

Fashion, Footwear, Gold and Gilding in Shakespeare's Time

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Techniques for making golden shoes, hats as engagement presents, and brooches worn by actors and audience members will be discussed at the Shakespeare Institute's 'Everyday Objects' Conference from 27 – 30 June.

Experts on material culture from UK universities will gather at the University of Birmingham's Stratford base to discuss clothing, personal objects, furniture and what these items meant to the people of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Shoes play a large part in this year's conference when academics will be discussing the way that footwear changed as a result of the provision of more public spaces, parks and 'walking for pleasure' – men's shoes became more functional and women's shoes became stylish, but impractical. Techniques in shoe making improved and even gold and gilded shoes could be manufactured, but were criticised as extravagant by the masses.

The connections between objects and relationships will be explored as wills and inventories from the time suggest that hats may have been sent to loved ones as a courtship gift and were involved in the complex social negotiations of the marriage process.

Experts will explore how small items of clothing were used using portraits, surviving garments, reconstructed clothing and the dramatic use of pins and laces in Shakespeare's plays. The small objects found at the site of the Rose Theatre in London included 685 pins and 58 aiglets – pieces of lace that were used to fasten clothes together.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Based in Mason Croft, an eighteenth-century house with gardens and grounds in the centre of Stratford-upon-Avon, the Shakespeare Institute gives its students the friendliness of being part of a close-knit academic community while offering the academic resources needed for specialist postgraduate work on the drama of the English Renaissance. The Institute is affiliated to the Department of English, University of Birmingham. www.shakespeare.bham.ac.uk

For further information

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