Brigid Brophy Anniversary Conference
9th–10th October 2015

Avenue Campus, University of Northampton, England
To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the death of Brigid Brophy (1929-1995) and the fiftieth anniversary of her article ‘The Rights of Animals’, published in the Sunday Times on 10th October 1965 (and later collected in the ground-breaking 1971 anthology Animals, Men and Morals), the School of the Arts at the University of Northampton is delighted to host a two-day conference to celebrate all aspects of Brophy’s literary career, as well as her leading contribution to animal rights, vegetarianism, anti-vivisectionism, humanism, feminism and her advocacy of the Public Lending Right.

Organiser: Professor Richard Canning
Contact: richard.canning@northampton.ac.uk
Friday 9th October: Brigid Brophy: Novelist, Biographer, Dramatist and Cultural Thinker

9-9.30 Registration & Morning Tea and Coffee

**9.30-11.00 Welcome & Plenary Lecture**

Philip Hensher - ‘Outer Crust and Inner Turmoil: the principles of fiction, by a beginner’

11.00-11.30 Tea and Coffee

**11.30-13.00 Panel Session 1: Brigid Brophy, Novelist and Biographer**

- Jonathan Gibbs, ‘The Erotics of Flesh and Sex in the Sixties’
- Robert McKay, ‘Brigid Brophy's Pro-animal Fictions’
- Peter Parker, ‘Prancing Novelist and Black and White: Experiments in Biography’

13.00-14.00 Lunch

**14.00-15.00 Plenary Lecture**

Carole Sweeney - “Why this rather than that?” The Delightful Perversity of Brigid Brophy’

15.00-15.30 Tea and Coffee
15.30-17.00  Panel Session 2: Brigid Brophy, Dramatist and Cultural Thinker

- Michael Bronski, ‘Sex, Death, and the Transfiguration of Queerness’
- Michael Caines, “I have been a dramatist since I was six”: The theatrical Brigid Brophy’
- Pamela Osborn, “Stop. That’s Wicked”: Morality in Brigid Brophy’s The Burglar and Iris Murdoch’s A Severed Head’

17.00-17.30 Tea and Coffee

17.30-18.45  The Burglar: A performed reading of excerpts from Brophy's West End play, directed by Dr Hayley Linthwaite and performed by The Body of One Theatre Research Group (venue for this event alone is MR5).

19.30-22.00  Conference Dinner: Karmana vegetarian / vegan restaurant (79 Broadmead Av, Northampton, NN3 2RA)

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Saturday 10th October: Brigid Brophy, Social Analyst, Activist, Campaigner and Polemicist

9-9.30 Morning Tea and Coffee

9.30-10.30 Plenary Lecture

Richard Ryder - ‘The Oxford Group of 1970’
10.30-11.00 Tea and Coffee

11.00-12.30 Panel Session 3: Brigid Brophy and Animal Rights

- Gary L. Francione, ‘The Mother of the Animal Rights Movement’
- Kim Stallwood, ‘A Felicitous Day for Fish’

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-14.30 Roundtable Panel: Brigid Brophy in Person, chaired by Peter Parker with Kate Levey and Shena Mackay

14.30-15.00 Tea and Coffee

15.00-16.30 Panel Session 4: Brigid Brophy, Author and Author Figure

- Jill Longmate, ‘Brigid Brophy’s Role in the Struggle for Public Lending Right, 1972-79’
- Phoebe Blatton, ‘Brigid Brophy’s The King of a Rainy Country - republishing a lost classic’

16.30-17.00 Tea and Coffee

17.00-18.00 Plenary Lecture

Kate Levey – ‘Brigid Brophy and Michael Levey: My Mother and Father’

18.00-18.10 Closing Remarks
Plenary Lectures

Philip Hensher: ‘Outer Crust and Inner Turmoil: the principles of fiction, by a beginner’

How did Brophy systematically explore the larger questions of interior life and exterior observation? Did her interest in rococo, zoological inquiry and Firbank shape the debate she entered into, about the propriety of getting into characters' heads versus recording their leaky exteriors, or does it rip up that long novelistic debate? What Brophy's first five novels (and a husband's book about eighteenth century painting) contributed towards a novelist's practice much later on is considered by that novelist.

Professor Philip Hensher is the author of nine novels and two volumes of short stories, and an opera libretto for Thomas Ades, Powder Her Face. He is the editor of the new Penguin Book of the British Short Story. He has won the Somerset Maugham Award and the Ondaatje Prize, and been shortlisted for prizes including the Man Booker and the Commonwealth Prize. He is Professor of Creative Writing at Bath Spa University.

Carole Sweeney: ‘Why this rather than that?’ The Delightful Perversity of Brigid Brophy

The single word that unites the slim body of criticism on Brigid Brophy’s literary work is ‘perverse’. Reviewers reached regularly for this adjective to describe her novels. But what does perverse mean
when applied to Brophy’s work? I argue here that the term ‘perverse’ misrecognises Brophy’s innovative avant-gardism that was not only aesthetic and linguistic but also political.

Many contemporary critics and reviewers saw Brophy’s lucidly inventive writing as an example of linguistic and philosophical perversity but the real perversity of her writing lies, I suggest, in her absolute refusal to accept the conventions of male and female roles in fiction and in language. As her bi-gendered, sufferer of ‘linguistic leprosy’ and ‘sexual amnesia’, narrator Pat/Evelyn Hillary O’Rooley says in *In Transit*, it is time to catch up with the ‘ambiguity of trousers’. In Brophy’s work men can sing soprano and women bass, girls can fashion boys into objects of desire Pygmalion style and all the old mythologies of mad unruly women are revealed as nothing more than shards of fossilized language: ‘I feel that that mythology is a denial of imagination, which I think one has to counter.’ Let loose in Brophy’s fiction then, this imagination is androgynous and playful with more than a little Joycean portmanteau, polyglot badinage in its veins, a writer she describes as the ‘old pun gent himself’.

With an ingenuity and intellectualism reminiscent of a European rather than ‘English’ tradition, Brophy’s work was truly avant-garde and yet continues to be woefully underrated for the originality and experimentalism that it brought to British fiction.

Dr Carole Sweeney is Senior Lecturer in Modern Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is the author of *Michel*
Houellebecq and the Literature of Despair (Bloomsbury 2013) and From Fetish to Subject: Race, Modernism, and Primitivism, 1919-1939 (Praeger 2004) and has published work in Comparative Critical Studies, Journal of Modern Literature, and Textual Practice. She is currently working on a new book on the topic of women and experimental writing from 1945-70 for Edinburgh University Press.

Richard Ryder: ‘The Oxford Group of 1970’

Looking back from a perspective provided by nearly fifty years campaigning against speciesism, this paper will review the emergence of what is now called 'The Oxford Group'. While there were many individuals developing ideas along these lines, it was Brigid Brophy who started the whole animal rights revolution of the 1960s and continued to spur others on. In this paper, I aim to trace the events and development of ideas where Brigid and I coincided, in order to begin to explore Brophy's role in the development of animal rights groups and activities since her article was first published in 1965.

Dr Richard Ryder holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge and serves as a trustee of the RSPCA and a patron of the Animals Interfaith Alliance. Since 1969, when he started campaigning in Oxford, he has coined ‘speciesism’ and ‘painism’, helped revolutionise the RSPCA and served as its Chairman between 1977 and 1979. His work with various groups has directly led to UK legislation in 1986, 2004 and 2006. He was named Director of the
Political Animal Lobby in 1991 and served as Mellon Professor at Tulane University in 1996. He is the author of various books, including *Victims of Science* (1975), *The Political Animal* (1998), and *Speciesism, Painism and Happiness* (2012).

**Panel Speakers:**

**Jonathan Gibbs: The Erotics of *Flesh* and Sex in the Sixties**

In my paper I will consider Brophy’s 1962 novel *Flesh* in the context of her own career and also the wider literature and culture of the 60s. Its generous and unabashed treatment of heterosexual passion – in particular the honeymoon sex of Nancy and Marcus – is at odds with both her other novels, which explore more complex and at-the-time provocative forms of romantic and sexual self-expression (latent homosexuality in *King of a Rainy Country*, gender ambiguity in *In Transit*) and the prevailing mood and memory of the time.

Nevertheless, I will argue that the treatment of Nancy and Marcus’s marriage is progressive, bearing in mind when it was written. I will compare the couple’s relationship with that of Edward and Florence in Ian McEwan’s *On Chesil Beach* and discuss the extent to which McEwan’s characters’ wedding night – set in the summer of the very year Brophy’s novel was published, and as disastrous as Brophy’s newly-weds’ is triumphant – is justified in its status as exemplary for that moment in the decade, before sexual
liberation had fully flowered. Other writing on sex of the decade, e.g. Philip Larkin’s ‘Annus Mirabilis’ and the novels of Kingsley Amis (Take a Girl Like You, etc.) will also be considered, along with the Kinsey Report and other social interventions.

The thrust of the paper, which will also take in elements of Brophy’s journalism and criticism, will be that Brophy’s novel offered a genuine alternative to the now-standard views of the 1960s – that sexual liberation was either a grand thing, or a poisoned chalice particularly for women – and did so before the decade as we now understand it had really started.

Dr Jonathan Gibbs has a PhD in Creative and Critical Writing from UEA. His debut novel, Randall, published by Galley Beggar Press, has been translated into Dutch and French (forthcoming), and was longlisted for the Desmond Elliott Prize. His short fiction has appeared in Lighthouse, The South Circular and Gorse, has been anthologised in Allnighter (Pulp Faction) and The Best British Short Stories 2014 & 2015 (Salt), and was shortlisted for the inaugural White Review Short Story Prize. He reviews books for The Independent, The Guardian and the TLS and blogs at tinycamels.wordpress.com

**Robert McKay: Brigid Brophy's Pro-animal Fictions**

In this paper, I discuss how Brophy explores her animal politics fictionally, paying particular attention to what I call her texts' 'animal form'. That is, I explore the ways in which unjust
relations between the species are reconsidered in Brophy’s work not just literally but also in literary terms because they pose specifically aesthetic problems. A good example is her postmodernist ‘Classic Detective Story’ from *The Adventures of God in His Search of the Black Girl*, which deconstructs both the country-house novel and the locked-room mystery forms to reveal that meat is murder. The paper is thus intended to celebrate Brophy's pro-animal literary achievement, and will also situate it in relation to contemporary writing by Patricia Highsmith and others.

Dr Robert McKay is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Sheffield where he teaches literature, film and critical theory. He has published widely on the politics of species in post-war and contemporary literature and film and wrote the interdisciplinary collection *Killing Animals* (University of Illinois Press, 2006) with the Animal Studies Group. He is series co-editor of *Palgrave Studies in Animals and Literature* and Associate Editor (Literature) for *Society and Animals*. Current projects include an edited collection called *Wolves, Werewolves and the Gothic* and a monograph called *Animal Form: Five Anthropofugal Fictions. Against Value in the Arts and Education*, which is co-edited with Emile Bojesen and Sam Ladkin, will be published by Rowman and Littlefield in 2016.
Peter Parker: *Prancing Novelist* and *Black and White: Experiments in Biography*

Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) and Ronald Firbank (1886-1926) were supreme exemplars of the high-camp dandy style in art and literature. Both men were interested in the ‘perverse’, in unorthodox sexuality, and both produced their work with the twin spectres of illness and mortality hovering over their shoulders. Both died young, abroad, and as Catholic converts. Sometimes mistaken as being merely decorative, their work was in fact highly innovative, ushering in modernism. In writing about these two men, Brigid Brophy was equally radical, adapting biography to suit her subjects and re-invigorating the form. *Black and White: A Portrait of Aubrey Beardsley* (1968) was as much a product of Brophy’s era as it was of Beardsley’s, the 1960s having seen a huge resurgence of interest in an artist whose revolutionary art suited the times. Brophy brought her interest in Freud and the *fin de siècle* to bear on one of Britain’s greatest graphic artists, and the result is as thrillingly rococo as Beardsley’s own work. As its subtitle announced, *Prancing Novelist: A Defence of Fiction in the Form of a Critical Biography in Praise of Ronald Firbank* (1973) was equally idiosyncratic. Many thought Firbank too slight a figure to bear the weight Brophy appeared to be loading onto him, but Brophy’s arguments about Firbank’s literary standing and the value of art were characteristically cogent and convincing, while her investigation of his life and work was a dazzling example of biographical speculation, making the kind of bold imaginative leaps characteristic of Firbank himself.
Peter Parker is the author of two books about the First World War, *The Old Lie* (1987) and *The Last Veteran* (2009), and biographies of J.R. Ackerley (1989) and Christopher Isherwood (2004), and was editor of *The Reader’s Guide to the Twentieth-Century Novel* (1994) and *The Reader’s Guide to Twentieth-Century Writers* (1995). He was an associate of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), for which he also wrote the article on Brigid Brophy, and remains an advisory editor. He was also a contributor to the Brigid Brophy issue of the *Review of Contemporary Fiction* (1995), and writes on books, gardening and architecture for a variety of newspapers and magazines.

**Michael Bronski: Sex, Death, and the Transfigurations of Queerness**

Brigid Brophy is noted as a novelist, activist, essayist and playwright. In each of these activities and genres she produced amazing work. Brophy’s prodigious contributions are less well known today – although highly appreciated by those who do know them – than they should be. This is especially true of her 1963 work *Black Ship to Hell*. Nearly five hundred pages of psychoanalytic interpretation of western culture that careers from Sade to Charon’s ferry to *The Interpretation of Dreams* to Lorenzo da Ponte’s libretto for *Don Giovanni* to the infamous Leopold and Loeb murder case to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* to *Peter Pan* and Saint Teresa of Avila Brophy unpacks, disentangles, reinterprets, stretches the truth about, and generally shakes out every interesting artefact of European and American culture.
Black Ship to Hell is a formidable, sometimes scary, often wrong-headed, and endlessly compelling read. Which is why, most probably, it has been ignored. But beneath this avalanche of intelligence Brophy’s book – in which homosexuality is a strikingly recurrent theme – surprisingly points to a series of ground-breaking later thinkers and ideas that have transformed contemporary thought including Juliet Mitchell, R. D. Laing, Dorothy Dinnerstein, radical feminism, sex radicalism, and queer theory. Of all of these, queer theory may be – granted, without acknowledgment – the most salient beneficiary to Brophy’s ideas and visions of the world. ‘Sex, Death, and the Transfigurations of Queerness’ will look at some of the more radical ideas lurking in Black Ship to Hell and chart how they set the intellectual stage for progressive that was to come, and prefigure the thinking of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, David Halperin, Lee Edelman, and Jack Halberstam.

Professor Michael Bronski is the author of several books including Considering Hate: Violence, Goodness, and Justice in American Culture and Politics (2015), A Queer History of the United States (2013), Pulp Friction: The Golden Age of Gay Male Pulps (2003) and The Pleasure Principle: Sex, Backlash and the Struggle Gay Freedom (1998). Over the past four decades he has written on books, theatre, film, culture sex, and activism for numerous U.S. periodicals and anthologies. He is currently Professor of the Practice in Activism and Media in the Studies of Women, Gender and Sexuality at Harvard University.
Michael Caines: ‘I have been a dramatist since I was six’: The theatrical Brigid Brophy

The failure of Brigid Brophy’s play The Burglar, staged in London in 1967, prompted her to write a Shavian, manifesto-like preface when it was published the following year. Here Brophy reflects on her artistic course to date, and how she has become, as it were, the central figure in a public drama. Her reputation as a campaigner, polemicist and uncompromising reviewer, she notes, has helped to determine the fate of The Burglar. She is also conscious of a bemusing critical prejudice against novelists dabbling in the theatre – yet presents herself as somebody who was a dramatist long before she became known as a novelist. ‘I have been a dramatist since I was six.’

Beyond The Burglar and the one-act play The Waste Disposal Unit, unpublished evidence of this dramatic sensibility languishes in the Lilly Library in Indiana, including ‘Libretto’, the piece she describes in the preface to The Burglar as a further development of her work in this direction, and ‘A Hero to His Valet’, a similarly ‘baroque’ and highly enjoyable play in three acts. Further connections may be drawn between these dramas and the novels for which Brophy was better known – such as King of a Rainy Country, with its adoption of As You Like It as a play-within-a novel.

Michael Caines is an assistant editor on the Times Literary Supplement, and the author of Shakespeare and the Eighteenth

Pamela Osborn: ‘Stop. That’s Wicked’: Morality in Brigid Brophy’s The Burglar and Iris Murdoch’s A Severed Head

Brigid Brophy’s long and complicated relationship with the novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch is partially chronicled in over a thousand letters written by Murdoch to Brophy over the course of almost forty years. These letters now form part of the collection held in the Iris Murdoch Archive at Kingston University. Brophy disliked Murdoch’s novels and told her so, causing her to respond in shock, ‘I confess I am surprised that you altogether dislike my work, as I should have thought it was complex enough to have some things in it which would touch your heart & mind. I am beginning now to think that your total rejection of it is important, & I’m not sure what should be done.’ One exception to Brophy’s distaste for Murdoch’s work seems to be her 1961 novel, A Severed Head, which was later adapted into a successful play by Murdoch and J.B. Priestley and a less successful film. Although only one side of the correspondence between Murdoch and Brophy survives it is apparent in the former’s responses that the latter praises the novel and asks several times about the progress of adaptations. Murdoch likewise anticipates Brophy’s 1967 play, The Burglar, with obvious excitement, telling her, ‘I much look forward [to] read & privately perform play’. If this performance ever took place Murdoch may have noted several parallels with her own novel and play which suggest that Brophy’s play is, to some degree, a response to
Murdoch’s work. Both pieces are farcical in structure and can be interpreted as scathing about the moral consequences of the sexual revolution and the hedonism of the middle class characters. Both include a core cast of couples, whose relationships change and fluctuate throughout, and an outsider/intruder character who pronounces judgement to some degree on the activities of these people. This paper will examine the dialogue about morality which emerges between the two texts and within Brophy and Murdoch’s correspondence, with particular consideration of the question posed overtly in *The Burglar* and throughout Murdoch’s fiction and philosophy: why is stealing wrong?

Dr Pamela Osborn is a post-doctoral researcher based in the Iris Murdoch Archive at Kingston University where she also teaches English Literature. She wrote her doctoral thesis on bereavement, grief and mourning in Murdoch’s work and most recently had essays on Murdoch published in *Iris Murdoch Connected*, ed. Mark Luprecht (2014) and the *Iris Murdoch Review*. She has also written an article on Barbara Pym and Philip Larkin in *Women: A Cultural Review*. She is currently preparing her thesis for publication.

**Gary L. Francione: The Mother of the Animal Rights Movement**

Peter Singer is almost always credited with inaugurating the modern animal rights movement and is often referred to as the
‘father of the animal rights movement.’ This claim is problematic in at least three respects.

First, it ignores the pioneering work that was done in the later 1960s—before Singer wrote *Animal Liberation*—by what has been called the Oxford Group. Oxford University post-graduates Rosalind and Stanley Godlovitch, inspired by an essay written by writer and feminist campaigner Brigid Brophy in the *Sunday Times* in 1965, formed a group to discuss animal ethics. A collection of essays they co-edited with John Harris, entitled *Animals, Men and Morals: An Enquiry into the Maltreatment of Non-Humans*, was published in 1971 and included essays by the editors as well as Brophy, Ruth Harrison, Richard Ryder, Maureen Duffy, David Wood, and others. Although Singer was at Oxford at the time and was acquainted with members of this group, he was not a part of it and did not contribute to the book, which was far more important as a conceptual matter than was *Animal Liberation*.

Second, it ignores that Singer is a utilitarian—and an act utilitarian at that—and rejects moral rights as a theoretical matter. It’s odd to have a rights movement whose father rejects rights.

Third, Singer did little more than assume the role of being the modern proponent of Bentham. Bentham argued that we could not discount or ignore the similar interests of animals based solely on species. The problem is that Bentham thought that animals were not self-aware and had no interest in continuing to live. Animals care about *how* we use them but not *that* we use them. That is, in essence, Singer’s position as well. Bentham opened the door to the
animal welfare movement of the nineteenth century and Singer has now become a proponent of working with corporations to make exploitation more ‘humane’. Whatever else anyone thinks about the animal welfare approach, it certainly has nothing to do with rights as we normally use that term. If you don’t have the right not to be exploited as property—however ‘humanely’—talking about any other rights you may have is beside the point.

As far as I can tell, it was Brophy who first observed that an interest in avoiding pain and suffering was different than an interest in continuing to live and she believed that both interests needed to be protected by rights. I will argue that if the Godlovitch/Harris book had been recognized as the ‘Bible’ of the animal rights movement, and Brophy recognized as its mother, we might have actually have had an animal rights movement and gotten beyond the welfare paradigm of Bentham. We might have moved in the direction of recognizing nonhuman personhood (and what that entails) instead of campaigning for institutional exploiters to produce ‘higher’ welfare.

Professor Gary L. Francione is the Board of Governors Distinguished Professor of Law & Nicholas deB. Katzenbach Scholar of Law and Philosophy at Rutgers University. He is the author of numerous books and articles on animal rights theory and animals and the law. His most recent books include (co-authored with Anna E. Charlton) *Eat Like You Care: An Examination of the Morality of Eating Animals; The Animal Rights Debate: Abolition or Regulation?*
(Columbia 2010); *Animals as Persons: Essays on the Abolition of Animal Exploitation* (2008); *Introduction to Animal Rights: Your Child or the Dog?* (2000); and *Animals, Property, and the Law* (1995). He has been teaching animal rights theory and the law for more than 25 years, lecturing on the topic throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe, and has been a guest on numerous radio and television shows.

**Kim Stallwood: ‘A Felicitous Day for Fish’**

In 1980, the RSPCA published the Report of the Panel of Enquiry into Shooting and Angling chaired by the distinguished zoologist, Lord Medway, which concluded that ‘vertebrate animals (i.e., mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish) should be regarded as equally capable of suffering to some degree or another, without distinction between “warm-blooded” and “cold-blooded” members.’ (para 286) The RSPCA was in turmoil during the 1970s and 1980s. Its policy on hunting symbolised the conflict between members who understood the society as only caring for cats and dogs and progressive members, inspired in part by Brigid Brophy’s 1965 article ‘The Rights of Animals,’ who opposed blood sports and other forms of animal exploitation. The RSPCA subsequently adopted progressive policies, including opposition to blood sports (but not angling), and banned hunters as ineligible for membership. These developments sent shockwaves through the British establishment, which continue to rumble to the present. The 2015 Conservative Party manifesto commits the government to ‘protect
hunting, shooting and fishing’ and ‘give Parliament the opportunity to repeal the Hunting Act on a free vote, with a government bill in government time.’ Polls repeatedly show majority public opinion opposed to hunting whereas angling is one of the country’s most popular past times, and is not an issue of concern for animal welfare organisations.

The launch of the Council for the Prevention of Cruelty by Angling in London and its demise four years later may only warrant a footnote in the history of the animal welfare movement except that Brigid Brophy gave its inaugural address in 1981. As CPCA’s Patron, she called this a ‘felicitous day for fish’ and as CPCA’s Vice President I recall her speech with admiration for its courage, vision, and wit. Drawing from the CPCA file in my animal rights archive, my presentation will consider the context of the remarks made by Brophy about animal rights, including how she saw cruelty to fish in angling from the perspective of her ‘fellow Lefties’ demands for social justice’ and the ‘Right Wing’s concerns for the freedom of the individual.’

Kim Stallwood is an independent scholar and consultant. His book *Growl: Life Lessons, Hard Truths, and Bold Strategies from an Animal Advocate* was published by Lantern Books (2014). Since 1974, he has demonstrated personal commitment and professional experience in leadership positions with some of the world’s foremost animal advocacy organisations in the UK and USA, including CIWF, BUAV, PETA, and The Animals' Agenda magazine.
He co-founded the Animals and Society Institute in 2005 and is (volunteer) Executive Director of Minding Animals International. He became a vegetarian in 1974 after working in a chicken slaughterhouse, and became a vegan in 1976.

Jill Longmate: Brigid Brophy’s Role in the Struggle for the Public Lending Right, 1972-1979

The campaign for PLR was collective, but the initial call to arms came from Brigid Brophy. A Government Working Party report, welcomed by the Society of Authors, advocated one-off payments to writers, via publishers, financed by libraries which bought their books. Brophy mobilised Maureen Duffy, Michael Levey, Francis King and Lettice Cooper to protest against ‘purchase right’. They founded the Writers Action Group, funded by recruiting members. Brophy and Duffy's reply, Ex Libris, went to all MPs.

WAG's goal was lending right (annual payments direct to authors, reflecting library loan-rates), as achieved in Sweden; administered affordably, using computerised statistics from sample libraries. Updating the 1951 ‘Brophy penny’ proposed by Brigid's father, John Brophy, WAG pursued central government funding. Opposition from the Society of Authors, publishers, librarians, civil servants and ministers was tirelessly challenged; MPs and Lords recruited. Resourceful media-management - deploying eloquent writers everywhere, rapid rebuttal, imagination and sardonic humour - helped keep PLR on the Labour government's agenda, as did insiders like Ted Willis. After filibustering killed one Bill, WAG's
Michael Foot, Leader of the Commons, ensured that another passed.

To a gruelling seven-year campaign, Brigid Brophy brought her brilliance as a writer, an exceptional talent for constructing logical arguments, securely founded on an impressive grasp of detail. Her reputation as a leading intellectual, sustained by press articles and TV appearances, helped in mobilising supporters (who included the Writers' Guild), and gaining access to Parliament, Whitehall, and Downing Street. Also crucial were dedication and tenacity: Brophy sacrificed creative writing-time, and endured personal attacks in the press. Secretarial support was minimal; WAG's workplace in Brigid's home.

A successful division of labour emerged, involving frequent collaboration: Brigid giving a persuasive public speech, Maureen answering subsequent questions. Duffy mastered library computerisation; converted the TUC: Brophy wrote WAG's highly informative, detailed newsletter, and a paper securing Council of Europe support for PLR. Sample files of WAG correspondence demonstrate Brigid's meticulous approach, from personalised responses to prospective members, to extensive essays for influential allies. Her 'touch of genius' as a writer, Michael Foot suggested, helped win the final battle with the Treasury.

Jill Longmate studied Modern History at Oxford, and has an MA in Library & Information Studies from UCL. She taught A-level History and Politics for 16 years, and then became a sixth-form college librarian. Now a freelance writer, she is currently researching the

Phoebe Blatton: ‘Brigid Brophy’s The King of a Rainy Country - republishing a lost classic’

In 2008 I co-founded The Coelacanth Press, which publishes the serial *Coelacanth Journal*. From the inception of the press, we hoped that with funds generated by the journal’s sales we could one day publish a new edition of Brigid Brophy’s 1956 novel *The King of a Rainy Country*. In December 2012, we realised this ambition. Like much of Brophy’s writing, the novel was out of print for over twenty years, having previously been included in the Virago Modern Classics range. *The King of a Rainy Country* is an often hilarious, poignant coming of age novel that centres on nineteen year-old Susan. It takes the reader from rain-drenched bohemian London and a Pornographic Bookseller’s back-room stock, to operatic Venice via a package holiday with a coachload of Coca-Cola guzzling Americans, and on crystalline side-excursions into Susan’s school days. In endorsement of our edition, Ali Smith described the novel as 'pitch-perfect, an inquiry into romanticism and disaffection, [it] is witty, unexpectedly moving and a revelation again of Brophy’s originality. Entirely of its time, it remains years ahead of itself even now, nearly 60 years later, in its emotional
range and its intellectual and formal blend of stoicism and sophistication.’ In this paper I will draw on the introduction I wrote for the new edition, revisiting the motivations behind the project, recalling the people (including Ali Smith and Brophy’s daughter Kate Levey) who helped us, and talking more broadly about why I felt it was important and timely to re-introduce Brophy to a new readership, specifically through this semi-autobiographical and most accessible of her novels. Susan is an essential protagonist for anyone interested in the discussion of female representation, sex and gender in post-war British literature, and as the closest fictional mirror of Brophy herself, lends us a unique insight into the writer’s life and vision.

Phoebe Blatton is Editor of The Coelacanth Press, which re-published Brigid Brophy’s 1956 novel *The King of a Rainy Country* in 2012 (see below). She is about to commence a practice-based PhD in Creative Writing at Birkbeck, University of London, which will incorporate a comparative study into the writers Brigid Brophy and Penelope Gilliatt.

[www.thecoelacanthpress.co.uk/The_King_of_a_Rainy_Country.html](http://www.thecoelacanthpress.co.uk/The_King_of_a_Rainy_Country.html)
Brigid Brophy’s *The Burglar* performed by The Body of One Theatre Research Group, under the direction of Dr Hayley Linthwaite.

**Hayley Linthwaite** is Senior Lecturer and Subject Leader in Drama at the University of Northampton.

**Arte Artemiou** is currently a third-year BA Drama (Hons) student at the University of Northampton. He is also a co-creator of a small Theatre Research Group called The Body of One (TBoO). He wishes to continue his studies postgraduate exploring his own research. Arte is also currently employed by Dale Forder on Munchkins and Monsters’ upcoming adaptation of *Wind in the Willows*.

**Lydia Collins** is currently a third-year student studying BA Drama (Hons) with Creative Writing. Upon reading 'The Burglar' she has decided to explore this piece, and Brigid Brophy, as a potential dissertation topic. She is also a co-creator of TBoO Theatre Research Group and wishes to continue her studies to a postgraduate level at the University of Northampton.

**Dale Forder** graduated from the University of Northampton in 2015 with a first class BA (Hons) degree in Drama. He currently works at the Royal & Derngate, Northampton, as a Creative Projects Associate. In addition to this he is also the Founder and Artistic Director of Munchkins and Monsters Theatre Company, which specialises in children's theatre. Current projects include:
Back in Time for Breakfast (winner of various awards at the Stratford-Upon-Avon festival 2014) and Wind in the Willows.

Samuel Jones is a third-year drama student at the University of Northampton and a co-founder of The Body of One (TBoO). He plans to continue his studies into postgraduate level while creating and experimenting with performances simultaneously.

Francesca Reeve studies BA Drama (Hons) at the University of Northampton, in her third and final year. She is a co-founder of TBoO Theatre, created in her first year of university. Fran's aim is to qualify with a BA Drama (Hons) degree before further training to become a drama therapist.

TBoO Theatre Research Group was founded in 2013 during Arte, Lydia, Samuel and Fran's first year of university. It came out of a desire to continue exploring what was being learnt in the studio with the lecturer. They created a performance at the end of their first year, travelled to Brazil with Dr Hayley Linthwaite to co-lead a workshop entitled ‘Imagine a Day’ and have continued working and researching together on projects.
**Proposed Publication**

ECW at Northampton plans on publishing a major, internationally launched volume of essays based on this conference, with a probable deadline of March 2016, for publisher's consideration, and proposed publication in 2017. We hope that all those presenting at the Conference will be able to contribute, and will be in touch in due course concerning the practicalities. If you know of others additionally interested in contributing, do direct them to ecw@northampton.ac.uk to be considered for inclusion.
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