

# FAMOUS FORGERIES

Alexander Howland Smith, also known as 'Antique' Smith (right), made a successful living out of forging documents by many famous Scots. His forgeries have become highly collectable in their own right today. Here, we've listed some of the most famous faces to have manuscripts forged by 'Antique' Smith...



MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS  
1542-1587



JAMES VI  
1566-1625



OLIVER CROMWELL  
1599-1658



DANIEL DEFOE  
1669-1731



DAVID HUME  
1711-1776



BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE  
1720-1788



ROBERT BURNS  
1759-1796



WALTER SCOTT  
1771-1832



LORD BYRON  
1788-1824



PERCY SHELLEY  
1792-1822



For centuries, Shakespeare has been the ultimate theatrical calling card. *Andrew Martin* has assembled a cast of just a happy few of those who have brought the brilliance and magic of the Bard's work to life

# ROLES OF HONOUR

**M**y first brush with Shakespeare came in the summer of 1964, when, like the rest of the world, I was celebrating the 400th anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare. Tricked up with a turkey feather quill, a roll of wallpaper inscribed 'To be or not to be', a pie frill round my neck, and a pair of my cousin Robert's striped swimming shorts stuffed with crumpled newspaper, I took home 'Best Dressed' at the annual fancy dress competition in Moffat's Station Park.

I did not know then of course that half a century later I would be involved in the 400th anniversary of the death of the Bard of Avon working deep in the collections of the National Library of Scotland on an exhibition called *Playing Shakespeare: 400 years of great acting*.

As all of us who studied Shakespeare at school know, reading a play in class is not the same as seeing a play on stage, and there's no doubt that however brilliant and magical

are Shakespeare's words, it is the actors who have brought that brilliance and magic to life for generations of play-goers. My challenge was to do justice to the 'mere' players who have acted Shakespeare over the last four centuries.

Working on any exhibition large or small at the Library is always a voyage of discovery – no wonder when there are so many items to explore in so many formats over so many years – and there's often the challenge of a limited amount of display space to fill.

The cast list I created inevitably meant that the display did not have a role for every worthy name. To be in or not to be in, that was the question. I have ended up with around 30 actors – from Shakespeare himself to Benedict Cumberbatch – a brief pageant of some of the most famous names and faces.

Richard Burbage and Will Kemp are some of the earliest names, but what about the boy actors who famously were the first Juliets and Violas, and the Restoration actresses who took over their roles? I was delighted to find we

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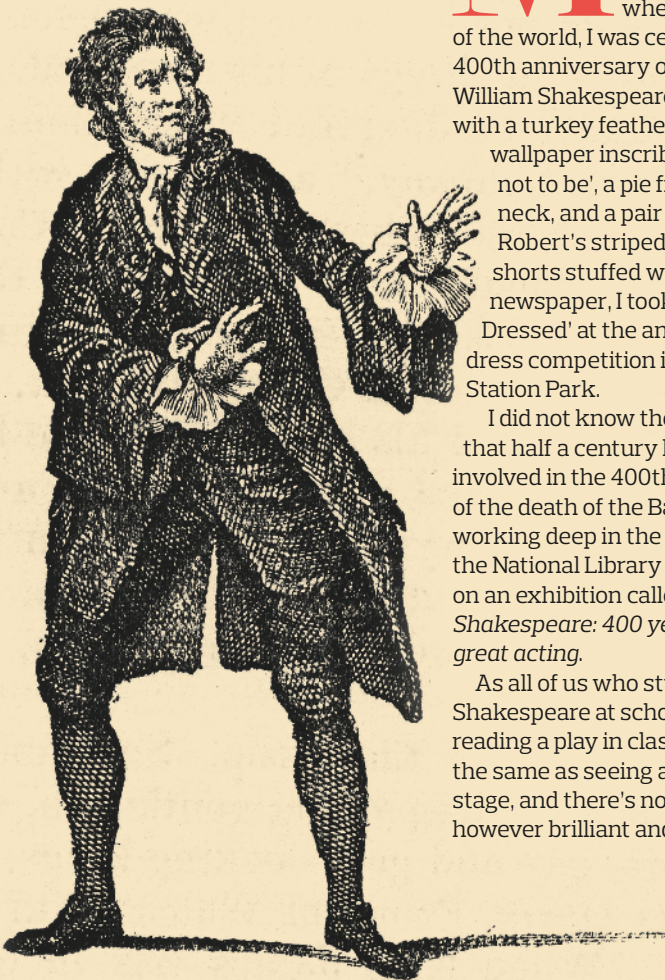
## GARRICK FEVER

(pictured left) Mr David Garrick first played the character Hamlet in 1742. He was 26 at the time and created such excitement that citizens were affected by 'Garrick Fever'

2

## YEARS OF GREAT ACTING

(pictured right) is a montage of Shakespearean actors at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford, 1949 – 1956



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**TREASURES DISPLAY**

(pictured left) Curator Andrew Martin with a 1906 programme, for Ellen Terry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, who features in the treasures display – Playing Shakespeare: 400 years of great acting

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**AS YOU LIKE IT**

(pictured below) Lillie Langtry in the 1880s playing Rosalind from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

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**CROWD PLEASER**

(pictured right) Edmund Tearle brought his Richard III to Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum late in the 19th century, but note that the star's name has been applied over a poster printed in Cleveland, Ohio, and featuring "Thos. W. Keene" – the noted American actor

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had the very first known depiction of any Shakespearean character, in a book published in 1662 – Falstaff, for the record.

I leafed through early editions checking for cast lists, enjoyed the first illustrated Shakespeare from 1709, recreating the stage productions of the time in what was then 'modern' dress, and read about the giant figures of the mid and later 18th century – David Garrick and Sarah Siddons. Also starring in the early 19th century were the Kembles and the Keans, and that infant phenomenon, Clara Fisher, who toured her Richard III to Edinburgh's Theatre Royal in 1819 at the age of eight, throwing in on another night – as our playbills show – her Shylock.

It was a delight, for example, to re-discover a sense of the theatrical magic of the great duo of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry who dominated theatre in the latter half of the 19th century. Artists, photographers, and writers, never mind audiences, were clearly in love with the luminous Miss Terry and fascinated by the versatile Irving.

There's no shortage of material too for the glittering names of the last century – Evans, Gielgud, Ashcroft, Redgrave, and Olivier



among them. The black and white photographic images of their classic productions from the Old Vic, London's West End, and Stratford-upon-Avon, as featured in programmes and magazines, continue to enchant and intrigue. Laurence Olivier appears in more than one role, as befits his stature, and Vivien Leigh has a special spotlight trained on her Cleopatra.

The exhibition is not all about the glories of the past. Today's actors know only too well that Shakespeare is the ultimate theatrical calling card. Dr Who and

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# SHAKESPEARE AND THE SCOTS



**SEAN CONNERY,  
MACBETH, 1961**

A full two years before his career-defining portrayal of James Bond began in *Dr No*, Connery appeared as Macbeth in this made-for-TV adaptation by the Canadian broadcaster CBC. With Bond's success, there was no more Shakespeare for the Scottish star – but his son Jason did carry on the family tradition, playing Macbeth in a 1997 movie.



**DAVID HAYMAN,  
HAMLET, 1970**

A favourite of Scotland's stage and screen, Hayman helped put a new era of bold Citizens Theatre productions on the map with a near-naked portrayal of the Danish prince. Hayman's Hamlet was central to an all-male, homoerotic and incestuous production, directed by Giles Havergal. Many Scottish school children missed out on the performance because it was judged too controversial.



**JAMES McAVOY,  
MACBETH, 2005/2013**

McAvoy seems to have a thing for Macbeth, with the Glaswegian star tackling the role twice within a few years. The first saw him play Joe Macbeth, an aggrieved chef who feels he's not getting adequate credit for his work, in the 'ShakespeaRe-told' television series. Then he took to the stage with a post-apocalyptic version of the Scottish play that won critics' plaudits.



**DAVID TENNANT,  
HAMLET, 2008**

In this Royal Shakespeare Company production, David Tennant switched from his role as TV's Doctor Who to play a highly rated Hamlet. The Dane became a nervous T-shirt and parka-wearing prince, battling Patrick Stewart's Claudius. The production went on to be filmed and broadcast on the BBC.



**ALAN CUMMING,  
MACBETH, 2012**

In this National Theatre of Scotland production, Alan Cumming showcased his versatility by playing every character in a one-man production, set in a psychiatric unit. Cumming – who made his stage debut as Malcolm in a 1985 production of Macbeth – took the performance to Broadway, where it received rave reviews.



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## TREASURES DISPLAY



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Sherlock are fine attention-grabbers, and success in those roles can ensure a live engagement – and perhaps a new audience – as Hamlet. David Tennant and Benedict Cumberbatch are two of the featured contemporary actors.

There is ample evidence of Shakespeare’s players throughout our collections – memoirs, biographies, playbills and posters, programmes and souvenirs, film, and illustrated magazines, filled with actors in character. Our collections, old and modern, have been built up by individual enthusiastic collectors, our busy Advocate ancestors, and by the very nature of the Library itself, through our privilege of being able to claim all published works in the United Kingdom. Shakespeare is everywhere – in print and picture, manuscript and film, and increasingly in digital form.

There are inevitably many Hamlets on show in the exhibition, more than one Rosalind, many kings and queens, much theatrical posing, velvet, and greasepaint, conjuring up centuries of a proud and inspiring tradition.

William Shakespeare wrote the roles, the players brought them to life – such stuff as dreams are made on!

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### MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

(pictured above)  
A programme showing images of Maggie Smith and Robert Stephens playing Beatrice and Benedick from Much Ado About Nothing in 1965

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### THEATRE WORLD

(pictured below)  
Richard Burton as Hamlet in the Old Vic production which visited the Edinburgh Festival in 1953

Q *Playing Shakespeare: 400 years of great acting is at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh until 12 June*

