

MAY MONTHLY MEETING AND AGM

The Chair welcomed 118 members to the May meeting which included the second AGM of Beccles U3A. The draft minutes of the AGM can be viewed via the link to [2016 AGM Draft Minutes](#) in the side bar. These draft minutes are subject to approval at the third AGM which will be held on 17th May 2017.

The AGM was followed by a talk by Mark Mitchels.



Mark Mitchels – Shakespeare's Globe: A groundling's view.

What was it like to attend a performance in the Globe Theatre in the early 17th century? This fascinating talk by the ever-entertaining Mark Mitchels described the experience of play-going for ordinary Londoners.

Mark explained that the entertainment of the time comprised gory public executions and gruesome bear baiting where the poor bear was devoured by dogs. The same people would then cross the river to visit the theatre where the environment was muddy fields and filled with pickpockets, brothels and prostitutes. It was exciting and the audience could interact with the actors. The stage was generally in the courtyard of an inn and the audience were standing throughout except for those who had stayed there who could view from their balcony. There was no scenery or lighting and the audience was on all four sides. Money was collected in a bucket at the end of the performance, however whilst the actors were taking their final bow most people disappeared without paying.

It was agreed to build a permanent theatre and a group of actors lent money for this and became shareholders. In 1576 James Burbage built The Theatre in north London, the first permanent dedicated theatre built in England since Roman times. It could house 3000 and there was a portable stage so it could also be used for bear baiting if required. However in 1598 it was dismantled and re-erected in Southwark and the name changed to The Globe. Money was collected on entry in boxes by 'gatherers' who took the final takings to the box office. Plays only ran for one day so it was extremely demanding for actors who had to learn 15 – 20 plays. Female parts were played by young boys.

Now that a permanent theatre had been established it was possible to have scenery, curtains and trapdoors and the costumes were of top quality and the most valuable asset. Shakespeare was one of the shareholders and became a wealthy man, retiring to Stratford.

In 1612 The Globe burnt down and was rebuilt on a grander scale on the same site. In 1642 it was pulled down. Hundreds of years later Sam Wanamaker had it rebuilt on a site close to the original but died before he saw it come to fruition. The Globe operates without any subsidy and plays to 85% capacity playing to a completely new generation who appreciate Shakespeare. *Vicki John*

AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING

Due to further alterations taking place at Beccles Public Hall, the venue for the August Meeting will be at Hungate Church. Doors open at 9.45am with refreshments being served until 10.20 in the foyer. Please note food and drink can not be taken into the church. The meeting will start at 10.30.

