



The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Dedicated to Researching and Honoring
the True Bard



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Gilvary: New Bricks in the Wall of Evidence

W. Ron Hess

Kevin Gilvary's *Dating Shakespeare's Plays: A Critical Review of the Evidence* (ParaPress, 2010) is a wonderful anthology of essays that has been in the works by the UK's De Vere Society (DVS) for over a decade. Past leaders of the project include Christopher Dams and Richard Malim. Gilvary deserves thanks from the entire Oxfordian movement, and indeed Shakespeare scholars generally, for the massive effort he has put into editing and completing this monumental achievement.

Gilvary also wrote or co-wrote 28 of the book's 41 chapters/sections. Other important contributors include Eddi Jolly, Noemi Magri, Derran Charlton, and the late Philip Johnson. Our own SOS and SF are represented by Joe and Marion Peel, Ramon Jiménez, Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, Alex McNeil, Roger Stritmatter and (although now an ex-member) Dr. John Rollett. We can all take pride in what is destined to be an indispensable contribution to the authorship debate.

Gilvary's Introduction lays out the study's areas of inquiry: What constitutes the composition of a play? Who established dating conventions in the past? And what types of evidence may we use?

This last is perhaps the most critical, since it includes Dated MSS, Literary Correspondence, Revels Accounts, Records of Payments, Stationers Registry, Title Pages, Sources, Allusions to Other Texts, and Allusions to Contemporary Events and People, etc. It is well known that data under most of these heads are lacking for the majority of Shakespeare's works.

Gilvary's section on "Verse, Style and Chronology" is an important feature for understanding the quagmire of "Stylometrics," nowadays used directly or indirectly for the orthodox dating of about a third to a half of the plays. Gilvary also provides a Conclusion and Appendices full of graphs and lists of great value.

A particularly valuable section is Eddi Jolly's discussion of the uses

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Letters to the Editor

A Note on Edward Shackespeare

To the Editor:

While pursuing research on Oxford's land sales I had occasion to use the Earls Colne Database, organised by Alan Macfarlane and his collaborators and archived by Cambridge University. It can be found at alanmacfarlane.com/FILES/earlscolne.

The database has an index of names of those appearing in the records. One of these, in the Colne Priory Manor Court Rolls four times between 1606 and 1608, is "Edw. Shackespeare." He and his fellows (some described as "gentleman" but not him) are listed as "tenants of this manor and suitors of this court." To have a Shackespeare in the village with the given name of the 17th Earl of Oxford is interesting enough, but perhaps not too much can be inferred. He is only listed as a "tenant" from 1606, two years after the Earl died.

Macfarlane informs me that "tenants" did not even need to be living in the village to have that status, only to lease property there. He could, says Macfarlane, have been a Londoner. The name is unique in Earls Colne (as we know it was common in Warwickshire) although there are plenty of suggestive names on the list: Bacon, Chapman, Middleton, Green(e), Jo(h)nsen, Fletcher, Golding, Marvel, Ford, Wilkins, Nash(e), Shelley, Lock, Lucy, Harv(e)y, Stanley, Surrey, Vaughn, Campion and even Sackville.

Robin Fox

Receptive to Oxfordian Views

To the Editor:

I gave a paper recently at the annual meeting of the Division of Psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association, in New York City. My title was "Wild Applied Analysis? Freud's Views on Shakespeare." The audience was receptive. At the annual meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association in June, in San

Francisco, I've been invited to discuss a film version of *The Tempest*. The chair of that session has been supportive of my Oxfordian views. My review of James Shapiro's *Contested Will* appears in the current issue of the journal *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. It's my third Oxfordian book review that distinguished journal has published.

Richard M. Waugaman, M.D.
Training & Supervising Analyst Emeritus,
Washington Psychoanalytic Institute
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry,
Georgetown University School of Medicine
Reader, Folger Shakespeare Library

A Play by Any Other Name

To the Editor:

In 1999 I wrote a play about the relationship between Edward de Vere and Will Shakespeare entitled *A Rose By Any Other Name*. Since I side with the Oxford camp, the premise of the play is that de Vere wrote the Shakespeare material. As the owner of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, de Vere was actually Will Shakespeare's employer. Will was simply a 'front,' and de Vere used his name to write the plays. Although this is a serious topic, my play is a comedy. Shakespeare is a good-natured, but not too bright country bumpkin turned actor; de Vere is a dashing, elegant aristocrat with a passion for writing for the lowly players. All the other essential characters of Oxford's life are there, including Ann Vavasor, Queen Elizabeth, Lord Burghley, Thomas Vavasor, Richard Burbage, Thomas Knyvet, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, *et al.*

At the urging of TV actor Paul Michael Valley, a staunch Oxfordian, I expanded my play into two works, *A Rose By Any Other Name, Parts I & II*. A local Nashville producer/critic and Oxfordian, Evans Donnell, helped me mount the production.

The first play was produced in Nashville in 2001 at the Belcourt Theatre, with the aid of a grant from the Metro Nashville Arts Commission. At the time, several members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society came down to talk with me, including the president at that time (sadly, I can't remember his name) as well as a local Nashville lawyer and Oxfordian, Joe Peel. They were very enthused about my plays and offered

me a slot speaking about my work at that year's annual meeting of the Society in Washington, D.C. I accepted and was looking forward to speaking in Washington, but negative financial considerations reared their ugly heads and I was unable to attend. Shortly after that I was contacted by the Shakespeare Institute Library at the University of Birmingham (Stratford-upon-Avon location) in England requesting permission to include my unpublished plays in their library. I was delighted to comply, and in some dusty, musty corner of the Shakespeare Institute Library rest my two plays about the oddest of couples, de Vere and Will Shakespeare.

I learned recently of the upcoming movie *Anonymous*, about de Vere and Shakespeare, starring Rhys Ifans. Although there are significant differences, the basic premise is the same. But no hard feelings, and I wish them well—I just regret I didn't get there first. But that's just the risk you take basing fiction on historical, public-domain material. Nevertheless, I am hoping that the soon-to-be-released movie may generate some renewed interest in my own plays. There may actually still be someone at the Shakespeare Oxford Society who remembers my work from a decade ago. But regardless, I would be honored if someone from with current Society would be good enough to take a look at my two plays and offer your opinion.

Thanks so much for your time—and keep the faith!

Bill Dorian

From “Anonymous” Film Studio

To the Editor:

Members of your organization once came to Sands Films Studio in Rotherhithe and left your contact details in our Visitor's book.

Sands Films is raising money to acquire the freehold of the property and keep Grice's Granary as you liked it. Our aim is to protect the building, home of the studio since 1975, and to secure the long-term continuation of all the Studio's and of the Rotherhithe Picture Research Library's activities. We want to build a strong and lasting Sands Films and to do so we are looking for subscribers to become shareholders of the company which will own the building. Sands is offering this as a long term investment

using the government's EIS tax incentives, whereby shareholders can benefit from a 20% tax credit refund on invested sums and Capital Gain reliefs as long as the shares are held for at least 3 years.

Grice's Granary contains about 800,000 bricks. Five hundred shares represent the ownership of 200 of those bricks. Together, we can acquire the building and secure the future of Sands Films and of the Rotherhithe Picture Research Library.

Whilst this is going on, Sands Films is thriving and is as busy as ever. *Anonymous* starring Vanessa Redgrave will be released in September 2011. This is a lavish and elaborate Elizabethan fantasy speculating on the true identity of Shakespeare and his relationship with the Queen Elizabeth I. Sands made all the costumes for the queen as well as for Shakespeare, Marlow and their friends.

Not less lavish, Maupassant's *Bel Ami* will be released in August. It is the story of a corrupt young man's rise to power, in 1890's Paris, by manipulating a series of powerful, intelligent, and wealthy mistresses. Starring Christina Ricci, Uma Thurman and many others,

Sands Films contributed the wardrobe of the handsome opportunist, Robert Pattinson, in the lead role. Sands made costumes for Long John Silver and his crew of pirates in an new adaptation of *The Treasure Island* with Eddie Izzard as the one-legged captain; to be shown at Christmas. The team is now making rich costumes for Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

But Sands is not only making costumes: the library, the stage and the film club are all very busy. There are now 1200 members on the Cinema Club mailing list alone! To find out more, visit the studio website ostockman@sandsfilms.co.uk, or contact Olivier Stockman, Sands Films, 82 St Marychurch Street, London SE16 4HZ www.sandsfilms.co.uk. Tel: 020 7231 2209

Forwarded by *Stephanie Hopkins Hughes*

News and Views

De Vere Society Condemns *Anonymous*

The De Vere Society of the UK has released the following statement about the upcoming movie, *Anonymous*

A major cinema release about Edward De Vere, Earl of Oxford, as the true author of the plays of William Shakespeare, will certainly raise the profile of the Authorship Question.

Described as “a political thriller set against the backdrop of the succession of Queen Elizabeth I and the Essex Rebellion against her,” the film is sure to prove controversial in a number of ways.

The most controversial aspect of the film for Oxfordians is the decision by director Roland Emmerich to incorporate the Prince Tudor theory into the plot. We will be publishing reviews of the film once it has been released.

In the meantime the DVS has agreed to the following statement in order to make clear at the earliest our position on this issue.

DVS Statement About *Anonymous*

The film *Anonymous*—which features Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford and his authorship of plays under the pseudonym “William Shakespeare”—is due to be released in September 2011. Unfortunately, it introduces the untenable theory that Oxford only used the pseudonym because he was the unacknowledged son of Queen Elizabeth, and by an incestuous relationship with her fathered Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. The DVS will be publishing evidence, on its website and in the DVS Newsletter, that this theory is untenable.

The purpose of the De Vere Society is to sponsor the claim that Edward de Vere (1550–1604) is the best candidate for using the pseudonym Shakespeare, while William Shakspere of Stratford (1564 – 1616) wrote none of the works that are frequently attributed to him.

And though the Society welcomes all who have an interest in what is known as the “Shakespeare Authorship Question,” it seeks to maintain rigorous academic quality and avoid the illogical, unfounded speculation that afflicts some

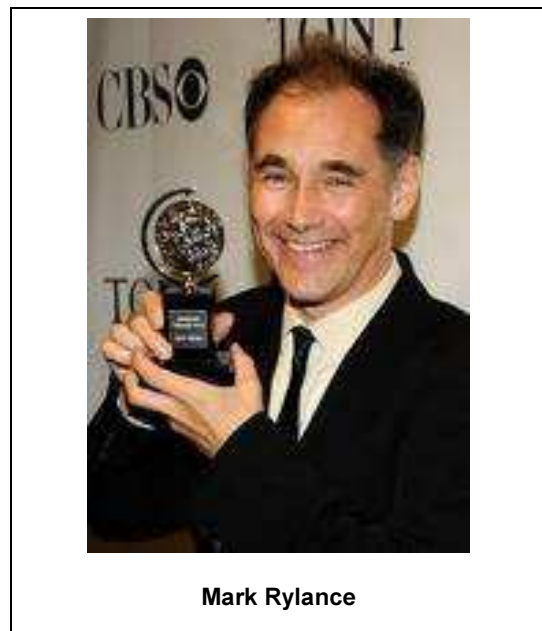
aspects of Shakespeare scholarship.

In particular, the Society considers that the following items do not meet those standards, have no validity, and are irrelevant to the question of the real Shakespeare’s identity.

- The part of the film *Anonymous* which tries to link the Shakespeare Authorship Question with the possibility that Queen Elizabeth had one or more adulterous relationships that resulted in the birth of Edward de Vere and/or the Third Earl of Southampton,
- Publications which, in denial of logic and evidence, propagate such notions,
- Publications, including this film, that appear to base the concept of Edward de Vere being the writer Shakespeare on such notions.

Mark Rylance Speaks Out!

Shakespearean actor Mark Rylance, a signer of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt, is currently starring in *Jerusalem* on Broad-



Mark Rylance

way. During a recent press conference at Babelsberg Studios, Berlin, he discussed the upcoming movie *Anonymous* and whether it

mattered who the true author of *The Collected Works* really was. Here is his reply, which can also be seen on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcPGi1DQkag>.

Rylance: I've played in maybe 50 productions of Shakespeare plays and plays by his contemporaries over the 30 years of my career and was ten years artistic director of Shakespeare's Globe. I love the Shakespeare plays, I particularly love the author and I love new plays, and I think in any field if there were someone who had achieved what this author has achieved in his field, the people who work in that field would be interested. If it was in medicine, or war, or aviation, or farming, people would be interested in how that person had surpassed not just the people in his country but seemingly anyone that anyone can mention anywhere in the world. No one's written such a wide compass of plays as Shakespeare.

So yes, I'm interested in how he did that, and at the moment there is a massive campaign to convince us that this is some kind of impersonal literary exercise. And that's being taught to young people who pay a lot of money in many universities that the Sonnets are "a literary exercise." I have never ever encountered a poet, a playwright, any artist that doesn't involve himself or herself personally in their work, and doesn't draw upon their own experience and their own efforts to learn by books, or by talking to other people, or by visiting places, by putting a lot of work in. To say that these works—that that you make up fourteen plays about Italy, set in Italy, with accurate details of Italian landscape, customs, habits, culture—that you just imagine that stuff.

I think it's an absolute crime that young people are being taught that. An absolute crime that members of my profession are being taught that. And since the authorship question was opened to me, my respect for the author, my attention to the detail of the plays, my feelings that I am working with someone who is possibly, in this particular story, sharing something of enormous personal pain and suffering, that these words were not just 'made up'—it's a ridiculous idea—but that there was enormous personal suffering that went in to make this kind of writing. Let them bring forth other writers, let them bring forth evidence that Ibsen or Chekhov or Goethe

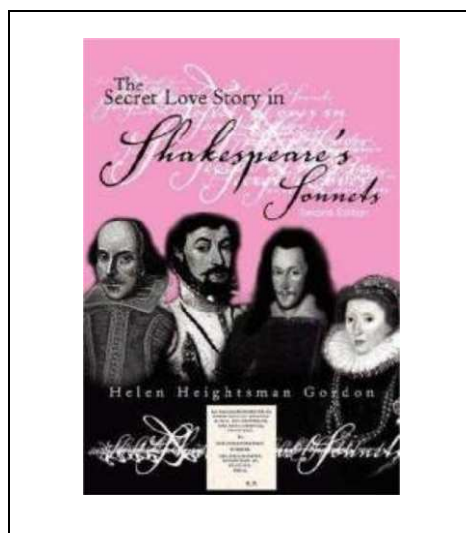
wrote without deep feeling, or Dostoevsky wrote without deep feeling and personal input.

There's a great great deal of rubbish being put about about Shakespeare, and it's getting in the way, it's getting in the way badly. And fortunately people like Roland and these actors who are putting themselves on the line, and the people who backed this film, and the person who's written it, are doing a lot to break down that idiocy—as there is idiocy in many fields at the moment, isn't there? Many many fields, and one of the fortunate things of this Shakespearean thing is it's totally unimportant. It doesn't matter a jot. But when you break through it starts to teach you how to question and break through other fallacies that are being put about at the moment.

So that's the difference it makes to me as an artist, Sir!

Helen H. Gordon Wins Award

Retired professor and author Helen Heightsman Gordon has received a prestigious award for distinguished contributions to the humanities. The Norman Levan Center for the Humanities Colloquium Award for Spring, 2011, was presented to her on April 8 at Bakersfield College, Bakersfield California.



Helen's colloquium address was titled "Sleuthing the Shakespeare Mysteries." Using power point slides, she informed her audience of the difficulty involved for researchers when official records cannot be trusted, when documen-

tary evidence has been destroyed or corrupted, and when her subject has been the victim of identity theft. She traced her own path of sleuthing to identify Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as the person who used the pen name "William Shakespeare." She also explained how the author himself left clues to his identity using codes and symbols from Rosicrucian and Freemason sources.

Board Positions Open

Susan G. Width

Nominations are invited for two vacancies on the SOS Board of Trustees (BOT). All members in good standing are eligible, and self-nominations are welcome.

Nominations should be sent by 2 September 2011 to the Nominating Committee:

Susan Grimes Width, Chair.
sgwidth@me.com 5172 56-6496
Michael Pisapia
michael@pisapia.net
Richard Joyrich
rjoyrich@aol.com

Nominations may also be made from the floor at our upcoming annual conference in Washington DC October 13-16 2011.

SOS by-laws state:

...the purposes of the Society shall be to promote the study and research of the life and works of Shakespeare, with the particular objective of establishing Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) as the universally recognized author behind the pseudonym William Shakespeare... The specific number of Trustees shall be eleven... Trustees shall be Members of the Society in Good Standing at the time of any meeting of the Board of Trustees or any committee thereof. ... Trustees shall ... hold office for a term of three (3) years from the time of election, which election shall be by the Membership at the Annual Meeting... Trustees may be elected to no more than three successive terms, and shall not be eligible for reelection or appointment thereafter until an interval of at least one year has elapsed.

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Have Genome Scientists Uncovered Shakespeare's Literary DNA?

Edited from the *Berkeley Lab News Center*

What does uncovering the true authorship of the plays and poems attributed to Shakespeare have to do with identifying our genetic ancestors or classifying new life forms? All involve the comparative analysis of data using “feature frequency profiles” (FFP), an innovative tool developed by genome researchers at Berkeley Lab. Led by chemist Sung-Hou Kim, who holds a joint appointment at Berkeley Lab's Physical Biosciences Division and UC Berkeley's Chemistry Department, the team's innovative techniques make it possible to easily compare, classify, index and catalog any type of electronically stored linear information. This includes text strings.

Shock Results

To test their methods the team applied their techniques to two authorially controversial Shakespeare plays, *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Among the startling results are statistically objective data suggesting that the Bard did not write *Pericles*, and—perhaps even more shocking—was actually the sole author of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Both conclusions fly in the face of current orthodoxy.

“I call our technique a tool for demographic phylogeny because it enables us to organize large sets of data into groups and find relationships among them,” Kim says. “The idea is to organize data sets into groups based on the frequency at which key features occur and then look for relationships. This is the reverse of what is usually done, where you find relationships in the data set, then organize the data set into groups based on those relationships.”

Using FFP techniques, Kim and his colleagues create “family trees” that put into easy-to-see

perspective the relationships between data groups, be they books or genomes. The key is to identify the “optimal features” for profiling. For books, this consists of sequences of text about eight letters in length.

In a series of tests the FFP technique provided a more comprehensive and accurate analysis than standard analytical tools. For example, Kim and his colleagues created a book tree composed of more than two dozen works in philosophy, mythology, religion, 19th-century fiction, science fiction and children's literature. Their analysis correctly regrouped all the books by category and author including some, such as the Koran, that had been misplaced. The FFP-based tree correctly set the Muslim holy book in the

religion category along with the Bible and the *Book of Mormon*, whereas the word-frequency book tree grouped it in the philosophy category with Plato's *The Republic* and Aristotle's *Ethics*.

Literary Tests

Comparative genomics measures similarities and differences between sets of selected genes “in which,” says Kim, “the presence of the same data yields statistically significant scores.”

Species with highly similar gene numbers are presumed to be more closely related than those without.

Kim's team tested this thesis by turning to literary studies, and especially the Shakespeare Authorship Question where comparative analytical tools are commonly deployed. The numerical version is stylometrics. However, two problems quickly became evident. First, current stylometric analyses are based on word frequency, whereas genomic data consist of extended letter strings. Second, stylometric analysis has no interest in syntax—an understanding of the relationship between adjoining words.



To overcome these limitations, Kim and his colleagues analyzed Webster's *English Dictionary* and found that entries about eight letters long were optimal for FFP analysis. This also proved true of literature and Shakespeare generally.

"Text features longer than eight or nine letters do not occur often enough for frequency profile comparisons, and text features shorter in length do not give us enough information to distinguish one book from another," Kim reported.

Shakespeare

To apply their FFP technique to literature and especially Shakespeare, the team "delimiter-stripped" *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, plays once considered "apocryphal" but now included among the *Collected Works* as "collaborative."

Kim explains: "The texts were stripped of punctuation and spaces. The result was a long string of letters. A 'window' of eight letters in length was then advanced across this string one letter at a time, yielding a frequency profile of the features in which overlapping sequences of text reveal relationships between individual features."

After analyzing their data the team concluded that Shakespeare did not write *Pericles*, but had composed *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Despite these controversial results, Kim and his colleagues note that the Feature Frequency Profiles for literature generally has produced astonishingly accurate trees for all the other authors so far tested.

"FFP enables us to capture the syntactical idiosyncrasies of specific authors as well as the unique vocabulary associated with certain genres or subject matter," says Kim. "When we saw the results of our book tree, we knew we were ready for genomes."

Collaborating with Kim were biophysicist Gregory Sims, statistical mathematician Se-Ran Jun and theoretical physicist Guohong Wu. Their work was funded by the National Institutes of Health and by a grant from the Korean Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. A paper describing the research has been published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Gilvary *continued from p. 1*

and limits of Francis Meres' *Palladis Tamia or Wits Treasury* (1598). With charts and lists, she shows that Meres failed to record prominent pre-1598 works by many of the authors that he mentioned. Those he did list were consciously paired with classical authors and their works—a patriotic brag!

Meres also noted, very importantly, Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends, &c.," thus proving that the poet often wrote privately and not always for public consumption or profit. It's clear too that a substantial number of his sonnets were in



Kevin Gilvary at Queens' College

existence over a decade before the 1609 edition. For these and other reasons I believe Gilvary could have exercised greater boldness assigning the earliest possible dates. They're not essential to the Oxfordian case, but they can throw the orthodox into a defensive mode.

This cavil aside, the DVS project headed by Kevin Gilvary is the very best our side has done so far in the "Dating Game."

Kevin Gilvary, ed.: *Dating Shakespeare's Plays: A Critical Review of the Evidence* (ParaPress, Kent, UK 2010)

Shakespeare's Biographical Problems Heat Up

Richard F. Whalen

Shakespeare scholars may be beginning to face up to a long-standing problem: that they have a hard time finding any contemporaneous documentation for his literary life. (Some of us might say that's because there isn't any.) Recently, their difficulties have spilled over in ways that should encourage Oxfordians.

Garber and Bevington

First, some of the leading Stratfordian professors are addressing the issue, and even taking more seriously the case for the Earl of Oxford as the true author. Recent instances include a new edition of Marjorie Garber's *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers* and David Bevington's *Shakespeare and Biography*. Both 2010 titles neatly sum up the problem facing the traditional ascription.

Garber holds an endowed chair of English at Harvard and has written six books on Shakespeare. Her latest is a new edition of a 1987 study which devoted most of its first chapter to the authorship question. Garber's first sentence asks, "Who is the author of Shakespeare's plays?" Not unreasonably, she then asks why doubts about his authorship have been so "tenaciously dismissed," noting that Ben Jonson's praise of Shakespeare in the First Folio "may not identify him with the prosperous citizen of rural Warwickshire." Garber goes on to discuss the controversy, giving arguments for both sides and citing several doubters and Oxfordians, including J. Thomas Looney and Charlton Ogburn.

The rest of her book, which theorizes and "thematizes" on ghosts in the plays, Freud's "the uncanny" and questions of authorship, continues to be informed by its opening question. The Preface to her expanded new edition confirms her ongoing interest:

Bevington's strange and self-contradictory conclusions are quite puzzling. Their weakness perhaps betrays unease about Shakespeare as Shakespeare and the strength of the evidence for Oxford as the true author.

When I first wrote about the Shakespeare authorship controversy...the topic seemed both fascinating and off-limits...I take it seriously and am less interested in an 'answer' or 'solution' than I am in the enduring nature of the controversy. Thus, I have remained in dialogue with Oxfordians and others, not because I concur with their opinions but because I do not dismiss them out of hand.

Garber's *Shakespeare After All* (2004) also confirms her acceptance that the authorship controversy is worth studying. Although she mentions it only briefly in the introduction, her "Suggestions for Further Reading" recommends seventeen books, nine of them by Oxfordians. Only three are by Stratfordians. (See review in the Spring 2005 newsletter.)

David Bevington is also a distinguished professor, now emeritus, in the departments of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Chicago. He is the editor of the *Complete Shakespeare* from Harper Collins/Longman and author of highly regarded books and articles about

the Bard.

The opening chapter of his *Shakespeare and Biography*, "The Biographical Problem," is full of unanswered questions. Its final chapter, which one might expect to summarize the author's views, does nothing of the sort. Instead it sketches the case for Oxford, "the favored candidate today," argues against him and ends in tentative Stratfordian assertions.

Bevington's strange and self-contradictory conclusions are quite puzzling. Their weakness perhaps betrays unease about Shakespeare and the strength of the evidence for Oxford as the true author. He suggests that if Oxfordians want to argue that the Shakespeare plays reflect an insider's knowledge of the manners and morals of aristocrats in Queen Elizabeth's court—knowledge he does not dispute, while strangely calling it the "private conversations of the great"—they are wrong to

conclude that only an insider could have been the dramatist.

But in support of his view he uses a faulty analogy. If you want to know what's going on in the White House today, Bevington asks, "would one choose to hear from some strategically placed cabinet member or from investigative reporters like Woodward and Bernstein at the time of Washington Watergate?" The answer, he says, is obvious: an outsider "was in a better position to see life steadily and see it whole (to quote Matthew Arnold again) than a biased insider like Oxford."

But this is the error called "presentism," explaining the past by invoking the present. It usually doesn't work. And in this case, it ignores the brutal censorship, rigid class distinctions and absence of any independent, investigative journalism in Elizabethan times. It also seems to accept that Shakespeare's works do show knowledge of aristocrats' life in court circles, a major tenet of the Oxfordian case. And it's hard to understand how an outsider seeing life steadily and seeing it whole means he can report the conversations of the great.

Then comes Bevington's third argument/conclusion: Oxford was not nice. His family life was "dysfunctional...he was a brute who gave his poor father-in-law heartache. Anne, the daughter and wife, escaped the nightmare of her married existence by dying in 1588." And he asks: Can one imagine such a man depicting male friendships in the plays and sonnets or paying homage to women in the plays "who show how to forgive one's persecutors?"

His answer: "No, the persona that emerges from Shakespeare's writings and from biographical studies is a better man than Oxford could have imagined."

But a "better man" does not necessarily make a great writer of genius. To the contrary, our best literary artists were almost all difficult, mercurial, contradictory and/or eccentric, e.g. Tolstoy, Proust, Twain, Goethe, et al. In music, Beetho-

ven, in art Caravaggio; and many others described by Kay Redfield Jameson of Johns Hopkins University in *Touched With Fire* (1993).

Bevington then contradicts his "better man" theory by citing Katherine Duncan-Jones's imagined life of the playwright in *Ungentle Shakespeare* (2001) as churlish, sexually ambivalent and self-loathing, disillusioned, cringing, self-abased at his unsavory reputation. This description does not sound like that of a "better man," but it does sound very much like aspects of the documented life of Oxford.

Shakespeare and Biography, a slim volume of 161 pages without footnotes, probably should

not be taken as Bevington's most considered analysis of the authorship controversy, though it may reflect the unconscious ambivalence of his thinking. And if these puzzling and self-contradictory conclusions are the best he can do to defend Will Shakspeare against the case for Oxford, we can take heart that he and other senior Shakespeare establishment professors may gradually come to the realization that they

have a major problem with "Shakespeare and biography." Maybe, just maybe, they will come to see that "Shakespeare" was the pen name for a "ghost writer," the Earl of Oxford.

Other Studies

Also taking the case for Oxford seriously is James Shapiro of Columbia University. In his *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* (2010), the first, book-length analysis of the controversy, he details the Oxfordians' considerable success.

In his online review of Shapiro's book, the late Joseph Sobran says that he "found almost every page instructive, brilliant and charming...Refusing to make easy mockery of the heretics, Shapiro, a model polemicist, courteously treats even those with whom he disagrees as his comrades in the pursuit of truth. He finds their errors reasonable and sees no point in insulting them

Books Referred to in this Essay

- Marjorie Garber: *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers*. Random House 2010
David Bevington: *Shakespeare and Biography*. OUP 2010
James Shapiro: *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* Simon & Schuster 2010
William Leahy: *Shakespeare and His Authors: Critical Perspectives on the Authorship Question*. Continuum 2010
Rene Weiss: *Shakespeare Unbound: Decoding a Life*. Henry Holt 2007
Katherine Duncan-Jones: *Ungentle Shakespeare*. Arden 2001

(his two brief mentions of me are rather flattering).” (*Search* 04-27-2010 Sobran Shapiro)

Another recent book taking the authorship controversy seriously is *Shakespeare and His Authors: Critical Perspectives on the Authorship Question*, edited by William Leahy of Brunel University (Continuum 2010). Leahy holds that there is reasonable doubt about the identity of Shakespeare and directs an MA program in authorship studies at Brunel.

Shakespeare and His Authors includes four essays by Stratfordian English professors, among them Graham Holderness of the University of Hertfordshire. All these writers show an encouraging willingness to grapple with the problem. They understand the case for Oxford and present it without rancor or sarcasm or supercilious dismissal. That’s refreshing. General readers could well conclude that there must be something to the authorship controversy worth exploring. Even more, Shakespeare professors who have had some doubts might conclude that the controversy has become a legitimate subject for research and study.

Shakespeare’s Other Lives

The final consequence of the documentation problem facing Stratfordians is the appearance of three “biographies” by leading establishment professors. Given the “mundane inconsequence” as Schoenbaum expresses it, of the actual evidence, these books are necessarily works of the imagination. Indeed, Stephen Greenblatt of Harvard openly admits in his preface that his biography, *Will in the World* (1997), is almost entirely made up—it even opens with “LET US IMAGINE” in capital letters.

Greenblatt is so committed to fictive biography that he actually attacked the second recent Shakespeare biography, Jonathan Bate’s *Soul of the Age*, (2008) for being insufficiently imaginative (*The New York Review of Books* 17 December 2009)!

Another mostly imaginary biography of Shakespeare’s supposed literary life is *Shakespeare Unbound* (2007) by Rene Weis of University College, London. Finding little or nothing about a literary life for his subject, Weis like Greenblatt and Bate simply makes it up. Whether this trend will continue without drawing alarmed skepticism remains to be seen.

In Memoriam

Among our saddest duties is to publish obituaries of prominent Oxfordians. Unfortunately the movement has lately lost four of its most articulate supporters: Richard Roe, whose notice appeared in the last issue, and the three stalwart members (plus one prominent opponent) whose remembrances appear below.

Joseph Sobran 1946-2011

The passing of Joe Sobran brings back memories of also recently-deceased Peter Moore (one of our best Oxfordian researchers) and Irv Matus (one of the most bitter Stratfordian apologists, but brave enough to debate us at least three times, and honest enough to directly confront some of our best arguments). If Peter or Irv were alive today, probably they’d be writing their memories of Joe who was reclusive and hard to get to know. They both knew Joe far better than I did.

Although I had spoken to Joe over the phone a few times at the behest of Charlton Ogburn, the first time I met him in person was after a debate in January 1994 between Matus and the Earl of Burford. Irv had done poorly—a poll of the audience of 70 confirmed that the Earl had changed the pre-debate vote of 35 Stratfordians vs. 35 Non-Stratfordians to 20 Stratfordians vs. 50 Non-Stratfordians.

So Irv was gloomy, as one can imagine, until Joe came up, shook his hand, and thanked him for participating.

Irv’s face brightened. “Why, Joe, what a pleasure it is to see you again,” he said. And Joe’s deep, sonorous voice reciprocated. Both men were gentlemen to the core.

Afterwards Joe, Burford and I went out to an Italian restaurant, where Joe reiterated his intention of helping me start up an Oxfordian group in the Washington, DC area.

I later realized that Joe was one of the best writers, speakers, and debaters that the Oxfordian movement possessed at the time. He had English Lit grad school credentials, plus he had worked for many years with William. F. Buckley as Associate Editor of *The National Review*.

Privately Joe would deny that he was a Republican—“Ron, I’m so far beyond their kind of

conservatism, you might say I'm a militia person." It might thus be fair to label Joe a proto-Tea Party person, long before tea partying became cool.



Joseph Sobran

Joe's webpage was divided into several sections, one of them containing ads for his Oxfordian book, *Alias Shakespeare*, and others highlighting his political articles, many of them quite extreme. For much of the past decade, Joe was probably the best known Oxfordian scholar and *Alias Shakespeare* our best-seller until Mark Anderson's book appeared.

I mentioned that Joe was reclusive, and yet I may have encountered him more often than all but a few other Oxfordians. He and I would occasionally bump elbows in the stacks of the Library of Congress (LOC) as we did our research. Also, he was good friends with Peter Moore, who admitted to "ghost-researching" for Joe as he prepared *Alias*. I often visited Peter, and believe that if he hadn't pushed Joe onwards, *Alias* might never have been completed, because Joe often seemed to suffer from writer's

block. In 1993 Joe had mentioned his forthcoming book to me, with his intent to adopt a bisexual theme for the meaning of the Sonnets. As he told me, the bisexual theme is a tried and often accepted Stratfordian theme, one that Rowse and many actors and writers agree with about Shakespeare, whoever he was. Joe noted that for Stratfordians it's an attempt to bridge the social gap between bumpkin and Earl via "the sin that dare not speak its name."

When Sobran first told me about his intended theme, I briefly objected to it, saying it would be too salacious to benefit our side. But by the end of the conversation, he'd persuaded me that he was only taking Stratfordian arguments and showing that they fit Oxford better than they did the bumpkin from Warwickshire. I still disliked his conclusion but admired his strategy. And his book turned out to be a great success.

'My Favorite Baconian'

I next met Joe in the living room of the late Vincent Mooney Jr., whom Ogburn described as "my favorite Baconian." Vincent was President of the Washington DC area Mensa Society, and had gotten Joe to speak to them on occasion. More than that, Vincent thought we Anti-Stratfordians should "try to stick together." Unfortunately, there was another very active scholar in Vincent's Anti-Stratfordian group, with just as forceful a personality as Joe's. And so when either of them entered a room "all the oxygen got sucked out." As a result the two would each call Vincent before a meeting to see if the other was planning to attend, and if so wouldn't show up. The small plus was that it meant more timid folks, like Barbara Flues and me, would stand a better chance of being able to report on our research.

Whenever Joe did show up, he would rhapsodize at considerable length about the Sonnets and other non-Shakespearean poem cycles. And even though he put much of those topics into articles published in *SOS News*, I still felt privileged to hear him speak about them first. It was amazing to watch this shy and quiet man, almost afraid of being noticed, until he "got on a roll." Then suddenly he'd sound like Orson Welles, thundering from the pulpit about a topic that he fervently believed in. Indeed, Joe's voice and speaking patterns were highly reminiscent of Welles, and I often wondered if he'd had stage training in his youth.

In 2003 I saw Joe give several well-received speeches. At Aaron Tatum's urging, he and I finally got around to starting up the Washington, DC area Chapter of the SOS, even though Joe was only able to attend occasionally. Still, he graced us with his lectures, and his presence thrilled our members, most of whom had read *Alias Shakespeare*. Joe was always a gentleman, with nothing but kind words for all present, friend or foe—such a difference from his flaming political writings! Also in 2003, he was a key speaker on the Friday evening of the SOS Convention, a special event held in an auditorium at the Library of Congress, where he and Peter Dickson each gave rousing speeches to an audience of several hundred.

The Smithsonian

But my most vivid recollection of Joe Sobran was at the April 19, 2003 Smithsonian Institution Associates debate of two panels: Joe, Katherine Chiljan, and me *versus* Prof. Nelson, Prof. May, and Irv Matus. It was an all-day event, introduced and concluded by Diana Price, and mediated by William Causey, a high-powered attorney with Anti-Stratfordian sympathies (though he never admitted who his favorite candidate actually was). This was my first debate, so I took the liberty of preparing a 22-page handout, and the organizers saw that each of the 150 attendees got a copy.

But both Joe and Katherine had often debated before, so they each had a small packet of note cards and could quickly make their points.

Joe had a particular knack for apparently spontaneous witticisms. When Nelson once-too-often asserted as fact something we all knew to be questionable, Joe thundered, to a roar of laughter from the audience: "That gentleman is more certain about everything than I am about anything!" It proved to be a prepared line, which I heard him reuse on another occasion, but his delivery was so smooth that you'd swear it had just then been invented.

Joe's departure is a loss to our cause, for nobody could represent us as effectively as he. Not only were his speeches hypnotic and full of facts, his answers to questions were right to the point, and he seemed to have a memory without limit, able to pull out quotes at will.

His stage presence was so great that his debating opponents would inevitably appear

crushed and flattened.

We shall not see his like again in this age!

W. Ron Hess

Norma Claire Howe 1930-2011

I am sorry to report that our dear friend, Norma Howe—Oxfordian, author, and a constant presence at the annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference—died on 19 April. She was 81.

Norma Claire Nadeau was born in San Jose, CA. She was married for 60 years and had seven children with her husband, Robert L. Howe, a state Department of Education administrator.

A Bright Light

Norma was one of the bright, ever-cheerful lights that made the events which brought us together such a joy to anticipate. Concordia events will be lonelier without her.

Make a point of getting a copy of her *Blue Avenger Cracks the Code* for children whose interest in the Shakespeare Authorship Question you'd like to stir. I'm sure she'd be very pleased and honored that she might be remembered, and her life work celebrated and extended in this way.

If you're unfamiliar with Norma's work and you're at CU, or are a SARC Scholar, you can check this book out (as well as her many other books, *Blue Avenger* and the *Theory of Everything; God, the Universe and Hot Fudge Sundaes; The Game of Life; Shoot for the Moon; In with the Out Crowd*; etc.) that we're pleased to hold in the university's collections.

Norma married in college, staying home with her children after earning an English degree at San Jose State while Robert taught high school in San Bernardino. She started writing confession tales for *True Story* and *Modern Romances* magazines before the family moved to Sacramento in 1962.

After her children were grown, Norma wrote and published eight novels and two short stories for young adults. Her first novel, *God, the Universe and Hot Fudge Sundaes*, about a teenager who questions her faith when her sister is diagnosed with a terminal illness, was made into a 1986 after-school television special by CBS.

Her 1999 novel, *The Adventures of Blue Avenger*, was well received and led to *Blue Avenger Cracks the Code* (2000) and *Blue Avenger and the Theory of Everything* (2002). Her last novel, *Angel in Vegas: The Chronicles of Noah Sark*, appeared in 2009.

Norma often received favorable reviews for her witty, honest and well-written stories. She once told an interviewer that she enjoyed writing for young people because she identified with them. "I'm a tomboy and have the feeling I never really grew up," she said in 1991. "Somehow, I got stuck at about age 13."

Dan Wright

Irvin Leigh Matus 1941-2011

Irvin Matus was an independent scholar, autodidact, author and lecturer best known for his book *Shakespeare, In Fact* (1994), a stout defense of the Stratfordian position. Based in Washington, D.C. for many years, he sometimes supplemented a meager income by working as a researcher for his cousin, the late congressman Stephen J. Solarz. He was Scholar-in-Residence at Shepherd University 1992-1993.

Matus was born and raised in Brooklyn, where he lived until his thirties. His interest in Shakespeare sparked when as a young man walking New York's chartered streets a line from *Julius Caesar* floated into his head: "You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!" He realized that, despite himself, he had somehow internalized large swathes of Shakespeare at high school. Idealist that he was, he instantly dedicated his life to the playwright and his works.

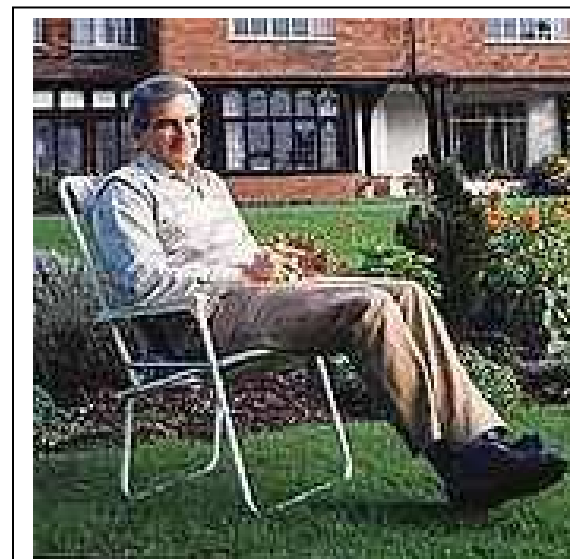
History and Architecture

Matus began by reading all Shakespeare's histories, together with biographies of their eponymous kings. In 1983, impressed by a book on English architecture, he began searching for information linking Shakespeare to known Elizabethan and Jacobean buildings, only to find almost nothing. He and his brother Paul sold their home on Long Island, and Matus used his share to research the topic in England itself. He also interviewed archivists, preservationists and historians.

Returning to the United States in November 1985, he moved to Washington DC so as to be close to the Folger and its resources. There he met and befriended the well-known scholar Samuel Schoenbaum, who helped him gain access to the library's restricted collections.

As always precariously self-financed, Matus lived by the kindness of others—in some cases members of the SOS—and by working part-time jobs. In June, 1987, he received a small grant permitting the purchase of a word processor and precious writing time. The result, *Shakespeare, the Living Record* (1991), fascinatingly described buildings and locales associated with the Bard.

In February 1989 the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable invited Matus to investigate the AQ and report back to the membership.



Irvin Matus in 1993

According to Jonathan Bate, Matus came to the controversy an agnostic. He flew to Los Angeles in August and spent two months researching the matter. This culminated in an address to Roundtable members in which he remarked that while Oxfordians were honest, thoughtful, gracious and cordial, their hypothesis was invalid. William Shakespeare was indeed the author of the works ascribed to him.

Shakespeare, In Fact

Matus went on to defend this position in the

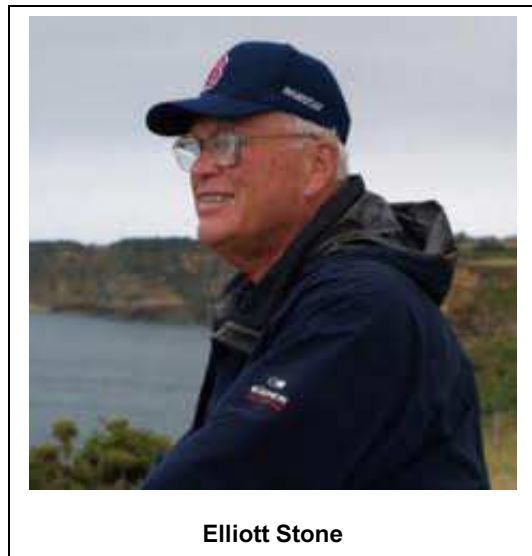
October 1991 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* and in his best-known work, *Shakespeare, In Fact* (1994). He summarized his position again in the April 1999 issue of *Harper's Magazine*.

Stratfordian scholars like Thomas Pendleton have hailed *Shakespeare, In Fact* as the most authoritative book on the subject. In *Contested Will* Shapiro urges “those interested in the strongest arguments in favor of Shakespeare’s authorship” to read it, while Scott McCrea praised the book for its “original and valuable scholarship.” David Bevington called Matus’s presentation “fair, balanced, and persuasive.”

Michael Egan

Elliott Stone 1932-2011

Arguing without being argumentative, Elliott Stone brought the vibrancy of youth throughout his life to discussions of his passions in art and literature that, he himself conceded, some might find obsessive.



“I am deeply involved in promoting the case of Edward de Vere, 17th earl of Oxford, as the true author of the Shakespeare canon,” he wrote several years ago, adding that “my friends and relatives are all aware of my need to immerse myself in this topic and do their best to interest me in other topics.”

They didn’t have to work too hard. For Mr. Stone, taking the Bard of Avon down a notch always took a back seat to showering generous attention on those around him.

“Dad looked at the interests of each child and grandchild specifically and individually—from football to tennis to elephants,” his daughter Leslie, of Brooklyn, N.Y., said at his memorial service last month. “He took the time to talk to people and took an interest in their interests.”

Mr. Stone, a lawyer and advocate for consumer credit unions who often wished he had been an art historian, died of cancer Dec. 19 in his Cambridge home. He was 79 and previously had lived for many years in Newton, where his family’s home and swimming pool became a de facto country club for a generation of neighbors.

“He was somebody who was a real intellectual,” said his brother, Dr. Alan A. Stone of Cambridge, the Touroff-Glueck Professor of Law and Psychiatry at Harvard University. “When he went to Harvard, he was interested in the history of art, he was interested in the finer things in life. I think he went to law school basically because he needed to find some way to make a living.”

Working as a lawyer and running a credit union his father had started, Mr. Stone used his career to help people by extending personal and business loans. Still, he left little doubt that his heart lay elsewhere. For the 50th anniversary report of his Harvard class, he wrote what he would have done differently: “I would have gone on to graduate school with a goal of a career in art history.”

In 1978, Mr. Stone noted in his 25th class report that he was “somewhat in demand as a tour guide through Boston’s museums.”

That may have been an understatement. Many a patron of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in close proximity benefited from Mr. Stone’s intimate knowledge

“I think the thing about my father that really touched me was his quiet generosity and his love for helping people in so many different ways,” said his daughter, Jennifer Stone Lesnick, of Wellesley.

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Shakespeare's Amazing Nautical Knowledge

Rex Clement

Thanks to Mark Anderson for calling attention to this remarkable excerpt from Rex Clement's *A Gipsy of the Horn: The Narrative of a Voyage round the World in a Windjammer Twenty Years Ago* (Rupert Hart Davis 1924)

Upshot: The Bard knew sailing and nautical terminology first-hand. Almost as if, say, he had crossed the English channel at least four times, had circumnavigated much of Italy in a Venetian galley and likely plied stormy seas on the open Atlantic in advance of the Spanish Armada attack.

The books that had survived the West Coast had succumbed to the rigours of the Horn and had been dumped, a sodden pulp, overboard. My battered old Shakespeare was the only book left in the half-deck and I hung on to that with grim solicitude. ...

On one occasion, when the bosun came in I fired off the first scene of the *The Tempest* to him. He was immensely taken with it, but would hardly believe it was Shakespeare at all.

However, he knew what "bring a ship to try" was, which was more than I did at the time or, I dare say, a good many others who have read the play. Shakespeare's knowledge of the sea always struck me as remarkable. For an inland-born poet he was very fond of sea similes, and astonishingly accurate in his use of nautical technicalities. How did he acquire his knowledge? One ignorant of sea-life would hardly use the phrase "remainder biscuit after a voyage" as a synonym for dryness, or talk of a man as "clean-timbered." I like to think that in the obscure early years of the poet's life in London he made a trip to sea, perhaps as an adventurer in one of the ships that smashed up the Armada. At least, no one can prove he didn't; and to my mind what's more likely than that a high-spirited youth doing odd jobs about the old Shoreditch theatre, in the scamplng and unquiet times when Medina Sidonia was fitting out, should join some salt-scarred vessel.¹ ...

His use of marine technicalities was far wider than that of any of his contemporaries. He mentions nearly all the parts of a ship, and with evident knowledge of their various functions. "The giddy footing of the hatches" as the open gratings of the main deck of an Elizabethan ship were called; the admiral bearing "The lantern in the poop"; the shrouds that "stay" the mast; "the high top-gallant"—they had no royals in those days; "the small spare mast such as seafaring men provide for storms"; these and many others he alludes to casually but with absolute correctness. Might he have learnt so much from ships lying in the London river, and not so far from Bankside?

The poet might even have learnt therefrom what the "remainder biscuit after a voyage" is like; found the inspiration of that simile, "Pun thee into shivers with his fist, as a sailor breaks a biscuit" and seen "the new map of the world with the augmentation of the Indies," that was so popular among seafaring men. Mixing with the mariners of those ships he might have gone so far as to hear of "great sea marks, standing every flaw," of the depth of "the bay of Portugal." Of the "guards of the pole," of taking the altitude or "height" of a star, of "keeping the weather gauge" of the need to "slack the boline" in heavy weather; and learnt to speak of the wind "fetching about," the anchor "coming home," of being "unclew'd" by misfortune or "be-lee'd" by lack of favour, though no other writer without sea experience that I know of ever got the hang of sailor-talk so naturally.

But admitting all this, there is still more that can hardly be explained in these ways. How came he to know what "noise the shrouds make at sea in a stiff tempest"? That dolphins "showed their backs above the element they lived in"? That a shifted wind unto a sail makes a vessel's course to "fetch about," mark you—or that, in a chase, if the pursuing vessel "yaws," a quarry of quick sail will escape her? Yet know it all he did and much more, and on occasion makes Ancient Pistol talk like Drake himself going into action.

¹ The Duke of Medina-Sidonia led the Armada—*Ed.*

SAC Seeks to Legitimize AQ in Colleges by 23 April 2016

John Shahan, SAC Chairman

The Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (SAC) now has 2,010 signatories to its *Declaration of Reasonable Doubt About the Identity of William Shakespeare*, launched in April of 2007. The pace has clearly picked up since the addition of the Keir Cutler video, plus an audio recording of Michael York reading the Declaration. So thanks again to Keir and Michael for all the work they did creating these excellent video and audio recordings. They provide interesting, useful tools for introducing people to the authorship issue. Thanks also to Hanno Wember and the *Neue Shakespeare Gesellschaft* for recruiting a dozen new signatories during the period.

But more important than the number is who these doubters are. Overall, our signatories are a very well-educated group—much more so than the general population. Nearly 79% are college graduates, and 725 (36%) have advanced degrees—312 doctorates and 413 master’s degrees. A total of 354 (18%) indicated that they are current or former college/ university faculty members. In a category by themselves, there are the 24 prominent signatories on our *notables list*.

Among college graduates and current/former faculty, the largest number indicated that their field was English literature (403, 25%), followed by theater arts (203, 13%). Not surprisingly, the largest proportions expressing doubt about Shakespeare’s authorship are from the two fields that deal with him most directly.

Professor James Shapiro praised the Declaration in his book, *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* But he called it a “petition,” and

claimed that the stated purpose is to get as many people as possible to sign it. Neither statement is true. A declaration is not a petition, and we never said that its goal was to maximize the number of signatories. Shapiro’s aim in saying otherwise was to define the number of Declaration signatories as the measure of “success” in the authorship controversy, and set the bar as high as possible.

The Declaration of Reasonable Doubt is exactly what its title says it is—a declaration. It is addressed to “Shakespeare lovers everywhere,” and it asks nothing of any authority. Our main goal is to “legitimize the authorship issue in academia,” by the 400th anniversary of the death of William of Stratford on April 23, 2016.

There’s no magic number of signatories that will accomplish this. It is difficult to say when such a tipping point might be reached.

Along the way, another major contribution of the Declaration is likely to be that it contradicts the Stratfordian narrative about doubters. The clear implication of Shapiro’s book, for example, is that authorship doubters are all defective in some way. Another example of this Stratfordian narrative is the claim on the *website* of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford that “The phenomenon of

disbelief in Shakespeare’s authorship is a psychological aberration of considerable interest ... [and can lead to] even certifiable madness (as in the sad case of Delia Bacon).”

So the issue is stigmatized. But there may come a time when people take another look, and see that it makes no sense to think that all of the many outstanding people who have expressed doubt are “defective.”



John Shahan and The Declaration

President's Letter

Richard Joyrich

I wish to extend my greetings to all of our members and to anyone else who has been fortunate enough to pick up this copy of the *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*. As you can see from reading this issue, it is certainly an exciting time for the Shakespeare Authorship Question and our Society in particular.

This year has already brought with it several new books on Shakespeare, many directly involved with the question of authorship. Some of these are reviewed in this issue and reviews of others will be forthcoming. Of the books already published I would single out *Dating Shakespeare's Plays: A Critical Review of the Evidence*, edited by Kevin Gilvary, as one of the most important books to come along.

In the coming months several more books will be published and I'm sure we will not be disappointed. Among these new books are *Shakespeare Suppressed* by Katherine Chiljan (expected in July), *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of "Shakespeare"* by Richard Malim (also expected in July) and *Shakespeare's Guide to Italy* by Richard Roe (expected in November).

Anonymous

This year will also be bringing the release of a major film, *Anonymous*, directed by Roland Emmerich, currently scheduled for nationwide release on September 30, 2011. This movie will certainly be controversial and will not satisfy all of us who are involved in researching and discussing the authorship of the Shakespeare plays and other works. However, I believe that the movie will stimulate great interest in our movement and our Society and related groups will need to be ready to respond to it.

I invite all of you to attend the upcoming Joint SOS/SF Shakespeare Authorship Conference, being held October 13-16, 2011 in Washington, DC. The host hotel is the Washington Court Hotel, conveniently located a few blocks away from Union Station, the Folger Library, and other major Washington sites and landmarks. A block of rooms is being held at a rate of \$159/night (plus tax). Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at 202 628-2100. Mention the Shakespeare Oxford Society (or the

Shakespeare Fellowship, or just Shakespeare). The Conference will include many excellent presentations (details to be announced later) and a visit to the Folger Shakespeare Library to view Edward de Vere's copy of the Geneva Bible.

Registration information for the conference is may be found on p. 19 of this issue of the Newsletter, or on the SOS website at www.shakespeare-oxford.com.

Recruit-A-Member

Think of that friend who gets a kick out of your reports on the latest authorship research. The same one who borrowed your copy of Looney or Anderson. Our Recruit-A-Member Program is a great way to encourage them to try out front-row seats at an exciting and overdue paradigm shift—the unraveling of the Stratfordian claim to Shakespeare.

The program enables you to offer people a half-price basic membership or give such a membership as a gift. They will receive *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* with all the latest news and research into one of history's great mysteries. It will also help us continue its publication and educational activities on behalf of the true Shakespeare—Edward de Vere.

Here's just one testimonial from a recent new recipient:

I was really pleased to get my first issue of the SOS newsletter from a friend, having been interested in the Shakespeare authorship question by her. I didn't know what I expected, but found the newsletter like a treasure hunt, offering more clues and insights into the plays and sonnets, and the characters who are determined to out the real author. I look forward to reading more, and expect it to take me back to the plays again, never a bad thing.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone to renew their memberships or consider joining us if you are not already a member. You can download a membership application or register online and pay by credit card. (Your membership dues are not up-to-date unless the address label for your newsletter says "2011.")

Please also consider making a donation to our Society to benefit our continuing work. There is certainly a lot to do right now.

Let's really make the most of this exciting time!