



# The Rattigan

The Newsletter of  
The Terence Rattigan Society

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## Version

## A presidential retrospective

Society members had a treat in store following the AGM on 21 November. A visit to the theatre is often a treat, but in this instance there was a cast of two and both were very senior members of the Society, namely our President and one of our Vice-Presidents. Sir David Suchet and his long-standing friend Geoffrey Wansell have been touring the country with

*Poirot and More: a Restrospective* and it was our good fortune that the show visited Richmond in November, prior to hitting the West End in January.

The first half consisted mainly of anecdote and conversation about David's early life and career, and if it felt a little more comfortable than the average chat show, it did give a many a glimpse into what led David toward the path he followed subsequently, particularly with regard to his mother and grandmother, who were both showbiz-minded, unlike his gynaecologist father who, one gathered, rather pooh-poohed acting as a serious profession.

But in the second half the evening (or in this case afternoon) really took off, with a riveting masterclass in Shakespearian language and perfor-



Photo by Ash Koek

**Editorial:**  
***Sir David Suchet's latest stage project combines reminiscence, performance and a masterclass in technique.***

mance, preceded by the famous speech from Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*, where Salieri describes first hearing the music of Mozart. The performance, although brief, was exquisite in every detail. We then heard speeches from *The Tempest* (David played Caliban at the RSC) and from *The Merchant of Venice* (he was also a notable Shylock) whereby he demonstrated his

theory that Shakespeare was humanising the then traditional portrayal of Jews as devil-like characters. And David's views on what he called 'the highway code' of Shakespeare's language were as fascinating for professional actors as they were for anyone interested at all in theatre and the mechanics of classical acting. There is a 'traffic light system' inherent in the verse, which directs the actor in the way to deliver the desired emotions and effects. All this led to the much-lauded finale where he outlines very precisely how he built his portrayal of Poirot, from the voice, to the walk, to the moustache. He even showed us the moustache, now carefully mounted in a frame. And it is a tribute to his skill that some people seem to believe that Poirot is a real person—**Cont. on back page...**

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## The Terence Rattigan Society

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## Two plays in one week



In early December the Society undertook two outings to Rattigan plays: *While the Sun Shines* at the Orange Tree, Richmond and *Flare Path* in Westcliff-on-Sea.

Members are pictured enjoying a post-show supper in Richmond. *Alison Du Cane* (fourth from left) reports on both productions.

**W**hile *The Sun Shines* is a revival of the successful 2019 production at the Orange Tree, directed by Paul Miller (reviewed in issue 29 by Paddy Briggs). As an absurd farcical comedy, it is very cleverly written – a classically “well-made play” as well as a superbly frothy confection. After the darker themes which Rattigan explored in *After the Dance* and *Flare Path*, this drama is in a similar vein to his first successful play *French Without Tears*, featuring mainly young people and a plot revolving around romantic diversions, albeit there are still fleeting references to the real effects of the war.

Philip Labey impressed as a cheerfully casual

Earl of Harpenden (reminiscent of a boyish Lord Peter Wimsey combined with Algernon Moncrieff) as did Jordan Mifsud as the deliciously over-the-top intense French Lieutenant Colbert – sounding as though he came out of “Allo 'Allo” but with a superior script. Special commendations to John Hudson as put-upon butler Horton, and Michael Lumsden as the painfully profligate Duke – also to the enthusiastic performance of Conor Glean, as the American Lieutenant Mulvaney, who falls for Harpenden's fiancée, Lady Elisabeth Randall, while labouring under the mistaken impression that she is Mabel Crum, a lady of “easy virtue”.

The female actors were not quite as convincing as the men. Rebecca Collingwood made a reasonable stab at Lady Elisabeth, but Sophie Khan Levy was less believable as good-time girl Mabel Crum, compared to her predecessor in the role, Dorothea Myer-Bennett. One audience member thought Mabel should be more common, but would Bobby really have proposed to her whatever trouble he faced back on his ship? She is obviously meant to be more worldly-wise than Elisabeth, and may be promiscuous, but she is not just a common tart.

One interesting aspect (which shows how Rattigan had refined his writing since *French Without Tears*) is that it is not immediately obvious how the play is going to pan out. At one point it seems possible that Elisabeth could end up with either Mulvaney or Colbert, and that Bobby could really end up with Mabel Crum. The play also explores some of the differences between loving, being “in love” and infatuation, and what really provides the basis of a good relationship. After the shenanigans that unfold in the play it seems that Bobby and

Elisabeth have a deeper and more realistic appreciation of their love for each other – but all the characters discover how easy it can be to succumb to an alternative dalliance.



Jordan Mifsud as Lt. Colbert and Rebecca Collingwood as Lady Elisabeth.  
Photo by Ali Wright

Because of both similarities and differences, it was intriguing to see *Flare Path* so soon after *While the Sun Shines*, performed by the Southend Shakespeare Company at the Palace Theatre in Westcliff-on-Sea. *Flare Path* was written in 1941-42, shortly before *WTSS*, but is a play of greater depth, and for me it is more satisfying, even though *WTSS* is such fun. The play involves similar types of characters to *WTSS* if less aristocratic – mostly young people, taking part in the war in different ways, and being subjected to the stress and restrictions of wartime life. *Flare Path* is probably more autobiographical, reflecting Rattigan's own wartime experiences, illustrating the strains felt by young men flying planes on regular bombing raids, many of whom won't return. Although there is a rather fairy-tale ending to the play which could seem a bit sugar-coated, most of the action appears deeply realistic with moments of humour offsetting the angst, exploring such themes as PTSS, mental illness and stresses put on relationships due to the war. By contrast, comedy is almost always foremost in *WTSS*, and it is hard to remember that the characters could be facing death and loss. In *Flare Path* the characters mostly show the stiff upper lip and restraint that is so typical of Rattigan's writing – making Teddy's breakdown scene such a moving contrast to his usual outwardly happy-go-lucky manner. The extremities of war provided a catalyst for many writers, and aficionados often

believe it was Rattigan's time in the RAF that unlocked his writer's block, inspiring both *Flare Path* and *WTSS*.

Although we were watching an amateur production of *Flare Path*, contrasting with the professional *WTSS* at the Orange Tree, it was impressive to see how well the Southend company performed, particularly, and surprisingly, in the more emotional scenes such as Doris listening to Peter translate the letter left by her husband – which provides a turning point for Peter as well as showing the depth of love between Doris and the Count. Perhaps inevitably, there were one or two weaker links (Percy with a rather erratic accent and Maudie a trifle wooden). And, just as with Mabel Crum not being completely convincing in *WTSS*, I felt that the actress playing Doris was either miscast or her accent was wrong. Doris has worked as a barmaid – which heightens the irony of her being a Countess. But do some actors or directors find it hard to believe that Rattigan has written roles for the “lower classes”?

However, given the limitations of actors available in an amateur group, SSC did an excellent job overall. There was a fascinating Q&A session after *Flare Path* when the director Nick Bright and his actors were articulate about how they had approached the play – especially the emotionally charged scenes. It was interesting that the young actors liked the relatively happy ending which they thought was needed to cheer up a wartime audience. And, as a counterpoint to the happy reunion, there is the bitter-sweet backdrop of Peter Kyle departing after Patricia decides she needs to stay with her husband – slightly reminiscent of *Casablanca*, although one cannot help suspecting that Peter would soon find another actress for a dalliance. There is also the knowledge that some of those drinking cheerfully in the Falcon lounge could be killed the next day. As so often with Rattigan, one is left thinking there must be more significance and feeling behind the façade than is apparent, and he is the master of revealing that without words. Seeing these plays so close together shed light on both of them and added to the satisfaction of the dramatic experience. Huge thanks are due to Phill Ward for making all the arrangements. ∞

# Edna Mills?\*

## *Roger Mills muses on subsidised theatre and Rattigan's Aunt Edna*

**L**ike most 1970s boys snaffling their sister's *My Guy* I usually had a quick flick through Mum's *Woman's Own* - which is why I associated Mark Eden with something other than the stage and TV where his namesake decorated the BBC Dorothy Sayers *Wimseys* as Charles Parker. I wasn't interested in the knitting patterns or the fiction - nurse is swept off feet by airline pilot - no, it was the problem page, always at the back. Nobody seemed to print such stuff for blokes; though I did wonder from the mug shot if Marge Proops was in fact Denis Norden moonlighting (or indeed vice versa).

Maybe that's what turned me into a backwards reader - something I can't break myself of. Put a mag in front of me and after looking at the back cover still wondering there the glossy adverts for Dunhills have gone - what a lifestyle that portrayed - I work steadily towards, though seldom reach, what the editor probably spent the most time on. In short I read what I want and not what someone thinks I need - which may explain the following.

So, in the dear old *Spectator* starting with the crossword (usually about three weeks, since you ask) and working forward I never get further than Martin van der Weyer who's still as good a business hack as you'll find. Go beyond that and it's acres of the same people writing the same article week after week. (I sympathise by the way - I have been under the cosh of weekly deadlines but that doesn't excuse the banal predictability of a lot of it. Sadly the *Eye* has become increasingly tedious in the same way.)

Arts coverage, admittedly, can never be so homogenised but even allowing for that I don't think you can beat the *Speccy's* coverage and in particular the bracing, straight-from-the-shoulder opinions of their theatre wonk, Lloyd Evans.

Back in April he let himself go with both barrels in a think-piece under the title *Theatre's Final Taboo: Fun*, where he pulled no punches in a critique of the subsidised theatre and what he reckons is an obsession with issues, problems and 'right on' attitudes, listing in particular race-hate, climate panic and psychological meltdown, none of which, in his words, 'is remotely conducive to a fun night out'.

Note he doesn't say any of this is unimportant. I don't think he'd ban playwrights dealing with such things. No, the nub of what he seemed to be saying is that the subsidised theatre (and that means virtually all professional work outside London's Theatreland when

you boil things down) and those that run it use public money to pursue a limited agenda of agitprop programming - which, one might add, stands every chance of merely preaching to the converted anyway.

I was more than a trifle startled when that 1980s comedic iconoclast Nigel Planer made very much the same point to Evans in September fearing, he said: "that too many London stages are taken up with meaningful plays that 'want to change the world' - and it's not going to work."

Now what has this to do with the TRS I hear you moan feebly. Well, quite a lot I think, and it has a lot to do with why I joined ten years ago and why I value it so much.

I was initially trained in Educational Drama in the early seventies. Looking back, it was entirely the wrong choice of discipline but leaving aside that it was not an ideal experience for me—since the playwrights I admired and the theatre I wanted to see were either forgotten or despised—I was expected instead to digest the indigestible - Stanislavski, Grotowski, Brecht and the 'kitchen sink' drama that was in vogue when I was a student.

Everybody wanted, it seemed, to give me the sort of gritty realism that I faced every day in the real world. (Most of these hacks came from the gritty middle classes I noticed.) As someone who came from the sort of background where you might wash in the kitchen sink I didn't go to the theatre to be back in the street or moving the oil stove into the middle of the room to get central heating. I wanted to be somewhere different. Fred & Ginger's Big White Set or places where pretty girls in the briefest of tennis dresses came through French windows constantly.

Most, I wanted to be entertained with good old fashioned dramatic craftsmanship. I wanted fun and if not that at least a good night out. It was in short supply in many a spot. We had to have our medicine and it had to taste revolting. It seemed at best well-meaning, usually it had some political axe to grind, all laid on with a lump hammer, but so much of it was just forgettable - which is no doubt why it has been forgotten.

It was also—outside the yet to be described but already influential chattering classes—pretty pointless and audience-less even then.

Let me tell you a story dating from 1975, when I was a student helper at my college theatre hosting a North West Arts funded tour of one of those interminable plays about Kit Marlowe (a strangely fashionable theme



at the time) - part of a season mounted, I suppose, to bring culture to the masses. Anyway, they were followed by a succession of then trendy, heavily subsidised, touring outfits all presenting well-meaning, socially-conscious, often improvisation-based, ephemera. Sincere? Probably, but in truth not much cop. (No names, but my contemporaries could probably make a fair list of suspects.)

Worse, none of this was fun or indeed a good night out. But also clearly, as we went along, pointless. The masses had obviously had a mass meeting somewhere else and decided not to bother.

Until that year, that season, I suppose if I'd thought about subsidy in general and the various Arts Councils in particular at all it would have been in Sellar and Yeatman's terms a 'good thing' in a sort of a vague way. After that I took the unfashionable view that, as far as theatre was concerned, I would have closed it down the next day.

The masses in short were right. In 46 years I have seen no reason to alter that view one iota. Mainly even then it was for the same reason that Evans gives the best part of fifty years later. The public purse should not be there to allow people to produce what nobody in their right mind would call entertainment or pay to sit through, well meaning or not, no matter how worthy, no matter how idealistic.

I suspect it's exactly the same conclusion that got Rattigan to invent Aunt Edna (the year I was born, actually) even before the Angry Young Men got into their stride at the washing up bowl.

Lloyd Evans' outburst sent me back to dear old Aunt Edna - a personage more heard about than met by many I imagine. But she is worth seeking out in the second volume of the collected plays. What she represents speaks down the years transcending effortlessly the piffle trotted out in rebuttal at the time. For me it goes to the core of what Rattigan, Lloyd Evans and I suppose Roger Mills (who's as 'Edna-ish' as they come), think theatre is for - entertainment. Search her out, I urge you.

Actually Edna is only a small part of a wonderful essay on Terry's development as a playwright and what drove him on. Amongst a really quite densely argued essay a number of thoughts struck me.

First is something that, for example, many of the entrants in the Society's New Play award forgot. Quite simply drama and theatre are not synonyms. So while we might be prepared to be lectured or subjected to a treatise or even a polemic in a Wednesday Play (if such things were still produced), or an art house film, our expectations of theatre could be, and probably are, quite different. When Edna goes to the theatre she wants theatre.

Rattigan repeats his love for *Adventure Story* and explains what he was trying to do with this ambitious piece. I enjoyed the television version immensely but

after a CFT rehearsed reading, (again a pleasant way to spend a Sunday afternoon in Chichester) I couldn't see it working on stage anywhere near as well. It didn't seem theatrical enough for me and the preface proves Terry knows just what theatrical means.

Then there's the obvious to me—but too little acknowledged—truth, that plays need an audience to exist - a fact that in turn implies that there is a contract with the audience that acknowledges their right to be entertained as well. If only in return for the simple act of leaving home and paying for admission. That audience will include many Aunt Ednas, so you have to know: "her likes and dislikes, her tastes and foibles [...] an experience that all aspiring dramatists must share, however much they may despise her intellect or deplore her influence."

Which maybe why Rattigan concludes, again about *Adventure Story*, very self-perceptively "At least it was consistent with the artistic development of an author who was trying to subdue the Aunt Edna in his soul. Aunt Edna, in fact, proved this conclusively herself. She refused to come."

He goes on "I am not in the least tempted to believe that the failure of a play with an audience means that it must therefore possess some special artistic merit. A play does not fail because it is too good: it fails because it is not good enough."

On that matter, some years ago in a public forum the person I consider to have been the foremost artistic director of the last twenty years (try and guess) was asked about new work in the theatre. The answer was frank. In past jobs where there was a mission to put on new work as a deliberate policy there were very few—fingers of one hand strongly implied—plays in any way memorable or deserving a second outing. It was a brave thing to say. It needed saying. You'd think it would be listened to by others.

The only new play I've rated for years is David Haig's *Pressure*, I strongly suspect for being character-rather than idea-driven, firmly grounded in an important issue and not a set of ideas or, worse, ideologies. Most of all though, despite centring on a life or death dilemma, it's entertaining, truly theatrical fun. As with Terry, you care about the people.

Maybe it's just me? Well, if it is, I take comfort in Rattigan's conclusion that: "Aunt Edna herself is indeed a highly contradictory character. One thing, however, she has never done, in the whole of her two thousand and more years of her life: she has never rejected the best." *Pressure* may not be completely well-made (there are a couple of needless sub-plots) but it gets darn close and it's up with the best for me. Better still it's the sort of thing Rattigan could have taken and run with too.

**Cont. on back page...**

# Classical parallels and unsolved problems

*James Heyworth-Dunne probes Rattigan's affinity with classical themes*

Rattigan saw parallels between the Athenian tragedies and his own times and experiences. No drama inspired him more than Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy. *The Oresteia* influenced *After the Dance* as well as other plays such as—more directly and more famously—*The Browning Version*.

On a world scale, *The Oresteia* ranks as one of the most supreme literary achievements: with immense artistry, Aeschylus produces an intense poetic masterpiece of tragic drama that describes disorder in society and poses questions of everlasting importance. The social problems exposed require a humanitarian solution that is not available.

By comparison, *After the Dance* is a modest achievement. Rattigan shows his skills of dramatic construction, understatement and intimation. He accurately and sympathetically describes the disarray of the Mayfair set, and the social problems exposed require, again, a humanitarian solution that is not available.

In *The Oresteia* the revenge cycle is symptomatic of torment in society. In the first two plays of the trilogy, *Agamemnon* and *The Libation Bearers*, vengeful murders follow each other as the avenger is in turn avenged: "Justice brings everything to a balance: for every word, a word; for hatred, hatred; for every fatal stroke, a fatal stroke... three generations of suffering have tested the truth of this law" (Chorus, *The Libation Bearers*).

Poignant imagery portrays this torment. For example, two of the most sacred rituals in Greek society, those of sacrifice and of burial, are grimly perverted. Aeschylus' audiences would have been alarmed by the religious outrages.

In each of the murders, exhortations to the deities intermingle with human decision-making but, ultimately, the human decides. The chorus, the deities and the protagonists analyse the reasons for actions. As in real life, the reasons for decisions come to be seen as deeply obscure.

Might not Orestes, instead of murdering his mother, have just as realistically been overwhelmed

by sympathy for Clytemnestra's loss of Iphigenia, his sister and her daughter? "Orestes, my child, don't point at me with your sword. See the breasts that fed you when you were helpless. These were your first pillows—" (Clytemnestra, *The Libation Bearers*).

Aeschylus juxtaposes the certainties of Cassandra's prophecies against the complex uncertainties



that riddle the trilogy: "Perfect vision is agony. Hideous things, the brain crammed with unbearable things" (Cassandra, *Agamemnon*).

Cassandra declares that human behaviour is predetermined by past events. Is it? Or do humans exercise free will? How are guilt and innocence to be defined? It is Aeschylus' genius to pose these everlasting questions within the framework of the tragic inevitability of ritual and religious poetry.

In the third play, *The Eumenides*, the Furies, driven by Clytemnestra's ghost, pursue Orestes. Athena uses her casting vote to secure Orestes' acquittal in his trial, in which the jurors cannot reach a majority decision.

Aeschylus created this trial as the mythic origin of the reformed homicide court of the Areopagus; through democratic processes the reformed court was intended to produce resolution of conflict in the form of an agreed 'just solution'. This would

replace the 'justice' by murder previously sought by the protagonists in the revenge cycle. Athena's transformation of the Furies into 'kindly beings' capable of forgiveness was an essential concomitant to the reform of the court.

Nowhere does Aeschylus predict that these changes will lessen the incidence of human conflict. Further, he identifies two weaknesses that undermined the ability of the democratic process to formulate the 'just solution'. First, virulent conflicts of interest made it difficult to secure a majority decision; and second, because of its potential to be unclear, misinterpreted or manipulated, the misuse of language blighted communication and exacerbated rather than soothed social tensions.

Aeschylus demonstrates how difficult it is, in fact, to choose the right word. Electra shows the dilemma exactly when composing her prayer to Zeus for the offering of libations at the tomb of her father, Agamemnon: "Zeus, Zeus, what am I to say? Where can I begin as I pray and call on you? How am I to end after saying what is right?"

Without the 'right word' how will humans communicate? The future is dark.

In *After the Dance*, the Mayfair set violates social norms. It is dysfunctional, egotistical, and feckless. To drown its inner torments it worships the gods of evasion, of nonchalance and frivolity. Its social degeneracy stands out against the threatening background of England in the late 1930s.

Rattigan offers no political or divine mechanism to rescue the set from transgression. There is only the human solution—Helen Banner. Like Cassandra, Helen both sees the full picture and feels, incorrectly, that she can make a difference. She and David Scott-Fowler, who is married to Joan, fall in love. Like Athena, Helen has a rescue plan, for David. Unlike Athena, her powers are limited and her armoury is bare. Rose Cottage in the New Forest as her proposed sanctuary has a wan appeal compared to what Athena offers to Orestes, freedom and high office in Argos.

Joan Scott-Fowler shocks her guests by leaping to her death from the balcony of their flat at the end of a party. The shock notwithstanding, the play concludes with certainty that the life of the Mayfair set, now without Joan, will continue as before.

The reasons for Joan's act are as complex as any in *The Oresteia*. Is Joan, when she takes flight like

the Furies, seeking to unleash retribution?

Entering Agamemnon's palace, Cassandra accepted inescapable death: does Joan see her fate now as inescapable because the disconnection between her façade and reality has become untenable? Or is Joan simply broken-hearted? Rattigan leaves us to decide.

The characters in *After the Dance* fail to communicate. Evasion was the hallmark of the Mayfair set. Its failure to use language, the most powerful tool given to humanity, to foster understanding underlines the set's vacuity:

JOHN: *You run away from everything, don't you? You've known for six months that Joan killed herself because of you, and you've never dared to face it.*

DAVID: *She couldn't have cared that much.*

JOHN: *She did.*

DAVID: *She didn't have to kill herself.*

JOHN: *It was about the only thing she could do.*

At the end of the play, David starts a letter to Helen to terminate their relationship. "It will take a long time." Finding 'the right word' will be a challenge. Is evasion, the denial of language, the result of emotional blockage? Does it reflect an inability to articulate? Does it spring from fear of rejection? Are the characters too "utterly self-centred" or is it simply a social affectation assumed by misguided people? Again we are left to decide. Rattigan's own conclusion is one of hopeless resignation.

Both *The Oresteia* and *After the Dance* are tragedies in the classical sense in that in neither is escape possible. The trilogy is framed in ritual poetry defining divinely ordained tragic inevitability and the impossibility, therefore, of escape. In *After the Dance*, tragic inevitability is self-induced as the protagonists conceal their inner stresses under adopted social mannerisms.

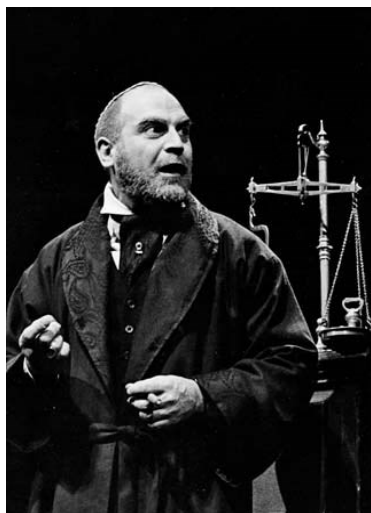
Aeschylus describes unsuccessful attempts, both politically and divinely inspired, to lessen and resolve transgression. The solution of human intervention that Rattigan offers similarly fails.

The only solution to the problems exposed by both playwrights is greater human understanding, enabled by language. Both playwrights deny the possibility of the achievement of this understanding, Aeschylus because of the pitfalls of language, and Rattigan because his characters evade its proper usage. ∞

## A presidential retrospective

*Continued from front page*

witness the little old lady who, observing him on his own in between filming exterior scenes, asked him what brought him to Hastings. Was it for a holiday? David felt it would have been uncharitable to disabuse her, so agreed that it was. “Well, thank you for choosing Hastings, Mr Poirot.” And with that she tottered happily off with her shopping. The afternoon was full of such delightful



As Shylock for the RSC in 1981

asides and showed just how magnanimous, self-deprecating and un-actorish a great actor can be.

Adhering to Covid restrictions, both performers did us (and us alone from a packed audience) the courtesy of appearing back onstage afterwards

for fifteen minutes of questions, which, in itself could have been another whole entertainment had time—and an evening performance—allowed. But was there a hint in this career retrospective that this might be a farewell stage appearance? Let us very sincerely hope not. ☞

## Does the sun still shine?

An enquiry has reached the committee at Rattigan Towers regarding the 1947 film version of *While The Sun Shines*, directed by Anthony Asquith, produced by Anatole de Grunwald and starring Barbara White, Ronald Howard and Brenda Bruce. Does anyone have a copy of the film, or access to a copy? (The BFI copy is unavailable for viewing.)

Writer Alexander Gleason of the *British Film Music Encyclopaedia* is compiling a work on British films 1929-1979 and WTSS forms one of the remaining gaps in his material. Any help or information via the committee email address would be greatly appreciated.

terencerattigansociety@gmail.com

## Date for your diary

**Saturday 5 February 2022**

**Visit to Hampstead Theatre** - a three-part theatre extravaganza comprising a matinee performance of *Folk* by Nell Leyshon and an evening performance of Florian Zeller's new play *The Forest*, translated by Christopher Hampton. A supper nearby is also offered between the two shows and members may book for one, two or all three parts of the outing.

An email with full information and a booking form has been sent to all members. Let us hope that no new Covid restrictions interfere with this, the first event of the new year.

## Edna Mills?\*

*Continued from page 5*

Anyway, back to Edna Mills. I don't know when Lloyd Evans saw the light but I've held these views for years. There's only one thing I'd add to Lloyd Evans' polemic. That NW arts season back in 1975 was a Damascene experience for me. It was an epiphany that showed me with complete clarity that while performers and arts venues are apt to think what they choose to do is somehow special and worthwhile and worthy of support from the public purse, they should not kid themselves.

If the majority of the live venues closed for ever the mass of the population would neither be inconvenienced nor indeed care or probably even notice. That was the lesson. It was true then - it is true now. We Ednas are the ones who buy tickets and attend as well as funding the public purse.

We pay. I wonder if that's why we are so frequently taken for granted.

(\* I had an Aunt called Edna Mills but any resemblance is completely accidental, or genetic.) ☞

## Target reached!

We are delighted to report that the fund-raising target for the restoration of the Rattigan family memorial at Kensal Green has been reached within the time limit and the organisers, led by Lucy Briers, are very grateful to all those who contributed. The work should be underway soon and we shall hope to report on progress in due course.