



Guide to Theatre, Drama and Performance material

Held by Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham

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Introduction

This guide offers an overview of the main collections held at Manuscripts and Special Collections relating to theatre and performance. It primarily covers Nottingham and the East Midlands more widely, and relates to theatre organisations, those involved in student theatre at the university, and material relevant to the academic study of drama, theatre, and performance. There is a particular focus amongst our holdings on smaller, touring theatre companies and theatre-in-education companies.

Other isolated or ephemeral material may be present in other collections, some of which are highlighted in latter sections of the guide, but any material not mentioned here, as well as more detailed descriptions pertaining to the featured collections, can be discovered by searching the Manuscripts and Special Collections Online Catalogue at <https://mss-cat.nottingham.ac.uk/Calmview/> using keywords or collection reference.

Archives relating to theatre and performance are a growing strength of Manuscripts and Special Collections, owing to the acquisition of the papers of a number of dramatists and theatre companies since the 2000s. Work on cataloguing many of these collections has yet to be undertaken, and it has been made clear throughout the guide where this is the case. Please email us at mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk to enquire about access to any uncatalogued material.

Printed material (books, journals, and other publications) in the Special Collections can be found using NUsearch, the University of Nottingham's Library catalogue: <https://nusearch.nottingham.ac.uk/> using keywords. This searches the entire University Library holdings, but you can filter results to just Manuscripts and Special Collections using the options on the right-hand side.

A small quantity of theatre-related material has been digitised and made available in the Digital Gallery, available to search or browse here: https://nusearch.nottingham.ac.uk/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=44NOTTS_UNUK:44NOTUK&lang=en

Beyond our collections, theatre-related material can also be found at Nottinghamshire Archives; the V&A Theatre & Performance Archives; and the University of Bristol Theatre Collection. The record offices and archives for other regions are also likely to hold material relating to their locality.

Theatres (Nottingham) and Theatre Companies

The archives of several Nottingham theatres and theatre companies have been deposited at Manuscripts and Special Collections. Within these can be found material relating to theatrical productions such as playscripts, posters, press cuttings, and show files; as well as administrative papers relating to workshops and arts projects.

Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall Nottingham, collection reference TRC

The Theatre Royal traces its origins back to The Theatre, in St. Mary's Gate, Nottingham. The 'new' Theatre Royal opened in its present location in 1865 and was remodelled in 1897. The theatre re-opened in 1978 following a £5 million refurbishment. Owned by Nottingham City Council, the auditorium has traditional tiered seating over four levels and is part of a complex which includes the Royal Concert Hall, built in 1982 on the site of the old Empire Theatre.

The Theatre Royal attracts major touring dramas, opera, ballet, West End musicals and an annual pantomime. In 2018, a digital archive partnership with the University of Nottingham and Horizon Digital Economy Research enabled the creation of a website presenting over 1000 digital images and stories, which can be accessed at ourtheatreroyal.org. The theatre has a Heritage Archive space for performance attendees to engage with the digital archive material, alongside talks and other events.

The Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall archive is by far the largest theatre collection that we hold and covers a date range from 1865-2024. It includes playscripts, posters, press cuttings, show files, leaflets, brochures, programmes and catalogues covering performances at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham and the Royal Concert Hall, as well as admin files and marketing material.

Also present in the collection are donations made by individuals who have some connection with the Theatre Royal or Royal Concert Hall, including autograph books and photo albums. Of particular interest are scrapbooks showing public affection for the theatre.

Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Extent: c. 66 shelves. Covering dates: 1865-2024.

Records of the New Perspectives Theatre Company, collection reference NPT

New Perspectives Theatre Company began in 1972 as a Theatre-in-Education programme and today are a leading touring theatre company based in the East Midlands. The company has operated previously under the names 'Key Perspectives' and 'The Perspectives Theatre Company'. New Perspectives are particularly significant due to the work undertaken within small communities in the East Midlands Region.

The collection comprises both physical and digital material relating to theatre productions and projects including scripts, programmes and photographs, as well as

administrative papers reflecting their involvement in a wide range of arts and theatre-related projects and schemes in the region. This collection reflects the company's role in supporting new playwrights and work to address and amplify societal issues facing communities within which they work.

A series of productions files contains publicity material such as flyers, posters etc., and photocopied newspaper cuttings of reviews. There is some material related to governance, including meeting and board minutes, business plans, and autobiographical files.

This collection does not contain many financial and accounting files, but some files labelled 'sales/invoices' remain.

Access is restricted to some parts of the collection, particularly the Governance and Administration files, under current Data Protection legislation. Access to some material held on outdated media formats such as floppy disks or cassette tapes may not be possible. However much of this type of material in this collection has been transferred to our digital preservation system and can be accessed in digital format on a PC in our reading room at Kings Meadow Campus. We continue to receive new additions to this collection, and these more recent additions are largely in digital format. Access to sections containing sensitive financial or personal data (CVs etc.) is restricted.

Extent: 56 boxes and one bundle. Covering dates: 1974-2023.

Nottingham Arts Theatre, collection reference NAT

Nottingham Arts Theatre was originally established as the People's Theatre, staging 10 productions a year around various Nottingham venues before settling in George Street, Lace Market.

In 2001, the theatre became known as the Nottingham Co-operative Arts Theatre, run jointly with Broadway Cinema and Nottingham City Council.

After some financial struggles they became a registered charity and re-adopted their name as the People's Theatre, this time staging four productions a year: two plays, a musical, and a pantomime. The theatre is still active today at the George Street location, and stages a pantomime and youth theatre production annually, as well as a number of other shows throughout the year.

The bulk of the collection consists of theatre programmes and photographs, most of which have been arranged by theatre performance in date order from the 1930s. Also included are photographs of individual theatre members, and of the George Street building at the time of its development into a theatre in the 1940s.

Other papers include newscuttings of reviews, meeting minutes, and correspondence, with a few papers showing set designs and stage directions.

Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Extent: 23 boxes. Covering dates: 1930s-2000s.

Youth Theatre and Theatre in Education

Many of the theatre companies whose material we hold are distinctly concerned with youth theatre, who work to develop theatre projects for and including children and young people, usually in an educational setting. Across these collections are administrative records, show notes, production photographs, and material relating to work within schools.

Red Earth Theatre, collection reference RET

Red Earth Theatre was a nationally touring inclusive theatre-based company in the East Midlands, working with deaf and hearing actors and audiences. Founded in 1999, Red Earth developed drama projects for children, young people and communities, and created new inclusive theatre works with an integrated cast of Deaf, disabled, and hearing performers.

The company developed new techniques for accessible storytelling, using a mixture of British Sign Language (BSL), Sign Supported English (SSE) and Visual Vernacular (VV), this enabled both hearing and Deaf audiences to understand and enjoy performances together. The company closed in 2024.

The collection contains both physical and digital material which relates to Governance, production workshops, projects, and events. Also included are records relating to research and funding projects, company documents, and printed material.

This collection has been fully catalogued. Physical papers may be accessed, and digital material that is not subject to access restrictions may be viewed via a dedicated PC in our reading room at Kings Meadow Campus. Extent: 12 boxes and 1 item, 104 digital folders (647GB). Covering dates: 2000-2024.

Nottingham Youth Theatre and College Street Centre, collection reference NYT

The College Street Centre for the Performing Arts was originally built as The People's College in 1846, with the addition of the Ropewalk building in 1888. The Centre first occupied this building in 1988, when the first performances were given by Acorn Young People's Theatre and Dance Company.

Nottingham Youth Theatre Inclusive Company was established in 1990 under Nottinghamshire Education, and included young people with and without disabilities, performing at local schools and theatres.

The Inclusive Company closed in 2019, and College Street Centre closed permanently in July 2021.

The collection includes tapes and DVDs of theatre performances from 1989-2006; photographs, posters, and programmes relating to theatre performances and College Street Centre activities from 1987-2020; and the archive of Nottingham Youth Theatre Inclusive Company, which includes material on award-winning performances given at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Extent: 42 boxes, 1 roll box, 1 flat package, 114 tapes and DVDs. Covering dates: 1987-2020.

Nottingham Roundabout Theatre, collection reference NRT

Nottingham Playhouse Roundabout was created as a Theatre-in-Education (TIE) company in 1973, funded by Nottinghamshire Education Committee and the Arts Council, enabling professional theatre to tour schools across the East Midlands.

In 2015, Manuscripts and Special Collections held an exhibition called 'Playing Around: Taking Theatre to Communities across the East Midlands', exploring the history of Roundabout, alongside New Perspectives Theatre. Copies of the exhibition boards and audio recordings of the accompanying lunchtime talks are available via our website.
[<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/mss/exhibitions/online/playing-around/index.aspx>]

Contains papers and material in other media formats relating to the creative development and delivery of productions of Roundabout Theatre in Education since the 1970s.

This collection includes playscripts, cast lists, production photographs and folders, administrative papers, press cuttings, camcorder tapes, mini-DV tapes, and material relating to Roundabout's work with schools. Also included is background information on theatre in education.

The collection does not contain records of Nottingham Playhouse Theatre concerning the management and administration of Roundabout and its team.

Pending full cataloguing, access is restricted and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Extent: 49 boxes. Covering dates: 1973-2012.

Footprints Theatre Trust, collection reference MS 1049

The Footprints Theatre Trust was an educational theatre organisation run for 40 years (from 1978-2018) by Steve and Janet Stickley. It ran as a charity, initially touring globally as well as nationally. Due to cuts in theatre budgets, the company developed an East Midlands focus, particularly in Derby.

The company developed into more of a storytelling group, working in schools with a focus on the role of imagination in education, working primarily with school Key Stage 1 and 2. The theatre offered arts, visual arts, and dance workshops alongside drama courses.

The company archive includes annual reports, minutes of Trustees meetings, accounts, publicity material, scrapbooks, photographs, scripts, project reports, funding applications, tour details, audio-visual material, and letters which includes feedback from children the theatre has worked with. Also included are publications written by Steve and Janet Stickley. There is very little financial information within the collection, only concerning projected budgets for productions.

Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Extent: 21 boxes. Covering dates: 1978-2018.

Student Theatre and UoN Societies

Several drama, theatre, and performance societies have been established over the years at the university. This section gives an overview of some of these whose material we hold. Additional society-related material and ephemera is present in other collections outlined elsewhere in this guide, and some of the collections given below are themselves part of a larger set of records relating to the University of Nottingham.

The sort of material commonly found in these collections are largely ephemeral, such as posters, flyers, programmes etc., as well as material relating to student productions, photographs of productions and cast members, DVD footage, and reviews of performances.

Newsletters and periodicals relating to student societies can be found within the University of Nottingham Special Collection. Details of this material, and on searching Special Collections holdings (which comprises printed and published material, as opposed to ephemera) can be found later in this guide.

Gilbert and Sullivan Society, collection reference UU 42

The Gilbert and Sullivan Society formed in 1973, performing each year a full play from the repertoire of the 19th century light opera theatrical partnership Gilbert and Sullivan. Their first performance was 'Trial by Jury', and the last recorded performance was 'The Pirates of Penzance', in 2015.

The collection includes material relating to productions; posters, programmes, flyers, colour photographs, as well as born-digital materials including a DVD of a performance of Iolanthe.

Extent: 1 box, 3 DVD discs. Covering dates: 2007-2017.

Musicality Society, collection reference UU 46

Musicality is the University of Nottingham Musical Theatre Society and has been designated Gold Star status by the University of Nottingham Students' Union. Musicality are consistent attendees at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, with the earliest recorded performance being in 2016.

The society offers opportunities to perform on stage, play in the band, direct, choreograph, or produce shows. Each year they put on various auditioned musical productions, including one large-scale production, and a second smaller-scale production during the summer.

The entirely digital collection contains Musicality posters, flyers, and programmes. The programmes contain information such as cast, crew, musicians, and committee members.

Extent: 2 digital folders containing 66 digital images and 9 .jpg files. Covering dates: 2023

Artificial collection of ephemera relating to the University of Nottingham's New Theatre, collection reference UU 15

The New Theatre originated in the student's Dramatic Society (Dramsoc) which began in 1927 and continued into the 1980s. The theatre was set up in the early 1970s and was run by a student Theatre Group with Dramsoc to assist in set building, admin, and stage management. This group was later renamed the Theatre Production Group.

The collection comprises programmes for student productions at the University of Nottingham, including plays by Theatre Production Group/Nottingham Theatre Group/Dramatic Society/Drama Society/Dramsoc/New Theatre.

As well as programmes, the collection includes posters; photographic prints showing cast members, sets of various productions, and performances; various papers including reviews, costume drawings, handwritten items including a letter, monologue, and annotated volume of a play.

Extent: 1 box and 1 packet of posters. Covering dates: 1970-2013.

Records of University Opera at the University of Nottingham, collection reference UU 13

Little is known about the history, status and achievements of the University of Nottingham's University Opera. Interest in opera grew out of the student Music Society which was established sometime between 1935 and 1937.

The first mention of a specialist Opera Group in connection with the Music Society appears in the student handbook in 1955 with reference to the group's annual February production.

By 1963, University Opera had a business manager to co-ordinate ticket sales and supervise the payment of performers and suppliers. The opera group continued to flourish into the 1980s.

This small collection contains papers concerning student productions of operas by the University Opera company, including minutes of meetings; notes about rehearsal, and correspondence relating to the preparation and production of Henry Purcell's dramatic operas 'Dioclesian' (1963), 'King Arthur' (1956), and 'The Fairy Queen' (1959). The second bundle contains correspondence relating to a production of 'Oberon' (1967).

Extent: 2 bundles. Covering dates: 1956-1982.

Copies of photographs relating to the University's Dramsoc productions, collection reference UMP/9/6

Copies of photographs donated by University of Nottingham Student, Haydon Luke, who was the official photographer for Dramsoc. The photographs relate to a performance of 'St Joan' at Minack Theatre, Porthcurno, and to other productions staged at the University.

They form part of a larger, artificial collection of photographs of the University of Nottingham and the earlier University College, formed from donations by alumni, staff and other individuals (collection reference NUP).

Extent: 15 photos. Covering dates: 1961-1964.

[Student theatre \(University of Nottingham\) and academic papers of Anthony John Burkett, collection reference BKT](#)

Anthony Burkett (1933-1997) studied politics at the University, and during his time at Nottingham held presidency at the Students' Union, and was heavily involved in theatre, producing several student plays.

The collection consists of both personal and professional papers, including items relating to Burkett's involvement in student theatre, which comprises theatre programmes and flyers for productions, newspaper cuttings of reviews of plays, production photographs, a typescript script, and memorabilia such as tickets and invitations.

There are also a series of student newspapers containing articles about his various activities at the University over the years, which includes an article on Burkett's thoughts on student theatre entitled 'Idea for a theatre', *Gongster*, 19 January 1962, p.6.

Extent: 3 boxes. Covering dates: 1955-1998.

[Records of Valerie Stevens relating to student theatre, collection reference MS 321](#)

Valerie Stevens née Deans (fl. 1960-1969) was a student at the University, and a member of both the Dramatic Society and the Nottingham University Shakespearean Company, appearing in the cast of several productions and co-producing the play 'Sport of My Mad Mother' jointly with Anthony Burkett.

Stevens and Burkett were also members of the Everyman Club, a theatre company formed in 1958 with members from both the University and the city of Nottingham. This perhaps became the Nottingham Theatre Club (a non-student amateur dramatic club), of which Stevens and Burkett were also members.

The collection comprises posters, copies of play programmes, photographs and newspaper cuttings of reviews relating to student theatre at The University of Nottingham in the early 1960s.

The photographs depict casts and scenes from plays performed in the 1960s by the Dramatic Society, Everyman Club, and Nottingham Theatre Club.

The programmes and newspaper cuttings are photocopies, with some of the originals being among the papers of Anthony Burkett.

Extent: 1 file and 1 roll. Covering dates: 1960-1961.

Personal Papers

Material found among 'personal papers' include the papers of individuals who were involved professionally in the theatre, as well as more miscellaneous collections. Via their archives, the papers of theatre professionals provide comprehensive insights into lives spent working in the creative arts. These collections are particularly strong due to their local connection with Nottingham Theatres, and the University itself.

The material ranges from miscellaneous ephemera to typescript copies of creative works, including unpublished material, and within them are personal files, manuscripts, artwork, scripts (for the stage and television), photographs, theatre programmes, publicity material, and newspaper cuttings.

Papers of Stephen Lowe, collection reference SJL

Stephen Lowe (1947-) is a Nottingham-born playwright and theatre director who started his career as an actor. As well as theatre plays, Lowe has written extensively for film, television, and radio. His work has been translated and performed throughout the world and twelve of his stage plays are published by Methuen. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Nottingham in 2011.

Many of his plays were commissioned and first performed at Nottingham Playhouse and Lakeside Arts Centre, produced in collaboration with Meeting Ground Theatre Company, where Lowe is co-artistic director alongside his wife, actress Tanya Myers.

One of his best-known plays is *Touched* (joint winner of the George Devine Award in 1977), about a group of working-class women in Nottingham at the end of the Second World War.

This large collection comprises files compiled by Lowe relating to individual pieces of work; scripts for stage-plays, screenplays, soap episodes; edited anthologies, and poetry written by Lowe. Also present is correspondence, research notes, publicity material and some photographs, audio-visual and born digital material.

Added subsequently to the collection are a series of video recordings of an interview with Lowe, filmed in 2018; and a digital file comprising an edited article 'The Politics of the Imagination', based on his lecture delivered at Leicester University in 2004, the contents of which are at the core of Meeting Ground's work.

Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Extent: 5.7 rolling rack shelves. Covering dates: 1970s-2020s.

Papers of Matt Marks, collection reference MMM

Matt Marks (1963-2019) was a musician, composer, and performer for musical theatre. He studied Creative Arts at Nottingham Trent University, Composition at the University of Nottingham, and Musical Theatre Writing at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

He composed several original scores for theatre, dance and performance, including work for Nottingham Playhouse, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Sheffield Crucible, Tell Tale Hearts, Retina Dance and Polka Theatre.

He collaborated with numerous theatre groups, and worked with New Perspectives, Roundabout Theatre, and with Nottingham playwright Stephen Lowe, all of whom have also deposited their papers with Manuscripts and Special Collections.

The Matt Marks collection contains files, printed and handwritten music manuscripts, artwork, VHS videos, floppy discs, CDs, DVDs, and photographs.

Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Extent: 27 archival boxes and 29 lever arch/box files. Covering dates: 1980s-2000s.

Papers of Roy Minton, collection reference MS 1058

Roy Minton (born Davies, 1933-2024) was a Nottingham playwright, screenwriter, and author best known for the prison drama film *Scum* (dir. Alan Clarke, 1979). Minton worked as an actor prior to writing full-time and was resident dramatist at the Nottingham Playhouse.

The collection contains published/produced screenplays, completed novels, plays, screenplays, poems, and novellas, as well as unpublished and additional material such as 'character sketches' and outlines. Also present is correspondence; publicity material for plays; notes, copies of his CV, and press photos.

Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Extent: 10 boxes. Covering dates: c.1960s-2023.

Papers of Julie Wilkinson relating to regional theatre, collection reference MS 1059

Julie Wilkinson is a playwright who has written many scripts for theatre, TV, and radio, including several plays for Nottingham Roundabout Theatre and New Perspectives Theatre, where she was heavily involved as a writer and actor.

She wrote six plays for the company over several years, including: 'Mrs Beeton's History of the World', 'Never on Our Knees', and 'Mole Catcher, Body Snatcher' - a comedy about a Northamptonshire midwife in the 1900s and the clash between old and new.

Also included are scripts written for BBC Radio 4; minutes and programmes for NPT productions, and items produced by the Nottingham Women's Support Group, where she worked as secretary.

An interview with Wilkinson is present within the Feminist Archive, and in it she speaks about the activities of socialist community theatre in the early 1980s; and offers an overview of the topics and messages of her plays.

Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Extent: 1 box. Covering dates: 1982-1991.

Manuscript material in the Patrick Miles Chekhov Collection, collection reference CHEK

The collection was compiled by translator and scholar Patrick Miles (1948-) and contains papers relating to research conducted by Miles between 1967 and 1988 into Russian Theatre, specifically the life and work of Russian Dramatist Anton Chekhov (1860-1904).

Chekhov, although a qualified doctor, was primarily a writer, initially contributing articles to magazines about theatre, and later writing his own plays. His first full-length play was *Ivanov*, written in 1887 and translated into English in 1912. He also wrote several one-act plays and short stories.

Miles studied at the University of Cambridge, specialising in the study of Chekhov. His fluency in Russian led to the establishment of the Patrick Miles Translation Agency in Cambridge.

The collection was acquired by the University of Nottingham in 1999 and is particularly strong on Russian and British criticism of Chekhov's early work, and the history of the British staging of his plays.

It includes theatre programmes and other papers relating to the performance and production of Chekhov's plays in Britain; research materials such as newspaper cuttings, photocopies, manuscripts and whole issues of newspapers and journals; card indexes containing notes relating to editions of Chekhov; and bibliographies compiled by Miles.

The library also holds printed books relating to Chekhov acquired from Patrick Miles, listed on the University's library catalogue, NUsearch.

Accessible to all readers; however, the research materials are restricted pending full cataloguing. Extent: 29 boxes and 9 index drawers. Covering dates: 1880-1998.

Papers of Harvey Pitcher relating to his research on Anton Chekhov, collection reference MS 1022

Harvey Pitcher (1936-) is an English writer, historian, translator, and qualified Russian interpreter. He founded the Russian Department at St. Andrews University in 1936, and became a full-time writer and translator in 1971, focusing on Chekhov and the British Community in Russia before the Russian Revolution. He translated Chekhov's early stories with Patrick Miles.

The papers include translations of Chekhov Stories, together with correspondence, draft typescripts and rough drafts; unpublished writings and notebooks; US and UK reviews of early stories; and copies of Chekhov Bulletin.

Also present are published books, translations, and articles. The books include: *Responding to Chekhov; If only we could know!: an interpretation of Chekhov* (Kataev; trans. Pitcher); *The Chekhov Play; Chekhov's Leading Lady*, a biography of Chekhov's wife, Olga Knipper, a Russian and Soviet stage actress; as well as a novel by Pitcher entitled *Lily: An Anglo-Russian Romance*.

A recent highlight of the collection is a file containing all the extant workings (c.2015-2024) on Pitcher's translation of Chekhov's story 'Lady with a little dog'. The completed translation was published online at calderonia.org in three instalments between December 2024 and January 2025.

Restricted access. Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. Brief box lists available. Extent: 12 boxes. Covering dates: 1957-2019.

Papers associated with DH Lawrence collected by W. Forster, collection reference For

W. Forster (1914-1997) was a London bookseller and prodigious DH Lawrence collector. Forster first became interested in Lawrence in the post-war period, after reading about the suppression of *The White Peacock*. His personal enthusiasm for Lawrence and his

wide bibliographical knowledge and contacts enabled him to build up an impressive, specialised stock of Lawrence materials, alongside his other more general holdings.

Forster's association with The University of Nottingham began in 1960 when he was among those who lent material for the first major Lawrence exhibition held at the University.

His collection extends to a wide range of printed material relating to Lawrence, including criticism, pamphlets, journals, reviews, and newspaper cuttings.

In addition to this, Forster collected ephemeral material, of which some relates to stage, television, film, and radio productions of Lawrence's work, such as theatre programmes, leaflets, posters, photographic stills, and handbills.

Extent: 40 boxes. Covering dates: 1933-1997.

Papers of Sir Hugh Willatt, collection reference THW

Sir Hugh Willatt (1909-1996) was a solicitor and arts administrator with a passion for theatre, both as a theatregoer and amateur dramatist. He campaigned for a new theatre building in Nottingham, a goal achieved with the opening of the Nottingham Playhouse in 1963.

He received a knighthood for his services to the arts and later became chairman of the Nottingham Theatre Trust (among others) and was a member of the board of the National Theatre and the Royal Court Theatre, and a trustee of Shakespeare's birthplace.

Willatt's library was given to the university in 1996, and the collection comprises printed programmes, posters and listings for theatre, music and dance performances and festivals in the UK and abroad, particularly in Nottingham, Oxford, and London. The Nottingham Theatre Royal, Nottingham Playhouse, and Nottingham Empire are some of the best represented. Also included are printed reports and accounts relating to Nottingham Theatre Trust and the Nottingham Playhouse.

Pending full cataloguing, access is limited and is possible only by advance notice and agreement. At present, only the theatre programmes are available. Extent: 35 boxes. Covering dates: 1843-1995.

Twentieth Century Theatre Papers, collection reference Tw T

Established in 1985, the collection concerns theatrical works and the history of the stage. The major element of the collection comprises the literary papers and correspondence of Charles Montagu Slater (1929-1976), an English poet, novelist, playwright, journalist, critic and librettist.

Also present are miscellaneous printed programmes and papers concerning 20th century theatrical productions, and a series of play scripts used by Nottingham Playhouse.

Extent: 11 boxes. Covering dates: 1919-1979.

Amateur Dramatic Societies

Amateur Dramatic Societies are usually formed in relation to other organisations and represented in our collections are instances of societies within the workplace and as part of wider church group activities, and as such they appear within collections that are not predominantly theatre focused. The types of material found within these papers are correspondence, reports, programmes, meeting minutes, scripts, and newspaper cuttings.

Programmes for productions by the Castle Gate Dramatic Society/Castle Gate Amateur Dramatic Society, collection reference CU/So 2/14/1-4

Castle Gate was a large and popular church, the roots of which date back to an independent congregation which met in Nottingham in the 1650s. The church was joined in 1971 by St. Ann's Well Road church, and by St Andrews in 1975, forming St Andrew's-with-Castle Gate United Reformed Church.

The church was a focus for several societies and groups, including the Castle Gate Dramatic Society, and the Castle Gate Amateur Dramatic Society.

The extent of the material held relating to these groups comprises four programmes of productions, two by the Dramatic Society, and two by the Amateur Dramatic Society: 'Tons of Money' and 'It Pays to Advertise'; and 'The Private Secretary', and 'Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary' respectively.

Records of the church drama group, the Stanwell Players, will be found in the St Andrew's-with-Castle Gate collection (CAA), as the group continued until 1991. (See next section).

Extent: 4 items. Covering dates: 1920-1950.

Papers relating to the Stanwell Players drama group, collection reference CAA/So/1

The records of the Stanwell Players drama group are rich, and date from the group's formation at St Ann's Well Road Congregational Church in 1946 to its closure in 1991.

The Stanwell Players drama group were formed at St Ann's Well Road Congregational Church in July 1946. Profits raised by admission to their performances were donated to charitable causes such as the London Missionary Society.

They mostly performed secular plays, comedies and murder mysteries, but occasionally produced religious shows to support church functions or services. After their closure, the group were succeeded by the Goldsmith Players in 1998.

The papers include a scrapbook volume containing news cuttings and photographs; account books recording subscriptions, receipts and expenditure; programmes for productions; scripts for pantomimes; list of members' names and plays performed; and handwritten reminiscences of producer Una Bellamy.

Extent: 393 items (1 box). Covering dates: 1946-2001.

Records of the Manvers Main Collieries Limited; Dramatic Society, collection reference
Mcl F/27/5

Manvers Main Collieries Limited owned collieries in Barnborough and Wath-Upon-Dearne in Yorkshire. The records contain files relating to staff clubs, as part of a series of files concerning the Staff Welfare, Betterment and Recreation (W.B.R) Department, of which eight contain details about the Barnborough Amateur Dramatic Society.

The majority of these are typewritten correspondences/memorandums concerning funds, invitations to performances, the initial proposal for and formation of the society, and notification of a first-prize award won at the Doncaster & District Drama League.

Also represented are reports relating more generally to activities carried out by all Manvers clubs and societies, as well as instances of events attended by staff which included performances put on by the Dramatic Society. A programme for the production of 'The Happy Ending' and papers outlining proposed future productions of Three One-Act Plays, 'Safe at Last', 'The Badger', and 'The Reprobrate' are also present.

Extent: 21 items. Covering dates: 1945.

High Pavement Chapel Dramatic Society Programmes, collection reference Hi X 5

The origins of High Pavement Chapel are in the ejection of Presbyterian ministers in 1662-1663 from St Mary's Church. This led to the foundation of a permanent chapel in High Pavement in 1690.

The current building was used as a place of worship until 1982, when it was converted into Nottingham Lace Museum. It was then subsequently converted to its current use as the Pitcher and Piano public house.

The collection contains a small amount programmes associated with the chapel's dramatic society, which include 'Tons of Money' (1931), 'The Cricket on the Hearth' (1931) and 'Lord Richard in the Pantry' (1932). Also present is a programme for 'a dramatic performance' by the High Pavement Social Union.

Extent: 13 items. Covering dates: 1869-1932.

Special Collections (Printed Resources)

The material found in these collections are mainly published volumes, periodicals, and pamphlets; viewable in the Reading Room as with manuscript material, apart from those found within the East Midlands Collection, which is a predominantly loanable resource with some reference material included. It is recommended to use NUsearch to locate material within these collections, either by publication title (if known) or by a keyword search which can be narrowed using collection filters.

University of Nottingham Collection, collection reference UONC

Publications about the history of University College, Nottingham (1877-1948) and the University of Nottingham as well as academic works published by members of staff. The collection contains over 2,000 books and pamphlets as well as c.500 periodical titles.

There is a rich collection of periodicals and pamphlets edited by various student bodies, including those relating to student theatre groups and Lakeside Arts. Represented among the periodicals are 'Scene Change', a student society newsletter by the Theatre Productions Group; the 'Dramsoc newsletter'; and the printed programme of events titled 'Lakeside Arts Centre' (later, 'On/ Lakeside Arts Centre' and 'Lakeside Arts Centre Nottingham'), which features a theatre section detailing shows performed at Djanogly Theatre.

Also contained within this collection are copies of the student newspaper *Gongster* which introduced an Entertainments Page in May 1960, which includes reviews of theatre outside of the university, and features occasional contributions from Anthony Burkett. Some issues have been digitised and can be viewed in the Reading Room. The publication was later known as *Bias*, then *Impact* as it remains today as a magazine publishing seasonally. The magazine still features occasional Theatre reviews under the 'Reviews' section.

It is recommended to use NUsearch using keywords and filters to narrow down results. To search the collection, enter the code UONC into the search bar, and under UoN Collections select 'University of Nottingham Collection' to search this collection only.

Extent: Over 2,500 items. Covering dates: 1877-present.

[Cambridge Drama Collection \(Printed Books and Manuscript material\), collection reference CDC](#)

The Collection was built during the 1870s and 1880s by Henry Thomas Hall, who gave the Collection to Cambridge City Libraries in the late nineteenth century. It was then presented to the University in 1960.

The core interest of the collection lies in works of drama or about the stage. The plays cover a broad spectrum of authors and genres, including many examples of editions and adaptations of the works of earlier dramatists.

The collection is particularly strong in its coverage of women writers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The history of British Theatre between 1750 and 1850 is also well-covered, including works about individual theatres and productions; lives of actors; memoirs; and texts on the theory of acting.

Ephemeral items found among the library books have been separated from the published works and identified as a private manuscript group within the Cambridge Drama Collection. This consists of cuttings extracted from printed volumes and scrapbooks.

It is recommended to use NUsearch using keywords and filters to narrow down results. To search the printed books, enter the code CDC into the search bar, and under UoN Collections select 'Cambridge Drama Collection' to search this collection only.

Extent: 1185 items and 1 volume. Covering dates: c.1664-c.1850.

[Cambridge Shakespeare Collection \(Printed Books and Manuscript material\), collection reference CSC](#)

Primarily a library of printed works containing editions and related historical and critical works about the dramatist William Shakespeare, concerning the reception and performance of his work. These range from a reprint of the 1623 First Folio, through eighteenth and nineteenth century editions, up to the twentieth century. There are also some illustrated volumes with engravings and drawings of characters, actors, and scenes from the plays.

Like the Cambridge Drama Collection, additional manuscript material has been separated from the published works. This group consists of illustrations and printed items cut from books, newspapers and literary journals concerning Shakespeare. They relate to Shakespeare's life, work (the performance and production of, as well as places mentioned in); his contemporaries, and Shakespearean actors. This includes printed articles, letters, engravings, illustrations, photographs, printed newspaper adverts, and artwork for performance programmes.

Also present are some complete issues of newspapers, including the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*. Sources for the cuttings include *The Daily Graphic*, *The Bookman*, and *The Times Literary Supplement*.

It is recommended to use NUsearch using keywords and filters to narrow down results. To search the printed books, enter the code CSC into the search bar, and under UoN Collections select 'Cambridge Shakespeare Collection' to search this collection only.

Extent: 1726 items and 1 box. Covering dates: 1709-1900s.

[D.H. Lawrence Collection \(printed books\), collection reference DHLC](#)

A collection of works by and about David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930). Born in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, he is best known as a novelist, writer of *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. He also wrote poetry, short stories, plays, essays, and literary criticism.

The printed books complement the rich Lawrence Manuscript holdings (collection reference La) and has been expanded by the addition of several private libraries of Lawrence material, most notably the collections of the late George Lazarus. The collection comprises published works by Lawrence, including fiction, poems, plays, criticism, travel accounts, and translations.

Within this collection are copies of the following plays by Lawrence, available either as single volumes, or in anthologies: *A Collier's Friday Night*; *The Daughter-in-Law*; *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd*; *The Fight for Barbara*; *Touch and Go*; and *David*.

Also present are pamphlets relating to performances of the plays, such as souvenir programmes and a rehearsal logbook; and plays inspired by the work of DH Lawrence, including Stephen Lowe's *Empty Bed Blues*, a biographical drama featuring the Lawrences among the cast of characters, and *Fox (and the little Vixen)*, a theatrical adaptation of Lawrence's 1923 novella *The Fox*.

It is recommended to use NUsearch using keywords and filters to narrow down results. To search the collection, enter the code DHLC into the search bar, and under UoN Collections select 'D. H. Lawrence Collection' to search this collection only.

Extent: over 4000 items. Covering dates: 1903-present.

[East Midlands Collection and East Midlands Special Collection, collection references EMC and EMSC](#)

The East Midlands Collection is the only open-access collection held in Manuscripts and Special Collections. It contains books, pamphlets, periodicals and other materials on the historic counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland. The collection is arranged by its own East Midlands Collection classification scheme. Earlier and rare imprints comprise the East Midlands Special Collection, and are available for consultation, but not borrowing.

Although both collections are commonly thought of as dealing with local history, many subjects are represented, including a small amount of theatre-related material as they relate to the regions covered.

These include a volume containing interviews with Nottingham Playhouse Artistic Directors from 1948-2006; copies of *The Leicester Stage*, a fortnightly broadsheet of local theatre news and reviews; and *Amateur Theatre in Nottingham* providing an outline of its history and development over the twentieth century.

It is recommended to use NUsearch using keywords and filters to narrow down results. To search the collection, enter EMC or EMSC into the search bar, and under UoN Collections select either 'East Midlands Collection' or 'East Midlands Special Collection' to search these collections only.

Extent: EMC contains over 30,000 items and covers 1700s-present; EMSC contains over 10,000 items and covers 1600s-present.

[Special Collection, collection reference SPEC](#)

Special Collection is the name for a collection which has been built up over the years from general library stock. It comprises those books which have been considered inappropriate for open library shelves, due to their age, rarity, fragility, or for other reasons. All books published before 1850 are transferred into Special Collection unless they form part of another named collection. Literature is strongly represented, including literature of a range of European countries including French, Italian, and Russian.

Within this collection are several volumes of plays and dramatic works or works about playwrights. It is recommended to use NUsearch using keywords and filters to narrow down results. To search the collection, enter the code SPEC into the search bar, and under UoN Collections select 'Special Collection' to search this collection only.

Extent: Nearly 17,000 items. Covering dates: mid-1600s-1900s.

Theatre material found in collections not specifically relating to theatre

Due to the large scope of our collections, there are occasionally found theatre-related material within collections that are not predominantly concerned with theatre or performance but may nevertheless prove relevant in terms of wider context to related research. This material ranges from photographs, audio interviews, ephemera, personal papers and scripts.

Literary Manuscripts in the Portland (Welbeck) Collection, collection reference Pw V

Contains various manuscript plays and dramas, alongside songs and poems. These include: manuscript of Thomas Middleton's play 'Hengist King of Kent', divided into five acts, including stage directions; autograph manuscript play 'A Pleasant & Merry Humor off a Roge' by William Cavendish along with a reprographic copy of his play 'The Country Captain' and photographic reproductions of a further two plays.

There are also various fragments, parts, single acts, or cast lists of plays both named and unattributed. Accessible to all readers, though some items are fragile, and in these cases the microfilm copy should be used in the first instance.

Extent: 200 volumes and 11 boxes. Covering dates: 1500s-1900s.

D.H. Lawrence Collection, collection reference La

The DH Lawrence Collection contains the literary papers, original correspondence, and artworks of DH Lawrence, as well as material relating to him, such as research and biographical papers; photographs; and audio recordings.

The development of the collection is paralleled by the development of the DH Lawrence Printed Books Collection, which includes first editions, periodical and critical literature, and is mentioned elsewhere in this guide (collection reference DHLC).

The collection is divided into sub-groups, some of which (most notably La L, La Z, and La S) contain theatre programmes, film ephemera and other items relating to dramatic productions of Lawrence plays, adaptations of his work and works inspired by Lawrence.

Also present are newspaper cuttings featuring reviews of stage productions; correspondence relating to the production of plays; advertisements; photographs of scenes on stage; and scripts and transcript for both performances of Lawrence plays and of plays inspired by his work, including amateur productions.

Among the collection is the autograph manuscript of 'Touch and Go', a play in three acts, together with the preface. The text features revisions throughout and was intended to be the first in a series of 'Plays for a People's Theatre' by the People's Theatre Society.

Extent: 410 boxes, 75 volumes, and 52 items. Covering dates: 1865-2000s.

Photographic slides depicting Nottingham, taken or collected by Henry C. Mugridge, collection reference Mu

Henry Mugridge (1908-c.1977) was a former technician in the Department of Electrical Engineering at the university. He created a photographic record of Nottingham in the 1960s, which comprises 532 slides. The focus of the slides is almost exclusively on architectural details of buildings such as churches, public houses, shops, and industrial buildings.

Among these are six photographs of various theatre buildings in Nottingham, some of which remain, where others were captured before their demolition. These are: Nottingham Playhouse, Arts Theatre, Theatre Quadrant, Empire Theatre, Theatre Royal, and Old Theatre Royal.

Extent: 532 slides, 1 reel of tape (and 1 digital copy file), 4 files, 3 volumes and 10 photographs. Covering dates: 1920-1977.

Interview with Jennie Garner, Chris Cutland and Joan Mathews: The Women's Theatre Group, collection reference FME/4/16

Contained within the Feminist Archive (East Midlands) is material relating to The Nottingham Women's Theatre Group (1979-1988), also known as the Witch Women. Shows were produced as a group, largely improvised and unscripted. They performed in communities located in Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, and Leicester, often in community centres or at demonstrations.

Their themes were drawn from issues of concern to the Women's Liberation Movement, including: women's work, health, and bodies, politics, abortion, and domestic violence.

The collection includes photographs of the Women's Theatre Group, and an interview with Jennie Garner, Chris Cutland and Joan Mathews who were involved in the group.

Extent: 1 audio file, 1 transcript, 1 summary / 2 albums of 40 photos, 12 items, 1 folder. Covering dates: 2019.

Ephemera from alumna Helen Young's time at the Midlands Agricultural College; 1937-1940, collection reference, ALUM/MS 1040

In 1893 University College, Nottingham established a Department of Agriculture, and the Midland Dairy Institute opened in 1895. In 1900 the Institute's affiliation with University College ended and it became a college in its own right, the Midland Agricultural and Dairy College, in 1906.

On the outbreak of war in September 1939 all courses were immediately cancelled and replaced with training courses for Women's Land Army girls, of which Helen Young was one.

The collection shows Young's involvement in student theatre and includes a small number of programmes for productions by the Midland Agricultural College Dramatic Society in which she performed, together with a photocopy of a newspaper cutting which shows Young photographed with other cast members of 'Ghost Train'.

Present are the following programmes: 'Laburnum Grove' (1937); 'Fourth Wall' (1938); 'Are you a Mason?' (1936), all signed by cast members. Also, 'The Whole Town's Talking' (1940); and 'Lucky Dip' (1940).

Extent: 1 bundle. Covering dates: 1937-1940.

[University ephemera and papers relating to alumnus David Guest's role in the Students' Union Carnival Committee and Ensoc, collection reference MS 995](#)

David Guest was a member of the Entertainments Committee of the Students' Union and wrote playscripts for productions involving Anthony Burkett. Guest was active at the university during the period 1956-1959.

The collections contains papers relating to the activities of Ensoc, and includes materials such as: leaflets and flyers; programmes; posters; notes relating to performances, including running order, costumes, and an annotated script; typescript information about an Ensoc production of 'The Son of Kit-e-Kat' produced by Anthony Burkett, featuring David Guest; and scripts for several shows, including 'Aisle be seeing you' by Anthony Burkett.

Also present among assorted ephemera are programmes for Nottingham Dramatic Society plays 'Coriolanus' and 'Tea House of the August Moon'; plus, tickets and a programme for a production of Peter Ustinov's 'The Love of Four Colonel's' produced by Wortley Hall Dramatic Society.

Extent: 1 box. Covering dates: c.1956-2012.

[Papers of Connie M. Ford, collection reference CF 1/6/1-5](#)

Connie M. Ford (1912-1988) was a poet and qualified vet, who worked for many years at Sutton Bonington. She was an active member of the Nottingham Poetry Society, and her work appeared in various publications including *Poetry Nottingham*.

The collection comprises research and personal papers, photographs, general correspondence, and literary papers, within which is contained three copies of a typed script for a play 'The Lab Assistant'.

With the play are production notes, set plan, and correspondence between Connie Ford and J. Harvey, to whom the play was submitted for consideration. Also present is a Unity Theatre newsletter for February 1957.

Readers must fill in a Restricted Material form. Extent: 1 folder. Covering dates: 1949-1957.

Theatre Ephemera

Various miscellaneous material related to the theatre, performances, and plays are scattered throughout our manuscript collections, and can be found using keyword searches in the catalogue. They may include evidence of theatre performances, amateur dramatics, theatregoing, and ephemera. Together this material forms an overall picture

of the past and ongoing culture of the theatre and performance, as both a literary form and its role in wider society.

The types of material found among other collections include: Letters/correspondence discussing attendance at or instances of performances and plays; play and theatre programmes; newscuttings of articles about and reviews of performances, including copies of magazines and newspapers featuring reviews; literary notes; and unpublished plays.

Researchers interested in Nottingham Playhouse should contact Nottinghamshire Archives in the first instance, as they hold the official Playhouse archive. This includes Board papers, financial records, correspondence, and papers relating to the production of plays. The Records of Nottingham Playhouse (1947-1993), reference: DD NP.

Some material relating to Nottingham Playhouse can be found amongst collections mentioned elsewhere in this guide, primarily the papers of Tony Church; Sir Hugh Willatt; Connie M. Ford; and the Twentieth Century Theatre Papers. This material consists mainly of programmes and playscripts, although some printed reports and accounts are present.

Complete list of collections

Artificial collection of papers and items donated by former students of the University of Nottingham/University College Nottingham/Midland Agricultural College, 1937-2021. Ephemera from alumna Helen Young's time at the Midlands Agricultural College; 1937-1940. ALUM/MS 1040.

Student theatre (University of Nottingham) and academic papers of Anthony John Burkett; 1955-1998. BKT.

Records of St Andrew's-with-Castle Gate United Reformed Church, Nottingham; 1946-2004. Papers relating to the Stanwell Players drama group; 1946-2001. CAA/So/1.

Cambridge Drama Collection; c.1664-c.1850. CDC.

Papers of Connie M. Ford, poet, 1900-1998. Script and correspondence relating to a play, 'The Lab Assistant', written by Connie M. Ford; 1949-1957. CF 1/6/1-5.

Manuscript material in the Patrick Miles Chekhov collection; 1880-1998. CHEK.

Cambridge Shakespeare Collection; 1709-20th century. CSC.

Records of Castle Gate Congregational Church. Programmes for productions by the Castle Gate Dramatic Society/Castle Gate Amateur Dramatic Society; 1932 and n.d. [c. 1920-1950]. CU/So 2/14/1-4.

D.H. Lawrence Collection (printed books); 1903-present. DHLC.

East Midlands Collection; 1700s-present. EMC.

East Midlands Special Collection; 1600s-present. EMSC.

Feminist Archive (East Midlands), 1970s-1980s. Interview with Jennie Garner, Chris Cutland and Joan Mathews: The Women's Theatre Group; 2019. FME/4/16.

Papers associated with DH Lawrence collected by W. Forster; 1933-1997. For.

Records of High Pavement Presbyterian (Unitarian) Chapel, Nottingham; 1576-1982. High Pavement Chapel Dramatic Society Programmes; 1869-1932. Hi X 5.

D. H. Lawrence Collection; 1865-2000s. La.

Records of the Manvers Main Collieries Limited of Barnborough and Wath-Upon-Dearne, Yorkshire; 1937-1955. Dramatic Society; 1945. Mcl F/27/5.

Papers of Matt Marks, musician and composer; 1980s-2000s. MMM.

Records of Valerie Stevens relating to student theatre at The University of Nottingham; 1960-1961. MS 321.

Theatre programmes and related material of Tony Church, theatre sound engineer and radio producer; 1970-2005. MS 809.

University ephemera and papers relating to alumnus David Guest's role in the Student's Union Carnival Committee and Ensoc; c.1956-2012. MS 995.

Papers of Harvey Pitcher relating to his research on Anton Chekhov; 1957-2019. MS 1022.

Footprints Theatre Trust Archive; 1978-2018. MS 1049.

Papers of Roy Minton, Playwright, Screenwriter and Author; c.1960s-2023. MS 1058.

Papers of Julie Wilkinson relating to regional theatre; 1982-1991. MS 1059.

Photographic slides depicting Nottingham, taken or collected by Henry C. Mugridge; 1920-1977. Mu.

Nottingham Arts Theatre; 1930s-2000s. NAT.

Records of the New Perspectives Theatre Company; 1974-2023. NPT.

Nottingham Roundabout Theatre; 1973-2012. NRT.

Records of the Nottingham Youth Theatre and College Street Centre events; 1987-2020. NYT.

Literary manuscripts in the Portland (Welbeck) Collection; 16th century-20th century. Pw V.

Red Earth Theatre; 2000-2024. RET.

Papers of Stephen Lowe, playwright and director of Meeting Ground Theatre Company; 1970s-2020s. SJL.

Special Collection; mid-17th century-20th century. SPEC.

Manuscript material within the Cambridge Drama Collection; 1875-1899. TCD.

Manuscript material within the Cambridge Shakespeare Collection; 1746-1923. TCS.

Papers of Sir Hugh Willatt, solicitor and arts administrator, relating to theatre and the performing arts; 1843-1995. THW.

Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall Nottingham; 1865-2024. TRC.

Twentieth Century Theatre Papers; 1929-1976. Tw T.

Photographs relating to the University of Nottingham and its predecessor University College, Nottingham, collected by various departments and staff at the University, 1877-2021. Copies of photographs relating to the University's Dramsoc productions; 1961-1964. UMP/9/6.

University of Nottingham Collection; 1877-present. UONC.

Archives of the University of Nottingham: Student, Staff and Alumni Societies including the Students Union, 1878-2020. Records of University Opera at the University of Nottingham; 1956-1967. UU 13. Artificial collection of ephemera relating to the University of Nottingham's New Theatre; 1970-2013. UU 15. Gilbert and Sullivan Society; 2007-2017. UU 42. Musicality Society; 2023. UU 46.