

The 962nd meeting of the Shakespeare Club
The Shakespeare Club's 200th Anniversary: 1824-2024
The Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon
Saturday 13 April 2024
Chairman: Mr Roger Pringle

PROGRAMME

2.15 Welcome to the guests and introduction of the Chairman: Susan Brock
(Committee Chair)

Introduction

2.20 By Roger Pringle (Chairman and Vice-President)

2.30 *Run-up to 1824: Stratford-upon-Avon late 18th-century Style*
By Dr Robert Bearman

3.00 *"Long life to the Club call'd Shakspearean"*
By Sylvia Morris

3.30 Tea is Served

4.20 Cutting of the Birthday cake (Professor Emma Smith, President)

4.30 Toasts

1. Toast to the Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare (Roger Pringle)

2. Toast to the Club's Presidents Past and Present (Susan Brock)

3. Toast to the Shakespeare Club of Stratford-upon-Avon on its 200th
anniversary
(The Worshipful the Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon, Councillor Kate Rolfe)

4. Toast: Future Success to the Club (Professor Emma Smith)

4.50pm Singing of "Rule Great Shakespeare" by the assembled company.

5pm THE END

Rule Great Shakespeare

Adapted from "Rule Britannia", music by Thomas Arne with
original words by James Thomson, 1740.

When Britons first, at Heavens command,
The sails of science had unfurl'd,
The sails (the sails) of science had unfurl'd,
Shakespeare was formed, was formed by Nature's hand
To be the wonder of the world!

Rule great Shakespeare, great Shakespeare rules the stage
Unrivalled to the latest age. (repeated)

Thy works in darkness ne'er shall fall,
Wide o'er the Drama thou shalt reign;
Wide o'er (wide o'er) the Drama thou shalt reign;
Take thee great Shakespeare, great man for all in all,
We ne'er shall see thy like again.

Rule great Shakespeare, great Shakespeare rules the stage
Unrivalled to the latest age. (repeated)

It is not known who wrote the adaptation but it may date back as far as 1788. A final patriotic verse was added by Sam Gwinnett, the Secretary of the Shakspearean Club, for the dinner on 23 April 1827. It was adopted as the Club's song and was sung at every dinner for several decades.

Shakspeare's Birth

Sung at the Feast of the Poet's Commemoration, in the Shakspear Hall on April 23^d 1827
by Charles Frederick Green

In peace we celebrate
The triumph of old earth,
And hail the day, with hearts elate,
That gave our Shakspeare birth.
His name all feelings blends
In Jubilee of heart;
And even we who met as friends
Still better friends will part.

Our cause knows no confines
Of nation, sect, or clan;
But in its wide embrace combines
The family of Man!
The selfish passions blind
Be from our bosoms hurl'd
We toast the friend of human-kind
The poet of the world!