



Selected Letters
from
A. M. Broadley's
Annals of the Haymarket

A selection of letters from the Broadley albums at City of Westminster Archives Centre, with biographical notes

Compiled by David Evans and Judith Bottomley, April 2012

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Introduction

Alexander Meyrich Broadley (1847-1916) was a lawyer and journalist by trade, but was also a well-known collector. His ambitious work, *Annals of the Haymarket* (1911) tells the fascinating story of this fascinating theatrical street through a unique compilation of prints, drawings, playbills, programmes and manuscript letters.

The Annals are bound as four volumes:

- I – The Street
- II – The King's Theatre
- III – The Little Theatre
- IV – Some Notable Haymarket Plays

The letters in this collection have been selected and transcribed from all four of Broadley's Haymarket volumes. Spanning over 200 years of activity in the Haymarket, they offer a remarkable insight into the thoughts and experiences of the major players – actors, singers, dancers, managers and impresarios – involved in London's vibrant theatre industry.

The aim of this transcription project has been to highlight the wealth of source material available in the Broadley albums. Editorial conventions have been applied to render these letters accessible to the widest possible audience: abbreviated words have been extended, unnecessary capital letters removed, punctuation inserted or modified and some spellings modernised. Where text is missing through damage, or illegible, this has been represented with an ellipsis: [...].

Each letter is accompanied by a biographical note, giving historical context to the entry. The research for these notes has been drawn from a wide range of sources, but of particular assistance were the online edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800* (Highfill et al., 1973-1993)



This project would not have been possible without the invaluable contribution of Westminster City Archives volunteer David Evans, who has dedicated many hours of work to the Theatre Collection at City of Westminster Archives Centre.

Left: David working on the Broadley Albums project, 2011

Judith Bottomley
Westminster City Archives, April 2012

Broadley Haymarket I, p 15

Letter from Henry James Byron to Lucy (13 December 1865)

27 Doughty Street WC

Dec 13 1865

Dear Lucy

I shan't be able to get to you until late today. Will you send me a fifty pound bill stamp and make it for two months at the regular rate of interest. I will pay you the five-and-twenty and take the rest myself as I'm up a tree this week. If you'll send it me through the post, I will accept and return by hand.

The [...] has to be altered a good deal for scenery etc. I can't let you have the proof with additions until Friday. I have a copy of Haymarket but that too requires some important additions.

Yours truly

H J Byron

Henry James Byron (1834-1884), actor, manager, journalist and dramatist

Byron was a dramatist and actor, whose first real presentation was a burlesque, *Richard Coeur de Lion*, at the Strand Theatre, in 1857. Among his successes as a writer was *Our Boys*, which played between 1875 and 1879 at the Vaudeville Theatre. His first appearance as an actor on the London stage was in 1869 but by 1881 ill health brought an end to his acting career.

In this letter, Byron is probably addressing the political journalist Henry William Lucy (1843-1924). Byron had become the first editor of *Fun* in 1861, a rival of *Punch*. He may have met Lucy through his connections through journalism, or through frequenting the London clubs.

Broadley Haymarket I, p 67

Letter from John Braham to Henry Harrison (July 8 1827)

Dublin, July 8th 1827

Sir

I did myself the honour of calling on Her Grace the Duchess of St Albans to thank her for the £50 I received, but was not fortunate enough to see her. You will therefore confer a kindness on me if you will, on the first opportunity, convey my thanks to Her Grace.

I am your most obedient servant

John Braham

Letter from John Braham to Perry, Esq (13 February 1815)

3 Tavistock Square

13th Feb 1815

My Dear Sir

I do not require you to take up the cudgel for me but - if not discordant with your musical ideas - I would wish you to hint in your valuable paper at the degraded state of musical criticism when one of the greatest beauties of vocal performances, namely what the Italians call posta di voce, which may be interpreted - the swelling and diminishing of the voice - that upon which the celebrated Farinelli prided himself - and all the great modern singers are ambitious of attaining - the envy of nerveless and powerless singers - is compared to a mail coach horn!!! By the same rule, the Aeolian harp may be compared to the east wind singing through a cranny - an equal and well intonated shake to a fit of the palsy etc etc.

I am, dear sir,

Your most humble servant,

J Braham

John Braham (c 1774-1856), singer

Braham was born of German parents in London and first sang, as a child, at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane in 1787. As an adult tenor, Braham sang in the provinces and then had a great success at Covent Garden in *Mahoud* in 1796. After appearing in many European opera houses he was back in London by 1801.

Becoming a wealthy man, he built St James's Theatre in 1835. Unfortunately, the theatre did not prove a successful financial venture for him, and cost him a considerable proportion of his fortune.

Broadley Haymarket I, p 97

Letter from Alfred Guillaume Gabriel, Count of Orsay to Mr Cook (22 April 1843)

Mr Cook

I will comply with your wishes, and if you arrange the matter with Mr Malleon, I will do what is necessary, first because I promised you to do it and second because you appear so anxious about it. I owe money to some other tradesmen and you are the only one who is asking for such a security which astonishes me not a little considering that a tailor's bill, in general, is calculated to give time. I am sorry to do what you ask because I will feel obliged to do the same for my other creditors, which will complicate my arrangements, but as you have no confidence in me for these few hundreds, you may do what you are so anxious about . This is an additional page to my disappointments, as at least I had a right to expect accommodation or time from those that I have been serving.

Your obedient servant,

[...] d'Orsay

Alfred Guillaume Gabriel, Count of Orsay (1801-1852)

The Count of Orsay was an artist and man of fashion. Born in France, he came to London with his widowed mother in the late 1820s. At Seamore Place, and subsequently at Gore House, they hosted one of London's most glittering literary and artistic salons. His acquaintances in London included Bulwer-Lytton and Benjamin Disraeli, and Prince Louis Napoleon was also known to be a frequent visitor to Gore House.

Broadley Haymarket I, p 83

Letter from Antonio Tamburini to Pierre Francois Laporte (1840)

Monsieur

Je regrette infiniment que vous ayez cru devoir me rendre l'objet d'une mystification comme la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire et que je ne reçois qu'à l'instant. En rapprochant cette lettre d'une autre dans les papiers du jour, je vois que vous donnez à croire qu'en 1835 je ne recevais que 325£ par mois(!), et qu'aujourd'hui vous m'offrez cette somme. Personne ne sait mieux que vous, Monsieur, qu'en outre de cette somme 400£ m'était assuré en sus sur mon bénéfice et que le surplus du produit devait être partagé entre nous. Comme toutes les fois que mon bénéfice avait lieu, j'avais des désagréments avec vous pour l'inspection des recettes, pour me defaire de toutes tracasseries, en 1836 j'ai arrangé avec vous que vous conserveriez tous les profits de mon bénéfice quelque [...] être son montant, et je me suis resigné à ne recevoir que la somme de 400£ ajoutée a mon salaire, de manière que depuis ce sacrifice j'ai reçu 425£ et non 325£ par mois.

A l'égard de votre proposition "que je m'engage la saison prochaine à compter du 15 février", j'ai l'honneur de vous repeter encore une fois, Monsieur, personne ne sait mieux que vous que mes services sont déjà acquis et l'ont toujours été à la Direction de Paris jusqu'au 31 mars - Direction qui, Dieu merci, n'agit pas comme vous à mon égard. Mais si vous entendez la chose de bonne foi, je suis prêt à m'engager avec vous comme en 1835, non aux termes représentés par vous, Monsieur, dans les journaux, mais sur la base véritable que vous connaissez si bien et que je viens de vous décrire et à compter du commencement de la saison, "1er Aprile". La seule difference sera qu'il me sera permis de remplir mes engagements avec l'Ancient Concert et autres concerts publics avec lesquels, dans l'absence de d'un engagement, j'ai dû contracter des obligations pour des jours qui ne sont pas de l'Opera. Pour l'année prochaine, si vous avez de bonnes intentions a mon égard, vous pourrez facilement vous entendre avec la direction de Paris, dont je depends et que vous savez bien agira avec vous comme d'habitude sans vous faire essayer aucun sacrifice.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, monsieur, votre tres humble serviteur

A Tamburini

Antonio Tamburini (1800-1876), singer

Tamburini was an Italian operatic baritone who made his debut in 1818. From 1832 until 1843 he sang in Paris, but also performed in London during alternate years before moving to St Petersburg in 1844 where he stayed until his retirement.

In this letter, he reproaches the French manager of the Theatre Royal Haymarket, Laporte, for attempting to diminish his salary. He also accuses Laporte of deliberately ignoring his commitments for the coming season: Tamburini has been contracted to work for the Paris opera, and so could not be engaged by the Haymarket from 15 February, as Laporte had wrongly asserted in the newspapers.

Broadley Haymarket I, p 101

Letter from Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt to Mrs Brecy (13 January 1860)

My good Mrs Brecy

I am quite sorry to be obliged to send back the pretty little hens and their cock - that you kindly brought out here yesterday - but I do not like the thought of their being killed by our three cocks . [...] will tell you how they have already been fighting and we have no other place to keep them in.

I assure you that I am equally thankful to you and Mr Brecy to have [...] kindly thought of my children.

Yours truly

Jenny Goldschmidt

Argyle Lodge

January 13 1860

Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt [*real name Johanna Maria; née Lind*] (1820-1887) actress and singer

Jenny Lind made her London much anticipated début at the Haymarket on 7 May 1847. This special royal performance was a full house, and confirmed her international reputation as the incomparable 'Swedish Nightingale'.

In 1851, during an American tour, she married her conductor Otto Goldschmidt, and continued to appear both in Britain and on the Continent. In 1859, following the naturalisation of her husband, she became a British subject. Between 1883 and 1886 she held the post of Chief Professor of Singing at the Royal College of Music in London.

Broadley Haymarket I, p 123

Instruction from King Charles II to Thomas Earl of Southampton (9 November 1660)

Charles R

Right Trusty and Right Well-beloved Cousin and Counsellor, We greet you well. Whereas We are given to understand that Barnaby Love, Clerk, hath undergone great losses for his loyalty and faithful serving of Us and Our Royal Father of blessed memory, whereby he hath not only been deprived of what he had acquired, but also Nicholas Love, his brother, took that opportunity to defraud him of his Patrimonial Right; and finding, by the attestation of the Bishop of London and Dean of Westminster, that he hath been a great sufferer, and is otherwise very well deserving in his profession; We have therefore thought fit to recommend him very effectually unto you, that you admit him, the said Barnaby Love, to compound and agree for the remaining term and interest of the said Nicholas Love, in and to the several leases [...] of the Bishop, College and Church of Winchester, lately forfeited for treason by him committed, and that in the meantime he be appointed Bailiff or Receiver of the aforesaid leases and rents of the same, and of the free land of the said Nicholas Love, upon accompt, until he may be admitted our Tenant or Farmer for the same at such rent or composition as shall be thought reasonable; and also that he take care of the personal estate of the said Nicholas Love upon accompt for Our use. And so We bid you farewell. Given at Our Court at Whitehall, the 9th day of November 1660 in the twelfth year of Our Reign.

Our Right Trusty & Well-beloved Cousin and Counsellor Thomas Earl of Southampton,
Lord High Treasurer of England.

[...]

T Southampton

Thomas Wriothesley, 4th Earl of Southampton (1607-1667)

Although loyal to the Crown, Southampton remained in England after the Civil War. Appointed Lord High Treasurer in 1660, the Encyclopaedia Britannica comments that “he was remembered for his freedom from any taint of corruption...”

In this letter, Southampton receives an instruction from King Charles II, asking him to compensate Barnaby Love, clerk, with the tenancy of the confiscated lands of the Bishop of Westminster, as well as those of his brother, Nicholas Love.

Broadley Haymarket I, p 179

Letter from Gertrude Elisabeth Mara to Madame Cosway (10 January) (Late 18th century)

Madame Mara a l'honneur de présenter ses devoirs empressés à Madame Conway et serait très charmée de passer la soirée de mercredi ou jeudi prochain chez elle. Mais si par hasard un de ces jours ne convenait pas à Madame Conway, elle la prie de choisir un jour de la semaine après et de le lui faire savoir quelques jours avant. Madame Mara ajoute qu'elle se rendra chez Madame Conway avec un plaisir infini, et qu'elle espère d'avoir celui de l'entendre chanter.

Dimanche le 10 janvier

Gertrud Elizabeth Mara [*née Schmeling*] (1749-1833), singer

Mara was born in Germany. By 1759 she was already a proficient violinist, and was brought to London by her father, where her performances attracted great attention. Twelve years later, she made her debut as a singer in Dresden, and after touring many European countries made her first appearance on the London stage in 1784. She was back in England in 1791 and remained there for ten years before moving to Moscow.

Here, she writes to Maria Louisa Catherine Cecilia Hadfield (1759-1838), wife of the artist Richard Cosway. Between 1784 and 1791, the Cosways lived in an apartment at Schomberg House, Pall Mall. Located at the heart of London's West End, with theatres and concert halls within early reach, the house was also an opportunity for the couple to position themselves at the centre of aristocratic London society. Maria regularly organised concerts and recitals for her guests.

Maria was also an accomplished musician, and a successful history painter. She was a pioneer for women's education, establishing a girls' school in Lyon in the early 19th century. Today, she is known for her affair with Thomas Jefferson in the 1780s.

Broadley Haymarket I, p 343

Letter from W Digges to "Cunny"

Dear Cunny

I received the pleasure of yours and am happy you are safely arrived at your destined port. Tell Farrell I am very angry at not having an answer. Have you heard what is become of her sister? [...] is angry at not having heard from you. He is still with his favourite and seems as much in love as ever. I am surprised at what you say about A, as he has an estate, where he lives, and therefore ought to be known. If you hear anything about Parker, let me know. The Edinburgh Company is going to Sunderland. I am quite recovered of my late indisposition but not in the best spirits. The weather here has been dreadful, but now we are blessed with hard frosts. Mr Digges is well but has not set a time yet for his return. Baker is not gone yet, we are a dismal family. He is [...], your humble servant thinking Nelly holding, Charles a hiding, grumbling, Tom a coughing, the dear Black Bird a molten. Bless your stars at being happily rid of such horrid company. I expect to hear from you often, tell me all the news. I fear, nay now am almost sure, that I shall not go to London soon. Try if you see A to get him to find money, it never was more wanted. But he is such a [...], I have no great expectation. Adieu my dear Cunny, the mutton is on the table, for fear of Anthony's souring the milk, I must attend. He has taken a religious fit and is going to be a friar. Don't you think he would be an attendant of a seraglio? I am starved with cold and can hardly hold my pen but am always, at all times, and in all situations your sincere friend

W Digges

PS Don't remember me to Farrell. I am angry.

West Dudley Digges (1720-1786), actor and actor-manager

Digges made his first appearance, in Dublin, in 1749 and his London debut, at the Haymarket, in 1777.

In 1756, Digges moved from Dublin to Edinburgh, where he took up the management of the Edinburgh Theatre. He toured extensively in the provinces, and enjoyed four years of success on the London stage between 1777 and 1781. In 1784, Digges suffered a stroke, which effectively brought an end to his acting career.

This undated letter gives a colourful insight into life as part of a travelling company of actors. Digges describes the troupe as 'a dismal family' and 'horrid company', revealing the cracks that emerged in the relationships of touring actors.

Broadley Haymarket I, p 467

(Letter from John, Duke of Montagu to Mr Cockram (5 January 1725))

January 5th 1725

Yours of the 16th December. I have received this moment the news of poor Jackson's death. I had learnt it before as ere this you'll have found by my letters. I shall not [...] on anybody till my arrival which, God willing, will certainly be by the latter end of July. Till then my son will not be fit to travel. He thrives, God be thanked, to a wonder. As for timber, what you have cuttable in the copses, you have cut, I would have you sell; that is, what trees are come to their maturity. But don't deal with Martin, but with him that you dealt last with. Since you have tried whether the place I designed was in a good light for our pictures and found it not so, let it remain till I come over. As for chamber wood, what quantity will be necessary, you ought to know best, since you have often made those provisions. I have told you already in what rooms I would have coal be burnt in, supposing it to be as cheap as wood. Therefore, accordingly, you must provide for both, as well as charcoal and faggots, in the brew house, [...] burn turf if it does not affect the drink, for it must be cheaper and I must be in the management, these hard times. I suppose you'll remember to buy me the quantity of wines I mentioned to you in one of my letters. You do mighty well to cut the furze bushes where the [...] is. I hope to keep Cowdray gardens cheaper [...]. As for seeds, after I am provided the first year, I shall not buy any more. I've learnt to receipt this voyage. I find tis only a trick of gardening and that what they allege, that the same seed will not thrive in two years in the same ground. As I wrote to you last, if any difficulty in country affairs should occur to you, address yourself to Mr Radbourne. As for [...], I shall not determine anything till I am arrived and considered some time of it. I am your well wisher,

Montagu

John, Second Duke of Montagu (1690–1749), courtier

The Second Duke of Montagu is thought to have been behind a famous hoax at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in 1749. In that year, a conjuring act, *The Bottle Conjuror*, was billed to appear at the theatre. The act was promised to show a man magicking his whole body inside a wine bottle. However, the illusion was never performed – on the day of the performance, the conjuror failed to make his appearance on stage. This non-appearance provoked a riot in the theatre.

In this letter, Montagu writes of domestic matters: the gardens of one of his estates. He was enthusiastic about the gardens of his country estate, Boughton House and his involvement in expanding and improving the gardens lent him the nickname 'The Planter'. His main town residence, Montagu House, was given to the country following his death, and was opened as the British Museum in 1759. He also had a property in Privy Gardens, Whitehall, where he died on 6 July 1749.

Broadley Haymarket I, p 683

Letter from Sir John Coventry - recipient not mentioned (24 March 1681)

My Lord

The bearer hereof, Mr John Cooke, hath for several years last past been employed in the service of a cure where I am concerned and hath, during his service there, carried himself with unspotted loyalty towards his Prince, so far as I understand,

John Coventry

Crombe, March 24th 1681

Sir John Coventry (c 1636–1685), politician

Coventry was elected Member of Parliament for Weymouth in 1667.

In December 1670 Coventry expressed his support of a new tax being imposed on the theatres. In the parliamentary debate that ensued, he made a comment that was interpreted as a slur on the King's relationship with certain actresses. That same night, walking home through the streets of Westminster, Coventry was attacked by the duke of Monmouth's men, who were acting to avenge the King. Coventry's nose was severely maimed. The incident shocked Coventry's fellow MPs, and led to the passing of the Coventry Act (1671), an Act "to prevent malicious maiming and wounding".

Broadley Haymarket I, p 705

Letter from George Morland to John Graham (6 May 1801)

Dear Graham

I am worse than ever. Had an opium pill to take last night as I thought two must do me more good than one. I took them both. I expected it was all up.

However, I am not quite so bad, but I will use my best endeavour to get on for you this week, the whole of which I must keep quiet,

Goodbye

G Morland

Wednesday

George Morland (1763-1804), painter

Morland was born in the Haymarket in 1763. He became a well known painter of domestic scenes with a moralising message, and as early as 1773 was an honorary exhibitor at the Royal Academy.

Hugely talented, Morland was astonishingly productive: he sometimes completed two paintings in a single day, is said to have painted as many as one hundred and ninety-two pictures, for one customer alone, between 1800 and 1804. His extraordinary focus was, however, matched by a reputation for hard drinking. His deteriorating state of health in the latter years of his life was undoubtedly made worse by his alcohol abuse. He describes his sufferings in this brief letter, addressed to fellow painter John Graham (1754-1817)

Broadley Haymarket II, v

Letter from Anna Lodi (10 January 1708)

I shall be contented to sing the part of Media in the opera called Thomyris or the Amazon Queen in my own cloth[e]s on the stage for two or three days and after to perform the part of Eurilla in Mr Valentin's opera as often as the said opera shall be performed from the date hereof until the 13th day of next June, if my health will permit - but no other part in any other opera during the said season, except I shall be consenting these to myself. And, before do I perform, act or sing in either of the said operas, Mr Vanbrugh must oblige himself, by writing, to pay me one hundred and fifty pounds by weekly payments (viz) seven pounds four shillings every week until the said one hundred and fifty pounds be paid. If Mr Vanbrugh will agree to this, I shall be ready and willing to perform the parts as abovementioned, who am, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant

Anna Lodi

January 10th 1707/8

Anna Lodi [*née Signon*] (fl 1703-1715), singer

There is relatively little surviving documentation of the singer Anna Lodi. This letter to Vice Chamberlain Coke gives a good indication of her astute head for business, as she negotiates the terms of her stage appearances.

In their *Biographical dictionary of actors, actresses [...] and other stage personnel in London, 1660-1800* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), Highfill, Burnima and Langhans suggest that she may not have sung Media: the 1707 edition of the opera indicates that Mary Lindsey took the role at the Queen's Theatre. It is possible that Lodi may have starred in a number of the performances, although the role appears to have been dedicated to Lindsey.

Broadley Haymarket II, *vii*

Letter from Nicolini (Nicolino Grimaldi) to Vice-Chamberlain Coke (18 May 1710)

Monsieur:

Suivant vos commandements, j'ay l'honneur de vous envoyer la memoire en question de ce qui se passe entre Monsieur Suigni [Swiny] et moy avec les articles de l'accord qui a ete fait entre lui et moy. Je vous supplie de votre protection et surtout pour me délivrer d'un esclavage inquiet et honteux qu'on ne scaurait [saurait?] non plus s'imaginer ailleurs hors de l'Angleterre et d'être persuadé que je serai toujours avec tout la sincerité et respect que je dois, Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur, [...] Nicolino Grimaldi

Nicola [Nicolini] Grimaldi (c 1673-1732), singer

The Italian castrato Grimaldi was brought to England by Owen Swiney, manager of the Queen's Theatre, to perform in the 1708 opera season. He debuted in London in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* on 14 December.

In this letter to Vice-Chamberlain Coke, Grimaldi complains of his “worrying and shameful slavery” to Swiney, enforced by the prohibitive terms of his contract (see next page).

Nicolini went on to have a successful operatic career in London that spanned a decade. He became known for his performances in the operas of George Frederic Handel.

Broadley Haymarket II, *viii*

Owen Mac Swiney's Conditions for Engaging Nicolini

Proposals to Signor Nicolini:

1st - The engagement to be for three years

2nd - He shall not perform in any place during that time within the Liberties of London or Westminster where money is taken

3rd - He shall have an opera upon the same terms he had this year, every season

4th - If actng be forbid by the Government or Lord Chamberlain for the time being, or that Signor Nicolini shall not be able by reason of sickness to perform the agreement on his part, then an [abatment?] to be made in proportion to the time of such cessation or non-performance

5th - He shall be obliged to perform three new parts every year if required, but he shall have the liberty of choosing his parts

6th - I will pay him 150 ll [pounds] for a fair score with the words and parts of an opera to be by him fitted for the English stage every season, if such opera shall be approved of

7th - He shall receive every year 800 guineas by six payments:-

1st payment being 300 guineas upon the 10th day of December; 2nd payment being 100 guineas upon the 10th of Jan; 3rd payment being 100 upon the 10th of Feb; 4th payment being 100 upon the 10th of March; 5th payment being 100 upon the 10th April; last payment upon the 10th of May being 100 guineas

8th - He shall not be obliged to attend the business of the house between the first day of June and the last day of October in any of the three years

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(Letter - Terms of Contract - from Catherine Tofts (c1750))

In obedience to your Lordship's command, I humbly propose to sing upon ye following terms:

1st I oblige myself to sing as often as required for twenty guineas each time.

2nd In consideration ye year is so far advanced, I offer to sing as often as operas shall be performed till ye first of July for four hundred guineas.

3rd I humbly propose to sing for ten guineas a time till ye first of July next, upon condition ye undertaker oblige themselves to call me to sing twice a week.

4th That I may not be debarred singing at a play which is coming out, upon condition it does not interfere with an opera.

All which is humbly offered to your Lordship's consideration by

Your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant,

Catherine Tofts

Catherine Tofts (c 1685-1756), singer

Catherine Tofts was a fine opera singer, and the first English singer to successfully perform Italian opera. At the height of her career she was the highest-paid opera singer in England; the only other possible claimant to that title being her long-term rival, Margherita de l'Epine.

English audiences not only appreciated Tofts' singing, but found her stage presence charming. She was also a hard-headed businesswoman. These terms of employment, which she sent to Sir John Vanbrugh in 1708, suggest that she was a demanding yet valuable actress for the King's Theatre in the Haymarket.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 33

Owen Swiny - Agreement as to Opera Management with Sir John Vanbrugh, Mr Collier and others (16 November 1710)

Mr Vanbrugh is to have 700 pounds, and the year ending on the tenth of May next.

I desire to be secured that I may receive the 700 pounds out of the receipts of the Opera and ten shillings each week for the housekeeper.

Mr Collier, or which other person shall have a power to act operas, shall have the use of all the opera clothes, books, [scores?] and other materials belonging to the Opera which I am now possessed of, with the liberty to perform operas two days in every week, and the clothes scores of operas and all other materials which shall be by him or them added to the stock this year are to be delivered to Mr Swiny into Mr Vanbrugh's original stock of clothes and as his property. Mr Collier or any other person being considered as the undertaker: this your declaring that they have no rights to such additional stock but that such materials as shall be added and as a consideration for the wearing out, damage and use of the present stock.

The wardrobe keepers to be [...] to Mr Swiny but to be paid by the undertakers of the Opera.

Owen Swiny

November 16th 1710

Owen Swiny (c 1676-1754), theatre impresario

Owen Swiny first leased the Queen's Theatre from Sir John Vanbrugh in 1706. The following years witnessed an embittered struggle for supremacy between his enterprise and that at Drury Lane. Initially, Swiny made considerable progress, poaching actors for the Queen's Theatre and, when Christopher Rich was evicted from Drury Lane, gaining the rights to perform spoken drama. However, the tables turned in 1710 when William Collier, proprietor at Drury Lane, affected a coup. He took over management of the Queen's Theatre himself – a development referred to in this agreement with Vanbrugh – and transferred Swiny and his co-managers to Drury Lane. Swiny's terms of employment worsened considerably as a result, with his salary being reduced to a fourth of the company's net receipts and his co-managers refusing him any financial control.

Swiny's career at the Haymarket and Drury Lane ended in scandal. Having sued his co-managers in Chancery for breach of contract, he struck a deal with Collier, granting him a licence to perform opera at the Haymarket once more. However, finding the opera in financial difficulty, Swiny abandoned his theatre and players in January 1713 and ran away to France. His exile lasted at least until the mid-1720s, when his name starts to reappear in connection with London theatre.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 35

Letter from Catherine Tofts to Vice-Chamberlain Coke (18 December [1707?])

Tuesday the 18 December

I have seen ye orders you have sent to Mr Dieupart and am very sorry that I should be put to the necessity of den[y]ing. I am convinced that none but Mr Rich's friends could prevail upon my Lord and you to have Thomryis down without having matters settled so that we may be secured from further troubles, but if it is my Lord's pleasure that I should be silent I willingly submit to his Lordship's commands and am contented to wait for a better opportunity in hope that in case fresh orders should come that I must sing again. 80 guineas that I laid out last winter for Camilla's clothes, by order of a nobleman who is Mr Rich's best friend, with Mr Rich's consent shall be paid to me - otherwise I am resolved never to set my foot upon ye stage again, since it is to my great loss that I have done it hitherto by reason of the expense that I have been at - and must daily to make a tolerable appearance, since Mr Rich won't allow necessaries. Therefore I humbly beg of my Lord Chamberlain not to depend on my performance in Thomyris on Saturday next, since I am resolved not to do it till I have 80 guineas sent to me by Mr Rich, beside what I must have for my day's performance.

From &c.

Cath Tofts

Catherine Tofts (c1685-1756), singer

Tofts was one of several singers who switched their allegiance from Drury Lane to the Haymarket between 1707 and 1708. The manager of Drury Lane, Christopher Rich, was known as an unsympathetic employer, short-changing his performers out of their salaries and treating them as thoroughly dispensable. Vice-Chamberlain Coke received several complaints about Rich around this period, including this letter from Catherine Tofts.

Here, Tofts registers a complaint, claiming that Rich has failed to pay her for clothes purchased for the opera *Camilla* – a debt of 80 guineas. She threatens “never to set [...] foot upon ye stage again”, which would compromise her appearance as Cleora in the imminent production of *Thomyris*.

Tofts' London career ended fairly soon after this episode. She appears to have made her last appearance on the London stage in May 1709.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 43

Letter regarding an agreement between John James Heidegger and Anastasia Robinson (1714)

Mrs Robinson has agreed to sing in the Opera on these conditions:

The operas here affirmed by Mr Heidegger could not begin till the New Year for reasons he then gave. Mrs Robinson to have 500 for singing in the Opera, and a benefit day. This bargain to be of no force unless Cavalier Nicolino returned to sing in the Opera.

By command of Mr Vice-Chamberlain (on his declaring the Operas to begin next week), Mrs Robinson offers to begin then to sing, pretends no alteration as to the price of five hundred pounds and submits to that. But by reason the operas are to begin eleven weeks sooner than Mr Heidegger proposed when the agreement was made, she only requires to have her benefit without any charges whatever.

I made a bargain with Mrs Robinson upon the 14 of July past, in the presence of Her Grace the Duchess of Shrewsbury, as follows:

Mrs Robinson's daughter is to sing in the opera under my direction the following season.

I am to pay her the sum of five hundred pounds and a benefit day at the usual charges and in case I should be a gainer by the Operas, I oblige me self to make her a present of a gold watch.

J J Heidegger

Robinson, Anastasia (c1692-1755), singer

In this contract, JJ Heidegger lays out the conditions according which the singer Anastasia Robinson is to be employed at the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket. Robinson had already had dealings with the theatre: in June 1713 she had had a benefit there.

Robinson made her debut at the Haymarket on 27 January 1714 . Unfortunately her first season at the Opera was not a financial success: the company lost money, and hence she did not receive her promised bonus of a gold watch. Nevertheless, she continued to sing at the Queen's Theatre regularly until 1717. Among her greatest roles was that of Oriana in Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula*, in which she played opposite the castrato Nicolo Grimaldi ("Cavalier Nicolino"). Although she fell ill shortly after the debut in May 1715 she recreated the role in later seasons to great acclaim.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 43

Order to Pay out of His Majesty's Treasury the Sum of £1000. Signed by Walpole, Dodington, Yonge and others (30 August 1731)

In^o James Heidegger

Order is taken this 30th day of August 1731, by virtue of His Majesty's General Letters of Privy Seal, bearing date this 26th day of June 1727 and in pursuance of a Warrant under His Majesty's Royal Sign Manual dated the 24th instant, that you deliver and pay of such His Majesty's Treasure as remains in your charge unto John James Heidegger Esq., or to his assigns, the sum of one thousand pounds without account to be applied as His Majesty's Royal Bounty towards enabling the undertakers of the Opera to pay their debts and these to go then with his or his assigns. Acquittance shall be your and discharge herein.

Johann Jakob [John James] Heidegger (1666-1749), theatre impresario

As manager of the King's Theatre, Heidegger benefitted from a position at the centre of London's high society. The opera also benefitted from an allowance from the King, the payment of which is ordered in this document. The order bears the signature of Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Robert Walpole, among others.

This order was issued during Heidegger and Handel's partnership at the King's Theatre. They had established a new opera company at the theatre in late 1729. However, the venture was not financially successful, and at the end of the 1733-4 season Heidegger leased the King's Theatre to a rival company, the new Opera of the Nobility.

Broadley Haymarket II, p115

Letter from John Beard (4 January 1758)

Sir

The countenance you have so generously shown me on all occasions has, at length, encouraged me to request a favour of you on which my future happiness almost entirely depends; and, should there be anything either impertinent or improper in this application, I flatter myself, I may rely on that goodness I have so often experienced for an excuse.

I beg leave to inform you, Sir, that I have had the honour to be principally employed in the performance of the Birthday and New Year's Odes for twenty-four years, for which I have never received any gratuity or allowance whatever, (there being no provision on the Civil List for vocal performers) and you know, Sir, I am now approaching towards that time of life which must necessarily render any advantage from my public performances precarious. The late Dr Greene, composer to His Majesty and Master of the Band, has often told me these services would, on a proper representation, entitle me to some provision from the Government: and, in this opinion, about three weeks ago, I set forth my pretensions as above, and petitioned the Duke of Newcastle for a place as King's Waiter in the Customs then vacant, but was informed by a friend in His Grace's family that my petition would be of little use to me unless I could prevail on some nobleman of consequence to back it, and advised me by all means to lose no time. My humble situation allowed me no intimacy with the Great, but I don't know how, I was hurried into hopes that some part of my character might possibly claim the protection of the Good. In this situation of mind Sir, you who know Lord Hallifax cannot be surprised I soon found myself at his door, though I wished myself a thousand miles off before it was opened; but opened it was and I no sooner approached His Lordship than all my diffidence, doubts and fears were changed to gratitude and respect. His Lordship showed a desire to serve me but, alas, the place I wanted, unfortunately for me, was actually promised to himself for a friend of His Lordship. I returned to Newcastle House and told the Duke I came to withdraw my petition, as I had been informed His Grace had promised the post to a friend of Lord Hallifax; and was graciously dismissed, with leave to apply on any future occasion.

Now Sir, if you in your wonted goodness can prevail on Lord Halifax to think me for your sake worthy his protection, I am persuaded, whenever the occasion shall offer I cannot fail of success

I have the honour to be, with every grateful sentiment, Sir, your most obliged, humble servant,

John Beard

John Beard (c1717-1791), singer

From 1752, Beard had sought a salaried position to ensure him financial security in older age. In 1757, aged 42, he petitioned the Duke of Newcastle for the position of King's Waiter in His Majesty's Customs. His request was denied.

In this letter of 1758 he recounts the episode, still in hope that the Duke of Newcastle's friend Lord Halifax might offer him a position.

Finally, in 1764, George III made Beard "Vocal Performer in Extraordinary to his Majesty" and granted him an annual pension of £100.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 115

Letter from John Beard to Mr Booth (14 October 1776)

Rose Hill, 14th X 1776

Dear Sir

I beg you will present my grateful acknowledgements to the Gentlemen of the Committee for their kind invitation, and assure them of my concern that my engagement at this place will not allow me the pleasure of telling them in person how much I think myself their obliged, humble servant,

John Beard

John Beard (c1717-1791), singer

This letter is written from Beard from his residence Rose Hill, at Hampton. He had retired from the stage almost a decade previously, due to ill health and loss of hearing. Part of the estate at Hampton had been given to Beard by David Garrick in the late 1760s, and Rose Hill was built by Beard circa 1774.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 125

Letter of complaint about Badini's impudence towards Lady Mary Di (c1786)

Lady Mary Di is not a little surprised at the consummate impudence of Badini, in daring to have the insolence to send tickets to her house without her having sent him orders for it. Had she intended going, this would have prevented her, nor does she see any occasion to employ so bad a poet as Badini. He can be of no service except to wipe off the dust from the dancers' shoes when they come off the stage.

Carlo Francesco Badini (fl. 1769-1793), librettist

Badini was a prolific librettist, with his earliest known work, *Nanetta e Lubino*, having been produced at the King's Theatre, Haymarket in 1769. His relationship with the King's Theatre was strong throughout his career, and he was employed as a staff librettist there at various points in the 1780s and 1790s.

In 1786 Badini was acting manager of the theatre, and it was in this year that the theatre produced his opera, *L'Inglese in Italia*. Anfossi's score was not well received by the critics, but Badini's libretto did attract praise.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 149

Letter from Signora Storace to Thomas John Dibdin (30 October 1816)

Herne Hill Cottage, 30 October 1816

Dear Dibdin

I have this instant read your favor and congratulate you both on the birth of a son and heir which I hope and trust will be more fortunate with than you were with the others. Am extremely happy to hear Mrs D is so well - pray give my love to her. We arrived home last night from Brighton - left it in the morning - came in 12 hours with our own horses. Don't you think that was capital? We should certainly have called on you, but I guessed Mrs D must either be in bed or near her confinement, and we judged we should only be in the way and that you would not have room for us - and to call only would have been too much for the horses in addition to the Brighton journey - or be assured we should never have passed so near Betchworth without calling on our friends. During Mrs Carey's residence at Brighton we were in daily expectation of seeing you - then should have learned exactly (from yourself) whether a visit in our way home could have been contrived.

We shall be at home the whole of the month of November, and shall hope to see you. Our beds are always kept aired so you can never arrive mal-à-propos.

I am sorry I did not see your friends yesterday, but of course it must have been us they did see. I am surprised I did not know Mrs Charles Dibdin. We tried to look for your cottage, and I fancied I saw it. I assure you we were sorry to stay 2 hours and a half at Reigate - so near - and not to be able to get to you. A pair of wings then would have been very acceptable.

I saw you Benefit announced for the 25th and was happy the poor Princess's death did not prevent its taking place, for we made sure that evening would be a favourable one for a benefit.

We called on Mr Harris at Brighton, who was polite enough to express great satisfaction at our attention, and we were much gratified to see him look so much better. You know he was always a great favourite of ours. He rather seemed in expectation of seeing you there before he returned to Uxbridge.

Adieu my good friend. My mother, and even the servants, rejoice to hear of Mrs D's doing so well. We both join in best regard to you. Br[...] is gone to town but will be much delighted to hear (on his return) of your letter.

Yours sincerely

A S Storace

PS the butcher is waiting for the letter.

Ann Selina [Nancy] Storace (1765-1817), singer

Ann Selina Storace, popularly known as Nancy, was an operatic soprano and the daughter of Italian double-bass player Stefano Storace. She made her debut on the London stage at the Haymarket on 15 April 1774, launching a highly successful international career. Mozart famously gave her the role of Susanna, the maid, in his opera *Le Nozze di Figaro*, which premiered in 1786. In 1808 she retired from the stage, and made Herne Hill Cottage her permanent residence.

This letter was written in a year of personal trauma for Storace. In early 1816, her long-term lover John Braham abandoned Ann, and ran away to France with a Mrs Wright. Quickly abandoning Mrs Wright after her husband threatened legal action, Braham went on to marry a Frances Elizabeth Bolton in November of that same year.

News of Braham's desertion spread quickly, and scandalised London theatre audiences. Storace was heart-broken by the turn of events. She had been in a relationship with Braham for over 20 years, and he was the father of her son, William Spencer Braham.

In this letter of 30 October 1816, she appears to address Thomas John Dibdin (1771-1841), the second illegitimate child of Charles Dibdin the elder. He had followed his father into the theatrical profession, making a career as an actor, playwright, and theatre manager.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 183

Letter from John Nash to the Earl of Caledon (30 November 1826)

No14 Regent Street

30 November 1826

My Dear Lord,

Your letter came just as I was about sending the working plans to three builders to have their estimates. I, of course, stopped my hand.

I cannot find the sketches which were first made and which you allude to. I fear being mere sketches that they were thrown aside when the plans were fixed as being no longer of any use. I have therefore sent you an arrangement which I should prefer. In forming this plan I have had in view your not having more building than you require - the only excep[tion] being the gallery which, being only 12 feet wide and two storeys high, will add very little expense at the same time that it will afford a handsome approach both to your drawing room above and eating room below. You will see too that, should you wish to have a library, you might have it by widening the gallery - but I have sketched out 2 or 3 other arrangements which I shall send you the one after the other, so that when you shall have had them all, you will see the subject in every [front?] of which it is susceptible. [...] Lady Stewart is wavering between two (new) sites and there is a contest between Sir Charles and Mr [...] as to one of the spots.

I have the honour to be, with great respect, your Lordship's faithful servant,

John Nash

John Nash (1752–1835), architect

In 1826 the architect John Nash was at the height of his career. The construction of Regent Street to his design, which was completed in the mid-1820s, transformed the face of London's West End. His portfolio also included the transformation of Marylebone Park into the landscaped Regent's Park, and a number of theatres, including the Haymarket.

This letter concerns his development of the southern part of the Crown Estate: the improvement of St James's Park, and the replacement of the former Carlton House with two blocks of grand terraced houses. Carlton House Terrace was constructed between 1827 and 1833. The 2nd Earl of Caledon's lease on no. 5 commenced in 1830, but it is clear from this letter that he was closely involved in the interior architecture of the property.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 205

Letter from Samuel Arnold to Pierre François Laporte (10 March 1828)

T R E d H
March 10th 1828

My dear Monsieur Laporte

Ayez la bonté... no, I must write in English or you will not understand me... I wish very much to see you, and that as speedily as possible on the subject of the benefit for the sufferers by the late dreadful accident. Say when, where, and at what hour.

If anything is to be done it "must be done quickly", and while I give you all possible credit for your prompt and very generous offer to the Committee, allow me to suggest that your honor will be doubled and trebled by the sudden decision of your movements and the ready acquiescence with any arrangements which may render your liberality in the highest degree effective. But of all this we must talk and not write. And that I like to talk with you, on any subject, I hope I need not (...) you under the hand of yours, very sincerely,

S Arnold

Samuel James Arnold (1774-1852), dramatist and theatre manager

Samuel James Arnold was a trained artist, but his real passion was for theatre. After working as a playwright and producer for over a decade, he gained a licence to convert the old Lyceum on Wellington Street into a new venue. His 'English Opera House' opened in 1816.

On 28 February 1828, the roof of the newly-built Brunswick Theatre in Wells Street collapsed, trapping about 100 people. Arnold's letter to Pierre-François Laporte, manager of the Haymarket Theatre, appears to refer to this devastating turn of events. He thanks Laporte for the support he has offered to the relief committee, including a benefit performance for "the sufferers by the late dreadful accident".

Broadley Haymarket II, p 245

Letter from Charles Incledon to R Elliston (10 April 1807)

Norwich, Thursday, 10th

My dear Elliston

I called several times at the Olympic Theatre before I left town but could never get sight of you. I shall return to town in about a week or ten days when I will give you a call in Stratford Place. I have been making some engagements in the north with Macready, H Johnston etc etc and will, if you approve of it, perform with you at Birmingham in (sic) my way to those places. God bless you and success attend you, dear Elliston.

Yours truly

C Incledon

PS - I perform here every night this week and damned deal of applause but little money.

Charles Incledon (c1763-1826), singer

Incledon was a fine tenor, yet not so highly regarded as an actor. Nevertheless, from 1790 to 1815 he performed at Covent Garden almost every season, and his salary rose steadily during this period. In this letter he writes his performances in the provinces, including plans to work with William Macready and Henry Johnston on a northern tour. In the letter he addresses Robert Elliston, a fellow actor and the manager of several theatres in London and the provinces.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 255

Letter from Albert to Monsieur Viguet, Paris (7 June 1828)

Monsieur,

J'ai l'honneur de vous prévenir que j'ai remis pour vous deux mille francs entre les mains de Mr Morisseau, mon notaire. Vous pouvez vous présenter quand bon vous semblera - ils sont à votre disposition.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec considération, Monsieur,

Votre serviteur,

Albert

le 7 juin 1828

François-Ferdinand Decombe (c1789-1865), dancer

Decombe performed under the stage name Albert. He performed on the London stage at various points between 1821 and 1845.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 271

Letter from Michael Kelly to Peter Moore (December 1816)

Sir

When I had the honor to solicit your attention to my case, in reference to my situation in Drury Lane Theatre, of which you are a trustee, you had the goodness to intimate that my best mode of proceeding would be to prepare a written statement setting forth particulars. Very anxious to profit by this suggestion, I trouble you with the enclosed, and I shall endeavour to supply all that appears to me further necessary by this letter.

The consequence of my written application to Mr Whitbread (of which the enclosed is a copy) was that I was immediately retained by him, in Drury Lane Theatre, as Director of the Musical Department at the salary of twelve pounds per week.

Previously to this continuation of my appointment by Mr Whitbread, and while Mr Wroughton was Acting Manager, he (Mr Wroughton) avowed that he understood from Mr Sheridan that my salary of twelve pounds was fixed for my life.

Again, when the late theatre was unfortunately consumed by fire, and a majority of its actors formed a temporary establishment at the Lyceum (Mr Sheridan having instructed them not to disperse but to carry on performances there as the Drury Lane Company under a committee of their own till other arrangements could be effected), then the committee of actors paid my full weekly salary above-mentioned in consequence of Mr Sheridan's explication of my claims. Various appeals to consideration from persons thrown out of their usual theatrical employment were rejected under the existing and narrowed state of the Company's operations, although many of these appeals carried a full conviction of their strength in an abstract point of view; but my claim was admitted on account of its peculiar and compound right to attention.

Further, when Mr Arnold was Acting Manager in the present New Theatre, he stated to the Sub-Committee, for the time being, the necessity for curtailing expense - particularly in the Opera Department - at which time Mr Sheridan informed Mr Arnold that he (Mr Sheridan) always considered my situation and salary for life, to be immovable, and, accordingly my situation and salary remained unaltered.

Mr Bannister and others who were of the Committee of Actors at the Lyceum and Messrs Wroughton and Arnold can, if it is thought to be necessary, come forward to confirm the statements I have made which have any reference to their testimonies.

In time, since the commutation of the debt due to me and the late Mrs Crouch, my full weekly salary has been always paid during every vicissitude of the Drury Lane Theatre concern, till latterly.

But latterly, the success in the present concern of Drury Lane not being commensurate with the exertions and expectations of its Directors, a gentleman did me the honor to call upon me, who was at the time a member of the Sub-Committee, to inform me of the pressures upon the theatre and to suggest, as one among the plans of future retrenchment, the diminution of my salary - a salary annexed to the situation in which Mr Whitbread had continued me and which continuation of my salary and appointment, under

all the circumstances, was surely an admission, if not a downright confirmation, of the validity of my claims for life, as stated in the enclosed letter which I had written to him, (Mr Whitbread).

Still, having the prosperity of the theatre most sincerely at heart, I consented, upon the representation of the gentleman of the Sub-Committee above-mentioned, to forgo a part of my weekly stipend. This gentleman, however, when he afterwards had the goodness to take the trouble of communicating my consent to his colleagues, was under a misapprehension in respect to the extent of the reduction in which I had acquiesced: a misapprehension which it is, hereby, my object to remove, that its effect may cease, as it deprives me of a complete moiety of my pay.

One third of my salary I cheerfully relinquish to the present necessities of the concern, but I could not subscribe to a surrender of one entire half without subjecting myself to absolute inconvenience; indeed such a defalcation would most deeply affect my requisite comforts.

Here, Sir, I rest - founding my immediate hopes of consideration on the rectitude of principle which influences the resolutions of the Sub-Committee, and upon its contemplating me as a creditor of the theatre who has agreed to the commutation stated in the enclosed, in lieu of four thousand pounds and upwards.

It would ill become me to say whether, on the face of the facts herein contained, any favourable feeling towards me should be blended with matters of equity and justice, and I leave it to the gentlemen of the Sub-Committee to determine how far a liberal sentiment should spare me from further question - from uneasiness and difficulty - how far such a sentiment (particularly when a fair claim is, as I conceive apparent) should be permitted to operate towards anyone who has so long prominently labouring in a theatrical concern as I have been, and who has faithfully, and zealously, adhered to his duty and to his employers.

I respectfully entreat that you will take an early opportunity of submitting my case to the gentlemen above-mentioned.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

Michael Kelly

Michael Kelly (1762-1826), singer and composer

The Dublin-born musician Michael Kelly enjoyed a busy career as an opera singer in Italy and Austria before arriving on the London theatre scene in 1787. He first appeared on stage at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane in April of that year, and continued to perform at with the Drury Lane company throughout his working life.

From 1793 he was also involved with the management of the King's Theatre, Haymarket. Kelly retired from the stage in 1808, but was retained at Drury Lane as its musical director.

This letter is not written in Kelly's hand, but does bear his autograph. It is addressed to Peter Moore, a trustee of the Drury Lane Theatre, in 1816. The Drury Lane Theatre, in response to a difficult financial period, had asked the members of its company to voluntarily accept a pay cut; however, Kelly complains that the reduction to his salary proposed by the Sub-Committee is greater than that to which he had originally agreed:

"one third of my salary I cheerfully relinquish to the present necessities of the concern, but I could not subscribe to a surrender of one entire half without subjecting myself to absolute inconvenience; indeed such a defalcation would most deeply affect my requisite comforts".

Kelly's letter makes references to the Drury Lane Theatre fire of 1809, and to the financial sacrifices made by the theatre's company of actors in the aftermath of the disaster. He also mentions Anna Maria Crouch – a late colleague of his and an intimate friend. Kelly had lived with the Crouches since 1787 and, following Anna's separation from her husband in 1791, Kelly and Mrs Crouch continued to live together in Pall Mall. Mrs Crouch died in 1805.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 325

Letter from Pierre Francois Laporte to J Winston, Esq (September 1833)

Mr Dear Sir

I trust it will not be attributed to any feeling of disrespect for the Garrick Club, nor any of its members, but simply to my domestic habits when I tell you that ever since last year it was my intention to decline the advantage of belonging to it. As I did not know how to act in that circumstance I applied to Mr Bartley, who as an English gentleman was more competent in those matters, and he told me that the usual way for one expressing his intention was to abstain from frequenting the club and not to send his subscription - that such a mode was usual and even more polite than an open declaration. I followed his advice but if I have acted wrong and if it is thought that my absence was not a sufficient notice, I will readily pay my subscription and again repeat that I hope no impropriety or offence will be attached to me who have(sic) withdrawn from the English theatres/ for withdrawing from an establishment chiefly theatrical.

I remain, my dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J F Laporte

Pierre François Laporte (1799-1841), actor and manager

French actor Laporte succeeded John Ebers as manager of the King's Theatre in 1828. Excluding a brief interlude in 1831-1833, carried out the role until his death in 1841.

In this letter Laporte addresses the first Secretary and Librarian of the Garrick Club, James Winston. He expresses his intent to extricate himself from membership of the Garrick Club, and his fear of having caused offence through his ignorance of English club etiquette. The famous club was in its infancy, having been founded just two years previously in 1831. The institution's aim was to provide a venue where "actors and men of refinement and education might meet on equal terms". Although Laporte here expresses his desire to "decline the advantage of belonging to it", many of his theatrical contemporaries did embrace the Club and its ideals. William Macready and Charles Mathews are among those names that have entered the pantheon of distinguished members.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 333

Letter from Giulia Grisi to Mr Hoare(?)

Madame Grisi présente ses compliments à Mr [Hoare?] et le remercie infiniment pour son aimable obligeance de lui avoir envoyé le mouchoir que Madame Grisi avait perdu et elle regrette, beaucoup, de lui avoir causé tant de trouble pour une si petite chose.

Giulia Grisi (c1810-1869), singer

The soprano Giulia Grisi came from a theatrical family: her sister Giuditta and cousin Carlotta both had successful stage careers singers and dancers. Giulia made her London stage debut in 1834 went on to dominate the city's opera scene. She was a regular performer at the King's Theatre, Haymarket until 1847, when she accompanied the tenor Mario and composer Michael Costa in transferring to the opera house at Covent Garden.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 393

Letter from Carlotta Grisi (26 August 1846)

13 rue de Trevis

Monsieur,

J'ai lu le charmant article que vous avez fait pour ma rentrée. Je viens vous remercier de l'esprit dans le quel vous l'avez composé. Il m'a fait encore plus de plaisir que les comptes rendus de mes vieux amis, non pas seulement parce qu'il est si spirituellement écrit mais par le motif que je ne puis soupçonner son impartialité, ayant le malheur jusqu'à ce jour de ne, pour vous, être personnellement connue. Je serai à la campagne encore pour huit jours, mais j'espère bien qu'à mon retour vous me fournirez l'occasion de vous remercier de vive voix.

Recevez, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma vive reconnaissance et de mes sentiments les plus distingués.

Carlotta Grisi

Caronne Adele Josephine Marie [Carlotta] Grisi (1819-1899), ballet dancer

The Italian ballet dancer Carlotta Grisi made her London debut in 1836. Between 1841 and 1849 she performed at the Théâtre de la Renaissance in Paris, but returned regularly to London's West End during her vacations. Her working and personal relationship with the ballet master Jules Perrot brought her to Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket, which provided the setting for several seminal performances. She performed her signature role, Giselle, at the theatre in 1842, and two years later joined with some of the greatest names in ballet to perform Perrot's sensational *Pas de quatre*. By the time she was writing this letter in 1846, she was at the height of her Parisian career, commanding a salary in excess of 20,000 francs a year. The timing of this letter from an unidentified admirer, "pour ma rentrée", suggests that she received it when preparing for the 1846-7 ballet and the role of Paquita.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 399

Letter from Fanny Cerrito to Mr Lumley (14 August 1844)

Mademoiselle Cerrito présente ses compliments et ceux de son père et sa mère à Monsieur Lumley: elle regrette beaucoup de ne pouvoir accepter l'aimable invitation pour vendredi prochain, se trouvant préveusement engagée pour ce meme jour avec Madame Tarante.

Mademoiselle Cerrito prie Monsieur Lumley d'accepter de même ses sincères remerciements.

Mardi 14 août 1844
223 Regent Street

Francesca [Fanny] Cerrito (1817-1909), ballet dancer

Cerrito was one of the most popular dancers of the Romantic era. Audiences flocked to see her perform on the stage at Her Majesty's Theatre throughout the 1840s. The highlight of her dancing career came in 1843, with her highly acclaimed performance of Perrot's *Ondine*. 1844 saw her in the title role of *La Esmeralda*, and her collaboration with Lucile Grahn, Marie Taglioni and Carlotta Grisi in Perrot's *Pas de Quatre* was a sensation in 1845. In this letter she addresses Benjamin Lumley, who had taken over the management of Her Majesty's in 1842.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 399

Note from Fanny Cerrito to Mr Lumley (1 April 1856)

Mademoiselle Fanny Cerrito, en faisant ses compliments à Mr Lumley, lui envoie son adresse et le prie de lui faire connaître le jour et l'heure où elle pourra avoir le plaisir de sa visite, afin qu'elle ne sorte pas de chez elle.

1/4/56

Francesca [Fanny] Cerrito (1817-1909), ballet dancer

Cerrito addresses this letter to Benjamin Lumley, manager at the Lyceum Theatre. Lumley had been manager of Her Majesty's Theatre when Cerrito had graced the stage there in the 1840s. In 1856, the Lyceum was playing host to London's opera stars whilst the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden was being rebuilt. Cerrito appeared on the Lyceum stage for the 1856-7 season, shortly before her retirement.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 399

Signed Autographed Letter from Fanny Cerrito to Mr Rodriguez

St Petersburg

Mon cher Monsieur Rodriguez,

Que j'ai bien fait de vous recommander mon frere: il m'a informé dans ses lettres combien vous avez été aimable envers lui et que de bonté et d'intérêt vous lui avez témoigné.

Il m'a écrit aussi que dans sa première entrevue avec vous, la veille de son départ pour l'Italie, vous l'avez informé que Mr de Salamanca avait conclu l'affaire du chemin-de-fer et que l'on aurait bientôt formé le personnel pour l'administration siégeante à Paris, en ajoutant que vous n'accepteriez de place dans cette administration pour lui.

Je ne pourrai jamais vous exprimer combien je suis sensible à l'amitié que vous lui témoignez, car vous occuper de mon frere, vous intéresser pour lui, c'est pour moi la preuve la plus éclatante de votre amitié à mon égard. Je n'écris pas à Mr Salamanca pour lui renouveler mes prières - je ne sais même pas s'il est à Paris - mais je m'adresse à vous: soyez mon interprète auprès de Monsieur Salamanca. Je suis sûre que vous ferez plus que je ne pourrais faire moi même, et si à mon retour de St Petersburg au mois de mars je trouvais mon frere placé, que de reconnaissance ne vous devrai-je alors.

Présentez mes respects à Monsieur et à Madame Salamanca, donnez-moi de vos nouvelles et, en attendant, agréer les sentiments de mon amitié.

Fanny Cerrito

Francesca [Fanny] Cerrito (1817-1909), ballet dancer

This letter may date back to the 1850s, when Cerrito was attempting to plough a career in Russia. She had some successes - including performances for the coronation of Alexander II in Moscow in 1856 - but found it hard to compete with the growing popularity of Russia's home-grown dancers.

Cerrito's brother Giuseppe (Joseph), to whom she refers in this letter, was two years her junior.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 429

Letter from Cornélie Falcon (20 November)

Comme vous êtes aimable, chère et gentille madame, de vous être occupée de moi en me faisant une si jolie bourse. Je savais que vous me conserviez un bon souvenir et cela m'était bien doux, mais j'ai été tout à fait heureuse d'en recevoir l'assurance par votre affectueuse lettre, autre joli ouvrage de votre esprit et de votre coeur.

J'ai eu le plaisir de dîner avant hier avec votre famille, augmentée depuis quelques jours de Madame Barancourt et de ses deux jolies petites filles. Cette bonne récession, malheureusement, ne reste pas complète et va être attristée par le départ de monsieur votre frère et de sa charmante femme, que l'on aime si vite et si bien. Je n'ai jamais vu personne s'attirer plus entièrement l'affection et la sympathie. C'est tout à fait comme vous. Cette chère madame Marie vous aime tendrement et depuis que vous êtes partie nous avons souvent parlé de vous. J'aime à penser qu'elle reviendra bientôt à Paris et je fais des vœux pour qu'elle puisse s'y fixer. Votre excellente mère va se trouver bien isolée quand Madame Barancourt l'aura quittée. Elle était si heureuse de vous avoir tous près d'elle. Je ne veux pas faire de réflexion à ce sujet car j'aiderais votre esprit à broyer du noir. Il n'en a pas besoin et pourtant toutes vos pensées devraient être couleur de rose.

Parlons musique. Vous avez donc renoncé à poursuivre les petites études que nous avons commencés ensemble? C'est très mal en vérité car avec un peu de persévérance, vous auriez certainement réussi. Vous êtes une petite indocile, je le vois par expérience. Je n'ai pas oublié vos rires si peu respectueux pour mon titre de professeur et mon air sévère. Malgré tout cela, je regrette sincèrement nos séances musicales et je me rappelle avec bien de plaisir nos bonnes petites causeries, qui reviendront j'espère.

Je suis désolée d'avoir à vous apprendre que votre chère Mlle Hubert a eu la douleur de perdre sa mère. Sa santé s'en est tout de suite ressentée, mais maintenant elle est mieux. Je lui ferai part de tout ce que vous me dites pour elle, ce qui la rendra très heureuse car elle aussi vous aime bien.

Adieu chère et gentille madame. Embrassez pour moi votre petite ange de fille qui j'aime de tout mon coeur malgré son ingratitude. J'espère que vous ne ferez jamais comme elle et que vous conservez toujours un tendre souvenir à votre bien affectionnée

Cornélie Falcon

Lundi 20 novembre

Cornélie Falcon (1814-1897), singer

Cornélie Falcon's career lasted less than a decade. She premiered in Meyerbeer's *Robert-le-Diable* in 1832, shortly after finishing her training at the Paris Conservatoire. Within ten years, her voice had become so damaged that she could no longer perform on stage. However, her ability to sustain long lyrical lines and high notes with clarity and apparent ease had an influence on the opera world that lasted beyond her short career.

In this affectionate letter, Falcon gently scolds her friend for a lack of industry in practising her musical studies: “you are a little rebel, I can tell from experience. I haven’t forgotten how you used to laugh so disrespectfully at my title of teacher and my severe manner. Despite that, I sincerely miss our musical sessions and I remember with much pleasure our nice little chats, which I hope we will have again”.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 476

Letter from William Dowton (20 January 1824)

My dear Sir

I will be with you tomorrow between one and four, with the twenty pounds and also the balance of the interest money for the Thousand - will, at the same time, sign the paper.

Yours, dear sir, truly

W Dowton

20th January 1824

William Dowton (1764-1851), actor

Dowton established a career in Kent before making his London debut 1796. He performed principally at Drury Lane, but took on roles at the Haymarket during the summer months and was manager there between 1815 and 1816. By the mid 1820s he was principally performing in provincial theatres, in roles including Sir Anthony Absolute in *The Rivals* and Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 489

Letter from Michael Costa to Josiah Pittman (16 July 1881)

59 Eccleston Square
SW

Dear Mr Pittman

In the hope that you may be disengaged tomorrow week, Sunday the 24th inst., I shall be very pleased if you will come and take a family dinner here with a few friends, of course without ceremony, in morning dress at 6.30.

Sincerely yours

M Costa

July 16th 1881

Michael Andrew Angus Costa (1808-1884), composer and conductor

Michaele Andrea Agnelli Costa was born into a musical Neapolitan family. He came to London in 1830 and took up the post of conductor at the King's Theatre. His distinctive fashion sense and his highly-disciplined approach to his art made him a popular figure on London's theatre scene. Following a falling out with Her Majesty's Theatre's manager Benjamin Lumley, Costa continued his conducting career at Covent Garden.

Costa stayed in England for the rest of his life: he adopted British nationality and was knighted in 1869. This invitation to dinner at his home, 59 Eccleston Square, was written towards the end of his life. It is addressed to a fellow composer, Josiah Pittman.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 499

Letter from Giacomo Meyerbeer (July 1853)

Monsieur!

J'apprends qu'à une époque ou j'étais absent de Paris, mes confrères Messieurs les membres de l'institut (section de musique) ont fait une démarche auprès de Monsieur le Ministre, pour demander la Croix de la Légion d'Honneur pour Monsieur Dietsch, Maître de Chapelle à l'Eglise de la Madeleine. Permettez-moi Monsieur de joindre mes instances à ceux de mes confrères en faveur de Monsieur Dietsch.

Connaissant depuis longtemps Monsieur Dietsch et ses travaux, je suis à même de certifier qu'il a rendu de grands et nombreux services à la propagation de la bonne musique à l'église en France comme compositeur et comme maître de chapelle. Il a composé une grande quantité de messes et d'autres musiques religieuses d'un vrai mérite musical et empreintes du véritable style classique de la musique d'église. Comme maître de chapelle à St Eustache d'abord, et depuis à la Madeleine, il a dirigé le service musical de ces églises de la façon la plus méritoire et il a en outre organisé fort souvent pour de grandes fêtes religieuses ou des buts de bienfaisance, de véritables solennités de musique religieuse par d'exécutions magnifiques et tous les plus grandes dimensions des oeuvres classiques, d'un effet puissant, même sur la grande masse des auditeurs non-connaissuers.

Par tous ses efforts il a puissamment contribué à la propagation du goût des masses pour la bonne musique d'église en France et a bien mérité par là de l'art et de la religion: il a droit par conséquent (et depuis long temps même) aux distinctions que le gouvernement daigne accorder au vrai mérite et aux caractères honorables et modestes tels que ceux de Monsieur Dietsch.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de la considération la plus parfaite avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur, votre très dévoué serviteur

Giacomo Meyerbeer

Paris, ce Juillet 1853

[This letter is annotated: A moi adressée le 29 juillet 1853 par M Meyerbeer. Alfr. M.]

Giacomo Meyerbeer [*real name Jakob Liebmann Meyer Beer*] (1791-1864), composer and conductor

The German-born composer Giacomo Meyerbeer here writes in support of Pierre-Louis Dietsch (1808, who had been put forward for the award of the Croix de la Légion d'Honneur. Dietsch boasted an impressive career, having worked as Chapel Master of St-Paul-St Louis, St Eustache and La Madeleine. He also acted as a bass player for the Italian Theatre in Paris, and was organist at St Roch. Meyerbeer argues that Dietsch has propagated good taste in Church music in France, and consequently is deserving of this prestigious award.

Dietsch did indeed become a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1855.

Broadley Haymarket II, p506

Letter to Ludlow, possibly from Sir Julius Benedict (19 December 1855)

2 Manchester Square

19 Dec 1855

My Dear Sir

The aria "Ah Mie Fedeli" is doubtfully Madame Goldschmidt's most brilliant piece, and in which she develops all her extraordinary powers of execution. To exchange for a quiet song like "Ob Die Wölke" would deprive the public of a great treat, the more so as the song of Mozart from Figaro is also of the same character as the one from Freischutz, besides which, Bellini's aria has never before been heard by her at Liverpool and she has chosen it on purpose for that object.

I trust, therefore, you will sanction that aria and am,

yours truly,

[J Benedict?]

Julius Benedict (1804-1884), composer and conductor

In this letter of 1855, Benedict writes to settle arrangements for a performance by the Swedish soprano, Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt (1820-1887). He asks for the aria *O Mie Fedeli*, from Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda*, to be retained in the programme, as opposed to *Ob Die Wölke* from *Der Freischutz* (Weber).

Benedict had a long-established working relationship with Lind, having acted as her musical director and accompanist for an American tour in the early 1850s. It was during this tour that the world-famous 'Swedish Nightingale' met her future husband, Otto Goldschmidt.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 507

Letter from Fanny Elssler to M H Simpson (15 April)

Queen's Theatre
April 15

Sir

Agreeably to your wish, I will consent to add a third danse, though I scarcely feel called upon to do so.

I will dance La Cachucha, in addition to the Pas Seul and La Cracovienne. There must be some acting between each of the three so as to leave me an interval for preparing myself.

I remain, Sir

Your obedient

Fanny Elssler

Fransiska [Fanny] Elssler (1810-1884), dancer

Fanny Elssler was an Austrian-born singer and dancer. By the time she came to London in 1834, she was already a well-known figure on the Austrian and Italian stage.

In 1836, Elssler starred in *Le diable boiteux*. The ballet featured La Chachuca, which would become her signature dance. *Le diable* was her great breakthrough, establishing her as a real rival to her fellow dancer Taglioni, and boosting her reputation as an international star. Success on the London stage led to an extended North American tour. Two years later, in 1842, she returned to the West End, enjoying a warm reception from audiences at the Theatre Royal Haymarket.

In this letter she addresses Mercer Hampson Simpson, lessee and manager of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham. Elssler appeared at the theatre on 20th May 1842, shortly after her return from the United States.

Broadley Haymarket II p 511

Eliza Andrews : Memorandum from Benjamin Lumley concerning the Letting of the Theatre to Her (13 February 1844)

Her Majesty's Theatre, 1844

Memorandum made this thirteenth day of February 1844

Mr Benjamin Lumley agrees to let to, and Mrs Eliza Andrews, widow, agrees to take, the boxes and stalls mentioned in the Memorandum annexed for the Season 1844 at the prices therein mentioned. The boxes called the House Boxes to be paid for in manner following, namely one thousand pounds forthwith, one thousand pounds on the 12th day of April next, one thousand pounds on the 12th day of May next, and the remainder on the 25th day of July next.

The mode of payment for the boxes called Property Boxes amounting to the sum of twelve hundred pounds (a list of which will be furnished by Mr Lumley to Mrs Andrews) is to be arranged according to the wishes of the assignees of Messrs Chambers and Son.

The Season to consist of forty-seven nights and a proportionate reduction to be made for any number of nights deficient.

Mrs Eliza Andrews further undertakes and agrees not to sell or dispose of, under any pretence whatever, any opera book or books other than those printed and published by the Opera House and known by the name of the "Authorised Edition".

No [invoices] to be issued but to subscribers and no cards to be sent in for which [invoices] have been issued.

Benjamin Lumley

Mrs Eliza Andrews, Her Majesty's Theatre, 1844. [...] for subscription to the following boxes and stalls

[seat]	[seat no.]	[price]
Pit box	3	280
Pit box	11	250
Pit box	14	250
Pit box	30	280
Stage	6	300
Ground tier	8	300
Ground tier	17	270
Ground tier	20	270
One pair	48	240
One pair	64	240
One pair	58	240
One pair	66	240
Two pair	86	130
Two pair	87	130
Two pair	97	130
Two pair	104	"
		3550.0.0
29 stalls viz: No 5 6 37 38 39 50 51 56 58 65 67 95 101 102 103 155 156 157 160 161 162 165 180 181 182 142 164 167 168 at £36.15.0. each		1065.15
		4615.15.0

Benjamin Lumley [*real name Levy*] (c1811-1875), opera manager

Lumley started working for Her Majesty's Theatre as a financial and legal officer in 1835. He took over the management of the theatre in 1842, following the death of Pierre François Laporte,

In this agreement, Lumley lets a number of boxes and stall seats to Eliza Andrews, at a cost of £4615.15 per year. It would be expected that Andrews would sub-let these boxes to theatregoers, or exchange their use for that of seats in other theatres.

The theatre at this time consisted of 177 boxes, 334 stalls seats and a pit with fourteen rows of benches.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 583

Letter from Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree to Sir Arthur Ellis (21 April 1911)

Her Majesty's Theatre
21 April

Dear Sir Arthur Ellis

I should be greatly obliged if you could see me for a few minutes today in reference to the subject of your letter.

I am calling a meeting of the managers on Tuesday, the 29th inst, in order to submit to them your letter addressed to us through our solicitor, Mr Fladgate.

I will at the same time canvass their opinions on the subject of the closing at Coronation time.

For my part, I shall of course be glad to fall in with whatever course may be considered most acceptable.

I remain, yours very truly

Herbert Beerbohm Tree

Herbert Beerbohm Tree [*real name Herbert Draper Tree*] (1852-1917), actor and theatre manager

Herbert Beerbohm Tree was already an established actor and theatre manager when he opened his Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket in 1897. The theatre gained a reputation for its classical drama, inventive stagings of nineteenth-century novels and Shakespearean drama. Tree managed the theatre until his death in 1917, and is still remembered as the foremost theatre manager of the Edwardian Age.

In this letter of 1901, Tree writes to Sir Arthur Edward Augustus Ellis, Comptroller in the Lord Chamberlain's Office. The Lord Chamberlain was the official theatre censor, and determined whether performances could legally take place or not. Tree refers to the proposed closure of theatres for the Coronation of Edward VII in 1901 – a matter which the Lord Chamberlain's Office would oversee

Broadley Haymarket II, p 627

Letter from Edward Askew Sothern (11 September)

T R H
11 Sept

Dear Sir

Accept my thanks for your gentlemanly way of reminding me of a debt which ought to have been paid long ago - so long ago, indeed, that it had slipped my memory, which must plead my apology for not settling it on my arrival in London.

Truly yours

E A Sothern

Edward Askew Sothern (1826-1881), actor

Edward Askew Sothern was a sensation in a succession of comic roles at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in the 1860s and 70s. His foppish interpretation of the role of Dundreary in *Our American Cousin* was an international success, with the Haymarket run extending to 496 performances. Other notable roles included the eponymous David Garrick in Tom Robertson's play of 1864.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 629

Letter from Edward Compton to Mr Broadley (29 July 1911)

Riviere House
Phillack
Hayle
Cornwall

July 29/11

Dear Mr Broadley

As I said in my last - and first - all my possessions are put away for the vacation, but I have come across two photos which may interest you.

Yes, my late father was Henry Compton the celebrated Haymarket comedian, and the best actor of Shakesperian clowns of his generation - or any other!

I am motoring to London on Monday, and staying the night at Wimborne; if I have time, and no "Tyre Troubles", on Monday evening I will look you up for a few minutes, as I presume I pass through Bridport en route.

Yours very truly,

Edward Compton

Edward Compton [*real name Edward Compton Mackenzie*] (1854-1918), actor and theatre manager

Edward was the son of the actor Charles Mackenzie, who was better known by his stage name Henry Compton. Edward followed in his father's footsteps, adopting Compton as his stage name and making his debut appearance at his father's benefit on 1 March 1877.

Compton's career began with extensive tours of the English provinces and the United States. When his fiancée and colleague Adelaide Neilson died unexpectedly in 1880, Compton inherited sufficient funds to start up his own company: the Compton Comedy Company.

The British tours of the Compton Comedy Company witnessed some of Edward Compton's best known performances. *The School for Scandal*, *David Garrick* and *She Stoops to Conquer* were all frequently performed. Apart from a brief foray into theatre management at the Opera Comique in London, Compton was essentially a touring actor.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 631

Letter from Edward Compton to Mr Broadley (22 July 1911)

1 Nevern Square
London SW

Dear Mr Broadley,

I must apologise for not having answered your letter sooner, but it has been following me about from town to town, and has at last caught me in the "Great City". In the brochure about the Coronation Gala Performance at His Majesty's, the allusion is made to my having played David Garrick, not Puff, more often than any other actor, living or dead, and this is quite true. My record is now nearly 1800 performances, and the play and the player are still going strong and well. I have played Puff a fair number of times, but I never found "The Critic" a real draw with general audiences. When I get to work again in September, and if you will then write me, I shall be pleased to send you my photograph as "Garrick", but just now everything is put away for the vacation.

Many thanks for the bill and book of your very interesting pageant which I hope has scored a huge success. My congratulations to Mr Lloyd and believe me,

Yours very truly,

Edward Compton

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Edward Compton [*real name Edward Compton Mackenzie*] (1854-1918), actor and theatre manager

In this letter of 1911, Compton refers to his record number of performances as the great actor-manager David Garrick. He also refers to the role of Mr Puff, which he played in Sheridan's *The Critic* from 1910 to 1911 at His Majesty's Theatre.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 639

Letter from Mary Anne Keeley to Mr Burgess

10 Pelham Cescent
SW

Saturday

Dear Mr Burgess

I have taken the liberty of sending my land[au?] tomorrow with my nephew and his little new wife. Will you admit them.

Very sincerely yours

Mary Anne Keeley

Kind regards to the wife altho' she will not call and see me.

I spoke or recited 'Ashbey Sterry's' lines at a party on Saturday last. On Monday, I received a cheque for £21-8-0 for the hospital. I enclose the address - perhaps you will like to read it.

Mary Anne Keeley [née Goward] (1805-1899), actress and actor manager

Mary Anne Keeley was well-known actress, performing in the major London theatres from her debut at the Lyceum in 1825 to her retirement from the stage in 1859. Beyond retirement she remained popular with audiences, and frequently reappeared for benefit performances. This letter was written at some point between 1867 and 1899, when she was resident at 10 Pelham Crescent, Brompton. She writes of a recent performance of works by the poet and novelist Joseph Ashby-Sterry (c1836-1917).

Broadley Haymarket II, p 645

Letter from Sir Charles Willie Mathews to Henry Neville (16 November 1877)

Beef Steak Club
King William Street, WC

November 16th 1877

My Dear Sir

I shall [...] it a great favor if you can spare me a small box for tomorrow (Friday) night, as I am most anxious to see "The Moonstone", which the advertisements tell me closes its [...] on Saturday.

If the box can be conveniently left, the obligation will be [...]. If it cannot, please have no hesitation in saying so.

Yours truly

Charles W Mathews

Letter from Sir Charles Willie Mathews to Henry Neville (18 February 1878)

5 Crown Office Row
Brighton

Dear Mr Neville

Would it be taxing you very greatly to ask you for a box for Thursday next before the free "tide" finally "turns" or, indeed, ceases to flow?

Faithfully yours

Charles Mathews

[Letter written on Garrick Club newspaper]

Charles Willie Mathews [*formerly West*] (1850-1920), lawyer

Mathews was the son of William West and the actress Lizzie Davenport [*née* Jackson], who used the stage name Lizzie Weston. In 1857, Lizzie married for a third time – this time to the actor, Charles James Mathews. With a strong theatrical tradition in his blood and in his step- family, Charles Willie maintained a strong interest in the performing arts, despite making a distinct career in law. He became a celebrated criminal lawyer, known for his theatrical rhetoric.

In these letters, Mathews addresses Henry Neville, lessee and manager of the Royal Olympic Theatre. He requests tickets for Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, which ran at the theatre from 17 September to 17 November 1877.

Broadley Haymarket II p 645

Letter from Lady L Mathews to Mr Neville

59 Belgrave Road

Dear Mr Neville

So many thanks for your kind attention, but the box never arrived till the last post 9 o'clock and, of course, I could not well start to see the piece at that hour.

Perhaps you will be good enough to send me another (undated) that I might use one night this week.

With kind regards,

Yours truly

L Mathews

Letter from Lady L Mathews to Mr Neville

59 Belgrave Road

Dear Mr Neville

Can you spare me a box for tomorrow, Saturday night? If you can, I shall be much obliged.

Yours truly

L Mathews

Letter from Lady L Mathews to Mr Neville

59 Belgrave Road, SW

Dear Mr Neville

May Mrs Charles Matthews ask for a box for Saturday night? If yes, may she have it by return of post?

With best compliments, she has the honour to be,

Yours truly

L Mathews

Lucy Mathews [*née Sloper*] (1852-1928)

Lady Lucy Mathews was the daughter of Edward Hugh Lindsay Sloper, a well-known pianist and music teacher. She married Sir Charles Willie Mathews in 1880.

From these letters, it is difficult to ascertain where the addressee, Henry Gartside Neville, was playing at the time. Following his tenure at the Royal Olympic Theatre, he took on roles at the Adelphi, Vaudeville and Drury Lane Theatres.

The paper on which these letters are written bears the monogram of Lucy's mother-in-law, Lizzie Weston.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 649

Letter from A Sketchley to B Webster (7th July)

Egyptian Hall
Piccadilly

7th July

My dear Sir

I have looked over the proof which is nearly correct - I merely wish to mention that the reprint of this paper I reserve as a right myself. I have no objection to the initial letters.

I regret not being able to be at the Palace on Saturday week but such is fate.

Yours very truly

A Sketchley

Arthur Sketchley [*real name George Rose*] (1817-1882) writer

As a young man, George Rose embarked upon a career in the Church. However, he had a passion for dramatic literature, and by the early 1850s was writing scripts for the London stage. He is best known for his humorous sketches on the character of 'Mrs Brown', which he published and performed under the pseudonym Arthur Sketchley.

This letter to Benjamin Nottingham Webster, manager of the Adelphi Theatre, is likely to have been written in the mid-1860s, when Sketchley's entertainment *Mrs Brown* was in performance at the Egyptian Hall. Webster had been manager at the Haymarket from 1837 to 1853.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 655

Letter from Charles Mathews (23 April 1861)

Doncaster

April 23 1861

Dear Sir

Mrs Mathews will be obliged to you to send six impressions of the portrait of herself (in profile with the hat on and looking in the glass) and six of little Willie (the one lying down) to Gore Lodge, Fulham as she wishes to send them to America. They are to be paid for of course.

She hopes you will not send out any of the portraits with the veil. They are not good and she had rather they were not published.

[...]

Yours truly

C Mathews

We both like all the others very much.

[At the top of the letter is this annotation:

We have received the packet you sent to Gore Lodge but want those mentioned below in addition to the others, as they are excellent]

Charles James Mathews (1803-1878), actor and playwright

Charles James Mathews, son of the actor Charles Mathews (1776-1835) was in his mid-fifties when he married his second wife, the actress Lizzie Davenport (Lizzie Weston). She brought a child to the marriage – the young Charles Willie, who was about seven at the time.

Mr and Mrs Mathews were clearly proud of their family. In this letter, Mathews orders family photographs on behalf of his wife, who wishes to send copies to her contacts in America – her homeland. Later on in the year, the Mathews mounted a concert entertainment at Her Majesty's Theatre called *Mr and Mrs Mathews at Home*.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 677

Letter to David Garrick from Thomas King

My Very Dear Mr Garrick

Your note to me did not imply a wish for my assistance, or ill as I was, I would certainly have been with you; it only desired, if I had no objection, to taking turn about with you, in the Domino, that I would be at the House at twelve.

I hear the Jubilee is called at twelve today - can I do you any service? Shall I attend? How can I oblige you? No fatigue or danger will I shun as the friendly substitute of Mr Garrick, tho' I cannot, as an actor, submit to put myself in situations held disgraceful by any hired performer. I have been, and am, (I hope you will be my witness), an enemy to this false, this self created seeming importan[ce], but as the advantages it produces seem by many worth attending to, I cannot bow my back to make a step for any person who could not, without my so doing, get above me.

As to what else I have to say (which you so politely and in so friendly a way tell me you will attend to with good humour), it will keep cold days or weeks. Do not imagine I shall come to you "with a bundle of complaints at my back" - the major part of the matter will relate to yourself, and arises from little observations I have lately made. Enough of this for the present. Shall I or shall I not come to the House?

Yours most devotedly

Thomas King

Saturday morning

Thomas King (1730-1805), actor and manager

Thomas King's acting talents were discovered by David Garrick in 1748. Garrick engaged King at Drury Lane, but after two years King departed to pursue a career in Ireland. Returning to Drury Lane as principal actor a decade later, he became one of Garrick's most highly-valued colleagues. Towards the end of Garrick's career, King proved a reliable deputy and, in his mentor's absence, took on much of the daily running of the theatre.

This letter probably dates to 1769, the year in which Garrick held his spectacular Shakespeare Jubilee. This processional entertainment was first staged at Stratford-upon-Avon, and opened with cannon-fire and peals of bells. King's role was to play a devil's advocate, heckling during Garrick's recitation of the specially-composed Jubilee Ode. Unfortunately, the event was not well-received, and was marred by heavy rains. It was generally considered a failure.

Undeterred, the following season Garrick staged *The Jubilee* again, this time at Drury Lane. With substantial revisions, it now met with more success, running to about ninety performances.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 815

Letter from Herbert Beerbohm Tree to Mr Broadley (5 December 1911)

His Majesty's Theatre
London

December 5th 1911

My dear Broadley

Thank you very much for your offer of photographs of the "Orpheus" cards, but I am producing the whole play entirely on lines of my own, going back to the Rococo period for inspiration with regard to production.

I shall be delighted to send you two seats for December the 20th which is the first night and shall be interested to know what you think about it. Thank you for the article on the Hardy play, which I shall read at my leisure.

Yours very truly

Herbert M Tree

Herbert Beerbohm Tree [*real name Herbert Draper Tree*] (1852-1917), actor and theatre manager

In this letter to Alexander Meyrich Broadley, the curator of the Broadley Albums, Tree refers to his plans for the production for *Orpheus in the Underground*. This adaptation of the Greek legend set Offenbach's well-known music to a libretto by Alfred Noyes, Frederick Norton and Herbert Beerbohm Tree.

Offenbach's operetta had first been performed at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1865; it is perhaps images of this earlier production that Broadley had offered to Tree.

The "Hardy play" Tree refers to is possibly *The Three Wayfarers*, which was staged in London in late November 1911.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 817

Letter from Herbert Beerbohm Tree to Mr Broadley (23 January 1912)

His Majesty's Theatre
London

January 23rd 1912

My dear Broadley

I am so delighted to get your letter and to know that you and your people enjoyed the play so much. I send you a photograph of Viola.

Yours sincerely

Herbert M Tree

PS The Daily Mirror Studio will be able to supply any photograph of Miss Tree that is wanted for publication.

Herbert Beerbohm Tree [*real name Herbert Draper Tree*] (1852-1917), actor and theatre manager

Following his letter of 5 December (Broadley Haymarket vol II, p 815), Tree writes to Broadley to thank him for his comments on *Orpheus in the Underground*. Tree's daughter, Viola (1885-1938), was also an actress, but aspired to a career as an opera singer. In 1910 she had performed at the Savoy Theatre in Gluck's version of the Orpheus myth, *Orfeo ed Euridice*. A year later she was back on stage at her father's theatre for his production of *Orpheus*.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 441

Letter from Giuditta Pasta to the Reverend Charles Longley (18 May 1826)

Monsieur

Vous voudrez bien excuser le retard de cette réponse mais ce n'est qu'aujourd'hui que je puis vous la faire dans des termes positifs. Je suis bien reconnaissante à votre honorable souvenir et à l'aimable invitation que vous me faites. Je suis très disposée à l'accepter. Après avoir calculé les sacrifices auxquels m'expose mon absence de Londres pendant deux jours et pris en considération les circonstances que vous m'exposez, je fixe ma demande à cent cinquante guineas pour chanter à tous les deux concerts.

J'espère, monsieur, que cette proposition puisse vous convenir. Vous aurez la bonté de me faire, le plus tôt possible, un mot de réponse.

Agréez, en attendant, les assurances de ma haute considération.

G Pasta

Londres, 18 mai, 1826

P.S. Si vous croyez que notre arrangement puisse avoir bien, vous aurez la complaisance de marquer, dans votre réponse, quels sont les morceaux de musique que vous désirez, et si vous en avez la musique.

Reverend Charles Longley
Christ Church
Oxford

Giuditta Pasta [*née Negr*] (1797-1865), singer

Giuditta Pasta made her London début at the King's Theatre, Haymarket in 1817. She then returned to the continent for several years, performing in French and Italian theatres, before making a successful return to the English stage in 1824.

This letter was composed during a later visit to London, in 1826, prior to her departure for Naples. The addressee is the future Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Thomas Longley (1794-1868). Longley was educated at Christ Church, and continued in various offices at the college following his graduation. From 1825 to 1828 he was a tutor and censor there.

Pasta offers to perform two concerts for Longley for a fee of 150 guineas. She states that this sum would cover her expenses and the loss of earnings incurred from two days' absence from London.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 441

Giuditta Pasta - Receipt for salary (31 July 1826)

Received of Mr Ebers, through the hands of Mr Obicini, the sum of one thousand two hundred pounds - which, with the sum of one thousand pounds received at Paris, makes up the sum of two thousand two hundred pounds, the amount of my salary for the present season.

London 31 July

Giuditta Pasta

£2200

Giuditta Pasta [*née Negri*] (1797-1865), singer

Pasta was one of the most highly-regarded singers of her generation. Although her London début of 1817 was not a great success, she subsequently built up an impressive operatic repertoire and her soprano *sfogato* (unlimited) vocal range ensured that she was always in demand.

This receipt records an instalment of Pasta's salary paid by John Ebers, manager of the King's Theatre. £2,200 was a colossal sum, amounting to almost 15% of Ebers' annual rent for the theatre. In 1827, Ebers could no longer cope with balancing exorbitant rents with high salaries, and was declared bankrupt.

Broadley Haymarket II, p 447

Letter from Mademoiselle Eliza Felix Rachel to Monsieur Nicou (21 June 1841)

Mon cher Nicou

Vous croyez sans doute que mes occupations, ma vie tres agitée de Londres, m'ont empêchées de vous donner signe de vie. Si vous l'avez pensée, je vous en remercie, car en effet il est impossible d'être plus sur la [...] que je ne le suis en ce moment. Je dois vous avouer, pourtant, que cette [...] là n'a rien qui puisse me [...].

Vous aurez appris, par les journaux français, l'accueil que j'ai reçu des anglais. Nous sympathisons fort bien ensemble et la preuve, c'est qu'ils m'ont gardé un mois de plus que je ne pensais leur donner et moi, j'ai accepté l'offre avec on ne peut plus de joie.

Dès que je suis sur la terre ferme, je vous raconterai en detail tous les bonheurs dont j'ai été et suis encore accablée outre-mer.

Sarah dit [...]. Elle étudie beaucoup et me parait avoir fait d'immenses progrès. J'espère que vous [...] bien portant. J'embrasse tendrement votre petit bien heureux. Qu'aime-t-il et que lui apporterais-je de Londres? Dites a la bonne Madame Chorán qu'elle est souvent dans mes conversations et toujours dans mon coeur. A mon retour à Paris, qui sera le 20 juillet, je la persuaderai que je ne l'ai point oubliée à Londres.

A vous, mon cher ami, je vous serre fortement la main, car je me dis votre toute dévouée et sincère amie,

Rachel

Londres 21 juin 1841

Maman envoie ses compliments et amitiés a Monsieur Chorán. Elle vous prie d'en garder la moitié en lui envoyant.

Elisa Félix Rachel (1821–58)

Rachel's story was one of rags to riches. Born into an impoverished family, she grew up in Paris, where her father made a living selling oranges. Rachel's acting talents were spotted by a retired actor, who arranged for her to study at the Conservatoire. Within a few years she had made a name for herself as one of the great French tragediennes. She was particularly known for her interpretations of the 17th century dramatists Racine and Corneille.

Rachel wrote this personal letter during her first professional visit to London, in 1841. She writes of the welcome she has received from the English, and “all the joys with which I have been – and still am – overwhelmed overseas”.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 15

Letter from Tate Wilkinson to Mr Macklin (15 February 1775)

Feb 15th 1775

Dear Sir

There is a gentleman with me whose name is Woods. I can speak of him with truth in two lights, either of which would, I am certain, incline you to oblige him. He is a man of merit on the stage and a gentleman and a man of merit off the stage. The best qualifications does (sic) not always secure success, you can attest to the truth of the assertion. He is a stranger, he comes in the middle of strong interests - *Love à la Mode* would serve him. He will receive it as an obligation, the Town will acknowledge (as they will, made acquainted with your kindness) the favour; nor will it, nor your many good offices and friendship be forgot by Dr Sr,

yours most sincerely,

Tate Wilkinson

Tate Wilkinson (1739-1803), actor and theatre manager

Wilkinson was a Glamorganshire-born actor who, after great success in Dublin in the 1750s, met with equal success on London. He was particularly well-known for his characterisation Golcondus in *Tragedy a la Mode* by Samuel Foote, which he performed at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. His reputation as an actor was chiefly derived from his performances in plays by this author and he published his four-volume *Memoirs* in 1790-1791.

In this letter of 15 February 1775, Wilkinson addresses Charles Macklin (c1699-1797) a fellow actor and playwright. He recommends an actor called Woods for a part in *Love à la Mode*, which Macklin had written in 1759.

Macklin was well-known for courting controversy, and his acting career had been marked by a number of lawsuits. When he received this letter from Wilkinson, Macklin was pressing charges against suspected instigators of rioting at Covent Garden. Macklin had divided opinion with his insistence on performing Shakespeare in period costume as opposed to contemporary dress. At a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* on 18 November 1774, violent demonstrations had broken out in the theatre, with rioters destroying the furniture and even smashing the chandeliers. The case was settled in Macklin's favour, but he waived the payment of damages, asking only for his legal costs to be covered, for the guilty parties to pay towards his next benefit performance.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 29

Letter of Invitation - author and recipient not mentioned - to Mr Charles Macklin's Funeral on 16 July 1797

Sir

You are desired to accompany the funeral of Mr Charles Macklin from his late dwelling apartments to his interment at St Paul's Covent Garden on the 16th day of July, 1797 at 12 o'clock precisely.

A coach will attend you to convey you to the house in time.

Performed by Mr George Sloper

Charles Macklin (c1697-1797) actor and playwright

Macklin was one of the best-known actors of his generation, courting both admiration and controversy throughout his career on the London stage (see note to Broadley Haymarket III, p 15). He was plagued by poor health inancial problems following his sudden retirement from the stage in 1789, and died, bankrupt, at his home in Tavistock Row in 1797.

Macklin's wife, Elizabeth, was supported by the theatrical community through the Covent Garden Fund for elderly performers. A benefit was held in her name at the Drury Lane Theatre in 1805. She, in turn, left her life savings to the Fund, on condition that they maintain the monument to her husband Charles in the Church of St Paul Covent Garden.

Macklin's monument survives to this day. The inscription includes a poem:

*Macklin! the father of the Modern Stage,
Renown'd alike for Talents and for Age,
Whose years a Century and longer ran,
Who lived and died as may become a Man,
This lasting Tribute to thy worth receive."
'Tis all a grateful Public now can give.
Their loudest Plaudits now no more can Move.
Yet hear! the Widow's still final voice of Love.*

Broadley Haymarket III, p 81

Letter from George Colman to Dr Arnold (26 April 1781)

My Dear Arnold

The dead alive have given me more trouble than I expected. Enclosed, you have all the songs I have done for it, and I think, when they are composed, the whole is complete.

I was afraid of [...] the book so have sent my favourite] servant and hope you will decipher it. This with bathing etc is all I have done since here and the place is so delightful I really would not quit it if I could help it.

Mrs Arnold is the picture of health and bathes so duly that she went into the sea yesterday - a very rough morning.

I see that I am to be ruined in the summer by the Winter Powers, at least the papers say so. Who's afraid? I can send you no news from [here?] but should be glad if you would give me a line by Saturday's post with all you can stuff into your budget.

Mrs B sends her compliments. She has been three times into the sea which to say truth I did not expect - is better for it and I don't doubt will persevere during our short stay. I hope you are well and hearty and am, dear Arnold, most truly yours

G Colman

Margate
April 26 1781

George Colman, the elder (1732-1794), playwright and theatre manager

Colman started writing for the stage in 1760. *The Jealous Wife*, *The Deuce is in Him*, *The Clandestine Marriage* – in co-operation with David Garrick – and *The English Merchant* count among his successes.

Here, Colman writes to Samuel Arnold from Margate, a popular seaside resort known for its covered bathing machines. He mentions struggling with the songs for John O'Keefe's musical afterpiece *The Dead Alive*, which would be staged at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in June 1781.

Colman favoured Margate as a resort for recovering from the strains of the summer theatrical season. Holidaying there in 1785, he suffered a stroke that left him paralysed. Although he recovered from the stroke to some extent, he was left prone to epileptic fits. His son, George Colman the younger, assisted with the management of the Theatre Royal Haymarket, until a fit in 1789 left his father brain-damaged.

The addressee of this letter, Samuel Arnold, was as the Theatre Royal Haymarket's musical director in 1777. He remained at the theatre working for Colman the younger until his own death in 1802.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 85

Letter written by Samuel Arnold's executor to James Winston (27 May 1805)

27 May 1805

(Received on Monday Morning the 5th June 1805)

Sir

Take notice that a judgement is entered up of Record and docketed in the Court of King's Bench against Mr George Colman for a debt of one thousand pounds and upwards due from him on Bond to the late Dr Samuel Arnold, and which judgement has been regularly registered in the Middlesex Registry Office so as to constitute a legal charge or lien on the Theatre and other leasehold premises of which you propose to become a purchaser.

I am, Sir, &c

M Arnold, Administratrix to the above-named Dr Samuel Arnold

George Colman the younger (1762-1836), playwright and theatre manager

George Colman the younger inherited the ownership and management of the Haymarket Theatre upon his father's death in 1794. He also inherited his father's debts. In 1795 Colman took out a mortgage on the business in order to pay the theatre's creditors, but his own debts continued to accumulate. By 1805, Colman was forced to sell off part of the business. Among the new business partners was James Winston.

Colman's former musical partner, Dr Samuel Arnold, had lent him and his father money to keep the theatre afloat. Following Arnold's death in 1802, the composer's son and wife began to chase these loans.

This letter was written by the late Dr Arnold's executor to James Winston around the time that the latter took up part ownership of the Haymarket Theatre. The letter warns Winston that a claim has been made against Colman in the Court of King's Bench.

Colman was arrested in February 1806 for his failure to pay Arnold's heirs. Even while serving his 11 year prison sentence, he continued to manage the Haymarket Theatre and write plays.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 93

Letter from George Colman the Younger to James Winston (10 June 1810)

23rd September 1810

My Dear Winston

I send you a most uncomfortable solicitation, considering that your holidays are so short, which is come to town immediately - for I am much perplexed by a proposition which Elliston has made to me and cannot (as I ever make it a point to consider you as attached to me in our theatricals) proceed without you.

Elliston's proposals are for a Winter scheme - to commence in November next - in which he wishes me to be joined: in fact, to make use of my name and interests in various ways. His plan presents to me a million of objections on my part. Still, it is worth attending to, and that immediately, for I feel it a duty to our interests to neglect nothing that is proposed to us in these times of dramatic revolution.

To detail all that he has past (sic.) in conversation would be too much for a letter. Therefore, let me see you. It is absolutely necessary.

Though Elliston's scheme may (as I think) vanish in smoke, it may, probably, lead to something else in the shape of engagement with him, which may tend to our future advantage and the prolongation of our Season. Write me one line by return of post, or rather throw yourself into the mail coach and come away. You see I write in haste.

God bless you.

Yours ever,

G Colman

PS Of course, Elliston proposes to make his scene of action the Haymarket. If you write by return, say when I may expect you in Town.

Adieu!

Melina Place

George Colman the younger (1762-1836), playwright and theatre manager

This letter was written by Colman from 4 Melina Place, where he was residing under effective house arrest until the termination of his prison sentence in 1817 (see notes to letter: Broadley Haymarket III p 85). He addresses James Winston, his business partner, with some urgency regarding a business proposal made by Robert Elliston.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 93

Letter from George Colman, the Younger to James Winston (10 June 1811)

10th June 1811

Half past 5 o'clock

My Dear Winston

I have just been informed, to my utter astonishment, that "Over the Water to Charley" is intended to be sung tonight (words & tune) in the last act of *The Royal Oak*. This is putting a lighted match to a barrel of gunpowder in the midst of the theatre.

Surely you must be aware (with all the world) that this is a rebel song, and if it escaped the audience - which to me would be miraculous - it could not escape the Chamberlain sooner or later. I think our licence would be very seriously, and justly, endangered by it. I therefore, hereby, send you the most positive instructions to take care that it be omitted, this night, and all others, in the piece in question, and I [...] you upon your responsibility as to such instructions being carried into effect.

You see the consequence of Mr Dimond's not condescending to attend to my urgent and repeated solicitations to send me his variations from the copy which has been sent to Mr Sargent. None of the words to the music, it seems, have been under Mr Sargent's inspection. Mr Dimond assured me that they were perfectly harmless and had no allusion whatever to politics. And now I am told of this "Over the Water to Charley"! To say nothing of our encountering the resentment of the Lord Chamberlain by the introduction of this song, the anachronism of it is most gross and absurd! A sorry allusive to Jenny Cameron and the Pretender!

I must insist on its omission - both words and tune.

Ever truly yours

G Colman

George Colman the younger (1762-1836), playwright and theatre manager

In 1810, Colman was under arrest for non-payment of debts, and consequently relied on his business partner James Winston for many matters relating to the running of the Haymarket Theatre.

In this letter, Colman asserts his authority as theatre manager. He writes to prevent the inclusion of the song 'Over the Water to Charley' at a performance of William Dimond's *The Royal Oak* at the Haymarket. Colman feared that the song, based on Robert Burns' poem about Bonnie Prince Charles and the 1745 Rebellion, would risk laying the theatre open to accusations of sedition.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 123

Letter from H Harris to George Robinson (January 1838)

Brighton, 1 Bedford Terrace

January 1838

My Dear Sir

I am requested by Mrs Colman to return you her most sincere thanks for the very beautiful lines on her dear departed husband. Nothing can be more appropriate to be inscribed on his tomb.

You may not be aware that the family monument is in the church at Kensington. It was erected for our late friend's grandfather Francis Colman, who was our Ambassador at Florence. The remains likewise of his son George Colman the Elder, the translator of Terence, are deposited in the vault underneath, but from the neglect of his Executors, no notice of this appears on the monument. It was felt therefore right that when the inscription of George Colman the Younger was arranged, that his father's name should likewise be inscribed on the monument. Mr Winston had the kindness to inspect it and consulted with the Rector how this could be effected and he will show you the model he made of the tablet for this purpose.

When you next visit the Garrick, will you be so good as to see Mr Winston, give him a copy of your lines, and say we should be infinitely obliged to him if he would have the proposed plan carried into execution as speedily as possible, and that all expenses shall be directly paid.

If you would add to the obligation already conferred by giving Mr Winston the advantage of your taste and judgement in the disposition of the inscriptions, the favour will be gratefully acknowledged with the best compliments of the season.

Believe me, my dear sir, most truly yours

H Harris

George Colman, the Younger (1762-1836)

This letter refers to arrangements for a memorial inscription to George Colman the Younger. Colman had died at 22 Brompton Square on the 26 October 1836. Before his death, he had let it be known that he wished to be buried in the Colman family vault at Kensington Church. The funeral took place on 3 November.

James Winston, Colman's former business partner, appears to have taken charge of arrangements for the memorial inscription.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 141

Letter from J Bannister to John Smith (19 June 1826)

My Best of Smiths and Friend

Can you fashion your mind by appetite to sit down at my board tomorrow at half past four - when the dinner will be on the table.

The reason for the early hour is in consequence of Mrs B having given the servants leave to go to the Play and, being Spring the Boxkeeper's Benefit, unless they go early they will not be able to get places - as he generally has upwards of six hundred pounds' worth of tickets in the theatre.

Although I have quitted the theatre eleven years, I am under the necessity of making a theatrical apology in my own house - so that I shall "stick to the shop" till I quit the stage of life and till when, believe me

Yours most truly

J Bannister
Monday, June 19th 1826

John Bannister (1760-1836), actor

John Bannister was born in Deptford to Charles Bannister, a well-known actor and vocalist. Encouraged by David Garrick, he first appeared on the stage at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in 1778. One of his most famous character roles was as Don Ferolo Whiskerandos in *The Critic*, in 1779, and the role of Inkle, in *Inkle and Yarico* was created by him later in the century.

In this letter, Bannister refers to his retirement from the stage 15 years previously, on 1 June 1815. His wife, Elizabeth Harper (referred to here as "Mrs B"), had also had a career on the stage, as an actress and singer at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. They had married in 1783.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 147

Letter from Joseph S Munden (1 July)

Cheltenham July 1st

Dear Sir

On my arrival here, which by the bye was not until several days after the time I mentioned in my last, I found the part you were kind enough to send me, which I think very good.

When I had the pleasure of some conversation with you on the subject of performing at the English Opera House, I believe I mentioned to you that it was not my intention to make any regular engagement in future. I have promised long since to perform in several theatres during the summer, but will reserve at least three weeks to have the pleasure of being under your Government, and will make all the progress I can in studying what you have sent me.

I mean to be in town in two or three days and will do myself the pleasure of seeing you immediately I arrive.

I am, dear Sir

Yours very truly

Joseph S Munden

Joseph Shepherd Munden (1758-1832), actor

Joseph Munden was known as a player of low comedy characters. By the 1780s he was an established actor in the provinces and in 1790 came to London where his success continued.

Munden first appeared at Cheltenham in 1776. However, the authority with which Munden addresses the unnamed theatre manager suggests that this letter may have been written at a later date, when Munden had become a well-known comic actor.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 163

Letter from Elizabeth Rebecca Edwin to Mr Elliston (8 January 1820)

Dear Sir

I was surprised this morning by the Treasurer refusing to pay me my last week's salary. Now, as your bills will prove, with the exception of Saturday January the 1st (when it did not suit Mr Dowton's convenience to perform), that the business of the theatre was not changed or retarded by my illness, I must pronounce the forfeit unjust. Scarcely ever to employ me when well, and then taking advantage of my sickness to call upon me merely for the purpose of stopping my salary looks so like oppression that I cannot think the act emanates from you but one of your satellites, whose hostility to me and my interests I am aware of. I loathe mystery and therefore name Mr Winston

It is the first time I ever was forfeited for indisposition. During my former six years' engagement at Drury Lane, malady confined me 3, 4 and 5 weeks at a time, yet no salary was taken from me, it being well known caprice never governed my actions.

I am also charged for two orders given December the 30th, on which day I sent my servant to know if they went; the Porter inquired and told her they did. Miss Kelly, it appears, can be ill with impunity whenever she pleases, as her salary never is withheld. Her orders also go in every night. Now, as it is stated in my engagement (I will quote your own words) "and whatever privileges that lady (Miss Kelly) may have, you shall have". Have the goodness, then, to order the return of my money. I am in want of it. A quarter's payment, £25, is due to my mother, the same sum for lodgings, and several other bills which must be settled next week. I therefore not only want what is unjustly detained from me in the Treasury but also as [...] you can spare of the hundred pou[nds] [...] to me from our [...] account.

I remain, dear Sir, though very ill used, your sincere friend

E R Edwin

January the 8th 1820

Elizabeth Rebecca Edwin (née Richards), (c1771-1854), actress

In this letter, Elizabeth Rebecca Edwin, late wife of the actor John Edwin, complains that her salary has been withheld on account of her absence through sickness. She was to have played at Drury Lane.

Edwin's letter highlights the precarious nature of an early nineteenth-century actor's finances. Citing Frances Kelly as an example of an actress who is well-treated by her employers, she surmises that the unjust withdrawal of her own payment must be due to the malicious intent of another: a certain Mr Winston.

Edwin was a well-respected comic actress. She retired from the stage in the early 1820s, but was forced to resurrect her acting career when a stockbroker ran off with her savings shortly after her retirement.

Letter to John Quick from William Woodfall (14 August 1777)

Friend Quick

I thank you heartily for your letter and am not a little pleased that the burthen of the song is so weighty as to balance one hundred and fifty pounds. May such ever be your summer satisfaction on Benefit Nights! In town the general take has been that the very vitals of the theatrical business at Liverpool and Bristol were either pressed out or warr'd away. I rejoice that I have such ample grounds to oppose this report, as you have possessed me with, and shall in my tomorrow's paper contrast falsehood with fact and remove a suppose by introducing a positive.

I am much obliged to you for your information touching the Morning Chronicle. I am, either from pride or some worse motive, so conscious that the paper ought to be universally read on account of the impartiality visible in the line of its conduct, the earliness and authenticity of its intelligence, and various other reasons that I am too inactive in sacrificing to fools and forcing it upon the multitude from whom (by the by) more money is obtained by all publick professions than from the narrow circle who make up the judicious few. Like the men of Laputia I want a [...] and whenever a friend rouses me from my reverie, I am thankful. Perhaps a word or two to the Master of the most frequented Bristol coffee house might serve to introduce the paper; sooner than not have it introduced. I'd send it gratis for a month.

Do drink threepenny worth of punch extraordinary to feel the pulse of some proper patient and send me word how it beats(sic).

Henderson has done wonders, although I wonder not at his success when I consider the leading circumstances to it. He has played for some years at Bath, where every other actor who attempted the capital walks was infinitely his inferior. Like a diamond among foil stones, he [...] with additional lustre in proportion to the dullness and dimness of those around him. People of fashion and even people of judgement are deceived by what ought to, and what in general does, prevent deception - by comparison. They considered his merit locally when they should have extended their minds and considered it generally. Hence his titles of "A Second Garrick, the Bath [...] &c. &c.". Not that I mean by this to destroy his real claims to applause. Those who had seen him at Bath were numerous, and their voices went far in forming the Town opinion with us of the Metropolis, but if Henderson had not given some proofs of innate genius, he could not have had the general cry in his favour. The critics not least, who pique themselves on opposing popular opinion, while they have anything a logical plausibility to justify them, would have objected and entered their caveat.

My opinion of him is this. He possesses a very good understanding. He feels his author, he perfectly conceives him and, as far as Nature will allow, he well expresses his conceptions, but his figure is bad, his voice dissonant (though melodious in the lower tones), his action too uniform and sometimes ungraceful, his face too rotund and his features not so perfectly at his command as is requisite in a first rate performer. With all these disadvantages, his primary qualification, "his good understanding", enables him to rise superior to most of his competitors, who, enjoying only what he is deficient in and

wanting the first requisite of an actor, which he enjoys, often catch the million but never make the men of judgement allow that they have merit.

I thus hastily have scrawled you my [...] of this at present most popular actor, for, to say the truth, I never knew one man of your profession more magnetic. He has brought Mr Colman an amazing sum. On nights when the heat of the house would almost bake a pie in ten minutes, even upon his fourth representation of one character, the receipt has been one hundred or one hundred and fifty pounds, frequently more. In short, there never was so profitable a Haymarket season, and next to the kindness of the Gods, who have had a diabetes all the summer, Mr Coleman has to bless his stars that he engaged Henderson. He is to be at Drury Lane next winter on a very capital salary and will, if I mistake not, cut the [...] of some of the first fowl of that coop.

Pray give my respects to Mrs Johnson and Mr Bentley and believe to be,

Your sincere wellwisher,

W Woodfall

Dorset Street, Salisbury Court
August 14 1777

Turn over

Mr Foote has had two paralytic strokes, the last on [...] August 4, when he lay for four hours convulsed and speechless. He is now surprisingly recovered. He chatted with him last night for an hour, and I never heard him more [...], more collected or more master of his memory. I have [...] him to drop further thoughts of the stage for this summer at least, and in consequence he sets out for Brighton next week. I fear he will never play again. Mrs Gardner produced a most bawdy play last Saturday at which even the town [...] blushed. I am told she is now writing a satire called Mock [...], and means to dedicate it to the governess as of the publick [...] in which she will endeavour to prove that every female [...] when a [...] business is only talked of [...]

William Woodfall (1746-1803) journalist and newspaper editor

Woodfall was a parliamentary reporter and dramatic critic who became the editor of the *Morning Chronicle* in 1774.

This letter, written to the actor John Quick (1748-1831), is packed with news relating to the theatrical community. He gives his opinion on **John Henderson** (1747 -1785) who was rapidly becoming the most popular actor of the day, and regarded as the greatest Shakespearean actor after Garrick.

He also reports on the “paralytic strokes” suffered by Samuel Foote, a renowned actor and dramatist connected with the Haymarket Theatre. Despite Woodfall’s cheery update that “he is now surprisingly recovered, Foote died within two months of this letter being written.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 181

Letter from William Powell to David Garrick (9 January 1765)

Dear Sir

In obedience to your request I have transcribed the very ingenious and truly affectionate letter you did me the honour to write me from Paris. The original I shall preserve as dear, and one of the greatest treasures I possess, to the last moment of my life.

I shall be very sorry if it has given Mr Garrick offence by so long delaying it, for I cannot but be happy at embracing so favourable an opportunity of laying before him how much I was once (so lately) honoured by his particular friendship and regard. Can I be blamed when I freely confess such a letter from Mr Garrick raised my ambition? It made me vain, I acknowledge, and more, so that the grateful sentiments my mind entertained for his great kindness to me assured me I deserved his friendly attention. I flattered myself that at Mr Garrick's return he would find me worthy [of] the continuance of his friendship and esteem, and that from his kind assistance I might reap wonderful advantage in my profession. It hurts me much to say "twas only flattery to my heart". How to account for all Mr Garrick's cool and distant treatment to me I am totally at a loss, and as totally unconscious of deserving it for I do, and ever shall acknowledge my great obligations to him, and while I live entertain the most perfect sense of gratitude for them. I will not ever suppose that my attachment to my friend Mr Lacy can give Mr Garrick offence, for he would, I am sure, be the first to condemn ingratitude. I have asked, I have solicited Mr Garrick's friendship and attention and here assure him it would add much to the happiness of my life. I can say no more.

Mr Garrick, from his superior understanding, cannot (I hope) be offended at anything this incoherent letter offers. He allows that I have some feelings in my public capacity and therefore he will not wonder if those of my private are somewhat nice and precipitant. In that consideration, I trust I shall stand excused from giving any intentional offence, and whatever Mr Garrick may think of me, I will never deserve less than his minutest regard and attention.

I am, dear Sir, your most obedient and very faithful, humble servant

W Powell

January 9th 1765

[Draft of Garrick's reply (January 9 1765)]

The answer

January 9th 176[5]

Dear Sir

The company that dined with me has but this moment left me - or I should have thanked you sooner for the copy of my letter. As I was collecting my thoughts (from scattered papers) upon our profession, I was willing to see any scraps that I had written upon the

subject. I should have taken it very ill if you had sent me the original for, insignificant as the matter may be, it was written with the best and kindest intentions towards you.

I am, dear Sir, your sincere well wisher and humble servant,

D. Garrick

William Powell (c1735-1769), actor and manager

Powell was first introduced to Garrick in 1763. Powell had dabbled with amateur theatricals, but it was not until this meeting that he abandoned his position at Ladbrooke's counting house for a career on the stage.

After receiving careful coaching, Powell filled in as Garrick's replacement at Drury Lane while his mentor travelled abroad. He made his debut performance in October 1763.

This letter was written while Garrick was still abroad, in Paris. Powell and Garrick's relationship was under strain at this time. Garrick feared that Powell was growing arrogant; however, Powell's popularity as an actor was undeniable, and it is possible that the meteoric rise of his protégé was making Garrick feel uneasy and even jealous.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 187

Letter from Mrs Mary Robinson - royal recipient not mentioned by name - (17 January 1785)

January 17th 1785

Hotel de Russie
rue de Richelieu
Paris

My Dear Sir

Colonel Hotham will perhaps inform your Royal Highness of my having applied for the last quarter's annuity. If it is more convenient to have you to pay it half yearly, I will with pleasure wait till that time, wishing in every respect to do what is most agreeable to your Royal Highness.

I should not have made any application to Colonel Hotham, but being in want of money (on account of Lord Malden's neglecting to pay his annuity these fifteen months past), will I trust be deemed a sufficient apology.

As I fear I shall not dare return to England for some time, I shall be infinitely happy in executing any orders your Royal Highness will honour me with during my residence in Paris.

I have the honour of subscribing myself,

your Royal Highness's affectionate and faithful servant,

Mary Robinson

Mary Robinson (née Darby), (c1758-1800), author and actress

Mary Robinson first appeared at Drury Lane on 10 December 1776, as the lead in a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. She soon became known for her talent for light comedy acting, playing parts such as Lady Plume in Sheridan's *The Camp*. However, it was for interpretation of Perdita in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* that she would be most remembered.

It was as Perdita that Mary Robinson first attracted the attention of the Prince of Wales, when she performed to the royal audience on 3 December 1779. There began a passionate correspondence between the Prince and Mary Robinson, who took the pen names Florizel and Perdita respectively.

Robinson soon gave up her career on the stage. The Prince gave her a bond for £20,000, and his 'Perdita' embarked on an extravagant lifestyle. However, when the direction of the Prince's affections altered towards the end of 1780, their affair took a darker turn. Spurned by her former lover, Robinson threatened to publish the Prince's letters. After difficult negotiations she was paid off with a £5000 lump sum, with promises of an annuity.

This affair and its unravelling sets the context for the above letter, written from Paris. Four years on from the end of her love affair with the Prince, she was now living in Paris, having fled from her creditors in England. In this letter, she makes reference to both the Prince's annuity and that to be paid to her by another former lover, Lord Malden.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 195

Letter from John O'Keefe to Messrs Cadell and Davies (2 February 1796)

February 2nd 1796

Mr O'Keefe's compliments to Messrs Cadell and Davies. Would be obliged to them for the account of songs of Sprigs of Laurel, Irish Mimic, Omai and if any balance on Tony Lumpkin in Town; and Mirth Day of Prince of Arrogan, Mr O'Keefe will send in the course of next week.

No 4 Prospect Road, Old Brompton

John O'Keefe (1747-1833), dramatist

John Keefe was a Dublin-born playwright, who, after some success in Ireland, moved to London in 1780. There, he devoted himself to writing comic plays, chiefly for the Theatre Royal Covent Garden and the Theatre Royal Haymarket.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 195

Letter on behalf of John O'Keefe to Prince Hoare (21 May 1798)

May 21st 98

Dear Sir

I return you many thanks for your zeal and kindness, the receiving the earnest money is wholly unnecessary, the intention of it in the proposals being rather according to form than any purpose.

Doubtless you heard of my defeat on Saturday night - rather a grievous one to me but heaven's will be done.

With every acknowledgement of your goodness

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Your respectful and obliged servant

for John O'Keefe

I enclose a few proposals according to your desire and the receipt. The money came safe, though I can assure you neither that nor the General Post are always so. By the latter, cash was lost sent to me by Lord Mulgrave.

How much I am obliged to my friends for their generous exertions in my favour you may, dear Sir, conceive.

No 6 Newcastle Street
Strand

[The letter contains the following note in a different hand]

Drury Lane, May 19 1798. She's Eloped, a Comedy by Mr O'Keefe was acted the first and only time. The characters as follow:

Sir Charles Hyacinth	Mr Palmer
Sylmer	Mr Wroughton
Lord Villeure	Mr Aickin
Major Blinner	Mr Suett
Appesley	Mr Dowton
Plodden	Mr Bannister
Joe	Mr R Palmer
Jerkin	Mr Russell
Mrs Egerton	Mrs Powell
Miss Villeure	Mrs Jordan
Miss Highbury	Miss Pope

Grace

Miss Mellon

The comedy is very inferior to Mr O'Keefe's former productions. The plot uninteresting; the sentiments trite and frivolous; the language weak and insipid; the scenes without novelty, discrimination or humour. To these defects it may be added that it was not enlivened by those flashes of merriment with which this author's former works abounded. In short, the failure was complete.

John O'Keefe (1747-1833), dramatist

The playwright John O'Keefe appears quite philosophical in his assessment of the poor reception of *She's Eloped*: "rather a grievous one to me but heaven's will be done". However, at this time both his personal and professional life were overshadowed by ill health: the steady deterioration of his eyesight had left O'Keefe effectively blind by the height of his career.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 201

Letter from Mrs Jordan - recipient not mentioned by name - (Monday 30th)

Bushy, Monday 30th

Sir

On reconsidering the subject on which we had some conversation the other night, I must rather decline performing at Richmond or do so on the old terms - 20 guineas per night for six nights, paying you 20 for the 7th - twice a week, the time from the 10th or 12th of August, you arranging the plays or farces yourself and directing the business, or I must decline it all together.

I am your [humble servant]

D Jordan

Dorothy Jordan [*real name Phillips*] (1761-1816), actress

Dorothy Philips was born in the West End of London, but spent most of her childhood in Ireland. After success on the Dublin stage, she made her London debut at Drury Lane in 1785. She supposedly adopted the stage name 'Jordan' – an allusion to her crossing the water from Ireland to England – at the suggestion of the actor Tate Wilkinson.

Mrs Jordan appeared at the Richmond Theatre Royal on several occasions, with performances including Sheridan's *A Trip to Scarborough* on 12 July 1790 and *The Country Girl* on 3 August 1801.

As an actress in comedy, Mrs Jordan was held to be without equal by her contemporaries and her career continued well after she became the mistress of William, Duke of Clarence later King William IV. She had ten children by the Duke, all taking the surname FitzClarence. Their relationship ended in 1811 and although she received a liberal settlement she died, in some poverty, in France in 1816.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 207

Letter from Arthur Murphy - name of recipient not mentioned (6 August 1792)

Dear Sir

I am to request your pardon for having detained the volume of Rousseau such a length of time. I have at last read it through with care and the result is that an imitation of the brevity of Tacitus will never read well in any modern language. I think that a translator should never forget that his author is remarkable for brevity but he should not be a slave to his manner, especially as it may well be questioned whether it is always a beauty in the original.

It appears to me that both Rousseau and d'Alambert have failed in this attempt. We look, in vain, in this translation for the grant of style that charm us in their original works. If I had seen Rousseau in time, there are a few touches of his which I should have adopted.

There remains one thing more, for which I am to return you my best thanks. I mean the cause against Roberts. I will not trouble you on that subject but I am convinced of two things. 1st, had I brought Roberts before the court for sheep stealing, a witch judge would have found it to be manslaughter. The 2nd thing is more important. If a judge dares in that manner to make up his mind, we boast in vain of trial by jury. The judge should at all times know that a cause is to be tried before him but not by him. If by early showing himself he is to intercept the question from the jury, the law in the case of libel has been corrected in vain. I will not promise that Lord Kenyon shall not, at a future day, hear more upon this subject. I beg pardon for troubling you so long and I remain with great esteem, dear Sir

Your most obliged and most obedient servant,

Arthur Murphy

Hammersmith Terrace

6th August 1792

Arthur Murphy (1727-1805) barrister, actor, playwright

Irish-born Arthur Murphy began his theatrical career as an actor, but met with little success treading the boards, and turned to playwriting. His plays include *The Apprentice*, *The Orphan of China*, *Zenobia* and *The Grecian Daughter*. The latter provided Sarah Siddons with one of her favourite parts in the character of Euphrasia.

Murphy writes this letter in his capacity as a barrister. He was most famous for his representation of the Donaldson vs Becket appeal against the perpetual possession of copyright (1774).

Lord Kenyon, Baron of Gredington, was appointed Lord Chief Justice in 1788

Broadley Haymarket III, p 227

Letter from Henry Erskine Johnston to John Burgess (31 August 1830)

Chichester, August 31st 1830

Dear Burgess

On the last day of the month I proceed to address you - and, as you have often expressed a wish to hear from me in my theatrical career, I presume apology is needless.

I opened at Bognor in June, soon after I saw you in Rochester, Charles II. I have played Iago, Glenaloon, Steinforth's Stranger and many parts, comedy and tragedy, but I think the Comedy Lady seems to pull me her way. The first night to a genteel house I played Rochester and Somerville in the Turn Out. I shall finish my season here in a fortnight.

Now the more immediate cause of my writing to you is, beside to trumpet fame, to beg. You know, friend John, under Covent Garden Piazza, leaving Mother H's, I once had the impudence to borrow 6/- of you. I have drank (sic.) your wine many a time and oft, and I have now to detail to you my woes. My friend Palmer is out of London - I don't know w[h]ere to write to him. My benefit as Sylvester Daggerwood [...] is fixed for some night next week. Now, not having the felicity of possessing cash enough about me to pay the necessary expense of bills, tickets etc being a new one, and all I have yet got being lawfully expended on that there thing called Greed - alas eating and drinking - I have once more the impudence to request you will make the 6/- I owe you into a pound, which shall be returned you immediately after my benefit.

As you are aware of my natural modesty, you will perhaps excuse this scrawl – 'tis nothing but my nervousness - by forwarding the same by the Comet Coach from the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, directed as below, you will oblige,

yours truly,

H Johnston

H Johnston
Theatre
Bognor

Give Harry a lift by the shirt collar if you please.

Henry Erskine Johnston (c1775-1845) actor

Johnston was born in Edinburgh, and commenced his acting career on the Scottish stage before making his débuts in Dublin and London. He first appeared in the West End at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden in 1797. He also made regular performances at the Theatre Royal Haymarket where, he appeared as the original Alberto in Holcroft's *The Inquisitor* (1798).

This letter of 1830 gives a flavour of Johnston's busy touring schedule in the provincial theatres. Later in the year, in October, he would take to the stage of the Caledonian Theatre in Edinburgh.

The final years of Johnston's acting career were dedicated to trying to make a name for himself in America; however, he was now in his sixties, and although his performances were warmly received, he was in competition with more energetic, younger actors. He retired to England, and died in London in 1845.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 235

Letter from Daniel Terry to Bingley(?) (10 October 1827)

My dear Bingley

We are very much annoyed and perplexed by the want of [...] and also by the deficiency of the [...] in the Back [...]. Pray let the proper and efficient [...] remove without any delay, and then I believe you are free from all further [...] of attendance and the [...] of yours most truly,

Daniel Terry

Adelphi Theatre London

10th October 1827

PS As soon after tomorrow as you can [...]

Daniel Terry (c1789-1829) actor and playwright

After many appearances in the provinces, Terry made his London début at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in 1812. He was also a well-known actor on the Edinburgh stage, and was associated with numerous adaptations of Sir Walter Scott's work for the stage, including *Guy Mannering* and *Rob Roy*. From 1825 he managed the Adelphi Theatre but was forced to retire due to financial problems shortly after this letter was written. He suffered from debilitating memory loss following the end of his tenure at the Adelphi, and died from a stroke on 12 June 1829.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 249

Letter from John Liston to Mr Woodin

Tuesday Morning

Mr & Mrs Liston are sorry they cannot have the pleasure of availing themselves of Mr Woodin's polite invitation for the evening, as Mr Liston will be engaged at the theatre until a late hour.

Soho Square
No 27

John Liston (1776-1846), actor

Liston was born in Soho, and is said to have been a pupil at Soho School. He made his London début at Theatre Royal Haymarket in 1799, performing in Colman's *The Iron Chest*. He then toured extensively before returning to the Haymarket in 1805. It was at this performance of *The Village Lawyer* that Liston began to carve a name for himself as one of the nation's leading actors of low comedy. He counted among the highest paid actors of his generation, with estimates of his nightly earnings at the Theatre Royal Haymarket ranging from £10 to £60. By his retirement in 1837, he was said to be earning £100 per week at the Olympic Theatre.

Although exuberant and eccentrically-dressed on the stage, in his private life John Liston was a rather solemn, serious character. This letter, a polite refusal of an evening engagement, is an expression of this rather more dignified side to Liston. In the letter, reference is made to Liston's wife, Sarah Tyrer. She had also had a successful theatrical career as a singer and comic actress, but retired from the stage in 1822 when Liston left the Covent Garden Theatre in May 1822.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 263

Letter from Elizabeth Inchbald to the Rev Dr Wrangham

That I should presume to write criticisms upon the works of The Rev. W. Wrangham and The Rev Dr Sumners is perhaps the most extraordinary incident of my whole life and the one I ought most to be ashamed of. But I am never ashamed of anything before the wise. They know, so well, the various follies of human nature they can readily excuse all its vanities and all its nonsense. But I have too much respect for my reputation to dare to find fault with the productions of the weak and the foolish.

Pray let Dr Sumners know how much I abused your sermon. He will then probably tell you how much I disliked his play. Upon my word they are both to me insufferable and yet, upon that self-same word you are, in my opinion, two of the most admirable men I know. But it is no reproach to him to not write a good play though it is a great fault in you to preach a sermon of evil tendency.

I won't dispute with you the subject any longer on paper because writing is my [...] and I hate it. But the next time we meet I will make you confess you are, and that however feeble my arguments may be, my feelings are right. They are the feelings of the uninformed - of the illiterate, I own - but these are the persons for whom sermons were designed. For the uninformed and the illiterate too are plays meant - at least those are the people who decide upon them and decide merely from feeling. Therefore, till priests and poets can make choices of their congregations and of their audiences, they should study the capacity and the taste of the vulgar. To please the refined not the learned I acknowledge to be more honourable but to charm every class should be the aim, and attainment is fame and [...].

This is a perfection to which I know you can arrive if you will - not that I have little doubt but you will. In the meantime, accept my wishes with this letter as some apology for my former impertinences.

I trouble you with the enclosed to your little neighbour, Juliet, when you see her. It is in no [...] as you may imagine. I have the pleasure of seeing Mr Tobin often.

E Inchbald

Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1821) actress, playwright, novelist and poet

Elizabeth Inchbald had to overcome a speech impediment to embark upon her career on the stage. Although she was never considered a very fine actress, she met with considerable success as a playwright.

Outspoken and radical in her social and political views, she was careful to temper her writings to appeal to popular audiences. Theatre managers refused to produce some of her more political dramas, such as *The Massacre*, which drew parallels between the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre and the French Revolution.

In her novels, she was less reserved in expressing her views on society, exploring issues such as sexual relations, and criticising the class system and social institutions.

In this letter, she addresses the classical scholar and clergyman Francis Wrangham (1769-1842). Although she makes reference to her 'illiteracy' and 'ignorance', she clearly demonstrates her sharp wit and spirit for argument.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 279

Letter from the Chevalier d'Eon - to Monsieur Durival (9 January 1788)

Londres le 6 janvier 1788

J'ai l'honneur, Monsieur, de vous envoyer ci-joint un duplicata du Mémoire sur le procès qui me retient encore en Angleterre malgré moi depuis le mois de [...] 1785 et que j'envoie aujourd'hui à Monsieur le Comte de Montmorin. Monsieur Barthelemi veut bien se charger de faire parvenir ces deux paquets par son prochain courrier.

La lecture vous fera connaître la justice de ma cause et la n[e]cessité de la protection de Monsieur le Comte de Montmorin pour qu'il ait la bonté d'autoriser le nouvel Ambassadeur à faire connaître au Ministère de cette cour la justice de la réclamation de ma dette.

Je compte beaucoup, monsieur, sur l'amitié que vous m'avez toujours témoigné et sur vos bons offices tout auprès de Monsieur le comte de Montmorin et de Monsieur de Rayneval pour que la lettre du Ministère à Monsieur le Chevalier de la Luzerne soit conçue en des termes pressan[t]s. Si vous n'avez pas cette bonté pour moi, Monsieur, je cours risque de rester encore longtemps dans ce pays beaucoup trop cher et trop nébuleux pour moi, tandis que j'ai abandonné depuis si longtemps mon bien et mes affaires en Bourgogne, ma mère qui a plus de 80 ans et qui vient de faire une chute dangereuse à son âge, tandis que j'ai quatre neveux encore jeunes au service du Roi, qui quoique bons sujets, ont néanmoins grand besoin de mon retour et de ma présence en France.

Je vous souhaite une meilleure santé que celle que j'ai en ce moment. Sachez que je puisse dans quelques mois vous aller moi-même renouveler les assurances de la parfaite reconnaissance avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissante servante,

La Chevalière d'Eon

Charles Geneviève Louis Auguste André Timothée d'Eon de Beaumont (1728-1810), swordsman, diplomat and impresario

D'Eon was considered one of the 18th century's finest fencers, well-known for the spectacular defeat of Saint-Georges at Carlton House in 1787. He performed at numerous theatres, including the Haymarket on 30 May 1793.

The Chevalier had a complicated personal identity. He was born anatomically male, and lived out the first 45 years of her life as a man. However, as an agent for the French Secret Service, he frequently carried out missions under a female identity. In 1775 he confirmed his gender as female, and from that point on appears to have lived entirely as a woman.

D'Eon first came to London in 1762 as Secretary to the French Ambassador, returning to France in 1777. He came back to London in 1785 and died there in 1810.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 289

Letter from Mrs Rose Mountain to Mrs Mathews (1836)

My Dear Mrs Mathews

Will you permit a very old friend to express her extreme gratification at the "triumphant and deserved success" of your dear Charles's début.

I have been watching anxiously to hear of him. Since he undertook the frightful risk of becoming manager, he has now established his claim to public favour beyond the Proprietor and Caterer of their amusements by proving himself the attraction, and by personal talents, to ensure that admiration that he was seeking for other.

There is a charm in the name of Mathews, and it is for the exertions of the son (so happily approved) to perpetuate that name to all lovers of dramatic excellence who have witnessed the [...] of his father! I should have written on the following day after your son's appearance, but illness prevented me conveying those sensations that I felt on reading (of) his glorious reception.

Adieu my dear Mrs Mathews. Give my best regards to dear Charles and say, as he has always been one of the best of sons, his success will draw from Envy his sting - as all must love him that do not [...] to admire him, that he may long continue.

Your happiness [...]

Yours very sincerely

Rose Mountain

PS There are at present only in lodgings, waiting to get into our little cottage in the road [...], No 1 Grove Place opposite St Peter's Hammersmith.

Rosemond Mountain (née Wilkinson) (c1768-1841) actress and singer

Rosemond Mountain had strong connections with the theatre from a very early age. She was born to a family of performers: her father and aunt were both variety artists specialising in tightrope walking, and her mother was an actress of minor parts. Her name, Rosemond, may even have been given to her as a compliment to Thomas Rosoman(d), the proprietor of Sadler's Wells.

This letter over 20 years after Mountain's retirement from a successful career on the London stage. She addresses Ann Mathews (née Jackson), wife of the celebrated actor Charles Mathews, who had passed away the previous year. In the letter, she congratulates Ann on the success met by her son Charles James Mathews (1803–1878) on the commencement of his theatrical career. Charles James Mathews had opened the Adelphi Theatre with his late father's partner in September 1835. In the November of that same year, he made his début at the theatre in a production of his play, *The Humpbacked Lover*, and in the farce *The Old and Young Stagers*, in which he starred alongside the famous comedian John Liston.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 297

Letter from Robert Keeley to Charles Lewis Gruneisen (28 December 1844)

Theatre Royal Lyceum
Saturday December 28th 1844

Mr Dear Sir

I have been so occupied that I have not had time to answer your note of Thursday.

It is not our rule to extend the privileges of admission to any newspaper that has not been established 6 months, and I am not permitted to break it in the instance of the *Great Gun*; This however will make little difference to you, as I shall always be happy to let you have admissions whenever you apply for them.

Yours very truly

R Keeley

C L Gruneisen, Esq

Robert Keeley (1793-1869) actor

Robert Keeley toured the provinces before making his London debut, in 1818, as the original Leporello in *Don Giovanni in London*.

Following a tour in the United States in the late 1830s, Keeley returned to London and, in 1844, took up the management of the Lyceum Theatre. It was during his tenure at the Lyceum that he penned this letter to the journalist and critic Charles Lewis Gruneisen (1806–1879).

Gruneisen had recently returned from Paris, and had become the editor of a new publication: the *Great Gun* newspaper. Although Keeley explains he is unable to offer free tickets to journalists at brand new publications, he would happily offer Gruneisen with free admission on a personal level.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 327

Letter from Charles Leftley to Robert William Elliston (22 July 1796)

Direct for me:
At Mrs Paynes, Milliner
No 4 Charles Street, Middlesex Hospital

Friday July 22nd 1796

Once more I am in London, and once more, dear Elliston, I have the pleasing opportunity of returning you a thousand, thousand thanks for a friendship that beams honour on me, for civilities unmerited, for attentions that can never be repaid.

The particulars of my journey you will glean from Miss Kitty Fleming; the particulars since my arrival you shall have from myself. I reached town at nine in the morning, alighted at Hyde Park Corner, walked home, breakfasted, read the last week's chronicles and, after refreshing myself, according to custom, with a general ablution, and repairing the little machines of business which had been neglected in my absence, I proceeded to deliver Miss Dorothea's letter with your cabinet of compliments to the good people in Fountain Place; though, by the bye, I had no direction where they lived, or if I had it was forgotten, and I was not without an apprehension of some difficulty to find them out. I recollected however the latitude of their house, and by the bearing of Islington Church I steered my course right. On my way I called at Somers Town. Your father was from home, but I saw the good lady your mother, who was highly gratified to hear of you and your success at Bristol. I gave her a playbill and figured down the receipt of your benefit upon the back of it, that she might be able to inform your father with precision. Poor man, he has been troubled with a disorder in the bowels she told me, and she has herself been affected with a cold. They are vexed you do not write to them. I really believe a letter from you would be as acceptable to them as a bank note and revive them more than the most sovereign panacea or fresh air, and, since you have it in your power, I am sure you will not fail to glad (sic.) them with it.

When I reached Fountain Place, I saw Marianne sitting at the window, who flew out to me with a smile upon her countenance and a welcome in her heart. Her mother was in the country, and her brothers at their daily occupation in the City, so I drank tea with her alone. We talked about you, her sisters, Miss Kitty, Bath, and a multitude of etceteras. She had, it seems, expected me that evening per advice from her sister, and I had the agreeable mortification to find my whole stock of intelligence anticipated from the same source. However, we passed the time agreeably enough notwithstanding. She sang and played the piano for me, told me she was learning some new glees from Mr Aldley, her next door neighbour, and that she should attend a review of the Artillery, which was soon to take place in the neighbourhood. We strolled out together in the evening and I bought a beautiful cabinet picture, the portrait of Henrietta Maria wife of Charles the first, by Vandyke, for four shillings. What it is worth I will not pretend to say, but at any rate it is a bargain. We returned and supped with Charles off a nice cos lettuce and pickled salmon. Mr Rundell did not come in until after supper when he informed me that the Gazetteer and some other papers had either copied or paraphrased the paragraphs from the country papers respecting your Benefit. He had not seen it, but, as he understood, it stated that Earl Northampton had treated all his men with tickets to see your play and that the whole regiment was delighted!!! I apprehended he must have mistook (sic.) the construction, for

the incident is too ridiculous and too improbable to obtain belief. Mr Rundell is going to spend a few days at Ipswich in Suffolk. He has sent you Steven's Shakespeare, which he bought at Lackington's for £5.10, I think he said. The usual price is £7. I hope it is a fair and perfect copy; that you will see, however, when you come to collect it. Marianne has invited me to dine with her next Sunday when I am to carry the Sylph for her to read and give her a lesson upon drawing. I left the other playbill and regretted that I did not bring more with me, particularly the bills with the Epitome of the Pantomime on the back as well as the Bath and Bristol papers that mentioned you. From Fountain place, of course, the little loves come greeting.

I went last night to Colman's. Sir Peter, who was the first man I saw, enquired very kindly after you and when you would return? This augured well for my Lord's Porter after all you know is the mouthpiece of my Lord, and if your estimation had not sounded well to the top of the gamut you should have found this treble-base most dismally out of tune. The first person I met behind the scenes was Jack Bannister who bowed en passant more coolly than was wont to do. Perhaps he had heard of my attendance on you and they say rooks will smell gunpowder. Well, let him pass! The next was Charles Kemble who asked me when I heard from you &c.? I told him of my journey and my late return, and delivered your kind compliments with as much grace as I was master of. He seemed pleased; pleased too to hear of your probable return to the Summer Theatre this season, put many anxious questions to me concerning your health and that of Mrs Elliston, your welcome to Bristol, what characters I had seen you play there, and so forth to the end of the chapter, which was, of course, a kind remembrance of him when I wrote. The third person was little Waldron, the son of the renowned Sir Walter Raleigh, who to make himself look big I supposed rapped out some dozen others spoke prettily and rimini finimi, as it were, swore by Gad he could not have thought there was so much stuff in you, that by Gad you had taken them all in, that you were a most astonishing young man, a second Garrick, and in short that all the great stars of the Theatre must hide their diminished heads before you; though I would hazard all I am worth, and God knows it is very little, to one of this fellow's teeth, that he knows no more of Garrick than I do of the present Great Mogul, but your parrot is an excellent ballad maker. Apropos, he said that he had heard you were engaged at Covent Garden for £20 a week. Marianne told me the same story. She heard it in the Edmonton stagecoach from a Mr Collins of Edmonton. Whence does it proceed?

At length I come to the climax of my narrative, for the Hero of the house now made his appearance and asked me when I heard from you? I told him that I accompanied you to Bath and had but just left you. He then asked if I had a letter from you? I replied in the negative. "Oh! the rogue", said he, "how can he neglect me so when he knows I am upon the rack of impatience to hear from him?". I told him that he might expect to hear from you next day, but that you ought to receive grace as you had been indisposed with a cold and a rash. He said he had written to you [...] return this summer and your choice of characters, which he supposed I had some [...]. I replied I had, that I thought you would be in London in about three weeks [...] the characters you had glanced at were Hamlet, Othello and Belcour. I forgot Gondibert. [...] expressed great satisfaction at the probability of your return, repeated his opinion of your playing Hamlet well, was glad you had pitched upon Othello as he thought you would perform that well also but, as for Belcour, he thought it would not do - it could not answer - however, he should think about it. Here the discourse changed to the opera of Azemia, when he begged leave to wait upon me at my lodgings next Thursday about it. Is it not singular that he never appoints a meeting at his own house, but is always anxious to wait on me? This is a mystery I cannot penetrate.

I forgot to tell you that the play was Inkle & Garico and the farce, The Children in the Wood. Palmer played Inkle and was horribly imperfect. Fawcett received great applause in Trudge, and Bannister in Walter was, if possible, greater than ever. The house was crammed in every corner and Shaw, the leader of the band, has told me that it has been so every night. The proprietors of the Little Theatre had scarcely ever before such a profitable season.

I saw Cumberland behind the scenes. He is in a panic about the success of his new play. It is called Don Pedro and will be produced tomorrow.

During the performance of the farce, I walked round to the front and joined Reynolds and Jack Taylor in the lobby. I thanked the latter again, in your name, for his last favourable report of Sheva. He said you deserved no less and they both spoke handsomely of you. Reynolds is going to Margate to recruit his health with the sea breeze, but thinks he shall come up to see your Hamlet. He approves of your playing Othello and recommends Romeo but as to Belcour, he says it will never do, it would not draw a penny, it has been hacked to death, it is stale, all my eye and Betty Martin. He has finished another comedy for Harris, he tells me, in which Lewis is to play Harlequin and jump about as usual. It is full of stale jokes he says, cut and dried for the occasion, the characters all cast in the same mould as his former ones were and as for plot, he says he will be damned if the critics can accuse him of stealing plots from other people because his plays have not plot at all.

Morton is returned from the Isle of Wight and is also busy about a comedy for Harris. He has just finished the second act.

Drury Lane Theatre I hear is still in a state of insolvency and it is doubtful whether it will be able to open or, if it does open, whether it will be able to continue so. Suett desires to be remembered to you. He invited me to sup with him but I declined the invitation. He drinks desperately. Now I believe I have retailed all my intelligence and if I had not, the want of paper to carry on business would oblige me to shut up shop - which I cannot do however without thanking you, my best customer, for your kind encouragement, and assuring you that although I retire, I shall ever remain a grateful remembrance of the favours conferred on, my dear friend, your truly affectionate

Charles Leftley

Say handsome things for me to Mrs Elliston; look handsome for me to Miss Taylor; bear kind remembrances to Father Paul. Bounce not about me to Murray when you tell him I respect him; and to every other enquiring friend, health and fraternity.

[Notes at the head of the letter]

Tell Carr to write to me and do you send a letter yourself soon with as much Bath and Bristol chit-chat as you can cram into it. You see I have set you a good example.

Margate Theatre opens next Thursday. The place is very full.

Charles Leftley, actor and poet

According to Charles Mathews the elder, Leftley had performed with Elliston as a young man, in a production of Pyrrhus and Orestes at a theatre above a pastrycook shop. In his memoirs, Mathews recalls how “Orestes was really well performed by a very interesting youth of the name of Leftley, a poetical genius who distinguished himself in many of the periodical publications of the day”. This spirited letter demonstrates the depth of friendship that remained between Leftley and Elliston well into their adult lives.

Letter from Charles Leftley to Robert William Elliston (circa July 1796)

Dear Elliston

To have my letter of last Friday so soon answered, and answered too not only with that warmth of friendship which distinguishes your character, but with the care and elegance of a more studied composition, was a pleasure I did not expect, "and therefore as a stranger gave it welcome"; and to convince you that my pleasure was sincere, I would not have suffered the Post to drive again to Bath if I could have conveniently executed your commission in the interim without a due acknowledgement. As it is, you have outran (sic.) me in the race of courtesy, and I must be content to hobble after.

I thank you for your attention to my partialities in preference to your own business and must candidly confess that to sit high in the esteem of your friends and acquaintances was an honour I was anxious to attain, and the attainment of it consequently flatters my ambition. Your sage advice to shun the witcheries of Marianne shall be remembered for, in "my salad days", as Cleopatra calls them, I shall need it, although perhaps I may lack resolution to obey it, and so must prodigally waste my youth in idle sighs and bankrupt lamentations.

Your edition of Shakespeare is the last, and best, if notes and commentaries do improve the text, which with some people is a doubt. At any rate it is that which you wanted and that which I should recommend. In regard to the injury sustained by package, all the blame must fall on Mr Rundell who took the charge of packing to himself. I hope the covers only have been injured, because, as they were bound in boards, the injury will then be not worth notice, for such a set of books so finely written and so beautifully printed deserve and ought to have a binding of some value, but, if the leaves or text have been impaired, I fear it will be difficult to get your loss restored. However, I would have you send me the particulars and if I can procure you duplicates, I will.

When in conversation with Charles Kemble about a correct play-house copy of the tragedy of Hamlet, he told me that his brother John revised and published one which Lowndes has printed. I shall walk into the City soon and make enquiries about it as well as a correct theatrical edition of Othello, which if I can obtain I will remit immediately to you.

Did I observe to you that Mr Reynolds recommended Romeo? At all events, be sure to think of it.

Why did you not reply to Colman's letter sooner? You should not be too confident of your own influence. "Security is mortals (sic.) enemy", and a man who has behaved so kindly to you as he has done has a claim to every attention in your power. You were very much to blame, but it is not my business to reprove you, and I am sure if it were that you will stand corrected by your own good sense so as to render it unnecessary. I see no reason why you should be afraid of personating Hamlet. You have every qualification for it except feature, and art may do much for you in that. Manifest no timid apprehensions to the Manager, nor to any other person, but as at our Swedish game of Fer Kerme, rush boldly forward and win by daring. I would say to you, as Caesar did to the pilot who was afraid to put to sea with him in a storm, "Quid times? Caesarem vehis". I would remind you that

Fortune prospers you as the better Genius did Augustus, and that you ought to exclaim in the sublime language of Horace:

Justum et tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium
Non vultis instantis tyrannus
Mente gratit solida

I commonly lounge away part of my evenings behind the scenes and in the Green Room. Jack Bannister has recovered his politeness. "Quid est dici?". After all, perhaps my conjectures on the cause of what I fancied might be coolness might be false. Cumberland has noticed me, and we chatted together upwards of an hour last Friday behind the scenes, very freely I assure you. We talked about you, and you must not be angry with me for telling you that I praised you very highly as a good son and a good friend and doubted not but you would make a good husband also. I could do no less, but if you blush to hear the commendations you so justly merit, I will henceforward praise you in secret and the world shall be taught to love and respect you without your knowing one word about the matter. To proceed in our conversation Cumberland said he had been surprised at the universal applause you were received with, because he had been told by Grubb that when you played at Margate, a young man of the name of Melvin entered into competition with you and in the opinion of many bore away the palm; but he supposed the public had been apprised of your amiable conduct in private life and attributed part of their approbation to that conduct. It gave a dignity to the profession and he esteemed you for it.

I called at your late lodgings for Zeluco. The woman told me that your conscientious barber had applied to her several times for two shillings which he says you owed him for shaving, and she wants to know what she is to do with him. Do, said I, shave him four times in return, and when Elliston returns to London, he shall shave you. Her rooms are empty and if they continue so, she says she should be glad to have you again for her lodger. Let me know your determination.

Concerning Drury Lane Theatre, what I have heard was very vague and mere report. The substance of it was that the accompts were still embarrassed, that it was uncertain whether John Kemble and Mrs Siddons were or were not re-engaged, that a great dismissal had taken place of many of the performers, that the loss of Wroughton, Bentley etc, etc was likely to be felt, and that the Town had not yet any idea of what kind of company it would contain. Be the embarrassments what they will, however, I do not perceive if you were engaged how they could affect you, provided you insist on being paid every Saturday as Jack Bannister does, or strike, for your abilities are worth a reasonable price and will be always sure to find a market.

Lady Charles Spencer was present at the first representation of Don Pedro last Saturday. She sat in the stage box and was accompanied by one of the most beautiful women I ever beheld and the ladies (sic.) husband. They received me very politely, made room and invited me to sit with them, and I had the pleasure of joining in a charming conversation all the evening. The gentleman was intimately acquainted with Sheridan, Grubb and Richardson, but who he was I do not know. Perhaps you do? He is about thirty-eight or forty years of age, tall and well proportioned, of pleasing manners, well-informed, commonly dresses in a green coat and frequents the Theatre. His wife is above the common size, embonpoint, fair, with a dark, laughing pair of eyes that captivate at the first glance; a soft set of features, the outlines of which melt tenderly away, and a neatly

rounded neck and arm. Lady Charles says if you play Hamlet you will have the best Ophelia in the kingdom, for upon her report Mrs Kemble performs it inimitably. Of course I was not displeased with the distinction of this party and to render it more acceptable two of my good-natured friends, Videlicet Boaden and Bill Matthews, sat nearly opposite. Phillis also was there, I could have spared her! And, yet, in spite of the beauty of the lady in our own box, I could scarcely keep my eyes and thoughts one moment from hovering about her.

For once I fear you must excuse the postage of a double letter, and yet it is a pity to put you to such an expense for my incorrigible nonsense. But I know not how it is, when once my pen is set a-going, it will run down like an alarm or a jack when the fly is off to the end of its line. I have turned the fourth quarter of my paper, you see, and I believe if I had strength, leisure and material I should go on scribbling till Doomsday. I went on Sunday, according to the appointment which I told you of, to dine with the worthy family in Fountain Place. Mr Rundell was gone to Ipswich and Mr Richardson to Margate, so we formed a partie quarrie, compact and comfortable. Our repast was nearly the same as when you dined with us there: a roast quarter of lamb, green peas, French beans, bacon and a raspberry and currant pie, with the addition of a Devonshire dish called a Wurtle-berry pie, which is a pie made of a wild kind of berry resembling blackcurrants, very full of juice but of a flat, astrigent quality like sloes only in a less powerful degree. We drank all your healths - that is to say your own and Betsey's, Dorothea's, Miss Kitty's, Miss Taylor's and all the good people at Bath. After dinner, and taking a little fruit by way of dissent, we rambled across the fields to Hornsey Wood, where we regaled ourselves with nice short loaves and coffee. Tell Betsy her mother forgot her age and walked as briskly as the best of us, for what with our walk out and our return we did not measure less than eight or nine miles. I drank tea at Fountain Place again yesterday and we commemorated Betsy's birthday with wishes of mutual happiness to you both in wine and shrub and water, with merriment and laughter, with catches and with glees. Mrs Rundell sang in her turn the old ditty of "Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme" and some others that served to amuse our forefathers and were no less pleasing to their posterity.

I am desired to inform you that the silversmith has forgotten the size and pattern of your teapot and will be unable to make you a stand for it unless you either send him up a drawing of the size and pattern or send back the teapot to have one made to it.

I have not time to give you my opinion now of Cumberland's new play and therefore must beg leave to defer it. I can only briefly tell you that it is not likely to live above nine nights. Who would be an author?

Robert William Elliston (1774-1831) actor, singer, manager and playwright

Robert William Elliston made his first theatre appearance in Bath in 1791. Following appearances in the provinces, he made his London debut on 25 June 1796 – the year of this letter – at the Haymarket. In September of that same year, he appeared for the first time at the Covent Garden Theatre. Later in the course of his very successful career, he managed provincial theatres and the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, making his last appearance, when in poor health, in 1831.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 347

Letter from M Howard to Lord Chedworth (1804)

Dear Lord Chedworth

We went last night to the Haymarket, an exceeding good house. We got in without the least difficulty from being very early. The Enchanted Island was received with the greatest applause. I believe almost every performer from Covent Garden and Drury Lane where (sic.) in the house. The scenery is very good. It is an extreme (sic.) pretty thing and will, I think, have a great run. At present it is rather too long. De Camp was very good. I send you the book. I hope it will not be too heavy – pray let me know. Miss Daniels got a little missing in the song 'Oh Men Forlorn'. I believe it was from the fear of having it repeated and she looked hurt. Mrs [Bedell?] I have seen once since you left town - did not mention your name, therefore I did not. I shall call on Mrs Siddons this evening. Mr H has not heard anything more of Gedge. It is expected he will pay 2/6 in the pound. Before the new piece [...] we had the purse, and [in] *The Liar*, Young Wilding, Mr Elliston. Mr Howard did not much like him. I am sorry Mr Fosset is not better. Pray, when you write, say how you are. I doubt we shall have a hot dusty journey on Wednesday.

With the greatest respect my Lord, believe me your ever obliged

M Howard

John Howe, Fourth Baron Chedworth (1754-1804)

Despite his privileged youth, including an education at Harrow and Oxford, Chedworth spurned fashionable London society, preferring to mix socially with milliners and actresses.

Chedworth was famous as an eccentric, and even after his death, still had the ability to shock polite society. In his will, he distributed the majority of his estate among friends in the theatre industry, as well as some other acquaintances such as a local cheesemonger.

In this letter, one of Chedworth's contacts sends him a critical appraisal of *The Enchanted Island*. The play was first performed at the Haymarket in 1804 and was written by John Fawcett (see biographical note to Broadley Haymarket III, p. 405).

Broadley Haymarket III, p 405

Letter from John Fawcett - recipient not mentioned (2 April 1823)

Theatre Royal Covent Garden
Wednesday 2 April 1823

My Dear Sir

I want a description of the house of the two brothers in your comedy (a cottage I think you call it). If you could sketch ever so roughly it would do for me as a document – pray send me this off hand.

I am, Dear Sir, yours truly

John Fawcett

John Fawcett (1768-1837), actor and playwright

After joining Tate Wilkinson's Company in York, actor and playwright John Fawcett made his London debut in 1791. He made his first appearance at the Haymarket in 1794 and became stage manager there in 1797. His works included *The Brazen Mask*, *The Secret Mine* and *The Enchanted Isle*, a critique of which is given in a letter to Lord Chedworth (Broadley III, p.347)

His acting career included the part of Rolamo in Howard Payne's *Clari, the Maid of Milan* (1823) – a work perhaps most famous for popularising the song 'Home Sweet Home'.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 475

Letter from Benjamin Webster to Cooke (26 May)

T. R. H,
May 26th

My Dear Cooke

Wishing to bring the few old geniuses of the Adelphi time before the public on the last night of the old theatre, I venture to ask if you could, without inconvenience, do one act of Black Eyed Susan for my Benefit on June 2nd, Wednesday next.

Yours faithfully

B Webster

Letter from Benjamin Webster to Cooke (27 September)

Paris
September 27th

My Dear Cooke

I enclose cheque and hope it will find you well and hearty. Bowes of Gallin[...]’s paper desires his best remembrances and congratulations. He has promised me a paper for you in which he did not forget an old friend.

I will try to see you on Wednesday or Thursday. I meant to have been home tomorrow but wish to see if I can pick up anything here, though I doubt it.

Yours sincerely,

B Webster

[...] I believe remains

Letter from Benjamin Nottingham Webster to T P Cooke (14 October)

The Tower
Llanarmon
Near Llangollen
Denbighshire

October 14th

My Dear Cooke

I am glad you can carry on and, as Madame requires the full complement of rest, if you can make it two weeks it will be all the better. Arrange the pieces with Gallot as you please.

Yours truly
B N Webster

T P Cooke Esq

Letter from Benjamin Nottingham Webster to Cooke (26 October)

Llanarmon

October 26th

My Dear Cooke

I enclose cheque and shall have the pleasure of shaking you by the hand in a day or two.

Yours truly

B Webster

Webster, Benjamin (1798–1882), actor and theatre manager

Benjamin (Nottingham) Webster was an actor and dramatist who, after appearances in the provinces made his London debut in 1819. In 1829 he made his first appearance at the Haymarket in “Lodgings for a Single Gentleman”. Less than a decade later, he was managing the Haymarket, and went on to be the lessee of the Adelphi Theatre and the Princess’s Theatre.

These three letters, addressed to Thomas Potter Cooke, appear to have been written during Webster’s sixteen year tenure at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. As a teenager, Cooke had embarked upon a career in the Royal Navy, but his life on the high seas came to an end with the Peace of Amiens in 1802. He then turned to a career in circus and theatre acts, and became a popular figure on the nineteenth-century stage.

With his maritime background, Cooke was well-suited to the portrayal of sailors on the stage. He was also known as the original ‘Frankenstein’ in the first stage adaptation of Shelley’s novel. He had another major success as ‘Sweet William’ (a sailor) in Jerrold’s *Black Eye’d Susan*, which premièred at the Surrey Theatre in 1829.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 477

Agreement between Benjamin Nottingham Webster and Mr John Oxenford (19 July 1838)

Memorandum

Theatre Royal Haymarket
July 19th 1838

I hereby agree to give Mr John Oxenford £40 for a new original farce in two acts called "English Etiquette". If successful, its success to be determined on the third night's representation. It is understood that I am to have the exclusive right of acting it in London.

July 19th 1838

B N Webster

John Oxenford (1812-1877), playwright and translator

Oxenford's first efforts as a dramatist are recorded as dating from 1835, when his play *My Fellow Clerk* was produced at the Lyceum.

English Etiquette, 'an original farce', premièred at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in 1838.

Oxenford's most influential piece was *A Day Well Spent*, which indirectly provided material for twentieth-century hits such as the musical *Hello, Dolly!* and Tom Stoppard's *On the Razzle*.

Broadley Vol III, p 485

Letter from Thomas Potter Cooke to Meredith and Keeve (15 December 1843)

27 Manchester St
December 15 1843

My Dear Sirs

I beg to say that I have accepted Mr Winslow, the present occupant of my house by Torrington Square, as my tenant at Christmas next on the expiration of the lease granted to the late Mrs Edmonds, which will relieve you from the necessity of obtaining possession for the purpose of transferring it to me ... and am,

My Dear Sirs,

Yours very truly,

T P Cooke

The above is of course without prejudice with respect to the settlement of the fixtures.

Letter from Meredith and Keeve, to Thomas Potter Cooke (20 November 1843)

Lincolns Inn
20 November 1843

Sir

Understanding from Mr Winslow that he has agreed with you for continuing the occupation of No 7 Torrington Square from Christmas next, the period when the lease granted by you to the late Mrs Charlotte Edmunds will expire pursuant to notice – May we beg the favour of your notifying to us your acceptance of Mr Winslow's possession as your tenant from Christmas next, which will relieve the executors of Mrs Edwards, for whom we apply, from requiring possession to be given them by Mr Winslow for the purpose of transferring it to you.

We are, Sir,

Yours most obediently,

Meredith and Keeve

Letter from William Hoskins to Thomas Potter Cooke (10 September 1853)

24 Myddleton Square
Islington

September 10th 1853

Dear Sir

I beg to enclose you (sic), at the request of the Committee, a circular containing the lamentable case of the widow and orphans of the late John Wilkins, actor and dramatic author, and to which most respectfully your benevolence in behalf of its melancholy details.

The Committee are trying to raise a fund to place the widow in some occupation whereby she may be enabled to maintain herself and her orphan infants.

I am, dear Sir

Yours very obediently

William Hoskins

Secretary

T P Cooke Esq

Reply, on facing page, from Thomas Potter Cooke (12 September 1853)

35 Thurloe Square
12 September 1853

Dear Sir

In reply to yours of Saturday, I beg to say that I will, with pleasure, hand Mr Greenwood a sovereign as my [...] in the subscription-raising for the widow of the late Mr Wilkins, and am,

Dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

T P Cooke

William Hoskins Esq

Thomas Potter Cooke (1786-1864), actor

Thomas Potter Cooke had embarked upon a career in the Royal Navy as a teenager, but his life on the high seas came to an end with the Peace of Amiens in 1802. He then turned to a career in circus and theatre acts, and became a popular figure on the nineteenth-century stage.

With his maritime background, Cooke was well-suited to the portrayal of sailors on the stage. He was also known as the original 'Frankenstein' in the first stage adaptation of Shelley's novel. He had another major success as 'Sweet William' (a sailor) in Jerrold's *Black Eye'd Susan*, which premièred at the Surrey Theatre in 1829.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 491

Letter from John Baldwin Buckstone to Sothern (16 October 1866)

Theatre Royal Haymarket
London 16 Oct 1866

Dear Sothern

I return you Marston's letter - I think you may accept his terms as regards yourself - for Town and Country - but now about myself? - and my share of the payment - because I get no advantage in the country from such pieces - I wonder if it is the same subject Hermann Veizin has adapted from the German.

Shall we decide on opening at Christmas with "A [...] to Life" - if so, I must ask you to leave me out. I must not play parts unsuited to me in future - Tom Taylor was dead against my playing the part in the first instance, and I do not see the policy of sacrificing myself whole to play an inferior part, it causes disappointment to the public and does no good to the piece - and also injures me. I shall keep Kendal for Dacre - he appears in Hereford's Comedy on the 31st inst.

O'Connor will then be at liberty - I would have produced the comedy earlier but do not like changing the present bill - I took £800 last week - I will tell O'Connor to send you a sketch. He will be home from Belgium this week.

I am dreadfully worried with the Bradlow affair - and Wilde's vindictiveness - which although harmless, in a serious point of view, is annoying.

Trusting you may have good business in Dublin

Truly yours

J B Buckstone

John Baldwin Buckstone (1802-1879) actor, dramatist, and theatre manager

Buckstone made his first London stage appearance in 1823. His *Ellen Wareham* was first produced, at the Haymarket, in 1829 and there, between 1833 and 1839 he appeared in many of his own farces. After to a visit to the United States in 1842, he returned to more success at the Haymarket. From 1853 he became the manager of this theatre until three years before his death. Edward Sothern was among his company of actors at the same theatre.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 497

Letter from Edmund Kean to Dunn (24 April - no year indicated)

April 24th

Dear Dunn

Who is to be Manager?

Money, money, money,

Edmund Kean

The boy will take the needful.

Edmund Kean (1787-1833)

One of the greatest actors of his generation, Kean made his debut, as a very young child, circa 1790. In 1806 he made his first appearance at the Haymarket and his first appearance in New York in 1820. His immensely successful career came to an end with his last appearance at Covent Garden in March 1833, just a few months before his death.

In this letter, Kean may be addressing William Dunn, who became one of the lessees of Drury Lane in 1826

Broadley Haymarket III, p 533

Letter from Lady Martin to the Editor of the Daily Telegraph (9 December 1887)

December 9th 1887

31 [Onslow] Square

Lady Martin presents her compliments to the editor of the Daily Telegraph. She has naturally watched with some interest what has been said in his paper on the Bacon and Shakespeare controversy.

No one has touched on a point which Lady Martin thinks ought not to be overlooked.

She has called attention to it in the enclosed letter, which the Editor may perhaps find room for in his paper.

Helen Faucit (*married name* Helena Martin, Lady Martin) (1814–1898) actress

Helen Faucit was widely admired as an actress, and in her career she did much to promote the status of acting as a profession.

In 1851 she married Theodore Martin, a lawyer and biographer. In the 1860s, Martin was commissioned by Queen Victoria to write a biography of Prince Albert. This work earned him a knighthood in 1880.

Theodore Martin wrote widely about theatre, and in 1888 published an article, *Shakespeare or Bacon?* in which he aimed to dispel the belief that Sir Francis Bacon was responsible for writing Shakespeare's works.

It is probable that Helen Faucit's interest in the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy, expressed in this letter to the Daily Telegraph, was not only informed by her own experience of working with Shakespeare's texts, but had been heightened by her husband's research into the subject.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 551

Letter from William Charles Macready to the Rev A M Walter (13 May 1852)

Sherborne House
Sherborne
Dorset

May 13th 1852

Dear Sir

I have the pleasure of acknowledging your favour of yesterday and beg to express the gratification I feel in learning that my weak endeavours to procure a more liberal support to the Sherborne Literary Institution have been viewed with sympathy by a kindred society.

Upon the conduct of the Rector of Wareham and that of the Independent Minister, I would wish to hold a Christian reserve in the expression of my judgement, but it is hard for frail humanity to practise lessons of forbearance and charitable indulgence when those who are bound to justify their faith by their works leave us to infer from their works what their faith must be!

According to my own construction of our Divine Teacher's precepts, I may apply to "the faith" of these gentlemen a line of our great poet:

"But those, who hold it, I could wish more Christian!"

I should be most happy to give my humble co-operation at your meeting, but I have sickness at home, and being obliged to make a journey to Bristol for three or four days in the following week, I could not so immediately extend my term of absence.

In some future period I hope to be able to testify my interest in the success of your Institution and with my best thanks for your most obliging and courteous invitation,

I remain, dear sir,

Yours very faithfully

W C Macready

Reverend Alex M Walker

William Charles Macready (1793-1873) actor and theatre manager

Following his final stage performance at Drury Lane in February 1851, Macready retired to Sherborne House, in Dorset. Widowed shortly afterwards, he immersed himself in local life.

He helped to revive the Sherborne Literary Institute, and introduced regular meetings in the stables of Sherborne House.

Over the course of his ten year residence at the house, he also received some of the most eminent literary figures in the country, counting Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray among his close acquaintances.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 561

Letter from Charles John Kean to Madame Celeste (29 November 1859)

Mr Charles Kean presents his compliments and begs to thank Madame Celeste for her courtesy and kindness in placing his name on the free list of her theatre.

It is the first time Mr Kean ever received such a compliment from any London manager with the sole exception of the late Mr Ducrow.

Gresham's Hotel
Dublin
29 November 1859

Charles John Kean (1811-1868) actor and theatre manager

Charles John Kean was the second son of actor Edmund Kean. He made his stage debut in 1827 and became a popular actor on both sides of the Atlantic. From 1850 until 1859 he managed the Princess's Theatre on Oxford Street and made a round the world voyage, with his wife, between 1863 and 1866. His last appearance was in Liverpool in 1867.

Only a few months prior to writing this letter, Kean had surrendered his management of the Princess's Theatre when his lease on the theatre came to an end. He had been a successful manager, but the undertaking had been a costly one.

In this letter, he addresses the dancer and theatre manager, Céline Celeste. Celeste had taken over the management of the Lyceum theatre in 1859, where she would remain but briefly, before taking on the lease of the Olympic Theatre in 1860.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 571

Letter from Edward Lytton Bulwer, Lord Lytton to Benjamin Webster (6 December 1841)

Dear Sir

I was surprised to see on your playbills an announcement that, the *Lady of Lyons* and *Money* being the exclusive property of the Haymarket Theatre, Mr Macready could only perform them such and such nights etc.

Of course you are aware that your property in the *Lady of Lyons* expires in January 1843 and in *Money* at the end of two years from the date of its production, viz about next December, and therefore that after these respective periods, Mr Macready or anyone else can act them, if I so permit.

Yours truly

E L Bulwer

Fenton's Hotel, St James's St, Monday December 6th 1841

Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer, First Baron Lytton (1803-1873)

Lytton was known not only for his work as a playwright, but also as a successful novelist and politician. Among his best known literary works are his debut novel, *Pelham*, and *The last days of Pompeii*

In this letter, Lytton refers to his rights in two of his most popular dramatic works: the five-act romantic melodrama *The Lady of Lyons* (1838) and his comedy of manners, *Money* (1840).

Broadley Haymarket III, p 606

Letter from Edward Sothern to Mrs Dallas (17 May 1865)

The Cedars
Wright's Lane
Kensington
W

Dear Mrs Dallas

7 ½ sharp on Sunday evening.

Excuse brevity – but you'll come, won't you? You said [you] [...] your husband was also disengaged, so that's settled.

My wife is so crowded with long-due "calls" that she trusts you'll consider this a call and an invitation - rather a freak of fancy, but you'll kindly imagine it, I know. She signs her name under mine to prove there is such a person.

Ever yours (hurriedly)

E A Sothern

Edward Askew Sothern (1826-1881) actor

Sothern was a skilled player of comic roles, and best known for his creation of the part of Lord Dundreary in *Our American Cousin*. The play had already met with astonishing success on the New York stage before transferring to London in 1861 – the opening performance at the Theatre Royal Haymarket was also Sothern's debut in the West End.

In 1864, Sothern attempted a break from Dundreary by taking on the title role of *David Garrick*. For many critics, this was a step too far from the comic characters for which Sothern was known, but the production was nevertheless a success.

This letter gives an insight into Sothern's private life when he was at the height of his fame. He refers to his wife, Frances Emily (née Stewart) and her busy schedule of social calls.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 609

Squire Bancroft, signed quotation from "Caste" (Friday the 13th, 1883)

"I don't pretend to be a particularly good sort of fellow - nor a particularly bad sort of fellow"

Caste, Act I

Friday the 13, 1883

The last night of its performance

Squire Bancroft (real name Squire White Butterfield) (1841-1926) actor and theatre manager

Bancroft made his stage debut at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, in 1861. In 1867 he married Marie Wilton, and assumed co-management of her Prince of Wales's Theatre. Together, they elevated the status of the social drama and drawing-room comedy.

They produced a succession of comedies by [Thomas William Robertson](#), including *Caste*, which debuted at the Prince of Wales's Theatre in 1867. The play was an example of Robertson's naturalistic theatre. Upon seeing a revival of the play in 1897, George Bernard Shaw wrote:

After years of sham heroics and superhuman balderdash, Caste delighted everyone by its freshness, its nature, its humanity. You will shriek and snort, O scornful young men, at this monstrous assertion. "Nature! Freshness!" you will exclaim. "In Heaven's name...where is there a touch of nature in Caste?" I reply, "In the windows, in the doors, in the walls, in the carpet, in the ceiling, in the kettle, in the fireplace, in the ham, in the tea, in the bread and butter, in the bassinet, in the hats and sticks and clothes, in the familiar phrases, the quiet, unpumped, everyday utterance: in short, in the commonplaces that are now spurned because they are commonplaces, and were then inexpressibly welcome because they were the most unexpected novelties.

Broadley Haymarket III, p 613

Marie Bancroft, signed quotation from "Masks and Faces" (1883)

"Stage masks may cover honest faces"

"Masks and Faces"

Act 3

Marie E Bancroft, 1883

Letter from Marie Bancroft to Colonel Hallett

Thursday

Dear Colonel Hallett

On Sunday at 2 with much pleasure.

Kindest regards to Mrs Hallett and believe me to be sincerely yours,

M E Bancroft

Marie Effie Bancroft (née Wilton; later Lady Bancroft), (1840-1921), actress and theatre manager

Bancroft began her theatrical career as a burlesque performer, but her ambitions soon extended far beyond that art form. In 1864, she formed a professional partnership with Henry James Byron at the former Queen's Theatre, which they refurbished and reopened as the Prince of Wales's Theatre. In 1867, Byron ceded his position as co-manager to Marie's new husband, Squire Bancroft. In 1880, the couple moved on to manage the much larger Haymarket Theatre, where they remained until their retirement in 1885.

Marie was famous for her business acumen, as well as being a highly likeable stage personality. Together, the Bancrofts made a significant contribution to heightening the 'respectability' of the theatre, by gentrifying the interior of their theatres and promoting programmes of domestic dramas on the stage.

Broadley Haymarket IV, p 11

Letter to George Townsend from R Cumberland

Warren's, Sunday

My Dear Townsend

It is not possible for me to (...) what you might do with (...) in the warming up of a plot. In the mere sketch of the scenes I do not see much incident and it appears that (...) and Elvira have not more than one scene previous to their union at the conclusion. Splendid diction and all forms of magic and superstition I am persuaded you would display, but the times are very (...) and, as the characters can have no inherent interests, these will require strong situations to engage the passions and these I do not (...) your present brief and imperfect prospectus as yet discover? If you have such in your thoughts, you will excuse the (...), if not, you will drop it. I am impatient for your poems and glad to hear you are upon the last sheet. I write in great haste but am ever truly yours

R Cumberland

George Townsend (1788-1857), writer and clergyman

George Townsend was a clergyman and a writer of sermons, theological texts and poetry. At the very opening of his career, he was championed by the dramatist Richard Cumberland (1732-1811), who supported his education at Trinity College Cambridge and also helped him to publish his first volume of poems in 1810. Although Townsend went on to publish a further poetry collection in 1815 (*Armageddon, a poem in twelve books*) he is remembered chiefly for his controversial religious works, in which he launched virulent attacks upon the Catholic Church.

Broadley Haymarket IV, p 201

Five anonymous letters to James Winston concerning *The Taylors* by Samuel Foote (August 1805)

August 14 1805

Sir

I understand that Mr Dowton has chosen a(sic) afterpiece to scandalize the trade of tailors and we fear it might be attended with bad consequences. Therefore, we should wish to submit it to your superior wisdom to advise Mr Dowton to withdraw it and substitute some other and he will have a full house.

Your most obedient and humble servant

A Taylor & Citizen

Sir

We take the liberty of addressing you respecting the piece you are about bringing out as a burlesque on the tailors. We beg you will relinquish it as it will (...) an everlasting disgrace on the trade. If not, you may expect a very full house that even.

Sir, yours

Taylors

Wednesday 14 August 1805

August 14

Sir

I am desired at the request of seventeen thousand tailors to inform you that there is not less than that quantity coming to sea(sic) the entertainment tomorrow evening.

(...) is our particular desire and request you will not let any part of the House at all and if the above mentioned quantity does not fill the House, we shall have about eight or ten thousand at the theatre door - if you dare to act the entertainment.

I am yours respectfully

Death

Sir

Presuming these lines will not give offence, I have taken the liberty to address them on the subject of the late disturbance at your theatre - as some of that body now presume to say - that the Master Tailors gave you timely notice of the consequences that would ensue if the play was brought forward and that the Manager or Proprietors of the theatre meanly offered to withdraw the performance if they or their body would make an advance of one hundred pounds. This, sir, I consider to be a gross insult to common understanding that either the Proprietor or Manager or Performers should be (...) in bringing forward any performance for fear of offending any particular body of people - as well may a (...) of servants say to their master, if you do not do as we desire, you must trust to the consequences. Were this sir to be attended to, your house would be soon shut up. To suppose for a moment that the Proprietors, manager or Performers of a theatre in the metropolis of England would stoop to ask the consent of a set of tailors (whose only glory is to show their disapprobation to any performance that in the least touches their profession), the idea itself is really too absurd to harbour. I must beg pardon for obtruding too long upon your patience but shall esteem it a particular favour if you will give me an answer to the truth of this aspersion respecting your offering to withdraw the performance in consideration of their gratuity of one hundred pounds being paid. A line addressed W.H. left at the Half Moon & Seven Stars Stanhope Street will be thankfully received as a considerable (...) is depending. In the interim, I remain, sir, your well wisher

August 17 1805

Mr Winston

Sir

I am much surprised at your not having announced the Tragedy of the Tailors again ere this as I am confident that it would gratify the public and, of course, be beneficial to you.

I am, sir, a frequenter of your theatre

London Tavern

August 23 1805

James Winston (1773-1843), actor, theatre manager and theatre proprietor

Samuel Foote's controversial drama *The Tailors: a tragedy for warm weather* was first produced at the Haymarket, in 1767. In 1805, a quarter of a century after Foote's death, the play was revived at the theatre by William Downton and James Winston.

Tailors in London objected to the Haymarket management's intention to perform the piece. One of the theatre's proprietors, James Winston, received three threatening letters – one signed by 'Death' – in the days leading up to the proposed performance, warning that the tailors would revolt if the play was shown as planned.

Undeterred, Winston and Dowton produced the play on 16 August 1805. As predicted, members of the audience, organised by the tailors, rioted. The show went on, but not without some scares: Dowton narrowly missed being hit with a pair of scissors that had been launched at the stage from the audience, and many of the ladies in the boxes fled. Eventually, Bow Street Officers arrived to break up the mêlée.