

## Shakespeare Club of Stratford-upon-Avon

**The 918th meeting of the Shakespeare Club, took place on Tuesday 8 May 2018.** The speaker was Glyn Jones, who spoke on “Plans for the five gardens associated with parts of Shakespeare’s life”. The meeting was chaired by Mary Reardon.

Glyn Jones became Head of Gardens for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in February 2016 having spent 17 years transforming Hidcote Manor Gardens for the National Trust. His role at the SBT, offering a strategic lead on the gardens, was a new one.

Mr Jones explained his over-all strategy was to give each of the gardens its own spirit using a different range of plants in each garden. He also intended to give the Trust’s gardens individuality to distinguish them from other gardens open to the public.

He outlined specific developments at each garden in turn. For example at the Birthplace he hoped to produce an urban oasis within its 1 acre, softening the noise of the road, while at Hall’s Croft a new herb garden is being created in recognition of John Hall, Shakespeare’s son-in-law, a well-known doctor.

Mr Jones aims to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century gardening ideas which acknowledging the historic importance of the sites. Some of the many ideas he outlined include increasing diversity by creating a wildflower meadow in the orchard at Anne Hathaway’s Cottage, improving the management of the gardens by composting waste and creating an appropriate planting scheme at the Birthplace Garden, introducing Asian plants into the area where statues of Indian, Pakistani and Chinese poets are located.

The historic garden designs and ideas of early 20<sup>th</sup> century plantswoman Ellen Wilmott and Ernest Law are being reintroduced at New Place and Anne Hathaway’s Cottage, and SBT is collaborating with scientists at Horticulture Research International at Wellesbourne to revive historic varieties of plants.

Commercial opportunities are also being investigated including the creation of Mulberry Gin using the fruit of the Trust’s many mulberry trees.

Mr Jones’s interesting and beautifully-illustrated talk led to many questions and after the meeting ended at 9.10 pm the discussion continued over refreshments, served for the first time in the hall.

