



# Newsletter

incorporating

## Occasional Papers and Reviews

SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

<http://www.ru.ac.za/shakespeare>

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*Celebrating the bard's 450<sup>th</sup> birthday,  
along with the Institute for the Study of English in Africa's  
50<sup>th</sup> birthday*

(See 'Grahamstown Branch Report' pages 7–9)

# Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa

(A project of The Grahamstown Foundation)

Head Office: c/o Institute for the Study of English in Africa (ISEA)  
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<http://www.ru.ac.za/shakespeare>

## Administration and Publications



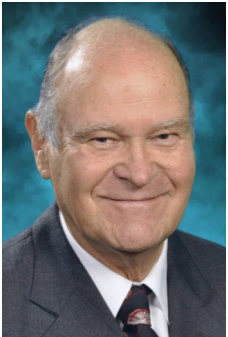
**Laurence Wright**

**Emeritus Professor of Rhodes University, Laurence Wright.** (Formerly HA Molteno Professor of English and Director of the Institute for the Study of English in Africa, Professor Wright is a Founder Member of SSoSA and Honorary Life President of the Society, successor to the late Professor Guy Butler.)



**Chris Thurman**

**Dr Chris Thurman**, editor of *Shakespeare in Southern Africa*. He holds degrees from Rhodes, London and Cape Town, and lectures at the University of the Witwatersrand. His doctorate is on Guy Butler.



**Warren Snowball**

**Mr Warren Snowball**, President of SSoSA from 2010. Warren started out as a BSc graduate in Mechanical Engineering, University of Cape Town. After obtaining Classical degrees from Rhodes University and University College, London, he lectured at Rhodes in Latin, Greek and Classical Civilisation from 1974, rising to the position of Head of Classical Studies, from which he has now retired.



**Hildé Slinger**

**Ms Hildé Slinger**, former President of SSoSA (2000-2007), served as Convenor of the 6th and 7th Triennial Congresses 2003 and 2007. An alternative to emigrating to the UK, Hildé now lives in Gauteng. She has returned as Editor of the SSoSA *Newsletter incorporating OPaR*, with effect from September 2011.



**Carol Leff**

**Carol Leff** joined SSoSA at the beginning of 2014 as part-time Administrative Secretary, subsequent to Eddie Baart's retirement in 2013.



**Bev Cummings-Penlington**

**Ms Bev Cummings-Penlington**, Editorial Assistant since September 2002, has the responsibility of formatting SSoSA publications, the journal, *Shakespeare in Southern Africa (SiSA)*, and the *Newsletter incorporating OPaR (NiOPaR)*.

## Members of the General Executive Council:

<b>Mr Warren Snowball</b>	President
<b>Dr Chris Thurman</b>	Vice-President & Editor, <i>Shakespeare in Southern Africa (SiSA)</i>
<b>Prof. Laurence Wright</b>	Chairman & SSoSA Publications Director
<b>Ms Hildé Slinger</b>	Editor, <i>Newsletter incorporating OPaR (NiOPaR)</i>
<b>Ms Louisa Clayton</b>	Executive Director (Treasurer), Grahamstown Foundation
<b>Carol Leff</b>	Secretary

## Branch Delegates

<b>Mr Geoffrey Haresnape</b>	Cape Town
<b>Ms Nancy Church</b>	Durban
<b>Mrs Lynette Paterson</b>	Grahamstown
<b>Ms Jo Warner</b>	Johannesburg
<b>Mr Rocky Mann</b>	Port Elizabeth

## Reports

### Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa Newsletter incorporating Occasional Papers and Reviews

Once again, all contributors to the SSoSA Newsletter are working hard to have the 2014 edition ready for distribution.

Apart from Branch Reports, an innovation will be an historical account compiled by Branch Chairpersons. We appreciate that full details from time immemorial could present a challenge to newer members and we have appealed for the support of Committees to engage in a little research in anticipation of producing an interesting product! Telephonic contact and/or e-mail correspondence are in process as we attempt to bring the plan to fruition.

It is always a pleasure to find that Branches work actively, creatively and enthusiastically; their accounts of events during each year provide inspiration and examples to members/readers with an insight into the opportunities that the works of Shakespeare offers.

At High School level pupils are introduced to Shakespeare. The teacher's approach to the play becomes a strong influence in the learner's attitude to the study and understanding of Shakespeare. Social interaction through reading aloud, discussion, interpreting the characters, bringing them to life, are aspects which enrich the education of the young.

The Newsletter provides an opportunity for writers through OPaR (Occasional Papers and Reviews) and Reports (recording of Branch activities by office-bearers) to describe activities which could attract membership.

Readers, look into the written offerings in this Newsletter and spot the gems!  
"Shakespeare today, tomorrow and for ever".

**Hildé Slinger**  
Editor *NiOPaR*

## From the President

It has been a quiet year so far. Since the headquarters of SSoSA is in Grahamstown, we have assisted with local functions, such as a school's Shakespeare festival organised by the ISEA at Rhodes University, and the annual Shakespeare Birthday lecture mounted by the Grahamstown branch, which included a well-attended celebratory dinner the night before. On a national level we invited our branches to do something extra in this special 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Shakespeare's birth, offering to send them each an amount of R2500 to assist with a function which would bring Shakespeare's name to the attention of people outside the Society. This idea met with a positive response. We are also establishing links with the Shakespeare Schools Festival South Africa, which is run from Cape Town by Ms Kseniya Filinova-Bruton as an affiliate of the UK Shakespeare Schools Festival. This holds great promise for the future.

It is time now to look ahead to the Ninth Triennial Congress of SSoSA, which is being planned for Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> of July to Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2016 in Grahamstown (with a welcoming cocktail party on the 6<sup>th</sup>), to coincide with the National Arts Festival in order to allow delegates to see some of the performances, should they so wish.

The theme of the conference, which will be the main event of the Congress, is as follows:

Shakespeare – Religion, Psychology, Anthropology.

The conference committee welcomes abstracts on the following topics:

- Ecological readings of the Shakespeare text
- Explorations in Shakespeare and cognitive science
- Shakespeare and the 'metaphors we live by' (Lakoff and Johnson)
- Cultural dissonance in Shakespearean performance and adaptation
- Tragedy across cultures
- Shakespeare, psychiatry and psychoanalysis
- Dramatic identity, character and 'human natures' in Shakespeare
- Shakespeare, nationalism and a 'national psyche'

- Playing psychology on stage
- Shakespeare and the psychology of Empire
- Religion and conduct in Shakespeare
- Why would knowing Shakespeare's religious affiliation with certainty matter?

Papers illustrating some of these issues through analysis of Shakespearean performance and production in different cultures and countries will be particularly welcome.

Please submit abstracts as soon as possible, and definitely before 30 April 2015.

I wish to finish by thanking all those who have helped SSoSA in the last year, but particularly Laurence Wright, Hilde Slinger, Chris Thurman, Louisa Clayton, Bev Cummings-Penlington, Renee Brown (our interim secretary after Eddie Baart's retirement) and our new secretary, Carol Leff.

**Warren Snowball**  
President SSoSA

## *Shakespeare in Southern Africa (SiSA)*

Readers may be surprised to find in this volume an article by Guy Butler, who died in 2001 and whose work on Shakespeare was last published in 1994. Here I claim a certain editorial licence. I discovered Butler's "*Macbeth: 'The Great Doom's Image'*" and other previously unpublished pieces a few years ago while researching material for *South African Essays on 'Universal' Shakespeare*. For various reasons it could not be included in that book, but a reviewer's comment on the manuscript (notes for a lecture first delivered in 1976) encouraged me to consider it for this journal. One of the aims of *South African Essays on 'Universal' Shakespeare*<sup>1</sup> is to reflect the changing nature of Shakespeare studies across various 'generation gaps'. The book presents Butler as a representative of earlier generations of South African Shakespeare teachers, theatre-makers and scholars, placing his work in dialogue with that of current Shakespeareans and attempting to discern marks of continuity as well as of disruption.

In various ways, Butler's Shakespeare scholarship seems dated. Critics such as Martin Orkin and Natasha Distiller have, in fact, suggested that Butler's version of Shakespeare was a conservative and reactionary one even for its time. In other ways, however, his essays, lectures and articles remain astute and pertinent. The reviewer mentioned above described Butler's insights into *Macbeth* as "a refreshing dose of learned scholarship", adding:

Having fed on a diet of New Historicism, which disregarded 'Christian' readings of Shakespeare, I found it refreshing to perceive another way of looking at the plays, especially one incorporating the art of the time. What is clear is that Butler writes ... with the assurance of wide reading and scholarship and the authority of a sharp intellect.<sup>2</sup>

The tension between 'then' and 'now' – along with the fact that good literary criticism does not become moribund, even though it becomes perceived as outmoded, or is in fact outmoded – is part of the impetus behind *South African Essays on 'Universal' Shakespeare*. But it should also be of particular interest to readers of this journal, not least because Butler was the founding editor of *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* and because Orkin and Distiller's critiques, along with those of David Johnson and others, are based on early volumes of the journal (which was established in 1987).<sup>3</sup>

The dialogue between Butler and current Shakespeareans thus continues in the pages of Volume 26. But there are various other dynamics that place the contents of this volume 'in conversation'. The illustrations on which Butler's argument about *Macbeth* depends are complemented by a very different set of images: the photographic essay accompanying Sarah Roberts' account of an innovative production of *Julius Caesar* (also depicted on our cover). Vital to the success of this ensemble production were the crowd scenes, which are in turn discussed in Tony Voss's essay on "The Myth of the Multitude". Along with *Julius Caesar*, Voss addresses *2 Henry VI*, *Sir Thomas More* and *Coriolanus* – but also *Hamlet*, "one in a sequence of plays in which the playwright's sympathy for the common people is at issue". Some other core strands of *Hamlet* criticism are teased out in this volume. Brett R. Murphy pursues the literary, dramatic and religious controversy surrounding the status of Hamlet's father's ghost, following but also taking issue with Stephen Greenblatt. Colette Gordon writes about a clowning appropriation of the play that emphasises its meta-theatricality; her substantial review moves between the Company Theatre of Mumbai's *Hamlet – The Clown Prince* and Shakespeare's play text(s), offering some thought-provoking comments on the production's provenance as well as the context of its performance in South Africa. Meta-theatrical reflections (both within Shakespeare's plays and by those who bring them to life on stage) are also central to the books reviewed by Victor Houliston and Josiah Nyanda.



Like Gordon, Laurence Wright addresses the enrichment and displacement that comes from very differing sites of production and reception, in a review essay that contemplates how “the advent of live filmed Shakespeare extends and challenges our sense of what global Shakespeare might mean”. One of the live filmed performances Wright refers to is the Royal Shakespeare Company’s *Richard II*, directed by Gregory Doran – a production that Derrick Higginbotham, in his analysis of the play based on intersecting notions of the “wasteful man”, the “effeminate man” and the “queer man”, finds wanting. Identifying the “templates” used to construct King Richard gives us pause. What is it that makes us think we “recognise” Shakespeare’s characters? This is the question posed by Sandra Young in her article on two further aspects of *Hamlet*: the problematic but almost-standard Freudian reading(s) of the play and the vexed question of universality. Todd A. Borlik expands the scope of the ‘universal’ by offering historical insight into the “stellification of Shakespeare” – a process that is “both symbolic of and predicated upon the international acceptance of him as a cosmopolitan rather than a quintessentially English author”, but also one that is ineluctably tied to European colonial expansion. Finally, this celestial perspective on Shakespeare takes us close to Butler’s focus on the cosmic dimensions of ‘universality’ – literally, Shakespeare’s conception of the universe based on his Judeo-Christian theological assumptions.

I trust that readers will enjoy (and perhaps contribute to) these and other ‘conversations’ taking place in the pages of the present volume.

Finally, on a mundane note, we have introduced a change in the journal’s referencing and citation format to the Chicago Style.

1. See Chris Thurman (ed), *South African Essays on ‘Universal’ Shakespeare* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014).
2. Anonymous reader’s report on draft manuscript for *South African Essays on ‘Universal’ Shakespeare*, December 2012 (Courtesy Ashgate Publishing).
3. See Martin Orkin, *Drama and the South African State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991); Natasha Distiller, *Shakespeare, South Africa, and Post-Colonial Culture* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2005); and David Johnson, *Shakespeare in South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

\* *Note: this report is based on the Editorial of volume 26*

**Christopher Thurman**  
Editor *SiSA*



### With regret ...

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the death of our former Secretary, Professor Eddie Baart, in the early hours of December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014 and of Jo Warner, Chairperson of the Johannesburg (Gauteng) branch of SSoSA, on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Full tributes will be published in the next SSoSA Newsletter.

## Journal Contents–Volume 26

### *Articles*

TODD A. BORLIK	Stellifying Shakespeare: Celestial Imperialism and the Advent of Universal Genius
SANDRA YOUNG	Recognising Hamlet
SARAH ROBERTS	<i>Caesar</i> Re-Configured: An Ensemble Presentation of Improvised Permutations
DERRICK HIGGINBOTHAM	The Construction of a King: Waste, Effeminacy and Queerness in Shakespeare’s <i>Richard II</i>
GUY BUTLER	<i>Macbeth</i> : “The great doom’s image”

### *Essays*

TONY VOSS	The Myth of the Multitude: “The displeased commons of the citie”
BRETT E. MURPHY	Sulphurous and Tormenting Flames: Understanding the Ghost in <i>Hamlet</i>

### *Stage and Screen Reviews*

LAURENCE WRIGHT	Global Live: Shakespeare’s Future in the Global Village
COLETTE GORDON	To Hold Up the Mirror: <i>Hamlet – The Clown Prince</i> and ‘Sharing History’

### *Book Reviews*

VICTOR HOULISTON	In Search of Perfect Freedom
JOSIAH NYANDA	A Theatrical Reading of a Theatrical Life

# SSoSA Branches

Branches are given a fairly free hand. However, it is vital that there should be a mother body to which they can refer, guided by a simple, effective Constitution. Founded in 1985, The Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa remains a project of the Grahamstown Foundation. The President of SSoSA is recognised as the director of the project and reports to the Council of the Grahamstown Foundation, SSoSA being one of its sixteen projects. The Financial Director of the Grahamstown Foundation is Treasurer, ex officio, of the Shakespeare Society.

The SSoSA Administrative Secretary keeps in touch with the branches, their chairmen, secretaries and treasurers, ensuring that the database is up to date. The two SSoSA publications, the Journal and Newsletter (incorporating OPaR), are distributed annually.

Close communication between the Honorary Life President, the President, Administrative Secretary and Treasurer (together with the Editors of the two publications) ensures an effective base for the smooth running of the Society.

Ideally, each branch is administered by its Executive Committee, the overall goal of Shakespeareans being to enjoy keeping Shakespeare alive through their chosen activities and to expand their commitment to the supporting of public, university and school productions, and ideally to contribute reviews and other matters of interest to our academic Journal and Newsletter. The importance of enrolling new members, including young people, cannot be over-emphasized.

## Branch Reports

### Snippets from Branches: July 2013-June 2014

#### Cape Town

Chairman's Annual Report June 2014

Seven meetings were held during the period 1 June 2013 to 31 May 2014.

9th June 2013: *The Tempest*

28th July 2013: *Richard II* (The Hollow Crown)

7th Sept 2013: *Richard II* (Shakespeare Uncovered)

10th Nov 2013: *Henry IV* pt 1 (The Hollow Crown)

26th Jan 2014: *Henry IV* pt 1 (Shakespeare Uncovered)

23rd March 2014: *Henry IV* pt 2 (The Hollow Crown)

4th May 2014: *Henry V* (The Hollow Crown)

The emphasis during the year under review was placed upon Shakespeare as a dramatist of English history. Two excellent DVD series helped us to alternate credible performances of the plays with stimulating discussions by leading scholars and theatrical personalities. Thank you to members of the Branch who took turns to provide the catering. The whole was held together by the ongoing hospitality of Winston and Linda Travis. On behalf of the group, I should like to thank them for making their home available and to Winston especially for the behind-the-scenes activity which has helped to make a success of yet another year at 70 Palmyra Rd.

**Committee:** Geoffrey Haresnape (Chair) Vernon Anderson (Vice-Chair) Winston Travis (Treasurer) Piet de Vries (Vice Treasurer), Linda Biersteker/Travis (Secretary)

**Membership:** Currently stands at twelve. Two members, who had been dormant for quite some time, have now resigned. A third member has moved from Cape Town.

**Subscriptions:** The membership fee for the 2013-2014 year was R50.00. Funds collected, together with a carry-over from the previous year, allowed the Branch to purchase the *Shakespeare Uncovered* DVDs and a trilogy of critical studies of Shakespeare. We enter the new year with a smaller balance, but still comfortably in the black.

**Geoffrey Haresnape.**

#### Durban (KwaZulu-Natal)

Chairman's Report July 2013 to June 2014

Welcome to our 2013–2014 AGM. Reading through previous AGM reports it seems that we have a certain amount of repetition but is an unending story of the world's Man of the Millennium and it's all about Shakespeare.

I am most grateful for the support of the committee and their ongoing interest in the subject of Shakespeare. There is a steady stream of encouragement from our National Committee in Grahamstown. We welcome Carol Leff as our new administrative secretary of SSoSA, taking over from Prof Eddie Baart following his retirement. Carol has requested an updated list of our branch members and to include email addresses.

Here is a quick summary of branch activities:

**July:** Our activities kicked off our "Member's Medley", a presentation of speeches by or about Shakespeare's Kings.

**August:** Charlotte Imbali gave a talk entitled "Myths about Shakespeare" which was well prepared and enjoyed by all.

**September:** A talk by Mr Sonny Venkathratham on Robben Island's 'Shakespeare Bible'. Prisoners were only allowed one book, the Holy Bible, for reading matter in their cells. Sonny managed to smuggle in an edition of the complete works of Shakespeare, suitably disguised as a Bible. The word got around and the 'Bible' was popularly borrowed by many prisoners. Each one signed next to their favourite quotations. This remarkable book was recently on exhibition at the London Public Library together with other memorabilia celebrating the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare.

**October:** We met at the home of George and Patricia Devenish and viewed part one of a DVD called "In Search of Shakespeare"

**November:** Hugh Thompson, who chairs the "Brush up your Shakespeare", an inter-schools quiz competition, was our quizmaster at a relaxed and fun quiz afternoon.

**December:** Our end of year function was hosted by Daniel Keyter. We watched a fascinating DVD on the exhumation of Richard III – "The King in the Car Park". In spite of the deathly topic, it was a really fun gathering!

**February:** We returned to the Devenish's home to watch part two of the "In Search of Shakespeare" DVD.

**March:** We had an animated discussion about the two DVDs that we'd previously viewed. It was interesting to hear everyone's opinions and see the enthusiasm of the members throughout the afternoon.

**April:** Mary Johnstone, past head of Westville Girls High School, talked to us about the first tetralogy (Richard III, Henry VI parts one and two and three)

**May:** A celebration of the Bard's 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary! We performed a Shakespeare pageant in words and costume done by branch members. Daniel and Stephen hosted an excellent lunch for which we charged R50 to cover costs. It was a tremendous success – most especially Daniels's Malvolio! Well done to all who took part.

**June:** Bring and share Annual General Meeting hosted by Nancy.

During the year some of our members attended 'A schools Shakespeare Presentation of Plays'. This annual event is to familiarise students with saying their words and acting their parts on stage – taking it from the class room into the realm of Shakespearean drama. The props are minimal and song and dance is added to the performance. The students love the event and it's wonderful to witness the inspiration and enthusiasm generated by the teachers.

Members also supported Hugh by attending the finals of the 'Brush up Your Shakespeare' interschool quiz competition. Hugh is the quizmaster and constructs the quiz with much flare, delighting the participants and the audience.

Congratulations to the winning school – King David's School from Gauteng – and to Westville Girls High School who were the runners up.

So once again, we come to the end of another year. We are a close-knit group and we find great friendship and support in our monthly Sunday afternoon meetings. It is a time of stimulating sharing and learning, a time of eating and being merry – the Bard would be proud! Thank you to the committee and branch members, especially Hugh Thompson who co-ordinated and made up much of the programme, for making sure that we enjoyed another successful year.

**Nancy Church**

## **Grahamstown**

Chairman's Annual Report June 2013-June 2014

2014 is no mean year in which to be presenting an annual report. It marks the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, and so far we have had a blast!

Determined as we were to make this year's Annual Birthday Lecture something special, we could think of no better person to deliver it than our old friend and one-time member of this branch, Laurence Wright, who is of course Honorary Life President of SSoSA. And once we'd settled on luring him and Madeleine to Grahamstown, it was but a small step to the decision that of course we had to hold a Birthday Dinner. Both events, held on consecutive nights, were hugely successful.

The **Birthday Dinner** at the Grahamstown Golf Club (22 April) was attended by 44 Shakespeare members and friends. Apart from the excellent fare provided by the legendary Esmé Basola, everyone also enjoyed the beautiful décor and the items of entertainment. These included an appearance by Emma Thompson (on video), a toast to the Bard by Tim Huisamen, a song by Eddie Baart in which he brushed up our Shakespeare, and an impromptu report from Chris Mann on recent advances in the study of certain marginalia concerning the place of the Bard's birth – which turns out to have been very possibly in or near the hamlet of Peddie in the Eastern Cape. This report out of left field gave Laurence an opportunity to make an impromptu reply regarding the link between the playwright Will Shakespeare, the astronomer Tycho Brahe, and the historical castle of Elsinore – which Eddie capped with a revelation about his own connection with the Bard, via a Dutch corruption of the name Bard to Baart! Well, there were more mysteries revealed of heaven and earth than the organisers had ever dreamt of! Speaking of whom, I want to thank Helen (H), Trudi and Andrew for the fantastic work done in preparation for this enjoyable evening. Thank you also to Sally and Pat Terry for hosting the Wrights.

The **Birthday Lecture** the following evening (bang on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April) was very well attended. People turned out in their numbers to hear Laurence, many still buoyed by the mood of the previous

evening. Laurence honoured us with a scholarly and fascinating paper on *Hamlet* and what the play tells us about right and noble moral conduct. In the process he shone a searching light on the form of the humanities, and breathed new life into the best-known soliloquy in all of world drama. Since then we have all been murmuring 'to be or not to be' with a completely new inflection.

We are indebted to the Wrights for their contribution to a duo of events that has significantly advanced the SSoSA brand in Grahamstown. The society has a wide circle of friends, many of whom, although they do not often attend our events, nevertheless express interest and support and ask not to be dropped from our mailing list. (On the other hand, if you know of anyone who is sick to the back teeth of receiving our mails and are wondering how they ever came to be on our list, please let me know. They probably got there by my whim!)

Our **education projects** are enjoying a bumper year too. As this year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the ISEA, they invited us to join them in an outreach project. Under the energetic leadership of new member Helen Lockyear, we and our ISEA colleagues put together an event entitled '*Macbeth – A Play in a Day*'. Actors from the Ubom! company assisted us in putting learners from eight government schools through their paces for a day, by the end of which they were able to entertain us to a creditable performance of *Macbeth*. It was an intense day for all concerned, and apart from the prizes we dished out quite liberally at the end, the learners took away with them something truly lasting. The project culminated in a poster competition, the fruits of which were displayed at the Birthday Lecture. Graeme College sent a delegation of boys to the lecture to receive their award as winners.

Our reputation in the education field seems to be spreading, as we have now been invited by the Eisteddfod committee of the Grahamstown Foundation to assist them in planning a Shakespeare festival for East Cape learners. We look forward to seeing how this plan develops. These developments do mean that our little band of Shakespeare activists is becoming quite stretched. If there is anyone who would like to be involved in education projects, please let me know. A larger pool of volunteers would be great.

Following the **reading group's** indulgence last year in the big three of *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, we are this year making our way through the English history plays. Again we have tried to dovetail our programme with the Rhodes syllabus, and we've begun to intersperse our readings with a lecture or two. Paul Walters introduced the histories, and Kate Birkinshaw is due to give us a talk on *Henry V*. We have developed a small but steady student following. Tonight we will watch either *Richard II* or *Henry IV part 1*. This question is open for negotiation over supper.

I recently learnt the delicious word 'Shakespearewallahs', so please allow me to address you by this term. Shakespearewallahs, thank you for your presence at this meeting and for your support in all things. Thank you especially to the committee of Warren, Malvern, Helen (H), Andrew and Trudi, all of whom I commend to you for re-election.

Finally, the good news is that just two years from now (1616) it will be time to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death – which is sure to provide an excellent excuse for celebrating yet again!

**Lynette Paterson**

On Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2014, The Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa (SSoSA), The Institute for the Study of English in Africa (ISEA) and UBOM! facilitated a 'Shakespeare Day' for aspiring young actors from high schools across Grahamstown. The aim was to celebrate the bard's 450<sup>th</sup> birthday, along with the ISEA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, by exposing learners to Shakespeare and the fun and stress of staging a dramatic performance. Learners from the participating schools (Graeme College, Kuthliso Daniels, Mary Waters, Nathaniel Nyaluza, Ntsika, T.E.M. Mrwetyana, Victoria Girls) began the day by taking part in a drama workshop hosted by an enthusiastic cohort of drama educators from UBOM!, during which they prepared a scene from *Macbeth*, which they would then act out in the afternoon. This was a great deal of fun for all the learners (and teachers) involved. After intensive rehearsals, the learners proceeded to act out an edited version of the full play in the fitting setting of the Nun's Chapel. During the production it was clear that there is much undiscovered talent in the Grahamstown area, and stirring performances were the order of the afternoon. Afterwards a short prize-giving ceremony was held, during which excellent performances were acknowledged, and a poster competition introduced, the winners of which (Graeme College) were announced at the annual Shakespeare Birthday Lecture. Thanks must go to all the people involved, particularly Helen Lockyear and Lynette Paterson, and the local business community for their generous sponsorship.

**Brendon Robinson**



*In training, learners from various schools with drama educators from UBOM*







*Shakespeare Day, Macbeth – A Play in a Day; prize giving ceremony; learners receiving products sponsored by the local business community towards a poster competition and Laurence Wright, guest speaker at the annual Shakespeare Birthday Lecture, together with the learners of Graeme College, winners of the poster competition*

## Johannesburg (Gauteng)

Annual Report Sunday, 15 June 2014

The society would like to thank The Ridge School for granting us the continued use of the Nupen Centre and kitchen facilities for our meetings, to Nick Soo, the IT expert at the school, and Chris Perumal, the estate manager. As chairman, I would like to thank the committee for their help, and to both members and guests, who are always on hand to help with the necessary chores.

I would like to mention that the few minor errors in the 2013 AGM report of this branch, which appeared in the SSoSA Newsletter, occurred at the proofreading stage, and were not in the written report which I sent to Grahamstown. The errors were mostly in the spelling of individual surnames.

I would also like to formally thank all those generous speakers, who have given their time and commitment to bringing us some truly memorable evenings.

The Johannesburg Branch has, as usual, enjoyed a full and interesting year of activities, and we hope that with your support it will continue to do so.

The SSoSA activities from June 2013 to June 2014:

**16 June 2013:** (after the AGM) 'Dialect and Accent in Shakespeare'. Fiona Ramsay, with her vast experience as an actor, gave the meeting some idea of the breadth and perception required to master an accent. Fiona has an extraordinary ear for accents, switching from broad Scottish to Italian, in a flash. Not only did she change accents but she explained how and why these accents differed, one from another, and what was required,

physically, by the speaker, to achieve the result. With Fiona's encouragement members of the audience attempted a few of the accents that are represented in the canon of Shakespeare's plays. Ms Ramsay is often a voice coach for films, most recently having coached both the lead actors, and the cast generally, of *Long Walk to Freedom*.

**July:** No meeting

**18 August:** 'From Page to Stage'. Rob Joseph, who has worked in the technical section of the Drama Department at the University of the Witwatersrand for many years, has been involved for decades in the department's productions of Shakespeare's plays. He demonstrated with slides and plans how set builders translate the designer's ideas into a manageable set. Rob gave us some insight into the restrictions that budget makes on stage sets, and explained how practicality might also change a too ambitious design. Working closely with the designer, and despite these constraints, the set builders try as best they might to produce the visual effect that the designer aims for.

**15 September:** 'Shakespeare and Dickens'. Dr Marcia Leveson, widely recognised for her acclaimed lectures on English literature, gave us a wonderful insight into the influence that Shakespeare had on the novelist. Dr Leveson supplemented her talk with a PowerPoint presentation, which was both illuminating and amusing, illustrating how much Dickens the writer, with his stories so full of drama, owed to the plays. Shakespeare the dramatist clearly had an impact on Charles Dickens's body of work.

**20 October:** 'Language and character; search for antithesis.' This is part 3 of the DVD series,

'Playing Shakespeare', directed by John Barton. 18 November: Hilary Semple, academic, titled her lecture, 'An examination of the reasons for the belief that Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth* is cursed'. As always, Hilary's eloquence, her intelligent insight into the background of her chosen subject and her masterly research gave us a highly satisfactory end to the year's activities. Hilary's scholarship and meticulous attention to detail are well known, and her lectures always secure the society a large turnout. As it was the last meeting of the year, people were asked to bring a plate of food, and we enjoyed a finger supper, and wine, which provided a very pleasant finale to the year's activities.

**December and January:** No meetings

**16 February:** George King, an eminent musicologist, came from Pretoria, with a small choir, to give us a concert of a cappella music from the Tudor period. The February evening was mild, and it gave us the opportunity of sitting out in the courtyard. George King and his choir once again treated the audience to a memorable evening, with music both entertaining and enhancing. His knowledge and understanding of the background to the Renaissance period is extensive. Afterwards, the Shakespeare Society treated the choir and the members and guests to a finger supper.

**17 March:** 'Exploring the character', part 4 in the series of the DVD set of 'Playing Shakespeare', with John Barton and members of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

**In April:** the Shakespeare Society, Johannesburg Branch, has always celebrated the Bard's birthday. The end of April this year had many public holidays, and as finding a suitable day for a Saturday lunch seemed impossible, the committee decided to hold a smaller party. Hilary Semple, under the auspices of the University of the Third Age (U3A), holds weekly seminars on Shakespeare's plays, in a meeting room at St Columba's Church, Parkview, and we held the celebration on 25 April, directly after the Friday seminar, calling the event 'Cakes & Ale'. A small charge was asked of those who attended. The importance of celebrating Shakespeare's birthday cannot be overstressed. There were 37 guests, most of them coming from the group who attend the U3A Shakespeare seminar. There was a reading by David Williams, and songs from Eleanor-Mary Cadell, chosen from *Twelfth Night*, with the audience joining in the chorus of the final song. Hilary Semple, in her usual eloquent manner, gave the toast to the Bard. While the event had been called 'Cakes & Ale', it was really 'Cake, quiche, and wine' but that was not a phrase familiar to either Shakespeare or Sir Toby.

As a note of general interest, the front cover of the SSoSA annual Newsletter featured a picture of the table decorations for the Birthday lunch this branch hosted last year.

**18 May:** the showing of a DVD of *Measure for Measure*, a play that was being studied in the U3A seminars led by Hilary Semple. The DVD was lent

to us by Ric Horwitz, and is from the BBC series of Shakespeare's plays.

**15 June:** Dorothy Ann Gould and her JAM drama students with 'The Time is Out of Joint', an adaptation of *Hamlet*. While it is unusual to make mention of the meeting that immediately follows the AGM, we make an exception this year. I describe briefly, below, how the group of JAM drama students came into being. On 17 May this year, the *Saturday Star* devoted a whole page to this very special project, and the importance the plays of Shakespeare have in the lives of these young men who are homeless.

It is with sadness that I announce that Josephine Voorhoeve has resigned from the committee, and that Anton Voorhoeve, her husband, has handed over his task as honorary Treasurer for the Johannesburg Branch of the Shakespeare Society. I would like to thank them both for the many years of dedication they have given the society. They will be much missed, though I am happy to say that Josephine says that they will still attend the meetings from time to time.

The society has most fortunately found a replacement for Anton Voorhoeve in David Emmerson, who has kindly agreed to take over as our Treasurer, and I would like to express thanks to him, on behalf of the committee and the society.

I am also standing down from the committee. I have created a list of telephone numbers and email addresses of both members and guests. I have also drawn up checklists with step-by-step details of what needs to be done for the Birthday lunch, or for an event such as the 'Cakes & Ale' held this year. There is also a checklist for the monthly meetings, creating a project management template, which I hope will prove a useful legacy.

We have put into place a programme for the rest of this year and, barring unforeseen circumstances, Eleanor-Mary Cadell will be giving us a lecture at the August meeting on Sunday the 17th, and Malcolm Purkey has agreed to talk to us on Sunday, 21 September. These speakers have lectured to the society in the past, and I assure you that the audience has a treat in store at both these meetings. On Sunday, 19 October we will show a DVD, which will either be another in the John Barton 'Playing Shakespeare' series, or one of the BBC canon of Shakespeare's plays. And then in November, on Sunday the 16th, we will have the pleasure of a lecture by Hilary Semple, whose scholarship is rightly respected by all who have heard her previous lectures.

**Accounts and Finances:** Last year at the AGM, we had announced that membership would be raised to R180.00. However, at the beginning of this year, due to an oversight on my part, the membership fee remained at R150.00. The guest fee this past year has been R25.00 for each meeting, and it will remain so for the next year. Next year the membership fee will be R170.00. I remind you that the membership fee has remained static for a

number of years. The society has often made a loss on the Birthday celebration, as was the case this year, so we do need to have a surplus in the bank account to cover this and other contingencies. We hope it will also encourage guests to become members, as doing so will prove better value than paying separately for each month.

I am pleased to announce that last year, the Shakespeare Society, Johannesburg Branch, was able to make a donation of money to JAM, a youth group which currently uses the facilities of an Anglican church on the outskirts of Hillbrow. The group had its origins, some years ago, on the initiative of the Good Shepherd Organisation. Dorothy Ann Gould, the well-known actor, regularly gives drama workshops, with emphasis on the plays of Shakespeare, to a small group of homeless youths. These young drama Students imbue the speeches from the plays with the experiences of their own lives, while at the same time responding to the power of the Bard's poetry. The group chose their name, 'Johannesburg Awakening Minds', to give the acronym JAM, because, they say, jam is sweet, and they otherwise experience very little sweetness in their lives. The Shakespeare Society is delighted to give support to this highly commendable project. Dame Janet Suzman, who was in South Africa at the time, was present on the occasion. We hope that you, the members of the society, will be interested in maintaining contact with this remarkable project, among our varied activities in the name of William Shakespeare.

**Financial report** by David Emmerson acting Treasurer

**Elections:** We really do need new members on the committee. I am pleased to tell you that Eleanor-Mary Cadell and Hilary Semple have both agreed to stand again for election. I do encourage anyone who would like to make a contribution to the running of this society to put your name forward for election.

The society advertises the forthcoming events in the *Rosebank Killarney Gazette* and on radio. Graeme Shackelford of Caxton Press and City Buzz has created a website for us, for which we thank him:

<http://citybuzz.co.za/14143/society-celebrates-shakespeare/>

A special thanks to Eleanor-Mary Cadell and her assistant Audrey Walker, for sending out the email notices each month, and contacting the radio and the press. If you have an email address, and are not receiving the society notices, please speak to Ms Cadell.

We should be grateful if members and guests would spread the information about our meetings to their friends.

**Jo Warner**

## **The Johannesburg Shakespeare Circle**

Annual report for the period June 2013 to May 2014

I am pleased to say that I have very little to say save that we have completed another very successful year with a stable membership and finances. In regard to the latter it is necessary to remind members who have not as yet paid their annual subscriptions that they should do so at the August meeting to avoid being charged the increased rate that will become effective on the close of the meeting. The increased rate has yet to be determined but will be put forward for ratification by members at that meeting.

I am currently in the process of compiling the programme for the period August – December. Member's personal preferences will be given serious consideration provided they are submitted not later than Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014. In this regard I have accepted an offer to screen "**The Enchanted Island**" at the November meeting.

I have to thank many members for their help during the year and notably those of Vice Chairman David Williams, Treasurer Hugh Bingham and Mike Rutherford.

That concludes my report.

**Guy Young**



Issue 3 of Shakespeare Magazine is now available to read online:

[http://issuu.com/shakespearemagazine/docs/shakespeare\\_magazine\\_03](http://issuu.com/shakespearemagazine/docs/shakespeare_magazine_03)

Highlights include The Shakespeare Guide to Brazil, Shakespeare's Cleopatra on screen, Henry IV in Washington DC, and an exhibition of beautiful French Shakespeare costumes.

I very much hope you enjoy the issue, and please feel free to share with anyone you feel may be interested.  
Pat Reid – Editor, Shakespeare Magazine

NB Shakespeare Magazine is a completely free online magazine. You don't have to 'Follow' or sign up - just click or swipe to start turning the pages.

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# Shakespeare Feature Page

## History of SSoSA branches

### The Johannesburg Shakespeare Circle

An entry in the Circle's minute book dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 1985 proclaims that the Inaugural meeting of the Johannesburg Shakespeare Circle took place at the home of Mrs Ray Smith, 49 Glenhove Road, Melrose, Johannesburg. A total of nineteen persons attended the meeting with three others sending apologies for being unable to attend.

Dr Ian Ingram welcomed those present. His election as Chairman was proposed by Mrs Smith and the following office bearers were elected:

Secretary: Mrs Auriol Ingram

Treasurer: Dr Joshua (Jock) Levy

Typing and duplicating: Mrs Diana Mackintosh

Committee members: Mrs Marlene Hofbrand-Kotzen and Mrs Zara Jackson.

At the meeting it was decided that the annual subscription for members would be R10 but would be waived for those who volunteered their homes for meetings. It was further agreed that meetings would be held on the first Tuesday of every month starting with a showing of a video of Henry V on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 1985 and an introduction by Ray Smith.

The inaugural meeting was concluded with audio tapes of "Ages of Man" read by John Gielgud and ten sonnets read by Edith Evans.

Of those who joined in those early years three remain active members notably, Jock Levy, Duncan Stepto and the current vice Chairman David Williams.

Circa 1988 my late wife Jean decided that we needed to *brush up our Shakespeare*. During the interval of a production of "The Winter's Tale" she approached Zara Jackson who suggested that we should talk to Ian Ingram. We became members shortly after that and I have been a member ever since.

In about 1996 Ian and Auriol Ingram announced that they would be relocating to Villiersdorp in the Western Cape and that a new chairman would have to take over the responsibility for running the 'Circle' and at a meeting at their house he called for volunteers for that task. As is the way of things nobody put up their hand. After a very embarrassing silence I nudged Jean and indicated that we should volunteer and so I took over the reins. Ian's final meeting was held at our house shortly after that and was an emotional affair with Ian bravely holding back his tears as he said good-bye to us.

Up to that time most of the monthly meetings were held in private homes but the number of members prepared to open their doors for the purpose had dwindled significantly and when Cecil and Rae Graham moved away to Hout Bay it became critical that another venue had to be found. Initially Ian managed to make arrangements for us to meet at Kingsmead school but when I took over the membership plunged and to make matters worse the Kingmead venue proved extremely unpopular with the few who remained. Clearly a better venue had to be found and Jean approached Roedean School who made the auditorium at the school available to us at a nominal charge. This new venue proved to be the catalyst in rescuing the organisation and within a short time membership and finances improved and we were able to reassure Ian that all was well in *the state of his retirement*.

These days, ten meetings are held during the course of the year, seven are held at Roedean but during the April and August school holidays Miss Ruth Kuper has made her gracious apartment available to us for lectures. As a gesture to the importance of music to the plays the theme for the December gathering is usually musical. As this is the time to celebrate a party is held at our house.

For many years most Circle were also members of the local branch of SSoSA and to this day a number of members belong to both. I am pleased to say that about six years ago the Circle became an affiliate of SSoSA. Today there is at least one other group in Johannesburg appropriately called **Shakespeare for Fun** and there may well be others that I don't know of.

It can be now said with confidence that Shakespeare is alive and well in Johannesburg.

A potted History  
**Guy Young**  
20<sup>th</sup> June, 2014



## **The Port Elizabeth Shakespearean Festival** inaugurated by André Huguenet May 1960

Port Elizabeth has a long history of performing Shakespeare's plays dating back to 1799 when "Hamlet" was staged by the officers of the garrison at Fort Frederick.

Taubie Kushlick directed "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Swimming Pool in St. George's Park in 1938. Helen Mann was an 8 year old fairy in that production.

André Huguenet played the title role in "King Lear" directed by R.A.D.A. Gold Medalist, Port Elizabeth born, Will Jamieson. On 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1960, André Huguenet inaugurated the Port Elizabeth Shakespearean Festival. Helen Mann played Goneril.

To celebrate the opening of the new University of Port Elizabeth in 1965 Margaret Inglis directed "Much Ado About Nothing" with Gordon Roberts as Benedick and Helen Mann as Beatrice.

1970 was the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of the 1820 Settlers from Britain and Leslie French, British director and actor, directed "Twelfth Night" at the Port Elizabeth Opera House and played "Feste" Helen Mann played "Viola."

Two years later, with guidance from Leslie French, who had helped establish the Maynard Open-Air Theatre in Cape Town, and great co-operation from the Director of Parks, John Shelton, the Mannville Open-air Theatre, St. George's Park, was launched with a production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." It was directed by Leslie French, who also played "Bottom, the Weaver"; Helen Mann was "Helena" and a young Philip Godawa was "Oberon." The Opening performance was followed by a Mayoral Reception at the City Hall.

From its inception, following the necessary procedures each year, multi-racial audiences were always welcome at the Mannville Open-air Theatre, and in 1980, at the same time as the P.E. Opera House, an "Open" permit was granted for our productions at Mannville. School Blocks from Port Elizabeth and the Eastern Cape attended the performances at a very nominal cost, or in many cases 'free of charge': a policy which continues to this day.

Leslie French directed at Mannville for a further two years then Helen Mann took over as director.

Helen Mann directed a Shakespearean play every year until the 1993 production of "Twelfth Night". Sadly she died of cancer later that year.

At the inauguration of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa, the President of the PESF, Bruce Mann was a founder member, an EXCO "Alternate", and the designer of the SSoSA Logo. The Port Elizabeth Shakespearean Festival retained its autonomy and became affiliated to the SSoSA as a 'Corporate Member.'

The Port Elizabeth Shakespearean Festival in association with CAPAB was fortunate to have professional director, Martinus Basson to direct "Othello" with 'Arthur Molepo' in the title role; and John Hussey had played "Lear." with our company.

Port Elizabeth is blessed with a number of excellent directors like Linda-Louise Swain, Colin Ward, Helen Flax and Lesley Barnard, who are also very fine actors, so a Shakespearean production is staged every year.

Themi Venturas, who acted and directed for the PESF in his youth, was asked to direct our Mannville 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary production in 2012. He chose "Antony and Cleopatra", which had never been produced in Port Elizabeth before; but due to vandalism to the main electric cable, could not be staged at Mannville and was therefore mounted at the Port Elizabeth Opera House.

The following two years the Park situation had not improved so in 2013 "Hamlet" directed by Linda-Louise Swain and in 2014 "Macbeth" directed by Lesley Barnard, in association with PEMADS, were staged very successfully at the PEMADS Little Theatre.

From the 2013/2014 Parks Department Municipal budget funds were allocated to 'Mannville' and a new "Tower" is to be built at the rear of the auditorium, three storeys high – the lower level for storage, the middle level a Coffee Shop and the upper level the "Sound/Lighting Box" The electric supply unit will be incorporated inside the building. Work commenced on the foundations in May 2014.

The 2015 celebratory production at "Mannville Open-air Theatre" will be 'Twelfth Night' directed by Lesley Barnard.

**Port Elizabeth**  
13<sup>th</sup> June, 2014

### The Syrian Crisis: *King Lear* inspires refugee children

Submitted by LAURENCE WRIGHT

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons such as these?

(Lear 3.4)

Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan, is a vast treeless sprawl of tents, prefabs and trailers. With its more than 80 000 inhabitants, all refugees of one sort or another from the Syrian conflict, Za'atari is now the fourth largest 'city' in Jordan. Poverty, estrangement and deprivation are everywhere. There are 25 000 children, and only three schools.



<http://f3.thejournal.ie/media/2014/03/mideast-jordan-syrian-refugees-3-390x285.jpg>

An unusual event took place at Za'atari recently to mark World Theatre Day (March 27<sup>th</sup>): a performance in classical Arabic of Shakespeare's *King Lear* by children who before this had neither heard of Shakespeare, nor acted, nor enjoyed the freedom of some form of public affirmation in response to performance.

The project was conceived by the Syrian actor/producer Nawar Bulbul (Nouar Boulboul in some orthographies), himself a refugee following his participation in anti-government protests and the subsequent banning of one of his productions. Having fallen foul of President Bashar Assad's regime, Bulbul, best known for his role in *Bab al-Hara*, a historical soap-opera popular across much of the Arab world, fled with his French wife to Amman, the capital of Jordan, in 2012. In 2013 the plight of children in the Za'atari camp came to his attention, and the *Lear* project was born. The children in the production were all under fifteen, mostly from Daraa and the area around Damascus.

*Lear* would, on the surface, seem an unlikely candidate for such an enterprise. This most unwieldy of plays is also not one in which spiritual uplift is other than complex. Having reduced the script to manageable proportions, rendered it into classical Arabic, and re-focused the drama on a simple contrast

between truth and lies, Bulbul was undaunted by the challenge of directing a cast of more than a hundred children.

'I seek to revive laughter and joy among children to help them express themselves', says Bulbul (*The Economist* 2014); 'The show is to bring back laughter, joy and humanity' (Hubbard 2014).

According to the *New York Times*:

The sun blazed on the day of the performance, staged on a rocky rectangle of land surrounded by a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire. The 12 main actors stood in the middle, while the rest of the cast stood behind them, a chorus that provided commentary and dramatic sound effects. The audience sat on the ground.

When each of Lear's first two daughters tricked him with false flattery in elegant, formal Arabic, the chorus members yelled 'Liar! Hypocrite!' until the sisters told them to shut up.

And when the third sister refused to follow suit, the chorus members yelled 'Truthful! Just!' until the king told them to shut up.

(Hubbard 2014)

Apparently a few scenes from *Hamlet* were slipped into the production. A possible reason for this curious dramatic grafting emerges in *The Economist's* account:

Mr Boulboul says he has no interest in politics. But he says Hamlet inevitably comments on the conflict in Syria. "'To be or not to be...'" is one of the most important sentences in the world for me,' says Mr Boulboul. 'Who am I? Shall I take action or not? This applies to our revolution.'

Trumpeting overt political motivation for his efforts might well, for Bulbul, be counterproductive, but there seems little doubt that his courageous intervention has a profound human impact which is both political, redemptive and humane. The *Global Arab Network* reported:

The initiative is 100% Syrian and supported only by the Syrian people and few friends. Unfortunately none of the international organizations provided any support to the play. The local community of the camp provided the place for training (a large tent in the camp where the children trained, played, painted and have fun). A meal was provided to the children at the end of the training each day by Syrian friends. It is an example to show the world that when we are united by our common good and humanity – we will accomplish great things.

(Kassar 2014)

It must be said that the 'few friends' mentioned above were much more in evidence than any tangible aid from that grand abstraction 'the Syrian people.' Scant support was received from outside organisations, and little help was forthcoming within the camp (*The Journal.ie* 2014). As so often happens, when the world cheers, it is a few selfless, well-motivated people who should take the credit, not the ideologists slouched on the side-lines.

CNN's Jason Miks noted, 'Many of the children are not educated and have never read or seen any of Shakespeare's work. But they are no strangers, of course, to the tragedy of the human condition. And this particular play – a story of exile, a ruler losing grip with reality, a land divided by rival groups, a tale of human cruelty – seems especially relevant' (Miks 2014). The broad outline of *Lear* seems all too apposite to the political fiasco which has brought Za'atari into being. Adults might make any number of perspicacious connections. But what of the children? What did they feel, where did they find value?

Bushra Nasr, 13, plays eldest daughter Goneril, while Weam Ammari, 12, is Cordelia, the one who is wronged.

'The play brought joy to all of us. We needed that,' said Nasr, who fled to Jordan with her five sisters and two brothers a year ago.

Ammari, who has five sisters and a brother, said she has finally found something to entertain her.

'My role was not easy at first because I had to speak classical Arabic. But now, everything is smooth and I have a lot of friends. It makes me feel much better.

'I do not feel lonely any more in this place.'

(*The Journal.ie* 2014)

That last sentence is probably one of the most telling responses to *Lear* ever recorded.

Overall, some 587 000 Syrian refugees are registered in Jordan.

For those wishing to sample the production, internet clips are readily available. See, for example, *YouTube*, and several of the sites mentioned in the references below.

\* \* \* \*

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Acknowledgement for information gleaned from an article by Helen Grange (Saturday Star 17/5/2014).

## Shakespeare Lights Up Lives of Homeless

Acting classes take edge off hell of living in squalor on the streets

Advised by JO WARNER, Chairperson Johannesburg Branch of SSoSA

Danger and desolation of life on the street is a daily reality for this group of men. But through actress Dorothy Ann Gould and Shakespeare, they have found each other, and a reason to dream.



*Dorothy Ann Gould working with the group*

It's a crisp winter morning in Hillbrow and a middle-aged woman pulls on her cigarette in the parking lot of the Brethren in Christ church. In fits and starts, young men scurry through the gate and make for the church entrance.

The scene is back-dropped by a ghastly Hillbrow tenement, one of those filthy, broken-windowed blocks that make you wonder what horrors it harbours.

The woman is veteran actress Dorothy Ann Gould and the stragglers are men who live on the streets, arriving for the free acting workshop that she offers every Monday. Within minutes, this seemingly unremarkable vignette takes on Shakespearean proportions, in every way thinkable.



“It goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me italic a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave overhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours...”

Hamlet’s speech articulated by a man dressed in a threadbare jersey who lives by his wits on the pavements of Hillbrow, is powerfully poignant. More so because he has notable ability in this exacting role.

Like the wheel of fortune so often referred to by Shakespeare the confluence of these men’s lives with Gould’s seems to have been a destiny predetermined, pitted with the “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune”.

The story begins in July 2012, when Gould “gate-crashed the Monday tea and sandwich day that The Good Shepherd Group from St George’s Anglican Church in Parktown offers the homeless in Hillbrow. “I asked the men whether they might like voice and acting classes. We started that same day,” recalls Gould.

Since then, the danger of life on the streets has claimed the life of Tshepo, one of her initiates, and the only girl in the group fell pregnant, fell desperately ill and disappeared.

An 18-year-old, who cried for the loss of his parents to Aids, became a rent boy and also disappeared.

Those who have stuck the course use this Monday session as a compass for the week, a beacon of hope for a better future. Gould has become the mother that many of them don’t have. “I wasn’t lucky enough to have my own children. These are my children, and they know I love them,” says the husky-voiced actress as she prepares the group for a breathing exercise.

What she has tried to do with her homeless thespians is “make them feel deeply again, to trust each other, and support each other in class as well as out of it, to heal themselves through releasing emotions in their work here”.

It is a high aim, given the anguished tales that many of them have to tell. “My mother passed away in 2004, and my stepmother and I would fight all the time.

She once nearly poured boiling water over me. I left home when I was 18,” says Gift Mbhengu, now 28 and surviving on Hillbrow streets “hustling” every day for food. Sometimes he gets a piece job distributing pamphlets at intersections – for R40 a day.

A clutch of these men live in the park at the end of Keyes Avenue in Rosebank and they walk to their Monday classes.

Among them is 22-year old Sibusiso Magubane, who once had a bright future as a student at the University of Johannesburg, but then he got “bust” for selling “weed”, which he says was financing his studies. “My mother passed away in 2010 and my father has deserted me so he is dead to me now too,” he says. Sibusiso still sells weed, and makes about R60 a day.

“Hustling” means you are selling a service, not begging on the streets, Magubane says. Still like all these men being homeless you get robbed, harassed by the police and assaulted by others on the streets.

Yet when they are in their Monday group, their troubles fall away for a while and their dreams take flight. Gould starts the morning by making sure they eat – they’re often running on empty” – so she picks up food donations from The Good Shepherd group and St Michael’s church in Bryanston.

All these men suffer the wounds of abandonment, but in Gould they have found a consistent guide and a reason to hope. Shakespeare, she says, was what they themselves chose to perform, because they say he speaks about them and their condition”. But they also perform their own writings, and in their repertoire is a pretty cool rap song themed on their own torn lives. They came up with a name for the group, JAM, which means Johannesburg Awakening Minds. And as their confidence levels rise, opportunities are opening up.

Last year the group performed at Joburg Theatre’s Space.com venue for a week and at a luncheon launch of Arts Alive. They also put on a few shows at PopArt at Arts on Main in

December: This year; on June 15, they will perform an adaptation of *Hamlet* – by one of Gould’s students, UnatiNwayo for The Shakespeare Society of South Africa.

Some of the group have casting agents and been cast in small roles or as extras.

Everyone who works with them loves them. This is their life and their passion, to have a skill and a place where they feel they belong,” says Gould.

For Eric Masilo from Rustenburg, it is part of God’s plan that he found his way to this group. “I used to cry a lot when I thought about my situation. But now I don’t ask questions. I leave it in the hands of God,” says the young father of two. Again, Shakespeare comes to mind:

“God shall be my hope, my stay, my guide and lantern to my feet.” – from *Henry V*.

## **“As You Like It”** (In Japan perhaps?)

Submitted by **GUY YOUNG** with more than a little help from **DAVID WILLIAMS**.

The first semester of the Johannesburg Shakespeare Circle featured the play *As You Like It* initially by a BBC video of the play featuring Helen Mirren as Rosalind and later the contentious 2006 film version produced and directed by Kenneth Branagh that was set in Japan. The two versions are so diametrically opposed in setting and interpretation that Digby Ricci was invited to talk on the play and give his views on the merits of the latter.

To set the scene Digby opened his talk by reading from Marlowe’s “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” and Raleigh’s “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd”.

### **The passionate Shepherd to his Love**

Come live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That hills and valleys, dale and field,  
And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks,  
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,  
By shallow rivers to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There I will make thee beds of roses  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle  
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,  
With coral clasps and amber studs;  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me, and be my love.

Thy silver dishes for thy meat  
As precious as the gods do eat,  
Shall on an ivory table be  
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May-morning:  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me and be my love.

**Christopher Marlowe**

### **The Nymph’s reply to the Shepherd**

If all the world and love were young,  
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,  
These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold  
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold,  
And Philomel becometh dumb;  
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields  
To wayward winter reckoning yields;  
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,  
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall,

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,  
 Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies  
 Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten—  
 In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,  
 Thy coral clasps and amber studs,  
 All these in me no means can move  
 To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,  
 Had joys no date nor age no need,  
 Then these delights my mind might move  
 To live with thee and be thy love.

**Walter Raleigh** (Written in response to Marlowe's poem)

The two poems neatly demonstrate the gulf between the romantic passion of the man and the down to earth response of the woman. In the play there appear to be two passionate “shepherds” (Orlando and Silvius) and two “nymphs” (Rosalind and Phebe). The two couples are from diametrically opposite sectors of the social spectrum; Orlando and Rosalind from the perfumed court whereas Silvius and Phebe are mere humble peasants. The play develops around the theme of the relationship between man and woman as portrayed by Rosalind's reaction to Orlando's advances and also behavioural differences between the courtly urbane and the rustic idyll. The play opens with treachery and hatred but ends on a happy note of confession of guilt, love and forgiveness and the return of the exiled to their respective stations in life.

Following his brief analysis of the play Digby spoke on productions from the seventeenth century to the present day and the interpretation and portrayal of the central character of Rosalind. With reference to the film production by Kenneth Branagh he was dubious of the value of the setting of the play in late 19th century Japan but full of praise for the cast especially of the portrayal of Rosalind by Bryce Dallas Howard and her delivery of the epilogue, now in every-day attire, from the steps of the caravan that served as her dressing-room.

The presentation was given to an appreciative audience in the auditorium of Roede an School on Tuesday 10th June 2014.

## Rufford Old Hall

Submitted by GUY YOUNG

Rufford Old Hall – home to the Heskeths for 500 years – and its Great Hall was once the stage for a young William Shakespeare before he was famous.

Fantastic furniture, arms, armour and tapestries sweep through the hall, and history springs in to life in the Hesketh's dining room, its food-laden table, lit candles and ‘fire in the hearth’ waiting to welcome the family's dinner guests.

Stroll through Rufford's glorious Victorian and Edwardian gardens – and remember you're only a few feet (or meters) above sea level – making Rufford one of the lowest lying National Trust gardens in England.

When I left school but prior to the start of my meagre tertiary education I took a job as a builder's labourer and was privileged to work on the extensive renovations of this wonderful house. When I got there the renovations of the Great Hall were virtually complete but there was still work to be done in the later 18th century extensions. During my time there two eminent scholars from London visited the house in connection with their researches on the early life of the Bard. They had established that a certain Master Shakeshafte had worked in the Hesketh's company of players both at Rufford and their other estate north of Preston. To my knowledge it has never been substantiated that Shakeshafte was the young Shakespeare.



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## Important to Note

**If you are affiliated to a Branch of SSoSA please effect payment to your Branch at your early convenience.**

At the Triennial Congress (4 July 2009) it was decided that from January 2010 each branch will set an appropriate branch membership fee. Subscription to the *SiSA* journal will be divorced from membership of SSoSA. Members wishing to receive the *SiSA* journal will pay R160.00, and should notify the Secretary (Carol Leff) of their intention. For **overseas members** there is a **charge of \$30 for the Journal, inclusive of FOREX and postage.**

For persons subscribing to the Journal, we would appreciate it if you did not send a cheque but made a payment via the internet. If you do not do

electronic banking, then a cheque (not cash) should be deposited into our account at your local bank. Our account is:-

**Grahamstown Foundation  
Standard Bank  
Grahamstown  
Branch code 050917  
a/c number 081996071**

**N.B. The account is NOT under the name of 'The Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa'.**

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