

QUESTION 7

Are there any clear links to be made between Shakespeare's plays and the area around Stratford-upon-Avon?

David Kathman

Shakespeare wrote his plays primarily for a London audience, but they still contain plenty of signs that the author came from the area around Stratford-upon-Avon. For one thing, they're peppered with dialect words from Warwickshire and the West Midlands, such as "wappered", meaning tired, and "geck", meaning fool. But there are also many specific references to people and places from the area around Stratford, as in 'Henry the Fourth Part Two', where Silence calls Falstaff "Goodman Puff of Barson", referring to a Warwickshire village. The induction to 'The Taming of the Shrew' is full of such allusions, including Barton-on-the-Heath, where Shakespeare's aunt and uncle lived, and "Marian Hacket, the fat alewife of Wincot", referring to a village four miles from Stratford where a real Hacket family lived in the 1590s. These references are consistent with the frequent rural imagery in the plays, reflecting Shakespeare's lifelong fondness for the area where he grew up.