Welcome to our third newsletter in the countdown to ESRA 2015 at the University of Worcester! With the conference two weeks away, we are writing with news from both ESRA and the University of Worcester.

**AGM:** Under articles 6 and 7 of the statutes of ESRA (the European Shakespeare Research Association), the biennial ordinary General Meeting of the members of this association will be held at 12.30, on Thursday, the 2nd July of 2015, at the University of Worcester Arena.

**AGM Agenda:**
- i. Montpellier conference minutes
- ii. Report by the Chair (on behalf of the Board)
- iii. Report by the 2015 conference convenor
- iv. Venue for the ESRA 2017 conference
- v. Board membership renewal
- vi. Any other business

**Book Presentations:** Following the invitation launched in our previous issue, we are pleased to announce that this edition of ESRA will host six book presentations of recent releases by ESRA authors. They are scheduled every day of the conference so check the updated programme online for times and venues.

**Conference Programme:** Keeping ESRA 2015 at Worcester **GREEN,** an award the University has been receiving consistently over the past years, we are producing the programme booklet in two formats: one printed and one electronic. Upon arrival, you will receive a copy of the printed version which will contain all the details of the conference and practical information about Worcester save for the abstracts of each seminar paper. The electronic version includes all the abstracts and will be available online for consultation and downloading a week before the conference start.
**Registration/Accommodation/Parking:** If you have not registered yet, the booking form is available on our website, at [http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/european-shakespeare-research-association-congress-june-july-2015.html](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/european-shakespeare-research-association-congress-june-july-2015.html). Please note that accommodation in the halls of residence remain available to ESRA2015 delegates only until **June 19th**. You can book this as part of your registration form; if the dates offered in the package do not suit you, please contact Shirley Adams at shirley.adams@worc.ac.uk urgently for alternative arrangements. Parking permits can be issued in advance for conference delegates travelling by car. The procedure for this has been emailed directly to those of you who have indicated that you will be travelling by car. Please ensure that you make the necessary arrangements **prior** to your arrival by contacting shirley.adams@worc.ac.uk otherwise we will not be able to guarantee parking availability during the event.

**Post-Conference Visit:** For those of you who will be staying on after the closing of the ESRA 2015 conference on Thursday, July 2nd, we are offering a short trip opportunity during the afternoon. The destination is Charlecote Park, the grand 16th century country house, surrounded by its own deer park, on the banks of the River Avon, about 4 miles east of Stratford-upon-Avon. Our pursuit is not visiting ‘the scene of Shakespeare’s reputed poaching exploits’, but rather seeing their special collection of books, in urgent need of conservation, among which a Shakespeare Second Folio, an illuminated 14th century Book of Hours and a copy of Erasmus given by the author to King Henry VIII. There is no charge for this but numbers are limited to 16. If you are interested in going on the trip, please email us at esra2015@worc.ac.uk so we can make the necessary transport arrangements.
The Golden Anniversary of the Swan Theatre

On the 20th June 1965, after some four years of campaigning, fundraising, and building, the Swan Theatre opened its doors to the public for the very first time. Councillors, supporters, VIPs and members of the public all gathered for the official opening, and a huge flag made by the Worcester Women’s Institute was raised in celebration. Just two days later the Swan opened its first production, *One Wild Oat*, which was staged by the theatre’s resident amateur company and had a ticket price of 5 shillings.

Since then the theatre has been home to thousands of actors, directors, musicians, designers and stage crew and has been a stepping stone in the careers of many talents that we know and love, not least the Theatre’s recently appointed new Patron, Imelda Staunton OBE, the Oscar-nominated and multi-award winning actress who is currently starring in *Gypsy* in London’s West End. Rufus Norris, director of the National Theatre, is another who began his artistic life at the Swan Theatre as a member of the Swan Youth Theatre, which he is now the Patron of.

It took a grand total of £63,000 to get the Theatre built and opened, and a huge amount of hard work and tenacity, not least from the forward-thinking Society for the Advancement of Music and the Arts, without whose ambition and huge fundraising drive, it simply would not have been possible.

Half a century on, the Swan Theatre is still going strong. With a packed programme of drama, comedy, music and dance, it continues to move, entertain and delight audiences year in, year out. Here’s to the next half-century of the Swan Theatre!

Worcester Repertory Company presents: *The Second Best Bed*

A play by Avril Rowlands
Directed by Chris Jaeger

When Shakespeare died, he famously left his wife Anne only one thing – the second best bed. This superb one-woman play, full of both humour and pathos, has received great critical acclaim since its premier at the Swan Theatre Worcester in 2012.

Liz Grand stars as Anne Hathaway on the night of Shakespeare’s funeral. The wake has finished, the mourners have all gone home, leaving Anne to remember her life with the most talented playwright the world has ever seen. Or was he? Did he write the plays? His widow would know if anybody did. Wouldn’t she?

In this thought provoking, moving and heart warming play, Liz Grand will have the audience spell bound, as we hear about the secret side of life with the greatest writer of all. The intimate setting of Huntingdon Hall offers the perfect atmosphere for delving into the past, and is well suited to a low key, one-person performance.

This performance is staged in association with the University of Worcester for the ESRA: The European Shakespeare Research Association, which will be holding its 2015 conference *Shakespeare’s Europe - Europe’s Shakespeare(s)* at the University of Worcester (29th June to 2nd July).

Location: Huntingdon Hall
Date: Tuesday 30th June
Time: 8pm
Price: £12.50
Box Office: 01905 611427
[www.huntingdonhall.co.uk](http://www.huntingdonhall.co.uk)