



The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



Vol.34: no.4

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

Winter 1999

22nd Annual Conference Report

San Francisco hosts record Oxfordian turnout

The Society's 22nd Annual Conference in San Francisco last November set several records. There were about 145 attendees overall, including many complimentary guests, and the entertainment was eye-catching, as was the famous, glamorous Clift Hotel. But as members have recently learned in a letter from new Society President Aaron Tatum there was a price to be paid for some of this glamour, as a serious deficit resulted (see page 20 for some further discussion of this matter and Aaron Tatum's presidency).

Nonetheless, for those attending it was an eventful, fulfilling three days in the Bay area, with Oxfordians from around the US and England on the scene, and, as usual, some interesting, provocative papers presented, and, on the final day, an eye-opening panel discussion on the ever-elusive goal of a "Unified Authorship Theory."

Another major event during the weekend was the premier of Alan Hovey's play *Aye, Shakespeare!* at the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre in San Francisco. The Marin Shakespeare Company was contracted to produce the play, a one-man show in which Edward de Vere speaks of his life and his times. Noted British actor Rob Clare starred, and his performance received a standing ovation.

The play was followed by a public discussion on Shakespeare and the authorship issue, led by moderator Peter Robinson, with panelists Lord Charles Burford, Katherine Chiljan and Randall Sherman (all trustees of the Shakespeare Oxford Society) also participating.

The Marin production followed an "out-of-town" tryout earlier in the week at the Eclectic Theatre Festival in Petaluma. Two staged readings of the play preceded the San
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Teaching the next generation that Oxford was Shakespeare

*How educator Robert Barrett is shaking up
the status quo in the state of Washington*

by Roger Stritmatter



"Hollywood's the thing..."

Cate Blanchet (left) in Elizabeth and Judi Dench (right) in Shakespeare In Love have treated moviegoers to two portrayals of Queen Elizabeth in two movies that take modern audiences back to the Elizabethan era. Can such films be of help to those of us engaged in the Shakespeare authorship debate? Well, yes. See pages 4-5.

Robert Barrett Jr.'s essay, "Shakespeare Meets Robert Frost" seems destined to remain an underground classic. The essay recounts Barrett's experience teaching the de Vere story to eager students at Central Kitsap Junior High in Silverdale, Washington. "Something there is," writes Barrett—quoting Frost—in that essay, "that doesn't love a wall. When I finished reading *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, by Charlton Ogburn Jr., something there was within me that didn't love the wall that hid the true Shakespeare."

After reading Ogburn in 1990, Barrett brought his iconoclasm into the classroom and soon found that his students were as inspired by the Shakespeare inquiry as he had been when first reading Ogburn.

"As a layman, newly introduced to a difficult subject, I responded to my reading in a way that was undoubtedly visceral—just in part, though, a small part. The larger part—I submit—was intellectual. I looked for reason, plausibility, evidence, and conviction in Ogburn's words, and I found those qualities much more often present in the book than absent."

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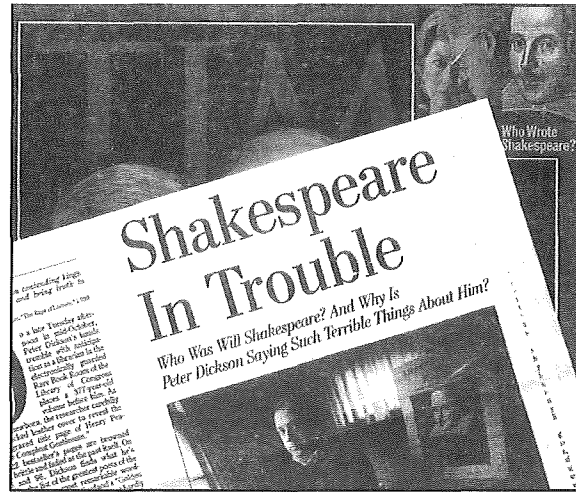
Shakespeare Everywhere

It's been hard to miss these past few months. Shakespeare has become fashionable, and—of much greater importance—newsworthy and saleable. Two mainstream Hollywood movies about Shakespeare and about Elizabeth (see our story, pages 4-5) are reaching millions.

In the print media Shakespeare stories are also popping up more frequently, propelled in part by these recent movies, and also certainly by the numerous film adaptations of the plays (with eight more to come in the next 1-2 years!). The films have brought forth such Shakespearean luminaries as Prof. Stephen Greenblatt writing in *The New York Times* op-ed pages (February 6th)—confessing that *SIL* co-screenwriter Marc Norman once approached him for ideas about how to tell the story of Shakespeare's life when so little is known. Yes, indeed, a tough problem.

The heightened media attention on both Shakespeare and the authorship really began in earnest last November with the publication in *Science* magazine of Dr. Eric Altschuler's "Searching for Shakespeare in the Stars." Dr. Altschuler presented his thesis—that there are no references to any post-1604 astronomical discoveries in the Shakespeare Canon—at the Society's San Francisco Conference (see page seven). The 1604 date, of course, is a perfect fit for postulating Oxford as Shakespeare. The article did generate a fair amount of main-

stream media coverage, indicating perhaps a strong awareness of the authorship issue just beneath the surface, and perhaps also a readiness to "pounce" on anything that



might constitute new, decisive evidence in resolving the authorship debate.

Then in December Shakespeare was voted "Man of the Millennium" in a BBC Radio 4 poll in Great Britain. This prompted Richard Malim to write "They haven't got the Will" in the *Spectator*, letting his readers know the true identity of the Briton of the Millennium—Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

Also in December personalities such as academic Harold Bloom (*Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*—reviewed on page

18) and screenwriter Tom Stoppard (*Shakespeare In Love*) appeared on the Charlie Rose TV interview show in the same week last December, talking about their respective projects. And naturally there were questions about the authorship asked of both of them (though, unfortunately, both were quite dismissive of it).

But amidst it all, we are happy to report—despite the likes of a Bloom or a Stoppard—the Shakespeare authorship story seems to be attracting more and more attention, and is perhaps also taking off into the same stratosphere.

Of primary interest was the one-two punch of major authorship stories that appeared in *The Washington Post* on January 24th, followed three weeks later by a two-page spread in the February 15th *Time* magazine (with a small box on the front page asking, "Who Wrote Shakespeare?") By the time members have received this issue of the newsletter, the biggest story of them all will be on the newsstands, a major treatment of the issue by *Harper's Magazine* (see box below).

In all three instances, it is the Oxfordian thesis that is being promoted as the most viable alternative to the Stratford story.

The *Post* story was about Peter Dickson and his recent research, much of which has been presented to our readers in the last two newsletters. Dickson tells us that the response to the article has been overwhelm-

Harper's Up Next

Harper's Magazine has undertaken a major review of the Shakespeare authorship question.

Five Oxfordians and five Stratfordians have written articles for a "folio," as *Harper's* calls it, to be featured on the cover of the upcoming April issue. Four of the Oxfordians are contributors to the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*.

The Oxfordian writers are Mark Anderson, journalist and columnist for the society newsletter; Tom Bethell, Washington correspondent for *The American Spectator* and author of several books; Joe Sobran, syndicated columnist and author of *Alias Shakespeare*; Professor Daniel Wright of Concordia University, organizer of the Edward de Vere Studies Conference and the author of *The Anglican Shakespeare*; and Rich-

ard F. Whalen, society past president and author of *Shakespeare: Who Was He?*

The Stratfordians are Professor Jonathan Bate of Liverpool University, author of *The Genius of Shakespeare* (reviewed in the Fall 1998 newsletter); Professor Harold Bloom of Yale and New York University, author of *Shakespeare: the Invention of the Human*; Professor Marjorie Garber of Harvard, author of several books on Shakespeare; Irvin Matus, author of *Shakespeare, In Fact*; and Professor Gail Kern Paster of George Washington University, editor of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, the leading Shakespeare journal.

Bethell and Matus are making repeat appearances in a debate format in a literary magazine. They squared off eight years ago in a cover spread in *The Atlantic Monthly* called "Looking for Shakespeare."

The *Atlantic Monthly* articles of 1991, the

PBS *Frontline* "The Shakespeare Mystery," broadcast three times since 1989 in prime time, and now the recent *Time* magazine article are all part of a continuing process over the past ten years to give the case for Oxford as the true author the broadest national communication since Looney identified Oxford as Shakespeare in 1920. The *Harper's* folio, totaling more than 20,000 words written by ten contributors, should stimulate even more interest in the subject.

Nearly sixty years ago *Harper's* carried an article claiming to refute the case for Oxford. Prof. Oscar James Campbell of Columbia wrote the 1940 article, which was largely a response to Charles Wisner Barrell's Ashbourne portrait article in the *Scientific American*. At the time *Harper's* refused to give any Oxfordian writers an opportunity to reply. So the times and editors have changed, and now the balance is redressed.

ingly positive (after tallying phone calls and letters that he and *Post* writer Don Oldenburg have received to date, plus the letters to the editor).

The *Time* article was, in part, a direct result of the exposure resulting from the *Post* article. While the article took no position, most readers could detect a clear pro-authorship, pro-Oxford subtext in it. Whatever the response to the *Time* article, we must note that just the fact that *Time* would put this story on its cover and delve into details of the debate is news. (However, it is also of some note that the international edition of the magazine *did not carry* the authorship story, although it is available worldwide on the *Time* website.)

For comparison, in the same week *Newsweek* also ran a major Shakespeare story, built on the success of *Shakespeare in Love*, but this newsweekly took the more conventional path of trashing the authorship in one dismissive sentence (“...[the lack of facts about the Bard] has allowed wackos and worthies to develop elaborate theories—such as the notion that Shakespeare didn’t write Shakespeare’s plays.”)

Back to *Time*, the manner in which they handled Letters to the Editor about the article (March 8th issue) seemed almost at odds with their original decision to publish an article on something so controversial, for *they chose to print not a single letter*, but instead opted for a highlighted box in the midst of the letters section in which they report there were a number of letters, but only tell their readers of several. Letters touting Marlowe and Bacon as the author are mentioned, and a concluding letter is cited stating that, since Oxfordians had lost in two mock courts (the judges supposedly finding Shakespeare the “unquestioned author”[!]) then the only conclusion must be (according to that letter writer): “De Vere’s claim just doesn’t hold up under scrutiny.”

In other words, letter writers were not allowed to speak for themselves—pro or con—about the authorship debate, but instead a clear anti-Oxfordian statement (i.e. “editorial statement?”) was made in lieu of printing letters. And of course, no mention of how many letters all told came in, let alone how many were anti-Stratfordian. Maybe someone at *Newsweek* gave them a call.

In any event, it promises to be an interesting year in authorship studies. The Spring Newsletter will carry an expanded report on all these media happenings. —W. Boyle

Journal Review

Yes, But, is Authorship Dead?

The Folger reports on George Greenwood vs. Mark Twain

by Richard F. Whalen

Mark Twain’s marginalia in a book by Sir George Greenwood on the authorship question and Greenwood’s marginalia in a book by Twain on the same subject are the occasion for some post-modernist ruminations in the Winter 1998 issue of the *Shakespeare Quarterly* (“Sir George Greenwood’s Marginalia in the Folger Copy of Mark Twain’s *Is Shakespeare Dead?*” by Michael D. Bristol).

The ruminations by Professor Michael D. Bristol of McGill University are meant to be amusing, mostly at Twain’s expense. Carelessly, Twain and his publisher printed a whole chapter from Greenwood’s book without adequate attribution in Twain’s *Is Shakespeare Dead?* Curiously, along the way, Professor Bristol gets a number of key facts wrong in this case of the criss-crossing marginalia.

The facts of the matter, which are of continuing interest to Oxfordians, are as follows. Mark Twain in his later years resumed writing and dictating his autobiography, which are really more random reminiscences. He needed money and expected to sell them as articles. In 1909, the year before he died, he published his last book, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* It was subtitled “From My Autobiography.” The slim volume argues that Will Shakspeare of Stratford was not the author of Shakespeare’s works.

The core of Twain’s argument is drawn on his own experience as a riverboat pilot and his reading of Greenwood’s *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, which had just been published. Greenwood, a British lawyer and member of Parliament, cited Shakespeare’s accurate knowledge of the law and noted that Will Shakspeare did not study law, therefore he could not be the poet/dramatist Shakespeare. Twain agreed. He cited his experience that no one who had not been a riverboat pilot could write about that experience accurately and convincingly.

Twain admired Greenwood and marked up his copy of Greenwood’s book. But carelessly or inadvertently he violated copy-

right law by lifting a whole chapter from Greenwood’s book and putting it in his own. He cited the book’s title but not Greenwood’s name. The style of the text is clearly not Twain’s, but the casual reader might not notice that, nor the fact that Greenwood’s chapter is set in slightly smaller type.

Greenwood got a copy of Twain’s book and noted in its margins that Twain did not get permission to reprint his chapter. “And without mentioning my name!” Greenwood exclaims. He threatened to sue, and in a later printing the publisher added at the end of Twain’s book two full-page advertisements for two of Greenwood’s books, the one Twain had seemingly plagiarized and *In re Shakespeare Problem*. Each ad included many laudatory “press opinions.” Thus ended a curious if minor contretemps between an anti-Stratfordian who was America’s greatest writer and one of England’s greatest anti-Stratfordians.

Professor Bristol makes several errors in his ultra-arch attempt to make fun of Mark Twain, errors especially strange for one trying to understand what Twain was up to. In the first paragraph he accuses Twain of being misleading when he sub-titled the book “From My Autobiography.” He says that “no such text exists.” But it does exist. Editions were published in 1924 and 1959, and a third, partial edition in 1998. Much of Bristol’s article derives from this apparent ignorance of Twain’s lengthy autobiography.

He finds it “very strange” that Twain would make the authorship question the central topic of his “autobiography.” But Twain’s text in *Is Shakespeare Dead?* was drawn from his manuscript autobiography, which took up two volumes in the 1924 edition.

He apparently does not know that Twain’s publisher added the two full-page advertisements for Greenwood’s books in a later printing. He never mentions them.

Bristol also misreads part of Twain’s main argument. Twain’s skepticism, he says, was prompted by Shakespeare’s “uncon-

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Hollywood's the thing...

Public's Elizabethan consciousness piqued by new films

by Gerit Quealy

Hooray for Hollywood. Or, more accurately, independent filmmakers. And who better to support, albeit unwittingly, independent thinkers such as Oxfordians, than independent movers and shakers operating outside the conventional system. To wit, we have been treated in recent months to two films in wide release that cover our favorite topic and time period, namely *Elizabeth* and *Shakespeare in Love*.

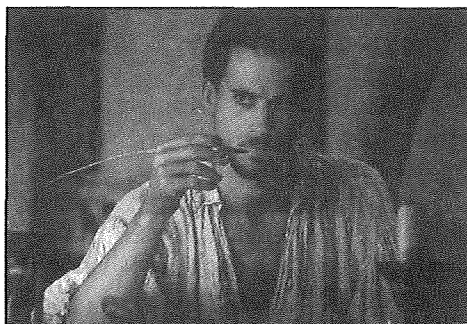
On the surface, an Oxfordian, being informed of two largely Stratfordian offerings of this topic, may be his usual disgruntled self. Why should we bother with or even endorse stories that further the Stratfordian myth? But I aver that this situation requires a closer and more perspicacious look.

In Love with Shakespeare

Of the two films, it is *Shakespeare in Love* that has reached the widest audience and level of popular appeal. Scripted by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, the latter a leading contemporary playwright and master of double and triple entendres himself, a wonderfully romantic and adventurous yarn regales us with how Shakespeare came to write *Romeo & Juliet*. Imagine! Positing a story where Shakespeare was inspired to write his plays based on events in his life! Complete with historic backdrop, practiced signatures, Marlovian contribution and yet another Elizabeth, this time older, wiser and in the person of the inimitable Judi Dench, the film introduces many of the players and theories of the Oxfordian argument in an entertaining and non-threatening forum (see the box on page 5 for some examples of "authorship" talking points).

With *Shakespeare in Love* we are afforded numerous opportunities for Oxfordian exposition. Supposedly Stratfordian screenwriter Tom Stoppard denies being compelled by the authorship debate, although he does admit to having perused *No Bed for Bacon*, and earlier days when he pondered the alternative theories of Bacon and Marlowe, before dismissing it as groundless. Presumably this was around the time he wrote the witty *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. But one wonders how thoroughly these theories were dismissed when considering his more recent and brilliant play, *Arcadia* (instrumental in this writer

becoming an Oxfordian). One of the themes this multi-faceted play covers is truth over time and, in that ever-widening gulf, the mistakes and misinterpretations that are its pitfalls. If this is a prevailing concern, can the impact of authorship questions lurk somewhere in the recesses of his cantilevered mind?



With Joseph Fiennes appearing in both films, as our hero Will Shakespeare (top) in Shakespeare in Love, and as the Virgin Queen's lover Sir Robert Dudley in Elizabeth (below, opposite Cate Blanchett as Elizabeth), the two movies can play into theories of "our" writer possibly being one of her lovers.

One critic called Mr. Stoppard an autodidact and, on the surface, his lack of formal education could lead one to believe he'd champion the conventional Stratfordian story. But his is not a conventional mind and knowing, as he must, the amount of time and effort expended to amass his wealth of knowledge, it is difficult to imagine him supporting such an incomprehensible tale. Certainly one aspect of *Arcadia* is giving credit where credit is due. Could this have led Mr. Stoppard, in his Golden Globe acceptance speech, to thank "the onlie begetter, Mr. W. H."? Like Shakespeare, Mr. Stoppard seems to choose his words very carefully and deliberately, so why did he say THAT? It's a mystery.

In fact, that line, "It's a mystery" is

sprinkled liberally throughout the film when questions of "how" and "why" arise. Perhaps pointing up the fact that a mystery does exist?

What is a bit of a mystery is the genesis of the film. The original story, reports screenwriter Marc Norman, was suggested to him by his son. One can only sympathize with the boy's frustration at the traditional story given in school that apparently led him to ask his father to fill in the gaps. Obviously any story is better than no story at all.

And this is certainly resoundingly echoed in the applause *Shakespeare in Love* has garnered from audiences. Fully 400 years later, the public is still hungry for an explanation of how all this came about—how these plays came to be written.

The Virgin Queen?

While *Shakespeare in Love* uses fiction to fill in the most famous blank spot in literary history—Shakespeare's life—Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth* uses historical drama to look beneath the surface of an existing life story.

Elizabeth tells the story of Elizabeth I's early reign, from the events that immediately led up to her ascension to the throne to the initial turmoil and political intrigue she faced in trying to establish a respected and stable monarchy. It is based upon historical fact, but as the medium of film is wont to do, timelines are compressed, personalities are altered, events are fiddled with or fabricated altogether for dramatic impact and clarity as the story is folded into two hours traffic on the screen. Although strict historians—especially Oxfordians—may take umbrage with such liberties, we have more cause for celebration than derision.

Of special note is how *Elizabeth* spares us the accusation of tearing down yet another cultural icon when the filmmakers depict her making love with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Thus, the myth of the Virgin Queen as an actual physical description is ignored altogether. In addition to this, we have Lord Burghley demanding to see her sheets each morning, right out of *Troilus & Cressida*! He even intimates that there are rumors afoot that she is with child (giving rise to the theory of a child with Sir Robert, Arthur Dudley, touted by the Span-

ish in 1587-88 as a putative replacement monarch after deposing Elizabeth).

For Oxfordians of the Prince Tudor persuasion, this is propitious outside corroboration. To further augment this theory, the filmmakers present a striking visual image of the genesis of the Virgin Queen as a deliberate political act by Elizabeth to create a parallel iconography to the Virgin Mary.

In fact, the film's story line of the Catholic issue and Catholic plotting against Elizabeth are fairly accurate history lessons that play well for Oxfordian revisionists. The film opens with scenes between the Catholic Mary and Elizabeth—who Mary says is *not* her sister as she begs her to keep England Catholic—and later we see the Pope demanding the heretic Elizabeth's death.

This dramatically underscores the political and religious hotbed that was the prevailing undercurrent of her reign. It also supports speculation that she would do anything, including undercutting an insider court playwright—or at least his name—to preserve the careful cultivation of her public persona and the stability of her throne.

The Debate

Many—probably most—of us have had occasion to butt heads with Stratfordians over the evidence in the authorship debate and the quality of each side's scholarship (i.e., Oxfordian "amateurs" vs. Stratfordian "professionals"). With these two films focused on the era, new opportunities are at hand to get the public asking questions about these times and then thinking about whose answers "ring true."

Taken together, these films provide many cogent reference points to engage the public on such questions as "Who was Shakespeare?" or "Who was Elizabeth?" With numerous Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations for both films—and already Golden Globe wins for *Shakespeare in Love*, its original screenplay and lead actress, Gwyneth Paltrow, as well as *Elizabeth's* Cate Blanchett—they have made an indelible impression on the public consciousness. So much so that many more films are being added to Hollywood's Shakespeare canon. Look for further de-

parture points of discussion with the opening of the forthcoming *Midsummer's Night Dream* with Michelle Pfeiffer, Kevin Kline, and Calista Flockhart, as well as Ethan Hawke as *Hamlet*, with Bill Murray as Polonius. On offer also is *Titus Andronicus* with Anthony Hopkins and Jessica Lange, "10 Things I Hate About You" (*Taming of the Shrew*), "O" (*Othello*), and "Near in Blood" (*MacBeth*). Kenneth Branagh has formed the Shakespeare Film Company which plans on three films per year, beginning with a musical version of *Love's Labour's Lost*, followed by *MacBeth* and *As You Like It*.

So, the challenge ahead for us is to present our rival poet as more adventurous and romantic than the current popularization. We certainly have the material. But will the public, so intrigued by the topic at the moment, prefer the fictionalized version as they have for the past 400 years?

Historical odds are not in our favor, but if indeed public curiosity is piqued enough to look further, they may just have to look to Edward de Vere. And then they truly can be in love—with the real Shakespeare.

Shakespeare in Love has opened wide for Oxfordians larger doors of public interest in Shakespeare's real life, and—more importantly—speculation about his life and about the key question, "Just *how* did he come to write those timeless plays?" The fictional story touches upon many issues that resonate within the authorship debate and are ripe for discussion. To cite just a few examples...

Basing his writing on events in his life:

Not only is the basic love story of *Romeo & Juliet*, according to the film, based on Shakespeare's experiences, but many of the lines that end up in the play (and others later) are absorbed from events and speech in his daily life. With no suggestion that this denigrated his genius. Since so much of what we know of Oxford's life was woven into the tapestry of the plays, this film adroitly points up the fact that true genius absorbs all the material at hand and transmutes it into Art.

The play *Romeo & Juliet*: One acquaintance asked me if *R & J* was in fact written at this time. Of course I had to reply that that depended solely upon who you assumed to be the author. But it is an opportunity to make note of the family feud that erupted between the de Veres and the Vavasours as a result of Edward de Vere impregnating Anne Vavasour (and to extrapolate further, if given the opportunity, to refer to plot points in other plays where this fact is relevant, such as *Measure for Measure*, where Claudio is imprisoned for impregnating Juliet, as was de Vere, in the Tower).

Sonnet XVIII: In the film, Shakespeare writes a sonnet to Viola de Lessups. Again, the subject arises of personal relationship to the writing. *The Sonnets* are the most personal account we have of Shakespeare's writing. To whom were they written, and why? It's a mys-

tery, certainly, but Oxfordians have a plethora of theories, none of which resort to "it was a writing exercise."

Moth: Here he's Shakespeare's analyst, but it further underscores the possibility of people that Shakespeare knew showing up as characters in his plays. Moth is a character in *Love's Labour's Lost* as well as *Midsummer Night's Dream*. We certainly have many examples of people Oxford knew showing up in the Shakespeare canon.

Queen Elizabeth: We first see her here having *Two Gentlemen of Verona* being performed for her at Court. This brings into question the dating of the plays and records of court performances. And she, in effect, commissions *Twelfth Night*, inviting Shakespeare to write a play about the story we've just watched him live. This can lead to a discussion of her involvement with the writing of the plays, either as a character herself, or for entertainment purposes or even political propaganda. And did she pay Shakespeare? Well, she paid Oxford—£1,000 a year, beginning in 1586. For what?

Marlowe: A ripe example for authorship discussion. The film has an amusing scene with Marlowe contributing ideas to Shakespeare's play. This alludes to those who believe Marlowe wrote some of Shakespeare's works. The character even acknowledges Marlowe's influence on *Titus Andronicus* and *Henry VI*.

The signature: An early scene in the film has Shakespeare practicing his signature. This is a multi-level joke on, 1) writers write what they know—well, he knows his name, 2) there was no standardized spelling yet—hence, they were all spelled differently, and 3) actors constantly practicing their autograph. But it also points up the fact that the ONLY extant sample of his handwriting are the six signatures.

Poet Playwright: At one point, when Shakespeare is visiting Viola's house, he identifies himself as poet and playwright (not actor!) in the same breath, illustrating the Oxfordian thesis on the name William (pastoral traditional name for poet at that time) and Shakespeare (alluding to the spear-shaker goddess Pallas Athena, patron of the arts in Athens, home of the theatre). A perfect *nom de plume* if EVER there was one.

Philip Henslowe: This is perhaps one of the most strategic coups for Oxfordians. To the layman Shakespeare enthusiast, Henslowe is largely an unknown figure. Thanks to the film, Henslowe, played by Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush (also nominated for this performance) becomes a memorable and significant figure in the story. This opens the door to discussions of Henslowe's diaries—records of payments to actors and playwrights, but NOWHERE any mention of Shakespeare. How can this be?

—GQ

Conference (Continued from page 1)

Francisco outing—first in Seattle at last year's conference, and in Washington DC by the Far Off-Broadway players.

Randall Sherman commented about the play, "I believe that *Aye, Shakespeare!* can make the authorship story accessible to a wider audience. I hope Oxfordians around the country will bring this play to the attention of their local theatres and Shakespeare festivals."

There were several local reviews of the production, both quite positive.

"As the crowning achievement of the weekend, Marin Shakespeare Company presented Shakespearean scholar Rob Clare at the Palace of Fine Arts, in a one-man show entitled *Aye, Shakespeare!* in which Clare played the spirited de Vere ... Hovey's script is very convincing, citing innumerable parallels between de Vere's and Shakespeare's characters," wrote Chrisanne Beckner of the *Commuter Times*.

A Unified Position on Authorship?

Another event of note was the panel discussion "Toward Establishing a Unified Public Position on the Authorship Debate." Panel participants were Mark Alexander, manager of the Shakespeare Authorship SOURCEBOOK web site, author Joe Sobran (*Alias Shakespeare*), and Society trustees Charles Burford, Katherine Chiljan, Randall Sherman and Dr. Daniel Wright.

This was the last event of the conference, and the room was packed to hear what panelists had to say about this provocative issue. It was no secret to anyone what is really meant when talk turns to seeking a "unified" public position, for everyone knows how little unity there is over the so-called royal heir theory (also called the Prince Tudor theory), i.e. that Southampton was the child of Oxford/Shakespeare and the Virgin Queen, and hence the true heir to the Tudor throne. That, as proponents say, would explain a lot about the Shakespeare authorship problem. Or that, as detractors say, would be the ruination of the authorship movement under a barrage of ridicule from the mainstream of academe and the media.

It will probably surprise no one to learn that no breakthroughs occurred during the discussion and follow-up questions from



Among the attendees were veteran Oxfordians such as Gordon Cyr, a former Society trustee and newsletter editor (top), and Carole Sue Lipman (bottom), founder of the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable in Los Angeles. (Photos James Liu)

the audience. While some panelists, most notably Dr. Wright, spoke forcefully against the theory, other panelists, such as Charles Burford, were strongly in favor of the opposite view. There was some general agreement that this theory (or perhaps any controversial and/or complicated theory) should probably not be the centerpiece of any public presentations designed to attract newcomers to the authorship issue. It's enough just to get folks to question the Stratford story and begin learning out Edward de Vere.

However, it was also noted that as people get more deeply involved in the authorship debate it is inevitable that this theory is encountered as one explanation of why the cover-up, and therefore—as controversial as it is, and though based on circumstantial evidence—it is also simply unavoidable. The Society cannot afford to censor any one point to view.

Also of significance in this discussion was a straw vote taken toward the end of the question and answer period. In a show of hands for who accepted or rejected the theory, it was at least 50-50, with any benefit of the doubt going to those who accept the

theory. Those numbers are something that need to be considered whenever talking about achieving a unified position on the authorship question.

As author and researcher Hank Whittemore commented later, "For Oxfordians, there are two quests—one within the group, and one where the group presents itself to the world. Certainly, we do not want to present ourselves to the world as squabbling among ourselves, but researchers must be allowed to research and to disagree with each other as they do. Disagreement should not be seen as negative."

Elizabethan Banquet

Another featured event was the Elizabethan Banquet, with the actors of As You Like It Productions on hand as Elizabeth I and her Court. Some guests also participated as Lords and Ladies of the Court, using costumes which were available for rental from AYLI.

Throughout the meal there was music and dancing, plus the Court enacted a brief story, and such figures as Leicester, Burghley, and Elizabeth herself walked among the tables and interacted with the guests. The evening ended with an appearance by the merchant of Warwickshire, who couldn't adequately explain himself to Her Majesty, resulting in her taking his quill and wandering among the tables to find the rightful "possessor," who turned out to be a very surprised Lord Charles Burford.

At the conclusion of the Banquet many guests stayed on in the French Room to enjoy continuing conversations with their fellow Oxfordians, or went outside for a photo session with the Queen and her Court. It was an entertaining and memorable evening.

The Papers

There were a number of interesting, provocative papers this year, touching on all aspects of the myriad authorship debate. In four instances presenters were delivering papers that had already been published somewhere earlier in the year (Altschuler, Sobran, Dickson, Rollett).

Dr. Eric Altschuler's "Searching for Shakespeare in the Stars" was a feature article in the November issue of *Science*

magazine, and generated some stories in the mainstream media (when ABC News used the story on their website, with a link to the Society Home Page, daily traffic more than doubled for the next 30 days).

In brief, what Altschuler postulates is that a number of astronomical references in *Hamlet* and other plays all reflect the state of knowledge through the end of the 16th century, while significant events that became known after 1604 (Oxford's death) are nowhere to be found. Dr. Altschuler's conclusion from this is that the playwright clearly demonstrated knowledge of and use of "the stars" throughout his works. Therefore, if he had been alive past 1604, new discoveries (such as the orbit of Mars) would be present somewhere in the plays.

Dr. John Rollett (of Ipswich, England) was attending a Society Conference for the first time. His presentation was based upon the *Sonnets* dedication decipherments which have already been published earlier this year in *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* and *The Elizabethan Review*. Nonetheless the room was packed to hear firsthand Rollett's work and some of his newer research on the sonnets and the dedication.

Joe Sobran's presentation was also on the *Sonnets*, in a manner of speaking. Sobran believes he has discovered a cache of new Shakespeare Sonnets that have been on the record for years. These are the "Emaricdulfe" sonnets, first published (as by "E.C., Esquire") in 1595, but little noticed by scholars since. Sobran believes, based on his analysis of these sonnets compared with "Shakespeare's," that there can be little doubt that they are Shakespeare's.

A fuller version of Sobran's paper was published in his newsletter *Sobran's*, and can also be found on the *Sobran's* web site.

Peter Dickson's presentation was a summing up of all he has learned in the one and one-half year he has been studying the political circumstances surrounding the publication of the *First Folio*. Some of his presentation our members have already learned about through the article in the Summer 1998 newsletter ("Shakespeare's Son on Death Row"), but there was much new material also, particularly about the other half of Dickson's thesis—the issue of the suspected Catholicism of the Stratford man.

Dickson believes that his contextualization of the folio publication spells death for the Stratford theory, especially if Strat-

fordians try to advance a "Catholic" Shakespeare in the next round of the authorship battle. Such a scenario, Peter believes, simply cannot co-exist with the Spanish Marriage Crisis and the Protestant/Catholic battle being fought then.

Among other papers this years were several that stirred a bit of controversy: Roger Stritmatter on identifying "Oxford in the Digby Canopy Portrait," and Charles Boyle on "Why *Pericles* is not in the *First Folio*."

Stritmatter's presentation was a reprise of the one he gave at the Edward de Vere Studies Conference last April, where attendees were all impressed with Roger's analysis. They were no less so this time, although some other Oxfordians have now challenged this analysis. In brief, Stritmatter claims—based on records of other processions and marching orders by degree and rank—that Oxford must be the smallish man in the center with the extremely thin left leg.

In the months since the conference there have been further challenges to this identification, and we hope to provide complete coverage of both sides in the near future.

Boyle's presentation was the first since his stroke two years ago. True to form, he took on the controversy within the controversy, and gave a paper that takes the royal heir theory one step further.

In short, Boyle presented a case for incest being the centerpiece of

Shakespeare's deepest obsession, and perhaps also being at the heart of the authorship controversy (for talk of deep, dark, shameful secrets that are also life—and possibly state—threatening ...incest has it all). *Pericles* is the one play where incest is central, the one play that has the strangest textual history, and the one play that was not included in the *First Folio*, and was not included in the "official" Canon until early in the 18th century.

Another paper of some note was that of Robert Detebol of Frankfurt, Germany. Derran Charlton of England read Detebol's paper, "Oxford's authorship in the Stationers' Register," which makes an interesting case that the *Merchant of Venice*, by having its publication opposed by the Lord Chamberlain, may actually reveal evidence that the Lord Chamberlain was the author. And by this Detebol means not Lord Chamberlain Hunsdon, but rather the Lord High Chamberlain Edward de Vere. There are instances where the LHC is referred to in the abbreviated fashion as "Lord Chamberlain," in addition to the fact that, in Detebol's estimation, intervention to block publication of *Merchant* by the actual Lord Chamberlain (Lord Hunsdon) makes no sense in any Stratfordian scenario. So, asks Detebol, just who did oppose the publication of *The Merchant of Venice*, and why?

There were three papers presented that
(Continued on page 8)

23rd Annual Conference in Boston, November 11th to 14th

The 1999 Conference is scheduled for November 11th to 14th in Newton, Massachusetts, just 5 miles outside the Boston city limits. The Conference Hotel will be the Boston Newton Marriott, located at 2345 Commonwealth Avenue, near the intersections of the Mass Turnpike and I 93/95.

Conference room rates (for the three nights from November 11th to November 13th) will be \$119, single/double.

Preliminary planning by the Conference Committee already calls for having at least one major conference event on the campus of Boston College, the site of a highly successful authorship debate in October 1997.

There will be more details in the next newsletter about the Conference, and a mailing to the whole membership in June/July with fuller details.

Members who wish to book rooms now can call the Marriott: 1-617-969-1000

Call for Papers 23rd Annual Conference

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

Dr. Charles Berney
91 Standish Road
Watertown MA 02472-1235
Tel: (617) 926-4552

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

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

Conference (Continued from page 7)

all touched on the personal life and fortunes of Edward de Vere, and helped to fill in some of the blanks spots. John Foelster spoke on "Reevaluating the Financial Decline of the de Veres," Daphne Wilson on, "Oxford's Gentry Servants," and Verily Anderson on "Sixty Five Years of the De Veres."

Foelster was especially illuminating on just how the de Vere family slowly lost its vast land holdings, while Wilson filled in the gaps about Oxford's servants. Anderson, author of *The De Veres of Castle Hedingham*, gave her audience a wonderful one hour tour (with slides) of the history of this illustrious family.

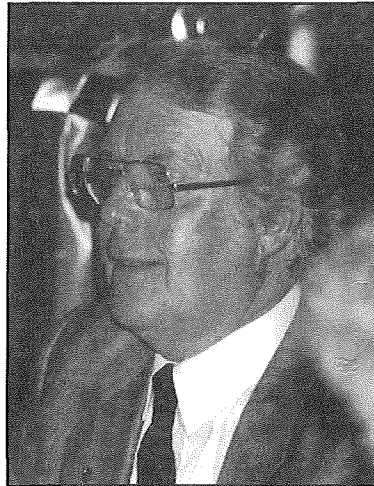
Rounding out the papers were three others that broke new ground about plays, manuscripts and holographs that could possibly be connected to Oxford.

Derran Charlton spoke on several different topics, including, "A *Twelfth Night* Manuscript in Belvoir Castle," (a subject that he had first spoken on at the 1993 Conference in Boston), Roger Stritmatter spoke on, "The Earl of Oxford's Commonplace Book?" and Katherine Chiljan on, "Oxford and the 1566 play *Palamon and Arcite*." In all three presentations Oxford was being linked to material that was either unattributed or attributed to someone else (e.g., *Palamon and Arcite*).

In the case of Charlton and Stritmatter, if their theses prove out, there would be significant additions to the known holographs connected to Oxford. This is especially true of the so-called *Twelfth Night* manuscript (with its passages eerily similar to portions of Shakespeare's play), first reported in Peter Porohovshikov's *Shakespeare Unmasked* (wherein he claims the handwriting is the Earl of Rutland's, and Rutland is Shakespeare). Charlton makes a good case that the handwriting is not Rutland's, leaving open whose, then, it is.

His comparisons of the handwriting in the manuscript with the famous "I am that I am" postscript from Oxford's 1584 letter to Burghley struck most observers as interesting, but far from decisive. It is also of some interest that the manuscript's present owner—the Duke of Rutland—refuses to allow any researchers access to it.

Stritmatter's presentation on the commonplace book may have broken some new ground in authorship research, since—if the book did once belong to Edward de Vere—it would join the small circle of non-



Derran Charlton, from England, was on hand to read Robert Detebol's (Frankfurt, Germany) paper, in addition to presenting his own work.

letter de Vere holographs known to have survived. The book is in a Secretary hand, and includes recipes, spells, some poems and some Latin exercises.

Chiljan's paper made an interesting case that the play *Palamon and Arcite* might be an earlier version of *Two Noble Kinsmen*, written when Oxford was just sixteen. The play is presently attributed to Richard Edwards, but, as Chiljan points out, his schedule was so busy in 1566 one can reasonably question whether he really had the time—in just a month or two—to write this play also.

Other Speakers

Peter Beauclerk spoke at Friday's luncheon on the long history of the Cecil and de Vere families, using some anecdotes from his own family's contact with the Cecils in modern England.

Lawyer Jim Murray and author Joe So-bran shared the microphone at the Saturday luncheon to talk of their experiences at the May 1998 Mock Trial in Washington DC. Murray emphasized how the trial experience does demonstrate the weaknesses in the Stratfordian documentary case, weaknesses that should always be exploited in any debate or trial situation.

Other events that took place over the three days included the showing by Lisa and Laura Wilson of the Ogburn Interview (they expect to have a final version ready for distribution and sale later this year), a taped showing of the Mock Trial from last May

and a musical demonstration on Renaissance Music by Owain Phyfe and Professor Sasha Raykov.

Ogburn Memorial

On Saturday night former trustee and newsletter editor Gordon Cyr helped pay tribute to Charlton Ogburn, and spoke also on the history of the Society. Even though he spoke of the 1960s and 70s, it seemed as if a far different world was being described to us. Such vignettes as Ogburn bicycling into Washington DC every day lent a sense of time and place, and reminded us of how far this movement has come in the years since.

Following Cyr there was an open microphone for anyone who wished to say a few words about Ogburn, their experiences with him or with the authorship issue itself. Twelve people stepped up to the mike over the next 45 minutes and spoke movingly of their personal experiences with Ogburn and of their engagement with the authorship issue and what his life-long work on this issue had meant to them.

Lisa Wilson was the first to speak and told of her many contacts with Ogburn during and since the September 1997 videotaped interview project with him. Lisa promised that the final version of the interview, due for completion later this year, would do justice to a man she had grown to admire tremendously in the past two years.

Roger Stritmatter, the interviewer for the Wilson project, also spoke briefly. Roger recalled that, after all the on-again, off-again nature of getting the project in place—Ogburn having stated often that *he* shouldn't be the story, Oxford should—how surprised he was just before leaving for Beaufort when Charlton phoned and asked simply, "Are you coming?"

Bill Boyle spoke of his frequent contacts with him as newsletter editor, and also of Charles Boyle's long relationship with him, complete with the famous "Ogburn" postcards—first the one blasting away at the affront of the moment, and then the "all is well" follow-up a few weeks later.

Boyle also reminded everyone that Ogburn was much more than just an advocate of the authorship issue, and had written extensively on many subjects in a rich and colorful life. In fact, he said, it was the coincidence of their both being veterans of war in South East Asia and both having come to similar views about "expert truth"

out of that experience that helped in their later Oxfordian relationship.

As Boyle was finishing his comments the irrepressible Verily Anderson rushed to the microphone to pay her homage to that "sweet fellow" Charlton, a spontaneous moment that delighted everyone.

Many comments emphasized how engaged Ogburn had remained with the authorship issue and with friends and acquaintances right up to the end. Katherine Wodehouse remembered how she once wrote just to thank him for writing *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, and how surprised she was that he wrote back so quickly, in a letter full of insight and observations. "He always wrote back," she noted.

Researcher Peter Dickson, who only

became acquainted with Ogburn in the past one to two years, commented how "sharp and engaged he always was," and how thorough and analytical his letters were when he wanted to take Dickson to task over some fine point of fact or interpretation.

Elliott Stone reminded everyone that before Ogburn's 1984 book there had been his famous 1974 article in the *Harvard Alumni Magazine*, a landmark event in its own right, whereupon "all hell broke loose" in the magazine's offices. It was that article that brought Stone into the Oxfordian fold.

Mrs. Betty Drayton Taylor spoke of how her parents and Charlton's parents had been lifelong friends, and how she had known Charlton for years. Taylor broke the audience up when she recalled how she had

once—long ago—advised him, "You'll catch more flies with honey."

Playwright Alan Hovey said it was comforting that Ogburn did live long enough to see the ever-increasing interest in the issue and that an Oxfordian victory is undoubtedly on its way. Writer Tom Goffspoke of his graciousness and of the "southern eloquence in his writing."

The final speaker was Derran Charlton, who confessed that he had first picked up Ogburn's book because the name "Charlton" caught his eye. Charlton concluded on a fitting note of how saddened he was that "that dear, darling man is no longer with us."

The memorial then concluded with a toast to Ogburn.

—W. Boyle

Authorship and Orthodoxy

Ogburn's legacy can be found in how institutions such as the Folger now treat authorship

Charlton Ogburn was not one to shrink from a debate over authorship issues, especially when he thought his opponents were uninformed or being unfair. He often found himself dueling with leading scholars in the Shakespeare establishment. Invariably, however, the Stratfordians found themselves engaged with someone better informed and more skilled in intellectual thrusts and parries. This combative verbal fencing gained some prominence in books and magazines and on television; everyone loves a good fight over ideas.

Less well known to many readers was Ogburn's winning personality and his skill in making friends with those Stratfordian scholars who were willing to engage in open and civil discussion of the authorship question. Admittedly they were few, but one instance is particularly significant.

The year after publication of Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality* (1984) an article appeared in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* that surprisingly took to task those in the Shakespeare establishment who dismissed or derided non-Stratfordian writers. The author was Richmond Crinkley, programs director of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

The Folger, which publishes the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, had been for several decades the vocal adversary of the Oxfordians and anyone else who questioned the credentials of the man from Stratford. The most-vocal of them was the late Louis B. Wright, former director of the Folger. In a blunt appraisal Crinkley said Wright had "a contempt for dissenters that was as mean-spirited as it was loudly trumpeted."

Crinkley admired Ogburn and the intellectual rigor in his book. He found Ogburn "among

the most congenial of men." He described as "invigorating" the intellectual wars that Ogburn fought: "It is a tribute to Ogburn's character that his intellectual polemics are of a much higher order than those of most of his critics He has given an accurate picture of an intellectual controversy in which his antagonists would not deign to face him He has shown a high degree of good humor and wit." Strong words to publish in the journal of the officially Stratfordian Folger.

Indeed, with the retirement of Louis Wright the Folger had modified its reaction to the authorship controversy. The new director, O.B. Hardison, a highly respected scholar who once appeared on the cover of *Time*, wanted a reconciliation with Ogburn. Crinkley was his emissary. Crinkley says their goal was to make amends and to establish a "dispassionate attitude about a contentious subject." Although he disclaimed credit for effecting a reconciliation, he says "that would come in time." And it did.

Ogburn's wife, Vera, who worked with her husband, confirms that Hardison and Crinkley were most friendly and welcoming and that the Folger staff was most helpful. Since then, many other Oxfordian researchers have worked at the Folger and experienced the same welcome and help. Although not persuaded by Ogburn's arguments, Crinkley did see benefits in the controversy. "Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians should begin talking," he says. "The two have much to learn from each other." And he concludes his article in the Stratfordian journal with a striking statement: "Shakespeare scholarship owes an enormous debt to Charlton Ogburn."

Ogburn also got a sympathetic reading from E.A.J. Honigmann, a British professor and

Shakespeare biographer. His review of Ogburn's book in the *New York Review of Books* was fair and friendly. "Perhaps," he wrote, "we have all been wrong together, Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians, about the elusive, unknowable dramatist." Then followed an amicable exchange of letters to the editor.

Ogburn even effected a tentative rapprochement with the late Professor S. Schoenbaum, the dean of Shakespeare, i.e. Shakspeare, biographers. The two men were in touch during their final years, when both were contending with chronic ailments. Schoenbaum, in fact, may have had his doubts about the Stratford man. Although he heaped scorn on anti-Stratfordians in his book *Shakespeare's Lives*, he concluded on the last page: "Perhaps we should despair of ever bridging the vertiginous expanse between the sublimity of the subject and the mundane inconsequence of the documentary record." This documentary record that Schoenbaum disparages is the record he spent much of his career analyzing.

Charlton Ogburn was unyielding in his defense of the 17th Earl of Oxford as the true author of the works of Shakespeare. And he could be very blunt about his critics. Sometimes he despaired that the academic establishment would ever examine the internal evidence and documentary record in fair, unbiased intellectual inquiry. At the same time, however, he found a few professors who would engage in reasonable, friendly discussion. They admired his intellectual rigor, his fairness, the depth of his knowledge and his genial good nature and wit. He was the greatest Oxfordian of our time, and he remains a model for all Oxfordian scholars to emulate.

RFW

Teaching Shakespeare (Continued from page 1)

In Spring 1997, after several years of testing the water and guiding students through their questions about authorship, Barrett floated a proposal to teach an after-school Shakespeare course. A huge overflow of students rushed to sign up for Barrett's course. On only twenty-four hour notice, twenty-five of one-hundred and twenty-five eligible Central Kitsap ninth-graders signed up for fifteen slots of a course devoted to two hours of after-school study of the Bard twice a week. "What is the world coming to?" wondered Barrett in a letter to parents explaining his own—and by extension his students'—enthusiasm for the after-school Shakespeare project. "How do we explain the excitement of the kids?"

Easy. Barrett's seminar was not just another dreary exercise in memorizing the words of an incomprehensible genius. It was billed as a course in historical literary detection. Like Al Pacino "looking for Richard" in the film of the same name, Barrett's students were searching for the truth about Shakespeare. The text came alive with potential clues to the author's identity—they read with a motive for comprehension.

"The authorship question is highly controversial," admitted Barrett in his letter to parents of the enthused students, "but it has persisted for two hundred years. We're not going to solve it in our seminar, but it provides a wonderful entrance into the Elizabethan world and an incentive to study the text and, perhaps, identify a personality behind the text.

"As I type this letter, I hear in the background a PBS telecast of *Rebecca*, a story by Daphne Du Maurier, who purportedly believed that Shakespeare's works were written by Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford. Your child will be hearing that name often in the seminar, and there have been indications during the past ten years or so that it could soon become a household name."

Since reading Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, Barrett has not made any secret that he agrees with Supreme Court Justices Blackmun and Stevens that the Oxfordians have got the best argument. His enthusiasm for the authorship question, in his regular English classes and now in the after-school Venture Program, has inspired several successive cohorts of Central Kitsap

Junior High students to investigate the authorship question and carry forward their enthusiasm into the local high schools in Central Kitsap County, Washington.

In 1997, Barrett took his Shakespeare experience to the Shakespeare Oxford Society Conference (in Seattle, Washington), at which he joined Cleveland State University Professor David Richardson (a renowned expert on the Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser) to co-chair a seminar on teaching

***"His students, having
learned a hard lesson
about the dangers of
thinking for
yourself in high school,
continue to pursue their
interest in the
authorship question
after leaving Barrett's
popular classes."***

the authorship question in the classroom.

Barrett's letter to his Washington State Secondary school teaching colleagues, inviting them to attend the Seattle Conference, spells out the potential for authorship studies in the classroom more eloquently than any other document we have read:

Do you, as an educator, yearn to fire your students with the same love for Shakespeare that you have, to thrill to his name the same way you do? When I began to discuss the Shakespeare authorship question with my students, I found I was tapping [into] something almost reflexive in its immediacy. Their natural iconoclasm and vague curiosity about the world around them quickly grew to focused interest in how it was possible that the Stratford man was credited with great works. I was pleased to see students' eagerness to engage figurative language as they looked for clues to confirm or reject the ideas that were arising in our discussions. Critical thinking skills sharpened. Frequently, we stumbled into teachable moments involving such issues as academic integrity, *ad hominem* arguments, skepticism, professional tolerance, research methodology, and the concept of the university. And they learned

to care strongly about the person who was Shakespeare and, by extension, the wondrous texts themselves. There was connection!

Despite this emphasis on treating the authorship question as a means to the higher goal of teaching the values of tolerance, free inquiry, and informed debate, Barrett's success soon boomeranged when one of his students got into a contretemps with a local high school teacher offended by inquiring minds. Soon Kitsap County administrators were subjected to complaints about Barrett's subversive pedagogy. Rumors originating in local high school English departments charged that Barrett's students were notorious "trouble makers." They refused to silently endorse the official myth of Shakespeare and sometimes openly expressed their own frustration at what they perceived as stonewalling responses on the part of other teachers. One such teacher, apparently not a student of history, told students that "there is no such person as Edward de Vere."

One week of sometimes heated email exchanges took place between Barrett and one local high school teacher. Barrett, frazzled and frustrated, was being tarred with the old *ad hominem* of being a teacher whose students subverted the dominant paradigm by asking difficult questions for which other teachers did not have canned answers.

Although the email exchanges ended amicably, the rumors were less easily silenced, and Barrett felt the damage was done. To clear the air, he wrote to the English Department chairs of Central Kitsap High:

During the past week, I engaged in a letter exchange [via] e-mail with a member of your faculty. It partially touched on the Shakespeare authorship question. You possibly are aware of the argument, which has ended amicably and is no longer an issue. However, in the exchange I was informed of "horror stories" told by your teachers involving my former students who have come to the high school with a "looking for a fight" attitude." This revelation is the converse of what I've been told by other former students who have come back to me complaining that they have been curtly cut off when they tried to discuss the authorship issue in their classes. Apparently, I have come in for castigation, one of your faculty members informing me that another faculty member said I should be

fired. I don't know how accurate any of this is, since it is mostly hearsay. Obviously, though, something is going on, and I am in the middle of it. I'm tempted to believe that since not a single member of your faculty has been disturbed enough to contact me to find out exactly what it is I'm saying to my ninth graders, there is no real problem. My intuition, however, tells me that that is naive.

Please allow me to make this point crystal clear: I don't care if someone, student or teacher, is an Oxfordian or a Stratfordian or an Agnostic or a Baconian or an Anything Else in the authorship question. I just want to continue firing up the imagination of kids with the fun and beauty and worth of Shakespeare, and I have chosen Shakespeare authorship as my approach to that goal, which is still my prerogative—and which has been remarkably successful. Surely your faculty can respect that and find a way to come to terms with it. For example, why not become familiar with the topic and argue the orthodox view. What better debate topic can there be?"

As we go to press in winter 1999, Barrett informs the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* that the situation has stabilized and that de Vere's flag flies high in the region. His new web site (www.hurricane.net/~rbarrett/index.html) features pedagogical materials on authorship and discusses his enthusiasm for the potential for authorship courses at the junior high school level. His students, having learned a hard lesson about the dangers of thinking for yourself in high school, continue to pursue their interest in the authorship question after leaving Barrett's popular classes.

Some of Barrett's local colleagues have even—slowly—started to come around to the validity of the authorship question and incorporate the issue into their Shakespeare pedagogy.

One of Barrett's former students, Samantha Harvell, summarized the lessons learned by students who had been shocked at the amount of heat generated by their investigation of the authorship question:

I guess if you have spent your entire life believing something, and possibly based your career on it, then I can see how you would resist the fact that it may be a lie. You'd be surprised, Bob, how many minds you have changed regarding the subject. Pretty much everyone who has had your class believes that de Vere was the true talent behind the writings.

Interview with Bob Barrett

Washington teacher talks candidly about bringing the authorship question into secondary school classrooms

What did you want to accomplish when you introduced the Oxfordian viewpoint to your kids?

It's easier to say what I didn't want to accomplish: I didn't want to convince my ninth-grade students that de Vere was Shakespeare. From a teacher's standpoint, the nature of the authorship debate itself was more interesting than my own, personal conviction of who the true Shakespeare was. Most kids read Shakespeare for the first time in the ninth grade. It's part of their transition from young-adult literature to adult literature. For some of them, it's a daunting prospect, so teachers must prepare students for the transition, guide them through it, and instill in them a love—or at least a healthy acceptance—of the new literature. In pedagogic terms, teachers try to address the affective domain of their students. In the ninth grade, that can be even more important than addressing the cognitive domain. The goal, after all, is to develop lifelong, independent learners who can gather facts and experiences and think about them when no teacher is around to help—and are eager to do it.

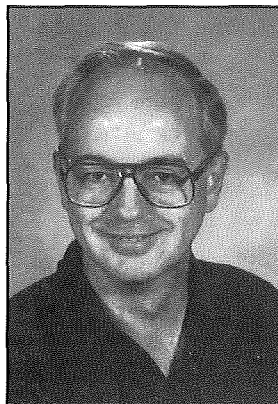
The other side of the coin, of course, is the cognitive domain. It's not really a choice for a teacher; that is, affective or cognitive. I want my kids to become enthusiastic, confident readers of challenging literature such as Shakespeare, but I also want them to think about it, and to think about it well. The buzz term in the jargon of educators is "critical thinking," and what better topic than the authorship question for introducing and exercising critical thinking skills!

For example, there's the cognitive dissonance of knowing securely and even unquestioningly to the core of one's young, fifteen-year-old being that Shakespeare is Shakespeare, and then someone comes along and suggests there's a problem with

the question. There's the accretion of facts that need to be weighed and assembled into a meaningful whole. There's the apposite learning in history, culture and biography. There's the interpretation of texts, academic integrity, research methods, tolerance, fair-

ness. There's the wonder of it all, the reflection on possibilities. The topic is so rich with learning opportunities! And it's fueled by teacher enthusiasm and the natural, almost proprietary predispositions of teenagers: their iconoclasm and love of mystery.

So, when I stood in front of the class a few years ago, still excited with having read Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*—



Robert Barrett

twice, in the span of a couple of weeks—I was aware that I was doing what I had done many times before. I was sharing something with my kids, and the unfeigned and authentic enthusiasm of my interest in this new topic, a topic of some intellectual scope, which had the potential of being interesting to them, too. I really didn't give much thought to it. I certainly didn't have a lesson plan or something I consciously "wanted to accomplish." I just wanted to talk to them spontaneously.

What was the response?

I underestimated the topic the response was explosive. They asked question after question, many of them of the "Yeah, but what about?" ilk. They weren't just asking me about what I believed. They wanted to know about the topic itself, to satisfy their own aroused curiosity. They pushed me for clarification and more details. They asked me to repeat certain things I'd already said minutes before. They wanted to know why no one opened Shaksper's tomb to check for clues, why people get angry about the topic, why de Vere couldn't sign his name on the plays. Did Shaksper know de Vere? Where

(Continued on page 12)

Teaching Shakespeare (Cont'd from page 11)

are the handwritten plays de Vere wrote? When the tempo of questions and answers slowed down, I'd throw out another tidbit, such as the Gad's Hill parallel, and the race was on again. I'd never seen anything like it.

What obstacles did you run into?

The part about my being "right" was disconcerting. I didn't want to be right. I wanted to make them curious, to question, to discuss, to argue, to disagree, to challenge, to think, to look forward to reading *Romeo & Juliet*, but I didn't want to be right. I wasn't even entirely sure myself, and the very idea of presenting myself as having the answer that brilliant scholars for two hundred years had been searching for was arrogant and presumptuous. I want my kids to think critically, but some of them were agreeing uncritically. Being right was ending a thinking process I wanted to begin. It was tossing them just one more "fact" they would receive in school that day to ignore, store, and forget.

I haven't yet gotten a grip on how to handle that dilemma. Enthusiasm is a two-edged sword in this case. It helps instill an interest in Shakespeare and the reading of *Romeo and Juliet*, but it also sells the side of the authorship debate I strongly support and find difficult to hide. I saw during the past year that the more neutral I was in my presentation of authorship, the less interested the kids were and the less effectively I was addressing their affective domain where it touched on the reading of Shakespeare. It was a trade-off. I reduced the kids' uncritical acceptance of my position on de Vere, but instead of more critical thinking, I seemed to gain less interest in the whole topic—and in the reading of *Romeo and Juliet*!

Why do you suppose some of your secondary school colleagues in Silverdale have reacted to the authorship question not, as you have, as an educational opportunity, but instead recoiled in fear, to the extent of questioning your professional integrity for raising the subject in your classroom?

Simple. The notion that Shakespeare

didn't write Shakespeare is preposterous, ludicrous! It defies simple logic and a four-hundred-year-old historical record. Shakespeare's biography takes at least 300 pages of fully-documented text to do it justice. It's a matter of record that Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon, and to this day one can find his school and monument there. Scholars at every college and university in the world study his life and work. If proof were to be found that Shake-

"...to many Stratfordians, particularly at the public school level, any anti-Stratfordian thesis is so patently absurd, it's reflectively rejected with nary a second of reflection."

"I emphasize what I am interpreting here ... is at the public school level, where teachers are normally much more occupied ... in presenting what they already know..."

speare didn't write Shakespeare, it would be front-page news, but [since] there's never been any front-page news, [therefore] there's never been any proof. What can be found are countless conspiracists and lunatics who attack whatever is good and true and divert decent people from their proper pursuits to counter them. The very idea that an educator would poison young, defenseless minds and shift the burden to others to reconstitute them, namely teachers who are already over-worked teaching facts, not

delusions, stains the profession and causes guilt by association. It's shameful; it's irresponsible. And it's infuriating!

...to many Stratfordians, particularly at the public school level, any anti-Stratfordian thesis is so patently absurd, it's reflexively rejected with nary a second of reflection. There's no real possibility to activate an initial curiosity, because the reflex instantaneously blocks it. The comfort and security of collegial support, the acute discomfort of belonging to a diminished profession, the resentment of an increased workload—such things just serve to justify the unthinking, hostile Stratfordian response. Again, I emphasize that what I am interpreting here is the psychology at the public school level, where teachers are normally much more occupied in the classroom than in the research library, much more involved in presenting what they already know than what they are discovering.

What can other Oxfordians, readers of this newsletter who may not be involved in secondary education, do to support efforts such as your own to introduce an informed discussion of authorship into the schools?

The target of "secondary schools" is much too broad for what we might want to consider doing through the good offices of Shakespeare Oxford Society. In junior high school, it's normally quite all we can do just to introduce the controversy!

In the broadest terms, that means—first—creating a little cognitive dissonance with the suggestions that Shaksper might not be Shakespeare, but de Vere most likely is. The specific objectives here are to spark interest and intellectual involvement in the authorship controversy, to raise doubt about the traditional attribution of the works to the Stratford man, and to introduce Edward de Vere.

Once in high school, students can probe much more independently and use much more effective intellectual tools. My point here is that there is a distinct and considerable difference between the abilities of junior high school and high school students, so the Shakespeare Oxford Society does not have one, but two targets, two age levels to support with materials, services, or whatever its involvement might become.

My teaching of authorship is largely unplanned, much like an extemporaneous speech. I have an idea of what I want to cover, so from the very beginning of the school year, I look for 'teachable moments.' With wall posters of Castle Hedingham, and the Droeshout engraving, and a plaque reading 'De Vere Lives!' over the front chalk board, I carefully lead my kids over time to ask me about authorship, and in answering their questions, I allow class discussions to develop. In a way, they gradually and unsuspectingly take ownership of the topic. By the time we arrive at the fourth-quarter Shakespeare block, we're ready to draw in the loose ties of all our talks and address the topic of authorship a little more coherently, and we begin looking for de Vere clues in our reading of *Romeo and Juliet*.

A possible Shakespeare Oxford Society role in my teaching? Again, I'm not sure, but I wonder what I could do with the following:

1) A video documentary biography of Edward de Vere, along the lines of the one for William Shakespeare that's widely available from cable television's A&E *Biography* series. Like it or not, video is an important teaching tool for this generation of kids.

2) A separate web site for research by students (and curious faculty). It would contain such pages as topics-cum-recommended research sources; links to important internet authorship sources, such as Mark Alexander's wonderful *The Shakespeare Authorship SOURCEBOOK*; practical advice for writing reports; current authorship news; essay contests with publication of winning entries; school spotlights, etc.

3) A separate web site for teachers. This one would contain curriculum blocks, lesson plans, teaching strategies, issues involving faculty and administration relations, professional development announcements (annual conventions), lending library, roster of available speakers, etc.

4) Oxfordian texts and reading guides for the plays most often read at the secondary schools (for example, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*).

Who would create these things? Who would pay for them? Who would administer them? If not the Shakespeare Oxford Soci-

ety, no one—but efforts such as these could possibly build the foundation for future Oxfordian growth. Costly conventions and current publications and planned libraries largely cater to present members. There needs to be a sea change from the insular applications of scarce present resources, which seem to do little more than maintain status quo, to applications that work through public schools into the institutions of higher learning.

*"There can be little
doubt, I think,
that there is a softening
of Stratfordian resistance...
[coming] from the constant
pressure Oxfordians have
exerted over the past
nearly 50 years."*

*"...relentless pressure and
the variegated nature
[of] iconoclastic attacks
on the Stratfordian
religion have brought
a shift from Stratfordian
hostility... to an uneasy
respectability."*

Wouldn't the SOS recover some of the costs in increased membership? Wouldn't Stratfordian bastions at the University eventually be forced to respond to the increasing pressure of the Oxfordian influx? I think perhaps so.

**How is your current situation at
Central Kitsap Junior High?**

The situation today seems better than it was two years ago, although I can't say

why, exactly. Sometimes—rarely—internecine battles simply exhaust themselves when cooler heads prevail, and perhaps that explains, in part, what's happened here.

I've tried to tone down my authorship rhetoric in the classroom, although there's a perverse streak in me that surfaces sporadically, such as when I casually substitute the name Edward de Vere for Shakespeare when reading out loud, talking to the class, or writing notes in the margins of student compositions! I've also cautioned the kids and instructed them how to handle authorship situations with their "gaining" teachers at the high school.

I still hear from my former students that discussion of authorship is not welcome in many of the English classrooms, but apparently that is very gradually changing. At two of the three high schools, there is at least one teacher who treats students who raise the subject with restraint and circumspection bordering on passive interest. One of them, in fact, was an advisor to one of my past students who was selected as a Distinguished Graduate, based partially on her research paper that argued the Oxfordian case. An indicator of at least a tacit truce on the part of the more militant Stratfordians is their continuing silence and avoidance of contact with me. There can be little doubt, I think, that there is a softening of Stratfordian resistance, and it came not directly and exclusively from any bestselling books (Ogburn, Whalen, Sobran) or research finding, but from the constant pressure Oxfordians have exerted over the past nearly-50 years.

A whole series of events, from the American Bar Association's series of journal articles in the 1950s, to the SOS Home Page and the Supreme Court's involvement in the current debates, have helped to bring about this change. Each of these things was scorned at the time—and continues to be scorned—but the total relentless pressure and variegated nature of these iconoclastic attacks on the Stratfordian religion have brought a shift from Stratfordian hostility and unthinking lemming mentality to, if not acceptance of the Oxford theory, then an uneasy respectability for the theory, or at the very least a numb, passive acceptance of the existence of an honest controversy. Time is on our side.

The Jaggard-Herbert-de Vere Connections (1619-1623)

Was the dedicatory letter to Philip Herbert and his wife Susan de Vere related to Lord Chamberlain William Herbert's 1619 edict on play publishing rights?

by Peter W. Dickson

Even though Charlton Hinman proved conclusively that the actual printing of the *First Folio* did not get started until the first quarter of 1622 (at the earliest), and hence after the political-religious turmoil associated with the Spanish Crisis had reached major proportions, we must carefully evaluate Roger Stritmatter's discovery of strong evidence that the folio printer (William Jaggard) had approached Susan de Vere as early as 1619 in the hope of obtaining some important literary manuscripts to publish.

The evidence in question is the close parallel between the dedication page to the Herbert brothers ("The Most Noble and Incomparable Paire...") in the *First Folio* (1623) and that to Philip Herbert and Susan de Vere ("The Most Noble and Twin-Like Paire...") for a massive folio-size anthology entitled *Arxaio-Ploutos Concerning Ten Following Books in the Former Treasure of Auncient and Moderne Times* (1619).

This evidence—which Stritmatter presented in his recent article "Bestow how, and when you list" (*Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Fall 1998)—is powerful in that it clearly indicates that Jaggard was looking in the direction of Susan de Vere and *not* the actors in the King's Company, such as Condell and Hemminge, for some fruits from a "literary" orchard—fruits which Jaggard might then supposedly publish, although it cannot be determined in what form he would have published such bestowed fruits from her hand. Perhaps just more quartos—such as he and Pavier were already publishing in 1619—and not a comprehensive folio.

We do know that Jaggard had already printed for Thomas Pavier ten quartos of Shakespearean or pseudo-Shakespearean plays in 1619, but these quartos were not bound together in a set order or sequence, and they were only reprints of old plays. This was, of course, in sharp contrast to the *First Folio*, which contained 18 plays never before seen in print.

The sudden emergence of the Pavier quartos in 1619 had encouraged some scholars prior to Hinman's landmark work *The*

Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare (1963) to believe that the actual folio project was about to begin in 1619 or shortly thereafter. But we now know from the folio evidence and Hinman's technical analysis that this is not what happened.

Moreover, as Hinman originally observed in 1963, the sudden registration in early October 1621 of *Othello* (the first hith-

"When did Jaggard prepare the dedication to Susan de Vere—before or after Susan's brother-in-law (William Herbert, Lord Chamberlain) issued his edict of May 3, 1619?"

erto unpublished Shakespearean drama to appear in print since 1609) for publication as a quarto seems highly improbable for sound commercial reasons if a comprehensive folio project was underway and/or near completion at that time.¹

However, this later start to the folio project in 1622 (which was also after the imprisonments of Henry de Vere and Southampton in the midst of the Spanish Marriage Crisis) does not detract from the bottom-line significance of the dedication to *Arxaio-Ploutos* in 1619. It still shows conclusively that Jaggard coveted important literary material in the possession of Susan de Vere, which in her case points to her father's works.

A crucial question still remains to be answered: When exactly in 1619 did *Arxaio-Ploutos* appear in book stores? More precisely, did Jaggard make the pitch to Susan de Vere before or after her brother-in-law (William Herbert, the Lord Chamberlain) issued an edict warning publishers not to print plays owned by the King's Company of actors without their consent?

This question is important because some scholars believed this edict was a direct

response to the alleged illegal nature of the Pavier-Jaggard quartos of 1619.

Furthermore, some Oxfordians such as Charlton Ogburn have argued that William Herbert's edict was designed to discourage others from trying to interfere or pre-empt an ongoing *First Folio* project. But this must now be seen as impossible, since the folio project did not get underway for at least another two years.

So, what was the edict about? And what impact, if any, did it have on Jaggard and his pitch to Susan de Vere?

In the inset box on page 15 is the text of the edict from Lord Chamberlain William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, dated May 3rd, 1619, and also a later note of explanation (letter dated June 10th, 1637) about his brother's action from the then Lord Chamberlain Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery (Susan de Vere's husband).

We believe that close analysis of the edict and the historical context supports the conclusion of Alfred Pollard in 1909 (in *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*), and restated by Irvin Matus in *Shakespeare, In Fact* (1994), that the edict *was not a royal prohibition against legal reprints*. Instead, it was a *clear warning to anyone actually thinking about stealing or pirating the unpublished playhouse manuscripts* still owned by and in the possession of the King's Company of actors.

Although the Lord Chamberlain had significant power, we believe that he could not prohibit reprints of old plays which the actors had sold legally to publishers long ago, which is precisely what the situation was with regard to the Pavier-Jaggard reprints in 1619. The bizarre back-dating of some of these reprints to 1600 and 1608 and the curious absence of Jaggard's name as the printer on the title pages did not rise to the level of a criminal offense.

Therefore, as Pollard and Matus maintain, Pavier and Jaggard strictly speaking had done nothing wrong and there is no evidence that they were planning to steal/pirate unpublished playhouse manuscripts

in the possession of the actors. Furthermore, we know from *Arxaio-Ploutos* that in 1619 Jaggard was in fact looking towards Susan de Vere for any additional material. Susan de Vere apparently decided that the time was not ripe to release her father's works; if she actually gave Jaggard anything of significant literary value in 1619 we have no record of this decision, which we should have in the form of a later "thank you" style dedication to her.

However, there is one outstanding and significant question that does remain from these events in 1619: when did Jaggard prepare the dedication to Susan de Vere—before or after Susan's brother-in-law (William Herbert, Lord Chamberlain) issued his edict of May 3, 1619?

Analysis of the evidence available strongly indicates that the dedication page (and therefore *Arxaio-Ploutos*' completion) was prepared after the edict. We can reach this conclusion with good confidence based on evidence internal to *Arxaio-Ploutos*, namely, a reference on page 541 to Robert Sidney as the Earl of Leicester. The actual investiture ceremony of Sidney who just happened to be the uncle of the Herbert brothers, took place sometime after the title fell to him legally and by right on August 2, 1618.

This timeline means that Jaggard had to have set the type for the last 450 pages of this massive anthology (nearly 1000 pages) after Robert Sidney became the Earl of Leicester. It is highly probable that Sidney had already been the Earl for some time (perhaps several months) when Jaggard reached page 541 where he offers a current list of new earls created during King James' reign. If Sidney had been a new Earl for only a mere four months, this would have given Jaggard only five months to type set 450 pages (at a bare minimum!) to complete the entire work before the edict of May 3, 1619.

We say a "bare minimum" of 450 pages because there is no proof that Jaggard had set any type prior to August 1618. In other words, Jaggard in August 1618 could have had a lot more than half of *Arxaio-Ploutos* (perhaps the entire book!) still ahead of him to type set and print. Compared to the *First Folio* which took more than one year, this 1000-page folio project had to be far more tedious given the double-columns of much smaller size type.² These factors and the

The Edict of May 3, 1619

Upon a letter from the Right Honorable Lord Chamberlain: It is thought fit and so entered that no Plays that his Majesty's players do play shall be printed without the consent of some Of them.³

Philip Herbert's letter, dated June 10, 1637, explaining his brother's action in 1619

Whereas complaint was heretofore presented to my dear brother & predecessor by his Majesty's servants the Players, that some of the Company of Printers and Stationers had procured, published & printed diverse of their comedies, tragedies, chronicle histories, and the like, which they had (for the special service of this Majesty & for their own use) bought and provided at very dear & high rates. By means where of they themselves not only had much prejudice, but the books much corruption to the injury and disgrace of the authors. And thereupon the Master & Wardens of the Company of Printers & Stationers were advised by my brother to take notice thereof & take order for the stay of any further impression of any of the plays or interludes of his Majesty's servants without their consent.⁴

timeline pushes the most probable completion date and thus the dedication page to Susan de Vere and her husband well past her brother-in-law's edict of May 3, 1619.

Thus, when Jaggard made his pitch to Susan de Vere, he almost certainly was aware of the warning contained in the Lord Chamberlain's edict about the need to deal directly with the actors concerning their hitherto unpublished playhouse manuscripts. But how significant was this?

Unfortunately, we cannot tell how essential it was for Jaggard to approach the actors for anything because we do not know for certain how many, if any, unpublished Shakespearean plays they really had in their possession. The total loss of the pre-1623 official records (i.e., the Master of the Revels licenses necessary prior to any public performance of a play) blocks our effort to know the truth.

However, we do know that among those 16 previously unpublished plays which Jaggard registered on November 8, 1623 for inclusion in the *First Folio*, the famous folio experts Charlton Hinman and Walter Wilson Greg have concluded that at least 12 were derived directly from the Bard's original manuscripts (foul papers) and not from playhouse manuscripts.

Therefore, all the evidence suggests that Jaggard ultimately dealt with non-actors (i.e., the "grand possessors" mentioned in the "Never Writer to an Ever Reader" preface in one of the two versions of the *Troilus and Cressida* quartos of 1609) who

had in their possession the original draft plays. This makes sense because it is difficult to see the actors sitting on so many old plays, in some cases for decades if they were in the legal position as rightful owners to dump them on the book market to raise badly needed cash. Acting companies often needed cash to cover costs, especially given that frequent theater closings due to the plague kept them dark nearly 70 percent of the time between 1603-1613, according to Leads Barroll in his *Politics, Plague, and Shakespeare's Theatre* (1991).

The person or persons who held so many valuable plays in their possession for so long a time could not have been in need of money. And it is clear that Susan de Vere and her fabulously wealthy Herbert in-laws needed money far less than the actors would have. Indeed, it is highly improbable the King's Company of Actors would have sat on such an enormous cache, releasing only a small handful of plays for publication after 1604.

We believe that Jaggard's decision after the May 1619 edict—an edict encouraging others to negotiate with the actors directly concerning unpublished material—to turn toward the Herbert-de Vere family for something of great literary value strongly suggests that Jaggard was not content to deal only with the actors—either because they did not at the time own or have anything that he wanted or, if they did, he was not quite satisfied because it was still not in the form he desired, most likely original drafts.

(Continued on page 23)

Oxfordian News

Oxfordian Londre to speak in San Francisco and Portland; authorship talks, classes, events scheduled around the country

California

The Shakespeare Association of America will convene in San Francisco the first weekend in April, and Oxfordians will be making their presence felt.

The Horatio Society plans several events for the same weekend, taking advantage of the large Shakespeare oriented crowds that will be in town. On the actual SAA agenda is Oxfordian Felicia Londre, who will be presenting papers at both the SAA and then a week later at the De Vere Studies Conference in Portland, Oregon. Londre is professor of theatre and drama at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Londre's most recent book received a positive review in *The New York Times*. Co-authored with Daniel J. Watermeier, *The History of North American Theater* is the first comprehensive history of North American theater.

Her SAA paper ("Where the words go: Shakespeare into Verdi, Gounod, et al")—slated for the plenary session—is authorship neutral, while at Portland she will deliver the keynote address, taking on Oxford and his relationships with Munday, Lyly, Nashe, et al.

Londre most recently spoke at the Shakespeare Theatre Association of America, where her paper on Oxford as Shakespeare was well received and piqued the interest of a number of directors and producers in attendance.

Massachusetts

The **12th Annual Oxford Day Banquet** is scheduled for Friday, April 23rd, at the Harvard Faculty Club in **Cambridge**, Massachusetts. Dr. Daniel Wright, Director of the Edward de Vere Studies Conference, will be the featured speaker.

Society members from around the country are invited to attend. In addition to the featured talk, the floor will be open to one and all for reports and news of authorship activities around New England and around the country. With the Society's 23rd An-



Even before Hollywood gave us two Elizabeths last fall, Oxfordians at the San Francisco conference were treated to their own Gloriana. And when she toured the Banquet room, British author Verily Anderson (left) knew all the right protocols when greeting her monarch.

nual Conference also taking place in Massachusetts, and the *Harper's* magazine authorship article still on the newsstands, there should be much to talk about. Tickets are \$40 each. For further information, phone William Boyle (617-628-3411).

Also in eastern Massachusetts, Chuck Berney will talk April 15th on "Hamlet and the Earl of Oxford" at the First Parish Unitarian Church, 35 Church St., in **Watertown**. The talk is intended for newcomers to the authorship question, and will associate characters in the play with proposed real-life counterparts in the Elizabethan Court. For further information call Chuck Berney at: (617)926-4552.

Trustee Elliott Stone will again be offering his authorship class at the **Harvard Academy Club** in downtown **Boston**, beginning April 20th. The classes will continue from the introduction to the authorship question covered last fall. For further information, call Elliott Stone at (617)742-8785.

Minnesota

George Anderson will coordinate a six week short-course on the "true author of Shakespeare's works," beginning March 29th. Organized through the Elder Learning Institute (ELI) at the University of Minnesota, it will address the 150 year old nagging question: "Why hasn't the Shakespeare authorship question been resolved? Enough

already!"

The course's "textbook" will be the April edition of *Harper's* magazine which will feature ten scholars, debating two sides of this issue (five Stratfordians and five Oxfordians).

And some people, of course, will blithely remark, "Who cares who wrote Shakespeare?" We're not expecting any of them to attend the course.

The course will also include dramatic readings, video interview (Lisa Wilson and Roger Stritmatter with Charlton Ogburn) and debate (*FrontLine*), and a discussion of the Guthrie's production of *Julius Caesar* with a prominent dramatist.

For course registration, contact ELI at (612)624-7847.

Oregon

The **3rd Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference** convenes on the campus of Concordia University in **Portland**, Oregon, from April 8th-11th.

Events at this year's Conference will include a lecture by Sally Mosher entitled, "William Byrd and Edward de Vere: The Musical Connection." Sally will follow her lecture at the University Lutheran Church of Saint Michael with a harpsichord performance of Byrd's "The March Before the Battle."

The Keynote Address of the Conference, "Edward de Vere: By His Friends You Shall Know Him: The Faithful, the Fickle, and the French," will be presented by Dr. Felicia Londre, Curators' Professor of Theatre, University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Edward de Vere's famous tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, will be enacted by the Concordia University Players under the direction of Professor Carmela Lanza-Weil and will be presented for Conference registrants in the University Theatre on the opening night of the Conference. Prior to the performance, Professor Lanza-Weil will present a dramatic reading of a paper by Stephanie Hughes entitled, "The REAL

Shakespeare in Love."

This year's Awards Banquet will confer distinction on British author Verily Anderson. Dr. John Rollett will also read selections from the Earl of Oxford's letters at the banquet.

A panel discussion on "The Pedagogical Value of Introducing the Authorship Question to the Classroom" will feature four educators: Dr. Frances Rippey of Ball State University, Mr. Robert Barrett of Central Kitsap Junior High School, Dr. Ren Draya of Blackburn College, and Dr. Daniel Wright of Concordia University. The panel will be chaired by University of Massachusetts graduate student Roger Stritmatter.

Washington DC

Oxfordians lost their strongest supporter among the active and retired justices of the Supreme Court of the United States when Justice Harry A. Blackmun died on March 4th.

Justice Blackmun was one of three judges at a moot court in 1987 in Washington DC on the authorship issue. They ruled against the Oxfordian challenge to the man from Stratford. Later, however, Justice Blackmun reversed himself. He wrote to Charlton Ogburn that on the evidence presented he would "rule in favor of the Oxfordians."

Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens has also written about his serious doubts that the Stratford man was the author, most recently last year at another moot court in Washington DC (*Newsletter*, Summer 1998 and Fall 1998).

Justice Blackmun's reversal upon further examination of the evidence was very much in character. *The New York Times* in its editorial on his death said that he "never outgrew his passion or capacity for change." He was best known for writing the majority decision in the Roe vs. Wade opinion on the right to abortion. He retired five years ago.

Many U.S. Supreme Court justices have long taken an interest in the authorship controversy, strong testimony to the validity of the Oxfordian challenge. Justices Brennan, Breyer, Ginsberg, Kennedy and Souter have all indicated their interest. In 1997 Justice Breyer mentioned at a moot court on Richard III that he had accepted Shakespeare's version of history until he discovered that "Shakespeare was really the earl of Oxford." Those who argue against the validity of the authorship controversy would lose in the U.S. Supreme Court.

England

Theater-goers at the Globe in London can get the Oxfordian view of Shakespeare's plays performed there. Mark Rylance, actor, artistic director of the Globe and non-Stratfordian, has arranged for the theater to sell a booklet that gives the Oxfordian perspectives. Papers on two plays sold out last year, and the *De Vere Society Newsletter* reports that Rylance has asked for a booklet on the three Shakespeare plays scheduled for this year.

Rylance, a patron of the De Vere Society, has also agreed to be a trustee of the Shakespeare Authorship Trust. The trust owns a collection of 350 books at Otley Hall, near Ipswich, where the Society's own library is also located.

Verily Anderson of Norfolk UK, author of *The de Vere's of Castle Hedingham* and a frequent speaker at U.S. conferences, reported that Warner Bros. has extended its option on her 1993 book for a possible movie. She says a producer at Warner Bros. is raising money and believes that the success of two recent movies, *Shakespeare in Love* and *Elizabeth*, has given the public a taste for Elizabethan scandal.

Finally, Christopher Dams, the De Vere Society's newsletter editor and secretary, reviewed the society's project to document proposed Oxfordian dates of composition for the plays, especially those that Stratfordians try to date after Edward de Vere died in 1604. He has set up a standard format, and he provided two examples, *Othello* (1594 vs. Stratfordian 1604) and *Two Noble Kinsmen* (also 1594 revised by Fletcher 1608 vs. Stratfordian 1613). He stressed that these are initial best estimates based on an Oxfordian reading of the evidence, much of which has been overlooked or dismissed by Stratfordians.

The major article in the latest *De Vere Society Newsletter* was also on the dating issue. Eddi Jolly reviewed at length the evidence for *Hamlet* and proposed 1589, around the time of the infamous "Ur-Hamlet" as fantasized by Stratfordians. She credits Lilian Winstanley's book, *Hamlet and the Scottish Succession*, published in 1920, with describing "the most significant topical reference," the execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587. Ms. Jolly is scheduled to speak on the subject at this year's Edward De Vere Studies Conference at Concordia University, Portland, Oregon.

Research Notes

Did Shakespeare stop writing in 1604?

In the Shakespearean authorship debate, no single point is more hotly contested than the chronology of the plays. Oxfordians assert that the author worked on what eventually became the Shakespeare canon from the 1570s through till his death in 1604. Stratfordians counter that in 1604, the author was only getting warmed up.

So evidence that supports the 1604 Shakespeare terminus is especially valuable to the heterodoxy today. As it happens, the history of the Shakespeare quarto publications suggest that something drastic happened around the time of the Earl of Oxford's death, since no new quartos appeared from 1604-1622—with the exception of a brief spate during 1608-09, the same period when the dowager Countess of Oxford sold King's Place at Hackney, where the late 17th Earl spent his final years.

In addition, a document I discovered several years ago also supports the Oxfordian position on Shakespeare chronology: In W.R. Chetwood's *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Ben Jonson, Esq.* (Dublin, 1756), one observation bears our consideration. That is, more than a century and a half before J.T. Looney's rediscovery of the man who was Shakespeare, Chetwood claimed that Shakespeare—whom he presumably takes to have been the Stratford player—ceased writing sometime in late 1603 or early 1604.

In his section on *Sejanus*, Chetwood writes, "Our inimitable Shakespear [sic] acted a part in this play, judged to be the last he performed, since his name is not mentioned in a drama after the year 1603; for, at the end of that year, or the beginning of the next, 'tis supposed he took his farewell of the stage, both as author and actor." [Spelling, punctuation modernized.]

This piece of evidence may not, by itself, shift the burden of proof to the Stratfordians—i.e. requiring them to prove the dates of any plays that they now assume were post-1604. But with both the chronology of quarto publications and Chetwood's expert testimony on the docket, a good lawyer could easily establish reasonable doubt for the Stratfordian case and perhaps even win an appeal to try the Earl of Oxford for the crime his advocates have long wanted him on the stand for: writing the "Shakespeare" works from the 1570s through till his death in 1604.

—Mark K. Anderson

Book Reviews:

Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human. By Harold Bloom (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998)

By Richard F. Whalen

Super-enthusiastic, bombastic, prolix, Professor Harold Bloom of Yale and New York University charges through Shakespeare's plays firing off sundry opinions, confessing his prejudices and inadequacies, and shouting unbridled admiration for Shakespeare's intelligence.

"His intelligence is more comprehensive and profound than that of any other writer we know," insists Bloom, still waving his arms with enthusiasm at the end of his 745-page book. He is frankly in awe of Shakespeare whom he calls an "insoluble enigma."

He says we will never know what Shakespeare was like: "Essentially we know absolutely nothing." Nevertheless he offers a few ideas about the author's biography, mostly based on what he finds in the plays and poems. Shakespeare "most certainly was unhappily married did not like lawyers, preferred drinking to eating and lusted after both genders He sensibly was afraid of mobs and of uprisings, yet he was afraid of authority also. He aspired after gentility [and] rued having been an actor." It is clear enough, Bloom says, that "Shakespeare had an intensely personal relation to his Hamlet." Unknowingly, but quite astutely, Bloom has described Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, who many contend was the true author of Shakespeare's works.

Biography is not Bloom's game in this book, and the few mentions are far from factual. Shakespeare, he says, "presumably" named his son Hamnet after Amleth of the old Danish tale. We know "for certain" that he played the Ghost in *Hamlet* and Adam in *As You Like It*. Those alleged acting assignments are, of course, later legends.

He makes no mention of his view of Shakespeare as essentially aristocratic, a view he presented in his 1994 book, *The Western Canon*. He said then that he found "an aristocratic sense of culture" at the origins of Shakespeare's art. He put Shakespeare "at the pinnacle of the long Aristocratic Age ... going from Dante to Goethe."

Not explained was how the uneducated, bit-part actor from Stratford came by that "aristocratic sense of culture."

In contrast, other themes from his earlier books are repeated, sometimes several times over. He deplores current trends in literary criticism as The School of Resentment—criticism based on race, gender and class. He refers to ideas in his books on the authorship of the Bible and on The Anxiety of Influence—Shakespeare, for example, worrying about Marlowe's influence on him.

In failing to mention, however, his earlier idea of Shakespeare's "aristocratic sense of culture," Bloom has perhaps now realized how that earlier insight pointed to Oxford as the more probable author. Perhaps he found the idea too dangerous. True, he may simply have forgotten about it, but that does not seem likely since in this book he does put Shakespeare—as before—"at the center of the Western canon." He just drops the word "aristocrat."

Bloom knows about Oxford, mentions him three times briefly, but leaves the reader uninformed. He chides Freud for supporting the argument that "the low-born 'man from Stratford' had stolen all his plays from the mighty Earl of Oxford." Later, with apparent irony, he calls Oxford "that defrauded genius." Even in these brief mentions Bloom seems not a little anxious about the influence on academia of the claims for Oxford as the highly intelligent, cultured aristocrat who is supposed to have written the works of Shakespeare.

Bloom dates the composition of the plays in a way that should give him some anxiety. Shakespeare, he says, accomplished "the supreme feat of producing *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in just fourteen consecutive months." Dazzled by this burst of rapid, polished writing but not stopping to question it (indeed he repeats it incessantly), Bloom plunges ahead.

He insists over and over that the "Ur-Hamlet" was written by Shakespeare. Most scholars postulate an "Ur-Hamlet" as a source for *Hamlet* because Thomas Nashe alluded to "whole Hamlets of tragical speeches" in 1589. They say Nashe was referring to a play that Kyd probably wrote

and that has been lost. Bloom does note the extreme youth of Shakespeare of Stratford in those years. He would have been "twenty-five or so (at most)" when he wrote what "could only have been a crude cartoon." He dates the composition of the Ur-Hamlet in 1587 or 1588. That would make the author even younger—twenty-three or twenty-four. Bloom evidently could not bring himself to mention his author's age in those earlier years. (Oxford would have been in his late thirties.)

Bloom also has his man perhaps helping "in 1587 or so" to "botch" *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, which scholars usually assume to be a circa-1586 source for *Henry the Fourth, Part I*. In those years the Stratford man was twenty-two and twenty-three—dangerously early for Bloom's Stratfordian chronology.

Bloom does not dwell on biography. He is simply in awe of Shakespeare and wants to tell you about it. He has taught Shakespeare for twenty years, and his discussion of each of thirty-eight plays sounds like a quick reworking of his lecture notes. The chapters are conversational, somewhat rambling and usually quite entertaining with quirky insights. Bloom speaks to a general audience and does not bother with footnotes, bibliography or even an index.

One has to wonder why his editor did not cut some of the many repetitions, which almost all reviewers have noted (e.g., the word "uncanny"—overused throughout academia—should have been banned by Bloom's editor). One reviewer suggested that the book could have been a third shorter; another generously called it "capacious and beneficent."

The central argument of the book, Bloom says, is that Shakespeare "invented us," hence the book's title. By claiming for Shakespeare "the invention of the human" he means Shakespeare invented personality, characterized by a preoccupation with the inner self and that in doing so Shakespeare created more "separate selves" than any writer before or since. His characters are "free artists of themselves," in the words of Hegel, which Bloom also repeats regularly.

Among those "separate selves" Hamlet

(Continued on page 24)

Column
The Paradigm Shift

Mark K. Anderson

Revisiting “*Apis Lapis*”

In October 1944, Charles Wisner Barrell first showed that the Earl of Oxford was called “William” by at least one contemporary. In the *Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly*, Barrell published a study of the introduction to Thomas Nashe’s 1592 satire *Strange News*. Nashe dedicates *Strange News* to a mysterious Elizabethan figure whom he only identifies as “Gentle Master William.”

A number of Nashe’s allusions to “William” point directly to the Earl of Oxford. To wit, he describes “William” as the “most copious” poet in England. The mystery man, he says, wields a “round cap” and “dudgeon dagger”—irreverent epithets for ceremonial talismans wielded by Oxford. (A nobleman’s cap and the sword of state, respectively.) Nashe also alludes to the heraldic blue boar of the Earls of Oxford when he says “By whatsoever thy visage holdeth most precious, I beseech thee by John Davies’ soul and the blue boar in the spittle... [i.e., hospital, possibly associated with the children players?].”

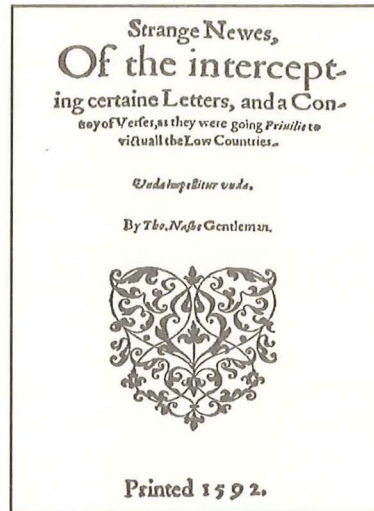
On the face of it, Barrell’s discovery should be more valuable. After all, how better to mark Edward de Vere as the author “William Shake-speare” than to find his colleagues referring to him by the first of these two names? However, as it’s played out over the past 50 years—for reasons that we’ll come to in a moment—Barrell’s discovery has remained an obscure point that Oxfordians rarely address.

That is, the only allusion of Nashe’s that scholars have quibbled with is that Nashe also refers to “William” with the Latin sobriquet “Master *Apis Lapis*.” This column will, 55 years after Barrell’s otherwise masterful attribution study, finally give Oxford his due as the true *Apis Lapis* of Nashe’s cagey dedication.

When Barrell published his original study in 1944, he assembled 40 footnotes to Nashe’s dedication that demonstrate to any patient reader how “Gentle Master William” can be no one but the 17th Earl of Oxford. Barrell made one crucial mistake, though. He fumbled on the one point where Stratford-

ians have made a marginal—if obtuse and historically implausible—counter-case.

And that’s essentially where we’ve been stuck for the past half-century. Sitting on a



treasure chest, albeit one that few outside the Oxfordian movement have been willing to recognize, in part, because of a technicality.

Here’s the paragraph in question from Nashe’s dedication:

To the most copious Carminist [poet] of our time, and famous persecutor of Priscian [i.e. enemy of pedantry], his verie friend Master *Apis Lapis*: *Tho. Nashe* wisheth new strings to his old tawnie Purse, and all honourable increase of acquaintance in the Cellar.

Barrell points out that “tawnie” is a direct reference to Oxford—in fact, it’s one of the two heraldic tinctures of the House of Vere (Reading tawny and Oxford blue). However, Barrell’s reading of *Apis Lapis* is not nearly as persuasive:

Apis here means the sacred bull of Egypt, frequently mentioned by Greek and Roman writers,” Barrell writes. “*Lapis* can be nothing else but *stone* or *stoned*. And as a *stoned* or *castrated bull* becomes an *ox*, so Master *Apis Lapis* in Nashe’s ribald pun becomes Master *Sacred Ox*, or the disabled and frustrated Earl of Oxford in professional mufti. (p. 56)

Considering his reading of *Apis* and his objective to make *Apis Lapis* mean “sacred ox,” Barrell must ultimately translate *Lapis* as “de-stoned” or “without stones” (i.e. testicles). That translation, however, is simply wrong. To castrate is to remove “stones,” and the mere mention of one stone does not imply its removal.

So what does *Apis Lapis* mean?

Does it mean, as Alexander Grosart and Ronald Brunlees McKerrow advocated nearly a century ago, that it’s simply a word substitution of *apis*=“bee” and *lapis*=“stone”? If so, the Stratfordians have a diversion ready: One uncorroborated statement has been found that the Elizabethan actor Christopher Beeston had a brother named William. As Barrell points out, “John Payne Collier seems to be responsible for the statement that William Beeston was ‘a man of some authority on matters of poetry.’ But as verification of this claim is lacking, it can be ignored as one of Collier’s many fictions.”

Taken in the larger context of Barrell’s overwhelming evidence from the whole of Nashe’s dedication that “Gentle Master William” is the Earl of Oxford, the *Apis Lapis* = William Beeston argument is patently absurd. But, given Barrell’s bungling of *Apis Lapis*, it’s no wonder that pedants the world over have refused to give up the ghost on their Gentle Master Beeston.

The problem, we’ve discovered, stems from the first word.

After several centuries of Egyptological work, we know today that *Apis*, as Barrell claims, is the “sacred bull of Egypt.” However, 16th century Latinists weren’t working from the mountains of evidence and recent discoveries that the present age has access to. Rather, renaissance archaeological sources consisted primarily of what ancient writers had to say about *Apis*.

This is where it pays to consider the actual words that 16th century readers had to work with in understanding who *Apis* was. (Incidentally, *apis* meaning “bee” is pronounced with a short “a,” which would

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Editor: William Boyle
Editorial Board:
Mark Anderson, Charles Boyle,
Stephanie Hughes, Elisabeth Sears

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

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From the Editor:

Are We Having Fun Yet?

These would have to be described as "heady" times for we happy few involved in any way with the great Shakespeare authorship story. It has been an issue outside the mainstream for eons, yet capable of summoning up strong emotions in an instant.

So who would have thought even six months ago that we'd be seeing Shakespeare's name blazoned everywhere, and even more incredibly, that the authorship question would be getting some of the same mainstream treatment. The cover of *Time*? Twenty-thousand plus words and the cover of *Harper's*? Strange days, indeed.

What this may actually auger for the future remains to be seen however. For even as we enjoy this recent wave of exposure, the forces of resistance stand firm.

The manner in which *Time* magazine handled letters to the editor following its own breakthrough cover-story on the authorship is illustrative. Many letters received, so they choose to publish *none of them*, quoting only from one Stratfordian letter, with a barely disguised sub-text of, "Well, let's be sure not to ever, ever talk about *that* again ... after all, there is *no case* for Oxford!" Makes one wonder just how many letters were received, and what the pro-Oxford ratio may have been.

In any event, the more publicity the better, since we do have faith that the more people who are introduced to the authorship question and begin to look into it, the more who will find that *there is something to it*, and conclude that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, fits the role of author head and shoulders above anyone else.

Aaron Tatum, 1999 Society President

The new President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is Aaron Tatum, who moved into that position from First Vice President after the resignation of Randall Sherman from the Board of Trustees on December 24th, 1998. Sherman resigned after a vote of no confidence following his mid-December report to the Board that in hosting the San Francisco conference he had incurred expenses significantly in excess of the registration fees and other receipts which he had collected.

At the conference he had reported to the Board that the revenues collected had met the expenses incurred, but in any event he would cover any possible shortfall, which in a worst case would be approximately \$2,000. However, in mid-December he reported to the Board that his shortfall was in excess of \$20,000 and that he would not be responsible for it.

Pro bono lawyers assisting the Society are ably and carefully reviewing and negotiating this matter. In these last four months, Sherman has suggested that he would attempt to raise funds for the purpose of retiring these obligations. However, to date he has failed to produce any funds, and has also declined to participate in any of several suggested reasonable alternatives.

Nonetheless, the Board is proceeding with business as usual, and is working hard

to reach an amicable, just conclusion. Tatum is determined to see this matter resolved with the responsible parties ultimately accepting their responsibilities.

Aaron Tatum is an insurance executive from Memphis, Tennessee, who has been a Society member for 12 years, a Board member for three years, and an occasional contributor to the newsletter. He has also written short stories and features—sometimes on Oxford—during his tenure as a newspaper columnist for ten years. He formerly served former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander as Jobs Conference Aide and is himself a former candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives. He received a BA from the University of Tennessee and an MA from the University of Colorado.

Tatum has recently stated to us that, "I welcome this opportunity to serve the Society and our common cause, and am delighted the Society is receiving so much recent positive printed press attention. Thanks to all of you who have so capably contributed over the years and helped bring us to this propitious moment.

"And finally, I can speak with confidence when I maintain that our financial house will remain in order and steps have been taken to assure no future abuses will occur. I thank you for your attention in this space on these matters."

Letters:

To the Editor:

Peter Dickson has drawn attention (*Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Fall 1998) to a fine mystery. Briefly, Henry Peacham's list of Elizabethan poets in *The Compleat Gentleman*, published in 1622, starts off with "Edward Earle of Oxford," and omits Shakespeare. This was despite the fact that his publisher, Francis Constable, had premises in St. Paul's Churchyard (The White Lion) only four doors away from those of William Aspley (The Parrot), and six away from Edward Blount (The Black Beare), two of the four members of the syndicate which was at that very time preparing the publication of the *First Folio*, which appeared the next year. Each must surely have known what the others were doing.

The mystery of Peacham's omission deepens when one considers later editions of *The Compleat Gentleman* and of the Shakespeare folio. The second edition of *CG* was published in 1627 by Constable, who had now moved to "his shoope in pauls Church yeard at ye crane," right next door to Blount's and three away from Aspley's. Is it possible that the name Shakespeare never came up in conversation?

Meanwhile a new syndicate was formed to publish the Second Folio, which was issued in 1632, William Aspley being the only member from the First Folio syndicate. One member of the new syndicate, Robert Allot, has now taken over Edward Blount's shop at The Black Beare. Then in 1634, two years after the publishing of the Second Folio, Francis Constable, next-door neighbour of one of that syndicate and near neighbour of another, brings out the third edition of the *CG*, again with no inclusion of

Shakespeare, a name he must by now have become thoroughly familiar with.

Not until the fourth edition of 1661 (when preparations for the Third Folio would have been underway) was any addition made to the chapter on Poetry in the *CG*, and then only a few lines in praise of Homer. This edition was printed by E. Tyler for Richard Thrale, at the sign of the Cross-Keys at St. Paul's Gate, so again it is unlikely that the name Shakespeare would have escaped the notice of the reviser.

Thus we have the following time-lines of books masterminded from almost adjacent bookshops in St. Paul's Churchyard:

<i>Compleat Gent:</i>	<i>Sh. Folios:</i>
1622	1623
1627	1632
1634	
1661	1663/4

Yet the name of Shakespeare, the author of the Folios (not to mention three quartos of poems), never made its way on to Peacham's list of Elizabethan poets. It does indeed seem odd, and lends weight to Peter Dickson's suggestion that perhaps Shakespeare's name was already on Peacham's list, in the form of "Edward Earle of Oxford."

John Rollett
Ipswich, England
10 March 1999

To the Editor:

Roger Stritmatter is to be congratulated on what I think is a brilliant piece of thinking ("Publish we this peace," *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Fall 1998) about the *First Folio*.

The idea that *Cymbeline* concludes the *Folio* for reasons similar to those for which *The Tempest* opens it seems to me to be something that makes perfect sense

But I wonder if Roger—or anyone else—has considered yet another reason that this play would be a fitting commentary on the political crisis of the moment. I am thinking, of course, of King Cymbeline's stolen sons, about whom it is commented at one point, "How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature! / These boys know little they are sons to the King... / ...their thoughts do hit / The roof of palaces, and nature prompts them / In simple and low things to prince it much / Beyond the trick of others." (III, iii, 79-86), and later, "Great men / That had a court no bigger than this cave ... / ...Could not out-peer these twain." (III, iv, 82-87)

The point being that these two boys—born of royal blood—just seemed to "naturally" live and act as those of royal blood should (in the author's opinion?) live and act. Now I dare not say these lines prove anything about either Southampton or Oxford, but they would certainly be an apt comment about how these "Two most noble Henries" rose to the occasion at a time of crisis, out-peering their peers.

Charles Boyle
Harwich, Massachusetts
21 February 1999

To the Editor:

I am indebted to Mark K. Anderson, in the Summer 1998 *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, for drawing my attention to the quotation from Ovid's *Amorum* (1.15, 35-36) on the title page of Shakespeare's *Venus & Adonis*. However, I do not agree with his interpretation that the second line of the quotation is an ironic answer to the first line, although I do believe that the quotation has a significance.

On reading Mr. Anderson's article I thought that I should read the quotation in the context of "Elegy 15" and I immediately realized that the reason why the quotation is on the title page of *Venus & Adonis* is to direct the reader to the entire "Elegy 15."

Edward de Vere must have empathized with Ovid because he could, quite easily, have written this elegy himself. I quote the opening lines:

Envy, why carp'st thou my time is spent so
ill,
And term'st my works fruits of an idle quill?

(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:

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

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

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

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Letters (Continued from page 21)

Or that unlike the line from whence I sprung,
War's dusty honours are refused, being
young?

...which could have been drawn from de
Vere's own life.

Nor that I study not the brawling laws,
Nor set my voice to sale in every cause?
Thy scope is mortal, mine eternal fame,
That all the world may ever chant my name.

The middle lines of the "Elegy" are an
embellishment of the theme that poets and
their verses are immortal, and the "Elegy"
then closes:

To verse let kings give place, and kingly
shows,
And banks o'er which gold-bearing Tagus
flows.
Let base conceited wits admire vile things,
Fair Phoebus lead me to the Muses' springs.
About my head be quivering myrtle wound,
And in sad lovers' heads let me be found.
The living, not the dead, can envy bite,
For after death all men receive their right.
Then though death rakes my bones in funeral
fire,
I'll live, and as he pulls me down mount
higher.

The "Elegy" is an answer to Envy, to
those who criticize the poet for wasting his
time.

In his *Tears of the Muses*, which was
written in 1590, Edmund Spenser wrote that
"Our pleasant Willy ... doth rather choose to
sit in idle cell than to himself to mockery to
sell." It would seem that de Vere was tired of
being mocked and criticized for being a
literary Earl and so he legitimized the name
he had invented, and by which he was
known among his literary friends, by pub-
lishing a work under the name of William
Shakespeare, "That all the world may ever
chant my name."

In his dedication to the Earl of
Southampton Shakespeare modestly offers
the "unpolished lines" of *Venus & Adonis*.
However, the implication of the quotation
from the Ovid elegy is that the lines will be
immortal. Here, surely, is a contradiction.
Are the lines unpolished, or are they immor-
tal? If the dedication is genuine, what is the
reason for including the quotation? Alter-
natively, could it be that the quotation is a
message, to those who knew Ovid, that the
dedication is not to be taken seriously, that

it is a mock dedication?

The Ovid quotation in *Venus & Adonis*
shows that in 1593 Shakespeare believed
that his verse would be immortal. Therefore
if William Shaksper of Stratford was the
author of *Venus & Adonis*, he believed—at
the age of 29, before his name had ever been
seen in print and before he had even pre-
sented his poem to the Earl of Southampton—
that his verse would be immortal!

Stratfordians cannot say that the Ovid
quotation on the *Venus & Adonis* title page

does not connect Shakespeare to the theme
of "Elegy 15" (and therefore that Shake-
speare did not hold this view in 1593), be-
cause the theme of "Elegy 15"—the immor-
tality of verse—is also one of the important
themes of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

Dennis Baron
Low Moor, Clitheroe,
Lancs. England
22 October 1998

The Blue Boar

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Dickson (Continued from page 15)

This analysis would explain the dedication directed towards Susan de Vere right after her own brother-in-law's edict, and also the later preponderance of foul papers utilized in 1622-23 for the plays not previously published prior to the *First Folio*. This analysis, coupled with the strong parallel between the dedication page of the *First Folio* and that of *Arxio-Ploutos*, powerfully reinforces the Oxfordian theory. It best explains how the *First Folio* came to be published once the Spanish Marriage Crisis and the Tyranny of Buckingham in 1621-22 convinced the relatives and friends of the real Bard that it was now—urgently—the time to release his unpublished plays (the fruit from Susan de Vere's Garden) for publication by Jaggard.

Footnotes

1. Splitting off this one extraordinary play so late in the game made no commercial sense because it would take something away from the folio project, which needed to include *Othello*. I believe the decision to publish *Othello*, with its villain Iago (the Spanish diminutive for Diego or James), was a subtle political statement by the Herbert-de Vere-Southampton clique in its struggle against King James, his lover (Buckingham) and the dark Machiavellian figure, Diego

Sarmiento de Acuña or Count Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador.

2. One indication of the tedious printing process is the fact that *Arxio-Ploutos* was the second volume of this anthology. The first volume had appeared six years earlier in 1613. This significant time gap suggests that haste was unlikely in producing another volume. Jaggard could have taken almost all of 1619 and perhaps even the first months of 1620 (which were considered to be 1619 in the old-style calendar) to finish the project.

3. William A. Jackson ed., *Records of the Court of Stationers' Company 1602-1640*, (London: The Bibliographic Society, 1957).

4. Edmund Kerchever Chambers, "Dramatic Records: The Lord Chamberlain's Office," *Malone Society Collections*, vol. 2. part 3, W. W. Greg, general editor (Oxford: Malone Society, 1931), page 384. Notice the plural "authors" in this letter which suggests that the edict was a response to a situation involving the works of more than one author.

On pages 113-115 in his work, *Shakespeare In Fact*, Irvin Matus speculates that it was the questionable or illegal printing of two plays written by Beaumont and Fletcher still owned by the King's Company which caused the actors to complain to the Lord Chamberlain. However, the analysis is still conjectural. We may never know in greater detail the factors which triggered the edict of May 3, 1619.

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Is Authorship Dead? (Continued from page 3) vining" treatment of the technical aspects of seamanship but his demonstrated expertise in the vocabulary of law. But Twain was not disparaging Shakespeare's knowledge of seamanship; he was making a point about the way seamanship and other skill vocabularies change over time. Legal language, he says, is "documented all the way back."

While ruminating about Twain's "egregious discourtesy" or "lapse in authorial candor" or "blatant copyright infringement" or his being "just plain sneaky," Bristol gives credit to Greenwood for "attracting support and legitimacy for his own skepticism" of the Stratfordian attribution.

In true post-modernistic fashion Professor Bristol concludes that the irony is that Twain stole from Greenwood just as in Twain's view the Stratford man stole from the true author. "If every work is a form of unacknowledged borrowing or theft, then every author is an evil twin (Twain) of a rightful claimant (Clemens). Or maybe it's the other way around."

Whatever. In any case, despite Bristol's lapses, Stratfordian readers of the *Shakespeare Quarterly* have been reminded once again that eminent writers and thinkers have become convinced that the Stratford man was not the author.

Join the Shakespeare Oxford Society

If this newsletter has found its way into your hands, and you're not already a member of our 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 fourth century of living in a Western World that was created during the Elizabethan era.

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

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

Subtotal: _____

The Oxfordian (\$10/\$20 overseas) _____

Total: _____

Anderson (Continued from page 19)

then rhyme with *Lapis*. However, *Apis* the Egyptian God has a long “a”—so an Elizabethan would rhyme the first syllable with “ape,” not “ap.”)

The Latin word used to describe *Apis* in the classical sources on Egyptian mythology was *bos*, which typically means “ox,” since a bull or a cow could respectively be denoted *taurus* or *vacca*. However, *bos* is also the generic term for any of these bovines, so the actual virility of *Apis* (i.e. whether “bull” or “ox”) is ambiguous.

It turns out that the past two centuries of scholarship have confirmed that *Apis* was indeed a “sacred bull.” But Elizabethans such as Thomas Nashe—and the Latin dictionary editors of the day—only had the classical sources to work with. So *Apis* the *bos* becomes *Apis* the “sacred ox.”

Thus, for instance, in Thomas Elyot’s Latin dictionaries (such as the 1548 *Bibliotheca Eliotae*, ed. by Thomas Cooper) the definition for *Apis* reads “an oxe, whome they [the Egyptians] worshypped.” No “stoning,” “de-stoning” or any other form of “stones” required.

What, then, is *Lapis* doing if Nashe wasn’t using it to emasculate the epony-

mous bovine? What does *Lapis* add to qualify our dumb beast?

According to Elyot, *lapis* means “stone,” but it also means “a negligent persone that bestyrreth hym not in dooyng a thyng [...does not bestir himself in doing anything].” (These secondary, metaphorical meanings of *lapis* carry through to the present day, where we find contemporary definitions of *lapis* such as “Trope for dullness, stupidity, want of feeling, etc.”)

Nashe is, in short, roasting the swan of Avon. In a dedication that is already full of irreverence and collegial ribbing, Nashe adds to his playful jousting a Latin tag—using Elyot’s 16th century definition—that calls his colleague and pseudonymous poet, essentially, “a *do-nothing* sacred ox.”

He’s paying homage to “William’s” god-like countenance, yet also commenting about him in a manner reminiscent of Spenser’s remark that, “Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late.” (*Tears of the Muses*, 1590).

So to translate *Apis lapis* as simply “sacred ox” is to miss both the joke and—more importantly—a perhaps significant piece of corroborating information about Oxford’s activities in the early 1590s.

Either that, or one could go with a less

literal reading, one that would probably be preferred by the Christopher Robins of the world: “silly old ox.”

(This Paradigm column written with the input and assistance of Tekastiaks - MKA)

Whalen (Continued from page 18)

and Sir John Falstaff are Bloom’s heroes. He even sees himself as a parody of Falstaff, namely, Sir John Bloomstaff. And, alternatively, “Bloom Brontosaurus Bardolator.” Would that Bloom could shake off his Bardolatry, follow his instincts and see that William Shakespeare was indeed a writer of the highest intelligence, a Renaissance man, a mighty genius, a cultured aristocrat—just like 17th Earl of Oxford.

Correction

In the article “Henry Peacham on Oxford and Shakespeare” in our last newsletter there was a typographical error involving the anagram on the cover of *Minerva Britannia*. The inscription should read “Videbori,” not “Vidibori,” and the latin verb is “videbor,” not “vidibor.”

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