

## THE SHAKESPEARE CLUB OF STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

**The 881<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Shakespeare Club took place at Mason Croft on Tuesday 12 November 2013.** The Club celebrated its 2013/14 Presidential evening, chaired by Professor Stanley Wells, welcoming Professor Michael Dobson, Director of the Shakespeare Institute, who spoke about Shakespeare and Asia, 1692 and 2013.

Professor Dobson, who had recently returned from Beijing, explained that his talk was in two discrete parts: the first focussing on 1692 when Purcell's *Fairy Queen* was first performed and marked the first major overlap of Shakespeare and Asia; the second on 2013 providing an update on Shakespeare Studies in Asia, specifically the Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Network (ASIA).

Professor Dobson showed how *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was particularly popular in the East and how Eastern elements were imported into English plays from as early as 1604. Purcell's adaptation of *Dream* as *The Fairy Queen* in 1692 left out Pyramus and Thisbe but included a Chinese garden and a singing Chinese woman, responding to the growing fashion for Chinoiserie.

Moving to 2013 Professor Dobson recounted his recent meeting with Korean, Chinese and Malaysian members of the Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Network which was making available on the Internet Asian performances of Shakespeare's plays with surtitles in three different languages. Shakespeare was originally adopted in the East as part of Western modernisation but today Shakespeare is often adapted into traditional dramatic forms. He gave as an example a project to create a cartoon version of *As You Like It* in the tradition of Indonesian shadow puppets supported by the Singapore government. It clearly demonstrated how the balance of influence has changed over 300 years.

Professor Dobson took questions from the audience and the meeting finished at 9pm.