



The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



Vol.32:no.4

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

Fall 1996

Oxford's Metamorphoses

*How Oxford adapted
Ovid's tales may be a key
to understanding
his life and works*

by **Hank Whittemore**

*Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.*

William Shakespeare made his triumphant entrance into history with this Latin epigraph on the title-page of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, quoting from Ovid's *Amores*, in which the Roman poet of antiquity had described his own experiences with love. Shakespeare was striding onto the printed page as an actor, speaking the proud lines of the couplet as though they were his, and thereby introducing himself as the long-awaited English Ovid:

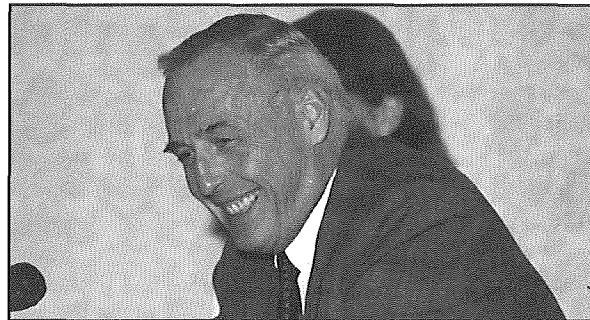
Let the mob admire base things;
may Golden Apollo serve me
full goblets from the Castalian Fount.
(Bullough, *NDSS*, Vol. 1, p. 161)

Publius Ovidius Naso, born in 43 B.C., sent the fresh breath of his love poems through the social life of Rome and became the toast of the town. Ovid revealed himself in his works more frankly than any writer of his culture; none so graphically depicted the intimacies of love. At the height of his poetic vigor, Ovid completed the monumental *Metamorphoses*, in which he linked together all the stories of classical mythology into a single artistic whole. Within fifteen books he depicted the full range of wondrous changes or "metamorphoses" by heroines and heroes from the dawn of creation to Ovid's own time, when in his final

(Continued on page 11)

20th Annual Conference Marks Turning Point

*Elizabethan, authorship and Society politics
converge in Minneapolis*



Shakespeare Mystery producer *Al Austin* enjoyed his role as moderator of the Thursday evening debate (page 5).



Author and journalist *Joe Sobran* and Griffith University Professor *Pat Buckridge* exchanging views on *Shakespeare and the Fair Youth* at the Friday morning panel (page 6).

The Society's 1996 Annual Conference, held October 10-13 in Minneapolis, may be looked back on some day as one of the key events in the history of the Shakespeare authorship debate. A record 150 Oxfordians and other interested observers gathered for this memorable event.

In a year which was marked by deep divisions, both political and intellectual, within the Society, Minneapolis provided a fitting arena for the discussion and analysis of some of the more controversial ideas surrounding both the authorship debate itself and the issue of how that debate should be conducted in the public arena.

The controversy over the Earl of Southampton's identity and relationship with Edward de Vere was central to many of the discussions and exemplified the way in which the politics of the authorship debate today tend to mirror the politics of the Elizabethan era. The desire to protect Oxford's reputation (and that of the Virgin Queen) is still strong among a good many Oxfordians. For,

(Continued on page 4)

Inside:

Forming a Society Chapter - page 3

Shakespeare and The Fair Youth - page 6

Update on Oxford's Bible - page 8

Mark Rylance stirs up the Globe

Globe set to stage Bacon as the Bard

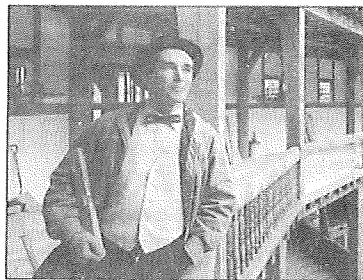
by CATHERINE MILNER

Arts Correspondent

MARK Rylance, the director of the new Globe Theatre, London, is expected to stage a play which he believes proves that Sir Francis Bacon, the Elizabethan courtier and philosopher, wrote all the plays attributed to William Shakespeare.

The Tragedy of Anne Boleyn, which has languished virtually unknown in a rare collection of plays published in the last century, tells how the queen suffered cruelly at the hands of her husband, Henry VIII.

Mr Rylance is understood to consider that the parallels



Bringing home the Bacon: Mark Rylance may stage a Bacon play at Shakespeare's theatre

Despite his role as the world's chief guardian of Shakespeare's memory, Mr Rylance is thought to have always believed that the actor from Stratford was not the same man who wrote the plays. "Mark has no doubt that Bacon wrote this

play, as he wrote all of Shakespeare's plays," Mr Dawkins said.

"If it was written by anyone else, they would have to be a genius, it is so well written." But other experts are skeptical about whether the play was by Shakespeare, Bacon or indeed any other Elizabethan playwright.

"This is an extremely bad pastiche of Shakespeare done perhaps in the 19th century," said Prof Bate. "It's not even by Bacon let alone Shakespeare. It's written in pseudo-Elizabethan style and one can spot deliberate imitations from Shakespeare. Performing this kind of thing discredits [Rylance] and Shakespeare."

Prof. Stanley Wells, a director of the Globe and of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham, agreed that the play was nothing to be taken seriously. "It's perfectly obvious that almost all of the play is taken from *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Othello* and *Julius Caesar*. Somebody has made up a play with bits of Shakespeare about Anne Boleyn. Anne Boleyn appears in *Henry VIII*. It can't be an unknown play – so it must clearly have been unregarded."

The play also duplicates material that appears in *The Tempest*, *Macbeth* and *Much Ado about Nothing*.

The following exchange between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn over a handkerchief bears an uncanny resemblance to the passage in *Othello* after Iago steals Desdemona's hanky in order to prove she was unfaithful:

Charles Boyle on the mend



Society trustee Charles Boyle, who was participating in a full schedule of events at the Minneapolis Conference, suffered a severe stroke on Friday afternoon,

in his hotel room, just hours after participating in the "Shakespeare and the Fair Youth" panel. Charles was hospitalized in Minneapolis for 12 days. He returned to the Boston area on October 23rd, and spent 7 weeks in the New England Rehabilitation Hospital, and is now continuing his recovery at home in Sandwich, Massachusetts.

He has been making great strides in his recovery in recent weeks, and it is expected that he will be able to rejoin the fray of the authorship controversy in 1997.

Queen: Why do you weep? Am I the motive of these tears, my Lord?

King: I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me, lend me thy handkerchief.

Queen: Here my Lord.

King: That which I gave you.

Queen: I have it not about me.

King: Not?

Queen: No indeed, my Lord.

King: That's a fault: that handkerchief to lose' t or give' t away have such perdition as nothing else could match.

Other passages have a curiously contemporary twang. For instance, Henry VIII says to Lord Norris: "You smell this business with a sense as cold as a dead man's nose."

According to Mr Dawkins, *Anne Boleyn* is not the only new Shakespeare/Bacon play. More than 10 others have also been unearthed including plays called *Mary Queen of Scots* and *Robert Earl of Leicester*, and the comedies, *Soloman II* and the *Mouse Trap*.

"They were probably written by a committee of scribes brought together by Bacon," said Mr Dawkins.

LONDON. The *Sunday Telegraph* for October 20, 1996 reported that Mark Rylance, the director of the new Globe Theatre, London, is expected to stage a play which he believes proves that Sir Francis Bacon, the Elizabethan courtier and philosopher, wrote all the plays attributed to William Shakespeare.

The Tragedy of Anne Boleyn, which has languished virtually unknown in a rare collection of plays published in the last century, tells how the queen suffered cruelly at the hands of her husband, Henry VIII.

Mr Rylance is understood to consider that the parallels between this play and *The Tempest*, *Othello* and a number of other Shakespeare plays prove beyond doubt that they were all penned by the same hand, that of Bacon. It is thought that the play will be staged at the Globe in January.

"It's more than slightly embarrassing to have the head of the Globe saying that Shakespeare didn't write what are thought to be his plays," said Jonathan Bate professor of English literature at Liverpool University. "Rylance is a good actor and a good director. But he does have wacky ideas about Shakespeare."

Peter Dawkins, who runs the Francis Bacon Research Trust in Warwickshire, introduced Rylance to the play. "It is such a beautiful play, very emotional, which is why Mark loves it," said Mr Dawkins. "It was very dangerous at that time to write plays about political events. It was a decapitable offense."

Reporting his Cause through Local Chapters

by Randall Sherman
and Katherine Chiljan

Hamlet's dying words to Horatio, "report me and my cause aright to the unsatisfied," inspired the formation of The Horatio Society, a local SOS chapter formed in the San Francisco Bay Area last year. The purpose of The Horatio Society is to actively publicize the Earl of Oxford and the Shakespeare authorship question. It was founded by the authors, but quickly grew to include local SOS members as well as those who had never heard of Oxford.

The Horatio Society has proven that ordinary people can mobilize to bring significant visibility to the authorship question. In its first six months, The Horatio Society arranged three public lectures, three live radio and one television interview, and inspired an on-campus debate with English Professor Alan Nelson. Also, it amassed a mailing list of 80 people interested in our activities. The Horatio Society provides a valuable forum for local Oxfordians to meet one another, discuss new theories and research, and keep people informed of the latest issues.

Next year, the SOS Board of Trustees will formally authorize the formation of recognized, local SOS chapters in cities across the U.S., modeled after The Horatio

Society. The chapters are intended to be autonomous and self-directed, yet they will have the support of the national organization and will hopefully share in achieving its important strategic goals. Like any grassroots organization, there can be a wide range of interests and talents among members. Yet, we have found that everyone has something to offer if given the chance and if positively focused toward results. To this end, committees can be organized into useful groups which include:

A. Out-Reach: The authorship needs to be discussed at every opportunity, whether it's by debate, presentation, or even calls to talk radio; letters can be written (we have many examples) to local theater, arts organizations, radio/TV stations; key academics can be identified and approached; lectures organized; literature made available to friends, etc.

B. Membership: In order for Oxford to become accepted as the true author of Shakespeare, the SOS must grow in membership. This can happen naturally each time a local chapter puts on an event and promotes it (e.g. by inviting friends/co-workers to the event, sending an invitation to a local repertory company, getting the event listed with the local newspaper, etc.). Several local chapters and a little effort could expand national membership dramatically.

C. Hospitality: In September, the Horatio Society sponsored an Oxfordian social at the home of Randall Sherman, where Katherine Chiljan reported her latest research efforts after a five-month trip to

England. Recently, our group went to see Al Pacino's new Richard III film, *Looking for Richard*, and went out for dinner and discussion afterwards. This kind of involvement builds relationships and spawns positive results. For example, we decided to write a letter to Pacino about his movie and the authorship question.

Each chapter will have its own ideas as to how to organize and operate, but to help people get started, we intend to provide new chapters with a "starter kit" to assist in the set-up, structure, procedures and activities needed to run a local chapter successfully. Sample letters, agendas, promotional materials and support literature will be included to assist people in getting the word out.

It is vital that Oxfordians meet, communicate often, and organize in order for any systemic change to take place on the authorship issue. The Oxfordian community, though small and geographically dispersed, can become enormously effective if its efforts are focused and persistent. All great things have small beginnings, and we have been theorists for too long. It is time for us to make this knowledge public (shake our spears so to speak) and inform others of the remarkable and complex character of Edward de Vere. This special knowledge is indeed a privilege, and it's our responsibility to share it with others.

Feel free to contact the authors (415-337-9171) about how to organize your own chapter in your local area, or share with us your experiences in trying to promote Oxford and the authorship.

First issue of *The Oxfordian* scheduled for next Spring

It is hoped that this Review will fill the long-felt need for a compendium of papers on issues surrounding the Oxford-as-Shakespeare theory, filling the gap between books (time-consuming to write; tough to get published; expensive to buy), and shorter pieces that are suitable for the Newsletter but must do without details or substantial references due to lack of space. Without such a Review, excellent papers presented at conferences all but disappear after one reading, or are left to their authors to distribute. Such a Review will also make it easier to respond in depth to issues as they arise within the Shakespearean community, such as the recent flap over the authorship of the *Funeral Elegy*.

Researchers and commentators are encouraged to contribute papers on any topic that touches on the authorship issue, that illuminates

the life of Oxford, or that examines the works of Shakespeare without the constraints of orthodox Stratfordian tenets. Especially welcome are close examinations of areas under continual dispute, such as the probable connections between *The Tempest* and actual shipwrecks, or the purely hypothetical nature of the accepted chronology, which is so frequently called upon by Stratfordians as proof that Oxford was dead before some of the plays were written. Such papers will help to arm our side of any debates with Stratfordians with potent facts and important points.

Those who have papers that have been offered for presentation at past conferences, whether actually presented or not, and those who have papers that haven't been published anywhere else, are encouraged to send them to me at the earliest opportunity for possible inclusion in the

first issue of *The Oxfordian*, due sometime this Spring. It is hoped that we will have the wherewithal to fund a Fall issue as well, and that this biannual publication can become a regular service of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. Those who are in a position to help financially with printing and mailing costs are encouraged most heartily to do so. For more information, either on getting papers published or on assisting with funding, please write to me:

Stephanie Hughes Editor,
THE OXFORDIAN
5815 S.W. Kelly Ave.
Portland, OR 97201
(503)246-3934
email: shughes305@aol.com

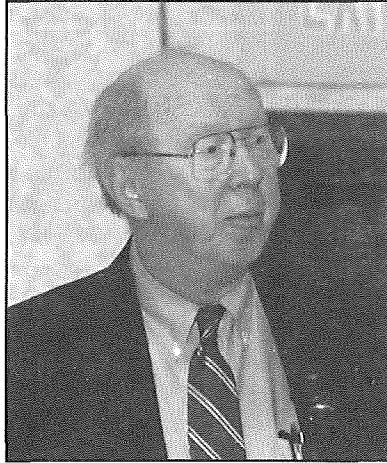
Conference (Continued from page 1)

whether one believes Oxford to have been Southampton's lover or his father (or both or neither), one can at least understand the poignancy of his lines: "My name be buried where my body is,/And live no more to shame nor me nor you..." (Sonnet 72)

The subject of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and the identity of the so-called Fair Youth provided an opportunity for what has come to be known as the "Prince Tudor" theory (the theory that Southampton was the royal son of Elizabeth and Oxford) to be discussed in detail. This occurred at the Friday morning panel. In a written statement read out during the discussions, Charlton Ogburn nailed his colors firmly to the Prince Tudor mast by claiming that it was the only theory "to which all the facts can be accommodated." Joe Sobran begged to disagree (see pages 6 & 7).

The unifying theme of the Conference, then, was politics. The politics of the Elizabethan era, which gave us the "authorship problem", the politics of the authorship debate itself (i.e. what issues are permissible and how should they be presented to the public?), and, finally, the day-to-day politics of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, which had generated some particularly stressful and vitriolic exchanges in the days leading up to the Conference. Charles Boyle, a leading advocate of Shakespeare as a political writer and the authorship problem as a political problem, became the lightning conductor for much of the ill-will that charged the atmosphere, suffering a stroke Friday afternoon, hours after participating in the "Fair Youth" panel discussion.

The major story this year turned out to be the General Meeting, which has tended to be a routine and uncontroversial affair in past years. The general direction of the Society would be discussed in a very general manner, and elections would be a matter of formality rather than contention. This year, however, all the growing pains of the last 10 years, coupled with the ardent controversies of the authorship debate itself, came to a head in Minneapolis, and the General Meeting became the Society's political crucible. The talking was tough and specific, and the elections hotly contested.



George Anderson, Chairman of the 1996 Annual Conference

Members were apprised of the obstacles facing the Society both by the article in the *Spring Newsletter* about former trustee John Price's lawsuit and by the spate of mailings prior to the Conference, which culminated in a letter from Stephanie Caruana, urging the membership to use their proxy votes to re-elect the official slate of candidates, including Society President Charles Burford, to the Board of Trustees, while blocking the election of the six candidates being proposed from the floor. This last minute call for proxy votes netted 140 in just five days, and made the difference in electing the official slate.

While the Minneapolis showdown appeared at first glance to be simply about the money John Price claimed he was owed by the Society, in reality it involved control of the Society itself, and with control of the Society, control of how the authorship issue is debated and presented to the world at large. It was, in short, a classic political battle, with what amounted to two opposing parties seeking to set the standards by which the authorship debate is carried forward into the 21st Century.

Charles Burford has written a special letter to all members in advance of this Newsletter, explaining more of the details of the General Meeting, so we won't dwell on them here. However, there were in this battle significant political issues that do need to be discussed on a regular basis in the coming months and years.

Chief among these issues is the matter of fundraising and, with it, the task of

elevating the Society to a level on which it can compete with the major institutions that have to date controlled the agenda of the authorship debate. But it is not enough simply to achieve this new level. We also have to come to an agreement among ourselves on how to cope with the divisive intellectual and strategic issues that have bedevilled our movement since its inception in 1920. How do we debate issues such as "Prince Tudor", which may always be matters of speculation? And just what is our story, and what's the best way to reach the public with it?

Such internal battles within the anti-Stratfordian movement as a whole have kept anti-Stratfordians fighting among themselves as ferociously as they fight against the Stratfordians. And, of course, it's not only a matter of Baconians or Marlovians or Derbyites fighting Oxfordians, but, more importantly, Oxfordians fighting Oxfordians. Ironically, one of this year's conference papers touched on this very issue. Prof. Pat Buckridge, in his presentation on John Marston, indicated how strong some of the evidence is for Oxford's son-in-law William Stanley, Earl of Derby, as the true author. As Buckridge made his case and confessed his shifting sympathies, one was left wondering how Derbyites fit into an Oxfordian universe.

In his paper "Recent Developments in the Case for Oxford as Shakespeare", writer and researcher Peter Moore took a timely look at how Oxfordians might better present their case to the world by winnowing out the weak arguments from the strong. Moore made the point that in order for the Oxfordian case to remain vigorous and convincing, we have to be a lot more scrupulous about jettisoning old and invalid arguments that have inadvertently become part of our stock-in-trade. By the same token we must continually enlist new arguments built upon new evidence to replace the discredited ones.

In short, Moore's paper addressed the intellectual tactics of the authorship debate. Among other things, he called upon Oxfordians to "face reality on this 'Prince Tudor' business, and submit it to proper historical scrutiny." (The paper, which is too long to appear in the Newsletter, will be available to members through the online

Ever Reader magazine by the end of December.)

It's the "Prince Tudor" theory that has cast its shadow over the authorship debate today, and it's "Prince Tudor" that many think underlies the current debate within the Society about who should be in charge and how we should proceed. Indeed, history shows us that this controversial issue has been at the heart of the various rifts and feuds which have beset the Oxfordian movement over the last 75 years. It even led to the break-up of the Shakespeare Fellowship in the 1950s because of the bitter differences between those who accepted Southampton as the son of Elizabeth and Oxford, and those who rejected it out of hand or rejected it as too dangerous to handle.

In his presentation entitled "Marketing a Paradigm Shift", Society trustee Randall Sherman touched on this same problem when he remarked how important it was for the Society to have a single, clear mission statement in order to reach out to possible donors and investors, as well as the public.

What made this Conference truly historic was not just that these issues were aired openly and thoroughly, but rather the fact that people for the first time became aware of the thematic unity of Elizabethan, authorship and Society politics, and understood that it is impossible to discuss any of the three in isolation. Ultimately, however, we should ask ourselves this question: if we as a movement decide that it is politic to withhold the whole truth from those that we are seeking to convince, then is it not likely that we will be doing just what the Elizabethans were so successful in doing, namely perpetuating the authorship ruse?

In his 1984 opus *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, Charlton Ogburn made the tactical decision to leave the Prince Tudor issue in the wings. And others have felt just as strongly, then and now, that this is the right thing to do. And yet, at Conference 96, Ogburn chose to "go public" with his belief that Southampton is indeed the son of Queen Elizabeth and Oxford, rather than leave the stage to Joe Sobran and others, who champion the homosexual theory of Oxford's relationship to Southampton.

(Continued on page 15)

Other Conference Events: The Debate, Teacher's Workshop, Speakers

The Debate

The October 10th Oxfordian vs. Stratfordian debate was entitled "Meet the Press: The Question of Shakespeare's Authorship." Questions were posed by three members of the press including moderator Al Austin (best known to Oxfordians as the correspondent and writer of the *Frontline* episode *The Shakespeare Mystery*, first aired in 1989, and repeated in 1992 and 1996). The other questioners were Josephine Marcotty and Chuck Haga, both from the Star Tribune, Twin Cities.

Regarding the issue of the authorship of Shakespeare's works, Austin admitted he was not impartial. He described himself as "leaning in Oxford's direction," but stated he was not a "true believer." He further commented that "ridicule is a weapon seized upon by those who find themselves short of ammunition." Austin indicated that it did matter who wrote Shakespeare's works, because otherwise, "Why have literary biography?... If it was Oxford, that changes the meaning of some of the plays and sonnets."

The Oxfordian debaters were SOS President Charles Burford, and actor and SOS Board member Charles Boyle. The Stratfordian panel of debaters consisted of Christine Gordon (University of Minnesota) and David Kathman (University of Chicago). Kathman holds a Ph.D. in linguistics and has often argued the Stratfordian case on the Internet Shakespeare newsgroup and on his Shakespeare Authorship Web Page.

Each participant first made some introductory comments on their views on the authorship. Charles Burford emphasized the Frank Harris statement that the object of an artist is to reveal himself through his works, and claimed that Oxford's authorship made psychological sense.

Charles Boyle said that when you consider Oxford the author your understanding of the plays improves and "you start getting the jokes." Boyle believes politics to be a central issue. He cited Dover Wilson's idea that in *Hamlet*, the central issue is to protect Gertrude's reputation. Similarly, in real life, Queen Elizabeth's reputation had to be protected. Boyle also talked about G. Wilson Knight's book *Religion and Shakespeare*, in which Knight identifies Polonius as Cecil, and Leicester as Claudius.

David Kathman indicated that his goal was to get Oxfordians to think from more than one perspective. He felt that Oxfordians ignore external evidence from the First Folio and the Stratford Monument that the man from Stratford wrote the works. Internal evidence, Kathman

said, is not reliable "because you can find anything you want to find in Shakespeare." Oxfordians employ a double standard, Kathman said, because they ridicule Stratfordian speculations, while indulging in speculations themselves. Kathman remarked that it is not surprising that no Shakespearean manuscripts survive, because no pre-Restoration manuscripts survive.

Christine Gordon, the self-described "amateur on the panel" indicated that the Oxfordian case was not persuasive, and that the "scientific perspective" offered by the studies of Ward Elliot and Don Foster found Oxford did not write the works. Further, applying Oxford's biography to the plays would limit them, Gordon believes.

The exchanges that followed were fairly routine for this format of debate. The Oxfordians concentrated on the bigger issues — politics, history, psychology — and cited chapter and verse from the plays and sonnets to back up their points, while the Stratfordians made hay out of the most mundane details in the documentary record, Kathman at one point even waxing eloquent about a load of stone that belonged to Shaxpere. Their case was compiled almost exclusively from negative arguments; for instance, Kathman claimed it wasn't surprising that we know next to nothing about the Stratford man because we know very little about John Webster; or the fact that Shaxpere's father was illiterate means nothing because Richard Field's father was probably illiterate, and so on.

As always happens, the Stratfordians did not even attempt to confront the big issues, such as Shakespeare's involvement in the politics of Queen Elizabeth's Court. Instead, they attempted time and again to shrink the subject down to a literary problem that can be solved by computer analysis.

As Charles Boyle pointed out, however, you can't effectively address the question of Shakespeare's identity without placing his writing in its political context. For only then can one really understand what was at stake all those years ago, and why the cover-up was necessary. Ultimately, he claimed, we're not talking about the honour of one man, but of a whole nation.

The debate, which was attended by 250 people, was conducted throughout in a spirit of the utmost courtesy.

Teacher's Workshop

Two university teachers presented a workshop on introducing the authorship issue to college students. Professors Felicia Hardison

(Continued on page 18)

Shakespeare and the Fair Youth

One of the major events at this year's Conference was a panel discussion entitled "Shakespeare and the Fair Youth." The panel was first suggested by Mark Anderson, and quickly endorsed by Conference Chairman George Anderson and Society President Charles Burford. The organizers were Mark Anderson, Roger Stritmatter and Carol Sue Lipman.



Participating in the special panel on Shakespeare and the Fair Youth were (left to right) Joe Sobran, Pat Buckridge, Betty Sears, Charles Boyle, Roger Stritmatter and moderator Carol Sue Lipman.

The panel was composed of five Oxfordians, representing a broad range of opinion on both the interpretation of Shakespeare's works and the meaning and significance of the authorship issue. This was perhaps the first time that Oxfordians have presented and discussed their own major differences of interpretation in a formal, public setting. It was fully expected that an open discussion of this nature would spark some interesting exchanges, and the audience was not disappointed. Even Charlton Ogburn managed to make his presence felt on the central issues under discussion. A letter he had written shortly before the Conference, regarding the Earl of Southampton's parentage, was read out by moderator Carol Sue Lipman.

The panel was billed as a discussion of Shakespeare's non-dramatic poetry (*Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece* and the *Sonnets*) and how Oxfordian interpretations of it can shape our understanding of the relationship between Shakespeare and the 3rd Earl of Southampton, the so-called "fair youth" of the *Sonnets*. The panelists were asked to pay particular attention to the relationship between the texts and their literary and historical contexts, as the most effective way of understanding the subtext of the poems i.e. what is really being portrayed beneath the familiar surface stories. They were also asked to consider the relative merits of literary evidence versus documentary or historical evidence.

These guidelines were adhered to in the

main, but as usually happens when Oxfordians get together, there was a good deal of discussion of a more general nature on the plays and their biographical content, and on the character of Oxford himself. Nonetheless, the exchanges were always revealing, and served to clarify the principal philosophical differences that exist within the Oxfordian movement today, as well as demonstrating that such differences can and should be openly discussed.

In his opening remarks, Charles Boyle, who was the principal advocate of the theory that Southampton was the royal son of Elizabeth and Oxford, stated that "the function of this forum is to legitimize discussion of not only who Shakespeare was, but also who Southampton was, and who Elizabeth was, and how all this might fit together...[it is] simply to start exchanging ideas, even when those ideas may seem controversial." He then reiterated some points he had made at the previous evening's debate, in particular that "Shakespeare is a political writer" and that the suppression of his work has to do with politics.

Betty Sears echoed this political view of Shakespeare, and cited a recent essay by Alan David Bloom, who states that "Shakespeare...must have known about politics."

Roger Stritmatter then stated that Betty Sears' book *Shakespeare and the Tudor Rose* had forever changed how he read the *Sonnets*. He also spoke about different types of evidence, and cautioned the audi-

ence with these words: "We are not here to talk about proof; literary critics are not interested in proof, they're interested in understanding a work of art....All hypotheses can be interesting and useful. We cannot think that documentary evidence is somehow better intrinsically than literary evidence."

In his opening remarks, Joe Sobran, who championed the theory

that the *Sonnets* are homosexual love poems celebrating Oxford's love for Southampton, gave a brief critical history of the *Sonnets* (the main contention being whether or not the poems can be read as autobiographical), and then addressed the notion, espoused by Charles Boyle and others, that the *Sonnets* in effect reveal secrets of State. "I think it is wrong" he said "to read these sonnets (or any of Shakespeare's poetry except maybe *The Phoenix and the Turtle*) as esoteric in the tradition of Baconian ciphers...[or] on the assumption that they are a sort of encyclopedia or handbook of some sort...The 'secret dad' theory seems completely implausible and at odds with the texture of the sonnets as a whole."

(Roger Stritmatter later responded to this point, saying that *Venus and Adonis* "cannot be read carefully without destroying the belief that it is not an esoteric text.")

Pat Buckridge focused more on his views of the authorship controversy in general, confessing that he was moving towards an acceptance of William Stanley, Earl of Derby (Oxford's son-in-law) as the author. Hence he wasn't certain that he could describe himself as an Oxfordian any more. He emphasized that there is solid documentary evidence from the 1590s that Derby wrote for the stage and was connected to the Earl of Southampton.

Following the opening statements, each participant responded to several written questions about Shakespeare's non-dramatic poetry, which once again gave fertile ground

for digression. It was during these exchanges that the depth of the disagreements between the panelists began to emerge.

Several exchanges between Joe Sobran and Charles Boyle highlighted the key contentions. Boyle, for example, did not find the apparently conflicting theories of Southampton-as-lover and Southampton-as-son irreconcilable. Instead, he threw the theme of incest into the mix as a way of understanding the Elizabeth-Oxford-Southampton triangle.

Boyle read a passage from a book by Jonathan Bate entitled *Shakespeare and Ovid* (1993), in which the author concludes that Shakespeare changed Ovid's version of the Venus and Adonis story by portraying Venus as both lover and mother. "For those of us who regard these plays as testimony and history" commented Boyle, "that passage requires some explanation."

He also cited this passage from Bruce T. Boehrer's *Monarchy and Incest in Renaissance England*: "...the higher one moves in the Renaissance England social register, the more disturbing the problem [of incest] becomes....monarchy itself is the product of family relationships."

"I didn't bring these issues to the table" Boyle stated. "It will take years of research before the secret heart of Hamlet can be plucked out, either by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, or by any of his critics."

Sobran responded by saying that he found the "surface" texts of the plays, with all their depth and humour, more interesting than the esoteric subtexts that Boyle and others claimed for them. "Too often" he said "people assume that others believe what they want to believe, which tells you that *they* believe what they want to believe. But you can't just believe what you want to believe." He cited his own journey from Stratfordian to Oxfordian, remarking that he was a reluctant convert, who finally had to face the facts, which is the alternative to believing what one wants to believe.

Boyle replied: "I don't *want* to believe any of these things. They are just there." He went on to quote from Dover Wilson's book *What Happens in 'Hamlet'* and cited other scholars who continually raise themes, such as Shakespeare's obsession with incest, without making sense of them.

During the concluding statements, Pat Buckridge expressed his opinion about the issues Boyle had raised: "I'm still trying to come to terms with [this]. I'm very skeptical. It's a form of historical orientalism...a kind of fascination with the [past]."

It was during the concluding remarks that Charlton Ogburn's statement of the issue was read out, in which he went on the record about his acceptance of the Southampton-as-son or "Prince Tudor" theory. In rejecting the homosexual theory of the *Sonnets* as espoused by Sobran, Ogburn stated that the "Southampton as son" theory was the only theory "to which the facts can be accommodated." Sobran responded by saying that he felt Charlton had over-idealized Oxford, and this explained his "overly hostile" reaction to the homosexual theory.

This concluded what could prove to be a landmark panel. No minds were changed, but nor was any furniture thrown. One can only hope that the door has been opened on a new era of Oxfordian debate, in which the more controversial aspects of an already controversial issue are openly discussed and tested.

For in the final analysis we all share in the common cause of truth, and as Joe Sobran said more than once, we must be wary of being blinded by our own beliefs, whether personal, cultural or generational.

WBoyle

Excerpts from Charlton Ogburn's Letter

For over half a century the members of our Society have strived against exceedingly heavy odds, odds favoring an unscrupulous, entrenched academic establishment, to win the public to a sympathetic understanding of the qualities of Edward de Vere. Now ... Mr. Sobran wishes to label the Earl of Oxford a homosexual... For the Shakespeare Oxford Society to provide a platform for the launching of his book proclaiming this charge is to me incomprehensible.

There is not the slightest indication that Oxford ever had a homosexual impulse in his life. It is true that Henry Howard and Charles Arundel in their list of charges against him cited an episode with a cook, but they accused Oxford of every imaginable vice, and if we give any weight to their testimony we must adjudge Oxford to have been the most depraved of mortals. (It is interesting that A. L. Rowse latched on to this scurrility to call Oxford "a roaring homo," who was therefore disqualified from having written the *Sonnets*, in which physical love for the young friend is explicitly [ruled] out.) As a homosexual, the author of Shakespeare's plays would have betrayed his proclivity again and again, but [it] surfaces in only one, *Troilus and Cressida*, and there is treated with disgust.

I cannot and do not believe that a poet in his forties addressing the youthful object of his physical appetites in a sonnet-sequence would devote the first 17 to imploring the youth to marry and beget issue. "Make thee another self for love of me," he urges, and, "As a decrepit father takes delight/ To see his active child do deeds of youth..."

In the Summer [Newsletter] ... Bill Boyle, citing the postulation that "Southampton was Shakespeare's [i.e., Oxford's] son by Elizabeth," ... asserts that "Nothing raises the hackles of Oxfordians more than this theory." What basis Bill can find for this extraordinary statement I cannot imagine.

...For years I have tried to avoid being backed into a corner on the issue of Southampton's parentage, feeling that the theory ... would add a seemingly infatuated improbability to the case we were seeking to establish. Honesty finally compelled me to concede that crucial elements of the case, especially the tenor of the *Sonnets*, could be accounted for only in terms of Southampton's having been in fact the son of Oxford and Elizabeth. The poet of the *Sonnets* addresses the Fair Youth in terms that only a father admonishing an erring son would employ while also acknowledging him as his sovereign, whose "vassal" he is; even A. L. Rowse admits that Shakespeare writes as one *in loco parentis* to the youth. ... if there is any other postulation to which the facts in the case can be accommodated, I have yet to hear of it.

Mr. Sobran's theory cannot explain why Southampton should have been imprisoned on the day of Oxford's death by a reportedly panic-stricken king who had forbidden the prince his heir to appear out of doors. Clearly he feared that the young Earl would exercise a claim to the throne, one that would have been his as Elizabeth's son. As such it was imperative that Oxford's authorship of Shakespeare's works be dissimulated at all costs, for if read as his—as is apparent to us today—these would give away Southampton's parentage. "Thy name from hence immortal life shall have," the poet of the *Sonnets* declared to the beloved young friend, surely envisaging a dedication on the lines of those to the two long narrative poems: "To the Right Honorable Henry Wriothesley". [That], however, was certainly not to be.

Shakespeare's Bible Brings Truth to Light:

Conference Seminar Reports on Work-in-Progress on Edward de Vere's Bible

by Mark K. Anderson

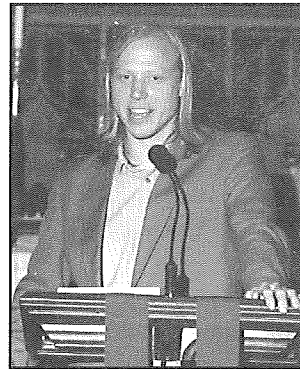
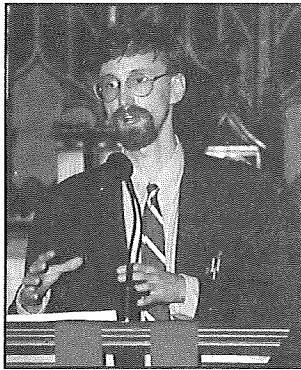
A special seminar at the 1996 annual SOS Conference in Minneapolis-St. Paul provided Conference attendees with a long-anticipated opportunity for a detailed update on work-in-progress on the hand-written annotations in the Edward de Vere Geneva Bible. Co-sponsored by the Plymouth Congregational Church and the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum, the seminar featured slides of the de Vere Bible and lectures by Mark Anderson and Roger Stritmatter.

The Bible, owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C., was first discovered in 1992 by SOS members Dr. Paul Nelson and Isabel Holden. It has been carefully studied by Roger Stritmatter, a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, for five years. The discovery has been featured in several news articles in the U.S., Germany and Italy, and Stritmatter was interviewed for the 1992 GTE authorship teleconference organized by Gary Goldstein and John Mucci.

As one further step in bringing the light of twentieth-century technology to bear on the "fine mystery" (in the words of Charles Dickens) of the authorship controversy, Stritmatter and Anderson spoke for about two hours, to eighty listeners, illustrating their points with slides of the annotated Bible and other illustrations.

Drawn largely from material Stritmatter is preparing for his proposed PhD dissertation at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the work will also be featured in Anderson and Stritmatter's forthcoming book, tentatively titled *Prospero's Bible: The Shakespeare Mystery Resolved*. The book will consider for the first time, in detail, why the evidence contained in the de Vere Bible is the humanist equivalent of DNA evidence in a murder trial.

"We are here to try Edward de Vere on the charge of having written *Hamlet* and the other works of Shakespeare" said Stritmat-



With their joint presentation in Minneapolis, based on two years of study and research on Oxford's Bible, Roger Stritmatter (l) and Mark Anderson (r) inaugurated what may prove to be an intriguing new chapter in the authorship story – similar presentations about the Bible on campuses around the country.

ter. "As Joe Sobran recently wrote, de Vere is 'guilty as sin.' Today, we hope to show you the equivalent of the DNA evidence in the case against him."

As many readers know, since 1925 the Folger Shakespeare Library has held in its vaults a hand-annotated 1570 Bible originally owned by Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford. The Bible is a copy of the second edition of the "Geneva" translation prepared from 1550-68 by Protestants in exile from Mary's counter-reformationist government. As reported previously in these pages (*SOS Newsletter*, Spring 1992), the marginalia (consisting of about 1000 underlined or marked verses and about forty brief marginal notes) exhibit a striking correspondence to the Bible verses and themes found in Shakespeare. The case for just how striking that correspondence is, however, has yet to have its day in court.

Stritmatter and Anderson began their presentation by answering the current crop of de Vere Bible naysayers and detractors – most notably the Folger Library itself, the *Smithsonian Magazine*, and Iona College's *Shakespeare Newsletter*, which have all claimed that the de Vere Bible annotations were made by someone other than de Vere! As unlikely as such a proposal might seem,

it was not only proposed in the Folger's *Roasting the Swan of Avon* pamphlet (1993), edited by the former President of the Shakespeare Association of America Bruce Smith – but swiftly endorsed (as if by institutional osmosis) by the *Smithsonian* and the *Shakespeare Newsletter* (summer 1995). The Bible, declared the April 1995 *Smithsonian* with more than a touch of hubris, had "proved a false alarm."

Before getting into some of the particulars of the connections between the de Vere Bible annotations and Shakespeare, Stritmatter and Anderson set the record straight concerning this phantom annotator.

In 1570 the Court of Wards purchased for Edward de Vere a number of books recorded in extant accounts as follows: "To William Seres, stationer, for a Geneva Bible gilt, a Chaucer, Plutarch's works in French, and other books and papers..2L, 7S, 10 d" (Ward 1928, 33). The Folger 1570 Geneva Bible fits the above description. Furthermore, the maroon velvet binding bears silver centerplates engraved with de Vere's heraldic arms: the rampant boar on the front and the quartered shield with the sinistral star on the obverse. These facts alone, before one begins to examine the handwriting in the book, are sufficient to establish de Vere's original ownership of the Bible. As luck would have it, this is almost certainly the same book described in the Court of Wards record.

Enclosed within the sumptuous heraldic binding with the de Vere arms are actually three distinct books, originally published separately, and bound for the purchaser by a London stationer, perhaps the same William Seres (or an associate) named in the Court record: a 1570 Old Testament, a 1568 New Testament, and a 1569 edition of the psalms set to music – a copy of the so-called *Sternhold & Hopkins Metrical Psalms* – all of which contain annotations in the same fine 16th-century italic handwrit-

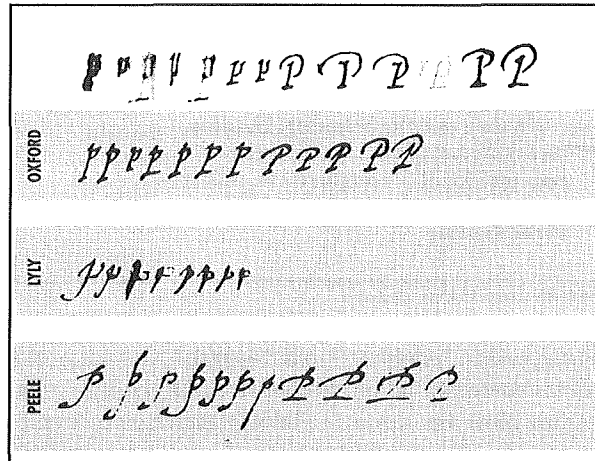
ing.

Many of these notes, written in the Bible's margins, have been cropped by a binder's knife. It was this circumstance which led Bruce Smith, in the Folger pamphlet, to the bizarre conclusion that the Bible had been annotated *before* Oxford acquired it. Presumably, Smith reasoned that since the Bible was bound with Oxford's heraldic arms, and since it would have been cropped preparatory to the original binding process, the annotations must have been in the Bible before it was bound for Oxford.

Of course, as Stritmatter explained, Smith apparently never paused to consider the circumstances his scenario requires. Before examining what did happen, let's take a glance at what Smith, the Folger Library, and the *Smithsonian* assume must have happened according to their theory: In the first weeks of 1570 our phantom annotator acquires the unbound (and uncut) broadsheets of the Bible and proceeds to mark them up with over one thousand underlinings and marginal notes distributed in fifty-eight books of the Bible. Within less than six months, he resells these used and marked sheets to the London Stationer and Bookbinder William Seres, who crops, binds and resells the book to the Earl of Oxford at the standard rate for a new Bible.

Seres' notoriously literary and spend-thrift customer doesn't blink when handed a vandalized Bible. Instead, he shells out several pounds for an expensive, customized binding in royal crimson velvet, adorned with delicately engraved silver clasps, cornerplates, and centerplates bearing his coat of arms; he proceeds to cherish this book for the next thirty years of his life without making any of his own annotations in it. Flashforward four hundred years...the apparent congruence between these annotations and Shakespeare's biblical references is coincidental—or was the phantom annotator the five year old William Shaksper of Stratford?

Needless to say, this scenario is not only implausible but also, it turns out, superfluous. Smith suppressed unambiguous evidence of the Bible's 18th-20th century spine



By permission Folger Shakespeare Library

Mark Anderson's analysis of the annotator's handwriting (top) with both Oxford's (second row) and other samples from the period (third row is Lyly, fourth row is Peele) indicate the strong, unmistakable parallels between Oxford and the annotator.

replacement (called "rebacking"). As any antiquarian book lover can tell you, binders customarily trim the loose margins of a book when rebacking or otherwise rebinding it. Quite probably, given its age, the book has been repaired two or three times; that it has been rebacked at least once is all too obvious.

And, finally, our phantom annotator just happens to have handwriting which is remarkably, if not indistinguishably, similar to Edward de Vere's!

In the Plymouth Church talk, Anderson demonstrated the annotator's identity with Oxford by using slides showing details of the annotator's hand compared both to Oxford's and to those of his fellow writers who possessed similar stylistic traits. These slides are part of a study-in-progress which will prove that the annotator was indeed Oxford.

"Our explanation for the cropped annotations is simple," declares Anderson. "Oxford bought the Bible in the same year it was printed, as the original purchase order shows; he had the Bible bound for him, and subsequently made notes in it—those we are studying today. Some of those notes were cropped when the Bible was rebound during the next three centuries. No reasonable person in possession of the facts of the case could conclude otherwise."

"Some folks have asked," continued Anderson, "why don't you just go out and

hire a handwriting expert?" Handwriting analysis, he explained, is a complicated field strewn with minefields, sometimes planted by Stratfordian pundits. Some so-called paleographers are dealers in manuscripts who trade on their "expertise" for personal prestige by reaching conclusions profitable to their clients. Some readers may be aware, for instance, of the 1985 book, *In Search of Shakespeare*, by the New York manuscript and autograph dealer Charles Hamilton, which reveals to the world that the same person responsible for the six well-known "Shaksper" signatures, also wrote the Shakespeare will. In a later book, Mr. Hamilton, having quite a bit of fun with the naive susceptibilities of his readers, announced that the recently rediscovered manuscript of the pseudo-Shakespearean play, *Cardenio*, was also in the Bard's evanescent hand.

Under such circumstances, Stritmatter and Anderson have understandably approached possible "experts" with some circumspection. "Before laying ourselves at the mercy of paleographers whose professional judgement might be contaminated by Stratfordian loyalties of one kind or another, we wanted to educate ourselves so that we understand the technical aspects of the field. We want to be informed collaborators, not just paying customers, in the paleographical investigation of the Bible," explained Stritmatter.

"In the process," he continued, "we've pushed the state of the art in Elizabethan paleography". Anderson's computer-assisted methodology is pioneering advancements in paleographical technique which should earn the respect and assent of the best professional paleographers and demonstrate unequivocally that the annotator of the Bible was Edward de Vere.

"Although this work is still in progress," he concluded, "all work to date confirms that the hand of the annotator shares numerous idiosyncratic characteristics with Oxford's accepted handwriting."

This conclusion—that de Vere was the annotator—is what Stritmatter and Anderson call the minor premise of the syllogism of the de Vere Bible. Despite claims to the contrary, this minor premise is all but unas-

(Continued on page 10)

Bible (Continued from page 9)

sailable, and remains so with every new development in the paleographical investigation. Undoubtedly, those troubled with the implications of the study will unearth new “refutations” in the months to come. As things stand in 1996, however, the minor premise has generated the most heat. Accordingly it received more attention than might otherwise be expected in the Plymouth Church presentation.

As the researchers continue to buttress the minor premise through further study and professional consultation, they express hope that critics, supporters and –most important– the public at large will be drawn to the centerpiece of their argument, that the Earl of Oxford’s 1570 Geneva Bible not only confirms that Oxford wrote under the pen-name “Shake-Speare,” but also teaches us how to be better readers of his work.

Of the more than one thousand marked passages in the Bible, nearly a quarter turn up as direct references in Shakespeare, and many more have reverberating thematic resonance within the canon. About a hundred of these references can be found in the work of previous scholars of Shakespeare’s Biblical knowledge, such as Richmond Noble (1935) Peter Milward (1974, 1987) or Naseeb Shaheen (1987, 1989, 1993). A further hundred are new contributions to what is known about Shakespeare’s knowledge and use of the Bible. “Much of what we have learned about the de Vere Bible in the last three years, and the reason for the length of time consumed by the research, is that this group of verses has steadily grown to the present number of around a hundred,” explained Stritmatter.

In Stritmatter’s spring 1992 letter to the *SOS Newsletter*, the figure was quoted as “around a dozen”; by the time of the summer 1992 filming of the Bible for the GTE authorship teleconference, the number was “thirty or more.” Further research continues to reveal more –now over a hundred. This means, said Stritmatter, that the de Vere Bible functions as an “answer key” to the quiz: which Bible verses did Shakespeare remember and use in his work?

Of course, if Oxford’s annotations could

14 Do all thigs without* murmuring and reasonings,
15 That ye may be blameles, and pure, As they which in the night sit forthe a candle to giue light to others.
the sonnes of God without rebuke in the middes of a naughtie and croked nation, amōg whome ye shine as*lights in the worlde,

By permission Folger Shakespeare Library

One of the marked passages (Philippians 2:15) includes not only the words “naughtie” and “worlde”, but also, in a footnote (pasted in on the right), the word “candle”, thus providing three key words in Portia’s Merchant of Venice speech, “How far this little candle throws his beam! So shines a good deed in a naughty world.” (V, ii, 61-2).

also be found in the works of Shakespeare’s contemporaries, critics such as the Folger or the Smithsonian might have something to complain about. Indeed, Shakespeare Authorship Page (SAP) editor David Kathman continues to claim publicly –though on what reasoning or authority remains unclear– that the relationship between the de Vere Bible annotations and Shakespeare is “random”.

Contrary to Kathman’s claims, Stritmatter reports that a study of biblical references in Bacon, Marlowe, and Spenser’s *Fairie Queene* (the only authors and texts, unfortunately, for which comparable data is easily available) suggests that the correspondences between the de Vere Bible and Shakespeare are anything but random. While nearly half of Shakespeare’s top verses can be found marked in the Earl of Oxford’s Bible, the overlap between marked Bible verses and those favored by other authors approaches zero.

In a few critical cases, the answers supplied by the “quiz key” actually allow us to correct and fine-tune previous work done by other scholars. For example, since Carter (1905) it has been generally accepted that Portia’s stirring message in *Merchant of Venice* about the power of a tiny candle to cast a blazing light of moral truth in this dark and “naughty world” –“How far this little candle throws his beam! So shines a good deed in a naughty world” (*MV*, V, ii, 61-2)– is a paraphrase of the New Testament proverb about not hiding your light under a bushel. Carter and Noble (1935) both associated the image, incorrectly it

transpires, with *Matthew 5:16*: “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16 is not marked in de Vere’s Bible. However, the preferred source of Portia’s moral (*Philippians 2:15*) is marked. We know this is the preferred source, because both Portia’s utterance and *Philippians 2:15* include the peculiar collocation of the words, “naughty... world”, and in a footnote to the verse, “candle”.

“Now, who said you can’t learn by peeking at the answers?” quipped Anderson.

And, as Stritmatter revealed in his lecture, Portia’s moral could not be more apt. For, as he explained, he had communicated this particular discovery to Professor Naseeb Shaheen, author of several important books on Shakespeare and the Bible, during the spring of 1993. When Shaheen’s third book, *Biblical References in Shakespeare’s Comedies*, was published five months later, it claimed –correctly, but for the first time in print– that Portia’s “naughty world” was a reference to - lo and behold! - *Philippians 2:15*. Just how Professor Shaheen “discovered” this correction, however, remains unpublished.

Needless to say, *Philippians 2:15* is only one of over two-hundred Bible verses –albeit a particularly significant one– to which Stritmatter’s study of the de Vere Bible devotes serious consideration. Nevertheless, Portia’s moral based on this verse seems all too pertinent to present circumstances. Hamlet charges Horatio to “report me and my cause aright to the unsatisfied.” As all Oxfordians are aware, anyone who takes Horatio’s words seriously will sooner or later run afoul of court politics. Portia admonishes us not to despair. The little candle of which she speaks is, after all, “this star of England” –the five-pointed heraldic star of the de Veres of Castle Hedingham in Essex.

“How far that little candle throws his beam!” declares Shakespeare’s Judge. “So shines a good deed in a naughty world.”

Whittemore (Continued from page 1)

book the soul of Julius Caesar is transformed into an eternal star in the heavens. In A.D. 8, Augustus cited the immorality of Ovid's writings and banished him to the far edge of the empire. Here the exiled poet lived in the land of the Goths, amid a barbarous culture, until his death in disgrace a decade later.

But poetry, Ovid had declared, was a way of cheating death. He would rise above oblivion on the wings of his words. Now Shakespeare was taking the same position — "Not marble nor the gilded monuments of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme" — and with the epigraph from the *Amores* on his title-page, he claimed Ovid as his route to the Castalian spring on the side of Mt. Parnassus, sacred to Apollo and the Muses. Here was his source of inspiration, as well as his guarantor of high cultural status and immortality. He, too, through the virtue of his pen, would conquer disgrace or banishment or even death itself.

The newly arrived English Ovid, his cup brimming over, would infuse his own writings with tales of poetic, sexual and political power. He, too, would explore the psychology of desire and the transformations wrought by extremes of emotion; with Ovid, he would show that just when you think you've found what you most want in life, it destroys you. While also delighting in rhetorical ingenuity, verbal fertility and linguistic play, he would equally value variety and flexibility as fundamental habits of mind. His own contemporaries seemed to recognize the transfer of identity as not only literary but spiritual: "As the soule of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras," Meres wrote, "so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare."

For those who view the new author of *Venus and Adonis* as Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, it is possible to see him constructing the same kind of Ovidian illusion when he writes as a dramatist; that is, when he brings the magic of metamorphosis on stage. As perhaps the simplest example, the flesh-and-blood actor appears and we think, "Ah, here comes Will Kempe, playing Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." But then Bottom himself becomes an actor, during a play rehearsal within the play,

wearing an ass's head (III, i, 106) and now we think, "Ah, here comes Bottom, playing the ass" — so that the original actor, Will Kempe, seems to vanish. Such is the case with Edward de Vere playing William Shakespeare who, in turn, embodies Ovid: the original author, himself a consummate actor-illusionist, seems to disappear.

Virtually all of Shakespeare's plays are indebted to Ovid. Four times he refers to the Roman poet by name, five times to the swan's singing at death as described in the *Heroides*.

The influence of Ovid was apparent throughout Shakespeare's earliest literary work, both poetic and dramatic. His closest adaptations of

"But poetry, Ovid had declared, was a way of cheating death. He would rise above oblivion on the wings of his words. Now Shakespeare was taking the same position..."

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* often reflect the phraseology of the popular English version by Arthur Golding issued between 1565 and 1567.

(Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare*)

Ovid, the love of Shakespeare's life among Latin poets, made an overwhelming impression upon him, which he carried with him all his days: subjects, themes, characters and phrases haunted his imagination. The bulk of his classical mythology came from the *Metamorphoses*, which he used in the original as well as in Golding's translation.

(A.L. Rowse, *Shakespeare, The Man*)

The quotations above demonstrate how Stratfordian thinking about Shakespeare was forced to expand. First he is the poet of "small Latin" (a stubborn misreading of Ben Jonson's words of praise in the *First Folio*) who must have relied upon Golding's version in English; then, some generations later, it is acknowledged (reluctantly) that he also must have absorbed Ovid's masterwork through the Roman poet's actual Latin words. But evidence of his facility in both languages was always readily available: Shakespeare's principal direct source for *Lucrece* — the *Fasti* of Ovid — was not published in an English translation until 1640, so Shakespeare had to move from

Latin to English with consummate ease; he himself was a translator. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, to cite an example involving his favorite Latin author, he actually demonstrates this ability by having Lucentio "translate" Ovid's *Heroides* for Bianca:

Hic ibat, as I told you before — *Simois*, I am Lucentio — *hic est*, son unto Vincentio of Pisa — *Sigeia tellus*, disguised thus to get your love — *Hic steterat*, and that Lucentio that comes awooing — *Priami*, is my man Tranio — *regia*, bearing my port — *celsa senis*, that we might beguile the old pantaloone. (III, i, 28-37)

J. Thomas Looney used the phrase "long foreground" for Shakespeare's formative years, a period of necessary artistic growth and development which has always been totally missing from Stratfordian biography. Unless he was a god with miraculous powers, the sophisticated English poet who wrote *Venus and Adonis* went through much trial and error, creating a substantial body of apprenticeship work beforehand. By all logic Shakespeare must have begun translating Ovid in his earliest years, becoming thoroughly grounded in his old tales. He would have labored over the original texts and "tried on" various English nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, inventing new ones along the way; and in the process he would have acquired his astounding vocabulary of some 25,000 words, more than twice the size of Milton's.

But let us return to Golding.

When John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford died suddenly and inexplicably in 1562, young Edward de Vere became a royal ward of Queen Elizabeth under the guardianship and control of William Cecil, her chief minister. The boy was a child of state and Her Royal Majesty was in every official respect his mother. Living with him at Cecil House was his uncle, Arthur Golding, and it was during this time that the "Golding" translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was being rendered; so the young earl was physically present when the Roman poet's tales of Echo and Narcissus, Venus and Adonis, *et al*, were transformed from their original Latin to English. In retrospect, given Shakespeare's acknowledged debt to Ovid's fifteen-book opus in both versions, the ecstatic feverish literary activity under Cecil's roof becomes supremely significant.

(Continued on page 12)

Whittemore (Continued from page 11)
cant.

It is remarkable, in light of Arthur Golding's pivotal contribution to the English Renaissance, that traditional academia has never questioned his credentials for translating seduction scenes that he himself would have censored. Golding, after all, was an uptight puritanical scholar acting as one of Cecil's henchmen. There is no evidence that he was ever the young Earl of Oxford's tutor; at most he acted as the boy's "receiver" for financial and legal matters. Otherwise, acting for the equally uptight and puritanical Cecil, he attempted to dissuade his nephew from taking any politically incorrect religious and cultural paths. His job, as well as inclination, was to quash Edward's delight in exactly the kind of sensuous, stimulating, witty, erotic qualities that Ovid's works embodied in the first place.

Arthur Golding was far more comfortable translating John Calvin's version of the *Psalms of David*, which he published in 1571 and dedicated to Edward de Vere, urging the young earl to accept "true Religion, true Godliness, true Virtue." Even though Oxford might have "all the sciences, arts, cunning, eloquence and wisdom of the world," Golding warned him, without God's word through Calvin he would "walk[eth] but in darkness." This was probably a last ditch attempt to influence his nephew in the direction of puritanism, writes B.M. Ward, but "such efforts were doomed to disappointment" because "the movement of the time that appealed to Oxford was not the Reformation but the Renaissance." Edward de Vere's uncle would later warn that the earthquake of 1580 was God's punishment for immoral behavior, specifically that of attending plays on Sundays, but by then his madcap nephew was himself producing plays.

It may be all too obvious that Arthur Golding could not, would not and did not translate Ovid's tales of passion, seduction and lovemaking as well as incest by pagan gods and goddesses who were transformed into trees and lions and such. He was in every way incapable of it and, besides, he would have incurred Cecil's wrath for doing so. Golding's most notable task at Cecil House was helping Elizabeth and her

Master of Royal Wards to quash a charge in 1563 that Edward de Vere and his sister Mary were bastards. At the heart of that legal challenge was the earlier and apparently sinister involvement of Golding's half-brother and half-sister, Thomas and Margery Golding, who had meddled with the Oxford earldom.

While the English departments might have doubted Golding's role based on his credentials, the History departments might have better explored his background.

This back story began to unfold shortly after the death of Henry VIII in 1547 and the succession of Edward VI, when the boy king's uncle, Edward Seymour, assumed all power as Protector and Duke of Somerset.

"Arthur Golding was far more comfortable translating John Calvin's version of the *'Psalms of David'*, which he published in 1571 and dedicated to Edward de Vere..."

This brother of the late Queen, Jane Seymour, had staged a palace revolution without firing a shot; and if nine-year-old King Edward did not live to maturity, Somerset would need to block Mary and Elizabeth Tudor from the succession in order to keep his control. In opposition was his brother, Lord Admiral Thomas Seymour, who retaliated by marrying Henry's widow, Catherine Parr, and getting her pregnant. At the same time the Admiral conducted an affair, or a political alliance based on sex, with Elizabeth, who was fourteen and living in the same household. By aligning himself with both Henry's widow and Henry's daughter, Seymour was challenging his brother on behalf of the Tudor dynasty.

Meanwhile, in his quest to keep on amassing power, Somerset went after the Oxford earldom with undisguised greed. He pressed some criminal charge against John de Vere, the details of which have not survived. Working for him was the ambitious young man William Cecil, who moved to quash a marriage between the widowed Oxford and his 10-year-old daughter's governess, a Mrs. Dorothy, with whom the earl had twice proclaimed banns of matrimony. That done, Somerset arranged for his own seven-year-old son to be the eventual bridegroom of

John de Vere's daughter. He also attached a "fine" that stripped the earl's collateral heirs of nearly all the great Vere possessions in Essex.

Enter, now, a pivotal figure in the person of Thomas Golding, a servant of Somerset who was apparently acting under Cecil's orders. "By November 1547," writes relative Louis Golding in this century, "Parliament granted John de Vere's chantry lands to the Crown. Their liquidation was in every neighborhood a juicy plum, and in Essex this fell to Thomas Golding, who, in the words of Holman's *History of Halstead*, 'knew how to improve his interest to get a large share of these lands.' John de Vere signed the fine on February 1, 1548, and on the same day he made a new will, which was witnessed by Thomas Golding. That John de Vere was under some sort of observation or control by Thomas Golding is evident."

Then, as Verily Anderson surmises in *The De Veres of Castle Hedingham*, this same Thomas Golding enlisted his own sister, Margery Golding, to be John de Vere's wife. The wedding, which supposedly took place on August 1, 1548, was a total secret — unknown even to Oxford's daughter, Katherine, from his first marriage. Why would John de Vere suddenly wed the sister of a man who, along with Somerset and Cecil, had caused him to suffer such grief and humiliation? The answer can only be that this was a "forced" marriage and that the earl had capitulated.

By now Elizabeth had left the Seymour household after Catherine Parr had caught the princess in her husband's arms. Elizabeth was reported "sick" while remaining in seclusion for some months. In early September 1548, after giving birth to Seymour's daughter, Mary, his wife virtually accused him of trying to kill her. Catherine Parr died a few days later, leaving Seymour to resume his courtship of Elizabeth amid growing rumors that they would marry. Not far behind these events was Somerset, who arrested his brother in January 1549. He promptly put Elizabeth and her servants through some frightening interrogations, during which she boldly asked to be summoned to Court to show that she was not pregnant by the admiral. If Elizabeth had already given birth, Somerset had acted too late, so he reluctantly dropped

his investigation. A few weeks later in March 1549, undoubtedly as the only way to avoid a recurring threat by Seymour and Elizabeth, Somerset executed his brother.

All during this time, William Cecil had played both sides of the fence. While in Somerset's service he had begun a correspondence with Elizabeth, who would soon hire him as her surveyor of properties. The busy Cecil was now also in contact with Kate Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, who had taken in the orphaned daughter of Thomas Seymour and Catherine Parr, although within a few years little Mary Seymour would disappear from history without a trace. During the subsequent reign of Mary Tudor, the Duchess of Suffolk would flee to Europe while John de Vere and his wife, Margery Golding, would hide at Castle Hedingham in Essex.

When Elizabeth succeeded in November 1558, at twenty-five, her first act was to install Cecil as her chief minister. She also elevated John de Vere and Margery Golding to favored status by ordering them to live at Court for at least the first full year of the reign. Their children, Edward and Mary, hereby make their entrance in history.

As there was no record of little Mary Seymour after the age of two, so there was no record of the birth of Mary Vere, who would have been the same age. (Perhaps it is no coincidence that Mary Vere in 1579 would marry Kate Willoughby's son, Peregrine, and that the play performed at their wedding may have been the early version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, whose title character, Kate, seems to be a combined portrait of both Kate Willoughby and Mary Vere.) There is also no record of when or where her brother was born, except for a suspicious diary entry by Cecil much later, in April 1576 — a particularly volatile time in this saga — when he gave Edward's birth date as April 12, 1550. (Hatfield MSS. Cal. XIII, 142) The boy was enrolled at Cambridge within days of Queen Mary's death. Whatever his age, he would have been much younger than any college student in England. There is no record that he lived at the school, but, with John de Vere at Court and Margery Golding as a Maid of Honor, the lad would often have been brought into the Queen's presence.

Upon John de Vere's death in 1562, the

widowed countess wrote to Cecil dropping any claim to an Oxford inheritance. In fact, Cecil got the wardship while the Queen's lover, Robert Dudley (soon to be Earl of Leicester) gained the administration of de Vere's lands. "I confess that a great trust has been committed to me of those things which, in my Lord's lifetime, were kept most secret from me," Margery Golding wrote to Cecil, as if pledging a vow of silence. (She had been a pawn in men's games.) Her lack of "any message of love or affection" for young Edward, observed Ward, seemed to indicate that she "handed the boy over to Cecil as a royal ward without a pang." We might add that Edward seemed to dismiss her from his mind as well. There

"Reveling in the attentions of his Queen, would not Edward de Vere have fallen in love with his own image, much as the sixteen-year old Narcissus of mythology had done?"

is no evidence, either, that he gave any thought to John de Vere — unless we count his riding away from the Oxford funeral with "seven score horse" and making an entrance into London in the (virtually traitorous) manner of a young prince who would be king.

By now, if not before, the widow's half-brother Arthur Golding was in Cecil's service. On Cecil's behalf, Golding handled the charge — brought by John de Vere's daughter, Katherine, now in her twenties — that John de Vere's marriage to Margery Golding had never existed. Katherine's husband, Baron Windsor, demanded that both Edward de Vere and his sister Mary be forced to prove they weren't bastards; but Arthur Golding, writing for Cecil, declared that the boy and girl (both of whose ages he put at fourteen in June 1563) were now the Queen's property and, therefore, off-limits. The case, at least during Elizabeth's reign, was dropped.

Just as Thomas and Margery Golding had been used to render John de Vere powerless, Arthur Golding was employed to help keep Edward de Vere in line. So we come full circle to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the role Golding played in its publication. As noted, Elizabeth in 1562 became

Edward de Vere's official mother; but it's easy to imagine that before then he had been dazzled by the radiant young Queen and deeply motivated to please her. How could a mere boy match the physical presence of Robert Dudley, who was sharing her bed? He could do so most effectively by touching the Queen's love for classical literature through the power of his own words.

Coincidentally enough it was not until the second full year of Elizabeth's reign that Ovid's Latin made its way into English. The first published translation appeared in 1560, within two years of her accession, by an anonymous author who had rendered the Narcissus poem from Book III of the *Metamorphoses*. An elaborate frontispiece, announcing The Fable of Ovid Treating of Narcissus, arranged this title so that its top line, in extra-large typeface, appeared as:

THE FABLE OF O

Was this the signature of the boy who would inherit the Oxford earldom? Reveling in the attentions of his Queen, would not Edward de Vere have fallen in love with his own image, much as the sixteen-year-old Narcissus of mythology had done? And if she herself had given him the *Metamorphoses* in Ovid's Latin, what greater gift could he return than an Englished portion, in his own hand, of the tale he most identified with?

Five years later, in 1565, was Arthur Golding enlisted by Cecil to put his name on the young earl's translation of the first four books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*? Surely it was Golding who included the prose dedication to Leicester, in which the morality and civic worth of Ovid's poetry was stressed; and when all fifteen books appeared in 1567, surely it was Golding who added the fuller epistle to Leicester, in which he attempted to reconcile the Roman poet's erotically charged work with the Bible. ("The snares of Mars and Venus shew that tyme will bring to light," Golding moralizes in Book III, "the secret sinnes that folk commit in corners or by nyght.")

Stratfordian scholar Jonathan Bate, in his book *Shakespeare and Ovid*, published in 1993, speculates that Golding's epistle "probably constituted Shakespeare's only sustained direct confrontation with the mor-

(Continued on page 14)

Whittemore (Continued from page 13)

alizing tradition — that is, if he bothered to read it.”

Well, I have no doubt that he did bother. Edward de Vere, reading his uncle’s impotent attempts to put a puritanical face on Ovid, must have erupted with devilish merriment. And soon after he came of age, while he and Elizabeth were dancing up a storm and raising eyebrows at Court in 1573, it must have amused Oxford as well to see Cecil (now his father-in-law) being forced to “wink[eth]” at these “love matters” as history records. In public, the official son of the Queen was now scandalizing the Court as her lover.

Even before then, I believe, Cecil had already “winked” at Edward de Vere’s translation of Ovid’s “love matters” by having them published in English under Golding’s name:

For a long time past Phoebus Apollo has cultivated thy mind in the arts... Let that Courtly Epistle, more polished even than the writings of Castiglione himself, witness how greatly thou dost excel in letters. I have seen many Latin verses of thine, yea, even more English verses are extant...

(Gabriel Harvey, speaking publicly in Latin to the Earl of Oxford, 1578)

Harvey was alluding to his personal knowledge of Edward de Vere’s own “long foreground” of labor in both English and Latin. He and Oxford had become friendly rivals in 1566, when the puritanical Harvey was at Cambridge. That was one year after part of the *Metamorphoses*, attributed to Golding, had appeared; it was also while the remaining books were still being translated. A dozen years later, was Harvey hinting that he had seen the work-in-progress? What had he thought of its robust vocabulary and bustling narrative? Had he winced at indecorous words such as queaches, plash, skapes, collup and coddys? Perhaps this was partially why, in the same public address of 1578, Harvey exhorted Oxford to give up poetry:

O thou hero worthy of renown, throw away the insignificant pen! Throw away bloodless books and writings that serve no useful purpose!

In reply we have Shakespeare’s own

caricature of Gabriel Harvey in the form of Holofernes, the schoolmaster and pedant of *Love’s Labor’s Lost*. Viewing the character in this light, we have the hilarious spectacle of Holofernes/Harvey extolling “the elegancy, facility and golden cadence of poesy,” directly contradicting Harvey’s public lecture to Oxford. And if this satire weren’t funny enough, we have him in his next breath effusively (and indecorously) praising the great Roman poet by name:

Holofernes: ...Ovidius Naso was the man, and why, indeed, Naso, but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention?...

(IV, ii, 123-5)

“Edward de Vere, reading his uncle’s impotent attempts to put a puritanical face on Ovid, must have erupted with devilish merriment...”

As a spoof of Harvey this works to its most wonderful effect by recalling his lecture to Oxford while turning it inside out: the lines become Oxford’s retort to Harvey through a character representing Harvey himself.

The reference to Ovid also reinforces the dramatist’s overall identification with him, which becomes even more obvious elsewhere:

I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths.

(*As You Like It*, III, iii, 7-9)

In these words to Audrey, the clown Touchstone puns on the word capricious — whose Latin root is “caper” or goat — so that it becomes goat-like. (Again, so much for Shakespeare’s “small” Latin.) Both the dramatist and his character demonstrate their ability to equal the “capricious” or whimsical nature of Ovid’s wordplay. Touchstone becomes the banished Ovid among those who cannot comprehend him, while the unseen playwright is our English Ovid disguised as the “honest” Court Fool who reveals the truth.

As Touchstone tells William, the coun-

try fellow (Shaksper?) who loves Audrey (the plays?):

“For all your writers do consent that *ipse* is he: now, you are not *ipse*, for I am he.”

(*AYLI*, V, i, 43-4).

Shakespeare becomes even bolder in announcing his presence when he summons the actual source of his play to the stage. In *Cymbeline*, for example, he has a copy of the *Metamorphoses* become Imogen’s bedtime book:

...She hath been reading late,
The tale of Tereus; here the leaf’s turn’d down
Where Philomel gave up.

(II, ii, 44-6)

And in what is perhaps the most self-consciously literary moment in all Shakespeare, the most significant source of *Titus Andronicus* becomes a tangible prop:

Titus: Lucius, what book is that she
tosseth so?

Boy: Grandsire, ’tis Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, My mother gave it me.

(IV, i, 41-3)

In this instant, the spell of the play is broken. Through young Lucius, the boy, we are offered a fleeting biographical image of how Shakespeare himself obtained his first copy of Ovid’s masterwork — his “mother” gave it to him — without which he could not have written *Titus* in the first place. At the same time, we are invited to follow him into the pages of the *Metamorphoses*, wherein the tales of two boys (Narcissus and Adonis) are the very sources of *Venus and Adonis*, through which he — “Shakespeare” — was delivered to the world. The poem itself (as well as its two main characters), having gestated since the 1570s, acted as the literary parent that gave birth to “Shakespeare” in 1593 and simultaneously became his first “heir” or literary child.

From the Narcissus tale, under Golding’s name: “This Lady bare a sonne whose beautie at his verie birth might justly love have wonne.” And from the Venus and Adonis tale, also under Golding’s name: “The water nymphes upon the soft sweete hearbes the chyld did lay, and bathde him with his mothers teares.”

The Adonis of Ovid is the fruit of incest between Myrrha and her father. She becomes a tree, however, from which he is finally born. In Shakespeare's poem, Adonis is combined with Narcissus while both he and Venus undergo metamorphoses which Bate attempts to unravel in this fascinating if daunting passage:

Where Ovid begins his tale with Adonis as a son issuing from a tree, Shakespeare ends his with a flower issuing from Adonis, who thus becomes a father. Shakespeare's Venus acts out an extraordinary family romance. By imaging her lover as a father, she makes herself into the mother and the flower into the fruit of their union. But the logic of the imagery dictates that the flower is her sexual partner as well as her child, for it clearly substitutes for Adonis himself—she comforts herself with the thought that it is a love-token, which she can continually kiss. The fusion of lover and mother in the context of vegetative imagery makes Venus into Myrrha once again. It is as if, having slept with her father, the girl is now sleeping with her son.

(Bate, 54-5)

"Venus the lover," Bate concludes, "is also Venus the mother." Is she the same mother who gave young Shakespeare his copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Latin? Is Venus, as Titania (the "imperial vot'ress") of *Midsummer Night's Dream* is universally acknowledged to be, a representation of Queen Elizabeth? To what extent was William Shakespeare undergoing a metamorphosis not just into the English Ovid but into the Roman poet's mythological figure of Adonis?

Let us close with some verses possibly from the young Edward de Vere, who seems to have identified himself with Adonis while asking similar rhetorical questions about his relationship to the Ovidian goddess who, in the Golding version, was kissed by Cupid and, "being wounded, thrust away her sonne":

What were his parents? Gods or no?
That living long is yet a child;
A goddess' son? Who thinks not so?
A god begot, beguiled;
Venus his mother, Mars his sire...*

(*from "What is Desire?", a poem originally attributed to Oxford by Dr. Grosart in 1872, but disputed as being Oxford's by Prof. Steven May in 1980).

Conference (Continued from page 5)

Equally significant was the way in which Charles Boyle presented his views during the Thursday evening debate and again at the Friday morning panel. Charles did not hesitate to invoke both the politics of the Elizabethan era and the much-debated politics of Shakespeare himself in answering questions at the debate (see p.5) and in explaining his interpretation of Shakespeare's non-dramatic poetry Friday morning (see p.6). As he repeated several times, in a monarchy, family, blood and politics are one and the same thing. Moreover, issues of incest and changeling children, though shocking to modern sensibilities, were hardly alien concepts either to the royal courts of the Renaissance or to Shakespeare, who treats of them in several of his plays.

For those who have long argued that the truth should only be taken so far, and that revealing such things can only hurt the Oxfordian cause, it should be noted that several listeners remarked instead that this political presentation of the authorship problem served to clarify much that had previously seemed confusing and implausible.

Debate moderator Al Austin found Boyle's answer to the key question of why the cover-up of Oxford's authorship was necessary 20 years after he died both intriguing and convincing. Boyle replied that it was not Oxford who was being protected, but Queen Elizabeth herself, and by extension, the State, which in England—then as now— included the Church of England. One young woman in attendance remarked the next day that Boyle's presentation had opened her eyes to what was really going on, and she quickly joined the Society.

And, lest anyone think that political considerations are merely code words for "Prince Tudor", it's fair to say that the great majority of papers presented at this year's Conference demonstrated how the politics of the Elizabethan era are fundamental to any thoughtful understanding of the Shakespeare problem.

In his paper on the *Funeral Elegy*, Richard Desper presented a strong case for identifying the subject of the *Elegy* as Edmund Campion, the Catholic priest ex-

ecuted for treason in 1581, which is also, he noted, one of several years in which Oxford would have had reason to remark upon his "shame". Desper believes that a youthful Oxford did write this "not too good" poem, and in his conclusion he made the astute point that the reason the subject of the elegy is so obscure is "politics". (The Campion case was so controversial that even Oxford dared not tip his hand, caught as he was in the tangled web of the Howard-Arundel affair in a highly-charged period of suspected Catholic plots.)

Roger Stritmatter explored the authorship of some of the anonymous pamphlets published during the Martin Marprelate affair (1589-90), with an emphasis on the identity of the pamphleteer "Pasquill Cavallero" as Oxford (a possibility first noted by Elizabeth Appleton). According to Roger, Oxford was thereby fulfilling the terms of his 1586 annuity, which probably involved a deal with the Queen to represent the Tudor line in political battle. He also pointed out that Marprelate's identity was not uncovered until 1976 when scholar Leland H. Carson identified him as Job Throckmorton. Politics and deep cover go hand in hand, and deep cover in this case prevailed for almost 400 years!

Mark Anderson considered the question of whether *The Tempest* is really about the Isle of England, with Sycorax a perverse reference to the dead Queen Elizabeth (a theory first proposed by a German scholar in the 19th Century), and Caliban therefore yet another vehicle for Shakespeare/Oxford to explore his obsessive theme of the lost heir, this time in a magical setting.

Pidge Sexton also concentrated on politics, taking a detailed look at the multiple layers of meaning in *As You Like It*, with the famous Alencon courtship the center of her focus. Her analysis revealed not just the obvious reference points, but obscure items such as the "bloody napkin" that Orlando sends to Rosalind (IV, iii, 93), which she identified as the symbol of the capitulatory banner of the House of Medici.

In all these cases, analysis of Shakespeare from an Oxfordian point of view inevitably leads to speculation about Oxford's political beliefs and struggles and how these might find expression in the

(Continued on page 24)

Oxfordian News:

Shakespeare performed at Hedingham Castle; new authorship documentary planned in Austria; authorship courses in Oregon

California

At the most recent Horatio Society meeting held November 16th in San Francisco, members decided to hold an "Oxford Week" at a time when Stratfordians are celebrating William Shakespeare's birthday (April 18-27). The group intends to host Charles Burford in a series of lectures, debates, and private and public presentations held throughout the Bay Area. Member Wally Hurst, a professional lobbyist and lawyer by profession, has proposed submitting a declaration to the California State Assembly to recognize Charles Burford for his efforts in promoting the Earl of Oxford as the author of the Shakespeare plays (sure to get lots of media attention!). An extensive publicity campaign will accompany all Horatio Society events with particular attention given to television, radio and print-media coverage.

Colorado

Society member Elizabeth Leigh of Denver visited England this past summer, and put together a display about the Globe Theatre for attendees at the Conference. Liz reports that future trips to England will not be complete if the Globe Theatre is not on your list of places to go. She visited the Globe in late August, and found it to be heart-stopping as well as educational.

The theatre is nearing completion, and rises on the South Bank of the Thames, just as it should, more or less opposite St. Paul's Cathedral. It is the anchor for a huge theatre complex, from rehearsal rooms to prop storage as well as a museum about the history and construction of the Globe, and educational/research departments. There is a smaller, interior theatre based on a 1624 Inigo Jones design and drawing — this, however will not be finished until 1998.

Part of the visit is an excellent tour, which includes the beginnings of the museum displays. There is some information about Shakespeare's "life", but mostly the displays are about the Globe itself. It is

stressed that this is the first half-timbered, thatched building constructed in London since the Great Fire of 1666, and that the thatch has been fire-proofed, and the building reinforced with steel and concrete as well as fitted with sprinkler systems, not to mention modern WC facilities!

This year's brief season of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* was used mainly to try out the second false stage — the original from 1995 was bad for actor and spectator alike. Over the winter the actors and builders will come together on a final stage. The brief season left some visitors, including Liz, with no plays to attend. "Alas, my timing was poor," she wrote us. "Nonetheless, seeing the Globe itself was compensation enough. I look forward to seeing a real performance in it on a return visit — talk about heart-stopping!"

Minnesota

In addition to all the Conference events scheduled at the Hotel Sofitel, there were several other happenings in and around Minneapolis before and after the main event. Charles Burford spoke at a Barnes and Noble Bookstore on Wednesday, and at the Minneapolis Public Library on Monday.

There was also media coverage before and after the Conference. Most notable was a major *Minneapolis Tribune* Op-Ed piece that appeared the Saturday following the Conference in which Professor Thomas Clayton of the University of Minnesota blasted all Oxfordians and all authorship enthusiasts in grand Stratfordian style. It was heavily laced with *ad hominem* and straw-man arguments, including ridiculing Looney's name and dragging in the JFK assassination. Conference Chairman George Anderson wrote a response which, as we go to press, the *Minneapolis Tribune* has yet to publish.

In the aftermath of Charles Boyle's illness a number of local Society members offered whatever help they could. Bill and Louis Klas of St. Paul made their home available to Bill Boyle, Charles' wife Cindy,

infant son Jack, and sister-in-law Beth Batchelder. Lisa Wilson and George Anderson also helped find several nights' lodging, and Don Weinberg (from California) chauffeured Bill and others whenever needed. A special thanks to them and everyone else who offered their help during Charles' hospital stay in the Twin Cities area.

Oregon

A six-week course in the Shakespeare Authorship is one of the new Fall offerings from the Southern Oregon State College Extended Campus Program. Instructor Carol Sue Lipman will explore the question of who really wrote the Shakespeare works, discussing the traditional point of view on behalf of the man from Stratford, as well as the alternative theories for the candidacies of Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe and Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

Austria

Austrian producer Michael Peer recently wrote us about his recent interest in the authorship question and his plans to produce a documentary about it:

Upon visiting my bank in February 1994, I came across a newspaper supplement which was free for anyone to take away.

On its cover it had the familiar First Folio image of Shakespeare. This, however, was to my immense surprise captioned "Who Was Shakespeare?"

Being always on the lookout for intriguing historical subjects (I had done five historical documentaries previously), I took the magazine home. As it turned out, it contained an article by Mr. Walter Klier, an Austrian publisher, shedding light on the Shakespeare mystery (I hadn't been aware there was one!) and revealing recent discoveries such as the Folger Shakespeare Library's Geneva Bible.

This was the first time I began to think about the subtle possibilities of the Stratford authorship and immediately I was hooked on the subject. From then, until this very day, I have been devoting all my spare time not only to reading everything on the matter, but also to

doing my own research into the authorship question. Being an entirely unprejudiced historian who only examines plain historical and, in this case, literary facts, this has led me to the irrevocable conclusion that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, is the only possible author of Shakespeare's works.

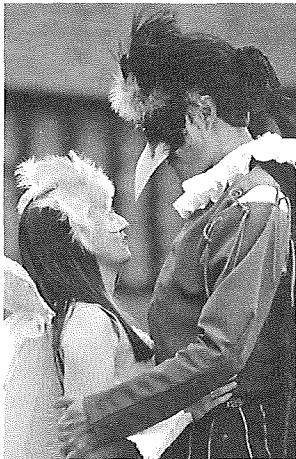
The result is a TV documentary entitled *The Shakespeare Conspiracy* which has been picked up by 3 SAT, a cultural satellite company, who are now in the process of building up co-production interest with other companies. The BBC as well as Sueddeutscher Rundfunk, Stuttgart, and WGBH Boston have been approached to that end.

Response from the former two has been favourable, whereas WGBH Boston have to date made no reply. I do, however, feel that this subject would also be of interest to an American audience, and would consequently ask anyone involved in American television to give the matter some thought.

Ideally, the film will be directed by Jim Burge, a British director who is showing great enthusiasm for it and who provided the BBC with the outstanding success of Christopher Frayling's medieval documentary series *Strange Landscape* in 1995.

Just weeks ago Sir Derek Jacobi, who recently signed the SOS authorship petition, agreed to serve as narrator for the documentary.

England



this past July with the words and music of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when a young Essex touring company by the name of "Mad Dogs & Englishmen" entertained enthusiastic audiences on two consecutive evenings.

Most of the 600 spectators picnicked on

(Continued on page 22)

John Louth Reports:

Acrostics, the wordplay form and its variations, were so hugely popular in news ephemera, literary circles and the secret officialdom of the Tudor-Stuart era that an unknown number are presumed to be still hiding in attics, old books, storage rooms. The record is packed with references to the passion of Elizabethans for the sport and art of intricate word games — acrostics, ciphers, anagrams — in ballads and poems and celebratory declarations and lovers' notes and covert insults and court plays and literary references. An unknown number of the latter are presumed undetected and unsolved.

Hymns of Astraea possibly still shelters a few such mysteries. Written by author-lawyer Sir John Davies (1569-1626), the 1599 chrestomathy presents a number of acrostics keyed to Queen Elizabeth's name. Among the examples demonstrating Shakespeare's use of this kind of wordplay is the name Asnath, a minor figure in *II Henry VI*. A transcendental devil or spirit invoked by the witch Margery Jourdain (aided by the sorcerous powers of Bolingbroke and Southwell), Asnath is ambiguous about the fate of the king, but predicts the Duke of Suffolk will suffer death by water and also warns that the Duke of Somerset must shun castles. The theory is that Shakespeare invented the name Asnath as an anagram of "Sathan", the accepted 1500's spelling of "Satan".

The poem "The absent lover in ciphers deciphering his name craveth some speedy relief as followeth" is contained in the 1573 book *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, and on the title page where the author's name traditionally appeared is the "posy", or name, "Meritum petere, grave".

The late B.M. Ward, sponsor of the 1926 limited edition of *Flowres*, found a first-line cipher in the "Absent lover" that generates the name "Edward de Vere", a clue confirming Lord Oxford as the poet who signed his verses with the posy "Meritum petere, grave."

"In this [poem]," states scholar W.W. Greg in *The Library* (December, 1926) "we are expressly told that a name is concealed, and the acrostic found is an excellent one. I should be reluctant to believe that its presence could be due to chance."

Martin Gardiner in a review for *Book World* (January 19, 1992) credits the late British words expert (and deviser of the palindrome "A Man, a plan, a canal — Panama") Leigh Mercer for the following odd (and, so far, unexplained) Shakespearean acrostics:

Consider these lines addressed to Bottom the Weaver by Queen Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (III.x)

Out of this wood do not desire to go
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou
wilt or no.

I am a spirit of no common rate;
The summer still doth tend upon my
state;

And I do love thee; therefore, go with me.
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the
deep.

The capitalized letters, reading down on the left, spell "O Titania". [Next] is a passage [the Duke of Ephesus speaking to Aegeon of Syracuse] from *The Comedy of Errors* (I.i, 142-150)

To bear the extremity of dire mishap!
Now, trust me were it not against our
laws,
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,
Which princes, would they, may not
disannul,
My soul would sue as advocate for thee.
But, though thou are adjudged to the
death,
And passed sentence may not be recall'd
But to our honour's great disparagement,
Yet will I favour thee in what I can.

Read the initial letters up from the word "My", then [reverse direction from] "My" and down for the next four letters. You get "Want my baby".

Reviewer Gardiner ends by asking, "Coincidences? Or did Shakespeare, who enjoyed wordplay as much as Joyce and Nabokov, intend both these acrostics?" (By the way, it is not generally known that both modern greats — Joyce and Nabokov — have been reported as extremely unconvinced that Stratford's Shakespeare was the poet and playwright Shakespeare.)

As You Like It, in Eva Turner Clark's analysis, contains allusions to circumstances

(Continued on page 23)

Conference Events (Continued from page 5)

Londre (University of Missouri-Kansas City) and David A. Richardson (Cleveland State University, OH) spoke to about 90 people on Saturday, October 12th.

Prof. Londre illustrated her lecture with over 50 slides showing how she came to question the Stratfordian tradition. She demonstrated eloquently that it does matter who wrote the plays and poems if individuals -and especially institutions of higher learning- really value truth. Without arguing for instant apostasy, she asked only that her audience exercise intellectual honesty and keep a mind open to the possibility that traditional views may be wrong.

With lucid commentary, she first surveyed the information we have about William Shakspeare from Stratford. Then she outlined the life of Edward de Vere, and for the remainder of her lecture linked biographical facts about Oxford to details in the works.

The result was a thoroughly informed and engaging introduction to the issue. Prof. Londre's carefully selected illustrations should appeal to a younger generation that has been reared in an audiovisual environment and her scholarly explanations should command respect from traditional academicians. A videotaped version of this presentation would usefully complement *The Shakespeare Mystery* which has appeared several times on PBS's *Frontline*.

Prof. Richardson took a different tack in showing how he uses the authorship issue to stimulate critical thinking, research methods, and both oral and written argumentation at all levels from freshmen through graduate students. He does not teach as an advocate of Oxford or of Shakspeare but rather as a disinterested inquirer who is training students in detective principles and techniques.

Part of his pedagogy is to require students from Day 1 to take an active role in original research through surveys and interviews about the authorship issue. He also teaches the components of argument: claims, premises, methods of development, criteria for evidence, fallacies, and counterargument. Although many students are initially and uncritically lured to the Oxfordian camp, he requires that everyone switch sides weekly for written work and class debates. By the time a course is about 80% complete, each student has a balanced perspective and may then choose either side to defend in a lengthy research paper.

Another aspect of Prof. Richardson's classes is using electronic resources to augment print. The World Wide Web has proved to be extremely popular with students who have grown up with joysticks and mouses in their hands. The Shakespeare Oxford Society Home Page is only their first stop among many as they branch out to other websites. Internet and individual e-

mail accounts also put them in touch with professional scholars of all stripes, so Alan Nelson and David Kathman are as likely to show up in their bibliographies as Charlton Ogburn and Richard Whalen.

One of the most dynamic experiences of Cleveland State Classes during Summer 1996 was an interactive video Conference with Richard Whalen (author of the students' textbook) and Charles Burford both speaking from Boston. A CSU student is now editing the videotapes from that Conference along with three more of independent scholar Diana Price, who has visited Prof. Richardson's classes to discuss investigative techniques and authorial evidence. Once the videotapes have been polished these resources will be available for other classes with other professors.

After eighteen months of experimentation, Prof. Richardson will teach the authorship issue again in Winter and in Summer 1997. He wants to open his classes more widely to visiting scholars and advocates of all persuasions. And he is looking for resources to host a miniconference on the authorship issue in Cleveland in late February or late July 1997.

Both professors Londre and Richardson have found that students are curious about Shakespeare, Oxford, and authorship. In their different ways, they have made stimulating and provocative inroads into the academy.

Michael York writes...

British actor Michael York, the scheduled Banquet speaker, had to cancel because of filming commitments in Paris. He wrote this letter to be read at the Banquet.

Dear Fellow Oxfordians,

Verily I say unto you how chagrined I am to have to absent myself yet again from the felicity of the Conference and the opportunity of addressing you at the Banquet. Strutting and fretting my brief hour in Paris is all very well, but I would have relished the chance of finally breaking bread with fellow enthusiasts.

I hope that the Conference is as enjoyable as it is useful and that the yet unknowing world -through such a Conference of passion and proselytizing- will soon be apprised of a self-evident, unassailable and conclusive Truth.

Meanwhile, be of good cheer and enjoy too much of a good thing!

Wishing you all veritas in de vino and de Vere.

Your absent friend,
Michael York

Speakers

Although scheduled Banquet speaker Michael York was forced to cancel his appearance for the second straight year, his role was ably filled by De Vere Society Secretary Christopher Dams, who reported on authorship events in England, and concluded with a most interesting presentation on a little-known book on the Sonnets from 1925 (Cecil Bray's *The Original Order of Shakespeare's Sonnets*).

Using the mechanical device of rhyme-links, Bray claimed to have discovered an entirely different sequence to the sonnets, one that Dams said had quite impressed him when he read it. It so impressed the audience that the few dozen handouts he made available were gobbled up in an instant. The Newsletter will provide more details on Bray's thesis in the next issue.

Joe Sobran expounded his view of the *Sonnets* at the Saturday luncheon. He identified four general views of the *Sonnets* in the critical tradition, which he termed Realist, Fictional, Agnostic and Homosexual. He claimed that the Homosexual view "has the great merit of any good theory: it makes a hundred otherwise baffling details click." His forthcoming book *Alias Shakespeare* (Free Press, April 1997) will present his views in full.

The Friday evening program "The Court of Queen Elizabeth in Shakespeare" was dealt a severe blow when Society trustee Charles Boyle, who had selected the scenes to be performed, written the program notes and agreed to be the narrator, fell ill Friday afternoon. The show went on without the narration.

Finally, featured speaker Al Austin delighted the Friday luncheon audience by regaling them with stories about the making of *The Shakespeare Mystery* and meeting the redoubtable A.L. Rowse.

He told how fellow producer Nick Rosen had to use a hefty file during tea with Rowse at the London Athenaeum to ward off the octogenarian's groping attacks upon his modesty. Rowse went on at great length about "that homo Oxford," while quoting liberally from the plays to make the point that Shakespeare, by contrast, was "abnormally heterosexual."

"I've never seen the likes of A.L. Rowse", said Austin, adding that he felt Samuel Schoenbaum was "more formidable."

In concluding, Austin said that although he still retains some skepticism, *The Shakespeare Mystery* was "the most fascinating, rewarding and important story" he had ever done. He asked the audience to join him in a toast to Charlton Ogburn, "the man most responsible for the authorship question moving from ridicule to respect."

(Reports compiled by Carol Boettger, David Richardson, Bill Boyle and Charles Burford.)

Book Reviews:

The Shakespeare Folio Handbook and Census, compiled by Harold M. Otness (Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., 1990)

by Carol Sue Lipman

During my first year in Ashland, Oregon, I had the good fortune to discover the Otness book at the Public Library. Otness was a librarian who was fascinated with the movement of the four great Folio editions of Shakespeare's plays. It is these books and how they traveled over time, and where they are today that is the focus of his study. His involvement with the Folios resulted from his work at the Southern Oregon State College library when they acquired a Second Folio of 1632 and a Fourth Folio of 1685, in 1979 and 1980 respectively. The college library in Ashland has an extensive Shakespeare collection of 6000 volumes donated by Marjorie Bailey during her years of association with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. There are many authorship books including the recent book by Richard Whalen. To follow are some fascinating facts about the Folios from the *Handbook* by Otness that impressed me. The book includes comparisons between public and private holdings as well as anecdotes on some of the more famous-owned Folios.

Eighteen plays made their first appearance in print in the Shakespeare Folio of 1623:

The Tempest
Measure for Measure
As You Like it
Twelfth Night
Henry VI, Part 1
Coriolanus
Julius Caesar
Antony and Cleopatra
King John
Two Gentlemen of Verona
Comedy of Errors
All's Well That Ends Well
The Winter's Tale
Henry VIII
Timon of Athens
Macbeth
Cymbeline
Taming of the Shrew (disputed)

These are the only copies we have today of these plays, although there are references to their earlier performances or registration

with the Revels Office. The First Folio is believed to have been sold for one pound, a considerable amount then, when a journeyman's annual income was six pounds. This luxury item, however, was successful enough to inspire three more editions in 1632, 1663-64, and 1685. The Second Folio of 1632 has an additional poem by John Milton, and the Third Folio was issued after the Restoration with both 1663 and 1664 title-pages, the latter printing in 1664 has an additional seven plays added:

Pericles Prince of Tyre
The London Prodigal
The History of Thomas Lord Cromwell
Sir John Oldcastle Lord Cobham
The Puritan Widow
A Yorkshire Tragedy
The Tragedy of Loocrine

There has been much controversy over these plays which are not thought to be as brilliant as those in the First Folio, and the consensus is often that only *Pericles* belongs to the Canon. This edition is considered the rarest as it is believed that many copies were destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The Fourth Folio from 1685 is the most common and commands the lowest price. In the eighteenth century editors started making alterations in the plays and writing extensive explanations for their so-called improvements. The first was Nicholas Rowe's edition of 1709. The trend in our century is to go back to the Folio versions. Of course, a complete set of the four Shakespeare Folios has always been considered the cornerstone of any great library, public or private.

The Otness chronology of when and how the Folios were acquired contains remarkable detail. The Boston Public Library was the first in America to acquire a set in 1873. The Library of Congress acquired their First Folio in 1889 to be followed by Pierpont Morgan who purchased his First Folio the following year for 1,000 pounds. The first census of First Folios was published by Sir Sidney Lee in 1902 where he identifies and gives numbers to 156 copies. In 1920 the Huntington Library in Pasadena opened to the public with their collection that included 29 choice Shakespeare

Folios. In 1948 the University of California system held a raffle to determine distribution of two Folios among its new campuses. UC-Davis won a Second Folio and UC Santa Barbara won a Fourth Folio. Dartmouth was the last Ivy League school to acquire a set of four Folios in 1978. More recently in 1985 Sothebys auctioned a First Folio for \$685,000 to Meisei University in Japan. In 1987 the Heritage Book Shop of Los Angeles offered for sale a Second Folio at \$35,000.

The Otness Handbook has assorted tables that include listings for public libraries, academic and private collections, distribution by states and countries. In the overall holdings worldwide, the USA is the first with 196 owned by the Folger Library in Washington, D.C. Japan is the second with 64 at Meisei University, to be followed by the Huntington, New York Public Library and Yale University. Surprisingly, England's Oxford and Cambridge Universities are in eighth and ninth place. The states with the most Folios are the District of Columbia (203), California (66) and New York (65). Public libraries with the most copies of the Folios include New York (28), Boston (6) and Buffalo (4). Special libraries at the top of the list include, of course, the Folger (196), the Huntington (29) and the Morgan Library (8). The academic libraries, top three are Yale (23), University of Texas (22) and UCLA (14).

Oxford's Bodleian Library acquired a First Folio soon after its original publication in 1623 and was probably the first library to have one. When the Third Folio was published in 1663-64 with seven additional plays, it was thought to be an improvement so the First Folio was sold and dropped out of sight for over 200 years. It was discovered in 1905 with the original Oxford binding in the family library of the Turbitts of Derbyshire. Oxford mounted a public campaign to buy it back and stave off efforts by Henry Folger, which they did for 2,800 pounds.

The Vailadoid-Folger Second Folio was long in the English College of Vailadoid in Spain. Its interest comes from the fact that it was censored in the Inquisition when it

(Continued on page 24)

Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Published quarterly by the
Shakespeare Oxford Society
P.O. Box 263
Somerville, MA. 02143

Editor: William Boyle
Editorial Board: Trudy Atkins,
Charles Boyle, Charles Burford
Stephanie Hughes, Betty Sears

Phone: (617) 628-3411
Phone/Fax: (617) 628-4258
email: everreader@aol.com

All contents copyright ©1996
Shakespeare Oxford Society

The newsletter welcomes articles, essays, commentary,
book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions
should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate,
validated by peer review. The views expressed by
contributors do not necessarily reflect those of
the Society as a literary and educational organization.

Board of Trustees Shakespeare Oxford Society

Lifetime Honorary Trustees:

Dr. Gordon Cyr

1995-1996 Board of Trustees

President
Charles Burford

Vice-President
Charles Boyle

Recording Secretary
Dr. Lydia Bronte

Membership Chairman
Randall Sherman

Treasurer
William Boyle

Timothy Holcomb
Isabel Holden
Sally Mosher
Michael Forster Pisapia
Elisabeth Sears
Aaron Tatum

From the Editor:

Who Won, and Why?

"Before I decide, Who Won, and Why?" These words were written on a renewal form returned to us a couple of weeks ago. No check, just the question. And it's a pretty good question, one that many of our members have probably been asking in the weeks since the Conference.

With the letter sent out by Stephanie Caruana just days before Minneapolis, every single member was asked to take a stance on the evolving struggle between two factions, with two very distinct points of view, within the Society. And 140 members did respond in the next five days, providing enough proxy votes at the October 12th General Meeting to re-elect the six sitting Board members, including Charles Burford, for additional 3-year terms.

So the simple answer to the question, from our point of view, is: "We won". But it is not so simple to answer the second question, "Why?", a question that really asks "What was the point of all this?" I will try to provide an answer, speaking as someone involved with the authorship debate for 17 years, indirectly involved with the Society through my brother Charles Boyle's activities for many years, and now serving as an active member and a trustee.

During these years, many individuals (members and others) have asked "Why was there no long-term plan for the growth of the Society? Why no headquarters? Why no investment plan or foundation, which would allow the Society to fund research, scholarships, etc.? Why were any decisions about changing the Society's Newsletter beyond the control of the Board of Trustees of the Society in whose name it was published?" There certainly were a number of members with the resources to make such things possible. And as one perused past Board minutes or Newsletters there was no shortage of bold talk about such things, in particular the statement of the outgoing Chairman of the Board in the Summer 1993 *Newsletter*. But up until October 1995, for reasons unknown, such talk always seemed somewhere along the line to "lose the name of action."

At the 1995 Conference in Greensboro Charles Burford, who has been paid by the Society for 5 years and has emerged as its leading spokesperson, was elected President of the Society, and I was offered, and accepted, a paid position to manage the Newsletter and put into action the prototype "new newsletter" that had first been shown to the Board at the 1994 Conference in Carmel. With several major donations targeted for publications and development in hand, the time seemed right to change the direction of the Society, and to have individuals who were being paid for their services

lead the way.

But it was also at Greensboro that many of us learned for the first time that a debt that had never appeared on the Society's books, and which was unknown even to a number of Board members, was to take precedence at this critical moment of change. How such an amount could be allowed to accrue over 5 years was in itself a major issue, let alone whether it was a legal obligation of the Society or not. Because legal or not, the alleged debt could be—and has been—used as leverage against the Society.

So began 1996, with the Board seriously split due to some old grudges and battles among long-serving members, as well as over a debt that both recent and some older members felt had been "sprung" on them at a key moment of change, and which was then presented to the Board in a "pay me or I'll sue" ultimatum. It was in this charged climate that trustees expelled Mr. Price from the Board rather than cave in to scare tactics, and this in turn led to the showdown in Minneapolis.

And the pity of it all is that during 1996 major progress has been made in transforming both the Society and the manner in which the authorship debate is conducted. The revised Newsletter is attempting to cover all aspects of the authorship issue. Paid membership increased by nearly 40%, due in no small part, we believe, to the new Newsletter. There is also a business and fundraising plan in place, headed by a professional fundraiser, and the prospects of having a generous member provide a headquarters is about to become a reality. By the 1997 Conference in Seattle we will know if these initiatives, begun at Greensboro and ratified by the vote in Minneapolis, will bear fruit or not.

So far the signs are that they will. The vision that Charles Burford presented to members in the Spring *Newsletter* is already beginning to happen. The payments to Burford over the years, and to me this past year, have been, in effect, an investment that will soon pay off. This is how the rest of the world operates, even non-profit organizations. Money well spent will bring in new money. Money badly spent will bring only debt and stagnation.

That is why we can say to our members that every single member of this Society "won" on October 12, 1996. And we fully expect that in another year this Society can begin doing what must be its primary mission: fund research, scholarships, projects, local chapter activities, and most importantly, publicize the issue. None of this would be possible without the battle that has just been fought.

We look forward to the Seattle Conference and the progress reports that will be made there.

Letters:

To the Editor:

As a member of the SOS I am writing to commend you for the Summer issue of the *Newsletter*. I thought it a really interesting and purposeful work. All the articles were well done and very much to the point.

I regret that for business reasons I was unable to attend the Conference in Minneapolis. I have heard some "replays" of the business meeting, but hope that the current internecine struggle can now be put to rest so that Charles Burford and the Board can move ahead.

William Paul Blair
Pasadena CA
25 October 1996

To the Editor:

It certainly is important to have a mission statement for the Society. However I would argue against asking people to commit to establishing a belief, but rather to establishing acceptance of an hypothesis. A belief, i.e. that the Earl of Oxford wrote the works of Shakespeare, reinforces the sense that the facts are unknowable, or at least, unlikely to be known, and thus that it can be through belief alone that he will be accepted as the author; which takes the proposition of his authorship into the realm of ideology; which, I would argue, is exactly the realm from which we hope to remove it. On the other hand, if we ask people to commit to an hypothesis, such as the possibility that the Earl of Oxford may

be the true author, the emphasis is removed from the realm of ideology to that of science. We are then directed to persuade acceptance of an intellectual possibility, not an emotional belief.

In science, hypothesis is the traditional stepping stone to theory; which is, itself, still a long way from proven fact. An hypothesis says neither "yea" or "nay," but "perhaps" or "consider this." It is the only possible meeting ground for opposite, or widely divergent views of a question; it is an invitation to further inquiry. An hypothesis raises hope that the authorship question can be solved not from belief alone but from proof.

And since the only path to proof is intensive digging through archives, with full publication and open-minded deliberation on the uncovered documents, it acknowledges that this process must include the academic establishment, not because they are the only ones qualified to do so, but for the very practical reason that they are the only ones free to do intensive scholarly work on a regular basis in connection with the work that keeps their bread on the table. Their compliance must be won if we are ever to get the full story out. There are scholars of good will within the academic community, and they will not be won by polemics or leaps of faith, but they may very well be won by a request to consider an interesting possibility. Alan Nelson has shown that there is a great deal of material out there relating to Oxford. It has not been unearthed heretofore because those with the time and the training to do it haven't been interested, and those who

have been interested for the most part haven't had the training or the time.

To strive for public and academic acceptance of an hypothesis offers the hope that we can achieve a public discussion rather than a war of polemics, and that students of Shakespeare currently attending universities who are considering an academic career and who are interested in the Oxfordian hypothesis, can hope to be accepted as they climb the academic ladder to positions which will give them the power to do in-depth Oxfordian research, a situation which is manifestly not the case at present. At present, we have had many assurances in confidence that to reveal a bias towards Oxford would be career suicide for an academic of standing. If we ask academia to open its doors, not to the fact that Oxford was Shakespeare, but to the possibility that he might have been, they will be less likely to refuse to deal with the issue, and thus academics who are already interested in Oxford may find it possible to come out of the closet. In addition, those who snub or mock an even-handed request of this nature will be clearly seen as having a greater fear for their positions than they have love for the truth.

Truth to tell, we do not know that Oxford was Shakespeare, not in the same way that we know the earth is round. It is far from proven; there are many anomalies yet unexplained, and when we appear to claim that it is proven we risk appearing to the uncommitted either foolish or misguided. True, the pieces of the puzzle that we do have fit together very neatly for the most part, but we need more pieces of the puzzle than we have at present. Thanks to Alan Nelson we have considerably more of those missing pieces than we did a year ago, since, in spite of his claims to the contrary, he has discovered a great deal about the man who (we believe) wrote Shakespeare. He also inspires us with hope that we're only at the beginning of a long trail of discovery. With an Oxfordian Alan Nelson, or even better an Oxfordian Charles Nicholls, and with the kind of diligence that has been devoted in the past to finding every possible scrap of information on the Stratford man focused on uncovering and publishing all documents relevant to Oxford's life, and the lives of his friends

(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
P.O. Box 263
Somerville, MA 02143
Phone: (617)628-3411
Phone/Fax: (617)628-4258

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:

IRS No. 13-6105314; New York 07182

Letters (Continued from page 21)

and lovers, and of the writers, actors, and musicians that inspired and assisted him, we may get, if not the full story, certainly a much fuller, richer one than we have pieced together so far. And we, as well as the Stratfordians, may be in for some very interesting surprises.

Stephanie Hughes
Portland OR
20 October 1996

Oxfordian News (Continued from page 17)

the greensward as the golden summer twilight slanted across the tree-rimmed meadows, and swifts darted overhead to their nests in the tower of Hedingham Castle.

Welcoming the crowds to the castle grounds were the Hon. Thomas and Mrs. Lindsay, de Vere descendants and owners of the castle since 1981. Under their caring administration the grounds are beautifully kept and well laid out for recreational purposes. The new dimension of a Shakespeare play performed in this unique setting gave obvious pleasure to the Lindsays and their guests.

This was a company of skilled performers under good direction, and with an energetic impresario to boot. The enterprising and talented Ann Courtney established the company only last year; she is its artistic director and starred as Hermia in this production. Licensing for the July 96 performances was arranged by the administrator of Hedingham Castle, Diana Donoghue, who then enlisted local De Vere Society member Simon Daw as chief organizer.

Dauntless Simon brought in ten stewards to handle the castle gate, parking, crowd control and emergency arrangements. This teamwork set a fine precedent and appears to have created popular demand for future performances.

Ms. Courtney's players, chiefly Equity professionals, had commissioned original techno music by Piers Gordon which set the tone for magic, mischief and romance. Switches in character style ranging from historical to allegorical to magical to contemporary were reflected in the costumes, which ran the gamut from Oberon in traditional Elizabethan velvet cloak with bird-beak mask and fancifeathers, to Titania in

(Continued on page 23)

The Blue Boar

Books and Publications

Book Dedications to the Earl of Oxford. A compendium of dedications gathered from contemporary literature. Edited by Katherine Chiljan. Item 127 \$20.00

The de Veres of Castle Hedingham. A Comprehensive Biography of all 20 Earls of Oxford with emphasis on the 17th. By Verily Anderson. Item 122 \$35.00

The Elizabethan Review. A Scholarly Oxfordian Journal. Editor: Gary Goldstein. Two issues per year. Item 125 \$35.00 (individuals); \$45.00 (institutional, US); \$55 (overseas). Back issues are available directly from the publisher.

A Hawk from a Handsaw. A Student Guide to the Authorship Question. By Rollin de Vere. Item 129 \$10.00

The Mysterious William Shakespeare, The Myth and the Reality. Revised 2nd Edition. By Charlton Ogburn, Jr. Item 121 \$37.50

The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History. (2nd edition) By Michael H. Hart. The entry for no.31 ("William Shakespeare" in the first edition) now reads "Edward de Vere, better known as 'William Shakespeare'." Item 128 \$18.95

Oxford's Revenge: Shakespeare's Dramatic Development from Agamemnon to Hamlet. By Stephanie Caruana and Elisabeth Sears. Item SP1. \$7.50

Shakespeare and the Tudor Rose. by Elisabeth Sears. Item SP3. \$12.50

The Shakespeare Controversy: An Analysis of the Claimants, their Champions & Detractors. Includes a Chronological Annotated Bibliography. By Warren Hope and Kim Holston. Item 124 \$25.00

"Shakespeare" Identified in Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford. by J. Thomas Looney. Paperback facsimile reprint of the 1920 edition. Item SP4. \$20.00

Shakespeare: Who Was He? The Oxford Challenge to the Bard of Avon. By Richard Whalen. Item 123 \$19.95

Spear-Shaker Review. Set of the 5 issues published in 1980's by Stephanie Caruana. Item SP2 \$20.00

Gifts

Lapel pin: The Blue Boar 1 1/2" blue on gold. Item 130 \$15.00

Lapel pin: The Oxford Shield 1/2" red and white on gold. Item 131 \$10.00

Lapel pin: The Oxford Shield 1" red and white on gold. Choose from "Shake-Speare" or "Vero Nihil Verius" beneath the shield. Item 132 \$10.00

Photographs of Castle Hedingham. Two full color photographs of the ancestral home of the De Veres. One exterior and one interior. Item 133 \$4.50

Leather book mark. "Castle Hedingham" and the "Oxford shield" or "The Shake-Speare Oxford Society / Vero Nihil Verius" with "shield and Bulbeck crest". Gold design on your choice of maroon, blue, or black. Item 134 \$3.00

Window decal. Round, 3-color. "Shakespeare Oxford Society" with the Oxford escutcheon. Item 135 \$3.00

Coffee mug. Oxford escutcheon and De Vere's ancestral titles, 4-color. Item 101 \$12.00

Beer mug. 14 oz. ceramic mug, 4-color, with the Oxford escutcheon and De Vere's ancestral titles. Item 102 \$15.00

T-shirts. Top quality all-white 100% cotton, imprinted with 6-color Oxford escutcheon and "Shakespeare Oxford Society". Item 103 Sizes S, M, L, XL. \$16.00 Item 104 Size XXL \$17.00.

Sweat Shirts. Same design as T-shirt. White only Item 105 Sizes M L XL \$25.00

Stationery

Christmas cards. Choose from "Wassail at Castle Hedingham" in gold on red, folded, inside blank; or "Santa at the Globe" in black on white.

Item 115 Wassail design. 12 cards, 12 envelopes. \$25.00

Item 116 Wassail design. 24 cards, 24 envelopes. \$50.00

Item 117 Santa design. 10 cards, 10 envelopes. \$10.00

Oxfordian Note Pads. The St. Albans portrait of Oxford in upper left corner, and underneath "Earl of Oxford." Buff only. 50 sheets per pad. Item 120 \$2.00 each

	Item	Price
Name: _____	_____	_____
Address: _____	_____	_____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____	_____	_____
Check enclosed: _____ Credit Card: MC _____ Visa _____	Subtotal:	_____
Card number: _____	10% member discount:	_____
Exp. date: _____	Subtotal:	_____
	P&H, books (\$1.00 each):	_____
	P&H (per order):	\$ 2.50
	Grand Total:	_____

Mail to:
Shakespeare Oxford Society, Blue Boar,
PO Box 263, Somerville MA 02143

Oxfordian News (Continued from page 22)

orange-heeled mod boots and pink wings, Helena in a 1990s black business suit, and Puck as a leather-suited rockstar. This unconventional costume contrast might have been confusing, yet it had its own rationale and seemed even more effective on second viewing.

The overall verdict was applause for a fresh, vigorous and effective play, true to the Shakespeare text. Essex journalist and drama critic R.G. Ashworth commended the direction of the play as intuitive and, above all, entertaining.

Lee Young

**Support the
Shakespeare
Oxford Society
and save money at the same time!**

Subscribe to ATCO's long-distance
phone service for 30-50% savings
on your monthly phone bill,
and...

ATCO will contribute 8% of *all*
your total ATCO long distance
billing to the Society, every month!

Call 1-617-628-3411 for further details

Louther (Continued from page 17)

and personages figuring in Queen Elizabeth's promise to her subjects in November 1581 that she would become the bride of the Duke of Alencon, brother of Henry III, King of France. Mrs. Clark asserts that *AYLI*'s late Sir Rowland de Bois is Shakespeare's simulacrum of Henry II. Once a Valois king of France, Henry II dies after sustaining a head wound in a 1559 jousting tournament, and Mrs. Clark underscores an important wordplay resonance in connection with Shakespeare's invented character the late French king: "[T]here is a suggestive similarity," she writes, "between the names 'Valois' and 'de Bois'," and then, continuing her reasoning by footnote, she writes: "Orlando is an anagram of Roland. Furthermore, the first two syllables of Alencon and Orlando are pronounced practically the same." (*Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays*, p. 508).

And of course we mustn't overlook the highly debated point of Shakespeare's use of "very", "ever", "green-vert" in relation to the influence of the era's widespread enthusiasm for intricate wordplay. Does the suppressed ego that so often called on this trio of modifiers indicate the author of the poems and plays: Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford?

Board votes changes in member dues

In a special telephone conference meeting of the Board of Trustees, two changes in member dues were proposed and approved, effective with renewals and new memberships for 1997.

First, the Teacher membership category was eliminated. Teachers will now pay regular dues of \$35. This is a change that has been under consideration for some time, and the Board felt that in most cases our teacher members were enjoying a difference in annual dues which they could easily afford compared to students.

The other change was to set a separate dues schedule for overseas members. This is in keeping with how all other organizations and publications handle the extra costs of mailing overseas. The current dues schedule was retained for the US and Canada, while overseas memberships will now cost: \$25.00 (student), \$45.00 (regular), and \$60.00 (family/sustaining).

The Board trusts that members will understand the rationale behind these changes. If you have any questions, please contact William Boyle at (617)628-3411.

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 in the US and Canada are \$15.00 (student); \$35.00 (regular); \$50.00 (family or sustaining). Overseas memberships are \$25.00 (Students), \$45.00 (regular) and \$60.00 (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>

We can accept payment by MasterCard or Visa in addition to checks. The Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. Donations and memberships are tax deductible (IRS no. 13-6105314; New York no. 07182). Clip or xerox this form and mail to: The Shakespeare Oxford Society, PO Box 263, Somerville MA 02143 Phone: (617)628-3411 Fax: (617)628-4258

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Check enclosed _____ or: Credit Card: MasterCard _____ Visa _____

Name exactly as it appears on card: _____

Card No.: _____ Exp. date: _____

Signature _____

Membership: (check one)

_____ New _____ Renewal _____

Category: (check one)

_____ Student (\$15; \$25 overseas)

(School: _____)

_____ Regular (\$35; \$45 overseas)

_____ Sustaining/Family (\$50;
\$60 overseas)

Lipman (Continued from page 19)

apparently arrived there. Offending lines were crossed out of 17 of the 36 plays. These offending parts concerned popes, priests and Catholic doctrine. Twelve leaves were completely removed from *Measure for Measure*. However, other potentially offending material went unnoticed. Sidney Lee described the volume in 1922. In 1928 Henry Folger purchased it from the English College in Spain for 1,000 pounds. It is sometimes displayed at the Folger Library.

The greatest single sale of Shakespeare texts was the Rosenbach sale of 68 Quartos and four Folios to the Swiss collector Martin Bodmer in 1951. It was widely reported in the popular press and brought \$1,000,000. In keeping with the public event, a farewell party for the books was given on January 21, 1952, which was attended by authorities and celebrities alike, including Margaret Truman. Central to the event was a cake decorated to resemble a First Folio. It is not reported who cut the cake.

There are many more tidbits awaiting you in the *Otness Shakespeare Folio Handbook and Census*.

Conference (Continued from page 15)

plays. Such speculation, though inescapable, is nevertheless bound to be controversial, the more so because it is based on an unproven assumption, whether that assumption be "Oxford is Shakespeare", "Southampton is Oxford's son" or anything in between. The question is: should it be condemned? And, if so, can those who have left Stratfordian orthodoxy well and truly behind them be expected to forego the opportunity of exploring all avenues of meaning?

At the 1987 Moot Court Debate in Washington D.C., Justice John Paul Stevens said that Oxfordians had to present a "concise, coherent theory" of the hows and whys of the authorship problem before they could make further progress. Later, in his 1992 *Pennsylvania Law Review* article "The Shakespeare Canon of Statutory Construction", he spoke of Queen Elizabeth's possible role in an "imaginative conspiracy", thus acknowledging his own progress towards such a theory. But his 1987 observation remains a key point when considering the tactics of the debate.

The political dilemma that faces us

today, as we reach for that elusive "concise, coherent theory" (a sort of Oxfordian unified field theory), is this: how do we avoid alienating the already skeptical public we are trying to reach, while at the same time allowing a free rein to thinkers and researchers to explore all avenues of the case for Oxford, however unsettling their conclusions and however public their disagreements? At all events, we must remember that, whatever the truth of the story, a great deal of effort was expended 400 years ago to misrepresent that truth for political reasons. It would be fatal to allow today's politics to compound the problem.

So while it is certainly true that Stratfordian scholars may ridicule some Oxfordian theories, Oxfordians must eventually ask themselves whether or not we are in charge of our own destiny, and whether looking over our shoulders at Stratfordians is tantamount to letting one's opponent dictate the terms of the debate. Those who cannot yet bring themselves to pack up and leave Stratford town should not be the ones to pass judgment on the findings of those seeking to pioneer the true Oxfordian dawn.

The Editors

Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

**P. O. Box 263
Somerville MA 02143
Address correction requested**

U.S. Postage
PAID
Boston MA
Permit No. 53235
Bulk Rate

Inside this issue:

20th Annual Conference: page 1
Oxford's Metamorphoses: page 1
Shakespeare and the Fair Youth: page 6
Update on Oxford's Bible: page 8
Oxfordian News: page 16
Book Reviews: page 19
