

## Edward Thompson Collection

### MS 4056

The collection contains notes by Muriel St Clare Byrne for an unpublished edition of Kate Terry Gielgud's *A Victorian Playgoer*; correspondence between Edward Thompson as editor of Heinemann Educational Books and various authors including letters from Robert Bolt (68 letters), John Gielgud (28 letters), Tyrone Guthrie (1 letter), James Reeves (56 letters) and Elmer Rice (10 letters); correspondence relating to Theatre Arts Books acting as U.S. distributors of Heinemann Drama Library Series; copy of *First Meetings and After, or the pleasures of publishing*, an autobiography by Edward Thompson.

The Collection covers the year's 1946-1990.

The physical extent of the collection is 10 boxes.

#### Introduction

Edward Thompson was born in 1917 in Surrey, the youngest of five children of a builder. At the age of 12 he was taken for the first time to see a play, *Romeo and Juliet* at Stratford, by his mother who also gave him a copy of Shakespeare's works. This began his life-long passion for the theatre.

Educated at Sutton Grammar School Edward did not shine academically, as the only subject he was interested in was English. He left at 17 and became a clerk, working unhappily for a short time as a rent collector for a London estate agents, before joining his father's firm in Birchington, Kent to keep the books. After two years Edward became restless and found another job in London as a clerk for a firm of car and motorcycle dealers. The move gave him more opportunities to expand his social life and continue his theatre-going.

On the outbreak of war Edward registered as a Conscientious Objector. His pacifism dated back at least to his schooldays when he had refused to join the Army Cadet Corps. His employers were sympathetic but things became difficult when they applied for army contracts and after his Tribunal in 1940 Edward decided to leave and work on the land. He became a pupil on a farm in Shropshire for a year and then joined the Land Army. At the same time he took the opportunity to read a great deal and to join WEA classes to extend his education. He was greatly influenced by his teachers, particularly Elsie Green, who taught drama and in 1943 started the Epsom Drama Group for which Edward acted several leading roles.

Unfortunately at this point Edward became ill with chronic back pain, eventually diagnosed as Ankylosing Spondylitis. After two years he was somewhat improved

and began to consider what he wanted to do after the war. He decided to try to become a professional actor and had successfully auditioned for Basil Dean's company when his back trouble returned and he remained bedridden for six months. Although the professional stage was no longer a possibility Edward knew that he wanted to work in the field of literature and grasped an opportunity which arose to work for the publishers Heinemann.

Joining the firm in London in 1945, in 1946 Edward was asked to become assistant to Alan Hill, the director of Heinemann Educational Books, and was given the job of creating its drama list. Amongst the first authors that he secured were John Gielgud, Michael Redgrave, and Michel Saint-Denis. Edward later discovered Robert Bolt after seeing a performance of his *Flowering Cherry*, and arranged for its immediate publication. Although Edward's ill-health continued the firm accommodated him, moving the headquarters of Heinemann Educational Books out of London to Kingswood in Surrey, and he repaid them with his taste and enthusiasm for his authors, many of whom became personal friends, and for new writing.

In the early 1970s Edward moved to Hove, partly because of the annual Brighton Festival with which he was closely associated. His attractive and spacious flat, filled with thousands of books, sculptures and pictures, became a haven for anyone interested in writing or the theatre. He joined the Brighton Campaign for Homosexual Equality, and later the Gay Community Organisation, becoming a focus for Brighton's gay culture.

In 1982 Edward retired from Heinemann and in his retirement continued to be a generous host and patron of the arts. He died in 2001 at the age of 84.

**MS 4056/1** Material relating to 'A history of the theatre in Europe' by John Allen  
Undated [1983]

**MS 4056/2** Correspondence and newscuttings relating to Peter Barnes  
20 Mar 1983-23 May 1988  
Contains letter dated 20 March 1983, a photocopy of article published in *The New Yorker*, 23 May 1988 "Profiles Play Agent" on Margaret Ramsay by Mel Gussow, and a TS of 'Porno Poems' by Peter Barnes.

- MS 4056/3** Correspondence relating to 'A short guide to modern British drama' by John Russell Brown  
1981-1982
- MS 4056/4** Correspondence relating to Aidan Chambers  
1983-1988  
Correspondence refers to his role as a drama consultant to HEB, with particular reference to plays for young people.
- MS 4056/5** Correspondence concerning the publication of the books 'Training for the Theatre: premises and promises' and 'Theatre: the rediscovery of style' by Michel Saint Denis  
Undated  
File contains correspondence regarding both 'Training for the Theatre: premises and promises' (Heinemann Educational Books, London), and 'Theatre: the rediscovery of style' (Theatre Arts Books, New York, 1982, reprinted in 1969 by HEB.)
- MS 4056/6** Correspondence between Edward Thompson, Martin Esslin and John Bright-Holmes relating to the transfer of publishing rights  
1963-1970  
Correspondence refers to the transfer of publishing rights from E&S to Heinemann of 'Brecht: a choice of evils', and 'The theatre of the absurd'; only the former was consequently published by Mercury in 1966.
- MS 4056/7** Correspondence and broadsheets relating to James Reeves  
1951-1976  
TS of masque A.D. One by James Reeves with music and illustrations; masque performed in St. John's, Smith Square, London on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1973. Also contains 3 copies of list of

James Reeves' work and publications. Correspondence 1974-1976. 2 copies of 'Quarto', a quarterly broadsheet of new poetry, Number 1, Spring 1951 and Number 3, Autumn 1951.

- MS 4056/8** Correspondence relating to James Reeves  
Undated [1946]  
Anthology of poems  
for young people. Correspondence 1946, includes 2 letters from  
Walter de la Mare in permissions letters.
- MS 4056/9** Correspondence relating to 'The poets' world' by James Reeves  
1947-1948  
Book published by Heinemann in 1960, previously published by  
Harper, New York, 1959. Correspondence 1959-1960, includes  
cuttings and American dust jacket.
- MS 4056/10** Correspondence and cuttings relating to 'The living theatre' by  
Elmer Rice  
1959-1960  
Includes letter from John Gielgud, 10 March 1983.
- MS 4056/11** Correspondence relating to 'Granville Barker: a secret life' by  
Eric Salmon  
1979-1982
- MS 4056/12** Correspondence relating to 'Granville Barker: a secret life' by  
Eric Salmon  
1983-1986

- MS 4056/13** Correspondence relating to 'Specimens of contemporary drama'  
by E. R. Wood  
1954-1957
- MS 4056/14** Correspondence with E. R. Wood  
1982-1991
- MS 4056/15** Correspondence relating to 'Who was Shakespeare?' By Hilda  
Amphlett  
Mar 1954-Dec 1954
- MS 4056/16** Correspondence relating to 'Who was Shakespeare?' By Hilda  
Amphlett  
Jan 1955-Oct 1955
- MS 4056/17** Correspondence relating to 'Casals and the art of interpretation'  
by David Blum  
Nov 1974-Dec 1977
- MS 4056/18** Correspondence relating to 'Casals and the art of interpretation'  
by David Blum  
Jan 1978-Dec 1979

- MS 4056/19** Correspondence relating to 'Casals and the art of interpretation'  
by David Blum  
Jan 1980-Jan 1985
- MS 4056/20** Correspondence with John Russell Brown  
1968-1972
- MS 4056/21** Correspondence with John Russell Brown  
1973-1975
- MS 4056/22** Correspondence with John Russell Brown  
1976-1990
- MS 4056/23** Correspondence with Sir Tyrone Guthrie  
Oct 1963-Aug 1964  
Correspondence refers to possible book that was never written.  
Includes one handwritten letter from Tyrone Guthrie.
- MS 4056/24** Correspondence relating to 'King Lear: the space of tragedy' by  
Gregory Kozintsev, translated by Mary Mackintosh  
Sep 1971-Dec 1972  
Three black and white photographs from the film and one of  
Kozintsev himself. Correspondence September 1971-December  
1972.

- MS 4056/25** Correspondence relating to 'King Lear: the space of tragedy' by Gregory Kozintsev  
1973-1976
- MS 4056/26** Correspondence relating to 'King Lear: the space of tragedy' by Gregory Kozintsev  
1977 -1991
- MS 4056/27** Notebooks relating to 'A Victorian Playgoer' by Kate Terry Gielgud  
Undated [1980]  
Contains author's notebooks with "Muriel St Clare's original workings" (as written on brown envelope).
- MS 4056/28** Typescript of 'A Victorian Playgoer' by Kate Terry Gielgud, Part 1  
Undated  
TS, including unpublished pages. Not paginated but now filed in 4 parts.  
  
1 file
- MS 4056/29** Typescript of 'A Victorian Playgoer' by Kate Terry Gielgud, Part 2  
Undated  
  
1 file

- MS 4056/30** Typescript of 'A Victorian Playgoer' by Kate Terry Gielgud, Part 3  
Undated
- 1 file
- MS 4056/31** Typescript of 'A Victorian Playgoer' by Kate Terry Gielgud, Part 4  
Undated
- 1 file
- MS 4056/32** Partial Typescript of 'A Victorian Playgoer' by Kate Terry Gielgud  
Undated
- MS 4056/33** Personal correspondence with John Gielgud  
1951-1985  
Correspondence contains 5 handwritten letters from John Gielgud.
- MS 4056/34** Correspondence relating to John Gielgud's introduction to 'The Importance of Being Earnest' by Oscar Wilde  
1949-1951  
Correspondence contains 1 handwritten letter from John Gielgud.
- MS 4056/35** Correspondence, cuttings and programmes relating to John Gielgud's translation of 'The Cherry Orchard' by Anton Chekov  
1961-1963  
Correspondence contains 1 handwritten letter from John Gielgud.

- MS 4056/36** Correspondence and cuttings relating to 'Stage Directions' by John Gielgud  
1962-1965  
Correspondence contains 2 handwritten letters from John Gielgud.
- MS 4056/37** Correspondence, cuttings and programmes relating to John Gielgud's adaptation of 'Ivanov' by Anton Chekov  
1965-1966  
Correspondence contains cuttings and programmes for the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and the Phoenix Theatre.
- MS 4056/38** Correspondence, cuttings and photographs relating to 'John Gielgud directs Richard Burton in Hamlet: a Journal of Rehearsals' by Richard L. Sterne  
1966-1968  
Correspondence contains cuttings and photographs of production in rehearsal.
- MS 4056/39** Correspondence relating to 'Distinguished Company' by John Gielgud  
1971-1977  
Contains 10 handwritten letters from John Gielgud.
- MS 4056/40** Typed publishing proposal of 'Distinguished Company' by John Gielgud  
Undated [1971]

- MS 4056/41** Press cuttings of 'Distinguished Company' by John Gielgud  
Undated
- MS 4056/42** Correspondence relating to 'Early Stages' by John Gielgud  
1973-1979  
First published in 1939 by Macmillan, then in 1948 by Falcon  
Press. File includes one very worn dust jacket of this edition, as  
well as 2 handwritten letters from John Gielgud.
- MS 4056/43** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to 'John Gielgud' by  
Ronald Hayman  
1968-1970  
Contains 1 handwritten letter from John Gielgud.
- MS 4056/44** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to 'John Gielgud' by  
Ronald Hayman  
1971-1976  
Contains 5 handwritten letters from John Gielgud.
- MS 4056/45** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to 'Stage Directions'  
by John Gielgud  
1977-1980  
Correspondence refers to new paperback edition. Contains 1  
handwritten letter from John Gielgud.
- MS 4056/46** Press cuttings and articles relating to John Gielgud  
Undated

- MS 4056/47** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to 'Flowering Cherry' by Robert Bolt  
1957-1970
- MS 4056/48** Correspondence relating to 'The tiger and the horse' by Robert Bolt  
1960-1963  
Papers divided into "Hereford Play edition", published 1961, and "Drama Library edition", published 1963.
- MS 4056/49** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to 'Lawrence of Arabia' by Robert Bolt  
1962-1963  
Correspondence refers to proposed publishing of the screenplay, never published due to opposition of A.W. Lawrence, T.E. Lawrence's brother.
- MS 4056/50** Correspondence relating to 'Three Plays' by Robert Bolt  
1963-1964  
Heinemann 1964, Mercury edition.
- MS 4056/51** Correspondence, programmes and press cuttings relating to 'Gentle Jack' by Robert Bolt  
1963-1965  
Contains two copies of the programme from the Theatre Royal, Bath where the play was performed.
- MS 4056/52** Correspondence, programmes and press cuttings relating to 'The thwarting of Baron Bolligrew' by Robert Bolt  
1965-1971  
Contains programme from The Aldwych Theatre, 1965.

- MS 4056/53** Correspondence and theatre programmes relating to 'Brother and Sister' by Robert Bolt  
1967-1968  
Contains theatre programmes from the Theatre Royal, Brighton and The Bristol Old Vic Company.
- MS 4056/54** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to 'A Man for All Seasons' by Robert Bolt  
1962-1978  
Correspondence refers to the Hereford Plays edition.
- MS 4056/55** Correspondence, press cuttings and foreign publishing arrangements relating to 'A Man for All Seasons' by Robert Bolt  
1961-1982  
Correspondence refers to the Hereford Plays edition. Also contains programme for the Theatre Royal, Bath, 1960.
- MS 4056/56** Correspondence and photographs relating to the film tie-in of 'A Man for All Seasons' by Robert Bolt  
1966-1974  
Contains photographs and typed CVs of the film actors.
- MS 4056/57** Correspondence, press cuttings and photographs relating to 'Vivat! Vivat Regina!' by Robert Bolt  
1969-1974  
Correspondence refers to the Hereford Plays edition.

- MS 4056/58** Correspondence, press cuttings and photographs relating to 'State of Revolution' by Robert Bolt  
1975-1980  
Contains National Theatre programme.
- MS 4056/59** General correspondence with Robert Bolt  
1966-1982
- MS 4056/60** General correspondence, press cuttings and magazines relating to Robert Bolt  
1961-1987  
Contains editions of 'Encore' Vol.8 no.2, 1961, and 'New Theatre Magazine' Vol II no.4, 1961.
- MS 4056/61** Photographs relating to 'Theme and Variations' by Yehudi Menuhin  
Undated [1972]  
Consists of 14 black and white photographs.
- MS 4056/62** Correspondence relating to 'Theme and Variations' by Yehudi Menuhin  
1959-1963
- MS 4056/63** Correspondence relating to 'Theme and Variations' by Yehudi Menuhin  
1964-1971

- MS 4056/64** Correspondence relating to 'Theme and Variations' by Yehudi Menuhin  
1972-1980
- MS 4056/65** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to 'The Actor's Ways and Means' by Michael Redgrave  
1952-1972
- MS 4056/66** Correspondence relating to Michael Redgrave's introduction to 'A month in the country' by Ivan Turgenev  
1950-1981
- MS 4056/67** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to 'Michael Redgrave: Actor' by Richard Findlater  
1954-1956
- MS 4056/68** Correspondence, press cuttings and illustrations relating to 'Mask or Face' by Michael Redgrave  
1954-1956  
Contains illustrations from the book, dust jacket and copy of 'Plays and Players', July 1958.
- MS 4056/69** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to 'The Mountebank's Tale' by Michael Redgrave  
1958-1962  
Contains dust jacket.

- MS 4056/70** Correspondence, programmes, photographs and press cuttings relating to Michael Redgrave's theatre adaptation of 'The Aspern Papers' by Henry James  
1959-1962  
Also contains programmes for Queen's Theatre, 1959 and the Theatre Royal, Windsor, 1961.
- MS 4056/71** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to Michael Redgrave's reading of 'Tales from Hans Andersen' at the Windmill Club  
c. 1970
- MS 4056/72** Correspondence and press cuttings relating to Michael Redgrave and John Gielgud's American tour, readings from 'The ages of man' by George Rylands  
1958-1959
- MS 4056/73** Photographs and newscuttings relating to Michael Redgrave  
Undated  
Consists of 12 black and white portraits of Michael Redgrave, 2 others of unidentified actors. Article from the Sunday Times, 1985, on the Redgrave family, also a number of obituaries of Michael Redgrave who died 21 March 1985.
- MS 4056/74** Correspondence between Edward Thompson and Rachel Kempson regarding the autobiography of Rachel Kempson  
1961-1975

- MS 4056/75** Correspondence with Vanessa Redgrave  
1959-1961
- MS 4056/76** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1953]  
Letters relate to the initial arrangements for Theatre Arts Books  
to be the United States distributors of the Heinemann Drama  
Library Series. The first book was 'The Actor's ways and means'  
by Michael Redgrave.
- MS 4056/77** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1955]
- MS 4056/78** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1956]
- MS 4056/79** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1957]
- MS 4056/80** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1958]

**MS 4056/81** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1961]

**MS 4056/82** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1962]

**MS 4056/83** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1963]

**MS 4056/84** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1964]

**MS 4056/85** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1965]

**MS 4056/86** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Jan-May 1966

**MS 4056/87** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Jun-Dec 1966

**MS 4056/88** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1967]

**MS 4056/89** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1968]

**MS 4056/90** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1969]

**MS 4056/91** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1970]

**MS 4056/92** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
Undated [1971]

**MS 4056/93** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
1978-1980

**MS 4056/94** Correspondence with Theatre Arts Books  
1981-1983