

Welford and Weston Local History Society

(www.welfordandweston.org.uk)

Newsletter 99 – August 30th, 2025

The Stratford Roundhouse : an innovative theatre

A talk by Abigail Rokison-Woodall

26 September 2025, at 7:30 pm

On September 26th Our next season begins with what promises to be a fascinating talk by Abigail Rokison-Woodall. She will be telling us about how in 1970, a small theatre, known as “The Stratford Roundhouse” was established in the gardens behind the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (RST). Between 1970 and 1972, actors and other theatre practitioners from across the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), inspired by the spirit of its London namesake, performed in a series of innovative, inventive pieces. Very little has been written about this project, which seems to have been erased from the RSC’s history. And yet, this venture laid the foundations for studio theatre at the RSC, having a direct impact on the founding of The Other Place Theatre, which has been an important part of the company’s history as a space for experimentation, innovation and intimacy.



Abigail is Deputy Director (Education) of the Shakespeare Institute. She has published widely in the field of Shakespeare in Performance. Her first monograph, *Shakespearean Verse Speaking* won the Shakespeare’s Globe first book award. Her other books are: *Shakespeare for Young People*, *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Nicholas Hytner, As You Like It: Language and Writing*, *Shakespeare and Lecoq: A Practical Guide* with Ed Woodall. She is the co-general editor of *The Arden Shakespeare Performance Editions* and *Shakespeare in Performance: A Practical Guide* series and has edited *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Richard III* (with Simon Russell Beale).

For the past few years she has been working on 'Signing Shakespeare', a project which is producing a series of resources and films for teaching Shakespeare to deaf children.

On October 31st, we're having an extra talk. This will be a showing of a lottery funded film about the lights and displays that lit up the Jephson gardens in Leamington from just after the war until the early 60's. Even I'm old enough to remember similar displays in Bournemouth and I can remember how magical they were to me as a child. I went to see the film in Leamington & I'd like to share that experience with you.

This talk will be available to people attending in person in the village Memorial Hall. I would encourage you to renew your membership prior to the talk by following this link <https://www.welfordandweston.org.uk/Membership/>

Doors open at 19:10 and the talk itself will start at 19:30. We look forward to welcoming you to what promises to be another great talk.

Karen Dickinson, 28th August, 2024.