

Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon

Walking Tour Guide

"Shakespeare Week 2023" 17th-22nd July 2023



To Shottery & Anne Hathaway's Cottage
To Evesham

To Wilnecote & Mary Arden's House

Maidenhead Rd.

Evesham Pl.

Rother St.

Shakespeare's Birthplace



Chestnut Walk
Broad Walk
Bull Street

School Lane

Ev St

Henley Street

Guid St.

Warwick Road

Shakespeare Arms

Grammar School
Hall's Croft

Nash's House & New Place

Bridge St.

Canal



To Rly. Stn.

Holy Trinity Church

Southern Lane
Memorial Theatre

RIVER AVON

Walking Tour Guide

Waterside



Gover Memorial



Arms of Stratford-upon-Avon

Clopton Bridge

Tiddington Rd.

To Banbury

M.F. Peck.

Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon (map)

Shakespeare in Stratford-Upon-A...
Itinerary for Shakespeare Week 2023
32 views
Last edit was on May 19

Map controls: Add layer, Share, Preview

Untitled layer

- Individual styles
- 1. Shakespeare's Birthplace
- Harvard House (2. Archive tal...
- 3. Shakespeare's Schoolroo...
- 4. Anne Hathaways Cottage
- 5. Shakespeare's Funerary M...
- Mercure Stratford upon Avon...
- As you like it at Royal Shakes...
- Romeo and Juliet at Oxford C...
- English Faculty Library
- Shakespeare's New Place

Map labels and markers include:

- Hathaway Green Stores
- The Fabric Hut
- Cottage Lane Play Park
- Anne Hathaway's Cottage
- Brookfield Nursery
- Burnside Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon
- Stratford-upon-Avon College
- Stratford Girls' Grammar School
- Simply Fresh Shottery
- White Sails
- Stratford Dental Centre
- Richards Guitars
- Morrisons
- Stratford-upon-Avon
- Shakespeare's Birthplace
- Stratford-upon-Avon
- Magic Alley
- Stratford-upon-Avon
- Royal Shakespeare Theatre
- Stratford Butterfly Farm
- Stratford Sports Club
- Holy Trinity Church
- Stratford Bentley Nursing Home
- Avonpark House
- Cox's Yard Stratford-t
- Crowne Plaza Stratford Upon Avon, an IHG
- St Gregory the Great Roman Catholic Church
- Bridgeway Multi Storey Car Park
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- St Gregory the Great Roman Catholic Church

#1 Shakespeare's Life in Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Origins



Shakespeare's birthplace, situated in Henley Street

William Shakespeare, also known as «The Bard of Avon» or «The Bard», worked during his 56 years of life as a poet, playwright, actor and dramatist. He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in April 1564 and died in his beloved hometown in April 1616. He grew up in the house now known as «Shakespeare's Birthplace», located on Henley Street.

Mary and John Shakespeare were his parents. Of the other seven siblings William had, William was the eldest. Because of his father's status, he was able to attend the local grammar school. William lived in his parents' household until he turned 18. His following years, he spent his life with his wife Anne Hathaway with whom he married just when he turned 18 and with whom he had three children, namely Susanna, Judith and Hamnet. The latter died when he was 11 years old. By 1592 he established a successful career in London. Around that time, he wrote numerous plays like *Henry VI Part 1, 2, and 3*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Titus Andronicus*, which were performed in the city. Two poems were printed and published also in London: *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). Later he became a founding member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a company of actors. Within this group he was the dramatist. The name of the company changed into The King's Men under the patronage of King James I.

Shakespeare moved to London to pursue his career as a dramatist, but returned to his hometown later in life, thus reinforcing the idea that he had a strong connection with the place. The town can also be found referenced in the geography of some of his works, such as the Hackets of Wilmcote, a village close to Stratford where his mother came from, in *Taming of the Shrew*. Arden forest, which plays such an important role in *As You Like it*, is also a reference to Shakespeare's real life world and the forest just outside his hometown.

It is not clear when and how exactly Shakespeare moved out of town, as it happened right in between 1585 and 1592, a period of life which is now defined as "The Lost Years", but it appears that starting from the late 1580s he started splitting his time between London and Stratford; while he worked in the former, his wife and children were still living in the latter, which is also where he made most of his financial investments.

In 1597 he bought New House, a very large family home which laid in the center of Stratford. At the time it was the largest house of the town; it possibly had between 20 to 30 rooms, which meant it was probably, at that point in time, the largest investment of 33-year-old Shakespeare's life. Following his death, the house's ownership went from one family member to another, being eventually inherited by his only grandchild, Elizabeth. In the second half of the 17th century the house was fully removed and rebuilt, only to finally end up being demolished in 1759. During the time Shakespeare's family lived there, the ownership of the house probably granted them a great deal of respect and impressive social status, due to its high cost and position in Stratford.

Siyar and Leyla



Shakespeare's New Place

#2 Exploring the Archives: Reading Shakespeare



Shakespeare's Birthplace

Source: "Shakespeare's Birthplace and the Shakespeare Centre", *WhichMuseum*, <https://whichmuseum.co.uk/museum/shakespeare-s-birthplace-and-the-shakespeare-centre-stratford-upon-avon-3895>.

Shakespeare's early readers were far more numerous and various than initially thought. They ranged from high status buyers, such as establishment buyers, who were "instrumental in setting a canon of collectible books" (Mayer 29), through clergymen, to members of the middle class and of course theatre people (27-35). Furthermore, Shakespearean works were an attractive subject for editing purposes in the 18th century (which contributed to the books' circulation) (36-37). Also, early modern women were an active part of Shakespeare's readership, though comparably lower in number (37-38). Even the working-class could afford Shakespearean works; his plays and poems could not only be purchased in expensive editions but were also available in smaller and cheaper formats (38-39).

Such breaking barriers between gender and social status allowed Shakespeare's texts to circulate among the greater public, and they soon reached international owners who distributed these books on the continent and beyond (39). Furthermore, around 1750, an uprise of public libraries, institutions and/or book clubs triggered the circulation of Shakespeare's works even more (40-41). Also, donating, borrowing and lending were common practices contributing to the flux of Shakespearean work; by opening the close circles of owners and buyers, better access for the common folk was guaranteed and Shakespeare's poems and plays could also be found in more modest places (40-43).

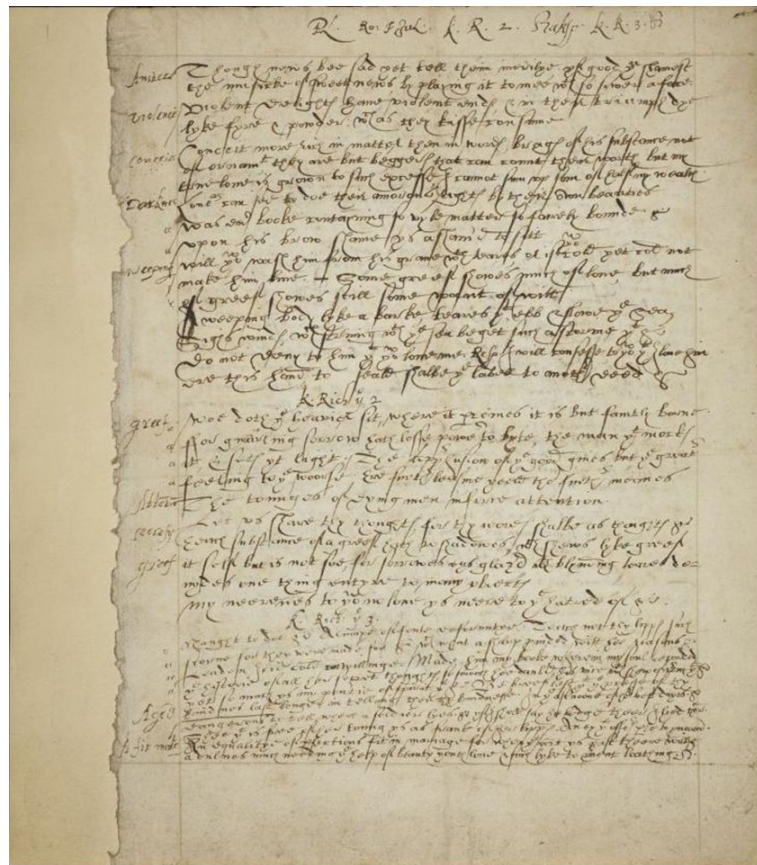
The way Shakespeare's works were processed and interpreted are documented in manuscripts like anthologies or so-called commonplace books (the latter being especially significant for the rise to fame of Shakespearean work): While skimming through and (re)reading Shakespeare's texts, authors extracted passages which they were most intrigued by and endowed them with headings, titles and topic descriptions.

Commonplacing was an annotation method originating in the field of Bible studies and was used as “a method of education that could lead to better speaking and writing skills” (143). Hence, commonplacing is irrevocably connected to literature. Commonplace books therefore provide a “system of knowledge of the world” (143) for “dissecting, classifying and fundamentally understanding reality” (140). Thus, in commonplace books, “[e]xtracting was clearly a hobby for textual collectors, a source of inspiration, and a touchy subject, in the sense that it posed the question of the originality of creative writing with acuteness” (Mayer 142).

Shakespeare’s texts were especially of interest since he was often connected to the myth of being a genius able to speak through the language of Nature itself. Reciprocally, this mythical understanding of the poet and commonplacing his work triggered his fame, and he acquired the status of a national symbol (Mayer 159).

Edward Pudsey (*1573, □ 1612/13) was a 16th/17th century keeper of a Shakespearean commonplace book and compiled the greater part of a quarto commonplace of various extracts (Kathman I; CELM). A fragment of Pudsey’s commonplace book containing extracts from Shakespearean plays is now preserved in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon (“Edward Pudsey’s commonplace book”).

One part of the mentioned Shakespearean extracts found in Pudsey’s commonplace encircles excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet* (see picture on the right; upper half). Pudsey used headings and marginalia to subsume themes he considered to be relevant. Key words like “Austere”, “Violence”, “Conceit”, “Darkness” and “Weeping” are indicated and visible in the left margin of the first sheet of the commonplace book presented here. When he listed several passages belonging to the same heading, Pudsey used inverted commas (see Mayer 154) to indicate that the same title topic should also be applied to the following quotes. As we can see, Pudsey converted the verse form into a more prosaic style. ([You can find a modern transcription of the extracts here](#))



First of four Original Sheets of Edward Pudsey's Commonplace Book, ca. 1600

Source: "Edward Pudsey's commonplace book with extracts from Shakespeare's plays (fragment at Shakespeare Birthplace Trust)". *Shakespeare Documented*, 21 May 2021. <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/edward-pudseys-commonplace-book-extracts-shakespeares-plays-fragment-shakespeare>.

#3 Shakespeare's Grammar School: Shakespeare's Education



Shakespeare's school, Source:

<https://www.shakespeares-england.co.uk/listing/shakespeares-schoolroom-%26-guildhall/146240101/>

Shakespeare's education would have started at home ("[Shakespeare's School](#)" para. 1). Although only a small percentage of women at the time were literate (11%), Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, was able to read and write ([Charlton and Spufford](#) 29; "[Shakespeare's School](#)" para. 1). Protestant parents were eager to instruct their offspring in "the elements of their religion", including teaching them to read the Bible ([Charlton and Spufford](#) 16). Thus, apart from telling young William mythical stories and fairy tales, it was likely she taught him to read the Bible ("[Shakespeare's School](#)" para. 1). In the 15th and 17th centuries, it was customary to teach reading and writing as separate skills ([Charlton and Spufford](#) 17). Indeed, many contemporaries could only read but never acquired the ability to write ([Charlton and Spufford](#) 29; 16 - 17). Young William would have learned writing at a later stage, possibly when he visited a Petty School ("[Shakespeare's School](#)" para. 1). Petty Schools taught children up to the age of seven and solely focused on teaching reading and writing with the alphabet and numerals ("[Shakespeare's School](#)" para. 1; [Charlton and Spufford](#) 23). The religious texts would have been the main subject. Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer had to be learned by heart ([Charlton and Spufford](#) 16). They were often written on "pieces of parchment and made into hornbooks" to make memorising the verses easier ("[Shakespeare's School](#)" para. 1; [Charlton and Spufford](#) 16). The hornbooks consisted of a sheet of paper with the alphabet and religious text written on it mounted on a wooden tablet with a handle ([Hahn](#) para. 1).

By the age of seven, Shakespeare would have started attending grammar school at the King's New School like the other boys who lived in the borough ("[Shakespeare's School](#)" para. 2). There, he would have learned written and spoken Latin to study classical authors such as Terence, Virgil, and Horace. ([Charlton and Spufford](#) 44; "[Shakespeare's School](#)" para. 2). Before starting classical literature and grammar, he would have learnt English language skills to aid the study of Latin ([Charlton and Spufford](#) 43). This allowed young Shakespeare to come in contact with the mechanics of poetry and prose while also approaching some instances of classical drama ("[Shakespeare's Schooldays](#)" para. 2). Such deep grounding in classical studies allowed him to adapt and transform these sources into his own narrative, giving birth to the works that we know nowadays. An example of this is *Romeo and Juliet*, where the playwright draws inspiration from the ancient Roman poet Ovid's story of Pyramus and Thisbe, a tale of forbidden love that shares similarities with the play's central plot. In Ovid's tale, Pyramus and Thisbe are young lovers who live in neighbouring houses but are forbidden to be together due to their parents' rivalry. Similarly, in *Romeo and Juliet*, the titular characters come from feuding families, the Montagues, and the Capulets, which makes their love forbidden. In addition, Shakespeare's characters bear resemblances to Pyramus and Thisbe. Romeo and Pyramus both exhibit passionate, impulsive behaviour, while Juliet and Thisbe display devotion and determination in their love.

Luca and Dominique



Shakespeare's Schoolroom

Source: <https://www.getyourguide.com/shakespeare-s-schoolroom-guildhall-1145746/museums-exhibitions-tc132/>

#4 Anne Hathaway's place: Shakespeare, love and marriage



Anne Hathaway's Cottage

Source: www.shakespeare.org.uk/visit/anne-hathaways-cottage

Although the details surrounding William Shakespeare's marriage and love life are unclear, researchers have been able to paint a plausible picture of his relationship with Anne Hathaway.

Anne Hathaway was the daughter of a yeoman farmer in Shottery; her family was the tenant of a one-storey farmhouse, only one and a half miles away from Shakespeare's childhood home. After the death of Anne's father, her brother purchased the cottage, which remained in the family for 13 generations and was then acquired and turned into a museum by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in 1892 ("[Anne Hathaway](#)").

Although Anne's exact date of birth is not known, it is believed that she was 26 years old and pregnant when she married William Shakespeare, who, eight years younger, was only 18 ("[Shakespeare's Wedding and Marriage](#)"). Contrary to what *Romeo and Juliet* might lead one to believe, Anne was at the typical marriage age for her time with 26 years, whereas Shakespeare was quite young ("[Did Shakespeare Love His Wife?](#)").

In order to avoid any scandal surrounding Anne's premarital pregnancy, William sped up proceedings and obtained a license from the Bishop's Court in Worcester: that way, they were able to marry only three months after the discovery of Anne's pregnancy. The marriage took place in November 1582, in an unknown parish within the diocese of Worcester ("[Shakespeare's Wedding and Marriage](#)").

Six months after the wedding, Susanna—Anne and William's first daughter—was born; a few years later, the couple had two twins: Judith and Hamnet. Sadly, Hamnet passed away at the age of 11, the cause of which is unknown ("[Shakespeare's Wedding and Marriage](#)").

During Hamnet's birth, Shakespeare had supposedly already left Stratford to spend the next twenty-five years of his working life elsewhere; he however financially sustained his family and would occasionally visit home—around once a year. There is no record of Anne ever visiting him in London. Moreover, if one were to consider his sonnets autobiographical, Shakespeare had probably love affairs while he was away ([Parker 44](#)).

There is a debate about Shakespeare's controversial will, signed on 25 March 1616, in which he left his "second-best bed" to Anne. Some read this as a sort of mock towards Anne; others argue that the "second-best bed" would have been the couple's marriage bed, thus not an unusual bequest. Even though medieval English common law stipulated that a widow would receive one-third of her late husband's estate, most wives were nonetheless mentioned in the will in terms of trust and affection. In general, however, the "best" of any type of item was usually considered an heirloom to be passed to the major heir, in this case Shakespeare's daughter Susanna ("[Shakespeare's Wedding and Marriage](#)").

Although there have been many attempts to romanticize and prettify the available facts, academics agree that Shakespeare had hurried a marriage to a woman who was older than himself and pregnant with his child, and that even though the couple reunited and perhaps reconciled later in life, theirs was not a companionate marriage ([Parker 44](#)).

Some of Shakespeare's thoughts about marriage and love can be identified in some of his plays, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, in which he, amongst other, persistently opposes premarital sex ([Parker 44](#)). In *As You Like It*, several characters exemplify the negative attitude towards love of that time. In fact, out of the four marriages at the end of the play, only one is out of love, while the other three are otherwise motivated, such as by security, companionship, and sexual desire. Shakespeare therefore detaches pure love from marriage itself, which instead may be entered into for practical reasons. ("[Love in William Shakespeare's As You Like It](#)")

Tamasha and Linda



Portrait painting of Anne Hathaway by Roger Brien Dunn

Source: Dunn, Roger Brien. "Anne Hathaway." 2010.

collections.shakespeare.org.uk/search/museum/strst-sbt-2010-1/page/94.

#5 Holy Trinity Church: Shakespeare and Death



Shakespeare's grave effigy in the Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-Upon-Avon

Source: [The Guardian](#), "Self-satisfied pork butcher"

Shakespeare was buried on the 25th of April 1616, two days after his death on the 23rd, in the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-Upon-Avon. The cause of his death is unknown (SBT, "[How did Shakespeare Die?](#)"). A famous myth tells that Shakespeare died after an evening of drinking with the writers Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton. However, scholars believe that Shakespeare most likely died of an infection. Although it was possible for people to live up to seventy or eighty years old, Shakespeare's death at the age of 52 was not uncommon as many people died of disease much younger than him (SBT, "[How did Shakespeare Die?](#)"). Scholars speculate that Shakespeare died a "good death". A "good death" was very important during the early modern period when the "*memento mori* tradition" was omnipresent. *Memento mori* was not regarded as negative or fearful in the Protestant faith, but rather as looking forward to life after death. A "good death" included "taking care of worldly affairs and [...] spiritual affairs" (SBT, "[How did Shakespeare Die?](#)"). It seems that Shakespeare was prepared in both aspects. Just one month before his death, on the 25th March, he had revised his will. Also spiritually Shakespeare was presumably ready for death since he had not written any plays in his last years and led a quiet life. It is assumed that he died in his bed at New Place. Shakespeare's funeral was probably fairly standard for an adequately wealthy and respected member of Stratford-Upon-Avon (SBT, "[How did Shakespeare Die?](#)"). His tomb in the Trinity Church, described as the "original Shrine" pertaining to Shakespeare (Engler 357) is unnamed and has been attributed to him since 1656 (SBT, "[How did Shakespeare Die?](#)").

It also contains the remains of his wife Anne and his oldest daughter Susanna which also denotes the prominent status he had within the town. The monument above his gravestone is especially interesting since it is likely the most faithful visual representation that remains of him. It was erected relatively close to his death and probably commissioned by his family (SBT, "[How did Shakespeare Die?](#)"). In the effigy, which seeks to portray the soul of the departed, he takes on the pose of a speaker rather than a melancholy one. It has undergone multiple changes since it was first erected and it is possible that objects like the Quill he is holding were later additions. (SBT, "[How did Shakespeare Die?](#)"). It has therefore been argued that his poetic achievements might not have been the primary focus of his early commemoration but rather added as his authorship became the more prominent aspect of his status (Engler, 357-358). A later addition to the countless commemorative tributes to the "national bard" is his monument in London's Westminster Abbey. The life-size marble statue is located in the "Poet's Corner" of the church, where over 100 writers are immortalised (Westminster Abbey, "[William Shakespeare](#)"). It shows him leaning against a pedestal with the heads of Queen Elizabeth I, Henry V and Richard III carved in it. A dagger, a dramatic mask and his melancholy pose primarily portray him as a writer of tragedies. After his death, there were plans to relocate Shakespeare's remains to Westminster Abbey but part of the inscription on his tombstone in the Holy Trinity Church "curst be he, that moves my bones" is said to have prevented this (Westminster Abbey, "[William Shakespeare](#)").

In the *memento mori* tradition of his time, death also preoccupies the minds of Shakespeare's Characters. In *As You Like It*, Jaques contemplates the nature of life and death in a philosophical manner. However, his musings on death are not filled with despair. In his famous "All the world's a stage" speech, he views death as a natural part of the human journey (Garber 23).

Romeo and Juliet on the other hand refer to dying for love multiple times and their suicides in the end are portrayed as "the ultimate act of freedom" (Arden Shakespeare, 18). So while it is equally present in comedies like *As You Like It*, where it is often approached with humour or philosophical acceptance, while in tragedies like *Romeo and Juliet*, it carries a greater weight and emotional intensity.

Ladina and Jenni



Shakespeare's Memorial in the Westminster Abbey, London
Source: [Westminster Abbey, "William Shakespeare"](#)