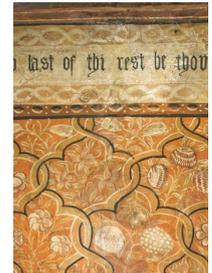


Shakespeare's Birthday

William Shakespeare (1564—1616) was one of the greatest playwrights, actors and poets.

He wrote many of the most recognisable and renowned dramatic pieces ever to be performed. His legacy has lasted centuries and still proves a major influence for the linguistic usage of the modern-day.

The **Painted Room** is all that remains of the Crown Tavern which was owned by John Davenant who was a friend of Shakespeare. Shakespeare is said to have stayed there on several occasions and was the godfather to Davenant's son William.



In the 1930s, OPT began a Shakespeare Birthday pageant so that on **23 April** each year, University and Town dignitaries would meet at the Lord Mayor's Parlour at the Town Hall and parade to the Painted Room where they would raise a toast to the 'immortal bard' in, malmsey and sack a sweet wine. This 'tradition' ceased in the 1960s and was revived in 2013 by OPT.

Shakespeare wrote lots of poems including some famous sonnets. A **sonnet** is a poem of fourteen lines with ten syllables in each line. One of his most well known is Sonnet 18:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Have a go at writing your own sonnet:

1. Choose a topic to write about— the weather, holidays, trees, family.
2. Brainstorm some ideas.
3. Select emotive language to create a picture using your words.

Make sure:

- Your poem has 14 lines.
- Each line has 10 syllables.

Extra challenge: Look at which lines rhyme and try to incorporate this into your sonnet.

Share your sonnet via Twitter

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