

# Editorial

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*Glynne William Gladstone Wickham, 15 May 1922 – 27 January 2004.*

Glynne Wickham, Emeritus Professor of Drama at the University of Bristol, enjoyed the rare distinction of having pioneered a discipline in British universities. After introducing drama to the curriculum in 1947, Bristol hired Glynne Wickham, educated at Winchester College and at New College, Oxford, where he had been the first post-war president of OUDS. Before 1947, the only department of drama in the British commonwealth was at the University of Saskatchewan, where Glynne found a model for Bristol and enlisted the advice of the Saskatchewan head of department. By 1951, Bristol's department had a studio (converted from a squash court, creating the first wholly flexible studio space in Britain). The same year, Glynne persuaded the vice-chancellor to purchase William Etty's portrait of Charles Kean as King Lear. This acquisition was the foundation stone of the University Theatre Collection, now, apart from the Theatre Museum in London, the largest theatre history archive in the UK.

Drama in universities, in Glynne's vision, demanded close links with the professional theatre, and he forged ties with the Bristol Old Vic and the BOV Theatre School. In 1957 Harold Pinter's first play, *The Room*, premiered in the department's studio, in an atmosphere Glynne described as 'electric'. But to Glynne drama did not mean just theatre. George Brandt, who had also lectured at Saskatchewan, arrived at Bristol in 1951 to introduce film studies to the curriculum. Glynne, meanwhile, keen to include broadcast media, talked his way onto a BBC training course. The unexpected benefit was his meeting Hesel Mudford; they married in 1954.

Throughout his career he travelled widely, helping establish departments of drama in other countries, lecturing and directing. What excited him about drama was its connection with many disciplines, its potential to embrace eastern and western traditions, and its pursuit not just through study but through practice – what he described as 'the hands reunited with the heart and with the head'. He influenced generations of theatre historians. David Bevington remarks, 'I cannot easily say how much his scholarship and leadership have meant to me in the field of dramatic studies. His *Early English Stages*, arriving (appropriately enough) in stages over the years, has changed the way I think and write about the staging of medieval and renaissance drama.'

Glynne published extensively throughout his career. In 1959, the first volume of *Early English Stages* changed the face of medieval and early modern drama studies and further volumes followed in 1963, 1972 and 1981. In between came *Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage* (1969), *The Medieval Theatre* (1974), *English Moral Interludes* (1976), a host of essays, as well as productions of many of the plays about which he wrote. In 1979 he became a general editor of the Cambridge series, *Theatre in Europe: a documentary history*. Despite retirement, his enthusiasm for his subject never waned. In 1985 he published his comprehensive *History of the Theatre*; in 2000, *English Professional Theatre 1530–1660*, and in 2002 the final volume of *Early English Stages*.

He received many awards and honours throughout his career. For his vigorous advocacy of the Shakespeare's Globe project in London, Glynne received the 1999 Sam Wanamaker Award. In 1996, the University of Bristol made him an Honorary Fellow, the highest accolade it can bestow, and awarded to only twenty-five individuals in the university's history. In 2002 the Department of Drama, in collaboration with the Society for Theatre Research (of which Glynne, as President from 1976 to 1999, 'always conducted the AGMs with a characteristic flamboyance and wit', according to Richard Cave) inaugurated an annual Wickham Lecture, to be given alternately by a scholar and practitioner, perfectly encompassing Glynne's passions for the theatre – its past and its present, its study and its practice. When he retired in 1982, the former Vandyck Theatre (the department's home since 1968) was renamed, as the foyer's plaque proclaims, in honour of 'Glynne Wickham, who inspired the study of Drama in British universities'. It is a unique achievement.

Herbert Berry offers this vivid testimonial: 'In the academic world of theatre, Glynne Wickham was a man for all seasons. He directed plays, lectured authoritatively on the theory and history of theatre from Dionysus to the present, and researched the minutiae of theatrical matters in English record offices. He was also a man of great charm and energy. Bright, informed ideas about theatre tumbled out of him, and wherever he was theatrical energy was in the air. Moreover, he had a keen sense of the pragmatic and did not let ideas remain merely as ideas. He not only got things done himself but effortlessly induced others to do so. His associates will remember him fondly and many with gratitude.'

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Martin White, former Head of Bristol's Drama Department and now Provost of the Institute for Advanced Studies, provided me with the basis for this eulogy, and Herbert Berry, Professor Emeritus of the University of Saskatchewan, filled in occasional gaps. His final collaboration with Glynne Wickham and Bill Ingram is reviewed in this issue.

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