

The Rattigan

The Newsletter of
The Terence Rattigan Society

ISSUE NO. 27 JANUARY 2019

Version

Enclosed with this issue:
a copy of 'Per Ardua Ad Astra'
- Rattigan, *Flare Path* and
the Bomber War

The first French Fund award

The final event of what has been a very active year for the Society also saw the opening of a new chapter — the first production of a play sponsored by the French Fund, generously donated by the Society's Vice President and US Representative, Dr Holly Hill.

The purpose of the Fund is, once a year, to encourage a drama school to put on a play by Rattigan. On welcoming the 45 members who had gathered to watch the inaugural French Fund production — a performance by BA (Hons) Acting and Theatre Practice Students of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama of *Flare Path* — Barbara Longford said how delighted she was that Dr Hill had been able to make the journey all the way from Texas to be with us and to present the donation to the Principal, TRS member Professor Gavin Henderson, in person.

In reply Professor Henderson welcomed the Society and said it was a great privilege for Central to be the first recipient of the award. His admiration for Rattigan began at an early age when he had come into his dignified presence — and admired his Rolls Royce — on his paper round as a boy in Brighton. He was especially touched that the Society's Secretary and RAF Liaison, Gp. Capt. Clive Montellier, had been able to attend rehearsals; the students had greatly enjoyed working with him, and hearing about the conditions endured by bomber crews had been a revelation.



Martin Amherst Lock
reports on the first drama school production
to be sponsored by Holly Hill's 'French Fund'.
Photographs by Patrick Baldwin.

Before presenting the donation Dr Hill said she had loved Rattigan's work ever since reading *The Browning Version*, whose Crocker-Harris bore a striking resemblance to her Latin teacher and, much to the disdain of her professors, who were very much kitchen-sink drama devotees, wrote her PhD on Rattigan's plays. She had never dreamt that she would see Rattigan vindicated as an outstanding artist to the extent he now has been, but felt nevertheless that it was crucial

that those who knew him should see his legacy passed on to the next generation — and that using the French Fund to do so was a brilliant idea of the Committee. The Fund is so named, she told us, because Harold French directed the first production of *French Without Tears*, transforming what had been a disastrous dress rehearsal into a triumphant first night, and remaining close to Rattigan for the rest of his life. His second wife Pegs became Rattigan's personal assistant, both of them accompanied him when he attended a performance of his final play *Cause Célèbre*, and Pegs was with him when he died. Dr Hill was delighted that their wonderful relationship with Rattigan had been honoured by having the award named after them.

The Central students gave us a superb performance which re-created the world of the play, drew the audience in and showed total faith in the script and what it seeks to convey.

Continued on page 3...

✧ *FLARE PATH* AT ROYAL CENTRAL SCHOOL, PP 1, 3, 5
✧ *IN PRAISE OF LOVE* AT BATH USTINOV STUDIO, PP 4, 5
✧ AN ANALYSIS OF *THE DEEP BLUE SEA*, PP 6, 7

✧ PROFILE OF LEE PENHALIGAN, P 2
✧ A RATTIGAN INTERVIEW REDISCOVERED, PP 5, 8
✧ DIARY DATES / UNCLE TERRY AND UNCLE PUFFIN, P 8



The Terence Rattigan Society

President: David Suchet CBE

Vice-Presidents: Michael Darlow, Lord Fellowes, Dr. Holly Hill, Greta Scacchi, Geoffrey Wansell

Chairman
Treasurer
Webmaster
Media Liaison/Co-Editor
Drama School Liaison
Events Liaison

Barbara Longford
Alison Du Cane
Stephen Bradley
Roger Mills
Prof. Michael Gaunt
Susan Cooper

Membership Secretary
Newsletter Editor
Theatre Liaison
US Representative
Secretary & RAF Liaison
Rattigan Trust Representative

Diana Scotney
Giles Cole
Michael Wheatley-Ward
Dr. Holly Hill
Gp. Capt. Clive Montellier OBE, RAF
Lee Penhaligan *ex officio*

Email: committee@theterencerattigansociety.co.uk

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 Lee Penhaligan

Solicitor Lee Penhaligan attends meetings of the TRS Committee as the representative of the Sir Terence Rattigan Charitable Trust and is a vital link between the Society and the Trust, which provides financial support to two other theatrical charities which were close to Rattigan's heart, namely Denville Hall, the retirement and care home for actors and other members of the entertainment industry, and the King George V Fund, which was set up by the King in 1911 to reward distinguished actors and actresses in financial need. Lee trained and worked with Peter Carter-Ruck, the distinguished media Solicitor and butt of many *Private Eye* jokes in his time!

She joined Oswald Hickson, Collier & Co, of which Peter was Senior Partner, in 1980 and moved with him to his new firm, Peter Carter-Ruck and Partners, in 1982. Originally working as a Legal Executive, she qualified as a Solicitor in 1990 and subsequently became a Partner in the firm's Media & Entertainment Department. More years later than she would care to admit to, she is now a Trustee and Chair of the Rattigan Charitable Trust as well as the Trust's Solicitor, working closely with Alan Brodie of ABR, the Trust's expert and tireless agent, and guardian of the Rattigan literary estate.

Peter Carter-Ruck was TR's personal lawyer for many years, setting up a Trust for him in 1963 and drafting his will. Lee never had the privilege of meeting TR herself but worked on the administration of Rattigan's 1963 Settlement and, following TR's death in Bermuda in 1977, on the administration of TR's Estate.

In 1997, Denville Hall and the King George V Fund, the sole remaining charitable beneficiaries of the 1963 Settlement, agreed that a new Charitable Trust should be set up to administer the copyrights in Rattigan's works so that the net income generated could be divided




between the two charities. Lee was involved in the drafting of the Trust Deed and the application for registered charitable status for the Trust in 1998, and the assignment of the copyrights to the new Charitable Trust, which, as a result, now holds the copyrights in Sir Terence

Rattigan's literary works. After the Trust was set up, Lee assisted Peter and Alan Brodie with the negotiation of film, theatre and publishing agreements when required, memorably assisting with the negotiation of an Agreement with David Mamet to direct a film version of *The Winslow Boy* starring Nigel Hawthorne in 1999.

Peter Carter-Ruck supported Lee's career as a media lawyer, including putting her forward to be interviewed live on Channel 4 News and by News at Ten regarding copyright issues, including those relating to Diana, Princess of Wales' love letters to James Hewitt. She also subsequently co-wrote the chapter on copyright for Edinburgh University Press's publication *The Handbook of Creative Writing*, first published in 2007.

Lee was a member of the Committee set up to mark 100 years since TR's birth, and this resulted in a very successful year celebrating Rattigan's centenary in 2011. She may have no direct theatrical experience herself, but she has been at the cutting edge of the Rattigan legacy for many years.

She was delighted when Barbara contacted her about her proposal for a Terence Rattigan Society in 2011 and considers it very useful for the Society and the Trust to keep in touch. A prime example of the co-operation between the two organisations was the planting of the tree in the garden of the Actors' Church to mark what would have been TR's 100th birthday. She looks forward to continuing the association with the Society in the future and we clearly value and admire her expertise in the world of media law. 

The First French Fund award

Continued from page 1

From the moment the curtain went up on an utterly convincing set, whose bulky furniture and bilious green wallpaper captured not only the war-time setting but the claustrophobia suffered by all those imprisoned by the tensions of war, one knew that this was a production which was taking things seriously. Assiduously avoiding the pitfalls which have afflicted so many recent professional productions of 'period' drama — a tendency to make accents sound hopelessly affected, to take everything at breakneck speed, and to labour anything which could be deemed remotely comic because a modern audience might get bored — the cast swiftly established believable characters and the complex relationships which develop between them, using pauses to let the play breathe and allowing its humour to spring naturally from the given situations. Comic moments certainly abounded — the characteristically English spelling out of the meaning of every word to the Count as if he were a five-year-old, for instance — but they were never allowed to eclipse the play's heartrending moments such as Swanson's breaking the news to Doris — beautifully handled by Callum Sharp — of the Count's probable death in the euphemisms of 'he's bought it all right' and 'it's been a shaky do', the only language possible in the face of such grim realities. Indeed, this was primarily a deeply poignant rendition of the play, not least because the cast was of the same age as many of the airmen who fought as bomber crew in the Second World War, 65% of whom, as the excellent booklet the Society produced to accompany the production (and this issue) made clear, lost their lives.

More than any production I have seen previously, this one also brought to life Rattigan's major concerns: the extent to which the characters all have to act in a desperate attempt to persuade others and indeed themselves that they are not wracked by fear; the extraordinary sense of kinship that commitment to a cause creates, and the extent to which war annihilates the distinction between public and private in its insisting that devotion to a common good takes precedence over any merely personal relationship. As Teddy, Martin Coates showed particular skill in portraying the gap between the bluff, jolly PO Prune persona he adopts to keep his crew happy and the reality of the abject terror which makes each flight he has to conduct unspeakably painful, his cataclysmic breakdown when it comes being all the more powerful and shocking thanks to the plausibility of the mask he usually wears. Coates' Teddy was someone who for all his seeming naivety is fully aware of what his wife is getting up to and even the extent of his own weaknesses.

Heather Foster's Countess was the perfect complement to Teddy's role-playing, her giggly, bubbly barmaid façade thinly veiling deep uncertainty — will the Count really want to carry on living with her once the war is over? — and genuine fear that he may have died. Indeed, all the performers gave hints of the deep



sadness lying just beneath the surface bonhomie — even Dusty Miller, whose tale of his shooting down a lone Messerschmitt revealed horror rather than pride at what he had done.

Sophie Bokor-Ingram's assured portrayal of Patricia suggested that it is through coming into close proximity with such deeply troubled individuals that you can grow as a character; her slow but sure progress from being a rather selfish young woman who thinks she can keep everyone at bay with her brittle, cut-glass vowels to someone who discovers that she has what it takes to put others first was deeply moving.

In total contrast to the hidden depths of those whose lives he briefly joins, Tian Scott skilfully presented Peter Kyle as a decent enough but fundamentally shallow person whose smug self-complacency means he not only does 'not understand war' but in the end what it is to be fully human. War, Rattigan tells us, changes people, reducing grown men into little boys who need their wives to be mothers — but also bringing out qualities of enormous strength in all those who have the capacity and humility to be changed.

Once we had recovered from the play's highly emotional conclusion we had the great pleasure of meeting cast and crew for a question and answer session chaired by Professor Henderson. It was fascinating (but not surprising) to learn from the theatre practice students of the care which had been lavished on every aspect of the play technically, from hand-crocheting the antimacassars, to ensuring that the sound of the planes' take-offs corresponded exactly to the wingspan and size of the bombers used, and that the radio had its own speaker.

It was also extremely interesting to hear how the actors had found playing Rattigan for the first time; according to Sophie Bokor-Ingram, *Flare Path* was the only play she had acted in where the characters jump off the page and it is easy and natural to do what they are asked to do because everything is there in the script. Playing Rattigan's characters had taught them both how very differently people thought in those days and how timelessly human they are. They had greatly valued meeting Clive Montellier at rehearsals because he had brought to life what actually

Continued on page 5...

The emotional power of *In Praise of Love*

Vice-President Michael Darlow

reviews the recent production at the Theatre Royal, Bath



In *Praise of Love* tends to divide Rattigan's admirers. Some, of whom I am one, think it one of his best plays – possibly *the* best written during the last twenty years of his life. (Only three others from those years come close – *Man And Boy* 1963, *Cause Célèbre* 1977 and the TV play *Heart To Heart* 1962). Others find it less compelling – they complain of clunky plotting and less than fully realised characters. However, I am hopeful that Jonathan Church's new production at Bath Theatre Royal's Ustinov Studio may persuade doubters to change their minds. There was certainly no doubting the emotional power of the play when I saw it on the press night. As the audience left the auditorium after the performance many were wiping away tears.

Rattigan's trigger for writing *In Praise of Love* was being diagnosed with terminal leukaemia in May 1972. Told that he had just months or, at most, two or three years to live, Rattigan decided that the only thing that mattered now was to write one last play by which, as he told his closest friends, he might be remembered.

Rattigan had originally had the idea for *In Praise of Love* in 1957 during the months he spent with Rex Harrison and his wife Kay Kendall after Harrison had been told that she had terminal leukaemia. The doctor had not told Kendall about the diagnosis and Harrison, wishing to spare her anguish, had decided to keep it from her by maintaining a façade of normality, treating her in his usual off-hand, uncaring, manner. Later, after Kay Kendall's death, a press story appeared reporting that Rattigan was working on a play about Harrison and Kendall. Harrison was

furious. Rattigan apologised and shelved the idea. But it was to this idea that Rattigan returned in 1972 after receiving his terminal diagnosis.

Another important influence on the play was discussions which Rattigan had been having with a publisher about writing an autobiography. All three male characters in *In Praise of Love* can be seen as partial self-portraits – Mark is Rattigan the free-spending, popular writer of commercial successes; Sebastian is the idealist, more left-wing Rattigan, whose work no longer enjoys the critical acclaim that it once did; and Joey is the young, aspiring playwright Rattigan, loving his mother and clashing with his father.

Rattigan originally intended the play, then entitled *After Lydia*, to be performed in a double-bill with another short play, *Before Dawn*, an inexplicably feeble burlesque of *Tosca*. But when the double-bill opened in London in September 1973, under the title *In Praise of Love, Before Dawn* killed appreciation of *After Lydia*. So for the Broadway production, a year later, *Before Dawn* was dropped and *After Lydia* lengthened and retitled *In Praise of Love*. It is this longer version, which includes more information about Lydia's wartime past in Estonia, which Jonathan Church has used for the Bath production.


Jonathan Church and Tara Fitzgerald, who plays Lydia, have made the brave decision, with the aid of accent and dialogue coach Nick Trumble, to have Lydia speak with an authentic Estonian accent rather than the usual, generalised *Mittel Europäisch* accent in which characters like Lydia are too often played. Initially the effect is somewhat disconcerting but ultimately the decision pays off, adding emotional power to her performance.

The first half hour or so of *In Praise of Love* can be difficult to get right because of the rather laborious way in which Rattigan sets up the characters' back-stories and relationships, and there were moments in Church's production when I felt that he did not entirely solve this problem. However, by about twenty minutes in this problem was behind us and the play was exerting its vice-like emotional grip.

The play is greatly helped by being played in the Theatre Royal's Ustinov Studio, where the audience

enjoys an intimate closeness to the actors, and by Tim Hatley's excellent set. The production's greatest asset, however, is its cast. Robert Lindsay conveys the full depth of love behind Sebastian's uncaring façade – there is a particularly heartrending moment when Sebastian breaks down in front of Mark, revealing the depth of his love in the words of King Lear over the body of Cordelia: "No Lydia – She'll come no more. Never, never, never, never, never."

Julian Wadham is excellent as the successful novelist Mark and Christopher Bonwell brings just the right mix of youthful enthusiasm, earnestness and mother-love to the young, aspiring playwright Joey. Tara Fitzgerald is outstanding as Lydia, full of frail determination and unflagging love in the face of Sebastian's apparent selfish indifference. There is a deeply moving moment at the very end when, after discovering the truth about Sebastian's feelings for her, Lydia pauses briefly on the stairs and looks down at Sebastian and Joey playing chess. Fitzgerald's whole body silently cries out the depth of her love for them both.

It is hoped that this production will come into London. If so I urge members to see it. 

The first French Fund award


Continued from page 3



Prof. Gavin Henderson with, L to R, Prof. Michael Gaunt, Drama School Liaison, Dr. Holly Hill and Barbara Longford

happened, making it clear that the play is much more than the depiction of a love triangle: all the characters have to be strong and have to carry on living. Being reminded that Rattigan was writing with love for those he actually knew gave them a huge sense of responsibility.

Director Lindsay Posner, actors, creative and production teams are all to be congratulated for what was an extremely powerful and professional performance.

The Oxford School of Drama, whose production in February of *After the Dance* will be the next beneficiary of the French Fund, have a tough act to follow! Certainly the Royal Central School could not have got us off to a better start, and we are very grateful to them for an excellent performance, to Professor Henderson and Meg Ryan for hosting the event, and to Barbara Longford for organising such an enjoyable afternoon. 

TR's best last lines

Pauline Tooth rediscovers her notes from an interview with Rattigan in 1973

A chance meeting at the Hurlingham Club introduced Barbara Longford to Pauline Tooth, former BBC Television announcer and interviewer (*In Town Tonight*) who for 10 years during the 1960s and 70s, was commissioned by Martin Tickner, the Editor of Theatre Print, to write articles to appear in theatre programmes. Martin arranged the interviews with leading figures of the day, such as Sir John Gielgud and Sir Rudolf Bing.

In 1973, Terence Rattigan was in London and Pauline was asked to interview him at Albany. The magazine has been lost, but Pauline has found her original notes from that interview, which appeared in all theatre programmes at the time. Here they are:

'Sir Terence Rattigan is back in London and at the top of his form. I was invited to lunch in his elegant Albany apartment to talk about his new play *In Praise of Love*, now at the Duchess Theatre and about to be published by Hamish Hamilton, who have already produced his complete works. He is justifiably excited with the acclaim that the play has received and is watching its progress like any proud father.

"It is founded on a personal experience in which I was involved – in fact I was really in the middle, so it is a situation I have seen at close quarters."

"The shape of 'In Praise of Love' demands that it should be of limited length, it cannot be expanded. The last three lines are the best I have ever written."

He talked of his own early days reading every play that he could lay his hands on in the school library. At Harrow, aged 13, he wrote his first drama, a piece about the Borgias, in many different coloured inks. He still has it today and it is called *The Parchment*. He chose a spectacular cast for it of all the leading actors of the day – in his imagination. From that time onward he knew that he wanted to be a playwright. He won a scholarship to Oxford and read History, but devoted more time to writing plays and eventually got a collaborative effort produced at the

Continued on back page...

The classic form of *The Deep Blue Sea*

An editorial analysis

The Deep Blue Sea, first performed in 1952, is regarded by many as a classic example of the 'well-made play', for which Rattigan was renowned (some would also say vilified). It is arranged in three acts, with time lapses of a few hours between each act, the whole action of the play therefore taking place within a single day, and in a single location – the dingy flat in Ladbroke Grove where the protagonist, Hester Collyer, lives with her lover, Freddie Page. This accords directly with the idea of the unity of time, place and action, often attributed to Aristotle (though not specifically discussed in *Poetics*), and it also has echoes of the Aristotelian theory that a well-formed plot should have a beginning, a middle and an end.

Aristotle defines a beginning as 'that which itself does not follow necessarily from anything else, but some second thing naturally exists or occurs after it'. The opening of the play – Hester's apparently lifeless body being discovered in her sitting room – is certainly the beginning in one sense, in that everything else in the play follows as a consequence of this discovery, but can it be seen as an action that 'does not follow necessarily from anything else'? Clearly a suicide attempt *does* follow from previous actions, or experiences, and the true beginning of the story – as opposed to the plot – is when Hester meets Freddie at Sunningdale Golf Club. That is at least a year before the play starts. But if we accept the discovery of Hester as the beginning, then it can certainly be shown that the further action of the play develops from this point, that the plot is 'complex' in the Aristotelian sense; in other words it advances by reversals, recognition (acquiring of knowledge) and surprise. For example, Hester's aggrieved husband, Sir William Collyer, has only pity and (even deeper) love for his errant wife; similarly, Hester's solemn vow to Freddie that she won't try to persuade him to stay if he returns to collect his suitcase is immediately revealed by Hester herself as a deliberate lie. Mr Miller, the struck-off doctor, develops a kinship with Hester, and saves her not only in the medical sense, in the first scene, but, arguably, in the spiritual sense, as well, at the end.

These are examples of the 'imitation' of human nature which gives the play a tragic depth. Hester contains within her psyche the stubbornness, the despair, the self-loathing, and the overwhelming physical desire that elevate her to tragic status.

Rattigan has written a modern (c.1952) tragic masterpiece about the destructive force of love, especially where the love is unevenly distributed. There is a sense

of a pre-ordained journey that Hester undertakes as a result of this love: she is in thrall to her passion for the air-ace Freddie; Sir William, despite this, loves his wife all the more and wants her back; Freddie has 'feelings' for Hester, more than for any other woman, but finds emotions get in the way of real life. For Hester, her emotions are her real life. There is a finely balanced 'eternal triangle' here, which captures the pain, bewilderment and destructive force of human nature. The peripheral characters also have gentler echoes of self-sacrificing love, e.g. Mrs Elton's caring for her sick husband, and there is a

Aristotle's *Poetics* has, for many scholars and students of drama, outlined the perfect construction for a play (or, more precisely, a 'tragedy'), and from which the three Unities of time, space and action have been established. Although *The Browning Version* contains perhaps the most obvious reference to the classics in the character of Crocker-Harris, this analysis of *The Deep Blue Sea* attempts to show how TR also followed the classic form in dramatic structure.

pleasing completeness about the structure and plotting of the play that is not too far distant from Aristotle's dictum that a tragedy is an imitation of a complete action, possessing a certain magnitude. Hester tries to kill herself; having failed, she tries to win back the object of her love, even though she knows that he cannot love her on the same terms; he decides to leave her; she contemplates suicide a second time, but is, again, foiled, after which she begins to accept the futility of her love. This narrative arc also follows, reasonably closely, the classic structure of Greek tragedy (see the synopsis on the next page).

One could argue that the resolution of *The Deep Blue Sea* is not a tragic one, for Hester, ultimately, appears to have regained the will to live, and there is therefore hope. However, the subject matter of Rattigan's well-made play, as described above, contains the elements of tragedy, and bears comparison with the Aristotelian model. The major difference, apart from Rattigan's naturalistic language as opposed to verse, is that Rattigan was largely concerned with suppressed

emotion, and the inner turmoil of human lives, which serve to diminish the scale of the tragedy and set the action more within the social constraints of its own time. Where Oedipus might blind himself and wander aimlessly for years as self-inflicted punishment, Hester fails to put a shilling in the gas meter and learns to live with the consequences.

Act One: Monday morning

Hester is discovered having tried to gas herself in the dingy flat she shares with her 'husband', Freddie. She is tended by the enigmatic Mr Miller, who says he is not a doctor, but seems to know exactly what to do. When she comes round, Hester passes it all off as an accident. **[Exposition]** But the neighbours who found her, Ann and Philip Welch, have already rung her real husband, Sir William Collyer, who is coming round immediately. **[Revelation]** He and Hester have a heart to heart. Sir William still cares for her and wants to help her, but she doesn't believe she is worthy of help. She is trapped inside a prison of love from which she doesn't want to escape. She wants Freddie at any price. **[Goal]** Sir William says he'll come round later to collect a painting of hers that she wants to give him. Freddie arrives almost as soon as Sir William goes. Freddie has forgotten her birthday the day before. He then finds her suicide note. **[Obstacle]**

Act Two: Monday afternoon

Freddie is with his friend Jackie, having gone out drinking since he found the note. He can't understand how a simple thing like forgetting her birthday can provoke such an extreme reaction. Freddie has been offered a job as a test pilot in South America, but feels his flying days are over. **[Complication]** He starts to read Hester's note out loud to Jackie, not noticing that Hester has entered. She asks for it back and tears it up. **[Confrontation]** She's been looking for him in all his usual haunts. Freddie and Jackie leave. Sir William turns up, followed later by a drunken Freddie. Sir William tells Hester he still loves her and goes. Freddie then tells Hester that he is going to accept the job in South America. He has to leave her. She begs him to stay just for one more night. **[Conflict]**

Act Three: Monday night

Hester gets news from Ann that Freddie has taken Philip off to a new club. Hester rings the club but then regrets it. Sir William reappears. He has a letter from Freddie, dropped into his letterbox, saying he's leaving. Sir William offers Hester her life back. She refuses. She is no longer the person she was. He goes. **[False resolution]** Philip comes into the flat. Hester thinks it's Freddie. But Freddie has sent him to pick up his suitcase. **[Reversal]** She prevents his going while she rings Freddie and asks him to collect his suitcase himself. He hangs up. She allows Philip to take the suitcase.


[Recognition] Hester prepares to gas herself again, but Miller has seen her put the rug along the door; he offers to buy a painting, and hopes that a new-found friend will still be there in the morning. **[Catharsis]** At which point Freddie returns. To say goodbye. Hester now accepts his departure. **[Resolution]** **Giles Cole** 



Photo: Richard Hubert Smith



Photo: Dan Wooller

Top: Helen McCrory as Hester Collyer in the 2016 National Theatre production; Centre: Simon Williams as Sir William Collyer and our Vice-President Greta Scacchi as Hester in the 2008 London production; Bottom: Peggy Ashcroft as Hester and Kenneth More as Freddie Page in the original 1952 London production.



Photo: Angus McBean

TR's best last lines

Continued from page 5

Q Theatre, which, he reminisces, was exactly 40 years ago. The success that he was sure would come his way was to be *French Without Tears*, despite its having been turned down by nine managements before Sir Bronson Albery put it on at the Criterion – to fill a gap.

“It was an extraordinary miracle of marvellous casting”, he recalls. A promising young actor, Rex Harrison, Kay Hammond and Trevor Howard earning only £4 a week – and it took off on the first night to the surprise of all but the young playwright.

His continual success is well known. He singles out *The Deep Blue Sea* as his most favourite memory. We have seen *Bequest to the Nation* recently, an idea inadvertently prompted by Prince Philip, who suggested he should write a play about Nelson. This was originally written for television, which makes *In Praise of Love* his first stage play for ten years.

Now he is returning again to television to script an incident in the life of Nijinsky, based on a book by Richard Buckle, which covers the dancer's great years between 1913 – 1917.

He finds the distractions of writing in London make it difficult to settle down to writing. Doctor's orders take him to the sun every winter. He lived for 6 years in Bermuda but now has a yearning for Scotland where he can pursue shooting and golf, the pastimes he most enjoys. A playwright's life can take him where he most wants to be, which perhaps only goes to show that a schoolboy's dreams need not be an idle fancy!

Pauline Tooth

November 1973



Footnote: The situation which TR says he was in the middle of concerns Rex Harrison and his third of six wives, Kay Kendall (see Michael Darlow's article, p4.) Rex's second wife, Lilli Palmer, had a sister called Irene Prador, who married a relative of Pauline Tooth's. ☞

Dates for your diary

Thursday 28 February 2019

After the Dance—a production by students at the Oxford School of Drama, recipient of the second French Fund award. Buffet supper, performance and post-show Q&A.

Monday 10 June 2019

The Annual Birthday Dinner at the Garrick Club, with Vice President Dr. Holly Hill as guest of honour.

Saturday 15 June 2019

The Browning Version and **Red Peppers**—a double bill directed for the Torbay Operatic and Dramatic Society by our former Treasurer Andrew Kenyon.

Uncle Terry and Uncle Puffin

TRS member **Alex de Grunwald** wrote to our Chairman with a request for a place at the Central School production of *Flare Path* for his sister Elizabeth—not altogether scintillating news you might think, but his reasons are in fact fascinating in their Rattigan connections. Let him tell us why...

“The reason that I know my sister would particularly enjoy the production is that with Terence Rattigan being my godfather—as you already know—he was Uncle Terry to both of us, and Liz's godfather was Anthony Asquith - Uncle Puffin to both of us. Uncle Puffin was not only the original director of *Flare Path*, but it was this play which was adapted for our father Anatole's third film *The Way to the Stars*, which won the award as the Daily Mail's ‘Best Film of the War’. These awards were presented at the Dorchester Hotel in 1946.

Anatole (Tolly) had also helped Uncle Terry with the script for the film of *French Without Tears*, which he produced before *The Way to the Stars* and then both he and both our godfathers became life-long friends and colleagues for many ensuing film productions they all worked on.

Liz and I also knew Harold and Peggy French quite well, with us all having spent Christmas with Uncle Terry one year, so I really think Liz would enjoy *Flare Path*.”

Thank you, Alex—we certainly hope she did! ☞