

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY - A ROYAL OCCASION

"Sir, you are very welcome to our house: it must appear in other ways than words, therefore I scant this breathing courtesy." Thus wrote Shakespeare in "The Merchant of Venice." Thus he might have spoken to the King and Queen, as the Royal car arrives at Stratford-on-Avon, the Warwickshire town where he was bred and born. It is the first visit of a reigning monarch to the Bard's birthplace and Stratford is out to make a day of it.

The half-timbered house in Henley Street - where Shakespeare was born - and its beautiful garden are first on the Royal family's list of sights. The visit is a curtain-raiser to capacity business in a town where selling and telling Shakespeare (now dead more than 300 years) is still the main industry. Stratford's 14,000 residents expect to welcome more than two million tourists before the season ends in October. Though the Bard's exact birthday is not known for certain, the Royal visit comes in the week, during which the poet's anniversary is commonly celebrated.

The Memorial Theatre is the next Royal call and Mr. Anthony Eden - member of Parliament for the nearby Warwick district - is among those who welcome the distinguished guests to Shakespeare's stage.

In a tour-behind-the-scenes, the Royal party look in on a rehearsal of "Julius Caesar." Later, they were to see a special performance of "King Henry the 8th." Its leading players, Miss Gwen Davies and

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