ridden characters of both genders in *The Sleeping Prince* (1953), *The Deep Blue Sea*, and *Cause Célèbre* make Jimmy Porter's bleats and brays in *Look Back in Anger* sound childish (which indeed could have been Osborne's whole point).

Motive-seeking takes us to the moral pits in *Man and Boy* (1963), where a cash-poor international swindler pimps his son to a gay moneyman. Gay sex always fed TR's muse. Perhaps his two greatest scenes, the confrontation of Sir Robert Morton and Dickie Winslow and that of Andrew Crocker-Harris and his student John Taplow in *The Browning Version*, both hew to the generational divide often found in homosexual lovers. TR also knew how to nuance and mute the sexual undercurrents of male-on-male interaction. This knowledge sometimes hinged on the truth that great men come to us carrying a great burden of sin.

His eponym, the Lawrence of Arabia figure in *Ross* (1960), embodies some of his nation's moral values along with hints of the unseemly self-promoting so alien to the discretion and reserve of the English self. And though TR avoids Lawrence's real-life order to kill scores of prisoners, he does put this shameful blot inside the spectrum of his man's moral profile.

As is seen in the love triangles in both *The Deep Blue Sea* and *Cause Célèbre*. Rattigan also excels at describing heterosexual love. His insight into the power the weak can gain over the strong turns the mind to Graham Greene. [Cont. on p 7...](#)

Two new Rattigan ‘episodes’

Giles Cole and Geoffrey Wansell on ‘First Episode’ and ‘The Crock’

Ever since the centenary year, and what we might be pardoned for calling the Great Rattigan Revival, theatres—especially London’s fringe theatres—have been falling over themselves to rediscover his earlier, or lesser known, or frankly not so distinguished plays. In November, at the splendid Jermyn Street Theatre, we were able to see TR’s first ever play, which went through several titles until he settled on *First Episode*.

It gave him his first taste of success, transferring from the Q Theatre to the West End’s Comedy Theatre in 1934, two years before *French Without Tears* swept all before it. It is well known that it is largely based on his own experiences at Oxford and is ‘co-authored’ by one of his fellow students, Philip Heimann, for whom it is said that TR had unrequited amorous feelings. Just how much was contributed to the play by Heimann is of course unknown, but it seems unlikely that he had much of a hand in the dialogue. What is certain is that this was Heimann’s only foray into playwriting, so perhaps it was a question of the themes and the storyline that were developed by him in collaboration with TR.

The play has great significance for aficionados of TR’s work (which naturally includes all members of the Society); it foreshadows themes that he developed rather more skilfully in later plays, such as the inequality of love: the film star Margot Gresham is surely an outline sketch for Hester Collyer in *The Deep Blue Sea*. In fact it is the sense of love betrayed, and the indignity of having fallen for a younger man who can’t return her feelings in any meaningful way that saves *First Episode* from being merely an amusing undergraduate romp. We mustn’t forget, though, that its other main theme, of an unspoken and somewhat ambivalent relationship between two men, was daring for its day. It is carefully enough written to allay the fears of the Lord Chamberlain, but it is certainly sufficient for Margot to question her lover, Tony, on his loyalties. So far so good: an early work which has not yet fully worked out the deeper layers or motivations of its characters, but which demonstrates amply the ability to create engaging and entertaining theatre. The difficulty with this production by Primavera is that although it makes a bold stab at showing the undergraduate Oxford world of the thirties, both the acting and the casting are uneven and therefore undermine the play.

It never seems remotely believable that the worldly, glamorous Margot (Caroline Langrishe) would fall madly in love with the aloof, arrogant, and utterly shallow Tony, as portrayed by Gavin Fowler. Yes, of

course, one can never discount the human ability to be vulnerable and foolish and flattered by the attentions of someone much younger, but Rattigan is not served well here in this regard. This Tony has no charm or allure, and Margot’s desperate plight in Act Three therefore seems utterly ill-founded.

The other aspect of the production which seemed not to be of the greatest assistance to the Rattigan cause was the portrayal of Bertie (Adam Buchanan). I can only imagine how Max Adrian played this in 1933/4, but here we have the classic case of an actor signalling everything to the audience that he feels we ought to know about the character, just in case we are slow enough not to be able to work it out for ourselves. From the moment he walks on he embarks on camped up ‘comedy acting’ as if he were in a Whitehall farce. Everything is exaggerated, including the huge, owl-eyed spectacles he wears. It’s as if he’s dangling his performance at you from an arm’s length. And the less said about the cringe-worthy bottom-wagging scene-changes the better. But bottom-wagging aside, this is otherwise an energetic revival of a fascinating play—here in a fine version by Dan Rebellato, compiled from the six existing versions. And for that it must be applauded. Fortunately we know our TR well enough not to be *too* distracted by directorial blemishes. **GC** ∞



Caroline Langrishe and Philip Labey in *First Episode*
Photo: Flavia Fraser-Cannon

It’s no easy task to write the sequel to a masterpiece, as anyone who loves the movies will tell you. So South Wales born Steve Gough, who began writing for film and television in the late 1980s, was a brave man to try and conjure up what might have happened fifteen years after Andrew Crocker-Harris and his wife Millie left their ‘public school in the South of England’ at the end of one of Rattigan’s masterpieces, *The Browning Version*.

In the Rattigan version Crocker-Harris was off to a crammers for backward boys in Malcombe, Dorset, while Millie was going to Bradford, though her science master lover, Frank Hunter, was not going to be joining her there. But in Gough's sequel *The Crock* – which played at the tiny Pentameters theatre off Hampstead High Street, London, between 28 October and 16 November – they all end up together again after the years have elapsed – and Taplow is visiting once again.

Theoretically we are now in the 'swinging sixties' – the play's original production in 1948 plus fifteen years would take us to 1963 – and Andrew Crocker-Harris is indeed a crock. He does not appear to be able to speak, and he is looked after by a kindly, if manipulative, manservant called Tony, who pushes him about in a wheelchair, while Millie runs the house. There is still no love between the two and Millie's shrewish character remains as it always was – taking the deepest pleasure in insulting her disabled, tongue-tied husband.

The problem is that Rattigan never intended the 'Crock' to be an old man. Indeed he told his friend Peter Glenville during the rehearsals in 1948 how worried he was that Eric Portman was playing him as an old man. "One thing I am determined on," he wrote, "is to put a line in which definitely states that Crocker-Harris's age is forty". It was Portman in the play that made him appear older, a mistake Michael Redgrave did not make in the first film version. The fact is 40 years plus 15 does not really make a man in a wheelchair who seems to have disappeared into dementia, even in 1963.

In fact the 'Crock' does not utter so much as a word until three quarters of the way through Gough's neat play, when he suddenly discovers his eloquence without any real warning or explanation. Given the fact that the play is named after him, it is a little strange not to allow the principal character anything more than some 'wheelchair acting' for a large part of the piece. In the original the 'Crock' appears on page eight of the forty-eight and never disappears, except, of course, to take his 'medicine'.

Nevertheless Taplow in the Gough sequel is now a successful young man – though one who seems to have triumphed in a remarkably short period of time – and Hunter is as suave, yet troubled, as he was when we first encountered him. Aeschylus's play is represented by the ghostly appearance of both Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, while the 'Crock' stares at an oil painting above the fireplace as if transfixed by what he is hearing them say in the diminished folds of his brain – before he recovers his power of speech.

As a whole Gough's sequel is an interesting experiment, but it proves that sequels to masterpieces are very difficult to do indeed. **GW** ☞

An Albany encore

Martin Amherst Lock reports on the Society's Christmas party

Piccadilly was positively heaving with Christmas shoppers at lunchtime on Saturday 6th December, but just a courtyard and half a Rope Walk away from the jostling throng and blare of a Salvation Army band, members of the Society were once again enjoying an oasis of calm in K5 Albany, a set of rooms occupied by Sir Terence Rattigan from 1943 to 1946.

Once described as 'the haunt of bachelors, or of married men who try to lead bachelors' lives', Albany is said to be the first purpose-built residential apartment block of its kind. In his fascinating welcome, our host, Antony Fletcher (*pictured*), who has occupied K5 since 1960, explained that its tranquil atmosphere is in no small part thanks to close adherence to the terms of its Trust which have not been altered since 1803. Albany – the definite article is eschewed lest it be confused with a pub of the same name—comprises 69 apartments called sets rather than flats because all are



on at least two floors. Not only has it been the home of distinguished statesmen and men of letters – Rattigan is likely to have brushed shoulders with J B Priestley and Graham Greene – but also of characters from fiction including Raffles, Ernest from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance...* and Lord Peter Wimsey.

As we sipped prosecco in these elegant and beautifully appointed chambers, at the heart of London yet totally hidden from the public gaze, it was not difficult to imagine why Rattigan must have loved entertaining there nor why he went on to occupy two other sets over the years. Giles Cole in his toast to Sir Terence expressed his view that it was providential that a member of the Society should now be living in what were once Rattigan's rooms; but the shade of Rattigan he firmly believes lives on not just in the set but in the spirit of the Society and all its endeavours.

Sadly, our Vice President Greta Scacchi could not be with us because bad weather in Morocco where she is currently filming had delayed her shooting schedule; nor alas was the courtyard to be graced as planned by TR's Rolls Royce, its owner being unwell. But Greta Scacchi assured us in an effusive telegram which our Chairman read to us that she would **Cont. on p 8...**

Cabbages and King Street and Thank You Mr Rippon: *random AGM thoughts* by Roger Mills

I'll bet I wasn't the only one scanning the walls of Sheekey's restaurant during the AGM trying to put a name to all the studio portraits of actors. A wonderful setting to celebrate Rattigan since we were, pretty well, at the beating heart of the British commercial theatre.

Forty years on it's hard to recall that this rather raffish industry went hand in glove with Covent Garden fruit and veg market, whose denizens moved in as the carriage trade melted away to their beds. Save for those dedicated toppers who appreciated the all night drinking opportunities in the market's many pubs.

For a flavour of these times I'm indebted to a quote from one Ian Christie quoted on a local history website: "The market, the theatres, and Opera House, and the publishers dominate the area, and are served by their haulage-contractors, barrow-makers and solicitors, makers of ballet shoes, pianos and scenery, their printers, book-binders, and literary agents. All are interspersed with a wide variety of restaurants and cafes, lavish pubs, cheap, 'sub-standard' housing, warehouses, and local shops."

With another hat on I've been lucky enough to meet the very few people left with memories of the place back then, old-timers who talk of such levels of market trade and traffic congestion that you wonder just how it soldiered on as long as it did.

It's also a matter of wonder the area survived the planning madness of the sixties and seventies, particularly as the Greater London Council (GLC), hand in glove with various other interests, had massive plans – for the horrible details see <http://tinyurl.com/nt8rqre> – which here would have seen the almost complete destruction of the existing area including the demolition of the Actors' Church and the Inigo Jones market building.

That this didn't happen was down to Geoffrey Rippon, who took the clever decision to approve the area as a development zone while spot listing 250 buildings, effectively stopping the GLC's vision in its tracks. He was correct in thinking it the best thing he ever did.

That's not to say the all singing, all dancing, tourist hot spot the area's become is the same place. The market traders and porters who knew the old place pretty universally told me: "well, we saved the buildings but everything else that made Covent Garden what it was

has been lost."

True, the world Ian Christie describes has largely gone, but not entirely – the ghosts still walk their accustomed ways. Actually I'd idled away the time that Sunday, as I invariably do when in the area, pottering around what is for many with my backstage background holy ground, a series of dingy alleyways and non-descript streets embraced by a circle of only a few hundred yards centred on the Lamb and Flag.

Here are Cecil Court, Garrick Yard, Rose Street, Langley Court, St Martin's Lane, Floral Street and King Street. Now gentrified and 'All-Sainted' it was here in 1914 – from two rooms in Long Acre – that Arthur Earnshaw, working for Charles Froham at the Duke of York's; and Phillip Sheridan at the Strand Theatre formed a partnership with a travelling salesman from GEC, Jim Woolnough, to form the Strand Electric Co. And for the next sixty-odd years (including 1939-45 when export contracts to neutral Portugal were undertaken) this company dominated the world of stage lighting in the UK and most of Europe.

And all from the purlieu of Sheekey's. Just one turning away is Cecil Court where Moss Mansell – who incidentally established the Electric Cinema in Notting Hill – invented the Cecil Plate Dimmer. A stone's throw away is what is now called Carriage Court where Strand had an upstairs works, their first – eventually taking over a good deal of Floral Street using the road for assembling spotlight bars. In King Street by 1939 was the Head Office and Demonstration Theatre which was known as something of a shrine.

Here the legendary Fred Bentham held court and invented the Light Console. Here too the extant Hall and Dixon (Hall Stage these days) displayed their drapes, tabs and ironmongery. Even after the firm opened factories in Gunnersbury and Ealing, the heart of the company stayed near to the stage doors it served. Well at least until John Davies got his hands on the business and, as Rank invariably did with its audio-visual acquisitions, ran it as a cog in a conglomerate rather than the niche firm it had been. (In 1996 it fell into the then fashionable hands of the venture capitalists and after a difficult period the brand name Strand ended up with Phillips!)

As a memorial to this quirky outfit who were so much part of the theatre scene there should be a blue plaque somewhere and a few extra pictures in Sheekey's, somewhere suitably obscure – maybe the gents!

Now all I need is an excuse to make some kind of tenuous link with TR so that these rather random thoughts might be of some use to our editor.

Well, I'd be prepared to bet that each first night of any Rattigan was lit with Strand equipment and it's a

very fair wager that even now in eighty percent of cases revivals take place under the gaze of at least one bit of fifty-odd-year-old kit turned out by 'the old firm' even if it's a Patt 23 kept out of sentiment. I know all the Chichester centenary revivals were, as was this year's Finborough.

Both lines and lights survive because they were well made and commercial and both had their birth by and large in an industry that was run by real theatre folk from the area we were lucky enough to be sitting for our meeting. So, thanks Mr Rippon. ☺

Roger Mills is the London Correspondent for Market Trader Magazine

In the Footsteps of Rattigan: an update

Trinity College, Oxford, Sat 6 and Sun 7 June 2015

*"And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening..."*

Registration for our Oxford conference will begin at 9am on Saturday 6 June and the first session will be an introductory tour of the college by the Archivist, **Clare Hopkins**. **Geoffrey Wansell** will give the introductory talk and there will be later morning sessions by **Dr Holly Hill** and **Professor Dan Rebellato**.

The Society is sponsoring ten students from drama schools around the country to attend and to participate in a Rattigan masterclass, led by **Ian Flintoff**, actor/director and alumnus of the college, who is also the author of a play about Terence Rattigan, performed at Trinity to mark the centenary. This will be after lunch. Then **Alan Brodie** will talk about the centenary and beyond. We hope to watch a performance by the first year Trinity College students in the open air in the evening and dinner will take place in the 17th century Dining Hall, lit by chandelier and candelabra. There will be a variety of sessions on the Sunday, and **Michael Darlow** will give the closing address.

Early accommodation booking is recommended and the college has supplied the following information:

ACCOMMODATION IN OXFORD:

Via Oxford Information Centre

www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com/ / Tel: 01865 726871 otic@oxford.gov.uk

Or try the following: www.oxfordrooms.co.uk

(University facilities – usually some available year round); www.oxfordshortlets.co.uk;

Cont on p 8...

Looking at Rattigan in 2015

cont. from page 3

The self-effacing Lady Frances Nelson of the all-but-forgotten *Bequest to the Nation* (1970) responds with total loyalty to her famous husband's insults, including his dumping her for Lady Emma Hamilton. Her resolve to be nothing but Nelson's wife and the mother of his kids, meanwhile, sharpens the irritation of this great naval hero as he ties himself in knots looking for ways to thwart her.

Discovering such up-to-date subject matter, I must admit, has stumped me. I don't know how I should feel about having bypassed TR in 40 years-plus of teaching the drama. Yet I'm glad to have retired from the classroom. The clincher? Outside of having no more student writing to mark, it must be the joy of sleeping late—one off limits to those harried people of TR sweating over love's complicated, contradictory powers and, like the straight-laced Catherine Winslow, their absence. ☺



A former Fulbright lecturer in India and Poland, Peter Wolfe has also taught in Canada, Taiwan, New Zealand, Russia and Australia. His twenty-odd book subjects include Iris Murdoch, Graham Greene, August Wilson, Simon Gray and Penelope Fitzgerald. His shorter work has appeared in the New York Times Book Review, New Republic, The Chicago Tribune and The Weekend Australian.

SIR DONALD SINDEN 1923—2014
Honorary member of the Society



An Albany Encore

cont. from p 5

join us at the very next opportunity, and we were honoured to welcome her mother Pamela in her stead. We were also delighted to be joined by our President Princess George Galitzine looking resplendent in winter furs, James Cellan Jones, the director of Rattigan's film *Bequest to the Nation*, Elena Salvoni, a former friend of Rattigan's from Bianchi's restaurant days, and a member of the Society, Philippa Comber, who is Rattigan's second cousin twice removed!

All too soon the winter sunlight started to fade—no wonder Rattigan wrote *While the Sun Shines* whilst living in these lucent rooms – and it was time to tear ourselves away and rejoin the madding crowd outside. All who attended what was a memorable occasion are indebted to Antony Fletcher for sharing his home with us, to Barbara Longford, Clive Montellier and Diana Scotney for organising the party, and to Esop Evard for ensuring that our glasses were never empty. ☞

Judy Buxton *cont. from p 2*

Ridley's *The Ghost Train*—in which she played the young bride on honeymoon some decades ago. It's a salutary lesson, she observes, to graduate from the *ingénue* to the character roles – but much more fun.

Through all the contacts she has made in her career, it is interesting to note that one of them was with our Chairman, Barbara Longford—not as a performer, but as a neighbour in West Kensington in the 1970s. She now has a further connection with Barbara—and all of us—as an honorary member of the Society. She is a most welcome adornment. ☞

Dates for your diary

Saturday 14 March 2015:

Rattigan on Screen at the Cinema Museum. Full details are in the booking form enclosed with this edition.

Saturday 28 March:

Matinee performance of *The Heart of Things* at Jermyn Street Theatre, 3.30pm. See notice below.

Saturday 6 - Sunday 7 June:

52 members are so far attending our **Conference at Trinity College, Oxford**. See the update by Barbara Longford, on p7 and below. Deposit £40.

In the Footsteps of Rattigan *cont. from p 7*

www.abodesofoxford.com; www.stayoxford.co.uk;
www.infotel.co.uk/towns/oxford.htm.

The Oxford University Club in Mansfield Road with ensuite rooms in quiet location, only a 10 minute walk from Trinity, tel: 01865 271044 or reception@club.ox.ac.uk.

Nearby B&B: Holywell, 14 Holywell St, OX1 3SA tel: 01865 721880 www.holywellbedandbreakfast.com or email: holywellb-b@hotmail.com. Parking is available.

Other accommodation includes (from closest):

www.thebutteryhotel.co.uk;
www.towerhouseoxford.co.uk; The Randolph;
www.vanbrughhousehotel.co.uk;
www.thebocardo.co.uk; Old Bank; Old Parsonage; Malmaison; Mercure Eastgate; Royal Oxford; Oxford Spire; Cotswold Lodge; Linton Lodge. Also the Barcelo, Holiday Inn and Travelodge on the ring road.

IT'S NOT YET TOO LATE TO RESERVE A PLACE.

52 members have paid deposits, so their places are guaranteed, but there is still room for more. Please contact me as soon as possible: barbara.longford@ntlworld.com. **Barbara Longford** ☞

Members may like to know that our Editor, Giles Cole, has written a new play called *The Heart of Things*, which is having its premiere at Jermyn Street Theatre in March. This is Giles's first play since *The Art of Concealment* (about TR), which was received with wide critical acclaim. The new play is a poignant drama about family, ambition, love and loyalty and is directed by Knight Mantell. Thirty seats have been reserved for the matinee performance at **3.30pm on Sat 28 March** at the special 'earlybird' price of £17 each. Please contact me (barbara.longford@ntlworld.com) if you would like to join this group outing. **BL** ☞