

Shakespeare Study Day

February 4th 2012, Avenue Campus, 10am – 4pm

10.00 – 10.15 Coffee and welcome

10.15 – 11.05 Professor John McGavin: 'Early Modern London Theatres'

How do we know what we know about the London Theatres in Shakespeare's time? What did Richard Burbage call Margaret Brayne, with whom he was in legal dispute? What happened after the scaffolding collapsed in Paris Garden during a bear baiting, killing seven spectators? Answers to these questions can be found in a new online, freely accessible resource 'Early Modern London Theatres'. John McGavin will introduce the website, and its educational resources, which are useful well beyond the university.

11.05 – 11.20 Coffee

11.20 – 12.10 Dr Louise Rayment: 'Shakespeare in Context'

Audiences who watched Shakespeare's plays were simultaneously consuming poems, ballads, folk tales and pamphlets which addressed many of the same issues. In her talk Louise Rayment will explore how these extra theatrical manifestations are important for establishing a cultural context for the plays.

12.10 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 13.50 Dr Peter Happé: "'All mine own folly": The Function of Folly in "The Winter's Tale"'

I'm going to talk about 'The Winter's Tale' because it's relatively late in Shakespeare's working life in the theatre. By then he had met many fools and such was his interest in them that he had adapted fool traditions and created many fools of his own. But though this is a late play it is revolutionary in lots of ways and I would like to consider what Shakespeare does and how folly helps to weld the play together. If you would like to do any preparation see if you can predict whom I shall be talking about.

13.50 – 14.40 Professor Ros King, 'Shakespeare, Language and Playfulness'

Modern readers are often frightened by the perceived difficulties in Shakespeare. This session will be about finding enjoyment, and a potential for both discovery and interpretation in the sounds and movement of his language.

14.40 – 15.00 Coffee

15.00 – 15.50 Stephen Morton, 'Postcolonial Transformations of Shakespeare'

How have Prospero and Caliban, Othello, and Shylock been appropriated by contemporary writers such as Marina Warner or Salman Rushdie? What do these transformations of Shakespeare's literary archetypes tell us about the politics of Shakespearean drama, or about the ways in which these archetypes have shaped British cultural identity during the age of the British Empire and its aftermath? This talk will address the ways in which plays such as *The Tempest*, *Othello*, and *The Merchant of Venice* have provided contemporary writers with a rich resource through which to explore questions about the relationship between empire and British cultural identity.