One March morning, out of the blue, Max Stafford-Clark learned that Arts Council England had drastically cut their grant to his theatre company, Out of Joint, leaving it in danger of imminent collapse. *Journal of the Plague Year* is his account of what happened next, as he sets out to contest the cut, make the case for public funding of the arts, and continue producing the work for which he and his company are renowned.

Max’s journal often takes on an autobiographical flavour, including the unexpectedly moving story of his two fathers, his surreal encounter with the New York theatre world, and the shocking details of what it is to suffer a massively debilitating stroke.

By turns funny, alarming and deeply personal, *Journal of the Plague Year* offers a fascinating exposé of the often Kafkaesque workings of arts subsidy in England, and the financial and artistic manoeuvrings which are a fact of life for every arts organisation today. It is essential reading for anyone with an interest in the state of our arts, from students to theatregoers, and from struggling arts workers right up to the Secretary of State for Culture.

**Launch event** at Royal Court Theatre, 17 January:
Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, 6pm-6.45pm followed by a book signing
Press tickets available on request, contact Robin Booth, robin@nickhernbooks.co.uk

Max Stafford-Clark formed theatre company Joint Stock in 1974, ran the Royal Court Theatre from 1979 to 1993, and then set up the extremely successful touring theatre company, Out of Joint, which he continues to run. Their latest production, Dawn King’s spy thriller *Ciphers*, is on tour around the UK, with *This May Hurt A Bit*, a new play by Stella Feehily about the future of the NHS, premiering in March.

The cover for *Journal of the Plague Year* features an illustration by the celebrated cartoonist Martin Rowson, a contributor of political and editorial cartoons to major UK publications and newspapers for more than 30 years.