

1925

Dame Ellen Terry

1925: Ellen Terry has been appointed a Dame Commander of the British Empire. She has rarely appeared on stage since her Jubilee in 1906, though she has toured extensively in America and Australia giving lectures on Shakespeare.

The Honours List also included a Knighthood for Barry Jackson, the producer and philanthropist most closely associated with the Repertory Theatre in Birmingham.

Tiller Girls in mourning as their founder dies

1925: John Tiller has died at the age of 73. He was a young employee of the Manchester Cotton Exchange and an enthusiastic amateur performer, when he started training a team of girls to dance for his amateur company. His first four girls had some professional success as the Four Little Sunbeams.

Soon Tiller troupes were in demand in Britain and on the Continent, and nowadays most musical comedies and pantomimes receive their girls from Mr Tiller's company.

His school attracts young girls from working class homes all over the North of England. There are the strict rules for their feeding, clothing and education. Smoking and other improper behaviour is forbidden. Respectable parents know they can trust their pretty daughter at the Tiller School. John Tiller has been responsible for creating a real career out of chorus dancing and singing.

Nobel Prize for GBS

1925 : George Bernard Shaw has been awarded this year's Nobel Prize for Literature. He has announced that he does not wish to accept the prize money and wants it to be used for charitable purposes.

Mr Denville's Hall

1925 : Theatre manager, Alfred Denville, hopes to create an actors' retirement home at Northwood. His plans have been adopted by his fellow managers, who wish to building to be known as Denville Hall.

Noel Coward has Five Shows in London

And all of them criticised for shocking immorality!



National Portrait Gallery

1925: Actor, playwright, songwriter Noel Coward has achieved astonishing success this season - having no fewer than five of his productions running in London's West End. However, he has attracted as much criticism as praise. "The Vortex" has been called "squalid". It portrays an older married woman having an affair with a much younger man, and has a character who is a drug addict. "Fallen Angels" has been called "shocking" because it shows two young women becoming intoxicated. Both these "ultra-modern" plays have attracted large audiences, proving that there is a following for theatrical fare that would have taken people's breath away a few years ago. His other West End shows include the revue "On With the Dance" and the comedy "Hay Fever".

"Hay Fever" has managed to avoid criticism for its content, but its form has been described as "empty and flippant". However, it is generally agreed that Marie Tempest in the role of Judith Bliss is worth the admission price - and she has been much praised for her performance.

Censorship Worries Agencies Bill

1925 : The post-War generation have shocked much of the country with their wild fashions, their "cocktails", young ladies openly smoking in public, and their "slang" language. London's theatres have recently come in for a great deal of criticism for the "new" kinds of entertainments on offer, and it seems that the Censor is about to take some action. The Lord Chamberlain, Lord Cromer, has instructed greater strictness from his reading staff with regard to the content of the plays they pass for production. Already this season four plays have been banned, and the latest victim, the fifth, is Basil Dean's proposed production of "Desire Under the Elms" by American playwright, Eugene O'Neill. The Censor has ordered a complete ban on this play, saying that "as a whole" it is unacceptable. No one can remember a period when the Theatre Censor was so active, and several are questioning the extent of his powers.

1925 : The Theatrical Employment Agencies Registration Bill comes into effect this year, seeking to regulate an aspect of the profession which has been much criticised for sharp practices in recent years.

Managers and performers alike have welcomed this long-overdue Bill.