

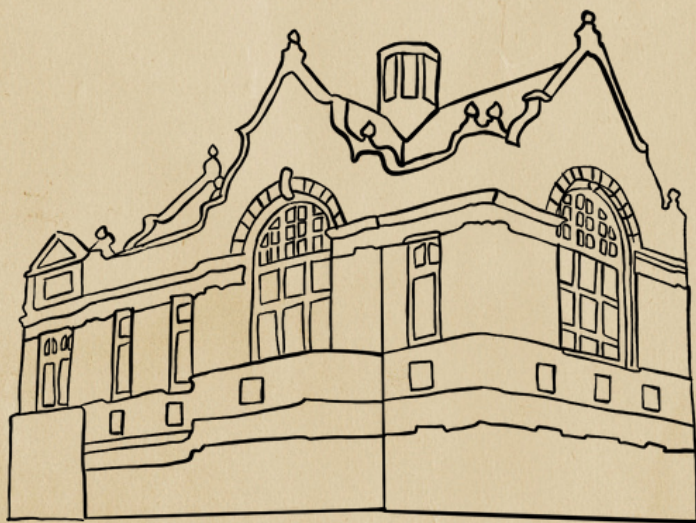
To the Reader.

We start with a familiar rhyme
And hold a mirror up to time.
Think on a tome to which we owe
Those stories past; a folio.
Our authors who have writ their truth
Not fame'd Bard, but today's youth.
Will delving deep into their past
Confirm their fate has long been cast?
Or understanding what they've found
They'll forge their paths, futures unbound?

OUR HERITAGE: UNBOUND

A FOLIO OF YOUNG PEOPLES' WORK
EXTRACTS FROM PLAYS
MONOLOGUES &
LETTERS

Published following workshops in schools and colleges
across London and the South East



LONDON

**Commissioned and compiled by Omnibus Theatre with
the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund**

2024



To the great Variety of Readers

Foreword by Charlie Dupré - Playwright, Composer E

My play *Composer E* dramatises the lives of the typesetters who physically manufactured the first ever collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, and through this process were able to pass down some of his most famous works, which otherwise would have been lost to history. The play was produced by Omnibus Theatre in September 2023 in celebration of the 400th anniversary of this collected edition - known as the First Folio.

Alongside the production, we ran a series of workshops for students in London and the South-East. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, these encouraged participants to think about the different aspects of their heritage and then use their own written compositions to respond to the story of the First Folio composers making their gifts to posterity.

This book - our *Young Folio* - contains the results of that work. I hope it can itself function as a response to the First Folio by reflecting the power of the written word, the articulated self, and the importance of passing things on!

Foreword by Alice Eve
Folio Curator & Learning and Participation Producer

This folio, as well as the exhibition and digital space that accompanies it, tells the story of young people using their heritage to understand who they are, where they come from, and what they might become.

With the support of the Heritage Lottery fund, we were able to work with local schools and colleges to continue conversations around history, heritage, and the impact of the First Folio.

In sessions facilitated by Charlie Dupré, students have learned about the First Folio's making, history, and impact, including the role of Isaac Jaggard. Some students have researched a person from the 1600s who has been an inspiration. Young people have reflected on 17th century worker's rights, witchcraft, persecution, and gender relations throughout history. Some students even took part in a book-binding workshop where they hand-bound their very own book!

Most importantly, as seen in this collection, they've used their own creative voices and created a 21st century written response to the first folio, platforming their new learning and their own heritage.

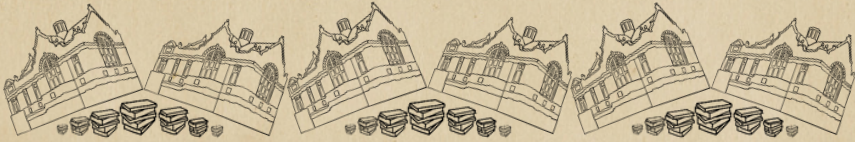
The main body of this folio has been divided into four sections to reflect the different ways in which young people chose to explore their heritage; Question, Asking for Help, Inheritance, and Admiration. There is a fifth section where a selection of work from the first workshops series has been included. Care has been taken to emulate the First Folio as much as possible in our version, from formatting, to illustrations, from preliminaries, and to hand book-binding.

Each school who participated in this project received a copy of the folio, and one copy will remain at Omnibus Theatre in Clapham, London. It is available to view online on the Omnibus Theatre website, and in-person at the Our Heritage: Unbound exhibition at Omnibus Theatre, opening in March 2024-2025. A preview of this additional content is featured in this folio's preliminary pages, so read on to check out blogs by experts on Shakespeare and the First Folio.

Thank you to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Charlie Dupré, Emma Smith, Chris Laoutaris, Mylyn McColl, and Shepherds London for supporting this project.



Mind map made by Charlie Dupré during school workshops. To open conversations about shared and personal heritage, he created this mind map to illustrate different types of heritage. He categorised Cultural, Material, Ancestral, and Psychological.



Now that Shakespeare can be read in cheap paperbacks or online, streamed, sampled, and reviewed in the theatre or on film, why should we care about the First Folio?

If the First Folio gave us Shakespeare, it is also an important testimony to all the other people who make great art possible... Some of them are named, others are lost, but their work survives.

The First Folio has come to be seen as the ultimate testament to a great solo genius – Shakespeare himself – but in fact it is actually a manifesto for team work. Art – especially the collaborative art of the theatre – exists in community.

Most of us, however much we might hope otherwise, won't actually become epic writers like Shakespeare. But many of us will have the opportunity to support talented artists – by sharing their work, talking

about them, buying tickets or books, working in the industries around them that make creativity possible and bring it to audiences. The First Folio is a reminder of the vital importance of readers, workers, and advocates who bring their skills to the work of individual creativity.

In preserving Shakespeare, the First Folio also preserves the craft and commitment of a whole support crew, in the playhouse, printing house, and book shop.

Extracts from a blog written for the Our Heritage: Unbound Exhibition at Omnibus Theatre, 2024, by Emma Smith. Available to read online.

Emma Smith is the author of *The Making of Shakespeare's First Folio* (2023), and Professor of Shakespeare Studies at Hertford College, Oxford



On 14 October 2020 a particularly prized lot went on sale at Christie's auction house in New York: a first edition of Mr William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies, the collected plays of Shakespeare, also known as the First Folio. This was one of 235 known copies to have survived, from an estimated initial print-run of around 750, issued in 1623, just over seven years after the dramatist's death. When the gavel went down on an eye-watering price-tag of, near enough, ten million dollars, the volume made history as the most expensive literary work ever sold.

In Anglophone cultures around the world, those who have used or come across phrases like 'sea change', 'brave new world', 'thereby hangs a tale', 'at one fell swoop', 'the be-all and the end-all', 'break the ice', 'what's done is done', 'rhyme nor reason', 'too much of a

good thing', and 'it's Greek to me', will have uttered, heard or read a commonplace saying that has become popularised thanks to its inclusion in a Folio play.

And this does not include the countless Shakespearean coinages that have become a regular part of English language usage, nor versions of Folio adages that have been translated into countless other languages.

Extracts from a blog written for the Our Heritage: Unbound Exhibition at Omnibus Theatre, 2024, by Dr Chris Laoutaris. Available to read online.

Dr Chris Laoutaris, Associate Professor at the Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-Upon-Avon, and author of Shakespeare's Book: The Intertwined Lives Behind the First Folio (William Collins), also published in the USA/Canada as Shakespeare's Book: The Story Behind the First Folio and the Making of Shakespeare (Pegasus)



QUESTION

As part of these workshops, students were asked to learn about their families heritage and reflect on this in session. The following examples of work have been brought together as they represent the questions that emerged from this learning.

Young people understood the knowledge and wisdom that could be found from connecting with your heritage, often through conversations with family members. For some, learning about their past made them question what the future held for them; would they take up the family trade, make the same choices as those who came before them, or forge their own path? We also found that upon learning about their heritage, some young people felt that they wanted to distance themselves from what they saw as traditions and restrictions.

At this critical time of a young person's life, they are asking questions of their identity more than ever. When reflecting upon their heritage, it is not a surprise that what felt urgent to these students was how to use this learning to inform their growing sense of self and purpose in the world.



Question



ERROR 404: HERITAGE NOT FOUND

Lost.

Who am - ...?

Who am I...?

What am I really?

Am I really human - ..?

I don't feel I belong here.

Nowhere on this planet feels like home.

Where did I come from? AM I real?

Why does it even matter? Does it even matter?

Why should I care who my ancestors were

I want to know - to squish myself into the category -...

Even if the label never truly fits.

The Thomas Aveling School

Question



DANCER

I have always been a dancer, but I don't really know where it came from. I have always been interested in dance. Where did my passion start? How did it become one of the most important and valued parts of my life? I know my mum always wanted to be a dancer but was told she couldn't. Did my mum put me in dance to fulfill her dreams? Does that mean if I quit, will she be disappointed in me? What if I do not want to dance anymore, will she force me to continue? Or what if I do continue will I then force it onto my children, what if they don't enjoy it?

St. Bernard's High School

Question



HOPE FOR MY FAMILY

Dad?

Yes, Son?

I, have questions

Ok then I'll answer

How did you escape war?

All I had was hope for my family.

I was put in a small boat

With many and managed to reach some safety

Now I can achieve what my parents wanted me achieving

Wow, amazing story dad, I never would have known.

The Thomas Aveling School

Question



I DON'T WANT TO REGRET

Starley starts to walk to her workplace but is also thinking to herself

I wonder what's going to happen today, it just seems boring getting up in the morning just to go to work when you can be doing something more fun... in your life.

Now speaking to the audience

My whole family works in business and that's what I always wanted to do since I was younger but... as time goes on... that's not what I want to do no more. I want to be free. I want to have fun all the time but I don't know how to do that... I just feel lost. Sometimes taking risks work but that only happens when you're lucky because it doesn't always work that way. I don't want that to happen but I also don't want to regret my life decisions.

St. Bernard's High School

Question



DESPERATION

I don't think you are the villain you are portrayed to be: cruel, callous, unfeeling. I think there is something deeper that dictates your response to the knowledge you will finally be able to help your husband get what he desires, although this may have been in an unconventional way. The knowledge that you would not be able to have children must have warped society's perception of you – the role of perfect mother and home maker suddenly became unattainable. Desperation is a powerful force and I think it undoubtedly pushed you to act in ways you never would have done before. It unlocked something in you.

Rosebery School

Question



WHERE DOES IT END?

In my grandparents tree in their garden, and I have climbed as high as I can. I am alone talking to myself.

Sighs

Oh I miss this. I miss this tree. I miss a lot of things about my life. I don't even know what's real about myself anymore. Is that who I am, who I've been told to be. I mean I think I enjoy baking, but is that just who I've been told I have to be. You know... my mum bakes, my nan, my great nan, my great great nan, my great aunt... the list goes on and on.

Sighs

But where does it end? And it's not just baking... It's most things about me... photography, reading, acting, graphic design... where does it end? Is this even me talking? Or the person THEY told me to be?

St. Bernard's High School

Question



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

“What’s in a name?” “Is it who I am?” Is it who I was or is it who I should be? Names are thrown around, tossed flippantly from person to person but to what avail? My name haunts me, the ghosts of my past chasing my every moment. He haunts me. The impact that his actions had upon me means that my name haunts me. The thing that discerns me from others, the last you’ll hear of my name keeps me awake. It disturbs my every dream, every nightmare. It reminds me of who I am, who I was, who I should be. What I couldn’t been with him and who I am without. My name will always remain mine, but was it ever mine to start with? No, it has been and will always be his. We are eternally connected. Me and him. Him and I. We will always be an ‘us’ even if there is no longer a ‘we’!

Rosebery School

Question



CONVERSATION WITH GRANDAD

Escaped?

I did.

Were you scared?

No, I was hopeful.

How did you survive it?

I thought of my family's future.

And did you live happily after?

Yes, the warm traditions of France welcomed me.

And what do you want your children to remember?

Nothing of the war, only of what is to be.

The Thomas Aveling School

Question



I WONDER WHY I LIKE...

I wonder why... why I like sports, cooking. Dancing, for example... is it because my cousin likes it and it sprung from her interest. IS IT EVEN my interest at all, or just something I haven't disliked yet. Or do I just love it. Love it because it allow me to move up and down and use all my energy until I'm so out of breathe it feels like my lungs will collapse. Because there are no boundaries constricting my movement. Did these interests form from the past – passions or regrets of people. I haven't even ment – my grandad he liked to dance, and I know my grandma was sporty. I don't really have the answers or know if I ever will. However I do know this. I truly do love dancing.

St. Bernard's High School



ASKING FOR HELP

After discovering more about figures in their shared or personal heritage, many students took the opportunity to reflect on what they could learn from influential figures in their past.

Whether it be family members, ancestors, or cultural heritage figures - these young people all sought guidance in some way from people who had gone before them.

With so many major life decisions on the horizon, this project gave young people the opportunity to take inspiration from the past in order to inform their futures.

In some of these creative responses, requests for help are not always answered, the imagined historical figures remaining silent. What this section of work demonstrates is the power that animating history can have. Learning about these historical figures has helped a younger generation with contemporary issues.



Asking for Help



DEAR RICHARD BURBAGE

Dear Richard Burbage,

My name is Muhammad. I'm writing this letter 405 years after your death date and I don't know if you are going to be able to read this but I really need you in my life right now. I have an audition for drama school and I'm lost. I know it would be so easy for you if it was your audition. I beg you to help me. I know that now you're thinking "How the hell can I help you I'm dead". But I have a solution for that. I'm going to sleep early tonight and you can come to my dreams and then you will have a couple of hours to give me some tips. My dad always says you early, you on time, you on time, you late, and you late, you're rude. Please don't be late.

Kind regards
Muhammad

Asking for Help



HOW DO I SUCCEED IN LIFE?

Can you hear me?

Yes, I'm here.

How do I succeed in life?

Never stop doing your all.

How did you get into football?

I was just fascinated by it in the streets of Brazil.

How do I get better at football?

Just keep training and the skill will come.

Thank you.

You're welcome.

The St Leonards Academy

Asking for Help



SWIMMING

My mum
Did it before
She trained and competed
And now I do it
She says my trainer is soft
But that's because she trained in USSR
Now I compete and wish to be as
Good as she was to be honest I might be already

The Thomas Aveling School

Asking for Help



WHERE DO YOU RECCOMEND?

Hi Grandma,

Hello Teejay, how are you?

I am doing alright thanks. What about you?

I'm missing my days of travelling.

I really want to explore the world.

I've already done that.

Where do you recommend?

Portugal, South Africa and Holland

Thank you so much

You're welcome.

The St Leonards Academy



INHERITANCE

Unsurprisingly, when prompted to reflect on their heritage, many young people thought about inheritance, or the notion of what is handed down through families.

Whilst some students have used more material examples - possessions passed down across generations - some have taken the ideas associated with heritage and heirlooms and thought more about how their parent's or families experiences affect them; what traditions, crafts, loves, and fears are passed down.

Perhaps more so than any section of this folio, the following work ranges from positive feelings of pride, to recognising the fear or trauma that contributes to the patchwork making them who they are today. Some responses in this section demonstrate that young people are not only aware of the fact they are the recipient of shared experiences, but also their responsibility to generations in the future. These young people imagine a future where young people are looking back and learning from lessons of today.



Inheritance



THE NECKLACE

You didn't personally give it to me. No, no. I received it long after you were gone. Was it meant for me? I won't know, I cannot ask now but I knew when I placed the silver heart shaped necklace around my neck that it was. Looking back I often admired the necklace and the blue jewels that shimmered at the centre of it. You didn't personally give it to me, but I wear it as though it was intended for me and with the pleasure of calling what once was yours, mine.

Rosebery School

Inheritance



WEDNESDAY

My Ghanaian name: Akua Agyemang because my name means 'girl born on a Wednesday' and whichever day you're born on, you get that particular name. Pronounced Aquea in English. And my Grandmother's name is 'Akua'. But if I was a boy my name would be 'Kwaku'

On planet Mars, two bored bestfriends, one alien and one human, are enjoying lunch in school in the dining hall.

Monday: I love Mondays

Human: I hate Mondays. I like Tuesdays.

Monday: Why?

Human: Because it's not Monday.

Monday: What...

Human: What I mean is that, once it hits 12:00 am it's not the beginning of the week anymore, it's TUESDAY!!!

Monday: Ah, ok.

Human: So you understand?

Monday: No.

St. Bernard's High School

Inheritance



MY PARENTS ARE FROM SRI LANKA

Bang. Boom. The bombs are exploding.

This feels like torture, this feels like hell. I want this to end. RIGHT NOW! I'm hidden under the ground. My legs are trembling. Goosebumps are shivering down my spine. I worry, I wanna scream. If only this could end. Bombs keep exploding. My mind's blank, all I can think about is death. I hear scream, people crying for help. I want to get out of this place and save them. Something's holding me back, THE FEAR of DEATH. I can't breathe. I'm at a loss of words.

BANG. AHHHH

I've heard that voice before. I remember it. OH NO, it's my mom. I feel paralyzed. I want to scream my lungs out. It can't be her can it? She can't leave me to endure her pain. She just can't. I wait desperately for the bombing to end.

St. Bernard's High School

Inheritance



IT IS NO WONDER GIRLS ESCAPE TO LITERATURE...

“It is no wonder girls escape to literature, it’s because real life has not made space for them”, I hope to pass down my words to you. And steeped within them you should find my knowledge, heart and soul. I hope soon you shall find your space in this world. That each piece of writing you find yourself consumed in will enrich your time here, savour every word and let it linger both on your tongue and your mind. Spread that word far, have no shame as that can only restrict what I know you to be capable of. Feel me own hand and soul guide your pen or your eyes. On cannot be lonesome when alongside the company of your own words. Perhaps you cannot control the words on your tombstone but you can only hope to inspire those who find it.

Rosebery School

Inheritance



BOXING

Boxing
My dad
He was good
My great grandad also
He earned lots of medals
He completed in lots of competitions
My great grandad did a lot of boxing
He was a professional boxer and was good

The Thomas Aveling School

Inheritance



THE SAME MISTAKES

I pass this along to a generation who are experiencing Covid 97, from one who witnessed Covid 19. We were always wary of the vaccine, whether it had long term effects of not and now you have this diary, it has become evident to the generation of the 2090s that the destructive virus has returned. This diary explains the mistakes my generation made and how self isolation prevented the killing virus but affected all of us. Cooped up in our house. A lack of supplies, not knowing whether we were going to win the war against coronavirus or not. And now you are reading this you are fully aware of the strength and destructive force of her, will your medical advancements be enough to destroy the virus? Here's a warning: people turned on people, countries on countries, doctors on doctors. Do not make the same mistakes we did.

Rosebery School

Inheritance



PRESSURE

I am so tired... I am stressed, I am worried and I feel like I am not good enough. Dancing has always been such a big deal in my life ever since my mum introduced it to me when I was little. But the difference is that back then I didn't put pressure on myself to try and be the best I can to prove myself to others. I know I would never say that out loud, especially my mum because she loves that I do it as she used to dance when she was little... I love dancing with all my heart... I love dancing with all my heart... but now it's about trying to be the best than having fun.

St. Bernard's High School

Inheritance



A PART OF ME

My first name, as far as I know, doesn't have that much that much or any background. However, the rest of my name is deep with interesting history that I would like to pass down to you. Charlotte, my middle name, has been a name passed down somehow to every female on my mother's side, like me with it being my middle name. One of my first last names was given to me by my dad, is English, whilst the other was passed down for generations, dating back to the Tudors. "Bullen" "Bolyn", however you want to pronounce it, has been changed over time, the spelling, the pronunciation, the meaning, but is still a part of me.

Rosebery School



ADMIRATION

Finally, this folio ends on the pieces of work that reflect admiration for figures that make up a young person's heritage.

Despite the range of feelings, responses, and learning shown by young people as part of this project it is essential to conclude on these creative responses which illustrate the positive impact that the past has on our future.

In these pieces, young people write to figures in their history to thank them for the work they did. They recall how it has influenced their lives today, and the hope they have that they will one day have the same impact on others.

This chapter is a reminder to us all of what can be gained from peering into our history (shared or personal) and learning from those who came before us.



Admiration



DEAR GIL VICENTE

Dear Gil Vicente,

I would like to thank you for writing *Auto da Barca do Inferno* (Act of the Ship of Hell), where I learned the old Portuguese Language which made learning my own language less boring and more entertaining, and made me more curious of the history of my first language.

Also for making me fall more in love with the art of theatre, when I saw that play live in a school trip, in which I felt so entertained and immersed into the show, and that made me be more certain that this is what I really wanted to study about, which is why I come to London and I'm studying Performing and Production of Arts.

From an enthusiastic admirer of Arts,
Paula

Dear admirer of Arts

Thank you very much for enjoying my play and the ancient Portuguese Language, which I believe evolved a lot since my time. Continue to enjoy the theatre and the wonders of life.

Your appreciated play writer,
Gil Vicente.

Lambeth College

Admiration



DEAR ME

Dear, me

I want to start off by thanking you for changing my life. Your work has had such a profound effect on me. You have been a source of inspiration for most of my life. Your work has spoken to me like no other. I have learned so much from just listening to your voice. I love how passionate you are about what you do and how this is reflected in your work.

Yours truly,
Rachel

Lambeth College

Admiration



KURT COBAIN

Hello Kurt Corbain

Hi Caspian

How is your band going?

It is good

I really like your guitar riffs, could you teach me your technique

Sure

Everyone always says I look like you

We have similar hair!!

Yes

And similar style in clothes

Yes it was great speaking to you

The St Leonards Academy

Admiration



YOU BECAME MY HOPE

You appeared when I thought it was the end
You wrote the end in a different way, a way that I did not
know of. The end that's a new beginning when I was
about to write my fullstop. You took the pen and wrote
and...

Just before I close my eyes and give up you lighted a
candle to show me what I had!

You became my home so can be it to others

You became my hope so I can give it to others

The fire you gave me is keeping me going and giving light
to others.

I could have stopped breathing, but I knew that not all air
is as toxic as this

I could have closed me eyes and let you go but I knew
they gonna see what I can only see in my mind

Stopping your thoughts wasn't an options.

I knew they will change you and the world.

Lambeth College