

Chronology of Shakespeare-related dates c.1530 - 1709

BEFORE:

- c1530 John Shakespeare born in the village of Snitterfield, near Stratford-upon-Avon
- c1555 Anne Hathaway, William's future wife, is born
- c1557 John Shakespeare marries Mary Arden, a yeoman farmer's daughter from Wilmcote, another nearby village
- 1558 John and Mary's first child Joan is born
- c1560 Joan Shakespeare dies in infancy
- 1562 John and Mary's second child Margaret is born
- 1563 Margaret Shakespeare dies in infancy

EARLY YEARS:

- Apr 1564 William Shakespeare is born in Stratford-upon-Avon (date uncertain, traditionally celebrated on 23rd, St George's Day); baptised on 26 April in Holy Trinity Church. In July, Stratford Parish Register records arrival of plague, but Shakespeare family escape
- 1566 William's brother Gilbert is born
- 1569 William's sister Joan is born
- 1571 Shakespeare begins his education at the King's Free Grammar School (free place due to his father's position as an alderman of Stratford-upon-Avon)
- 1571 William's sister Anne is born
- 1574 William's brother Richard is born

- c1575 John Shakespeare begins to suffer financial and personal hardship, losing or remortgaging property. William's schooling perhaps curtailed.
- 1579 William's sister Anne dies
- 1580 William's youngest brother Edmund is born
- 1582 (Nov) Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway (26 years old) at Temple Grafton
- 1583 (26 May) William and Anne's first child Susanna is born (Anne 3-4 months pregnant at time of their marriage)
- 1585 Twins Hamnet and Judith are born (probably named after Shakespeare's friends Hamnet and Judith Sadler, who would also have been godparents)
- 1588 Shakespeare in London on legal business for his family
- 1592 John Shakespeare is listed as a 'recusant', having failed to attend church (out of fear of prosecution for debt)

LONDON:

Early

- 1590s Shakespeare acting, rewriting existing plays, writing his own early plays:

COMEDIES: The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew, The Two Gentlemen of Verona

HISTORIES: The Three Parts of Henry VI, Richard III

TRAGEDY: Titus Andronicus

Possibly contributes to collaborative plays: *Arden of Faversham*, *Lochrine*, *Edward III*

- 1592 Earliest firm record of Shakespeare's residency in London: "Shake-scene" reference in Robert Greene, *Groat's-worth of Wit*

- 1592-4 London theatres closed for nearly 2 years, due to plague. During this time, Shakespeare writes and publishes his narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, both dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, in whose household he may have served. Probably also begins writing sonnets.
- 1594 Acting company the Chamberlain's Men formed to perform mainly at The Theatre in Shoreditch (built 1576); Shakespeare and his fellow-actors are shareholders. *The Comedy Of Errors* performed to an audience of lawyers at Gray's Inn
- 1595-8 In-house playwright for Chamberlain's Men. Writes:
- COMEDIES: *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*
- HISTORIES: *King John*, *Richard II*, *The Two Parts of Henry IV*
- TRAGEDY: *Romeo and Juliet*
- Possibly contributes additions to *The Spanish Tragedy*
- 1596 Living in Southwark, a disreputable area of brothels, ale houses, bear baiting houses and theatres. Hamnet, his only son, dies, aged 11. Shakespeare successfully applies for a coat-of-arms for his family, thus gaining the status of 'gentleman'
- 1597 Purchases New Place on Church Street, second largest house in Stratford-upon-Avon. *Love's Labour's Lost* performed at court for Queen Elizabeth this Christmas
- 1598 Shakespeare's name begins to appear on the title pages of quartos of his plays
- 1599 Globe Theatre built as new home for Chamberlain's Men. New plays performed there:
- COMEDY *As You Like It*

HISTORY Henry V

TRAGEDY Julius Caesar

- c1600 Hamlet
- 1601 Revival of *Richard II* at Globe, commissioned by supporters of the Earl of Essex on eve of his rebellion; acting company questioned in Star Chamber, but acquitted. John Shakespeare dies.
- 1601-5 COMEDIES: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well that Ends Well*
- TRAGEDIES: *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*, *Timon of Athens*
- Probable date of contribution to riot scene in *Sir Thomas More*. Possible contribution to *Four Plays in One: A Yorkshire Tragedy*
- 1603 Following the accession to the throne of James I, the company's new patron, the Chamberlain's Men renamed the King's Men
- c1606 TRAGEDIES: *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*. *Lear* performed before the King at Whitehall, Christmas 1606
- 1607 William's brother Edmund dies, aged 27. William's daughter Susanna marries John Hall, a Stratford doctor

STRATFORD:

- 1608 Circumstantial evidence suggests that from this time onward Shakespeare spent much more time in Stratford than London. His mother Mary Shakespeare dies. The King's Men take lease on indoor Blackfriars theatre in the legal district, offering winter playing to a smaller but more affluent audience.
- 1608-11 TRAGEDIES: *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*

COMEDIES: *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest* (last solo-authored play). These late plays sometimes known as 'romances'.

POETRY: The *Sonnets* are published in 1609 with *A Lover's Complaint*.

- 1612 Several plays performed for wedding celebrations of Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine. William's brother Gilbert dies aged 46
- 1612-13 Contributes to collaborations with John Fletcher: *Henry VIII*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Cardenio* (lost, but perhaps indirectly preserved in Lewis Theobald's *Double Falsehood*, 1727)
- 1613 Globe Theatre burns down after stage cannon is misfired into thatched roof during performance of *Henry VIII* (then titled *All Is True*). Is rapidly rebuilt. William's brother Richard dies, aged 39.
- 1614 Involved in dispute over enclosure of land on Welcombe Hills on edge of Stratford.
- 1616 William's daughter Judith marries Thomas Quiney, a Stratford vintner. William draws up, then revises his will. Dies (23 April) at home at New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, perhaps after drinking with fellow-writers Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton. Buried in Holy Trinity Church.

AFTER:

- 1623 The First Folio of Shakespeare's work is published by John Heminges (1566-1630) and Henry Condell (1576-1627), sole surviving members of the original Chamberlain's Men/King's Men players. Anne Hathaway dies, aged c. 67.
- 1642 The King's Men are disbanded following Parliament's order to close all theatres, enacted on the eve of the English Civil War

- 1646 William's sister Joan dies, aged 77
- 1649 William's eldest daughter Susanna dies, aged 66
- 1662 William's youngest daughter Judith dies, aged 77
- 1709 Nicholas Rowe publishes *Works*, with earliest biography of Shakespeare, including story William of his being caught poaching game on Charlcote estate of Sir Thomas Lucy, and needing to leave Stratford to avoid prosecution.