

Newsletter

June 2020



NORTHERN REGION

CENTRAL REGION

SOUTHERN REGION

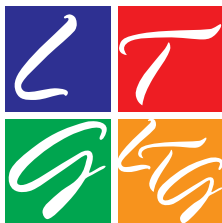
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The Little Theatre Guild represents 114 member theatres that control and manage their amateur theatre companies with an annual audience of over 650,000 patrons, and a turnover of approximately £4 million.



Visit us at www.littletheatreguild.org

Articles for the LTG Newsletters 2020 deadlines for copy: Aug 12th & Nov 6th

LTG Diary of Events

Northern Conference 16 - 18 October on hold
Central Conference tbc
Southern Conference 26 September on hold
Virtual AGM 5 September

LTG National Conference at The Questors Theatre, Ealing, London 17 - 19 April 2020

National Conference in 2020. Well of course bitter disappointment for all potential attendees, not to say, frustration at all the work that had gone into the preparations for Questors members, for the loss of what would have been a stunning conference at the LTG's largest 'little' theatre. Questors. We held the first ever National Conference there in May 1948. (according to some!)

Chesil's New Writing Competition

The Road Not Taken

The Chesil's new writing festival **TakeTen** launches with **The Road Not Taken** selected as the theme. Entries are now open. This national biennial playwriting event sees the winning 10 plays performed at the Chesil Theatre over one weekend in February 2021. The format is simple: - plays need to be ten minutes in length - scripts can include one to four actors, with minimum props, lighting and sound, and - they must also be unperformed, unpublished and original work.

TakeTen builds on earlier success and we're sure this new contest will be the best festival yet. All entries must be in by 18th July 2020. After this, an independent judging panel chooses the winning ten

plays to be performed over one frenetic weekend. Full details including an entry form are available from www.chesiltheatre.org.uk



Jo Matthews, the-soon-to-be Chairman of LTG, is a previous winner and has provided this comment:

The Chesil TakeTen event is a brilliant idea and should be adopted by every Little

Theatre – and maybe Big Theatres as well! Writing a play lasting exactly ten minutes is a hard discipline, but wonderfully invigorating. The process takes out any fluff, repetition, deviation and concentrates the mind wonderfully down to the essence, the core of the plot and leads to the sparest dialogue and exposition. Characters must be defined within their first few lines and the denouement must come suddenly and surprisingly from nowhere.

The final event itself – a performance watching ten short plays within a couple of hours – is fun but scary. Here are your own words spoken with conviction and your meaning, intention and message beautifully fulfilled and perhaps improved. Such is the collaborative nature of making theatre!

***Contact Chesil if you are interested in volunteering at act as Reader for this competition.**

Retirement on Hold

Presumably our Chairman Mike was looking forward to more of this (see picture *The Nightingales - Durham*), however, not quite yet as he remains Chairman for the immediate future. The best laid plans! - will have to wait.



View from the National Theatre

Rufus Norris, National Theatre's Artistic Director, speaks out as the signs are that the theatres will be one of the last to be able to make premises covid-19 secure. "It will take more than luck to keep us standing when audiences return".

Equity has called on the Chancellor to extend financial support for the self employed creative workers until the end of the year.

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The contents of this newsletter are not necessarily the official views of the Little Theatre Guild.



A Final Letter from the Chairman

Every single person in this country has been affected in some way by the coronavirus pandemic. Whether it be social isolation or distancing, shielding, furloughing from work or fighting the virus. Tragically for far too many it has resulted in death with their lives cut tragically short. Our own theatres have not been spared with some reporting deaths of long-standing members who made such a valuable contribution. To those, and all who died we offer our sincere condolences.

The contribution of the NHS staff has been immense and has rightly been recognised by the country. On behalf of LTG I would like to convey our deep appreciation and thanks for their heroic efforts in caring for all those afflicted by coronavirus. It will not be forgotten.

Given the scale of suffering the need to close our theatres can seem trivial and to many non-consequential. That is of course true. Never the less at some point the lockdown will end and our theatres will be able to reopen.

It is chilling to reflect on historical precedents. Coronavirus has achieved what two world wars, the Spanish Flu epidemic and the 1926 General Strike failed to do and that is close our theatres. It is fair to say few people disagree with the decision to close. It is interesting to note just how devastating the 1918/19 Spanish Flu actually was with estimates of the death toll being between 17 and 50 million worldwide and it infecting an estimated 25% of the world population.

At LTG in such a crisis we believe it is important to provide proactive support to our theatres. Our support was three-fold. Firstly, we wrote and telephoned all our theatres with details of the Government's Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality or Leisure Grant Fund. This provided a grant of £10,000 to theatres with a rateable value of up to and including £15,000 and £25,000 for a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000. As a result, a large number of our theatres applied for a grant and most have now received them.

Secondly, we undertook a survey of all our theatres to check on their financial resilience to a prolonged closure. In total 73 theatres responded and the results while re-assuring provided no grounds for complacency. Just under 95% confirmed they had financial reserves and only 18% responded they were very concerned about their financial situation. The grants received will certainly ease that situation.

These results are not a surprise but do speak volumes for the robust financial competence of our theatres. We are used to operating in an environment where we have to be financially self sufficient with virtually none of our theatres receiving any Government or Arts Council funding other than for capital projects. Added to that most of our theatres have been in existence for a long period of time and through financial prudence have realised the need for suitable reserves. In challenging times, we provide a good example to some other charities who perhaps have been over dependent on National and Local Government support.

Thirdly, we have been engaging with the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sports through our National Liaison Officer Eddie Redfern to explain and help them understand the problems faced by our

theatres. In particular we have been drawing attention to the fact that we do need advance notice of the end of lockdown for theatres as productions require reasonable rehearsal periods. The Government's response has to date been sympathetic and through out there does appear to be an attitude to do what is required.

The end of the Spanish Flu epidemic does provide some pointers to how the public may react to the end of lockdown. Contrary to what many people may think there was a desire from the public to get out and enjoy themselves. In the 1920s theatre did particularly well. This was after all the era of the "Roaring 20s". A telling comment was found in the "Stage" newspaper of that era "Audiences wanted bright lights, warmth and no longer cared so much about acceptable moral values". This was after all the era when Noel Coward came to prominence with his desire to push the boundaries with plays like the Vortex. A sophisticated comedy which depicted the sexual vanity of a now ageing beauty, and drug abuse which was seen by many as a metaphor for homosexuality.

The other popular genres were "Feel Good" musicals and thrillers. For thrillers Agatha Christie came to prominence with characters like Hercule Poirot. There was also Bulldog Drummond and Arnold Ridley's Ghost Train. Some evidence that this trend may be repeated can be seen on lockdown TV. By all account's ratings are soaring as viewers escape from reality by watching old episodes of "Only Fools and Horses" and "Last of the Summer Wine". These trends could well be worth noting as our theatres re-open.

I'm very conscious this was the Chairman's Letter I was not supposed to write. After all the last Newsletter had the headline "A Final Letter from the Chairman". I would assure you I have no intention of following the example of Frank Sinatra. He announced his retirement concert in 1971 and then went on to perform a further 1,000 concerts and not having his "Final, Final" retirement concert until 1995.

We unfortunately had to cancel our National Conference in April at the Questors Theatre which included our AGM. We have now provisionally re-scheduled our AGM for 5 September which will probably be in a virtual form. At that point, in line with our Rules, my excellent Vice Chair Jo Matthews will become Chair and I can disappear into the sunset.

I leave having had a very enjoyable and rewarding term of office and I would like again to thank our national committee for the unstinting support they have given me. I wish every success to LTG and to Jo, and know she will make an excellent Chair.

Michael Smith
April 2020



Anxious to keep in touch with members, Bolton Little Theatre needed items of interest to fill their members' newsletter, **PROMPTER**, and issued a challenge; inviting members to submit a sonnet titled *Isolation*. Here's the winner.

Ed: *It only took him two hours - should have asked for a play!*

At BLT the life dramatic
Was halted in these recent days.
The muse's loss was quite traumatic,
With no rehearsals, no more plays.
We found ourselves in isolation,
In 'lockdown', just as Boris said,
What can we do for consolation?
How can we fill the weeks ahead?
This was
When theatres by the Plague were closed,
When people feared the dread Black Death,
The Bard of Avon then composed
His great 'King Lear', his dark 'Macbeth'.
So, be inspired – just think upon it-
Like me and Shakespeare – write a sonnet!

Peter (the bard) Scofield

SONNETS IN SOLITUDE

According to William Wordsworth the sonnets are: **"the key which unlocked Shakespeare's heart"**

There were sporadic outbreaks of The Plague during Shakespeare's career. During the 1609 closure he published a quarto of 154 sonnets that he had written throughout his life. RSC actors perform a selection of Gregory Doran's favourites which are available to view on RSC's You Tube.

ED: *I set myself a challenge of learning some sonnets on my solitary early morning compulsory walks. My new favourite - No 57 reminds me of being a teenager when those first stirrings of love, fell indiscriminately on the most unsuitable candidates. Luckily I escaped unscathed!*

Dear SOLT and UK Theatre Members

Your evidence published

The DCMS Select Committee has published its first raft of written evidence submitted as part of their inquiry, including [UK Theatre/](#)

[SOLT, Creu Cymru, FST and Theatre NI's submission](#). We want to thank you all for getting your evidence in so quickly. As a result, Julian Knight MP, Chair of the Committee has written an excellent letter to Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for DCMS on the impact of COVID on theatres. Their press release highlights submission from The Minack, Shakespeare's Globe and Theatre Royal Plymouth. Julian Knight MP said:

"Shakespeare's Globe is a world-renowned institution and not only part of our national identity, but a leading example of the major contribution the arts make to our economy. For this national treasure to succumb to Covid-19 would be a tragedy. Like many theatres and venues across the country, it faces a struggle for survival and an uncertain future—the lifting of lockdown will not automatically mean 'business as usual' for the creative industries. The Government must step up now and find more funding to shore up our cultural landscape and safeguard our rich past while giving hope to those whose livelihoods depend upon it."

Julian Knight MP asks government by 1 June for 'an update on what this work has entailed, what assessment the Department has made of the UK theatre industry's immediate and long-term needs, and what additional support the Government intends to make available to support the creative industries over the coming 6-12 months.'

UPDATES

Mental Health Awareness Week. Please do feel free to remind your staff about the [Theatre Helpline](#), & [Theatre.Info](#). Also please share with us any initiatives you are doing, and we can add these to the Wellbeing page in case others might also find them useful.

Royal Shakespeare Company

Lots of RSC Artists - **Paapa Essiedy Niamh Cuisack David Bradley David Threlfall David Tennant** and others have been answering questions from students and young people about specific plays and speeches or about how directors and actors worked with BBC to deliver a full week of GCSE lesson around Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet.

Culture in Quarantine

Romeo and Juliet will be broadcast on BBC 4 on Sunday June 7th.

More Shakespeare

Talent is pouring out as if it had been waiting for such a crisis to reveal itself – and technology is enabling us to appreciate it. Enjoy this, written by Richard Stead and taken from Chesil's latest Newsletter, an inspirational piece of communication in itself. Richard has recorded this, his own adapted version of Henry IV Part 1 Act 1 Sc II. Check their website to hear his voice.

I know you ALL Corona, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour of "Lockdown".
Yet herein will I imitate health,
Which doth permit the base contagious Covid-19
To smother up her movement within this world,
That when she please again to be revealed
Being wanted, she may be more wondered at
By breaking through the foul and ugly tubes
Of ICU that did seem to strangle her.
If all the days were lockdown,
To sunbathe would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wished-for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So, when this imprisoned behaviour I throw off
And deliver the cure I, here, hold in my hand,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I exceed men's hopes;
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My attainment, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I, here, have the cure to protect us all and NHS and delivered by NHS skill,
Redeeming health when men think least it will.

Ed: Bravo

It takes more than covid 19 to keep a good theatre down

ZOOMED CHESIL CABARET

Chesil are proud to announce a good old knees-up

We're calling all *Chesil* members who would like to perform their favourite "Turn" from home to an audience of Chesil members at home, in their sitting rooms, attics, garages, man-caves, etc.

So!! Zoom, Zoom, Zoom a Liddle Zong Wiz Uz!

Master of Ceremonies will be **David Small, Chairman** 07944 355000, chairman@chesiltheatre.org.uk

He has very kindly offered to give 1:1 tuition sessions for those unfamiliar with Zooming.

A cabaret would be nothing without an audience! If you would like to be an audience member please e-mail David. The programme is open for any cheerful, uplifting turns. *We will be leaving out the Pandemic altogether!* Offer whatever "Turn" you like (within reason!) ... the spoons, a jaw harp, a cheerful piece of poetry, a sketch, tap dancing, concerto for toilet paper on comb. You can juggle or do conjuring tricks or acrobatics and, of course, you

can sing for us. Please provide your own accompaniment because Zoom cannot use backing tracks. Your "Turn" need be no longer than 3-4 minutes.

You can, of course, do a "Turn" and be in the audience. A running order will be prepared for all performers.

How Will it Work?

First, you will need to have access to a PC, Laptop, Mac or Tablet that has access to the ZOOM app, with video and sound. The app doesn't work well with the iPhone as it is not possible to switch to Gallery Mode which enables you to interact with other members. Also, the screen is very small.

Please do get in touch, we need to know if we have an audience. You can dress up for the occasion, provide your own drinks and nibbles; your seat is already reserved.

We can guarantee good vision and no long loo queues, or a scuffle at the bar.

AND SO we will all gather in the virtual bar for a brief mingle and, then, audience and "Turns" may take their seats to enjoy an evening of Isolation Entertainment.

Have a lovely evening, everyone; see you there!

ED: Good luck and let us know how it was received!

Apollo During Lockdown

A message from The Theatre Director

In normal times, the photograph on our front page would be one of Paul or Ian's brilliant takes from the current production. In these difficult times, however, that's not going to happen; so our photo is of the 'ghost light' which is currently keeping our theatre alive. In this issue you will find an update from the Committee and the Trust about what's going on, and various articles which I hope you will find entertaining in these strange times. First of all, however, here is a message from the theatre director, Amy Burns, on life at the Apollo during lockdown. 'On 16 March, following the government's guidelines, we had to make the decision to close the doors of our theatre, something which in its history has never happened before (and which I hope will never happen again). On 17 March a group of us went in and sanitised every touchable area, every dustbin and all the toilets, hoovered the floors and removed all the rubbish, to make sure there are no surprises when we are allowed to

go back. Since then we have been going in, checking everything is secure and nothing is untoward, testing the fire alarms, dosing the urinal, checking the post, changing the show cases and in a very fitting tribute putting up our very own ghost light. The theatre is sad without the coffee mornings, the rehearsals, the meetings, the youth theatre, play half-finished set fills the stage and half-finished costume rails fill the wardrobe. But there is a sense of wanting and waiting within. I watch the news daily and realise that when this restriction is lifted we will come back, albeit with some restrictions that we will have to adapt to in order to be able to bring back theatre to our audiences, but I know we will be back very soon. Stay safe, everyone.



A communication from Steve Pratt, our Northern Secretary...

Introducing Your Theatre Lottery



Do you want to help raise funds for your theatre simply by playing a lottery?

As some of you may know I did a deal with Stockport County football club's Lottery scheme to earn money for both CHADS and Stockport Garrick Theatre. This has been in operation for some years and effectively earns the Theatre £26 a year for each person who signs up to play the lottery. This demands very little effort from the theatre itself other than promotion of the lottery in publicity material and on their websites. As time

has passed we felt that the association with a football club may have been off-putting to theatre goers and so I have been working with a lottery company to develop a new lottery especially for local LTG type of theatres called "Your Theatre Lottery".

This is a way for theatres to benefit from running a lottery without the hassle of managing it. Simply by signing up your theatre as a member of Your Theatre Lottery the theatre will gain 50% of any £1 spent by their supporters playing the lottery. Drawn every Wednesday, for as little as £1 per week, this is a great way for members and audience members to help their local theatre survive and thrive. While they have the chance to win £1000s of cash and non-cash prizes each week.

A new website is being developed for Your Theatre Lottery which will be launched in the summer of 2020 to allow theatre lovers all over the country the chance to support their local theatres. Member theatres will have their own page on the website where they can have their own images and what the funds are for to promote their theatres. By directing their members and more importantly their audience to the page they can potentially sign up 100s of lottery

players; each earning £26 a year for the theatre.

We have teamed up with partners at the National Youth and Community Development Association to participate in the NYCDA Weekly Draw. With dozens of prizes including a regular jackpot and amounts up for grabs ranging from £10 to £250, members can also win a variety of non-cash prizes such as theatre tickets, corporate hospitality and merchandise.

It's a really easy way to fundraise for your theatre with very little ongoing effort. Sign up as few as 50 players and earn £1300 a year!

With the Covid-19 pandemic forcing the closure of theatres income has dried up. Now more than ever these theatres need help to survive and be there when restrictions are lifted. Supporting Your Theatre Lottery is just one way your members and audience can help.

If you are interested in registering your theatre as a member of Your Theatre Lottery, or just want to discuss in more detail contact Steve Pratt on steve@stevepratt.me.uk

Nick Hern Books - Announcement

Hello from (remote) Nick Hern Books HQ! We're very excited to share with you some of the things we've been working on over the past few weeks – starting with the announcement that, **from today, we're inviting applications to license NHB plays for amateur online performance.** This fantastic opportunity will allow amateur theatre companies, youth theatres, student groups and others to continue to connect, create and have fun – see more info below.

We've also announced five further fantastic NHB writers whose work we'll be sharing with **The NHB Playgroup**, our free online playreading and discussion community. And we're proud to be supporting **ImagiNation**, a new creative project from Theatre Centre and Theatre503 offering you the chance to appear in a compilation film.

Finally, we're extending our numerous ongoing promotions, helping you catch up on cancelled productions and support their writers, flex your creative muscles, support homeschooling and inspire fun activities, and more. We're working hard to keep you feeling connected to theatre during this difficult time – so, just as we sign off each episode of our NHB Playgroup Q&A Podcast: 'take care, and see you next time!'

The Kevin Spence Column

THE BEST OF TIMES, THE WORST OF TIMES



As I write this article in the week before Easter, the news seems to be assaulting us with new horrors with such ferocity, that it is hard to remain detached and to try to keep spirits up.

For those of us in the LTG who have our own theatres, our first thoughts, like everyone else, are for the continued well-being of both friends and families. In addition to that however, we have another family – our theatre family – and we will all, I am certain, be hoping that all of that extended family of like-minded theatre makers remain safe until the time – which will undoubtedly come – when we are all restored to our theatres, to our ‘play spaces’, and, above all, to that unique communion of diverse people and talents we call ‘live’ theatre.

I was lucky enough to be able to attend Questors Theatre on March 8th for the launch of Michael Coveney’s new book about amateur theatre – QUESTORS, JESTERS AND RENEGADES. If you have not yet managed to secure a copy, the current lockdown gives us all ample opportunity to read about one of the things we most love and its illustrious history. Michael has poured all his energy and skill as a writer into putting together a comprehensively researched study, not only of how we all arrived at a point where our theatres were still thriving in 2020 but why we will continue to be important, both nationally and locally, in the future. Consequently, it is immensely readable. None of us could have predicted – including Michael – that his book would be published at a time of such global catastrophe. It makes the content of his book not only more poignant, but also much more relevant as we try to look beyond our current predicament to future opportunities to be healthy, happy and creative.

I am sure you will be finding inventive ways – which I cannot begin to guess at – through modern technology and social media to stay in touch with fellow theatre members, offering each other encouragement, friendship and creative fun. Some of the initiatives being used to keep theatre lovers creative online and in touch with each other are so inspired that maybe this compulsion to find new ways of ‘doing theatre’ will only add to the range of opportunities our theatres can provide in the future for our members to be creative.

Certainly, the fact that our two major national producing houses – the National and the RSC are streaming some past shows for us to enjoy at home, is to be commended. Equally, other theatres are climbing on this particular bandwagon – so it is worth keeping our eyes open to these opportunities online. Hampstead Theatre, for example, is also streaming some past shows.

In addition, to looking after our fellow members, those of us in LTG theatres, much like our professional colleagues, have a building to maintain – even though it may be mothballed now possibly for weeks and months. Some of our theatres have already successfully applied to their local councils for the Government Small Business £10K Grants – it is good to know that this money is coming through so quickly – so I hope many of you will choose to avail yourself of this opportunity to put a smile on the face of your Treasurer! Fortunately, all of us are seasoned campaigners and experts in breathing life back into neglected buildings, so I

am confident that when the time comes we will reopen and get back to normal with alacrity.

Unfortunately, apart from our brilliant theatres, both amateur and professional, doing their best to keep interest in drama and



related activities alive at this difficult time, the media, in general, appears to be giving us scant attention. I even almost choked on my coffee the other day, when one of the BBC’s journalists, included actors in amongst a list of high earners alongside professional footballers etc. I never cease to be amazed by the inability of politicians and journalists to grasp how little most people in the arts actually earn!

There is one thing of which I think we can all be certain, however. Audiences will feel so starved of live entertainment and that unique experience of sharing with others electric performances onstage, I am hoping for something of a renaissance for us whenever normal times return.

I am hoping that all our amateur theatres will be able to reopen when the time comes and that, until then, we can all manage to stay afloat. Unfortunately, I strongly suspect that, at least in the short term, some small-scale professional companies will not survive – especially, those which, like us, have a building to maintain. The lucky ones may get local council and ACE support, but when national funds will be stretched by a depressed economy, we would be foolish to rely on this.

Consequently, the need for amateurs and professionals to be mutually supportive will be even more important when this emergency is over. It has been my mission for some time – as many of you will be aware – to promote conversations with a view to cooperation between the amateur and professional sectors. Fortunately, the Arts Council are clearly singing from the same hymn sheet in their new 10 year strategy LET’S CREATE. LTG theatres have known for years that we have a pivotal role not just in our local communities but also in the wider national framework of theatre provision. I am confident that our importance in this role can only increase when the new ‘restoration’ comes.

Finally, a lighter note on which to end. In the current crisis, never was the saying – ‘Necessity is the mother of invention’ – more true! Even on my daily bit of exercise – a walk through the open ground and streets near to where I live – I have discovered a new creative hobby. It is impossible, now we are all out of our cars, not to become more aware of the immediate neighbourhoods in which we live. Strolling past a whole array of houses with relatively small front gardens, it is impossible not to invent all sorts of scenarios about what could be happening in all those properties you cannot help but peer into! And what about the pedestrians? The woman speaking urgently on her phone as she marches along the other side of the street? A conversation with her lover from whom she is currently isolated?

I am certain there are theatre people out there much more creative than I, who could produce great material out of this stuff!

In the meantime, stay safe and look after your people and your theatres!

Kevin Spence

From The Apollonius

The in-house magazine of the Apollo Theatre Players

Leaving out Britt Eckland - does this sound familiar?

Once again, as so often, I have been tickled by something I have read in the Guardian. In this case it was an article written by Britt Eckland, saying that the back stage facilities in the UK theatres she performed in a recent tour, were so often cold, draughty and damp, that despite being a 'Viking Warrior' she succumbed to a chest infection. Well, all I can say is she's never rehearsed on the Apollo stage in the middle of winter!

Now, before any backstage or other crew leap to the defence of the theatre heating system, and write a 'disgusted of East Cowes' letter, let me say that I absolutely understand and sympathise with

the difficulties of heating and/or cooling a space the size of the auditorium to a reasonable standard of comfort. Nevertheless, it's a common sight at rehearsals to see those members of cast who are not on stage, huddling against the radiators, (those of you who saw the wonderful nature programme about the Emperor Penguins surviving through an Arctic winter by creating a 'huddle' will immediately recognize the syndrome), and those on stage struggling to demonstrate emotion or remember their lines, while encumbered with vast layers of jumpers and coats.

Still, the sun has returned now – just in time for nobody to be able to get out in it and those freezing rehearsals are but a memory. Let's hope that by the time the seasons turn again, we once more are able to sit shivering in the auditorium, awaiting our opportunity to get on the stage.

Strange how priorities change in these peculiar times!

Bits & Bobs from Your Newsletters...

From the majority of our little theatres we have heard nothing - apart from requests to members for help with meeting financial commitments. However, where theatres are fortunate enough to have technophobes we have evidence of some very creative ways of keeping in touch with members.

RICHMOND SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY

From May 6th – June 3rd, RSS are virtually reading Henry 1V. The first session took place on Shakespeare's birthday. They are also planning an Evening of Monologues - and in the meantime, will be rolling up their sleeves to carry out refurbishment and improvements works by installing lighting – and painting radiators and seats in the auditorium.

RSS YOUNG ACTORS COMPANY

The Young Actors Company are featuring each week in an online link with young actors from South Africa, India and Malta.

QUESTORS

Ealing's Questors Theatre has also begun a new initiative with members this week. "In this isolation period e are launching an exciting new project for you to get involved In from your homes.!" Bridging the Gap is a chance for the East London theatre's

members to showcase what they have been up to in isolation. "Have you been reading a great book that you'd love to recommend, or have you been learning a new yoga routine? Perhaps you've been getting creative and have written a short play or story, created a drawing, or partaken in a spot of DIY or gardening! "We'd love to see stories, images, videos or anything that best shows off your activity - even if it's just something you've spotted on your daily exercise!"

People are invited to email their responses to socialmedia@questors.org.uk and every Tuesday the theatre will post the week's favourite emails on the website and across the Questors social media channels, with highlights on its Instagram and Facebook stories.

PRIORY THEATRE

- one of the first theatres to hold their first ever online quiz. They are now asking for photographs – new and old, to revitalize their archives. Post these memories to the Priory facebook. There you will also find a link to a 30 minute video filmed in the two years following the 1976 fire that devastated the Priory.

SEAFORD LITTLE THEATRE

On May 12th, Seaford organised a virtual play reading of **At Mrs Beam's**. Robert Boorman, who has a long history with SLT, although not quite stretching back 75 years, suggested the reading to commemorate VE Day.

At Seaford Julie Pettit has been running fun and imaginative quizzes since the early nineties. She is looking forward to her first virtual quiz set to start just after 8.00pm so as not to interfere with clapping for the NHS.

THE MILLER CENTRE

The Miller Centre are adding ten more monologues to the ten previously posted. This series of monologues are written and performed by members and friends of The Miller Centre Theatre Company. Most are suitable for family viewing - And you will find them on You Tube.

ALTRINGHAM LITTLE THEATRE

The Chairman Ian Bowden provided a little consolation after the production of **Dead Certain** had to be pulled after the opening night. The cast were delighted to hear that the author Marcus Lloyd would be in the audience when they brought the play back to the theatre - and wouldn't we all like to know when that would be!

The Art of Coarse Acting

A message from Christine, widow of Michael Green. Two years before he died, Michael recorded his book - The Art of Coarse Acting (1964), and this has just been released on AUDIBLE. Christine would like his fans to be able to access this.

The Society for Theatre Research Announcement of Shortlist

The Society for Theatre Research are pleased to announce the shortlist for the 2020 Theatre Book Prize.

This year's list features a biography of Vivien Leigh, insightful examinations of playwriting and directing, expansive histories of 18th century and modern theatre and the untold story of the Drury Lane's most enterprising (and financially doomed) managers.

The shortlisted titles are:

The Art of the Artistic Director: Conservations with Leading Practitioners by Christopher Haydon (Meuthen Dramas)

The Birth of Modern Theatre: Rivalry, Riots and Romance in the Age of Garrick by Norman S Poser (Routledge)

Dark Star: A biography of Vivien Leigh by Alan Strachan (I B Tauris)

An illustrated History of British Theatre and Performance by Robert Leach (Routledge)

Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write by Stephen Jeffries (Nick Hern Books)

Shakespeare Spelt Ruin: The life of Frederick Balsir

Chatterton, Drury Lane's Last Bankrupt by Robert Whelan (Jacob Tonson)

THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON JUNE 8th 2020

About the prize

Established in 1998 to mark the Society's 50th Anniversary, it has been awarded annually to what independent judges consider the best published book about the history and practice of British or British-related theatre.

To be eligible the books must be first publications and in English

They may be about any kind of theatre or performance theatre from drama, ballet and opera to puppetry, panto, circus and performance art (but not unstaged classical or pop concert performance) past present or future performance. This includes biography, production, management, administration, design, architecture and audience but not playscripts, studies of plays as literature or student how-to manuals.

Previous winners have included Sir Anthony Sher for The Year of Mad King - The King Lear Diaries Nicholas Hynter for Balancing Acts, and Professor Steve Nicholson for The Censorship of British Theatre 1900 - 1968.

ED: When I first saw this I thought there would be nothing to divert me – but I found each title did capture my interest!

Some Recent Production Photos

Bolton Little Theatre - *Things I Know To Be True*



Hangmen - *Summerseat Players*



Hangmen - *Questors*



There Goes The Bride - *Seaford Little Theatre*



Golden Pond - *Seaford Little Theatre*



Theft - *Durham Dramatic Society*