



The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



Vol.32: no.2

"Let me study so, to know the thing I am forbid to know"

Spring 1996

Oxford, the Order of The Garter, and Shame

by Peter R. Moore

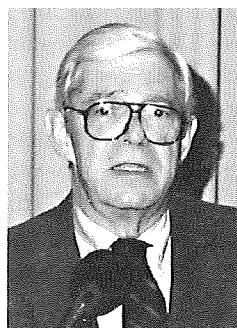
In August 1995 Prof. Alan H. Nelson, acting at my suggestion, microfilmed the records of the elections to the Order of the Garter for the years 1569 to 1604 from the register in the British Library, where it is Additional Manuscript 36,768. The purpose of this article is to examine the tale that these elections tell about the standing of the Earl of Oxford during his adult years.

I have never seen the Garter elections cited in history books as evidence of the standing of English courtiers, though they say a great deal about who a courtier's friends were, about the formation of factions and alliances, not to mention who had the monarch's favor. For example, the nineteenth century myth that the poet Earl of Surrey detested Sir Thomas Seymour collapses in the face of Surrey's votes for Seymour in 1543 and 1544 (see *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, 18.2.517 and 19.1.384). Other old stories from the history books can receive support or refutation from the evidence of the Garter elections. But new evidence often does much more than simply providing a thumbs up or thumbs down on the received wisdom. We often find entirely new motives, twists, and dimensions in old tales of who, what, when, where, how, and why. The Garter elections could add a great deal, for example, to our understanding of court factions in the reign of Henry VIII.

The information about the Earl of Oxford's life that is currently in print is highly incomplete, given the available

(Continued on page 8)

Authorship Fireworks at the Sixth World Shakespeare Congress Reception, Seminars make an impact



LA Times Arts Editor Emeritus Charles Champlin (left) and British Actor Michael York were among those who addressed World Shakespeare Congress guests at the reception hosted by the Shakespeare Oxford Society Friday evening, April 12th.

LOS ANGELES. In the introduction to an essay written by outgoing S.A.A. President David Bevington for *The Shakespeare Mystery* web site, established on April 23rd by WGBH-TV in Boston, reference was made to the "fireworks" surrounding some of the encounters between Oxfordians and Stratfordians at the 6th quinquennial World Shakespeare Conference in Los Angeles.

"Fireworks" may be overstating the case somewhat; however it certainly was a most stimulating week for those Oxfordians who attended the conference, following hotly as it did upon Donald Foster's grandiose claims for his *Funeral Elegy* and Alan Nelson's claim to have found the Stratfordian smoking gun in the *George a Greene* inscriptions. There was a smell of battle in the air.

(Vice-President Charles Boyle has written a separate piece about his experiences as an Oxfordian participating in the S.A.A. seminars, where some of the much-bruited fireworks went off - see page 4.)

At the April 12th reception hosted by the Shakespeare Oxford Society at the Biltmore Hotel, site of the week-long combined S.A.A. and World Shakespeare Congress meeting, around 200 guests turned out, most of them conference attendees. This included several notable names among orthodox Shakespeareans, including outgoing S.A.A. president David Bevington (University of Chicago), UC-Berkeley Professor, Alan Nelson (familiar to members of the Evermore email discussion group), and Professor Stephen Greenblatt of UC and Harvard, who will be adding *Funeral Elegy* to the next edition of the *Norton Shakespeare*.

The reception was coordinated by Carol Sue Lipman

(Continued on page 3)

Inside:

President's Letter on Fundraising
page 6

Stephanie Caruana on Funeral Elegy
page 12

Charles Boyle on Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England
page 18

Events at the World Shakespeare Congress

Visions, revisions and a premature death

by Carol Boettger

LOS ANGELES. The combined meeting of the International Shakespeare Association and the Shakespeare Association of America was held in Los Angeles on April 7-14, 1996. The majority of those attending were Stratfordian academics, but with the large Society membership in California, plus the Board meeting and reception, there were dozens of Oxfordians also attending.

Besides the academic sessions, there was a field trip to the Huntington Library to see the exhibit from the Extra-Illustrated Turner Shakespeare and performances of several of the plays nearby. An evening performance of *Venus and Adonis* by Ben Stewart drew rave reviews from those who attended. It was frequently necessary to choose between several different presentations of varying subject matter (such as Short Paper Sessions and Seminars). I attended as many as I could during a busy week.

In a Short Paper Session (lecture to a smaller group) entitled "Historicizing the Early Stuart Accession", J. Leeds Barroll of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, discussed the early reign of James I of England. Prof. Barroll took the position that King James had admired the social group of which Sir Philip Sidney, and the Earls of Essex and Southampton had been members. Barroll believes this admiration was the reason that Southampton was released from prison by James, soon after he became king.

In another Short Paper Session, Andreas Hofele (University of Heidelberg, Germany) spoke on "Twentieth-Century Intertextuality and the Reading of Shakespeare's Sources". At the risk of oversimplifying, I will attempt a summary of his version of intertextuality: 1) the way one text is transposed into another, 2) the range of possible ways one text relates to another, and 3) the interreading of the text.

As examples, he mentioned links between Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and between Hollinshed's *Chronicles* and *Macbeth*.

In the S.A.A Seminars format participants have all read each other's papers in the preceding weeks. In the Seminar on "Social Division and Hierarchy" Richard Wilson (University of Lancaster) referred to the "violence Shakespeare seemed to endorse" in *Twelfth Night* "unlike other dramatists of his time" who were more likely to ridicule dueling. A *Twelfth Night* example: Antonio heroically sought to defend "Sebastian" in a duel even though Antonio ran the additional risk of arrest for past acts.

Society Trustee Charles Boyle participated in the "Theatrical Enterprise" Seminar. In his paper, entitled "Allowed Fools: Notes Toward an Elizabethan *Twelfth Night*", Boyle discussed Elizabeth's court as the subject of the play and debated several Stratfordians as to whether patronage or the marketplace had a larger role in determining the direction of Elizabethan theatre. (Boyle has written about this seminar on page 4 -Ed.).

(Continued on page 23)

Samuel Schoenbaum 1927-1996

Samuel Schoenbaum, one of the two leading biographers of Shakespeare as the man from Stratford-on-Avon, died on March 27 at the age of sixty-nine after a long illness.

Professor Schoenbaum was a master at making the most of the facts and stories of the life of Will Shakspeare, as that man was known in Stratford, and of his relatives. His *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (1975) is valuable for its authoritative collection of Stratfordian facts and figures and the many facsimile reproductions of documents and their provenance. He maintained that his book differed from most popular biographies, which, he said, "augment the facts with speculation or imaginative reconstruction or interpretive criticism of the plays and poems." He may have been thinking of A.L. Rowse, the British histo-

rian and his only serious rival, whose several biographies appealed more to popular tastes.

Non-Stratfordian scholars, nevertheless, note the many times Schoenbaum must resort to phrases such as "there can be little doubt that..." in his attempt to stitch together a biography that unites the man from Stratford and the works of Shakespeare. Despite his unfortunate lapses into sneering sarcasm when defending the Stratford man against other candidates, Schoenbaum was curiously cautious about some of the key Stratfordian evidence.

In a postscript to the paperback edition (1987) of his *Documentary Life*, he accepts the work of Jane Cox of the Public Record Office in a booklet rejecting four of the six "Shakespeare" signatures as authentic. Schoenbaum allowed that "a sceptical in-

quirer has made necessary a re-examination of comfortable assumptions. Miss Cox has deigned to milk a sacred cow."

In his last book, *Shakespeare's Lives* (1991), Schoenbaum went so far as to question the meaning of the biographical documents he spent most of his life evaluating. On the book's concluding page he laments: "Perhaps we should despair of ever bridging the vertiginous expanse between the sublimity of the subject and the mundane inconsequence of the documentary record."

At his death Schoenbaum was director of the Center for Renaissance and Baroque Studies at the University of Maryland, where he had been an English professor. He had received his master's and Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University after graduation from Brooklyn College.

R. Whalen

Reception (Continued from page 1)

and members of her Los Angeles based Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable, and was largely funded through the generosity of former Society trustee, Russell des Cognets.

After Carol Sue had welcomed everyone, Charles Champlin made some brief comments on his 12 years as an Oxfordian, recounting how he, like so many others, had virtually stumbled upon the authorship issue at a dinner one night in 1983, and had found himself as much puzzled by the fact that he'd never heard about it properly before, as he was fascinated by the story itself.

Champlin said that it was one of the greatest literary mysteries of all time, and recalled one of his favorite authorship stories from his "early years" as an Oxfordian. At the beginning of the Century, James M. Barrie, when asked what he thought about Bacon's possible authorship of the plays, quipped: "I don't know whether or not Francis Bacon wrote the works of Shakespeare, but if he didn't, he missed the opportunity of a lifetime."

British actor, Michael York, spoke next and echoed Champlin, remarking that his recent involvement in the authorship question reflected his desire "to resolve this extraordinary mystery." He told how he had been "upbraided" just before the reception for his "neophyte allegiance to the Oxford cause." York went on to talk about a fax he'd just received from a friend he was working with on a "How to act Shakespeare" volume. His friend asked many questions about the famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy in Hamlet, which, he told York, puzzled him. "After all," he added, "it's the most famous speech in western literature. But what *does* it mean?"

York said that, as an Oxfordian, such questions take on a whole new meaning for him. Having a real author in mind, with "real life" events to illuminate the text, meant that he could think of Hamlet/Oxford as a man who did literally "take arms against a sea of troubles" when he took to sea against the Armada in 1588. Actors always appreciate such insights, and he, as an actor, appreciated the extra meaning that such a line now yielded.

Then featured speaker, Charles Bur-

ford, came to the podium and the fun began. Burford took *Hamlet* as his theme, and noted right off that the opening words of the play ("Who's there?") broach the theme of identity. He went on to describe a convergence of identities in the figures of Hamlet, Shakespeare and Oxford, the key to this unity being the *Sonnets*, in which an author, who speaks in the same register as Hamlet, expresses

the specific Court concerns of Edward de Vere (see, for instance, sonnet 66).

Maintaining the theme of identity, Burford pointed out that, in his experience, Shakespeare himself was never present at the Shakespeare Association of America meetings. He had searched for him in the corridors, he had searched for him in the seminars, he had searched for him in the banqueting halls, but he was nowhere to be found. Nor had he found him in the universities across the country.

He accused the professors of being more interested in literary theory than in literature itself. They had, he said, become mere propagandists for their various "isms" - deconstructionism, postmodernism, new historicism etc. - which were all devices for wilfully misunderstanding the works. They were no longer teachers, because they despised the truth. They were "facilitators of tenure."

This last remark caused an audible stir in the audience, with gasps from some and applause from others. Several listeners in the back of the room took it as their cue to depart. Here, in large part, were the fireworks mentioned on the *Mystery* web site just two weeks later.

Burford went on to identify the battle between truth and propaganda as a major theme in *Hamlet*, from the moment the ghost says to Hamlet in the first act, "the ear of Denmark is by a forged process of my death rankly abus'd." He pointed out that



The Reception hosted by the Shakespeare Oxford Society at the Biltmore Hotel drew an SRO crowd of curious Conference attendees. Pictured at the affair are (l to r) British actor Michael York, Society President Charles Burford, Pat York, Thad Taylor, and Society trustees Lydia Bronte and Michael Pisapia.

the master propagandist in the play is Polonius, who is described as "the father of good news", while the upholder of truth is Hamlet himself whose players will "tell all." The modern propagandists of the Stratford man, he claimed, are cast in Polonius' mould and should rightfully bear the name of "Cecilians" rather than Stratfordians. He cited both the *Ur-Hamlet* and *Funeral Elegy* as examples of their irresponsible propaganda.

Burford stressed that if one elevates the "isms" at the expense of the author's own mind and outlook, then you end up with a text that, because of its unreality, fails to engage the interest of students. Moreover, the author's philosophy and method become obscured, and the world loses sight of the fact that Shakespeare is one of its greatest spiritual teachers and is speaking for himself when he has Hamlet exclaim: "The time is our of joint. O cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right."

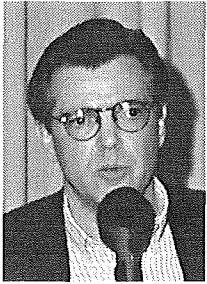
Finally, he went on to answer his initial question of "Who's there?" by arguing that the character and psychology of Hamlet are the window through which one can contemplate the psyche of Shakespeare himself. He claimed that the figure of the alienated courtier, of which Hamlet is the most thorough manifestation, is the filter through which the author percolated his art and philosophy. It was his point of vision.

Burford then described Oxford's spiritual journey in terms of Shakespeare's

(Continued on page 13)

Lessons from a Seminar

by
Charles Boyle



Charles Boyle has presented papers for the last 3 years at the SAA Annual Conference.

Like It. Later I learned that members of my seminar had met beforehand and agreed among themselves to ignore anything I said.

My seminar topics this year revolved around the 16th century theatre world. My paper described a production of *Twelfth Night* from an Elizabethan point of view, seeing it as a political satire of her Court, with the Queen as Olivia and Sir Christopher Hatton sketched in the character of Malvolio. I interpreted some of the more obscure jests along these lines, looking for the original laugh. In the process I suggested the Fool, like Hamlet, was the central character (though often dismissed as if peripheral, which only captures half his meaning). Perhaps he had been modeled on Oxford? That was as far as I went. I didn't bring up authorship directly but I did emphasize the play's political and personal reality. But with Stratfordians you generally find that not only won't they talk about the author as real, they won't talk about what he was writing about as real either.

The paper I was assigned for special review also concerned the Fool in *Twelfth Night*. It suggested that the Fool was not so much the creation of Shakespeare as it was the witty actor who must have played him, Robert Armin. In this gregarious and likeable paper I saw everything that infuriated me about Stratfordianism. Of course I understood his problem. Robert Armin is a more real and interesting person to him than the author. But still, the casual assassination permitted the "one opinion is as good as

another" courtesy, which allows them to whittle away at this poor author, making him ever more insignificant and irrelevant to his own genius. And who can explain "genius" anyway? Why try? In seminar after seminar I've sat through endless, circling talk that never made a point that had the courage of conviction.

So when I was called upon to respond to this other paper I was angry. I didn't act angry but anger was driving me. I knew I couldn't discuss authorship directly. Experience has taught me that if you do everyone groans and throws up their collective hands. So I went on and on about reality without coming to my real point until an eminent Stratfordian professor in the audience started yelling that I was boring, boring! and talking to scholars like they were fools and that I should just shut up! I protested I had only one more thing to add anyway, which was true enough, but pointless. The chair of the seminar asked me to stop and, half out of spite, I never said another word.

Yet I went over and over the uproar for two days afterwards, trying to figure some tactful way to have made my major point - human identity matters - without giving offence. But each strategy I devised felt like defeat.

Later at one of the conference functions I was speaking with another eminent Stratfordian professor. We acknowledged a personal liking for each other and a mutual regard for our love of Shakespeare.

He mentioned the awful reports he had heard of my seminar. I told him I truly regretted what had happened. He shook his head sadly and told me I had burned a lot of bridges there. I was genuinely taken aback. Bridges? I was unaware I had any bridges. Except for him, mum's been the word to me. I mentioned the plan last year to ignore me. He seemed to be aware of it and nodded with grave concern.

So what was to be done? We agreed the Authorship Question mattered and that indeed there was a tangible truth involved. Some real individual actually sat down and wrote these lines. In the simple question of who he was one of us was right and the other

wrong. I remembered a question put to Norrie Epstein, author of *The Friendly Shakespeare*, at the 1993 Boston SOS Conference. She had expressed ambivalence about the traditional attribution but also a deep personal and professional respect for the orthodox professors who had been her friends and mentors. She would not attack their conclusions. Someone finally asked her what piece of evidence would ever convince the Stratfordian establishment they were wrong. She answered that she didn't think there was any evidence that could convince them. That it wasn't a matter of evidence but of faith. They Believed. Case closed. You were better off trying to talk the Pope out of the Virgin Birth.

I asked my friend if he thought what she said was true. He smiled and nodded in a serious but friendly manner. Yes, he said, probably it was. He particularly liked the religious metaphor. We were like two churches. His candor made a strong impact. Suddenly I realized I didn't want to spend the rest of my life arguing with Stratfordians.

Most of what I know about Shakespeare I learned from Stratfordians. They've done some of the best work and still do. It's just that lacking a real author in the flesh and blood sense - who ever gave a tinker's damn about the Stratford man? - they have no unifying authorial voice to test their theories against. Authorship itself has become just another theory. Which isn't right. I'm a reality, you're a reality. Let Shakespeare be a reality too.

Stratfordians are intelligent and informed. But this case represents a kind of blindness they've been talked into by their priesthood. Why make yourself crazy banging your head against it? At this point I'd rather learn more about Shakespeare's motives, about the life of Oxford and the true history of Tudor England, the age that set the stage for the world we live in now.

No, I don't want to argue anymore (though I know I will). I would rather talk Shakespeare with the professors and Oxford with those who haven't fallen in love with Shakespeare yet. It would even be fun to build a movement so prosperous and powerful it made the Oxford story famous throughout the world - and then let the world decide.

Minneapolis Conference: full slate of events set

The 20th annual conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society will be held October 10-13, at the Hotel Sofitel, Minneapolis. Three special events, free and open to the general public, have been scheduled.

First, a public debate on Shakespeare's authorship will be held on October 10th, and will be moderated by Al Austen, the producer of *Frontline's Shakespeare Mystery*. Society President Charles Burford will uphold Edward de Vere's colors, while David Kathman has tentatively accepted an invitation as his opponent. There are plans to have two more individuals participate in the debate, making it more of a panel discussion. Further details will be announced in the next newsletter.

A public workshop on the primary questions and meaning of the authorship debate will be held on Saturday morning, October 12th, running parallel to the presentation of conference papers, thus giving members of the public and family and friends of Society members an opportunity to learn

the basics of the authorship debate.

In addition to these events, a special conference seminar "Shakespeare and the Meaning of Edward de Vere's Bible" will be held at 1:00 PM, Sunday, October 13th, at the Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis.

This will be the first time since 1994 that Roger Stritmatter has made a presentation on his continuing work on the Bible, and he has a wealth of new material to report on. This event will also be open to the general public, and a major publicity campaign is under way to let all in the Twin Cities area know about the Conference and these special venues where the public will have a first-hand opportunity to see what the debate is all about.

All Society members will have been mailed Conference Registration packets by the end of June. For further program and conference registration information, contact:

George Anderson, Chair '96 Confer-

ence Committee, Shakespeare Oxford Society, 1100 West 53rd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55419. Voice: (612)823-2957 Fax: (612)823-5649 email: gra55419@aol.com

Call for Papers 20th Annual Conference

Individuals wishing to present papers at the Conference should send them to:

Charles Burford
190 Amory St. #4
Jamaica Plain MA 02130-4501

Papers should be delivered typed double space, or on disk in ASCII format, Word Perfect 5.1, or Word 6.0

Length should be based
on a presentation time
of approx. 30 minutes

John Price sues Shakespeare Oxford Society

This report is made to inform the membership of serious issues that now confront the Shakespeare Oxford Society. It is hoped that these issues can be resolved with dignity and the minimum of upset and expense to all those involved.

On April 18th 1996 John Price filed a lawsuit against the Shakespeare Oxford Society in the Court of Common Pleas, Cuyahoga County, Ohio. The Society's president, Charles Burford, was served with papers on Monday June 3rd.

Mr. Price is suing the Society for monies allegedly spent on behalf of the Society between January 1990 and December 31st 1995. These monies are said to total \$25,243.42, and fall into three categories: Blue Boar inventory, Burford tour expenses, and office expenses. Mr. Price

claims that the monies for the first two categories were loans. No agreement exists between him and the Shakespeare Oxford Society with regard to these monies.

Mr. Price is demanding judgment against the Shakespeare Oxford Society in the amount of \$25,243.42, together with interest at the statutory rate, all of his costs and expenses, together with reasonable attorney's fees, and any further relief that the Court deems just and equitable upon the premises.

In the absence of any legal obligation to reimburse John Price, the Society has attempted to fulfill what it sees as a moral obligation by offering him sole ownership of the complete inventory of Blue Boar merchandise, which has a current retail value of \$14,000. In addition, the Society has sought mediation through the *pro bono* services of Mr. James L. Kenefick, the chairman-elect of the Senior Lawyers Section of the Boston Bar Association.

Mr. Price in a letter to the Board has rejected the reimbursement offered him, and has opted not to withdraw his lawsuit. Indeed, a threat of further action has been

made via Mr. Price's lawyer.

The Society, however, in its desire to settle this whole matter, is persisting with its mediation initiative.

Mr. Price allegedly obligated the Society to himself to the extent of its total assets without the consent or authorization of the Board of Trustees. When using his own money to conduct the Society's affairs, he did not seek, nor did he have, Board authorization for the expenditures that he was making. That the Society should be recognizing any sort of moral obligation to reimburse him is a measure of its willingness to do what is just and right.

Finally the necessary tax returns were not filed on behalf of the Society during Mr. Price's tenure as our leader. This has rendered the Society liable for considerable fines and other expenses associated with clearing up the financial affairs of the organization.

On May 18th 1996 at a duly called special meeting of the Board in Northampton, Mass., John Price was removed from the Board of Trustees of the Shakespeare Oxford Society for cause.

The Board of Trustees votes in a new era: fundraising now the key

By Charles Burford

The Society's trustees have met twice since the publication of the last Newsletter: in Pasadena, Calif., on the 13th of April and in Northampton, Mass., on the 18th of May. A good many new initiatives were passed at both meetings in line with the general philosophy outlined in the president's message in the last edition of the Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter. In addition, an Action Plan for 1996-2004 was approved in principle at the Pasadena meeting pending review and amendment by the Development Committee. It is printed on page 7, and our membership is invited to review it and make suggestions. Here are some of the significant motions that were carried at the meetings:

- It was resolved that the Society transfer the bulk of its funds to an insured money market account where better interest can be earned and bank fees eliminated.

- It was resolved that the Society set up an Endowment Fund, in furtherance of the aims set down in the Action Plan. The Gilfillan CD money and the Snap-on-Tools stock (total \$10,500) will be used as the start-up money for the fund.

- It was resolved that the Board should encourage all members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society to switch their long-distance telephone service to ATCO (Allied Telecomm Corporation). 8% of the bills paid to ATCO by members goes to the Society. This could mean an income of as much as \$1,500 a month for the Shakespeare Oxford Society, if all members were to switch their service.

- It was resolved that the Society should explore the possibility of a special Shakespeare Oxford Society credit card. As with the ATCO plan, a percentage of each transaction goes to the Society. This could be offered together with the ATCO sign-up as part of a membership package.

- It was resolved that life memberships be set at \$1,000, with \$100 going into the general fund and \$900 into the Endowment Fund.

- It was resolved that the sum of \$5,000 (raised specifically for that purpose) be paid out as a deposit on the Victor Crichton library once a satisfactory contract has been negotiated with Crichton's nephew, Randolph Riddoch. The Society is acquiring the library for \$15,000. Trustee Lydia Bronte has agreed to raise the remaining monies without obligating the Society. There are 2,000 books, some of them rare, and they have been valued at \$30,000.

- It was resolved that "The Blue Boar Gifte Shoppe" be renamed simply The Blue Boar, under which name it will become the official merchandising arm of the Society. A merchandising committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Tim Holcomb to explore new product lines and markets.

- It was resolved that William Boyle and Charles Burford be paid monthly stipends of \$1,000 and \$1,500 respectively to continue their extensive work on behalf of the Oxfordian cause. It was further resolved that such stipends be contingent upon the raising of further funds, and that at no time would the Society's coffers be permitted to fall below a figure of \$6,000.

All these resolutions make it clear that the Society is now moving towards a more professional, commercially-viable organization, with a permanent headquarters/library and a paid staff. As the Society enters this new era and builds a lasting monument to the movement that we all represent, it is essential that we develop a strong financial base. It will be the key to our future success. First, however, the Society must change the way it sees itself.

All successful non-profit corporations have to be run like businesses to succeed, even educational ones like the Shakespeare Oxford Society. Thinking big is an important part of growth. The time has come for us to envision an operating budget for the Society in the region of \$100,000 per annum. A well-targeted fund-raising campaign, backed up by a professional business plan, could make such a budget a reality by the year 2000.

The experiences of the last few years have taught us that we can't rely exclusively on volunteer workers. Considerable though their efforts have been, they can't take us where we want to go. Their work is never going to be consistently reliable and committed. Too often people assume office in the Society with an initial burst of enthusiasm and energy only to find that their "real-life" responsibilities get the better of them and essential Society business is neglected.

We are fortunate in that there are now a number of Oxfordians who are determined to make the Oxford cause their life's work. It is our duty to create an environment in which they can earn a living while working to fulfill our mission. To invest in them is to invest in growth.

Those who object to growth often say: "We haven't got the money to invest in growth." Such a statement fails to take cognizance of the fact that the money *is* there; we simply haven't tapped it. Growth is, above all, a state of mind. Where there's a will *and* a vision, there's always a way.

The alternative to growth is stagnation. The reason the Society is not growing properly at the moment is its failure to unite behind a single plan of action. We have, it seems, lost our sense of mission and become intent on allowing trivial theoretical concerns to distract us from our most basic goals.

It is vital that we concentrate on getting our message to as wide an audience as possible. Thus we should be thinking strongly in terms of promotion of the existing evidence, and this means developing techniques for the effective dissemination of our message. The world of public relations is not one we can afford to ignore, if we are serious about gaining national attention for our cause. Apart from being the foundation of any fund-raising campaign, public relations are intimately connected to our sense of mission. Only if we as a Society have a clear sense of our goals can we then communicate our vision effectively to the public, thus winning new mem-

bers and support.

The idea that we need a smoking gun to convince others of Oxford's authorship is not only bogus (after all you yourself didn't need one to become convinced), it's also dangerous. It fosters a state of mind that is anti-growth, because it says: "We don't need to bother about promotion. All we need to do is find that one piece of elusive evidence that will bring the Stratfordian temple tumbling down."

Unfortunately, the world doesn't work that way. We're in for a long battle, and to win it we have to build a Research Center which is every bit as formidable as the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. It means converting the Shakespeare Oxford Society into a world-class operation, and it's going to take all of us to do it.

To this end, we must create an organization to which individuals and corporations will want to give, and which they will trust. Before this can happen, we need to develop a full marketing/business plan with an integrated fund-raising strategy; we need to revise our bylaws to bring them more in line with the long-term goals of the Society; and we need to create a foundation, governed by a separate board of trustees in conjunction with either a community foundation or a reputable bank. Thus the Society will have a corpus of money that will remain intact and unspent while generating a constant and reliable source of income to fund its mission.

The Society's marketing/business plan is being developed, in consultation with others, by Randall Sherman, a newly elected trustee, who lives in San Francisco. It will be presented in detail in the next issue of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*. Please feel free to contact Randall with ideas or offers of help at (408)737-6590(W) or (415)337-9171(H).

I hope that you will become an active member and join with us in creating a stronger and more influential society. As I mentioned in my last message, one very direct way in which you can help is by giving at least one gift membership a year. Many of you, I know, already have. Let's *all* do it, and so double our membership by the end of the year!

Action Plan and Mission Statement for the Shakespeare Oxford Society of the 21st Century

ACTION PLAN

Step 1: Raise \$12,000 by the end of Summer 1996 to ensure continued salary payments for William Boyle and Charles Burford; as well as to design and print a new Society brochure and a fund-raising prospectus.

Step 2: Set up an Endowment Fund to receive substantial donations from both members and the general public. Create a separate board of trustees to oversee the fund in conjunction with a bank or community foundation.

Step 3: Raise \$35,000 by the end of Fall 1996 in order to establish a 1997 operating budget that will allow the Society to continue, and build on, the initiatives begun in 1996.

Step 4: 1997: Continue to develop the Society's public image through publications of excellence (*Newsletter* and *Journal*), a library catalogue, an index of the Society's newsletters and other authorship periodicals, an annual report, and a professional business plan for the next ten years.

Step 5: 1997: Apply for grant money from foundations and corporations for the development of research programs both in the US and Europe. The Society should start being able to grant scholarships and develop its own educational programs.

Step 6: Fall 1997-99: Launch a major

fund-raising and public relations campaign (**Mission 2004**). Target: \$1 million. Invest this money in the Endowment Fund - could yield \$75,000 per annum. Rent library/office space as prelude to acquiring a freehold property for the Shakespeare Oxford Society Research Center.

Step 7: 2004: Fulfill the ultimate goal of Mission 2004 by purchasing the Shakespeare Oxford Society Research Center. This will house the Society's library and archives, a lecture hall and performance space, and administrative offices with full desktop publishing facilities. There will also be live-in quarters for a caretaker/librarian and guest rooms for visiting scholars. With this accomplished, we can set about storming the citadel in earnest!

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To convince the world that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, was the author of the Shakespeare canon; to promote scholarly research and writing on the Shakespeare authorship question and on the English Renaissance, particularly as it relates to Edward de Vere; and to foster a spirit of open and unprejudiced debate on these matters and, with it, an enhanced appreciation and enjoyment of the plays and poems published under the name William Shakespeare.

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Garter (Continued from page 1)

records, although new material is becoming available, largely thanks to Prof. Nelson. Moreover, as with Surrey, myths have proliferated, such as that Oxford cruelly rejected his wife in 1576. Both B.M. Ward and Conyers Read, biographers respectively of Oxford and Lord Burghley, concealed their knowledge of a memorandum in Burghley's hand showing that Lady Burghley carried off her daughter after she reunited with her husband upon his return from Italy (see *H.M.C. Salisbury*, 13.128; Ward, *Earl of Oxford*, 123; Read, *Lord Burghley*, 136). We must expect more surprises.

We will begin by considering what the Order of the Garter is and how members were selected. We will then take a look at some other nominees besides Oxford; the Garter elections are of particular interest at the end of a reign when a transfer of power is imminent, and Elizabeth's reign is no exception. Finally we will examine the record on Oxford. The purpose of considering other nominees before taking up Oxford is twofold. First, we cannot make much sense out of the Garter elections or, for that matter, anything else that happened four centuries ago, without establishing the historical context. Second, we shall discover interesting things about people who are part of the story of Oxford's life.

The Order of the Garter was founded by Edward III in the 1340s and consists of the sovereign and 25 Knights of the Garter (KGs). Membership in the Order remains the highest honor bestowed by the British monarch. The great prestige of the Order is due in large measure to its exclusiveness; no one may be elected KG unless the death or degradation of an incumbent creates a vacancy. During the period 1569-1604 there were about sixty peers, so the Order of the Garter was far more exclusive than the peerage. In contrast, the French Order of St. Michael was debased in the mid sixteenth century by being awarded to all and sundry, and so in 1578 Henry III created the Order of the Holy Spirit, limited to one hundred knights. Given the much larger population of France in those days, the Holy Spirit was about as exclusive as the Garter. The ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, fifteenth, and twentieth de Vere Earls of Oxford were Knights of

the Garter.

Selection of KGs worked in the following manner. Whenever a vacancy existed an election was held to select a new member, normally at the annual meeting or chapter on St. George's Day, 23 April, at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Each KG present voted for nine men, three in each of the following categories: 'princes', 'barons', and 'knights'. 'Princes' means earls, marquesses, dukes, and royalty (or, earls and above), while 'barons' and 'knights' are self explanatory. A viscount, who ranks between an earl and a baron, could be nominated under either category, 'prince' or 'baron'. In Queen Elizabeth I's reign, the heir to an earl or above could be

"...the Garter elections are of particular interest at the end of a reign when a transfer of power is imminent, and Elizabeth's reign is no exception."

nominated under his courtesy title, while a duke's younger son could be nominated as a 'baron'. If ten Knights of the Garter were present at a given election, with each KG listing nine nominees, then as many as ninety names could be listed, though the more likely result would be about twenty. Then the votes were tallied and presented to the Queen, who picked whomever she pleased or no one at all.

As an example, we may consider the election of 1572. Nine members were present, and they voted for seventeen names. The top finishers were these: the French Duke of Montmorency, the newly created Lord Burghley, and the Queen's first cousin, Sir Francis Knollys, each received nine votes; Sir James Croft received eight; the Earl of Oxford and Lord Grey of Wilton each got seven; four other men got either six or five votes; and Walter Devereux, Viscount Hereford got four. Three places were vacant, so the Queen selected Burghley, Grey, and Hereford as the new KGs; later that year Burghley became Lord Treasurer and Hereford was created Earl of Essex. Hereford's wife was the Queen's first cousin once removed (the daughter of Francis Knollys), and Hereford had shown great energy opposing the Northern rebellion of

1569-70, hence the Queen's favor.

Who received votes and how did the Queen make her choices? The category of 'princes' included about twenty Englishmen, though a significant number of them were already KGs, but also included favored foreign royalty and near-royalty, as well as Irish earls. Twelve KGs voted in the election of 1590, and Henry IV of France and James VI of Scotland were up for the first time, and so all twelve KGs made Henry their first pick and James their second; four English earls split the remaining twelve votes. The category of 'barons' included about fifty men, less those who were already KGs, but they didn't have to compete with foreigners. There were about three or four hundred knights in England at this time, but the nominations for the category 'knights' were confined to a very tight circle of high Court officials, military commanders, and the Queen's viceroys for Ireland, Wales, and the North. In the elections of 1578 and '79, all voters listed Sir Francis Knollys, Sir James Croft, and Sir Christopher Hatton, in that order. It is easy to see which knights got votes, namely the Queen's closest servants, and the number of votes received is a good index of a knight's standing.

Why noblemen got votes is not so easy to say. Mere rank was not enough. In 1576 William Paulet succeeded his father as third Marquess of Winchester, and Paulet lived until 1598. During that time England had no dukes and no other marquesses, so Winchester stood alone above the earls. And yet he received only twelve votes for the Garter during the entire period. His record is particularly sad compared to that of his cousin Sir Hugh Paulet, Governor of Jersey, Vice-President of Wales, and second-in-command at the defense of Le Havre, who received twenty-eight votes in the last five years of his life, 1569-73. Sir Hugh's son, Sir Amias Paulet was Governor of Jersey, Ambassador to France, and jailer to Mary of Scotland; he received twenty-three votes in the period 1580-85. The Marquess of Winchester's problem was that he was a stay-at-home, whose best Garter year, four votes in 1580, coincided with his only significant office, Lord Lieutenant of Dorset.

Family connections helped. The second Earl of Essex received his first Garter

vote in 1587 from his stepfather, the Earl of Leicester. In 1603 Lord Howard de Walden was able to cast all three of his 'baron' votes for fellow Howards. The only votes ever received by the dissident Catholic second Earl of Southampton were cast by his father-in-law and co-religionist, Viscount Montague, in the elections of 1574-78. Montague was not present to vote in 1579. Southampton rejected his wife in early 1580, and so he failed to get Montague's vote in that year and the next, whereupon he died.

The Queen's choices seem to have been influenced by three factors besides personal favor: rank, service, and good behavior (from her point of view). As Sir Robert Naunton remarked, Queen Elizabeth was partial to the nobility (including noblemen by courtesy), and it shows in her Garter selections. In the first three decades of her reign, only one 'knight' received the Garter, Sir Henry Sidney in 1564. But in her later years the Queen grew more democratic: Hatton finally got it in 1588, Knollys in 1593, and Sir Henry Lee in 1597. Barons were more than twice as numerous as earls, but Elizabeth selected slightly more earls for the Garter, showing again her preference for rank. Separating service to the Queen from her personal favor is difficult for she combined the two. Her leading favorites over the course of her reign were the Earls of Leicester and Essex, Sir Christopher Hatton, and Sir Walter Raleigh. All received offices of great responsibility, and the first three were also Privy Councillors and KGs (Sir Walter just missed on both counts).

Among the men whose standing can be judged by the Garter elections are Thomas and Robert Cecil, Henry Howard, Walter Raleigh, and the third Earl of Southampton.

The Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) is quite scornful of Thomas Cecil, Lord Burghley's older son, though it allows that he eventually received the Garter in 1601 for helping to suppress the Earl of Essex's rebellion, which the DNB calls a "foolish riot". But Thomas Cecil regularly received votes from 1590 on, with the numbers steadily increasing; in 1601 he was picked by eleven out of thirteen members. Robert Cecil never received a vote until 1604, when he got fourteen votes out of sixteen, being finally elected in 1606. What

is truly remarkable is that Robert, by then Lord Cecil, didn't get a single vote in the election of June 1603, with King James on the throne and Lord Cecil clearly confirmed as the new King's right hand man. Presumably the Knights of the Garter respected the frequently displayed military skills of Thomas, while the Queen valued his abilities enough to make him President of the North in 1599. Meanwhile the KGs probably resented Robert's status as his father's understudy, and the Queen failed to put in a word to help him garner some votes.

Lord Henry Howard, Oxford's enemy in 1580 and 1581, held the rank of younger son of a duke, but never received a vote during Elizabeth's reign, though he picked

"Biographers have remarked on the popularity of the third Earl of Southampton, which is borne out in the Garter elections."

up five out of six as James' favorite in June 1603, and was elected unanimously in 1604. (Incidentally, one must be careful with names and titles when examining the Garter register, especially when the prolific Howard clan is involved. The "Lord Howard" who received numerous votes in 1599 and 1600 is the same "Lord de Effingham" who received votes in 1601 and 1603, that is William, Lord Howard of Effingham, heir to the Earl of Nottingham. Lord Henry Howard was son of the Earl of Surrey, who was heir to the third Duke of Norfolk. Lord Henry's brother became the fourth Duke of Norfolk, and Henry was treated as a duke's son.)

Sir Walter Raleigh's rising political power at the end of Elizabeth's reign and his sudden collapse may be seen in the Garter elections. He received single votes in 1590, '92, '96, and '97, then four out of nine in 1599, eight out of thirteen in 1600, and nine out of twelve in 1601. Reeling under the new King's disfavor, Raleigh received a sole vote from his friend the Earl of Northumberland in June 1603, shortly before being arrested for treason (Lord Henry Howard had been poisoning James' mind against Raleigh for several years). As a Virginian, I rather like seeing Raleigh's pros-

perity, but the Earl of Oxford felt otherwise. It will be recalled that he said of Raleigh's rise, apparently at the time of Essex's execution, "When jacks start up, heads go down". Raleigh's rise in Garter votes exactly coincides with Essex's fall, 1599-1601.

Biographers have remarked on the popularity of the third Earl of Southampton, which is borne out in the Garter elections. He got four out of twelve votes in 1595 at age twenty-one and ten votes out of twelve in 1596. In 1597 all ten voters picked the Duke of Wuerttemberg, thereby reducing the votes available for English earls, but Southampton managed to pick up two, including Lord Burghley's vote for the first time. But Southampton did not get the Earl of Essex's vote in 1597 (though he did in '95 and '96); the attachment of Southampton to Essex begins with the Azores voyage later that year. The theory of an Essex-Southampton social circle going back to the early 1590s is a myth originating in a misdated letter. G.P.V. Akrigg's *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* provided the evidence to puncture the myth, but Akrigg failed to realize its significance; the Garter election of 1597 provides more evidence. In 1599, newly arrived in Ireland, Southampton was decidedly in the Queen's disfavor owing to his begetting a child by one of her maids of honor, whom he secretly married, but he still received four out of nine votes. In 1600, presumably even more deeply out with the Queen as a result of the Irish campaign, Southampton yet polled six votes out of thirteen. In 1603 only six KGs voted, all selecting James' Scottish favorites, the Duke of Lenox and the Earl of Marr, as two of their three 'princes'. Of the six remaining ballots in the 'prince' category, Southampton and the Earl of Pembroke each got three, and James selected both English earls as KGs.

We now turn to the Earl of Oxford. With regard to the Garter elections, Oxford's life can be divided into four phases: 1569-80, 1581-4, 1585-8, and 1590-1604.

Oxford received numerous votes from 1569 to 1580 and probably would have gotten the honor, except that the Queen preferred someone else. In 1569 and '70 the underaged Oxford received the vote of William, Lord Howard of Effingham. In

(Continued on page 10)

Garter (Continued from page 9)

1571 Oxford was picked by all ten voters. In the eight elections from 1572 to 1580, Oxford averaged close to eight votes annually and never less than four. Oxford's supporters included not only the Earl of Sussex, as one would expect, but also the Puritan leader, the Earl of Leicester. The various misdeeds and alleged misdeeds of Oxford's youth — such as trying to rescue the Duke of Norfolk in 1571, or running away to the Low Countries in 1573 — seem to have had no effect on his standing with the KGs, though they may have prevented the Queen from selecting him. Lord Burghley always voted for Oxford as his first choice among English 'princes' (foreigners were always listed first), even during his separation from his wife from April 1576 to 1582. Burghley's forbearance stands in marked contrast to Viscount Montague's reaction to the rejection of his daughter by the second Earl of Southampton. Burghley's various writings on the breakup of the marriage invariably take a hurt or defensive tone, rather than expressing outrage, presumably reflecting the primary role of Lady Burghley in the separation. Incidentally, Lady Burghley's invasion of Oxford's house at Wivenhoe, trying to raise his servants against him and carrying off his wife, occurred in April 1576 while Oxford and Lord Burghley were at Windsor Castle for the chapter of the Garter.

Oxford was forbidden from Court until June 1583 as a result of having a son by Anne Vavasour in March 1581. In 1582 and '83 Oxford and his followers had to defend themselves against attacks by Vavasour's kinsmen and their men. Moreover Oxford was involved in a scandal of charges and countercharges with Lord Henry Howard and Charles Arundel beginning in December 1580, though we have little evidence of how seriously the charges against Oxford were taken. Oxford received no votes in the four Garter elections during 1581-4. The Queen's anger explains the results for 1581-3, but Oxford's failure to get any votes in 1584 (an election that Burghley missed) indicates that he was still not fully rehabilitated. His disfavor in these years may be contrasted to the third Earl of Southampton's situation in 1599-1600, when he continued to receive votes despite

his sexual misconduct. Clearly Oxford's standing with his fellows was seriously damaged.

Oxford was allowed back at Court in June 1583, but the Queen was not fully mollified. In May 1583 she was still concerned about the charges made by Howard and Arundel, and she permitted Oxford's return to Court only after "some bitter words and speeches". Oxford's standing presumably improved further after Charles Arundel fled to France in the wake of the discovery of the Throckmorton plot in November 1583, which resulted in the re-incarceration of Lord Henry Howard. Arundel was further discredited in September 1584 by being named as one of the co-authors of the

"Lord Burghley always voted for Oxford as his first choice among English 'princes' ...even during his separation from his wife..."

libelous *Leicester's Commonwealth*. That Oxford was fully restored to the proper status of his rank in the period 1585-8 is shown by the Garter elections and proffers of two military commands.

In April 1585 Oxford received five votes out of thirteen for the Garter, while that summer he was offered command of the cavalry contingent of the English expeditionary force to the Netherlands. In 1587 Oxford got four votes out of eight, and he received three out of seven in 1588. In the summer of 1588 Oxford was offered command of the key port of Harwich during the fight against the Spanish Armada, and he was prominent in the victory celebrations in November. Lord Burghley voted for Oxford in all three elections, always naming him first among the 'princes'. Two recently made KGs who voted for Oxford were the seventh Lord Cobham and the third Earl of Rutland. Oxford's other supporters had all voted for him before 1581, namely Henry Stanley, fourth Earl of Derby, Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke, and Charles, second Lord Howard of Effingham and Lord Admiral (the future Earl of Nottingham).

It is worth noting that Oxford's daughter Elizabeth married Derby's son William

in 1595, Oxford's daughter Bridget almost married Pembroke's older son William in 1597, and Oxford's daughter Susan married Pembroke's second son Philip in 1605. These marriages seem to have been arranged by the Cecils, and the fathers were dead in several cases, but the Garter votes support a connection between Oxford and the other two earls. Charles Arundel had accused Oxford of plotting to murder Lord Howard of Effingham, who was the first cousin of Lord Henry Howard's father, the poet Surrey. But Effingham's three subsequent votes for Oxford seem to indicate that he didn't take the charges seriously. Derby, Pembroke, and Howard of Effingham had one obvious thing in common — they were all patrons of major acting companies (see the *DNB* or *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare* for dates and other details of their troupes).

The Garter election of 1589 produced two new KGs, Lord Buckhurst and the fifth Earl of Sussex, but the votes were not recorded. Buckhurst was the Queen's cousin, a Privy Councillor, and several times an ambassador, and presumably benefited from the death of his enemy Leicester in 1588. Sussex was the military commander of Portsmouth, and he emptied his magazines to replenish the English fleet with powder and shot during the Armada fight the previous year. Lord Admiral Howard of Effingham and Lord Hunsdon had previously been Sussex's leading supporters for the Garter, the Admiral being Sussex's first cousin, Hunsdon his first cousin once removed, both were present for the 1589 election, and so Sussex was selected.

Oxford received one vote throughout the period 1590 to 1604, that of his brother-in-law, Thomas Cecil, second Lord Burghley, in 1604. Oxford's loss of his father-in-law's vote is easily explained by Anne Cecil's death in 1588, but his failure to get anyone else's vote seems to indicate that he was living under something of a cloud in this period. The least dramatic explanation of Oxford's disrepute would be his financial collapse around 1590, accompanied by the loss of his daughters to Burghley, their guardian after 1588 (and Robert Cecil became their guardian when Burghley died in 1598).

But Lord Sussex was even more broke

than Oxford. Between his election as KG and his installation, Sussex wrote a letter to the Queen explaining that his inherited estate yielded but 450 pounds per year, while he owed her a debt of 500 pounds per year. Sussex begged that his annual payment be reduced to 200 or 250 pounds. Oxford had his 1,000 pound pension from the Queen, he also had lands worth at least several hundred per year, though we do not know the size of his debts. On the other hand, his second wife was a woman of some wealth.

To judge Oxford's lack of votes during 1590-1603, we must compare him to his peers. Twenty-five other Englishmen held the rank of marquess or earl in that period, and fifteen of them were KGs by 1603. One of the remaining ten, the fifth Earl of Derby, died a few months after inheriting his title, and there was no election during his short period as an earl. So we are left with nine earls and marquesses besides Oxford who never became KGs. But several of them, such as the Earls of Kent and Hertford, regularly received a respectable number of votes, as Oxford did during 1585-8. Those who did worst were the third Earl of Bedford and the second Earl of Lincoln, who received three votes each from 1590 to 1603 and one vote each in 1604, followed by the fourth Marquess of Winchester, who re-

ceived two votes under his courtesy title in 1590 and '91, and no votes after that, even after becoming a marquess in 1598. Last we find the third Earl of Bath, who received zero votes in the entire period 1590 to 1604. So Oxford comes in behind Bedford, Lincoln, and Winchester, and barely beats Bath.

Lords Winchester, Bath, Bedford, and Lincoln were all nonentities. None of them rates an entry in the *DNB*, nor even the kind of sub-entry given to the sixth Earl of Derby at the beginning of the entry on his son, the seventh Earl. Examination of GEC's *The Complete Peerage* confirms the *DNB*'s verdict on these four lives of non-achievement, especially that of Lord Bath, whose invisibility must set the record for Tudor earls. But Oxford was anything but a nonentity, and he didn't go into rural hibernation after 1588.

B.M. Ward entitles the final section of his biography of Oxford "The Recluse", stating that "[f]rom 1589 onwards the life of Lord Oxford becomes one of mystery" (299). From 1589 to about 1593 we are indeed in some doubt as to Oxford's activities, but we know where he was after that — at Court and living in or near London. He was still in the Queen's good graces, so it seems, he had a new wife and son, his daughters were getting married, and he was

in the picture. But, from the point of view of the Knights of the Garter, he seems to have become a pariah. Ward quotes Oxford's first modern editor, Dr. A.B. Grosart: "An unlifted shadow somehow lies across his memory" (389). As the Garter elections show, Grosart hit the nail squarely on the head.

In the Summer 1995 *Newsletter*, I discussed the appropriateness of Shakespeare's self-description in Sonnet 37, "lame, poor, [and] despised", as applied to Oxford. Regarding the word "despised", I quoted Sir John Peyton's 1603 comment that Oxford lacked friends. The Garter elections powerfully re-enforce Peyton's evaluation. The seventeenth Earl of Oxford had been a man of popularity and prestige, but he fell from favor and honor twice, first in 1581, then again after 1588. Shakespeare's personal sense of disgrace is found throughout his *Sonnets*: the poet is barred from "public honour and proud titles" (25), he wants his name buried with his body (72), he knows himself to be "vile esteemed" (121). Shakespeare alludes to the cause of his dishonor several times, most clearly in Sonnet 110: "Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there/And made myself a motley to the view..."

Some Further Thoughts on Research, Biography and the State of the Debate

Prof. Nelson has recently speculated about Oxford's status as revealed by the Garter elections, but with the oft-repeated Stratfordian view that his evident "disgrace" somehow disqualifies him as the author of Shakespeare's works.

There is certainly an irony in this claim, and now, in 1996, that irony looms even larger as *Funeral Elegy* is sedulously fitted out as the new Stratfordian flagship.

For, as followers of the *Elegy* story know, it is the *Elegy* author's lamentation of his disgrace that has Prof. Donald Foster *et al* telling us how such insights about the author will make us "better readers" of Shakespeare.

Some day Stratfordians should hold a special authorship conference where they might all try to at least get their stories straight. But, until then, it is interesting to

speculate on how this new Stratfordian interest in the biographical nature of the works will play out over the coming years and how it will affect the authorship debate. Will it work to our advantage?

Probably not. Everything that will ever be discovered about William Shaxpere has surely already been discovered. Armed with the few biographical facts that they do have, the trick for the professors will be to reconstruct the author's inner life --his psychology-- which is very safe ground indeed. Who is going to gainsay the proposal that Shakespeare was feeling profoundly depressed and alienated in 1598?

All of which is to say that we are probably going to see many more biographies along the lines of Frank Harris's remarkable work *The Man Shakespeare and his Tragic Life Story* (1909). Harris,

in effect, paints a portrait of Edward de Vere, but sees no contradiction with maintaining his Stratfordian faith, since he is describing the inner life of his subject. For him, Shakespeare is "a natural aristocrat", with fastidious tastes and a disdain for money.

Grotesque as it may seem, then, in the months and years to come we are likely to see a more Oxfordian Shaxpere; an aristocratic Shaxpere even! Can't you just hear it? He developed his fastidious tastes as a reaction to the dunghill he had to endure outside his father's house. His disdain for money was born of a surfeit of the same. His aristocratic attitude was a compensation mechanism. And, best of all, he suffered from an identity crisis.

Anything to avoid asking the ultimate question: "Who was he?"

Editors

Funeral Elegy: An update

Does the Emperor Have Any Clothes Yet?

By Stephanie Caruana

The battle over the *Funeral Elegy* by W.S. (1612) rages on in the pages of the *London Times Literary Supplement*.

Professor Stanley Wells of the University of Birmingham began the round by rejecting the identification of W.S. as William Shakespeare (*TLS* 1/26/96, p.28). He pointed out that it would have been unlikely for Shakespeare to focus his attention on writing and publishing an elegy for William Peter since his own brother Gilbert died and was buried in Stratford only nine days after Peter's death.

Wells's other objections focus on the poor quality of the *Elegy* itself, which "seems not so much bad as tedious in a very unShakespearean way." He noted the generalized, nonspecific praises heaped on the murdered man, and the mistakes W.S. made about details of Peter's life. He questioned the value of Foster's computerized measurements of word usage, and the way computer programs are currently touted as superior to human literary perception. He ended by saying he would "continue to harbor a suspicion that W.S. was...perhaps a curate with literary aspirations, who had little personal knowledge of William Peter but was commissioned by Peter's family to memorialize him in an effort to minimize the unpleasant, if not indisputable circumstances of his death."

Professor Richard Abrams of the University of Southern Maine, Donald Foster's champion in the current drive to canonize the *Elegy*, sees the *Elegy* as a statistically unimpeachable example of "Shakespeare's late style" (*TLS*, 2/9/96, p.25-6). By this he means *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*—two plays which have traditionally been dogged with doubts and questions regarding their own authorship. He responded to what many see as an inexcusable error with regard to the duration of William Peter's marriage (three years in reality, as opposed to "nine of years...in his bed" (*Elegy* 511-2)) with an unsubstantiated tale of a nine-year affair with a mistress while Peter was a student at Oxford. He

lauded W.S. for displaying "considerable daring in affording pride of place to the 'other woman' as the most deeply aggrieved of Peter's mourners." He concluded by attempting to connect Prospero's abjuration of magic in *The Tempest* with W.S.'s "plain style."

Brian Vickers, an editor of Shakespearean books, took up the cudgel (oops! baton) with "Whose Thumbprints?—A more plausible author for *A Funeral Elegy*." (*TLS*, 3/8/96, p.16-18). He argued against Foster's "too great reliance on computerized stylometrics," because "depending...on an atomistic notion of style [use of computer programs] has produced bewilderingly conflicting results."

Vickers delivered a crushing blow to the significance of Foster's study of Jacobean poets whose initials were 'W.S.' He cited John Horden, to the effect that a pair of authorial initials may be false, or reversed, or may represent the last letters of a name, and supplied instances for each case. He brought up "the power of negative instances (it takes only one black swan to falsify the proposition that all swans are white.)"

He pointed out "the overt piety of several passages, quite unlike anything in Shakespeare." Finally he proposed another candidate for author: Simon Wastell, who was headmaster of a school at Northampton. Foster had tentatively identified Wastell as the author of *The Muses Thankfulness, A Funeral Elegy for Robert, Baron Spencer* (1627), in which he "plagiarized a whole series of funeral elegies, including W.S.'s on William Peter, Samuel Daniel's elegy for the Earl of Devonshire (1606), Tourneur's for Lord Oxford (1609), and John Webster's for Prince Henry (1613)."

The elegy to Robert Spencer was 614 lines long, compared to Peter's 578-line elegy. This similarity in length, combined with a curious sameness and flatness of content, and the speed with which the Peter elegy was ground out (nineteen days from

Peter's death to publisher's registration) suggests to Vickers that both elegies "belong to the traditional genre of eulogistic or epideictic rhetoric ...offered as ...consolations for the surviving family and friends."

After making a good case for Wastell, but perhaps inadvertently throwing the barn door wide open to rival claimants with *any* set of initials, Vickers concluded: "...no kudos attaches to identifying an obscure [headmaster] with the authorship of anything, while identifying Shakespeare's hand would be the great prize. I regret that Foster's well-considered avoidance of an absolute claim for Shakespeare's authorship has been overwhelmed by Richard Abrams's enthusiastic but indiscriminate advocacy."

Richard Abrams' response (3/22/96) seemed patterned after second-rate college debaters everywhere. He accused his opponent of "errors, misrepresentations and inconsistencies," hurled a few insults, and claimed victory. He hinted darkly of new, still unrevealed, and "more compelling reasons to accept the *Elegy* as Shakespeare's....Until the new evidence is before him, Vickers should probably try to keep his foot out of his mouth."

Foster made his own short but vicious riposte (*TLS*, 3/29/96, p.17). He accused Vickers of "advanc[ing] his case with an inattention to facts that would not be tolerated in an undergraduate student." He then quoted lines from:

--an elegy by Michael Drayton

--a 1627 elegy by Wastell (?) stolen from Drayton's elegy (and from all the other elegy writers on the block), and

--some lines from W.S.'s elegy that are supposed to show W.S.'s vast superiority.

OK folks, here's a snap quiz I have prepared (kind of like a Benezet test): I will quote lines from the three elegies Foster cites above, but I won't tell you which elegy they are from. You be the judge of their relative quality, and whether or not they come from the same collective elegy cookie-cutter:

Canst thou depart and be forgotten so,
 As if thou hadst not been at all?
 O no! But in despite of death the world shall see
 That Muse which much graced was by thee.
 Can black Oblivion utterly out-brave
 And set thee up above thy silent grave?
 When those weak houses of our brittle flesh
 Shall ruin'd be by death, our grace and strength,
 Youth, memory and shape that made us fresh
 Cast down, and utterly decay'd at length;
 When all shall turn to dust from whence we came
 And we low-level'd in a narrow grave,
 What can we leave behind us but a name?

Foster states, "In its prosody, diction, syntax and thought, Wastell's original work is as unlike *A Funeral Elegy* as can be." Like Abrams, he referred to unrevealed "new evidence" which has shifted the balance of evidence decisively. He talked of "the recent groundswell of support for a Shakespearean attribution... [and] emerging consensus that Shakespeare wrote this strange and challenging poem."

But like a harbinger of more grief to come, on the same page was a letter from Katherine Duncan-Jones, of Somerville College, Oxford, stating her belief that this "dreary poem" was probably written by some member of the Devonshire gentry. She proposed William Strode or one of Thomas Stukeley's many brothers.

Brian Vickers returned for a final mop-up on 4/12/96. He commiserated with Foster and Abrams: "It is not surprising that

they are upset, given that they have wagered their whole professional reputation on the claims for Shakespeare's authorship, and stand to lose a lot once it is generally discredited." But he added, "In fact they are guilty not only of arrogance but of pervasive dishonesty." He detailed Foster's methods of tiptoeing through the computer data, discarding any tests that disproved his thesis.

Then he addressed what is to me the crux of the problem: "Foster and Abrams...represent that recently emergent type of scholar who performs elaborate analyses of poetic language by using concordances and other electronic resources rather than by reading poems. But what do machines know about literary conventions, genre, rhetoric, or figurative language?...In all the thirteen years he has been working on this poem, Foster seems never to have noticed...that both the epistle, in which the author describes his inexperience in writing poetry, and the modesty topos, as used with such banality in the poem itself, would alone be enough to exclude Shakespeare from consideration, with a lifetime's work of unequalled range and variety behind him....The parallels that I see between [the 1612 *Peter Elegy* and the 1627 *Elegy for Baron Spencer*], and the difference that many more people see between either of

them and Shakespeare, are in fact so gross as to defeat computerized statistics; the scale is too large; it only needs a normal reader with some powers of judgment to tell the difference."

He describes Foster's odd dilemma: "Foster was doubtful about pressing the identification, since the poem's language was not so figurative or filled with word-play as is characteristic of Shakespeare. Then emerged his Svengali, Richard Abrams, who said in an interview: 'where I came in...was to notice that the poem avoids the language of the imagination because, in the poet's mind, imagination is strangely implicated in the murder of his friend. Shakespeare was deliberately writing this way.'" In other words, Shakespeare arbitrarily decided to write a banal poem because he felt like it. That's why it's bad, folks; just take my word for it. How can anyone argue with such nonsense? Foster accepted Abrams' rationale, and danced out on this treacherous limb. Stephen Greenblatt of the University of California plans to include the poem in his forthcoming edition of Shakespeare's works.

Meanwhile, it's hard to see how Foster and Abrams can summon up the chutzpah to return to the vaudeville stage of the *TLS*, where further literary brickbats and rotten tomatoes are sure to greet them.

Reception (Continued from page 3)

characters. He traced his growing disillusionment, from Berowne, through Romeo and Hal, to Hamlet and, finally, Lear, in whose godson, Edgar, Oxford finds true wisdom and fulfillment. It was from his nothingness that he was able to plumb deep spiritual truths.

To reinforce this idea, he gave his favorite quote from W.B. Yeats, who wrote: "Shakespeare's myth, it may be, is that of a nobleman who was blind from very nobility, and an empty man who thrust him from his place and saw all that could be seen from very emptiness."

But the Stratford man's life journey, he said, followed the opposite path, and was wholly material in nature. As Lear was crying out on the heath 'Who is it that can tell me who I am?', Shaxpere was warming his feet by the fire at Stratford.

Coming full circle, he quoted from

Walter de la Mare's poem "The Traveller" with its haunting refrain "Is there anyone there?", and pointed out that no one answers the traveller when he knocks on the moonlit door. He identified the traveller with Oxfordians, while those who hid in the house and ignored him represented the Stratfordian establishment. Oxfordians, he said, must keep knocking, while, in the meantime, they are at least entitled to cry out with the faithful traveller: "Tell them I came, that I kept my word...."

Visit the
Shakespeare Oxford Society
 on the Internet

Home Page located at:
<http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com>

Of her Will

E ver well affected "will",
 L oving "goodness", Loathing "ill",
 I nestimable Treasure:
 S ince such a power hath power to spill,
 A nd save us at her pleasure.

B thou our Law, sweet "will", and say
 E ven what thou wilt, we will obey
 T his Law, if I could reade it:
 H erein would I spend night and day,
 A nd study still to plead it.

R oyal "free will", and onely "free",
 E ach other "will" is Slave to thee:
 G lad is each "will" to serve thee:
 I n thee such Princely power is seene,
 N o Spirit but takes thee for her Queene,
 A nd thinkes she must observe thee.

By Sir John Davies, in his
Hymns to Astraea in Acrostic Verse

The debate heats up on the Web

In the winter *Newsletter* we reported on the great strides taken by the Society in bringing the authorship debate to the World Wide Web. In the three months since then a good deal has happened, which reaffirms our belief in the power of this new information technology and our commitment to carry the debate onward into all corners of cyberspace.

At the time the SOS Home Page was launched (Sept. 1995), it was one of only a few Shakespeare pages, and the only one on the authorship. This past April 23rd, two more pages joined the authorship fray.

In conjunction with the rebroadcast of *The Shakespeare Mystery*, a *Shakespeare Mystery* page was set up as part of *Frontline's* Web site. And on the same day a Stratfordian authorship page, the Shakespeare Authorship Page, was launched by David Kathman and Terry Ross.

Also this year several Baconian pages have appeared: Shake-n-Bacon (with numerous full text versions of documents provided) and Penn Leary's "Are there ciphers in Shakespeare?"

Prof. Alan Nelson, who is researching Oxford's life, has put up a page under his name that includes the full text (in unmodernized English) of all the Earl of Oxford's letters that he has transcribed in the past year. Some of these letters have never appeared in print before.

And then there are the pages sponsored at various colleges and universities geared to Shakespeare course work, pages with full texts of the works, or pages such as "Project W.S.", in which seven students at East Tennessee State consider the *Funeral Elegy* attribution (did he or didn't he?). Their online bibliography includes hyperlinks to online resources, which now include the two *Funeral Elegy* articles that appeared in the winter *Newsletter*.

A student (Jimmy Brokaw) somewhere in Great Britain has even created his own authorship page, dedicated to telling the world about Edward de Vere. And we have had students from around the country email us from the SOS page asking for help on writing about or debating the authorship issue

However the biggest news these past

months is the two new authorship Web sites that came online on April 23rd, the day that *Frontline* rebroadcast *The Shakespeare Mystery*.

The Stratfordian Shakespeare Authorship Page has come out swinging, taking on the producers of *The Shakespeare Mystery*, the SOS Page, and every Oxfordian in the world. In one article ("What Did George Puttenham Really Say about Oxford?"), they have gone so far as to proclaim that the conflation of two quotations from *The Arte of English Poesie* on *Frontline* and on the SOS page has exposed the falsity of all Oxfordian arguments in the 20th century, and put the whole debate to rest. And some web surfers, and web site managers, looking for a bit of Stratfordian comfort, have unsurprisingly responded quite favorably to the new page.

While much of the material on the SA Page is old hat, they have made an interesting point in challenging the quotes from *The Arte*, as well as presenting a new challenge on dating *The Tempest*.

We will be responding to these claims in the near future, first on our Home Page this summer, and later in the Summer *Newsletter*, which will be mailed to members in early September.

W. Boyle

Shakespeare Oxford Society Home Page

Vero Nihil Verius



The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to document and establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), as the universally recognized author of the works of William Shakespeare. The quarterly *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* and the Web online magazine *Ever Reader* carry articles, essays, news, debate and bibliographies which impart a wide range of corroborating information and commentary.

Welcome to the Home Page of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. We have made some changes since the beginning of 1996 and will be making more in the next few months. First, we have changed our address to a domain name to make it easier to remember our URL. We are now permanently located at: <http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com>. And we have added several new sections to the Home Page, and

Shakespeare Oxford Society Home Page:
<http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com>



The Shakespeare Authorship Page

Dedicated to the Proposition that Shakespeare Wrote Shakespeare

The Shakespeare Authorship Page:
<http://www.bcpl.lib.md.us/~tross/ws/will.html>

THE SHAKESPEARE MYSTERY
An Update
From the Stratfordian side
From the Oxfordian side

FRONTLINE
Airdates: April 23, 1996

The Debate Continues
Three Recent Debates/
Mock Trials/
Selected Readings
A Timeline of Doubt

The Shakespeare Mystery:
<http://ww2.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shakespeare/>

Discussion Group Changes

As of June 14, 1996 the email discussion groups Evermore and Library have been discontinued in their present format. There will be new arrangements by September, or perhaps earlier.

Marty Hyatt will most likely run a private, Oxfordian only list. The Society will be exploring arrangements for an unmoderated, automated list, open to all comers.

Meanwhile, for those not presently participating, send all inquiries and comments to: everreader@aol.com to learn what is happening and how you can participate in one or both of the new discussion groups.

Globe Theater's Mark Rylance latest to sign Authorship Petition

Mark Rylance, Artistic Director at the Globe Theater in London and a long time skeptic of the Stratford story, has joined with others in signing the Authorship Petition sponsored by the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

The Petition was informally presented to the S.A.A. on April 12th at the Reception sponsored by the Society. Charles Boyle gave a brief talk explaining the petition's origins, and how it could not be formally presented this year because there were not yet 20 S.A.A. members to sponsor it (Oxfordians who are also members of the S.A.A. number 18 at this point).

However, the petition will remain a permanent part of the Society's long term plans, and will be listed in each *Newsletter* and also on our Internet World Wide Web

page. It will be presented to the S.A.A. each year. Since it's appearance in both the Newsletter and on the Internet, more than 50 new signatories have been added to it.

To date more than 400 writers, lawyers, actors, teachers, students and other lovers of Shakespeare have signed the petition, which asks that the authorship question and the evidence pointing toward Edward de Vere be given serious consideration by the academic establishment.

Among those who have already signed are :

Verily Anderson, author
Armand Assante, actor
Lydia Bronte, author
Charles Champlin, arts critic (*LA Times*)

Norrie Epstein, author
Sir John Gielgud, actor
Michael Hart, author
Norris Houghton, producer/director, author
Sir Derek Jacobi, actor
Kevin Kelly, drama critic (*Boston Globe*)
Edgar Lansbury, producer
Kristin Linklater, author
Felicia Londre, professor
Christopher Lydon, journalist
Louis Marder, professor
Paul Nitze, author and statesman
Louise Robey, actress
Mark Rylance, actor
The Duke of St. Albans
Hank Whittemore, author
Michael York, actor

A Petition sponsored by the Shakespeare Oxford Society on the matter of the authorship of the works of William Shakespeare.

We, the undersigned, petition the Shakespeare Association of America, in light of ongoing research, to engage actively in a comprehensive, objective and sustained investigation of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon, particularly as it relates to the claim of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Occupation/affiliation: _____

Signature: _____

This form should be xeroxed, signed and and mailed to:

Charles Boyle,
208A Washington St. #9,
Somerville, MA 02143

Oxfordian News:

Nelson-Chiljan debate in San Francisco; "Shaksper" dethroned at Shakespeare Duel in Michigan; Annual Oxford Day Banquet in Boston

California

In **San Francisco** on April 23rd Prof. Alan Nelson of UC-Berkeley debated Katherine Chiljan on the authorship before an audience of students and faculty.

The event was sponsored by the Horatio Society in San Francisco, co-founded last year by Chiljan and Randall Sherman.

Prof. Nelson is currently conducting research into the life of de Vere, and plans to write a biography of him in the near future. Ms. Chiljan has been quite active in the Bay Area, along with Randall Sherman, in promoting de Vere's cause and holding public meetings and debates where the issue can be explored.

After both Nelson and Chiljan made their cases, a Q & A period followed which yielded some interesting comments from Prof. Nelson on the authorship and Shakespeare. The Professor cited his own recent research when stating that, even if the Stratford actor was proven not to be Shakespeare, he believes he has eliminated de Vere through examination of the spelling in his surviving letters.

At another point Nelson remarked that he "didn't think anyone seriously makes a connection between the plays and Shakespeare's life as a lived psychological experience....it's not events in Shakespeare's life that are reflected in the plays, but rather events from the books of the era." He then mentioned hearing at the conference in LA two weeks earlier of a biographer of Shakespeare who intends to claim that Shakespeare's gloomy period around 1600 began because there were two murders in Stratford in that year; this is the sort of speculation Nelson rejects.

A follow-up questioner then asked, "Why assume that the author's life is reflected in the plays?" Chiljan responded that it was most likely in this canon of 37 plays that the author was in there, and that with most artists she had studied, there was



Professor Alan Nelson poses with Katherine Chiljan after their debate. But will he wear his new T-shirt under his Stratfordian garb?

always an emphasis on the artist's life as part of that study.

Nelson rejoined that Chaucer and Ben Jonson were two examples of writers who are not in their works. He conceded that, for Shakespeare, only the *Sonnets* and perhaps *Hamlet* were "personal".

The final question of the day was the perennial favorite: "How much does it matter who wrote the plays?" Again, Prof. Nelson's reply was most interesting: "I think it would matter—not that the importance of the plays is tied to the importance of the author. But it would give us a kind of door into a new realm of scholarship, a new set of questions to ask about the plays" and "...I wish we knew more about his [i.e. Shaksper of Stratford's] life than we do... it might prod us to ask new questions."

Chiljan in her response emphasized how Oxfordians *do* know more about the author and *have* been prodded into asking more questions. She continued that much more research on this entire subject is needed, and generously praised Prof. Nelson for all his recent work on de Vere's life and the new material he has uncovered.

And now some further notes on Oxfordians in **Los Angeles** for the Sixth World Shakespeare Congress:

At the SOS reception on Friday evening, guests were entertained by a program of Renaissance dances, presented by

DANZANDO, a southern California troupe dedicated to recreating the dances of the 15th through 17th centuries. Performing in elegant period costumes, their performance included the galliard, almon, spagnoletta, and volta, as well as two English country dances.

A special thanks to trustee Sally Mosher for arranging for their appearance. Sally has also been working hard the last two years to document music named for the Earl of Oxford. We will report more about this in our next Newsletter.

Some of the familiar west coast faces seen were David Hanson, who presented the feature speech at the March Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable event ("Prince Hamlet and the Second Cause"), Thad Taylor, Ron Allen, Robert Treash, Tal Wilson, John Wood, and most of the members of the LA based Authorship Roundtable. A special thanks to Carol Sue Lipman and all the Roundtable members for making the local arrangements for the SOS Reception.

Massachusetts

Richard Desper of **Acton** was the winner of the Miller Award, granted by the 34th Annual Deep South Writers Conference for his play *Star-crossed Lovers*.

The award is sponsored by the Judge Minos D. Miller Foundation for the best play on the Elizabethan era and the Shakespeare authorship question.

The 8th Annual Oxford Day Banquet, hosted by the Northeast Chapter of the Society, was held in **Cambridge** at the Harvard Faculty Club on April 26th. Approximately 50 Oxfordians and their guests attended.

Charles Burford and Conference Chairperson George Anderson were the scheduled speakers, but the festive evening actually ran late as the event's founder Charles Boyle also spoke about his adventures at the recent Shakespeare Congress in LA, while Elliott Stone spoke on the

Funeral Elegy, and Roger Stritmatter on recent authorship encounters on the internet.

Boyle's thoughts on the Conference can be found on page 4, while Burford's talk provided another example of his provocative insights into Shakespeare.

In discussing Falstaff, Burford presented the possibility that this famous Shakespeare character may actually be yet another portrayal, albeit a burlesque, of de Vere's *bete noire*, Lord Burghley. There are telling lines and comments surrounding Falstaff's appearances that lend a tantalizing credence to this theory. Burford will expand on this in future talks, or perhaps a conference paper.

George Anderson spoke about the current state of planning for the conference, and distributed special bookmarks that have been printed up as a fund-raising device. See page 5 for more on the Conference.

Michigan

"The Great Shakespeare Duel II" took place on May 19th in **Grosse Ile**, featuring Oxfordian Mark McPherson who debated Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Myron Wahls.

It is called "Duel II" because 7 years earlier a similar debate had taken place, one which McPherson had videotaped, and which went on to win a local PBS broadcast prize, although it never achieved national recognition. 1989 was, of course, the year of the *Frontline* documentary, which garnered all the attention. McPherson has also participated in other Shakespeare authorship debates, including the Temple Mock Trial in London in 1988.

In Duel II the audience voted on the outcome, and the vote was restricted to simply passing judgment on the Stratford story, rather than selecting an alternative candidate. The audience on May 19th voted 14 to 12 that Shaksper of Stratford was not



George Anderson talks about plans for the Minneapolis Conference

Shakespeare.

McPherson plans to be at this year's Conference, and hopes to show the videotapes of both Duels I and II to those interested. He is also prepared to talk with anyone who is curious about setting up Debate/mock trial formats to publicize the issue, as he believes this is an effective way of promoting the cause.

South Carolina

Charlton Ogburn recently wrote us from **Beaufort** about two errors found in *TMWS* and the pamphlet *The Man Who Was Shakespeare*:

"Charlton Ogburn confesses to particular shame over two errors in print of which he is guilty. In *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, near the top of page 244, four lines are attributed to Julius Caesar that in fact are spoken in *Anthony and Cleopatra* by Octavius Caesar. (The confusion was first reported by Nat Kelly Cole, son of Nat King Cole, a student of Shakespeare since his 12th year and an active Oxfordian until his sad, untimely death last October.) In *The Man Who Was Shakespeare*, in the middle of page 16, another four-line quotation is attributed to Bertram in *Cymbeline*, when of course Belarius is meant.

But, as Mr. Ogburn observes, a great puzzle arises from these egregious errors. The orthodox Shakespearean scholars, known for their conscientious objectivity and scruples, would surely have read the two publications to make sure that their contemptuous dismissal of Oxfordians as snobs, ignoramuses and giddy conspiratorialists remained justified, and yet, thorough and deep as is their knowledge of Shakespeare, none came forward to pounce on [these] misattributions!"

England (or rather, Wales)

On May 25th Society president Charles Burford spoke at *The Sunday Times* Hay Festival of Literature at Hay-on-Wye in Wales. What started out as a literary weekend with friends for the Florence family, the Festival's founders, has now turned into one of the most prestigious literary gatherings in all Britain, with 150 events over ten

(Continued on page 24)

John Louth Reports:

"He was simply the most learned man in England in his own field of study." Thus, we have the opinion about John Bale (1495-1563) delivered by Professor Leslie Fairfield (*John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation*, Perdue Univ. Press, 1976). For centuries the Protestant ex-Catholic friar's antiquarian praxis has been praised (witness his huge undertaking in writing *Scriptorum illustrium majoris Britanniae catalogue* [1557]), but research of Bale as dramaturge unfortunately remains neglected --in spite of the tantalizing clues in his playwriting history that could lead to identifying the man behind the "William Shakespeare" pen name. The tireless reformer wrote 21 plays in all. Most, however are lost, including *King John* and *Three Laws of Nature, Moses and Christ*, dramas written to advertise the misuse of power by the Catholics. By 1537, when the king's anti-clerical advisor Thomas Cromwell recruited him (to become Henry VIII's "most prolific playwright"), Bale, his plays and buskers were already touring England.

Ruth L. Miller (*Shakespeare Identified*, pp.469-479) reminds us of Bale's electrifying potential: "It is not without significance that ...John Bale's plays ... were performed almost exclusively ... by the companies of John de Vere and Thomas Cromwell. (J.W. Harris, *John Bale*, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1940). Harris comments, as does R. Wallerstein (*King John in Fact and Fiction*), on Bale's *Troublesome Raigne of King John* as the primary source for Shakespeare's *King John* --but cannot account for how Shakespeare had access to Bale's unpublished ms. ... It is no mystery ... In August 1561, the Earl of Oxford's players performed Bale's *Troublesome Raigne* ...for the Queen at Ipswich ...that same August at Castle Hedingham, she was again entertained by Earl John's players. Edward ...heir of the family of Vere, was [an] impressionable eleven. A year later ...Cecil gathered the twelve year old Edward into the fold of wardship [and] took possession of all the young noble's assets ... Undoubtedly "Shakespeare" saw Bale's ms. plays ...through the eyes of Edward de Vere, who owned many of them in the library at Cecil House."

Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England

by Charles Boyle

While browsing in one of the second-hand bookshops I enjoy haunting, I came across an academic study published in 1992 called *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England*. I picked it up and read the flyleaf:

“Donna Hamilton rejects the notion that the official censorship of the day prevented the stage from representing contemporary debates concerning the relations among church, state and individual. Shakespeare positioned his writing politically and ideologically in relation to...church-state controversies in ways that have much in common with the ...Leicester-Sidney-Essex-Southampton-Pembroke group.”

I checked the index for Oxford. Nothing. That was okay. After all, the purpose of this hoax has always been to depoliticize Shakespeare - the depersonalization came along as an inevitable by-product. The authorship controversy is at heart a fight over his authenticity. Are these works a report from the front by some knower? Was he there? Or is he only an inspired patcher of old plays, a mere entertainer? At least Professor Hamilton placed him among the knowers. That was a start.

Though clearly written in academese, I suspected it would offer invaluable information and insight into Oxford's troubled relationship with the English Church and Crown. The professor did not disappoint.

It turns out she sees the Queen in play after play, not mere allusions to her, but her presence in the characters (so does Marjorie Garber in her Harvard lectures, finding Elizabeth in Portia and even Henry the Fourth). This is deep water for the conventionally minded. It goes beyond conceding Polonius as Burghley. The possible shock of even that confounded a critic as good as G. Wilson Knight, who rejected the Burghley identification as it opened the door to seeing Elizabeth in Gertrude. And that would be "suicidal".

Steeled as I was to the possibility, Hamilton's first recognition of her took me by surprise. In the seemingly frivolous *Comedy of Errors* she sees Adriana as “the suspicious wife, the church, the queen” in

“a play about the problems of being subjected to a female ruler.”

First it must be understood that in Tudor England the “church” meant the English Church, that strange hybrid, not truly Catholic but not Presbyterian or Puritan either - a kind of state catholicism where Elizabeth, as was the case with her father, was both Pope and King, ruling a strictly hierarchical society and a subservient church. Unlike, say, Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth, the Tudors thought they owned people body and soul. That is what doomed Thomas Moore. These monarchs, father and daughter, had given themselves the right to make and unmake their own legitimacy. Henry was arranging to have a bastard son made his rightful heir when the boy died.

But, as Elizabeth's reign wore on, her mythic status as both secular and spiritual leader of her people became subsumed in the icon of her as Holy Mother to the nation. She had come to stand in her church as the answer to the Roman cult of Mary. In England the Queen was the “church”, and her will, royal and divine, was enforceable by torture and death.

So the problems of being subjected to a female ruler were particularly acute in Elizabeth's day.

Yet Shakespeare, I learned, “wrote plays that critiqued the increasingly absolutist hierarchical...English Church.... At the centre of the controversies was the presbyterian drive to change the form of church government, which...provided the motivation for interrogating hierarchical forms, one of the chief locations (the other being the issue of succession) of opposition during the reign of Elizabeth.” In other words the presbyterian system offered a model for church government that “bypassed royal authority.”

Opposition to the English Bishops found support from Leicester and Burghley as well as Essex and Southampton. These last two, Hamilton observes, “became associated with two ‘oppositionist’ issues of Elizabeth's reign - the succession and mat-

ters ecclesiastical.” They would be tried and condemned together for their doomed revolt against her in 1601. Yet “Shakespeare's areas of refusal [were] the same issues that Southampton refused.”

This is interesting stuff. For after you've answered “Who was Shakespeare?” with Oxford, the next question becomes “Who was Oxford?” And who was Southampton? Why does Oxford link them eternally in the dedications to *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* and in the loving, dynastic language of the *Sonnets*? Some say their love was homosexual, others that it was a family feeling, some say it was both and others neither - but any news of their politics is bound to be helpful.

She notes, for instance, in her chapter on *King John*, how his reign was used for debating the succession to Elizabeth and stresses how Shakespeare differs from the anonymous *Troublesome Reign of King John*, a play performed by the Queen's official company. In Shakespeare the “King now awards the land to the Bastard.” (Furthermore, the author awards him the final lines in his history of John.)

In examining *Twelfth Night* she finds the Queen in the reclusive Olivia and sees her household as “a model for the state.”

She overlooks the fact that Olivia (constantly called “Madonna” by the Fool) is also compared to Lucrece, an emblem, like the Virgin Queen, of chastity. But this Lucrece lusts after a beardless youth, just like that goddess of the poem, Venus (another Elizabethan commonplace for Elizabeth). Overlooked, but why not? This kind of intertextual comparison leads nowhere in the academy. The professor, however, does recognize that a reclusive, unknowable, almost other-worldly Queen cannot exercise enough authority to hold her household together any better than Olivia. She explains:

“The result is virtually a carte blanche situation for those at the top, one into which no change of policy can be interpolated, and thus one in which repression by way of any number of arbitrary tactics - including systems for controlling meaning and for demonizing anyone who does not co-operate - becomes the taken-for-grantedness that characterizes daily life.”

We know this story. Oxfordians are familiar with such treatment. The Shakespeare problem is handled this way. But

(Continued on page 24)

Book Reviews

by Richard Whalen

Edmond Malone, Shakespearean Scholar: A Literary Biography, by Peter Martin. (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Professor Martin's biography of Edmond Malone (the first since 1860) describes Malone as a dogged archival scholar, debunker of Stratfordian myths, and "a terror to forgers", especially William Henry Ireland. Edmond Malone was a prodigious scholar and literary celebrity. He collaborated with James Boswell on his *Life of Johnson* while struggling to beat the competition with his own edition of Shakespeare (1790). This edition's *Life of Will Shakspeare* was the only substantial biography in almost a century.

At the same time, he maintained an active social life with the leading literary and artistic figures of the time. And he spent weeks with manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and the Public Record Office. He was the first to examine the Stratford parish records and Henslowe's diary of the theater in London. Several times he tried to re-date the plays of Shakespeare, while lamenting the impossibility of attaining anything close to certainty.

For Oxfordians his greatest contribution was perhaps his exposure of frauds and forgeries by Ireland and several others. Malone espoused rigorous historical research and he pounced on forgers with uncompromising force despite initial acceptance of the forgeries by his contemporaries. For anyone interested in the first great Shakespearean scholar and textual editor, Martin's biography of Malone provides a straightforward account of his extraordinary life.

The Sonnets, a volume in **The New Cambridge Shakespeare**, edited by C. Blakemore Evans, with an introduction by Anthony Hecht. (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Shakespeare's sonnets stir up a crowd of questions for Stratfordian academics, most of whom have no answers, or give multiple answers. Professor Evans raises

most of them in his introductory note to the lengthy commentary on his edition of the *Sonnets*. "Are the *Sonnets* to some extent autobiographical?" His answer is more questions followed by a hedged opinion and a convoluted reference to the earl of Oxford.

Evans states that all significant art is to some extent autobiographical; then he seems to say that Oxfordians differ from most critics in believing that the sonnets are not autobiographical. This totally erroneous impression seems to be the meaning of a triple-negative sentence: "No critic with a conscience (unlike Baconians, Oxfordians, etc.) would now deny that such a Shakespeare signature is writ large in the *Sonnets*, as it is, of course, in the plays and other poems."

Does he really believe that the "signature" of the Stratford man, that is, his biography, is writ large in the works of Shakespeare? If so, it is nowhere evident in the 164 pages of commentary on the sonnets that he provides. He comes close, perhaps, with the "Will" sonnets (135-136) where the Christian name William is one of six senses of the word "will".

Professor Hecht's long Introduction is an extended *explication des textes* that concludes by asking whether the sonnets should be read "as documentary transcriptions of personal experience." The question, Hecht concludes, is "largely irrelevant".

But then in his final words he betrays his feelings: "Most of all they speak with a powerful, rich and complex emotion of a very dramatic kind, and we cannot fail to hear in the them a voice of passion and intelligence."

The Shakespeare Conspiracy, by Graham Phillips and Martin Keatman. (London: Century, 1994).

Two British journalists offer a new candidate as the real William Shakespeare. He is William Hall, a secret service agent and the "Mr. W.H." in Thorpe's dedication of *Shake-Speares Sonnets*. William Hall, same last name as a Will Shakspeare relative, was probably disfigured and poisoned by Sir

Walter Raleigh's operatives in Stratford-on-Avon in 1616. Apparently, their view is that Will Shakspeare of Stratford led a double life, as the grain merchant known as Shakspere/Shakespeare and as William Hall, the secret agent who wrote the poems and plays of Shakespeare.

Along the way they must dispose of the other major candidates for authorship. They cite J. Thomas Looney's *"Shakespeare" Identified* and Charlton Ogburn's *The Mystery of William Shakespeare* (the U.K. abridgement, 1988), but their critique of the case for Oxford is cursory in the extreme: Correspondences in the plays are only to names of Oxford's relatives; the dedication to *Venus and Adonis* is from an inferior to a superior; Francis Meres mentions both Oxford and Shakespeare as playwrights, so they can't be the same man; if Oxford was working for the Queen there was no need for Will Shakspeare as a front man.

The book also has a peculiar format. Each chapter ends with six or eight numbered paragraphs that re-state the content of the chapter. This is not a book that will be taken seriously.

Cultural Selection, by Gary Taylor. (New York: BasicBooks, 1996).

In his last book, *Reinventing Shakespeare* (1989), Professor Taylor found reasons other than creative excellence for Shakespeare's reputation and standing in the world of literature. Surveying Shakespearean criticism and biography over the centuries, he suggested that the cultural circumstances of the times were powerful influences. Shakespeare was elevated to the Divine Bard even though some of the work of other playwrights was better than some of Shakespeare's.

His latest book is written in the same clever, witty style, and it extends his Darwinian theories broadly to the works of four other writers and artists. Their works are influential not because of their intrinsic merit, that makes them "classics", but because they happened to find a "niche" where they could visibly excel and be re

(Continued on page 24)

Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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Shakespeare Oxford Society

The newsletter welcomes articles, essays, commentary,
book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions
should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate,
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the Society as a literary and educational organization.

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From the Editor:

Special Notice

In the first two weeks after the Winter *Newsletter* was mailed to members in March, we received letters from Charlton Ogburn and Judge Minos and Ruth Loyd Miller. Both Mr. Ogburn and the Millers requested that their names be removed as Honorary Trustees of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

We have since spoken on the phone with both Judge Minos Miller and Mr. Ogburn. Mr. Ogburn made clear to us that he remains a member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. He had in fact been thinking for several years about having his name removed as Honorary President since he felt he bore no responsibility for what

appeared in the newsletter. In addition, Mr. Ogburn had been upset that the letter of his we published in the Winter issue had been shortened without explanation. Well, that was a mistake on our part, because the balance of the letter was all about his parents dealings with Simon & Schuster and the manuscript of *This Star of England*. We had, in fact, fully intended to publish it as part of our History of the Oxford Movement series, and it will now appear in the Summer *Newsletter*.

Judge Minos Miller reiterated to us that he and Ruth wish to be disassociated from the Society, and requested that we publish their letter exactly as they sent it.

Why it Matters

This morning, as I was pondering what to write under "From the Editor", the phone rang. It was an inquiry from someone who had just finished Charlton Ogburn's *Mysterious William Shakespeare*, which he had read after viewing *Frontline's The Shakespeare Mystery* last April.

This was a person who loved Shakespeare, had acted in the plays, and yet what he saw on *Frontline* about the authorship and Edward de Vere was a revelation. "How come I've never heard of any of this before?" he asked (sound familiar?).

He had called the Folger in Washington DC asking how to find the Society so he could join, and they gave him the Society address in Baltimore. Baltimore! An address that is more than 10 years old! Well, fortunately, he was in the end able to get our current address and phone number.

So this one phone caller reminded me, even as Society politics seem ready to overwhelm us, that he is the reason why all of us are involved in the authorship debate,

Oxford's story and the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

For there *is* tremendous potential in the Oxfordian movement, and in this Society, for us to take our mission to the next level. There is a world of people out there who have yet to hear of the true nature of this debate, and who, when they do, will see in an instant what all of us already accept as the truth.

As Charles Burford has outlined for you in his article on Fundraising on pages 6 and 7, it is time that all of us find a way to work together on the things we agree on so that we can build this Society and this movement to such an extent that, in 5-10 years, none of us will ever again hear of someone who has never heard of the authorship issue, except as a joke, or who has heard of Bacon, but not Edward de Vere.

So while the present difficult state of affairs over lawsuits and members' political views is no picnic for any of us, it should not allow us to lose sight of this larger picture.

Spring in July?

So why is the Spring *Newsletter* just now arriving after the 4th of July, some may ask.

Well, with all the authorship and Society events filling our calendar these past three months, the schedule just kept slipping and slipping, and for this we apologize

to our readers.

But we will get back on schedule by starting work right away on the Summer *Newsletter*, which will be mailed to members right after Labor Day. The Fall *Newsletter* will be mailed on December 1st.

Keep sending in your contributions!

Letters:

Letter from the Millers to SOS Members

To Mr. Boyle:

It has come to our attention that Charlton Ogburn has requested that "you insert a notice in the next Newsletter stating that [his] name is to be considered withdrawn as that of honorary president of the Society and hence deleted from the masthead of the Newsletter."

Ruth and I similarly request that a notice be placed in the next issue of the Newsletter stating that we each have requested disassociation from the Shakespeare Oxford Society and that our names be removed as "Lifetime Honorary Trustees" and all association terminated.

We ask that the above requested notice include this statement: "Members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and all others are reminded that they are specifically prohibited from using or reproducing any and/or all of Ruth Loyd Miller or Minos Publishing Co. copyrighted books, works, pictures, photographs, portraits, charts, coats of arms, heraldry, materials and/or sketches without first making a written request to Ruth Loyd Miller and having thereafter obtained specific written authority."

Ruth Loyd Miller
Minos D. Miller
Jennings LA
29 March 1996

To the Editor:

Kudos for the smashing first edition of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*.

That Mark Rylance was named the first artistic director of the new Globe Theatre in London was of special interest to me. He is a '78 graduate of the University School of Milwaukee, my alma mater. A copy of this page was sent to the school at once so that it might appear in the newest *USM Today*.

Then a new group of people will learn of the SOS.

Mary Louise Hammersmith
Williamsburg VA
16 April 1996

To the Editor

In reference to the serious doubts and consequent disagreements amongst the Stratfordian professors on the very fragile evidence purporting that the *Funeral Elegy to William Peter*, by "W.S.", was written by William Shakspeare between the death of Peter on 25 January and the poem's entry in the Stationers' Register on 19 February, 1612, I suggest that it ought to be most significant that William Shakespeare failed to write an elegy in memory of his younger brother Gilbert (who most probably died during the very same week as William Peter) and was buried on 3 February 1612.

W.S. may have been Wentworth Smith (amongst numerous others), a dramatist about whom little is known, save that Henslowe records fifteen plays, now lost, in which he collaborated with Day, Chettle and others for the Admirals and Worcester's, 1601-1603.

I would also draw attention to "A Prothalamion or Spousall Verse made by Edm. Spenser in Honour of the Double marriage of the two Honorable & vertuous Ladies, the Ladie Elizabeth and the Ladie Katherine Somerset, Daughters to the Right Honourable the Earle of Worcester and espoused to the two worthie Gentlemen M. Henry Gilford, and M. William Peter, Esquyers, London, 1596."

As Worcester's Men combined with the company of the Earl of Oxford and both were taken over by James I's consort as "Queen Anne's Men" from 1604, it is most probable that Edward de Vere knew this particular William Peter. During ongoing Oxfordian archival researches at the Bodleian, and elsewhere, I hope to determine that the two Peters were kinsman.

Derran K. Charlton
Dodworth, England
10 April 1996

To the Editor:

I refer to "An Open Letter from Joseph Sobran to the members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society" in the Winter 1996 *Newsletter*, and Charles Burford's message that accompanied it. Last year, the Board of Trustees passed a majority vote in favor of disinventing Mr. Sobran to last year's conference in response to a petition, to which I was a signatory. Every reader of the Society newsletter is entitled to decide whether the Board acted "to the discredit of the Society" when it made its decision, or whether it acted honorably, but readers can hardly do so without having access to more of the information that the Board considered. Unfortunately, Mr. Burford did not present the entire picture. Many readers will be unaware that the objections expressed in the petition were to Mr. Sobran's "bigotry and anti-Semitism" as reflected in recent articles of Sobran's newsletter, a publication perceived by many as a vehicle for prejudiced political commentary. Mr. Sobran's Oxfordian thesis was not a relevant factor when I agreed to sign the petition.

An invitation made by the Shakespeare Oxford Society to appear as a keynote luncheon or dinner speaker confers upon that speaker the status of honored guest. It

(Continued on page 22)

Subscriptions to the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* are included in membership dues in the Shakespeare Oxford Society, which are \$35 a year, or \$50 a year for a sustaining membership. Dues are \$15 a year for students and teachers. Dues and requests for membership should be sent to:

Shakespeare Oxford Society
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Somerville, MA 02143
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The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) as the true author of the Shakespeare works, to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication, and to foster an enhanced appreciation and enjoyment of the poems and plays.

The Society was founded and incorporated in 1957 in the State of New York and was chartered under the membership corporation laws of that state as a non-profit, educational organization.

Dues, grants and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law:

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Letters (Continued from page 21)

is in that capacity that Mr. Sobran has been invited, and it is for that reason that I have lodged my objection with the Board again. I have no objection if Mr. Sobran, as a writer on the authorship issue, presents a paper at a regular session, but I do not think it appropriate that the organization distinguish him as a special guest. Matters of conscience can transcend professional interests. The poet Ezra Pound was a known anti-Semite, and if he were alive today, some professionals in the world of literature would undoubtedly object to inviting him as an honored guest to a conference.

If the invitation to Mr. Sobran for the upcoming conference was made with the authority of the Board, then the Board apparently voted to reverse its position of last year, so far without explanation. If the invitation was made without the express knowledge, due deliberation, and majority vote of the full Board, then the invitation was made with disregard for last year's vote. Neither scenario is satisfactory.

Finally, it was either in poor taste or in ignorance for Mr. Sobran to conclude that anyone who objected to last year's invitation was someone "of no intellectual or literary distinction whatever." Several members who supported the petition are in the forefront of Shakespeare-Oxford scholarship and commentary.

Diana Price
Cleveland, Ohio
25 March 1996

To the Editor:

As a controversial writer, I've gotten used to silencing campaigns, especially since I began criticizing Israel over a decade ago. Until then I'd been strongly pro-Israel all my adult life; but as soon as my position changed, I found myself accused of anti-Semitism, racism, and other indecencies. Nearly every critic of Israel has had the same experience. The people who make the charges usually insist that they are in favor of free speech, that they don't equate criticism of Israel with bigotry, etc., etc., but...

It's that "but" that's troublesome. So is Mrs. Chenoweth's attempt to put words in my mouth, like the phrase "Jewish Bolshevism" (which was not mine: I had put it in quotation marks to indicate my skepticism

of it). So are her wildly inaccurate paraphrases of my views. So are her omissions of my many qualifying remarks.

For the record, I am not anti-Semitic. One shouldn't even have to say this; the burden of proof should be on the accuser. But for the sake of any members Mrs. Chenoweth may have misled, I will say flatly that I consider the rights of Jews, like those of all human beings, God-given. No sound or decent political philosophy can be based on any other principle.

I note that Mrs. Chenoweth no longer pretends to think that I would do "incalculable harm" to the SOS by appearing before it. The Shakespeare authorship question, and the right of other members to hear my views on the subject, seem to be of no concern to her. Her purpose appears to be purely disruptive and vindictive. And she accuses *me* of intolerance?

Despite my own objections to Israel and Zionism, I'd never suggest that Zionists be prevented from speaking on the Shakespeare authorship question. Such an irrelevant exclusion could only impoverish the Society. Politics should be kept out of the SOS, and I thank Lord Burford for his firm determination to keep it out.

Joseph Sobran
Vienna VA
10 June 1996

To the Editor:

I was shocked and distressed to learn that Joseph Sobran had been disinvited from the Greensboro meeting of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

I might confine myself to saying that it is foolish for members of the SOS to censor ideas or persons we disapprove of, since we are ourselves espousing an unpopular view (and are not always given fair treatment by the orthodoxy). However, it seems to me that the issue goes far beyond the immediate interest of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

Our rights to express unpopular ideas, to listen to unpopular ideas, and to listen to people whom many others consider "bad" are the core of what is generally called "freedom of speech". This is a precious freedom which most peoples in the world have never possessed, and which is under constant attack even in the United States.

Not merely as SOS members, but as Americans, and simply as human beings, we should do our best to preserve this freedom.

Those who voted to disinvite Mr. Sobran have done something shameful. Unless we apologize to him, and resolve not to do anything similar in the future, we share in that disgrace.

Michael Hart
Crofton, Maryland
24 March 1996

[Michael Hart is author of "The 100", in which he identifies Shakespeare as Edward de Vere]

To the Editor:

I'm writing to express my outrage at the SOS Trustees' decision to censor the speech of Mr. Joe Sobran, thereby depriving the membership of exposure to valuable information and hindering the cause to which we are all dedicated.

I have been reading Mr. Sobran for close to twenty years, first in *National Review* and his syndicated column, and now in his newsletter. Mr. Sobran is definitely not "politically correct", and he likes to ruffle the feathers of the political establishment. And that's why we read him. For honest, often courageous, thought-provoking political and social commentary, there's none better than Joe Sobran.

This slight to him is especially offensive since he was the first journalist to grasp the significance of the Shakespeare-Oxford question. It was through his column in the mid-1980's that I, and I'm sure many others, was first exposed to the controversy, and only because of his recommendation that I read the book, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. Other than Charlton Ogburn himself, I doubt there is anyone who has done more to further the cause of Edward de Vere than Joe Sobran.

Unless this situation is rectified, I would certainly have to reconsider my association with this or any other organization that tolerates political censorship.

Gary L. Livacari
Skokie, Illinois
15 March 1996

Congress (Continued from page 2)

During a Forum entitled "Shakespearean Biography: Problems and Developments", Katherine Duncan-Jones (Somerville College, Oxford) discussed her theory of Sir Sidney Lee's change of mind regarding the identity of the "young man" of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. After supporting first Pembroke and then Southampton as the young man, Lee (writing in the late 1800's) switched to describing the *Sonnets* as purely a literary exercise, without personal content. Duncan-Jones considers Lee's later position to be due to the fact that in the interim, Oscar Wilde had been tried and convicted of charges associated with homosexuality. Perhaps Lee felt he was "protecting" Shakespeare from similar charges.

In the same Forum, Park Honan (University of Leeds) indicated that new information regarding the skills of Mary Arden, the mother of Shakespeare of Stratford, will appear in his new biography of Shakespeare. Honan also stated that while in grammar school, Shakespeare "had to please" Thomas Jenkins, who was educated at Oxford University. Stanley Wells indicated that he does not believe William Shakespeare wrote *Funeral Elegy*. Regarding Donald Foster's computer analysis supporting Shakespeare's authorship of

the poem, Wells remarked that "The computer is the tool of those who give it commands."

In a Seminar on theatre history, Alan Nelson of UC-Berkeley (who is writing a biography of Edward de Vere) indicated that Oxford's men probably composed the company that was in the midst of a performance when the 1580 earthquake struck. Nelson also indicated that in 1580 Lord Burghley had written the vice-chancellor of Cambridge, requesting that Oxford's men be allowed to present a play at the university.

In a separate presentation ("Shakespeare Discoveries?") on Friday, Prof. Nelson discussed his research on Sir George Buc and Shakespeare. In the Folger copy of the anonymous play, *George a Greene*, there is a handwritten inscription attributed to George Buc. The notation cites "teste W. Shakespea" as the source of information about the play (indicating that Buc got this information from the testament of Shakespeare). Prof. Nelson has indicated that Buc knew Edward de Vere and had discussed Vere family history with him. Nelson's theory about this inscription is that, since Buc knew de Vere, but referred to de Vere and Shakespeare by different names, Buc believed them to be two differ-

ent people. To which Oxfordians might reply, while it could well be that the "W. Shakespea" was William Shakespeare, the Stratford actor, this *does not mean* that the actor was the author.

During the same hour, Donald Foster discussed his attribution of *Funeral Elegy* to William Shakespeare. The presentation was similar to that given at an earlier UCLA conference (see the winter *Newsletter*).

At the conclusion of Foster's presentation, a large crowd gathered around him for questions, including *Newsletter* editor Bill Boyle. Eventually Mr. Boyle was able to identify himself as editor of the *Newsletter*, and asked the Professor if he would care to respond to Joe Sobran's article in the winter *Newsletter*. Foster replied that he didn't wish to get involved in any debates with Sobran, or with any Oxfordians for that matter. "Oxfordianism is dead," he remarked, thus betraying the real agenda of those who have sought to promote this rather banal poem.

This remark was later repeated to several Stratfordians attending the SOS reception, and they either smiled or laughed. No one believed it. As anti-Stratfordian Mark Twain once quipped, "Reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

Join the Shakespeare Oxford Society

If this newsletter has found its way into your hands, and you're not already a member of the Society, why not consider joining us in this intriguing, exciting adventure in search of the true story behind the Shakespeare mystery? While the Shakespeare Oxford Society is certainly committed to the proposition that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, is the true Shakespeare, there is much that remains to be learned about the whole secretive world of Elizabethan politics and about how the Shakespeare authorship ruse came into being, and even more importantly, what it means for us today in the 20th century as we complete our 4th century of living in a Western World that was created during the Elizabethan era.

Memberships are \$15.00 (student or teacher); \$35.00 (regular); \$50.00 (family or sustaining). Members receive the quarterly *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* and discounts on books and other merchandise sold through The Blue Boar. We also have a Home Page on the World Wide Web located at: <http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com>

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Whalen (Continued from page 19)

membered by posterity.

Taylor ranges from Aristotle to the movies, *Casablanca* in particular. He uses Shakespeare to support his two-pronged theory of relativism in literary merit and determinism in cultural circumstances. Shakespeare is an example of a shaky standard of excellence: "Shakespeare's greatness is never proven; it is simply postulated....Anyone at all familiar with literary history knows that Shakespeare was not always the standard; he became so long after his death."

Taylor also believes in collaboration: "Shakespeare co-wrote plays with Thomas Nashe, Thomas Middleton, John Fletcher, George Wilkins, and probably others." *Timon of Athens* is mentioned as a play by Shakespeare and Middleton.

Taylor, who is a co-editor with Stanley Wells of the *Oxford Collected Works of Shakespeare* (1988), seems to be leaving Shakespeare behind. Reportedly he is preparing a work on Thomas Middleton as a playwright who missed his niche and has been largely forgotten.

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Oxfordian News (Continued from page 17)

days. Speakers this year included Salman Rushdie, Germaine Greer, Carlos Fuentes, Wilfred Thesiger and the poet laureate, Ted Hughes.

The Festival has a delightfully impermanent quality to it. Three large marquees are erected for the events in a field adjoining the local high school, with a fourth serving the all-important function of restaurant, bar and tearoom. There is also a book-signing tent, where authors go to sign copies of their latest book after they've spoken. It invariably rains throughout the Festival, and quite famous and insober poets can be seen struggling through the mud. The artists are paid in wine, not cash, and mingle freely with the hordes. All very British; all very democratic.

Burford spoke for an hour to an enthusiastic crowd of 250, his talk provoking a lively, not to say heated, Q & A session, during which a Welshman in the front row eloquently advanced the claims of an Anglo-German, Percival Hart, as the real author of the plays. How else was one to explain all the hart/heart puns in Shakespeare? How indeed! Which only goes to show: there are more Shakespeares, my dear Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy!

Boyle (Continued from page 18)

then why wouldn't what worked against Shakespeare and his friends in *Twelfth Night* be used again on his later friends (i.e. today's Oxfordians)?

Professor Hamilton's book, like most useful but orthodox studies, is better at analyzing what Shakespeare is saying than understanding how and why he said it. But in the end she does grant he was an artist who took "positions that foster the liberties of the subject" and goes on to note his "habit of constructing and then privileging a marginalised character." Which is pretty perceptive and probably about as far as she can go.

But for the busy Oxfordian there is a treasure trove of puzzle pieces here.

Announcing a new publication from the
Shakespeare Oxford Society

The Oxfordian

...a semi-annual journal devoted to new research and scholarship on the Shakespeare authorship question and the life of Edward de Vere.

First issue to be published in Fall 1996.

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papers to:

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PO Box 263, Somerville MA 02143

Attention: Charles Burford, editor.

Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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Inside this issue:

Oxford and the Knights of the Garter: page 1

World Shakespeare Congress: pages 1-4

Fundraising: pages 6-7

Funeral Elegy: An Update: pages 12-13

Shakespeare-Oxford on the Internet: page 14

Petition on the Authorship Debate: page 15

Oxfordian News: pages 16 and 17

Book reviews: page 19