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978-0-521-14681-4 - The Merry Wives of Windsor, Updated Edition

Edited by David Crane

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THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

This new edition of Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* focuses on a theatrical understanding of the play. While emphasising the liveliness of the play in stage terms, David Crane also claims that this citizen comedy needs to be taken much more seriously than in the past, as an expression of Shakespeare's fundamental understanding of human life, conveyed centrally in the character of Falstaff. In the process he also examines Shakespeare's free and vigorous use of different linguistic worlds within the play. The revision of this edition includes a response to some current arguments about the dating of *Merry Wives*, and also considers how recent productions bear upon the critical and theatrical account Crane gives of the play.

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Edited by

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Research Fellow in the University of Wales at Lampeter



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PREFACE

The Merry Wives of Windsor has at most times been a popular play on the stage, but it has not been one by which Shakespeare is chiefly known and thought about. Even the presence of Falstaff has often merely invited somewhat slighting comparison with the two great histories, *The First Part* and *The Second Part of King Henry IV*, in which he also appears. I hope this edition will emphasise the degree to which *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is alive in stage terms, but that it will also bring to the reader's attention how great a linguistic triumph the play is and how profound an understanding it conveys of what it means to be alive and not dead.

My old friend, Tom Craik, published his edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for the Oxford Shakespeare in 1990, and I have profited immensely from it, as well as owing a great deal in the preparation of my own edition to frequent discussion with him. Inevitably, and happily, the play seems somewhat different focused through his understanding of it and through mine, but I think neither of us would say we had no need of the other understanding.

My indebtedness is so great, in the pages that follow, both to people I know personally and to those known only in print, that the small space of a preface will not record it in detail; but I could not fail here to thank Brian Gibbons, the General Editor of the New Cambridge Shakespeare, for his constant help and encouragement; nor end without my warmest and most affectionate thanks to the staff of Bishop Cosin's Library in Durham, who gave me an academic home and a place to work in when I badly needed it.

D. L. C.

Durham

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Shakespeare's plays, when cited in this edition, are abbreviated in a style modified slightly from that used in the *Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare*. Other editions of Shakespeare are abbreviated under the editor's surname (Rowe, Eccles) unless they are the work of more than one editor. In such cases, an abbreviated series title is used (Cam.). When more than one edition by the same editor is cited, later editions are discriminated with a raised figure (Collier²). All quotations from Shakespeare, except those from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, use the text and lineation of *The Riverside Shakespeare*, under the general editorship of G. Blakemore Evans.

1. Shakespeare's plays

<i>Ado</i>	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
<i>AWW</i>	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
<i>AYLI</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>
<i>Cym.</i>	<i>Cymbeline</i>
<i>Err.</i>	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
<i>Ham.</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>
<i>1H4</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>2H4</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>H5</i>	<i>King Henry the Fifth</i>
<i>1H6</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>2H6</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>3H6</i>	<i>The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>H8</i>	<i>King Henry the Eighth</i>
<i>JC</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>King John</i>
<i>Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>LLL</i>	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
<i>Mac.</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
<i>MND</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
<i>MV</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
<i>Oth.</i>	<i>Othello</i>
<i>Per.</i>	<i>Pericles</i>
<i>R2</i>	<i>King Richard the Second</i>
<i>R3</i>	<i>King Richard the Third</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
<i>Shr.</i>	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
<i>STM</i>	<i>Sir Thomas More</i>
<i>Temp.</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>
<i>TGV</i>	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>

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Abbreviations and conventions

<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timon of Athens</i>
<i>Tit.</i>	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>
<i>TN</i>	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>TNK</i>	<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>
<i>Tro.</i>	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
<i>Wiv.</i>	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
<i>WT</i>	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>

2. Other works cited and general references

Abbott	E. A. Abbott, <i>A Shakespearian Grammar</i> , 1883 edn (references are to numbered paragraphs)
Alexander	<i>Works</i> , ed. Peter Alexander, 1951
Bentley	G. E. Bentley, <i>The Jacobean and Caroline Stage</i> , 7 vols., 1941–68
Bevington	<i>Works</i> , ed. David Bevington, 1980
Bowers	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> , ed. Fredson Bowers, 1969 (revised Pelican Shakespeare)
Bullough	<i>Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Geoffrey Bullough, 8 vols., 1957–75
Cam.	<i>Works</i> , ed. W. G. Clark, J. Glover, and W. A. Wright, 1863–6 (Cambridge Shakespeare)
Capell	<i>Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , ed. Edward Capell, [1768]
Cercignani	Fausto Cercignani, <i>Shakespeare's Works and Elizabethan Pronunciation</i> , 1989
Chambers	E. K. Chambers, <i>The Elizabethan Stage</i> , 4 vols., 1923
Clarke	<i>Dramatic Works</i> , ed. Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, 1864
Collier	<i>Works</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1842–4
Collier ²	<i>Plays</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1853
Collier ³	<i>Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, and Poems</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1858
Collier ⁴	<i>Plays and Poems</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1875–8
Colman	E. A. M. Colman, <i>The Dramatic Use of Bawdy in Shakespeare</i> , 1974
conj.	conjecture
Craig	<i>Works</i> , ed. W. J. Craig, 1891 (Oxford Shakespeare)
Craik	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> , ed. T. W. Craik, 1990 (Oxford Shakespeare)
Daly	<i>Shakespeare's Comedy of The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> , A facsimile of the First Quarto . . . prepared for use at Daly's Theatre, 1886
Delius	<i>Werke</i> , ed. Nicolaus Delius, 1854–60
Dyce	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Dyce, 1857
Dyce ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Dyce, 2nd edn, 1864–7
Evans	<i>The Riverside Shakespeare</i> , ed. G. Blakemore Evans <i>et al.</i> , 1974
F	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1623 (First Folio)
F2	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories and Tragedies</i> , 1632 (Second Folio)
F3	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories and Tragedies</i> , 1663 (Third Folio)
F4	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories and Tragedies</i> , 1685 (Fourth Folio)
Farmer	Richard Farmer, <i>An Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare</i> , 1767
Furnivall	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> , ed. F. J. Furnivall, 1908

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- Geneva Geneva translation of the Bible (1560)
- Globe *Works*, ed. W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright, 1864
- Greg *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1602, ed. W. W. Greg, 1910
- Halliwell *Works*, ed. James O. Halliwell, 1854
- Hanmer *Works*, ed. Thomas Hanmer, 1743–4
- Harness William Harness, *Dramatic Works*, 8 vols., 1825
- Hart *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. H. C. Hart, 1904 (Arden Shakespeare)
- Hibbard *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. G. R. Hibbard, 1973 (New Penguin Shakespeare)
- Hotson Leslie Hotson, *Shakespeare versus Shallow*, 1931
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- Irving/Marshall *Works*, ed. Sir Henry Irving and Frank A. Marshall, 2nd edn, 1906
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- Johnson *Works*, ed. Samuel Johnson, 1765
- Jowett John Jowett, textual notes on *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, 1987
- Keightley *Works*, ed. Thomas Keightley, 1864
- Kittredge *Works*, ed. G. L. Kittredge, 1936
- Knight *Works*, ed. Charles Knight, 1840
- Knight² *Works*, ed. Charles Knight, 1842
- Lambrechts Guy Lambrechts, 'Proposed new readings in Shakespeare', *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg* 63 (1965), 946–7
- Lyly John Lyly, *Works*, ed. R. W. Bond, 3 vols., 1902
- Malone *Works*, ed. Edmond Malone, 1790
- Melchiori *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. Giorgio Melchiori, 2000 (New Arden Shakespeare)
- Munro *Works*, ed. John Munro, 1958 (London Shakespeare)
- N&Q* *Notes and Queries*
- Nashe Thomas Nashe, *Works*, ed. R. B. McKerrow, 5 vols., 1904–10, rev. F. P. Wilson, 1958
- Neilson *Works*, ed. W. A. Neilson, 1906
- Noble Richmond Noble, *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge and Use of the Book of Common Prayer*, 1935
- NS *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. J. Dover Wilson and A. Quiller-Couch, 1921 (New Shakespeare)
- OED* *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. James A. H. Murray *et al.*, 12 vols., and supplement, 1933
- Oliver *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. H. J. Oliver, 1971 (Arden Shakespeare)
- Onions C. T. Onions, *A Shakespeare Glossary*, rev. Robert D. Eagleson, 1986
- Oxberry *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. W. Oxberry, 1820 (Oxberry's New English Drama, vol. 8)
- Oxford *Works*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 1986 (Oxford Shakespeare)
- Partridge Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, rev. edn, 1968
- Pope *Works*, ed. Alexander Pope, 1723–5
- Pope² *Works*, ed. Alexander Pope, 2nd edn, 1728
- Q, Q1 *A Most pleasaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr Iohn Falstaffe, and the merrie Wiues of Windsor*, 1602
- Q2 *A Most Pleasant and Excellent Conceited Comedie, of Sir Iohn Falstaffe, and the Merry Wiues of Windsor*, 1619
- Q3 *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1630

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Abbreviations and conventions

Rann	<i>Dramatic Works</i> , ed. Joseph Rann, 1786–[94]
Reed	<i>Works</i> , ed. Isaac Reed, 1785
Rowe	<i>Works</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709
Rowe ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709
Rowe ³	<i>Works</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1714
RSC	Royal Shakespeare Company
Schmidt	Alexander Schmidt, <i>Shakespeare-Lexicon</i> , 1874–5 edn
SD	stage direction
SH	speech heading
Singer	<i>Works</i> , ed. S. W. Singer, 1826
Sisson	<i>Works</i> , ed. C. J. Sisson, 1954
<i>SQ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
<i>S.St.</i>	<i>Shakespeare Studies</i>
<i>S.Sur.</i>	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>
Staunton	<i>Works</i> , ed. Howard Staunton, 1858–60
Steevens	<i>Works</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1773
Steevens ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1778
Steevens ³	<i>Works</i> , ed. George Steevens and Isaac Reed, 1793
Theobald	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1733
Theobald ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1740
Thirlby	Styan Thirlby, MS. notes in eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare, 1723–51
Tieck	<i>Dramatische Werke</i> , ed. Ludwig Tieck, 1831
Tilley	M. P. Tilley, <i>A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</i> , 1950 (references are to numbered proverbs)
Tyrwhitt	Thomas Tyrwhitt, <i>Observations and Conjectures upon Some Passages of Shakespeare</i> , 1766
Walker	W. S. Walker, <i>A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare</i> , 3 vols., 1860
Warburton	<i>Works</i> , ed. William Warburton, 1747
Wheatley	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> , ed. Henry B. Wheatley, 1886
White	<i>Works</i> , ed. Richard Grant White, 1857–66

Biblical references are to the Geneva Bible (1560), with modernised spelling.