

The Rattigan

The Newsletter of The Terence Rattigan Society

ISSUE No. 14 APRIL 2015

Wersion

A birthday party at the birthplace



Sunday 29 March saw the return to Rattigan's birthplace, 100 Cornwall Gardens, of our Vice-Presidents Michael Darlow and Geoffrey Wansell along with members of the Committee to celebrate our President's birthday. The birthday was in fact the weekend before, but had been taken up with a family celebration, so here we were, to raise a glass to the wonderful Jean Galitzine, looking as stylish, elegant and snazzy as ever, and even gracing the occasion with a pitch-perfect rendition of the Cole Porter classic 'So In Love'.

She then regaled us with the story of how in 1960 she had auditioned for the musical version of *French Without Tears* (at Rattigan's insistence), had been given the part, and then had second thoughts. As we know, it turned out to be a sensible decision because the show,

retitled *Joie de Vivre*, ran for just four performances, despite the huge success of the original play.

Immediately beforehand, our esteemed honorary member Adrian Brown delivered a tribute to Jean in verse, which he had composed for the occasion. It is reproduced in full on page 5. Readers may recall that Adrian composed a similar paean of praise for the great man himself on the occasion of the tree-planting at the Actors' Church in 2012.

It's customary in polite circles not to discuss a lady's age, but as Jean has now reached the sprightly age of 90 we were all hoping that we might be able to sing a song, and look like a Dior model, as she still does, when we get to that age (if we ever do). In this writer's case, I suspect I will be content simply to remember my own name.

Our Chairman and our Secretary had arranged a



special cake for the occasion, along with delicious sandwiches made by our Membership Secretary, and we were grateful once again to Junko Tarrant for hosting the party in her Kensington home.

Jean is seen above left with our Drama School Liaison member Catherine Day and our Chairman, Barbara

Longford, and above with accompanist—and Society member—Samuel Joseph. 50

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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

Antony Fletcher

Our member Antony Fletcher, pictured here with our President, is probably best known to the Society as the tall and distinguished host of two parties in his set at Albany, once occupied by Terence Rattigan. His CV, however, makes fascinating reading, not least because of his involvement in politics, local government, charity and the law, but also because he is perhaps the only person to be profiled in this newsletter who has not had some kind of theatrical career, or who has not rubbed shoulders with some of the great theatrical figures of his day—although he did persuade Sir Derek Jacobi to unveil the plaque for Rattigan outside his set.

He has certainly rubbed shoulders with others of the great and good, however, having been Political Private Secretary to the Government and, later, Opposition Chief Whips, Martin Redmayne and Willie Whitelaw in the 1960s.

He then became Private Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition, Edward Heath, having also stood meanwhile as a parliamentary candidate in the 1964 General Election. Unfortunately for him—as a Conservative candidate—he stood in the constituency of Romford, a marginal seat which Antony says he made safe for Labour.

If a career as an MP was not to be his lot, he certainly made up for it in other walks of public



life, and not just as a private secretary. More of that in a moment. Let's go back to the beginning.

Antony's education was at Stowe and Jesus College, Oxford, before which he did National Service in the Royal

Artillery and was commissioned in 1948. He was called to the Bar in 1953 and practised for the next six years, then becoming involved in the development of the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre

His political career then morphed into a career in charity: he was Chief Executive of the London and Quadrant Housing Trust from 1968-79, which is now the largest charitable landlord in London. His other appointments are numerous: he was Vice Chairman of the GLC Housing Committee, Consultant on Empty Homes to the Housing Minister, Sir George Young, and a member of the board of Ford Open Prison. He has been a trustee of CRISIS, a committee member of SHELTER, and in 1989-90 he co-ordinated the Lord Mayor of London's Charity Appeal. Apart from all this, he has helped to establish hostels for recovering drug addicts in Sussex and has been a campaigner for road safety-and now he is hard at work on his autobiography, The Maverick Gadfly. Now there's a good title. 🔊

Rattigan on Screen

Report and photograph by Clive Montellier

London's Cinema Museum is devoted to keeping alive the spirit of cinema. Set in historic surroundings in the former Lambeth Workhouse, Kennington, close to the Elephant & Castle, the Cinema Museum houses a unique collection of artefacts, memorabilia and equipment that preserves the history and grandeur of cinema from the 1890s to the present day, including items relating to former Workhouse inmate, Charlie Chaplin. As such, it seemed a perfect venue for an event to beat off the winter blues and spend an afternoon in a warm screening room, on traditional cinema seats, immersed in the world of Rattigan on film.

Fortified by an excellent lunch at a quirky nearby bistro, the Brasserie Toulouse Lautrec, our visit began with an introduction to the Museum's huge collection. To echo the days of a full cinema programme, our party of 27 viewed excerpts from the film debut of our President, the former Dior model Jean Dawnay, at the peak of her modelling career, starring alongside Frankie Vaughan in the 1958 movie *Wonderful Things*. Recently released for the first time on DVD, the film provides a unique visual and sound record of our beloved President, sporting some delightful Hardy Amies outfits and relishing her classic opening line 'Have you got any red mullet?' (which apparently springs back to her mind every time she places an order

at the fishmonger!). Our main feature stayed in the 1958 season with a screening of *Separate Tables*, a Hecht-Hill-Lancaster (as in Burt) production, directed by Harold Hecht, with screenplay by Terence Rattigan and John Gay. With a stellar cast including Deborah Kerr as Sybil Railton-Bell, Rita Hayworth as Ann Shankland, David Niven as Major Pollock, Wendy Hiller as Miss Cooper, Burt Lancaster as John Malcolm and Gladys Cooper as Mrs Railton-Bell, the script made understandable concessions to the intended US audience (including the insertion of a fairly irrelevant but aesthetic young couple), but lost none of Rattigan's essential craftsmanship in portraying an absorbing story of human frailties. It is telling that David Niven won his only Oscar for this part.

We concluded with a stimulating discussion about the film, and Rattigan's difficulties in portraying his original concept on either stage or screen of the time (which would have seen Major Pollock arrested for approaching other men, rather than 'bothering' ladies in the cinema). However, all felt that, even working under the social and legal constraints of the time, Rattigan had succeeded in creating a poignant and sympathetic - but not pathetic - character with great impact in the hands of the right actor. We also learned of the Museum's plans to acquire its current home on a permanent basis - a definite good cause for any 'angels' out there with a passion for the history of British cinema and cinemas. Find out more about the Museum and its programme of regular events at their website www.cinemamuseum.org.uk. 🔊



Portrait of a President

by Barbara Longford

The elegant drawing room of Terence Rattigan's house in Sunningdale, one Summer's evening in June 1956. A party for the opening of the film version of his play *The Sleeping Prince*, now retitled the *The Prince and The Showgirl*, is in full swing. Upstage right: Sir Laurence Olivier, who directed and played the prince and Marilyn Monroe: the showgirl. He with his wife Vivien Leigh, star of *Gone With the Wind*, and Marilyn with her husband, leading American playwright Arthur Miller. Downstage left: Sybil Thorndike, also in the film and amongst other luminaries of the time: Margot Fonteyn, John Gielgud, Lady Diana Cooper, Tyrone Power, Peggy Ashcroft. Centre stage: celebrated, handsome and debonair Rattigan himself. And, since he was, as they said at the time 'not the marrying kind' to

his right, playing the hostess, his great friend the equally glamorous Dior model, Jean Dawnay.

Over fifty years later, Jean, now the widow of Prince George Galitzine, was taken back to Rattigan's old house. Aged 88, she is still supremely active and elegant, but has failing eyesight. "As I stood on the same spot and recalled the scene of the party, I closed my eyes and imagined the guests approaching us so many years before. I could see them all so clearly in my mind's eye, that for a moment I questioned whether they were all still alive and I was dead, or was it the other way round?"

But Look Back in Anger had opened in May 1956 and within a few years Rattigan would become side-lined and embittered, seen as no more than the journeyman-writer of well-made plays about the irrelevant upper classes. Dior would be eclipsed by Pierre Cardin and Dawnay and her like by Twiggy and Shrimpton.

From an early age Jean was adventurous and spirited. "My mother died when I was four and I ran away from school when I was 12. By the time I was 14 I wanted to be a missionary in Tibet and also a famous opera singer."

At 16 she was at the Central School of Arts & Crafts and when she berated the male students "How can you sit around and talk about light, shade and perspective when people are dying for their country?", they replied "What about you? You're doing the same thing and girls are joining up and going to war." Immediately she got

up, marched down Kingsway to Adastral House and applied to join the WAAFs. They told her that she had to be 17 and a half and she replied "Well, I will be by the time you train me".

After a period working in a parachute factory she joined the Code and Cypher unit at ISRB (Inter Services Research Bureau) in Baker Street. It was highly secret and hush-hush, so much so that when, after the war, her boss, Leo Marks, told her "You were one of my best" and she replied "I can't even remember anything about it", his response was, "Good, that's what I wanted you to say". She came away convinced that he had hypnotised her to delete her memories.

At the end of the war Jean went to Germany for the Control Commission. She recalls crossing to the Hook

of Holland, sleeping on straw in the hold of a ship, and taking a freezing train with all its windows boarded up. After a three day journey, the other girls were exhausted, but seeing a notice 'Dance in the Camp' Jean didn't want to miss anything. She met a friend from ISRB who told her that the Chief, Brigadier John Cowley, needed a new Assistant. She added five years to her age and presented herself in an interview room "full of red tabs". "What would she do about the rehabilitation of Germany?" they asked. "I didn't know what the word meant but

didn't know what the word meant but thought 'habit' might have something to do with living, so I replied: 'I would do nothing until I had ensured that the children had shoes and milk.'" She got the job

and remained with Cowley till he was demobbed.

A chance meeting with Max Aitken, ex-fighter pilot and son of munitions minister Lord Beaverbrook, led to Jean's next adventure. Max had access to plenty of Dakotas which he used to start the first private charter hire company. Jean became an Air Hostess for them, but it turned out to be less glamorous than she expected and included unloading the chemical toilets and coping with endless vomiting passengers.

After this salutary experience, she launched herself into modelling, learning it all on the hoof and eventually became one of the most successful models of her day. Her book, *Model Girl*, published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in 1956, is an unromantic and honest portrait of the toughness of that world.

Cont. on page 6...

PRINCESS GEORGE GALITZINE MBE – the former fashion model Jean Dawnay, friend, muse and hostess to Terence Rattigan, talks to Barbara Longford about 'Terry' and her life.

Reprinted from 'The Oldie' by kind permission.

A La Princesse

Adrian Brown's tribute to Jean on her 90th birthday

No story-line has ever been So 'glamorous' as our lovely Jean's.

Two lines which I have boldly nicked From Andrew Marvell, but have slicked Up just a bit to express the worth Of our dear President, whose birth - Some ninety years ago, they say -We're here to celebrate today.

Jean Dawnay was the simple name
With which into the world she came;
Already fair of face and form,
With fearlessness enough to storm
The tempests of life's stormy sea
By her own personality.

Into her childhood's boist'rous state
I fear I cannot penetrate,
So catch no glimpse of Jean before
She worked in Germany post-war
As P.A. ex-officio
To some high generalissimo.
Then, when from National Service clear,
Jean entered her foredained career
As fashion model, where she soon
Set famed coutouriers aswoon,
Till she became top model for
Prestigious Christian Dior.

But yet the catwalks of Paree
Were not her only paths, for she
Delighted London's showbiz scene
Appearing both on stage and screen.
And though she did not then pursue

This calling, nor her singing too,
Yet—like Queen Marie Antoinette—
Jean would enrapture all she met,
Including that one special man
We honour—Terence Rattigan,
Who once considered her his muse...

I won't continue to enthuse
About Jean's conquests, which I'll say
Epitomised jeunesse dorée,
Till after all this social life
She gave it up to be the wife
Of George Galitzine, Russian prince
In exile here. And ever since
With unaffected savoir-faire
She's reigned as Queen of Eaton Square.

We'd be astonished if Jean should
Avoid the joys of motherhood,
So Katya came along—to learn
How she was cherished, till—in her turn—
She also married, and Jean can forge
Bonds now with grandson, <u>little</u> George.
So, Jean, as glamour-icon, wife
And mother, what a well-filled life!

Let's leave it there. Enough to say
We're gathered on Jean's special day
To emphasise she has a part
Of love in everyone here's heart.

So now that toast we've long foreseen, To Princess Galitzine—our Jean!



Portrait of a President

continued from p 4

Success led to taking an apartment in Eaton Square, where Terence Rattigan was a neighbour and where a real friendship blossomed. He was writing *Separate Tables*, set in a hotel in Stanhope Gardens, and based the fashion model character on Jean. "He would often ask me about my boyfriends and my reactions to them; he wanted to know how a woman really feels. When the play was finished, I dashed over to Terry's flat and he read out the entire play to me. Did I want any changes? I asked for just a few, so that no-one would recognise me. Terry complied and, honourably, never reinstated his original dialogue".

After appearing on the panel of the BBC's What's My Line? programme, Jean was invited to test for a film, which involved dancing a tango with Frankie Vaughan. She played a rich society girl in the 1958 film Wonderful Things (see p 3) and was offered a seven year contract, which 'Terry' advised her not to accept. But shortly afterwards, like Grace Kelly whom she strongly resembled, she married her Prince.

During the filming, Frankie invited her to help him at one of the boys' clubs and this later led to Jean being recruited by the National Association of Youth Clubs (now UK Youth) to visit girls' clubs throughout the British Isles. She's now its Vice President, a role for which, amongst other work, she was awarded an MBE in the Diamond Jubilee Honours List.

Prince George Galitzine, a descendent of a Tsar, escaped, aged three, with his family in 1919 and lived to see the fall of Soviet Russia in 1991. After his death in 1992, Princess Galitzine and her daughter Katya founded The Prince George Galitzine Memorial Library based in the St Petersburg Palace that once belonged to his grandmother. It is a public library holding a collection of books about Russia published abroad and not available in the former USSR.

And so back to where we came in. 2010 and the Princess is again in the company of one of the leading actors of the day. Benedict Cumberbatch has taken her back to Little Court with all its memories, for a television programme, *The Rattigan Enigma*. Benedict starred in the National Theatre's acclaimed production of Rattigan's *After the Dance* and a continuing series of successful revivals since have led to Rattigan's being recognised as one of the major playwrights of the twentieth century - the English Chekhov.

Jean retains her Rattigan connection and is the first President of The Terence Rattigan Society. It is yet another adventure and her energy and drive will, we hope, make it as successful as all the others.

An Eye to the Future— The Winslow Boy in St Louis

by Judith Newmark

Reprinted with the kind permission of The St Louis Post-Dispatch

'Let's put this as plainly as possible: We are very, very lucky to have a strong regional theater here. Looking for proof? It's onstage right now, and it's called *The Winslow Boy*.

The Winslow Boy is exactly the kind of play that lets the Repertory Theatre of St Louis shine. Terence Rattigan's absorbing drama comes packed with witty language and serious issues.

Director Steven Woolf shows a deft hand with this "courtroom drama" that takes place entirely in a London living room. Woolf lets the action unfold like a bolt of silk, smooth and supple and shining. He has also pulled together a first-rate cast, led by Jeff Hayenga. Hayenga plays prosperous, principled Arthur Winslow, a good family man who in the years before World War I nearly destroys his wealth and his health to redeem his son's reputation.

The 14-year-old boy, Ronnie (Jay Stalder), has been expelled from a naval academy "convicted" of stealing an inexpensive postal order. Ronnie says he didn't do it and his father believes him. He wants to sue to clear the boy's name, but because it's a military school that means suing the English government. *The Winslow Boy* directly confronts a persistent question: What rights does an individual have against the state?

Because it's an almost impossible case to make, Arthur seeks out a brilliant, arrogant barrister, Sir Robert Morton (Jay Stratton). Sir Robert's interrogation of Ronnie at the end of the first act is a dazzling piece of theater, one that does not need the visual cues of justice to achieve the tension of courtroom drama.

The second act opens almost a year after the end of the first, and we see the toll that Arthur's crusade has taken. At the start of Act I, he walks with a dapper cane, mildly complaining of arthritis. By Act II, he's turning into an invalid. The house has suffered, too: paintings and objects are missing, sold to pay legal bills. Arthur's wife, Grace, wonders if it isn't time to reconsider.

But Arthur's devotion—or unhealthy obsession?—still glows in him like a hot coal. Maybe it's keeping him alive. In any case, his daughter Catherine (Kathleen Wise) is his rock. Wise, as poised as a Shaw heroine, gives this play about a "man's world" a feminine and feminist perspective that acts as a built-in update.

Rattigan set his play in the past, but he wrote with an eye to the future.' 🔊

Rattigan in Malaysia

An extract from 'Dare Me! The Life and Work of Gerald Glaskin' by John Burbridge

Submitted by TRS member Richard Scott, who met Australian writer Gerald Glaskin (1923-2000) a few times and thought this anecdote would be of interest...

In 1958, Gerald Glaskin was staying at a Malayan rubber plantation, Ulu Tiram, near Johor Bahru. Glaskin's host was a "convivial Australian" called Brian Chapple.

"... Not long after, Ulu Tiram was graced by the visit of the noted British playwright, Terence Rattigan. The author of 23 plays, 22 screenplays and eight others for radio and television, Rattigan was often perceived to be the classic playboy, living a life of luxury and extravagance that success on the stage and in the cinema has brought him. His Rolls Royce with its personalised number plate projected this image. But as biographer Geoffrey Wansell has pointed out, behind this public façade was another man, tormented by fears, pain and His loneliness and homosexuality were hidden beneath a veneer of relaxation and wit. How Rattigan came to visit Ulu Tiram is not clear but Chapple was an avid reader and presumably a man of many connections. For Glaskin it was another chance to rub shoulders with a successful writer, a label he always strove to claim for himself but which for the most part eluded him.

Rattigan's appearance on the rubber estate was not without its own touch of theatricality. A Singapore tailor had made him a black silk pyjama-like outfit that looked uncannily like the clothes worn by Chinese 'coolie' women, which caused something of a sensation, especially among the Chinese employees on the estate. But, recalled Glaskin, 'even the most ill-concealed titters couldn't induce him to change it for something less provocative'. Rattigan, who was accompanied by a friend, was rather quiet this weekend. His friend put it down to the fact that the movie of his screenplay, Separate Tables, had been nominated for several Academy Awards, which were due to be announced that day. During the afternoon, a cablegram was telephoned through announcing David Niven had won an Oscar for Best Actor and Wendy Hiller for Best Actress. Although Rattigan was overlooked this time for an award, the success of the film lifted his mood and was cause for great celebration that evening at Ulu Tiram. encounter with the famous playwright had been a precious moment in Glaskin's life, as he recorded in A Many-Splendoured Woman, 'With Terry, I had managed to give both fame and achievement yet another gentle nudge'. 🔊

Cousin John: Warrior Poet and Beloved Vagabond by George Tabor

One of the most enigmatic of Terence Rattigan's relations was his lesser known cousin John Bradburne. The absolute antithesis of his urbane playwright kinsman, JB was mischievously described as a 'Bohemian misfit', a 'Toffs Tramp' or more delicately as a 'Pioneer Gentleman Hippy'. And although a literary thread joined them both, nothing could have been further removed from TR's louche lifestyle in London's Theatreland than the haunts of JB's worldly tramps. He ended his life as the warden of a Leper colony in down-trodden Africa, where he became an instant legend. After his murder at the height of the war in Rhodesia in 1979, he ultimately became a candidate for Sainthood.

John Randall Bradburne was Rattigan's cousin through the Irish grandparent ancestry of his maternal grandmother Evelyn. She was the second wife of Sir William Rattigan, who had married two sisters — one after the other — whilst Chief Justice in India — and had sired an extended family of nine children. Looking back on this 'Indian heritage' in his witty *Cavalier Cavalcade* JB wisecracked:

Sir William R. was adamant for Eva And married her; stood carriages aglow Stood five and fifty rickshaws in a row. It made a stir paraded in Lucknow It made the coolies bite the dust and bow!

He was born in 1921 and brought up in Cumbria where his father was a Vicar. The family then moved to Norfolk, where John was educated at Gresham's. Though he apparently never met Terence, he became close to his invalid brother Brian.

Having joined the Indian Army when war broke out, he was posted to the Ghurkha Rifles when Malaya was overrun by the Japanese. The rescue battleships were sunk, so John and a companion paired off to avoid capture and escape through the jungle. When they reached the coast they seized a sampan and sailed for Sumatra. They were shipwrecked, and swam ashore, before they grabbed another sampan and forced the crew to sail to Sumatra. Racked with malaria and heatstroke, John sailed on the last ship out of Sumatra. He finally joined the Chindits under the legendary General Orde Wingate and was awarded the MC.

After the war JB turned to the Catholic Church much to the chagrin of his father, who perhaps harboured more than his share of mixed Anglo-Irish Protestant feelings.

Cousin John cont. from p 7

'Crazy poet', 'Wandering Minstrel' and 'Jovial Monk' were a few more of the titles of his detractors. From now on this bizarre bohemian turned tail on the world. He tramped the highways and byways, greeting and helping all and sundry whilst playing the guitar and singing psalms. He tried in vain to join several religious orders, but was turned down. He wrote prodigiously every day, leaving over 9000 poems. Those referring to his cousin were all written after Terence's death in November 1977.

I've heard from an ex-Rhodesian Now set in England's heart That Cousin Terence Rattigan Has died; God bless his art.

God bless his art, God rest his soul, I've asked the nearest Priest To say a Mass that soon may roll To heaven this deceased.

May heaven be for Terence And for Brian and for Us With a Requiem and for reference And a reverent OREMUS.

JB's longing for a monastic life was never fulfilled, so he turned to a forgotten corner of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and settled on a lonely leper colony. He became their Warden, and treated the inmates like human beings. With a little laugh he looked askance at TR's worldly view of life. And his Harrow heritage. Yet

- from a letter to his Mother 1978.

TR's worldly view of life. And his Harrow heritage. Yet whatever the barriers, he marvelled at his distant cousin's literary success.

Further diversion, changing up of gears,
For Terence Rattigan has had a Mass
Said by a Roman Priest that he may pass
Sooner to heaven than inhuman fears
Make mention of: he wrote French Without Tears
And faithfully his cousin has related
The only joke the moke appreciated.

With wishful thinking for a final conversion he concluded:

Au dessus de ma gare, above my station
Which serves a Public School by underground
I found myself so Harrowed by elation
When wide acclaim on every side I found
That I declared to cousin John "I'm crowned
With such humility at seeing God
Beaming upon me that I deem it odd!"

John Bradburne's wishes were to die like a martyr and be buried in a Fransciscan habit.

Dates for your diary

Saturday 6—Sunday 7 June:

Conference at Trinity College, Oxford: 'In the Footsteps of Rattigan'. Full details of this event were given in the last issue of the newsletter. Some places are still available. Please contact Barbara Longford if you would like to attend this first-ever conference dedicated to the works and legacy of Terence Rattigan.

Wednesday 22—Saturday 25 July:

A production of *Flare Path* will take place at the Network Theatre (below London's Waterloo Station) on the above dates directed by Alastair Callcutt. Details will be available on the theatre website: www.networktheatre.org.

Even though his good works had spread far and wide, JB crossed swords with a few extremists of Robert Mugabe's mob. He refused to go with them and insisted on remaining at his post. Jealous in their depravity, these mindless Gooks got him in the end. They abducted him and shot him in the back on a lonely road whilst he wandered back home to his 'family'.

At his funeral in Salisbury (now Harare) Cathedral, three drops of blood fell to the marble floor below the coffin, for all to see. The coffin was opened, but the body was found to be totally intact with no sign of fresh blood. Whether or not this contributed to that 'Heroic Virtue' by which the Catholic Church, along with a couple of proven miracles, will consider him for sainthood remains an enigmatic dream.

In his final poem on TR he looked back with sardonic wit as he became reconciled to the 'sins' and 'homo' leanings of his cousin.

Blood Cousin not, fair Coz I never met
They've hailed you for a scintillating Wit
And as a genius beyond regret
For anything they said that was not fit;
The tale of their obituary paean
Will not be told but only as their knell;
I knew your Grandmother, your brother Brian
I knew a little while and liked him well;
They marked your homosexuality
And so the jackals shall not dig it up
Before I thus am able to reply
That he who leaned on Jesus as the cup
Was consecrated for the primal time
Thought Godman than odd woman more sublime.

Then Terence Rattigan, rest on in peace, One Requiem divine can sign release. Amen. "In Memoriam TR". №

Author's note: *Strange Vagabond of God* by Fr. John Dove SJ is the defining biography of John Bradburne.