Shakespeare Timeline

Father
John Shakespeare

Mother
Mary Arden

Birth
It is thought his birthday was April the 23rd, just three days before his baptism was recorded in the Parish register of the Holy Trinity Church on April the 26th.

Education
Shakespeare is likely to have begun his formal education. By local tradition, children in the Stratford area, entered the local grammar school at age seven up until they were 14.

Marriage
At 18, he marries Anne Hathaway (26 years old) from Shottery on November the 27th at Temple Grafton, a village just five miles (8 km) from Stratford.

Daughter’s birth
(May 26th) Susanna, William and Anne Shakespeare’s first child is born five months after their wedding.

Twins birth
(February 2nd) Shakespeare’s twins, Judith and Hamnet are born.

The critics
Shakespeare begins to be noticed as a force within London theatre; Robert Greene’s Groatworth of Wit famously calls Shakespeare an “upstart crow”.

Son’s death
Shakespeare’s only son Hamnet was buried 11 August (age 11).

Success & Property
Shakespeare buys ‘New Place’, one of Stratford’s most pre-eminent homes.

Pleasing the King
James I comes to the throne and is an enthusiastic patron of the arts. The Company renames itself The King’s Men to honour James I and they quickly become a favourite with the new king.

Last Performance
Shakespeare is recorded as performing in Ben Jonson’s Sejanus. Shakespeare’s last recorded acting performance.

Death
William dies on April 23rd, his burial being recorded in the Stratford Holy Church Register two days later.

Death of Anne
Shakespeare’s wife, Anne Hathaway dies.

“...BLESTE BE THE MAN THAT SPARES THESE STONES, AND CURST BE HE THAT MOVES MY BONES”

Digging up the bones of the dead was common in Shakespeare’s time. Often remains were removed to make way for more graves, and dumped in landfill sites or even used as fertiliser.

Digging up the bones of the dead was considered to be disrespectful and even sacrilegious by Shakespeare's contemporaries. It was forbidden by law in England, and the punishment for desecrating graves was severe, ranging from fines to imprisonment. Despite this, Shakespeare was able to obtain permission to exhume his wife Anne Hathaway's remains. He did this to have her grave moved to Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, as a warning to grave-diggers.