The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter

Vol. 38: No. 1 *"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."* Marcel Proust Winter 2002

Veres and de Vere

The Privilege of the Prefix

By Bob Prechter

Why are most members of Edward de Vere's family and ancestry called "Vere" but others "de Vere"? Records demonstrate a consistency in the distinction that all family members during Edward's time understood. Thomas Babington Macaulay called the family "the longest and most illustrious line of nobles England has seen." Lord Justice Randolph Crewe, ruling in 1625 on claims to the honorary position and title of Lord Great Chamberlain, commented, "I suppose there is no man that hath any apprehension of gentry or nobleness but his affection stands to the continuance of so noble a name and house." What exactly is the proper designation of that name, line and house?

The ancient family began in England when Aubrey/Aubrie/Alberici (de) Ver(e) crossed the channel in 1066 in the service of William the Conqueror. The post of Lord Great Chamberlain of England extends back to his son, Aubrey II, whose son, Aubrey III, became the first Earl of Oxford. The family's line of titled nobility ended in 1703 upon the death of yet another Aubrey, the 20th Earl, who had been named after his earliest English ancestor.

The last name of the family's oldest English ancestors was "spelt variously Ver, Vere, Veer, de Vere, de la Vere, Verres [and] de Ver." It is clear from the earliest date, then, that the "de" portion of the Vere name was used only occasionally. It was not an integral part of the family name as it would be for, say, Dempsey or Deyton. Arguably the most official record is the Domesday Book census of English property

(cont'd on p. 10)

Oxford Makes *NY Times*

Authorship Question is News Fit to Print, Finally

By Gerit Quealy

In an unprecedented move, *The New York Times* printed a large and comprehensive article on the Shakespeare authorship controversy in their Arts & Leisure section on Sunday, February 10, 2002. The article, entitled "A Historic Whodunit: If Shakespeare Didn't, Who Did?" covering nearly two full pages, primarily by *Times* writer William S. Niederkorn, was an in-depth exploration of the claim for Oxford as author, and refreshingly free from the usual derision that accompanies this topic in the press. The lead line alone – "It was not the Bard of Stratford-on-Avon. It was Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford" – was a startling breakthrough for those who have weathered the slings and arrows of outraged Stratfordians. The article also featured a large, full-color reproduction of the Welbeck Portrait of Oxford.

A separate piece explored the history of the Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare, including the x-ray examinations by Charles Wisner Barrell (who concluded the portrait was of Oxford), and new research by Oxfordian Barbara Burris detailing its "restoration" at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Related articles encompassed other authorship news: Amy Freed's new play *The Beard of Avon*, where Oxford figures

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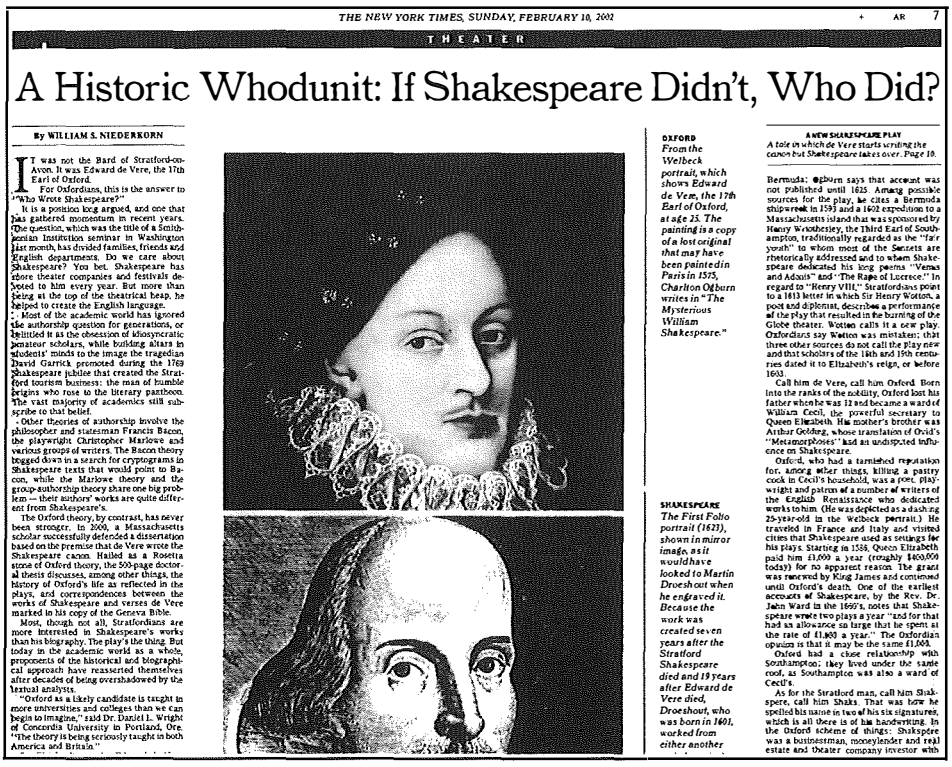

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2002 AR 7

THEATER

A Historic Whodunit: If Shakespeare Didn't, Who Did?

By WILLIAM S. NIEDERKORN

IT was not the Bard of Stratford-on-Avon. It was Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.

For Oxfordians, this is the answer to "Who Wrote Shakespeare?"

It is a position long argued, and one that has gathered momentum in recent years. The question, which was the title of a Smithsonian Institution seminar in Washington last month, has divided families, friends and English departments. Do we care about Shakespeare? You bet. Shakespeare has more theater companies and festivals devoted to him every year. But more than being at the top of the theatrical heap, he helped to create the English language.

Most of the academic world has ignored the authorship question for generations, or belittled it as the obsession of idiosyncratic amateur scholars, while holding aloft in students' minds to the image the tragedian David Garrick promoted during the 1769 Shakespeare jubilee that created the Stratford tourism business: the man of humble origins who rose to the literary pantheon. The vast majority of academics still subscribe to that belief.

Other theories of authorship involve the philosopher and statesman Francis Bacon, the playwright Christopher Marlowe and various groups of writers. The Bacon theory bogged down in a search for cryptograms in Shakespeare texts that would point to Bacon, while the Marlowe theory and the group-authorship theory share one big problem – their authors' works are quite different from Shakespeare's.

The Oxford theory, by contrast, has never been stronger. In 2000, a Massachusetts scholar successfully defended a dissertation based on the premise that de Vere wrote the Shakespeare canon. Hailed as a Rosetta stone of Oxford theory, the 500-page doctoral thesis discusses, among other things, the history of Oxford's life as reflected in the plays, and correspondences between the works of Shakespeare and verses de Vere marked in his copy of the Geneva Bible.

Most, though not all, Stratfordians are more interested in Shakespeare's works than his biography. The play's the thing. But today in the academic world as a whole, proponents of the historical and biographical approach have reasserted themselves after decades of being overshadowed by the textual analysts.

"Oxford as a likely candidate is taught in more universities and colleges than we can begin to imagine," said Dr. Daniel L. Wright of Concordia University in Portland, Ore. "The theory is being seriously taught in both America and Britain."

OXFORD *From the Welbeck portrait, which shows Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, at age 25. The painting is a copy of a lost original that may have been painted in Paris in 1575, Charlton Ogburn writes in "The Mysterious William Shakespeare."*

SHAKESPEARE *The First Folio portrait (1623), shown in mirror image, as it would have looked to Martin Droeshout when he engraved it. Because the work was created seven years after the Stratford Shakespeare died and 19 years after Edward de Vere died, Droeshout, who was born in 1601, worked from either another*

A NEW SHAKESPEARE PLAY

A tale in which de Vere starts writing the canon but Shakespeare takes over. Page 10.

Bermuda: @born says that account was not published until 1625. Among possible sources for the play, he cites a Bermuda shipwreck in 1593 and a 1602 expedition to a Massachusetts island that was sponsored by Henry Wriothesley, the Third Earl of Southampton, traditionally regarded as the "fair youth" to whom most of the Sonnets are rhetorically addressed and to whom Shakespeare dedicated his long poems "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece." In regard to "Henry VIII," Stratfordians point to a 1613 letter in which Sir Henry Wotton, a poet and diplomat, describes a performance of the play that resulted in the burning of the Globe theater. Wotton calls it a new play. Oxfordians say Wotton was mistaken; that three other sources do not call the play new and that scholars of the 18th and 19th centuries dated it to Elizabeth's reign, or before 1603.

Call him de Vere, call him Oxford. Born into the ranks of the nobility, Oxford lost his father when he was 12 and became a ward of William Cecil, the powerful secretary to Queen Elizabeth. His mother's brother was Arthur Golding, whose translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" had an undisputed influence on Shakespeare.

Oxford, who had a tarnished reputation for, among other things, killing a pastry cook in Cecil's household, was a poet, playwright and patron of a number of writers of the English Renaissance who dedicated works to him. (He was depicted as a dashing 25-year-old in the Welbeck portrait.) He traveled in France and Italy and visited cities that Shakespeare used as settings for his plays. Starting in 1586, Queen Elizabeth paid him £1,000 a year (roughly $400,000 today) for no apparent reason. The grant was renewed by King James and continued until Oxford's death. One of the earliest accounts of Shakespeare, by the Rev. Dr. John Ward in the 1660's, notes that Shakespeare wrote two plays a year "and for that had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of £1,000 a year." The Oxfordian opinion is that it may be the same £1,000.

Oxford had a close relationship with Southampton; they lived under the same roof, as Southampton was also a ward of Cecil's.

As for the Stratford man, call him Shakspere, call him Shaks. That was how he spelled his name in two of his six signatures, which is all there is of his handwriting. In the Oxford scheme of things: Shakspere was a businessman, moneylender and real estate and theater company investor with

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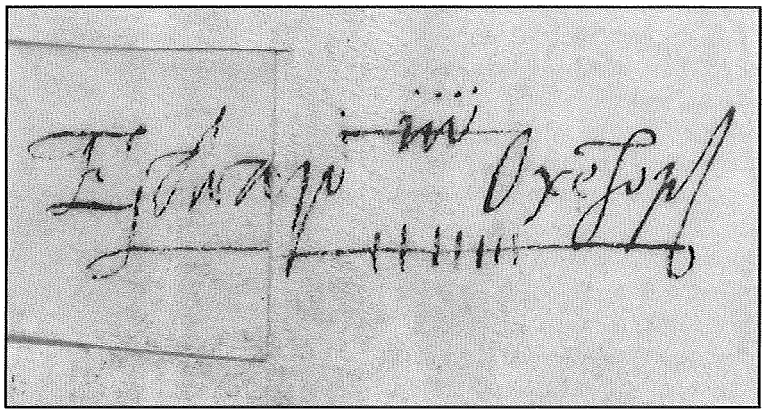
The newsletter welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise. All original papers are subject to editing in content and length. The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Society as a literary and educational organization.

Auction Results of Oxford Document

On December 13, 2001, a document signed by the 17th Earl of Oxford was sold at Sotheby's for £4,000. Signed on May 6, 1592, the document is a "letter patent" in which Oxford releases "Anthony Everrard from services of homage fealty and knight's fee relating to the manor of Sandon in Essex." Dr. Daphne Pearson, who transcribed the document, wrote "originally these fees were an obligation to serve the land-owner for forty days in the field, but as the need for this became less, the obligation was taken in money" (*De Vere Society Newsletter*, Jan.-Feb. 2002).

Sotheby's stated in its catalogue that Oxford's signature rarely appears for sale, and that "the only auction record within living memory which we can find is the sale of this same document, in these rooms, on 17 December 1963 (lot 457)." The auction house cannot release the name of the successful bidder, but a letter will be passed on to him via Sotheby's with the hope that he would identify himself to the Society. The entire document is pictured below, accompanied by a close up of Oxford's signature. The seven ticks on the underscore are thought by some to represent "seventeen," and the marks above it, the coronet of an earl.



Photos courtesy of Sotheby's

Oxford's Uncle Henry

Sir Thomas More Considered in Oxfordian Light

By Joseph Sobran

Most Shakespeare scholars believe the Bard wrote two scenes of the anonymous history play *Sir Thomas More*. The play exists in only one very imperfect manuscript, discovered in the nineteenth century. It has always been an enigma, since there is no record of its performance or publication in its own time. Even the date is uncertain. Yet on stylistic grounds it has found a marginal but firm acceptance in the Bard's canon.

My own view is that the Bard wrote the whole play – the Bard, of course, being not William Shakespeare (or Shakspere) of Stratford, but Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. And I believe that the play itself tends to confirm Oxford's authorship. The prevailing opinion among the scholars is that several writers collaborated on the play. The manuscript shows as many as seven hands, one of which, "Hand D," is widely believed to be the Bard's.

The style of *Sir Thomas More*, though uneven in quality, seems to me very much of a piece; there is no need to posit multiple authorship. The reader may want to study the following speeches, scattered throughout the play:

SURREY. But if the English blood be once but up,
As I perceive their hearts already full,
I fear me much, before their spleens be cold,
Some of these saucy aliens for their pride
Will pay for 't soundly, wheresoe'er it lights:
This tide of rage that with the eddy strives,
I fear me much, will drown too many lives.

SURREY. 'Tis strange that from his princely clemency,
So well a temper'd mercy and a grace,
To all the aliens in this fruitful land,
That this high-crested insolence should spring
From them that breathe from his majestic bounty,
That, fatten'd with the traffic of our country,
Already leaps into his subject's face.

SURREY. Now, great Erasmus, you approach the presence
Of a most worthy learned gentleman:
This little isle holds not a truer friend
Unto the arts; nor doth his greatness add
A feigned flourish to his worthy parts;
He's great in study; that's the statist's grace,
That gains more reverence than the outward place.

ERASMUS. Your honor's merry humor is best physic
Unto your able body; for we learn
Where melancholy chokes the passages
Of blood and breath, the erected spirit still
Lengthens our days with sportful exercise:
Study should be the saddest time of life,
The rest a sport exempt from thought of strife.

SURREY. My lords, as 'tis the custom in this place
The youngest should speak first, so, if I chance
In this case to speak youngly, pardon me.
I will agree, France now hath her full strength,
As having new recover'd the pale blood
Which war sluic'd forth; and I consent to this,
That the conjunction of our English forces
With arms of Germany may soon bring
This prize of conquest in. But, then, my lords,
As in the moral hunting 'twixt the lion
And other beasts, force join'd with greed
Frighted the weaker sharers from their parts;
So, if the empire's sovereign chance to put
His plea of partnership into war's court,
Swords should decide the difference, and our blood
In private tears lament his entertainment.

MORE. Close them not, then, with tears: for that ostent
Gives a wet signal of your discontent.
If you will share my fortunes, comfort then;
An hundred smiles for one sigh: what! we are men:
Resign wet passion to these weaker eyes,
Which proves their sex, but grants it ne'er more wise.
Let's now survey our state. Here sits my wife,
And dear esteemed issue; yonder stand
My loving servants: now the difference
'Twixt those and these. Now you shall hear my speak
Like More in melancholy. I conceive that nature
Hath sundry metals, out of which she frames
Us mortals, each in valuation
Outprizing other: of the finest stuff
The finest features come: the rest of earth,
Receive base fortune even before their birth;
Hence slaves have their creation; and I think
Nature provides content for the base mind;
Under the whip, the burden, and the toil,
Their low-wrought bodies drudge in patience;
As for the prince in all his sweet-gorg'd maw,
And his rank flesh, that sinfully renews
The noon's excess in the night's dangerous surfeits.
What means or misery from our birth doth flow
Nature entitles to us; that we owe:
But we, being subject to the rack of hate,
Falling from happy life to bondage state,
Having seen better days, now know the lack
Of glory that once rear'd each high-fed back.
But you, that in your age did ne'er view better,
Challenged not fortune for your thriftless debtor.

CATESBY. Thus the fair spreading oak falls not alone,
But all the neighbor plants and under-trees
Are crush'd down with his weight. No more of this: Come, and receive your due, and after go
Fellow-like hence, co-partners of one woe.*

[*Compare *Lucrece*, line 789: "So should I have co-partners in my pain."]

The style of these speeches seems to me, at least, just as "Shakespearean" as that of the passages generally ascribed to the Bard. They abound in verbal parallels with the canonical works. The multiple hands of the manuscript need not mean multiple authorship; they may be no more than the hands of various scribes to whom the play was dictated by a single author. Again, the play was apparently never published, performed, or licensed for the stage in its own time. It may have been banned because of its sympathetic portrayal of More, a Catholic hero (since canonized a saint) who had been executed by order of the queen's father, Henry VIII.

One feature of the play has never, as far as I know, been remarked on. A prominent character in the play is Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, described as a young poet. He is called "our honored English poet," "learned poet," and "noble poet"; More himself, parting with Surrey, says: "Farewell, most noble poet." Surrey and More are shown conversing with a visitor, the great scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam. Surrey speaks the final lines of the play, lamenting that so fine a man as More should run afoul of his king:

(cont'd on p. 6)

Oxfordian News

Amy Freed on Radio: She Cares Who Wrote Shakespeare; the 6th Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference

San Francisco

On January 25, the PBS radio station KQED featured a roundtable discussion on the Shakespeare authorship question with: playwright Amy Freed, whose authorship comedy, *The Beard of Avon*, was currently playing in San Francisco; Peter Kline, educator and author of the new book, *Why America's Children Can't Think; Creating Independent Minds for the 21st Century*, which includes a chapter on the authorship question; Prof. Alan H. Nelson of U.C. Berkeley; and Shakespeare actor-director Julian Lopez-Morillas. The program opened with Peter Kline, a "reformed" Stratfordian, defending Oxford's case as the author of Shakespeare. He noted that early on historically it was discovered that Shakespeare's life had nothing to do with the plays, that no documentary evidence connected him to them, but that Oxford's biography was fingerprinted throughout the plays, especially in *Hamlet*.

A new SOS chapter is formed in Washington, D.C., (l to r seated): author Joseph Sobran, W. Ron Hess, Peter Dickson; (standing): James Sherwood, Dr. Joseph Strada, Dr. Jim Swank, Dick Lester, Karyn Sherwood, Aaron Tatum, SOS President; Peter Silberblatt, Peter Rush, Cindy Wilson Silberblatt and James W. Brooks, Jr.

Professor Nelson rejected the idea that there ought to be a connection between the life of the author and the lives of his characters, stating that it was "a romantic notion first mentioned in the 1830s" and that "Oxfordians do the reverse circular argument. They rewrite his life to fit the Shakespeare plays better." Nelson, who has investigated the evidence for the Stratford Man for nine years, has concluded that the evidence is "extremely strong…all in his favor." Conversely, he says, De Vere has "no evidence whatsoever that a historian would admit as evidence." He also pointed out that the authorship question is not an academic debate because academics don't debate it. The debate is "between the academy and outside amateurs."

Amy Freed, after declaring that she is "a little bit bitten" by the authorship bug, said that she has kept her conclusions secret "because I'm afraid of everybody on both sides of the fence!" Freed said that in her play she wanted to create a Shakespeare and an anti-Shakespeare for a heightened theatrical clash between "nature and genius," i.e., the Stratford Man, and "culture and access," i.e., De Vere. When Julian Lopez-Morillas entered the conversation, he said that there are no authorship adherents within the theater community because there's an instinctive feeling that the person who wrote the plays was a working theater person, working within a theater company. He then repeated the old saw that "Genius is a mystery to us," and that Shakespeare was a freak of nature. Freed immediately retorted: "To call him that is to say nothing about him. He used 20,000 words in his composition, and we use 4,000-5,000. He used 200 forms of rhetoric and was in competition with the best of the best writers. Being struck by lightning doesn't do full justice to the struggle to acquire that kind of mastery of language."

After a caller posed the question "Who cares who wrote Shakespeare?," Freed ended the discussion with this eloquent reply: "There is something of a signature about his voice, a shocking immediacy that even 400 years later he's talking about you or your internal experience, or as Bloom said, the discovery of inwardness. This makes him so undatable, rather than being a cultural museum piece. For me that is the thing that's seriously magnetic and irresistible about his work … as much as I want to repress it, it's a desire to get closer to the soul of that individual. He is very unmistakable and his voice is all through the sonnets. It bites you through the plays unexpectedly: Who is that mind that has such scope and is so intimate he seems to have said my own humanity better than I could say it myself? So the pursuit of his identity as a man is hard to get away from. [My] play is an homage to that desire."

On April 25th, the Mechanics' Institute, a private library in downtown San Francisco, will celebrate Shakespeare's birthday with a program on the Shakespeare Authorship Question, entitled "Bard or Beard: Shakespeare's True Identity." The program will feature presentations by Prof. Alan H. Nelson and SOS trustee Katherine Chiljan.

Afterwards, members of American Conservatory Theater's core company will perform selected readings from Shakespeare's play and sonnets. This will be the library's third authorship program, the first was Chiljan's introductory slide talk, followed by Mark Alexander's lecture on Shakespeare and the law. For more information, contact Laura Sheppard, Director of Events, at 415-393-0114.

Portland, OR

The Sixth Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference will take place on April 11-14, 2002, at the Concordia University campus. Featured speakers include English Professor Steven May (Georgetown College) who will speak on "The Earl of Oxford's Poetry in Context," Dr. Roger Stritmatter, Richard Whalen, Ramon Jimenez, Richard Roe, Eric Altschuler, Hank Whittemore, Barbara Burris, Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, and Prof. Alan H. Nelson (U.C. Berkeley), who will speak on Oxford and the Earl's Colne Grammar School. At the Awards Banquet, Sir Derek Jacobi and Prof. Nelson will be honored. One can register online at www.deverestudies.org, or write to Dr. Daniel Wright, Director, The Edward de Vere Studies Conference, Concordia University, 2811 NE Holman, Portland, OR 97211.

Stratford, Ontario

Those who attended the 2000 SOS Conference in Stratford, Ontario, may be interested to learn that this year the Stratford Festival is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary and will present two of the Shakespeare plays that were produced in its debut year, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *King Lear* (starring Christopher Plummer). The Festival is also presenting Shakespeare's *King Henry VI* trilogy in two plays entitled *Revenge in France* and *Revolt in England*, finishing off the York/ Lancaster saga with *Richard III*, as well as the rarely performed *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, supposedly authored by the Bard and John Fletcher. This year the Festival will also unveil its fourth theater. The Studio, located in the downtown Avon Theatre, will be an intimate space for 250 patrons configured in a thrust stage surrounded on three sides by the audience. The need for the new theater is well warranted, as the Stratford Festival boasts a whopping 600,000 patrons for each of the past two years. The Festival runs from April 24 to November 10. Contact by telephone (800-567-1600) or website www.stratfordfestival.ca. And don't forget to look up Stratford's resident Oxfordian and SOS trustee Susan Sybersma (519-393-6409)!

– Sue Sybersma

Vienna, VA

While for many years the late Vincent Mooney (see obituary) held discussion meetings on Sundays among interested Metro D.C. Oxfordians, they were small and directed strictly towards the issue. The recent Smithsonian-sponsored debate afforded a capital opportunity to have a chapter-forming meeting in Vienna, Virginia, attended by fifteen people who heard a brief post-mortem of the debate from those who had attended the night before. SOS President Aaron Tatum discussed with the group the possibility of locating the Victor Crichton library collection in downtown D.C. The leading site is only a stone's throw from the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Library of Congress. The national office would follow thereafter in his and the board's vision. Tatum also discussed plans for the 26th Annual Society Conference sponsored by the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation to be held in the area. Several attendees, as well as some who could not attend, immediately went to work on the project. Nearly fifty members live in the area and more are joining as a result of these recent events. SOS trustee James Sherwood and his wife, Karyn, came down from New York and gave a presentation on their efforts to increase membership. Interim Chapter President W. Ron Hess is currently scheduling another meeting in March and is getting enthusiastic assistance from the entire group. Cindy Silberblatt, Joan Jungfleish, Dr. Joseph Strada, Peter Dickson and Martin King are working closely with Hess and Tatum in finalizing the details. Author Joe Sobran, who lives in Vienna, also attended the meeting.

Chicago

On November 17 and 18, the Chicago Oxford Society hosted Dr. Daniel Wright of Concordia University-Portland. Dr. Wright's introductory talk on the Shakespeare Authorship Question first focused on William of Stratford's lack of credentials as Shakespeare. Then he pointed out, citing authority, that Shakespeare's writings show a prodigious literary appetite and that Oxford's biography fits this description. The questioning from a relatively small audience (about 30 total over two days) was intense and specific, lasting nearly one hour, with several attendees curious on why the Stratford myth was first launched. Dr. Wright pointed out that this question has yet to be definitively resolved. He offered a variety of proposed theories involving various social and political stigmas, and the fact that Oxford was considered to be a

Joel Spears (lutenist) and Felicia Hardison Londre (featured speaker) take time for a photo shoot after the Chicago event.

"walking embarrassment" to his family – an answer that appeared to be well received. Bill Farina preceded this lecture with a "Snippets of Shakespeare" slide show, focusing on *Twelfth Night* and the Earl of Oxford. These events were held at the Chicago Public Library Harold Washington Center and the River Forest Public Library.

On February 2, 2002, the COS hosted Dr. Felicia Hardison Londre (Univ. of Missouri-Kansas City), whose talk, "The

(cont'd on p. 8)

Oxford's Uncle Henry (cont'd from p. 3)

A very learned worthy gentleman
Seals error with his blood. Come, we'll to court.
Let's sadly hence to perfect unknown fates,
Whilst he tends prograce to the state of states.

But there is a hidden ironic meaning in these concluding words. Surrey was Oxford's uncle and, I believe, his literary hero and inspiration. He was born Henry Howard around 1517; his father was Duke of Norfolk. He became a poet of distinction; with his friend Sir Thomas Wyatt, he introduced the Petrarchan sonnet fashion to England and developed what is now called the Shakespearean sonnet form. In his translation of two books of the *Aeneid* he also created English blank verse. His poetry was privately circulated during his lifetime and was published only after his death.

Surrey's cousin Catherine Howard became the third wife of Henry VIII in 1540 and was beheaded two years later. Rash and hot-headed, Surrey played into the hands of his enemies at court, who had him and his father arraigned for treason. He was reported to have asserted his own claim to the throne of England – a capital offense, if true. His father was spared; Surrey was not. In January 1547, the failing Henry, perhaps too delirious to realize what he was doing, signed the order for Surrey's execution only a week before his own death. Surrey was beheaded.

Surrey lived barely thirty years; he was still in his teens at the time of More's death in 1535, too young to play any role in the events of the play or to have known Erasmus. Erasmus did visit England, and More, but he did so years before Surrey was even born – between 1499 and 1514 – and he died in 1536, while Surrey was still a youth. *So the playwright had to take liberties with the historical facts in order to insert Surrey into More's story and allow him to meet Erasmus.*

We can well understand why Oxford might bring his famous uncle into a play about events in which he could not have participated. Who else would have a motive to do it? Moreover, Surrey's presence lends dramatic irony to the play: He speaks his final moral about More's "error" without realizing that he himself, like More, will finally – twelve years later – be beheaded by order of Henry VIII. No direct criticism of the Tudors would have been tolerated during Elizabeth's reign, but sophisticated members of the audience might grasp this cunning parallel and its significance.

Oxford would have been keenly aware that the father of Elizabeth I had been responsible for his uncle's early death. It would have been only natural for him to make an oblique comment about this by showing Surrey as a well-meaning young man who naively praises the king's "clemency," "mercy," and "grace," and approves of More's death sentence. But the play would subtly remind its audience that Henry VIII had beheaded two of England's greatest men, Sir Thomas More and the Earl of Surrey. By linking the two men in this play, however unhistorically, Oxford took a literary revenge on the king who had killed his uncle and hero.

Tudor censors would have caught the point too. Henry VIII's daughter was still on the throne, and they would not have welcomed a play implicitly critical of her father and favorable to two of his victims. Perhaps this explains why there is no record of the play's performance or publication: because of its subversive sympathies, it was never licensed for the stage. We can only speculate. But in its small way, Surrey's insertion into the drama of Sir Thomas More tends to confirm that his nephew was the author of the play – and of the rest of the Bard's canon as well.

Book Review

Sexual Shakespeare by Michael Keevak (Wayne State University Press, 2001)

By John Hamill

Michael Keevak's *Sexual Shakespeare* is a unique survey of the perceptions throughout literature of Shakespeare's sexual, or non-sexual, being, revealing perhaps an unspoken homophobia in both historical and current Stratfordian and anti-Stratfordian positions. I am unaware of any other scholarly work that has attempted to document Shakespeare's sexual nature from this perspective.

Keevak's book, while scholarly and heavily documented (actually dry at times for supposedly a sexy subject), is very uneven, and discusses a variety of seemingly disconnected topics. These range from William Ireland's famous forgeries, to a discussion of whether William Davenant was Shakespeare's son, to historical perceptions of Shakespeare's sexuality, to a discussion of the authorship controversy from a sexual point of view. Keevak continues with a chapter discussing the different portraits of Shakespeare, and finally discusses the current view of Shakespeare's (hetero) sexuality in film, for instance in *Shakespeare in Love*, and the homophobia in books such as *Naughty Shakespeare*. After awhile it's hard to understand how these subjects are related in making a cohesive argument. It appears that Keevak's main point is that our culture's need to know and sexualize Shakespeare, particularly because of the paucity of information we have about his life, has desexualized him when evidence from his poetry and plays points to his potential bisexuality, or as Keevak calls it, his "queerness."

Keevak tracks the history of how the Sonnets have been perceived, noting that they were probably originally suppressed because of their perceived homosexual content, and that when they were reissued in 1640, it was in a more "palatable" format – many of the masculine pronouns were changed to feminine – to obscure the fact that they were addressed to a young man. He then relates the controversy over their reprinting in 1780 in the original format. Many people were "shocked" to learn that the Sonnets were addressed to a man after nearly a century and a half of believing they were erotic poems addressed to a woman. Keevak points out attempts by scholars to circumvent this unnamed danger – that the bard is guilty of sodomy – by asserting that any suggestion of sexual attraction between males (in the poems or plays) represents "not a love affair between men but only an idealized friendship" and is not really sexual. He says that others have avoided the issue entirely by claiming that the Sonnets were not autobiographical after all, that they were a mere literary exercise, and others, i.e., some Oxfordians, believe that they were addressed to the author's son (fathered with Queen Elizabeth), and therefore were not homoerotic – examples of "tortured logic," according to Keevak.

Other issues, such as the implications of boys playing female parts, or the multiple examples of same-sex bonding in the plays, are summarily explained away because "the possibility of Shakespeare himself 'making a pass' at a man must be kept at bay at all costs, even if in the text of his plays Shakespeare imagines a whole range of possibilities for same-sex affection." Keevak then makes the point "that it really makes little difference if the sonnets 'really are' 'gay' poems, since modern culture continues to respond to them – or apologize for them – as if they were." Keevak's argument is that this non-sexual Shakespeare, who emerged when the Sonnets were reissued in 1780, has persisted to this day, in order to avoid a "queer" Shakespeare. Since the few facts of Shakespeare's life do not provide any indication of such "abnormal" behavior, the matter can be laid to rest.

Keevak's other major point concerns

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26th Annual Conference Scheduled for Washington, D.C., October 10th to 13th, 2002

The Society will be returning to the nation's Capitol to hold its 26th Annual Conference. Washington, D.C. has hosted the Society's Annual Conference six times in the past – in 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1987. In 1987, David Lloyd Kreeger, a Washington lawyer, businessman, philanthropist, and fellow Oxfordian, organized a moot court debate on the authorship question which was presented before a panel composed of his old friends Harry Blackmun, William Brennan and their fellow Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens.

Sponsored by the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation, the 26th Annual Conference will be held at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia, which is conveniently located near a subway stop for easy access to downtown D.C. Conference planning is still in progress, but points of interest will include the Folger Shakespeare Library and Theater, the Library of Congress, and the Kreeger Museum. The Shakespeare Theater, internationally recognized as one of America's foremost classical theaters and located in downtown D.C., will be presenting *The Winter's Tale* in October. The Conference promises to be an exciting event in the Authorship Debate. Please make your plans to attend.

Call for Papers

For the 26th Annual Conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, members are especially invited to submit papers (about 25 minutes in length) for presentation in Washington, D.C., on October 10-13, 2002.

Of particular interest are such topics as new findings about Oxford, his possible relationship to *The Winter's Tale*, his relationship to other writers and dramatists of the period, and evidence for dating of the plays. We welcome scholars from other fields and disciplines who can provide context or questions for the study of Oxford's role in Elizabethan society. Contact Dr. Jack Shuttleworth, 7770 Delmonico Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80919, Email: deVereinCo@aol.com

Oxfordian News (cont'd from p. 5)

Questionable Identity of Shakespeare," was a lighthearted and humorous presentation that first poked fun at the Stratford man, who, despite the appeal of the "poor boy makes good" story, comes across more as a commercial symbol than a flesh and blood literary biography for those who correctly believe that it does matter who wrote the canon. She then spent the majority of her time building up the case for Edward de Vere, citing Looney and Ogburn, and pointed to the heavy social stigma attaching to acknowledged authorship by an Elizabethan nobleman. The audience laughed when Dr. Londre observed that to have Oxford's printed name on a book would have allowed the vulgar masses to put their hands directly upon it. Dr. Londre's talk was presented at the Feltre School in Chicago, and was listed under "Primetime Picks" by Chicago Magazine's website. Bill Farina opened the event with his slide show, "Snippets of Shakespeare: Romeo, Juliet, and Oxford," to coincide with the new production by the Shakespeare Project of Chicago, a group of Equity Actors who put on free performances of Shakespeare simply because they love doing it. They take no position on the authorship question, but their artistic director Mara Polster is very open-minded and interested in Edward de Vere. The COS tries to promote their events in conjunction with its own. The COS is planning its second annual birthday celebration for April 25-27, with details to be announced shortly (www.chicagooxford.com).

Washington, D.C.

Joseph Sobran will be the featured speaker on the authorship question for the Newberry Lecture at DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired), the association of retired American diplomats. The event, which occurs on Wednesday, April 17, from 12:00 to 2:00 pm, is a lunch and lecture as well as a book signing of Sobran's *Alias Shakespeare.* It will be held at DACOR Bacon House, 18th and F Streets, N.W. (a block west of the Old Executive Office Building). The cost is $14 for the lunch. Limited space is available. Please contact Joan Jungfleisch 301-770-7025 or email joanj@erols.com.

Orson the Oxfordian

Orson Welles's Shakespearean Pursuits

By Craig McGrath

The great cinematic genius Orson Welles was a lover of Shakespeare's plays and, yes, an Oxfordian. "I think Oxford wrote Shakespeare. If you don't agree, there are some awfully funny coincidences to explain away," stated Welles, in *Persona Grata*. Born in Kenosha, Wisconsin and raised in Chicago, the creator of *Citizen Kane* was sent at age eleven to the Todd School in rural Woodstock, Illinois. This would be the only formal schooling Welles would have. The Todd School, run by Roger and Hortense Hill, was a progressive school that emphasized the arts and acting.

By most accounts the precocious Welles was partially responsible, even at the age of twelve, for bringing dramatic plays, performed and directed by the students, to the school. Over a five-year period in the late 1920s, Welles would act in and direct over thirty of these plays, including *Julius Caesar* and *Richard III*. In 1933, at the age of seventeen, he co-authored, with Roger Hill, *Everybody's Shakespeare*, a kind of promptbook which later became a financial and critical success.

Chomping at the bit to see the world, Welles left Illinois in the depths of the Great Depression in 1931. He toured the south and west of Ireland, sleeping out in the open as an itinerant sketch artist (a hobby he was quite good at), and eventually made his way to Dublin and the famous Gate Theater. By exaggerating his age and schmoozing his way into a role in the theater, he became friends with Hilton Edwards and Michael MacLiammoir, the stalwarts of the Dublin Gate.

After a successful run at the Gate, Welles returned to the United States amid the deepening economic gloom. In New York he partnered with John Houseman, and eventually Hallie Flanagan drew the two men into the WPA's (Works Progress Administration) Federal Theater Project, which she administered. The WPA was a federal government program that put thousands of actors, artists and musicians to work across the United States in the 1930s. Their first production was *Macbeth*, performed in Harlem. Dubbed by the critics "Voodoo Macbeth" because it was set in Haiti, the play was a popular sensation. It was also the first time that Shakespeare had been performed in a major public venue with an African-American cast for a mainly African-American audience.

Following *Macbeth*, Welles and the new Mercury Theater staged a modern-dress version of *Julius Caesar* in 1937 as an allegory of the rising tide of fascism. Much of the play's direction, lighting and acting was groundbreaking and established Welles and the Mercury as a force in the theater. With the WPA under attack by conservative critics, the Federal Theater was ultimately closed. Prior to the program's demise, however, Welles had moved into the realm of a new medium: radio. Once again, Welles swiftly made his mark as he revolutionized the airwaves while bringing adapted versions of the Shakespeare plays to a mass audience. By the later 1930s, Welles was easily the most recognized voice on radio, and by October of 1938, in the wake of the "War of the Worlds" program, was ready to make the move to Hollywood.

While best remembered for *Citizen Kane* and such movies as *Lady from Shanghai* and, later, *Touch of Evil*, Welles also produced, directed and starred in major Shakespearean productions. A film version of *Macbeth* shot in 1947 is a harrowing, blood-curdling telling with Scottish burr. Unfortunately, Welles had to fight the studios for creative control of the picture, and Republic Pictures cut twenty-one minutes out of the final running time. The picture also suffers from sound quality problems. Thankfully, modern technology has enabled the release of a restored 1980 version, a true director's cut, preserving Welles's original intent and powerful emotional unity.

(cont'd on p. 24)

The Peacham Document Revisited

By David Roper

In the Fall 2002 SOS Newsletter, David Roper gave compelling evidence that the Peacham Document, an Elizabethan manuscript that depicts a scene from Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus *with text (Longleat Archives), was actually dated 1575 and not 1594, as Stratfordian scholars have claimed. The earlier dating would disqualify the Stratford Man as Shakespeare. In the following article, Roper analyzes the latest Stratfordian explanation of the Latin chronogram that dates the document.*

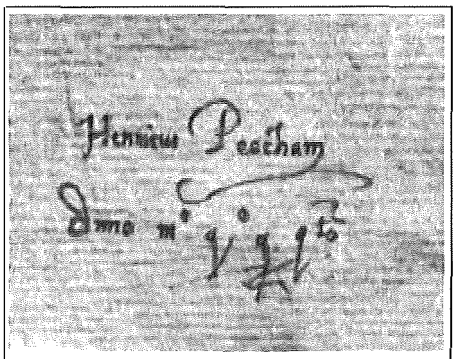
Current interest in the chronogram on the Peacham Document, and its potential for resolving the question of Shakespeare's authorship in favor of Edward de Vere, has brought to the forefront a previous but different attempt at dating this document. In the *Shakespeare Bulletin* (Spring 1999), Professor Herbert Berry claimed to have arrived at a date for the Peacham Document using a method hitherto unknown to any previous civilization. In plain English, Berry claimed that Peacham's chronogram should be read as $m^{o}q^{o}qq^{to}$ and that this represented 1594, thus coinciding with the date that *Titus Andronicus* was first published. The fact that the Peacham Document illustrates a scene from the play that does not appear in the published version, and that the dialogue attendant to the characters illustrated in the drawing differs from what was printed, were both carefully avoided by the professor.

Had Prof. Berry been a mathematician, and therefore better informed upon the history of numbers, he would have realized that no society on earth has ever added a combination of tens and units to another combination of tens and units to arrive at a partial date in tens and units. Prof. Berry cannot therefore have learned his system of dating from an earlier society, because no previous civilization ever practised that system. He must therefore either have invented it himself, to dispose of the awkward problem connected with dating the Peacham Document, or he misunderstood the Roman system of numbering. In Roman numerals, "1594" would have originally been written as "MDLXXXXIIII." It was medieval scholars who shortened this by subtractions, so as to read "MDXCIV." If Prof. Berry's misunderstanding was accidental, it may be because he mistakenly believed that 90 = XC = 100 - 10 was sufficient justification for interpreting $m^{o}q^{o}qq^{to}$ = 1000 + 500 + 50 + 45 = 1594. In Roman numerals, this equation appears as "MDLXLV" and is quite obviously ambiguous, since it can also be interpreted as either: 1000 + 500 + 50 + 45 = 1595, or 1000 + 500 + 60 + 55 = 1615.

Incidentally, 1615 is also a date favored by Prof. Jonathan Bate. However, he arrived at his conclusion by reading the Peacham Document as $m^{o}q^{o}gq^{to}$ which he then claimed to be representative of 1000 + 500 + 100 + 15 = 1615 (*millesimo quingentesimo centesimo decimo quinto*). Like Prof. Berry, he too had been forced to amalgamate two adjacent columns to give a single number, although this time it involved the hundreds. But it did enable him to arrive at a preconceived result, even though no precedent for this method of dating by amalgamation exists within any known civilization. Jonathan Bate also took it upon himself to translate g as c^{o}.

In his article, Prof. Berry gives the Latin equivalent for his preference of 1594 as "*Anno millesimo quingentesimo quinquaginta quadragintaquarto*." To understand the error contained in this phrase, one must understand that numbers may be cardinal or ordinal. The Latin language has separate words for both sets of numbers. For example, *Unus*, *Duo*, *Tres*, and *Primus*, *Secundus*, *Tertius* are One, Two, Three in cardinals and ordinals respectively. What Berry has done in order to achieve a date of 1594 is to mix together both cardinal and ordinal numbers; that is, quite apart from amalgamating tens and units with tens and units to arrive at his desired result in tens and units. A literal translation of this hotchpotch reads as follows: In the year one thousand five-hundred 50 40 - in the fourth.

Although Prof. Berry admits to uncertainty that the writer of the chronogram, Henricus Peacham, was male – presumably the fault lay in his failure to recognize that Henricus is in the masculine declension – he did recognize an urgent need to account for the admixture of cardinal and ordinal numbers. Fortunately, one cannot libel the dead, so Henry Peacham was given the blame for having performed the absurdity of mixing these two types of number. It should, however, be remembered that Henry Peacham Jr. associated with the leading mathematicians of his day, and was "ever naturally addicted to ... proportion and number." Had he been the Peacham who copied the document, then as a Cambridge graduate, a classicist and an amateur mathematician, he would never have committed the blunders that Prof. Berry requires from him in order to justify his own preferred date of 1594.



Detail of the Peacham Document, showing the Latin "chronogram" or abbreviation that dates it

It is perhaps needless to bury the professor even deeper in a grave of his own digging, but it may yet be instructive to examine, in detail, the basis upon which Berry's system for dating Peacham's chronogram has been constructed. To begin with, he has identified a need to distinguish between *quartus* and *quintus*. This happens to be his first error. For he had already correctly stated that Latin dates were given in the ablative case. The need is therefore to distinguish between *quarto* and *quinto*. Prof.

(cont'd on p. 17)

Veres and de Vere (cont'd from front page)

holders commissioned by William the Conqueror in 1086, which uses the briefer form in its citation of "Auberic Ver."

Originally, then, the "de" prefix appears to have been an identifying word, probably indicating place origin. According to scholars, the family's ancestors were either from Holland, Denmark or France. The "de" prefix occasionally recorded in early records seems to have meant (as *de*, *du*, *de la*, *da* and *di* mean in various European languages) "of" or "from," while "Ve(e)r(e)" originally referred to a village of residence or area of settlement. Verily Anderson cites as likely locations Veer in Holland, Ver in Denmark and an area of Normandy where Ver appears in several place names. If the extended family was mobile, its members may have at one time or another inhabited all three areas.

The Vere Family

In the 1500s, the clan was consistent in citing its ancestral, extended and collective family name as *Vere* rather than *de* Vere. Family acquaintances followed the same convention. For example, the family's Latin motto, *Vero Nihil Verius*, renders as "None truer than Vere." Edward entailed his estates in 1574 in order, says the legal document, to preserve the "name of the Veers." The residence he occupied at Oxford Court in central London was called Vere House. Oxford's cousins Francis and Horatio were nicknamed "the fighting Veres." Poet Gervase Markham in 1624 referred to "Our Veres, from the first hour of Caesar to this present day of King James…." Many modern scholars follow the same convention; for example, *The Dictionary of National Biography* cites the family name as Vere.

With respect to those individuals alive during and beyond Edward's own time, his sister was called Mary Vere, his daughters Elizabeth Vere, Susan Vere, Frances Vere and Bridget Vere, and his aunt Frances Vere. Oxford's illegitimate son by Anne Vavasor was named Edward Vere. Oxford's cousin Horatio (or Horace) became "Lord Vere of Tilbury." It was far more common for an individual from that family to be called "Vere" than "de Vere." Now let's find out why.

The *de* Veres

Some reference sources citing various members of the Vere family use the two forms of its last name interchangeably. However, it is clear that by the 1500s, and perhaps much earlier, the prefix "de" in English came to have a special meaning for this family. It was consistently reserved only for *certain* family members, specifically *the Veres who became earls*. It is they and only they, from Aubrey III, the 1st Earl, through Henry, the 18th Earl, whose names always sported the prefix. In contrast, official documents from the 1500s and 1600s report every non-earl simply as "Vere." John de Vere's will, from 1562, cites himself, the 16th Earl of Oxford, as *de* Vere. Yet he makes bequests to his brother "Awlbry Veer," his niece "Anne Verre" and his other niece, "Robert Veeres daughter," all without the prefix.[1]

Oxford's indenture and schedule of debts, made up in January 1575 prior to his traveling, follows throughout all three distinctions, involving the family name, individuals who were earls and those who were not. He cites Edwarde *De* (and *de*) Veer and John *De* Veer – the only two individuals who had been earls – and then Marye Veer, Hughe Veer, Awbrey Veer, "Iohn Veer esquier sonne and heire apparaunt of Rob[er]t Veer esquire," "Iohn Veer esquier sonne & heire of Gefferye Veer esquier deceased," [F]raunc[es] Veer, Rob[er]t Veer, Horatius Veer and lady Mary Veer. He caps his citations with a reference to "his saide house & famylie, in the name of the Veers…." Notice that among the three Johns mentioned, only one, Oxford's father, has a name distinguished by the "de," indicating that he had been an earl.

"the 'de' prefix appears to have been an identifying word, probably indicating place origin."

A lawsuit from May 6, 1594, involving Oxford's uncle, aunt and two cousins (one deceased) pointedly makes the same distinction. While referring repeatedly and in every instance to Robert Veer(e), Joan Veer(e), Mary Veer(e) and John Veer(e) *without the prefix*, it invokes the name of "the right honorable Edward *de* Veer nowe Erle of Oxenford." The reference to Oxford appears twice, and both instances use the prefix. In the same vein, when such documents refer to Edward's father, they call him "Iohn *de* Veer [or *De*vere] late Earle of Oxenford," and when they refer to his son, they call him "the righte hono[ra]ble Henry[ie] *de* Vere [or *De*vere] nowe Earle of Oxenford."

On November 12, 1612, Oxford's widow, Elizabeth Trentham, drew up her will and made the same distinction in her opening sentence: "I the lady Elizabeth *Vere* Countesse Dowager of Oxenford late wife of Edward *de Vere* late Earle of Oxenford doe make and ordayne this my last will and Testament…." She then carefully makes the same distinction when citing her son, saying, "I give unto my deare and lovinge sonne Henrie *de* Vere Earle of Oxenforde," while soon thereafter mentioning "my lovinge Cosen Iohn Vere esquire."

Lord Burghley referred to his own granddaughter, Oxford's first child, as "Lady Elizabeth Vere" in the inscription on his elaborate monument to Anne Cecil and her mother that he had erected in St. Nicholas' Chapel at Westminster Abbey shortly after their deaths in 1588 and 1589, respectively. Its stone and metal construction indicates its intended status as a historic record, intended to last for millennia. Thus, though Elizabeth was the daughter of a *de* Vere, she herself was a Vere. Surely given Burghley's social

"the prefix 'de' in English came to have a special meaning for this family. It was consistently reserved only for certain *family members, specifically* the Veres who became earls. *"*

ambitions, had he thought his family could have adopted the nobler "de Vere" form, he would have done so. Likewise, the legal document of 1591 turning over Castle Hedingham to Burghley in trust for Oxford's daughters, who were also Burghley's granddaughters, names them as "the ladies Eliz[abeth], Bridget, & Susan Veare." Similar documents from 1592 and 1598 use the same spelling. So citations that Lord Burghley controlled indicate that he, too, respected the distinction.

Shakespeare also understood the difference, with exceptional precision. In

"though Elizabeth was the daughter of a de *Vere, she herself was a Vere. Surely given Burghley's social ambitions, had he thought his family could have adopted the nobler 'de Vere' form, he would have done so."*

The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth (Act III, sc. iii), an eighteen-year-old John de Vere, then the 13th Earl, refers to "my elder brother, the Lord Aubrey Vere." He does not call him *de* Vere. Why? In 1462, King Edward IV beheaded Aubrey along with his father, John de Vere, the 12th Earl of Oxford, thereby leaving Aubrey out of the line of succession. By taking care to name him Aubrey *Vere* rather than *de* Vere, Shakespeare was taking Aubrey's lack of an earldom into account. As already demonstrated by his own legal documents, Oxford knew the difference in meaning. We may observe that as Shakespeare, Oxford cared deeply about the history of noble families. He even went so far as to whitewash part of the history of the Earls of Oxford. He would certainly have known Aubrey's status. Indeed, reflecting Shakespeare's precise choice of words, the son of an earl was properly called "Lord" even though he himself was not an earl.[2]

We may conclude, therefore, that the appellation Shakespeare chose for Aubrey was meticulous and deliberate. Lord Justice Crewe, when deciding a legal case concerning the line of succession for the title of Lord Great Chamberlain, wrote, "...let the name and dignity of *De Vere* stand so long as it pleaseth God." He was specifically addressing the peerage and thus cited the last name as it pertained to the long line of earls upon whose continuance he was ruling.

The de *Fades from the Family Name*

The "de" prefix faded from use even by the earls. A legal document from 1609 regarding a dispute between officials of Cambridge University and the 18th Earl, respecting Oxford's Covent Garden property in London omits the "de," saying, "Earl Edward, being also seized of lands held of His Majesty, died, leaving Henry Vere, now Earl of Oxford, his son and heir, His Majesty's ward." It is unclear whether this particular omission was deliberate or inadvertent, but it did occur on the cusp of a definite change. According to Anderson, Robert, the 19th Earl, despite his nobility, "dropped the 'de'" entirely. The *Dictionary of National Biography* noted that the 20th Earl's daughter "married the first Duke of St. Albans, whose descendants preserve his memory in the barony of Vere of Hanworth (1750)...", again omitting the prefix. The abandonment of the prefix provides yet another indication of its minority status as part of the family name.

Edward's Given Name

Edward's family name, then, was Vere, and it pertained to all members who were not or had never been earls. Edward was not the Earl of Oxford upon his birth, because his father was the earl. The only way that a member of the Vere family could have been born *de* Vere would be if the preceding earl were deceased. We must conclude, then, that Oxford's *given name*, in the only form that he would have been allowed to use until he became an earl, was *Edward Vere*, more formally, *Lord Edward Vere*. It would be helpful to have proof of this conclusion from Edward's first twelve years of life, but I am unaware of any extant document from the time that provides his last name. His father avoided citing it. As the eldest son of an earl, Edward was entitled to take the senior among the rest of the family's titles, which in his case was Viscount Bulbeck. John de Vere's two wills call him "my sonne Edwarde Lorde Bulbeck," "Edward my sonne" and "Edward Lorde Bulbeck my sonne," without adding any form of the family's last name despite its being cited elsewhere throughout the document. This very avoidance is likely evidence of respect for the distinction. A will is important twice, at its composition and at its reading. John's son would have been "Edward Vere" at the drawing of the will yet (if he were still alive) "Edward de Vere" at its reading. John could not use the former form, as it would not properly apply after his death. He could not use the latter form, as it was inaccurate at the time and would never properly apply if Edward were to predecease his father. Thus, John de Vere likely avoided citing his son's last name for practical reasons. At age twelve, upon the death of his father in 1562, Edward became an earl and thus entitled to adopt the "de" prefix for official matters. After that time, and in contrast to the names used in his father's will, legal documents faithfully address him, when they include his last name, as "Edward(e) *de* Ve(e)(a)r(e), Earl(e) of Ox(en)ford(e)."

Despite the honor that earldom afforded, there is evidence that in personal, familiar contexts, Edward still considered himself a Vere, like the rest of his family. While evidence for this contention is thin, we can at least demonstrate that he may have presented himself this way to his tutor, his lover, his audience and his intimate friends. George Baker, Thomas Bedingfield, Thomas Underdowne and Thomas Watson used the formal version of Oxford's name in dedicating works to Edward de Vere. However, Oxford's own Latin preface "to the Reader" of Bartholomew Clerke's English translation of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano (The Courtier)* introduces himself as "Edward *Vere*, Earl of Oxford." Clerke "seems to have been tutor" to Edward, so the two men would have been on familiar terms with

(cont'd on p. 15)

A Duel in D.C.

The Smithsonian Hosts an Authorship Debate

By Gerit Quealy

On Tuesday, January 29, 2002, at the Jefferson Auditorium of the Smithsonian Institute, Richard F. Whalen, author of *Shakespeare: Who Was He?* (and a past president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society) and Gail Kern Paster, professor of English at George Washington University and editor of the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, challenged each other in the Shakespeare Authorship Question: Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford vs. William Shaksper of Stratford-upon-Avon. And, as in any respectable duel, they had admirable "seconds," attorneys Robert S. Bennett (a lawyer for Enron) and E. Barrett Prettyman Jr. (recent inspector general of D.C.), to stand up for them and engage in cross-examination. William F. Causey, an attorney at Nixon Peabody LLP, moderated the event, and aptly so, as it was he who had initiated the proceedings in the first place. The event marked the second time that the Smithsonian has involved itself in the authorship question, the first time by printing an extensive article focusing on Oxford in the *Smithsonian Magazine* (September 1987).

The Smithsonian hostess who introduced the event kicked off the evening by confirming what many already knew – that there is considerable interest in this question, and people hold strong and stalwart views. The Smithsonian received a record number of vehement calls on both (perhaps many) sides of the issue. And the house was packed with over 600 people.

After extolling the value of trial practice, evidence, and cross-examination, Causey began with this simple statement: "There are two words synonymous with great literature: William Shakespeare." He went on to point out the growing mystery around the authorship, with "hundreds of books and articles exploring the question, [but that] in the past several decades Edward de Vere has emerged as the leading candidate." He quoted, "'to believe in the case of Edward de Vere, one must believe in conspiracy, plots and ghosts, [whereas] to believe in Shakespeare, one must only believe in miracles.'" He explained that both positions based their case on circumstantial evidence, but that there is *no conclusive proof on either side*, and with that the debaters were off to introduce their opening arguments.

The Debaters

Richard Whalen began by outlining the paucity of evidence for the Stratford Man, in his life, reputation, and possessions, citing that even the authenticity of the signatures we do have have been questioned, specifically by Jane Cox, Principal Assistant Keeper of the Public Records Office at Kew. After mentioning the questionable visual representations we have of the man, as well as Samuel Shoenbaum's lament about the "mundane inconsequence" of his life, Whalen went on to elucidate the reasons why Edward de Vere fits the profile of the author to a tee, and the luminaries who believed this to be the case, such as Whitman, Welles, and even Greenblatt. But as always, there was not enough time to explicate the comprehensive case for the 17th Earl, and it was then Paster's turn.

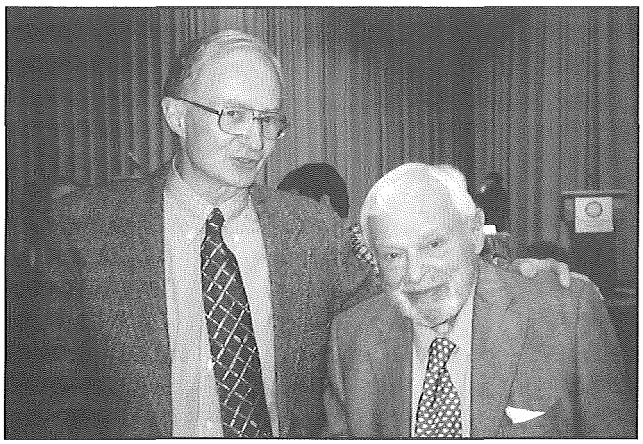


Photo: James Sherwood

Author Richard F. Whalen with Ambassador Paul Nitze, at the Smithsonian-sponsored debate in Washington, D.C. January 29, 2002

Her opening gambit was that "this joke about authorship has gone on long enough," a classic Stratfordian gambit to distract from discussion of the issue. She went on to cite Alan Nelson in a quote from his forthcoming biography on Oxford, that he was something of a "horse's ass" and that there's "no reason why a man like this (Stratford) could not have written these works." One longed for the inclusion of such points: that many writers (such as Hemingway and Ezra Pound) might also have been described with this epithet by detractors, and to contrast "could have, might have, must have" with "did, had, was, was there." She recited the much-touted, relatively recent inflation of the Stratford grammar school curriculum (cf. Park Honan's *Shakespeare: A Life*), John Shakespeare's position in Stratford society, and other contemporary authors' (Dekker, Fletcher, Heywood) meagre education as evidence. Paster countered this with De Vere's education (Cambridge, Gray's Inn) by explaining that, even though he attended these schools, there's no evidence he actually studied or learned anything there. (She later accused Whalen's lawyer of circular reasoning, but failed to cite this point as a salient example.) She mentioned contemporary "reviews" of Shakespeare by Robert Greene, Francis Meres, Gabriel Harvey (as had Whalen for Oxford), and

more convincingly, by Ben Jonson, citing his private diaries mentioning Shakespeare: "Why would he talk about him [in this fashion] in journals never intended for publication?"

The Gauntleteers

The lawyers then picked up the gauntlet, with Prettyman up first to cross-examine Whalen. Prettyman began with the name, and Whalen explained that "William Shakespeare" means poet/playwright, citing the goddess/muse Pallas Athena as the spear-shaker and Muse for Theater and the Arts. Prettyman went on to stress evidence of the Strachey letter's similarity to passages in *The Tempest* as well as the issue of the authorship being an "open secret," and the dearth of documentary biographical information on contemporary authors like Jonson, Marlowe, and Webster, all of which Whalen answered ably.

Bennett, in his cross of Paster, began with mention of Shakespeare's extensive vocabulary. Paster countered that much of Shakespeare's vocabulary was of his own making, inferring that one could not countenance an extensive vocabulary if it was made up. An informed observer would wish here for the added point that many of the words have foreign derivatives such as French or Latin, and that the author would have to have an intimate familiarity with these languages to play with words in this way. Paster elaborated by saying that "learning Latin is the way you make words in English," this again giving rise to the inflated curriculum of the Stratford Grammar School that Shakespeare "doubtlessly" attended. Bennett went on to cite: the lack of eulogies for Shakespeare at his death (Paster's answer: there were no printed eulogies, but there were some in manuscript form, like William Bass), lack of knowledge of Italy (Paster: no evidence that you needed first-hand experience of Italy in the plays), his knowledge of law (Paster: no evidence that he knew law all that well), and ended with the comment that "ever-living" (as in the sonnet dedication), usually indicated the person was deceased. Paster brought up an interesting tidbit that bears looking into: that "scholars of literacy" cite that, in the convention of the time, persons could read who could not write – that signing one's name with an X was not a sign of illiteracy. (This writer has never heard such a claim and would like historical documentary evidence for corroboration.)

After the Break

Following a short intermission, the debate reconvened. Questions put to Whalen concerned the notion that eulogies to writers were reserved for the nobility (i.e., that it was not unusual that the commoner Shaksper received none at his death), that *Venus and Adonis* publisher Richard Field hailed from Stratford-upon-Avon (suggesting a connection between that town and the Shakespeare works), and that the writer of the plays was clearly a "good person" whereas Oxford clearly was not. Whalen responded that Francis Beaumont (not a nobleman) received eulogies, that Field had more connections with Oxford than with Shaksper, and that Oxford's personality, as described to Justice Stevens, was met with the response "Sounds like the conduct of a playwright [to me]."

Photo: James Sherwood

Attorney Robert S. Bennett defended the Oxfordian position at the Smithsonian debate.

Paster, in her final cross by Bennett (who became an Oxfordian in preparing for this debate), fielded questions on the dating of the plays, autobiographical parallels, and the question of miracles. To these she responded that she doesn't agree with the Oxfordian dating of the plays, that "there are no autobiographical plays in the whole corpus of Elizabethan literature," and brought up the issue of stylometrics – that Oxford's early works did not match stylometrics tests for Shakespeare. To the last point, she responded that rather than a belief in miracles, she was "a scholar who believed in hard work." One could argue that she might make a good Oxfordian, as there is no evidence of "work" by Shakespeare, of a literary nature at any rate, and a great deal of work to recommend Oxford.

What We Can Learn From This

Paster, after her first cross-examination, commented in an aside, "History is on my side," and as Causey pointed out in his opening address, "the burden of proof is on Oxfordians" for precisely this reason. Ms. Paster is a smooth and facile debater. One would argue that she, indeed Stratfordians in general, have had years of practice (roughly 400 one might say). For this reason, it would behoove Oxfordians to keep in mind a few salient points. Although many Oxfordians have moved beyond what seem to be obvious questions, these are the questions that newcomers will ask, and we need smooth, facile "sound bites" to answer them. We need to develop more debaters who can think fast on their feet, advocates well versed in Stratfordian arguments, i.e., the particulars of the Strachey letter in relation to *The Tempest*, or the education and biography of other contemporary Elizabethan writers. Let's not get lost in the forest for the sake of the trees. The Smithsonian debate was a major step forward for all seekers of the truth.

Book Review (cont'd from p. 7)

the authorship issue, that Baconians, Marlovians and Oxfordians have all failed to capitalize on the fact that their claimant's homo- or bisexuality would actually be a powerful argument for authorship. Surprisingly, for a Stratfordian, Keevak states in his discussion of the claimants that "indeed Oxford is by far the leading candidate even today..." But Keevak faults the Oxfordian movement for failing from the beginning to discuss Oxford's "attitude toward either sex," despite what he says is Looney's claim that this "may indeed afford an explanation for the very existence of the Shakespeare mystery." Yet he states that Looney himself, Ogburn, and other Oxfordians have discounted, or refused to recount, the charges of sodomy against Oxford. Oxfordians instead, says Keevak, seek the security of Hamlet as the poet's true autobiography. Keevak also points this charge at the SOS. "It is notable that the current Shakespeare Oxford Society home page has whittled down Looney's original list of character traits to ten and that the earl's 'attitude' towards either sex has been removed altogether." Keevak is referring to Looney's point no. 8, "Doubtful and somewhat conflicting in his attitude to woman."

Is this true? Keevak perceptively mentions that even today, Oxfordian email sites, discussion groups, and journals fail to discuss Oxford's bisexuality, and that the "dissenters are ostensibly more concerned with the presumed social status of their author than with his romantic predilections." Unfortunately, I can confirm this bias from personal experience, having been recently (and secretly) dropped from an Oxfordian email discussion group for merely suggesting that Oxford might be bisexual. I was accused of promoting "erroneous" and "misleading" statements.

A major oversight in the book was Keevak's failure to mention – other than in the bibliography – Joseph Sobran's *Alias Shakespeare*, which makes exactly the case that Keevak states should be made. Sobran argues that the Sonnets' "homosexuality" fits Oxford and Southampton perfectly in a way that Shakespeare's life cannot, and explains the reason for the authorship mystery, as Looney first suggested.

"My point," says Keevak, "is not simply that generations of readers have expended so much energy trying to discover the bard's true identity, whether or not they ever pay heed to the messy questions of an accompanying sexual 'orientation,' but that the very idea of 'our own' identity keeps getting in the way. About whom are we dreaming? For these are biographical daydreams not only about Shakespeare, since the allegory is also our own, and indeed the sodomitical fault, to paraphrase Cassius, seems to lie in ourselves." Keevak concludes that "this is a sexual Shakespeare who, in short, continues to be thoroughly desexualized." In spite of its unfocussed approach, *Sexual Shakespeare* is a quite revealing and informative book, from which Oxfordians could learn how to capitalize on Oxford's potential bisexuality, as Sobran uniquely has, to promote him as the author.

The SOS Newsletter welcomes your thoughtful letters to the editor; due to space limitations, however, they are subject to editing.

Veres and de Vere (cont'd from pg. 11)

each other, Clerke taking a superior's role in the educational context. To Clerke, it seems, the earl was simply a friend, Edward Vere.

One of the few poems we know that Oxford wrote or inspired is *Ann Vavasor's Eccho*. It is found in a volume of verse hand-copied by one Anne Cornwaleys, daughter of the man who purchased Oxford's Fisher's Folly property in 1588, under a section called *Verses Made by the Earle of Oxford*. The poem begins thus, with the narrator's lover's name, Vere, called out as an echo:

> O heavens, who was ye first that bredd in me this feavere? *Vere.*
> Whoe was the firste that gave ye wounde whose fearre I ware for evere? *Vere.*
> What tyrant, Cupid, to mye harme usurpes thy golden quivere? *Vere.*
> What wighte first caughte this harte, and can from bondage it deliver? *Vere.*

Either Anne Vavasor or (far more likely) Edward de Vere composed this poem after he had become the Earl of Oxford and therefore after he had adopted the "de" prefix to his last name. Nevertheless, the reference is to Vere, suggesting that he was comfortable with, and perhaps even preferred, that appellation in such contexts. There are also hints that in certain writings he used the code word *ever* (and allied words such as *never* and *every*) as a self-reference, standing for *E. Ver*. For example, Oxfordians find double meaning in the line from Shakespeare's Sonnet 76 that reads, "That *every* word doth almost tell my name." The Sonnets, according to Francis Meres, were circulated only among Shakespeare's "private friends." From the context of *Ann Vavasor's Eccho* and the Sonnets, we may infer that Oxford held himself out as Edward Vere to those with whom he was intimate.

There is evidence that Oxford personified spring using the old English word *Ver* (the root of the word *verdant*) in circumstances where his character is suggested. For example, *Love's Labour's Lost* ends with the "Song of *Hiems*, Winter, and *Ver*, Spring," which is introduced, "This side is *Hiems*, Winter, this *Ver*, the Spring; the one maintained by the owl, the other by the cuckoo. *Ver*, begin." Ruth Loyd Miller interprets the lyrics as pertaining directly to a situation in Oxford's life at the time, thus indicating that Ver represents Oxford. If so, we may infer that Oxford was content to present himself by the name Ver even in public.

Had Edward considered the "de" prefix an integral and necessary part of his own name, then it would not have occurred to him to use *Vere*, *ever* and *Ver* as self-references. He thus seems fairly commonly in informal situations to have conceived of and expressed his name as *Ver(e)*, not *de* Vere. Because the "Vere," "Ver" and "E. Ver" abbreviations reflect what we have surmised to be his boyhood name, we may deduce that Oxford adopted these self-references at a young age. Since he continued to use them, we may conclude that he remained comfortable throughout his life referring to himself as Edward *Vere* in informal contexts. He reserved Edward *de Vere* for circumstances that called for a formal or official expression of his name.

NOTES

[1] I can find only one exception to the apparent rule. John de Vere's earlier will, dated 1552, refers to his brothers Aubrey, Robert and Geoffrey initially as "Vere." Once later in this document, these same names occur with the "de" prefix. Given what is otherwise consistent throughout the Vere family documents so far observed, we might postulate that the first mention was as John had dictated it, while the second mention was an error on the part of the lawyer who drafted the remainder of the document.

[2] For an example, see the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 9, p. 640 under "Henry Herbert."

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Review of Journals

Oxford Spoof in *The Shakespeare Newsletter*; The Updated 1577 Interview of Oxford's Page, Orazio Cuoco, in *De Vere Society Newsletter*

In a hilarious although misguided attempt to debunk the 17th Earl of Oxford as the true author of Shakespeare's works, *The Shakespeare Newsletter* (Fall 2001) has published a witty satire that unwittingly supports Oxford as the author. The satire is a dialogue between Queen Elizabeth and Lord Burghley written by Thomas A. Pendleton, co-editor of the Stratfordian newsletter published by Iona College in New Rochelle, New York. The quarterly has more than 2,000 subscribers, mostly college professors. In his one-act scenario, Professor Pendleton has an obsequious, garrulous Burghley trying to placate an impatient, imperial Elizabeth as he unhappily informs her about Oxford's outrageous behavior and the abortive attempts to keep secret his playwriting for the theater. Oxfordians will recognize all the usual accusations against Oxford. At one point, Elizabeth asks Burghley to tell her what people are saying about Oxford. He's reluctant, but she draws from him that Oxford is called a secret Catholic, a traitor, and an informer.

> Elizabeth: What else, Burghley? Please God, nothing worse.
> Burghley: Well, Madam, they call him a seducer.
> E: Oh, that's well known. He gave that slut Nan Vavasour the big belly, and I clapped them both in the Tower for it. Why do all my Maids of Honor flop down on their backs at the first appearance of a handsome fellow like Oxford? The dog! (Reflects) The handsome dog.

Neither of them can remember the name of the man from Stratford, who Burghley says is "barely literate" with illegible handwriting and who seems to spell his name differently each time he tries. They refer to him as Shipshape, Sheepshank, Slipshod, Shortstop, etc., etc., from Straightforward Oven. Elizabeth can't believe that Burghley has a "concealment conspiracy" to hide Oxford's authorship or that it could be accomplished. She tests him by asking Burghley to confirm that no one knows the secret.

> B: No, indeed, Madam. No one but us.
> E: Well, of course, you and I and Walsingham – and Hatton and Raleigh.
> B: The Privy Council, of course, and I suppose a few of their secretaries and advisers.
> E: And probably my Maids of Honor – the sluts – *and* the Gentlemen Pensioners, who mount them so regularly.
> B: Well, perhaps so. And, it goes without saying, the common players who perform Oxford's plays. They can hardly think their fellow Smokestack is actually the author.

Exasperated, Elizabeth finally asks Burghley to tell her again why there must be "a concealment of Oxford's play writing."

> Q: I know you have already – but – just the nub of it, old friend.
> B: Well, Madam (Starts searching for papers.) As, I had previously explained, the safety of a great land – (Still searching) – like England – under your Majesty's wise direction – blest by the grace of God... Many factors – (Rummaging frantically) – Concerns – and, ah...

He finally admits he can't remember why there's a concealment conspiracy, and Elizabeth bails him out of his predicament by exclaiming, "Then the secret shall be concealed – For England!!" The concealment conspiracy or implausible conspiracy, as it is sometimes called, is, of course, a straw-man argument, set up by Stratfordians to be easily knocked down to discredit the Oxfordian proposition. Pendleton's Burghley shows the absurdity of such a conspiracy. In fact, the best explanation is that Oxford's authorship was an open secret, not to be discussed publicly, since it was considered disgraceful for aristocrats to write plays and since he was satirizing figures in Queen Elizabeth's court. Unless Pendleton is a closet Oxfordian (not impossible), he has not only written a satire that makes the case for Oxford, but he's done so with playful wit and a talent for scriptwriting. With a few minor corrections and revisions, it would make a skit that any Oxfordian would be proud to have written.

From time to time, Pendleton's newsletter has published articles of interest to Oxfordians. Charlton Ogburn received a lengthy obituary and tribute. In 1999, the newsletter carried a letter by Ramón Jiménez in reply to a challenge to explain John Davies's poem "To Our English Terrence, Mr. Will. Shake-speare." Two years ago, a two-part article by J. Anthony Burton of Amherst described the extraordinary knowledge of obscure points of law that Shakespeare shows in *Hamlet*. Oxfordians immediately saw the value of Burton's work for the case for Oxford. Also of interest in this issue of the *Newsletter* is an article by Henry Janowitz, M.D., on Shakespeare's knowledge of the Copernican Revolution not only in *Hamlet* but also in *Henry VI Part I* in a passage about the orbit of Mars (1.2.1). The largest part of the issue, however, is devoted to articles and reviews on theaters and Shakespeare on stage, film and videotape.

– Richard Whalen

De Vere Society Newsletter

The January/February 2002 *De Vere Society Newsletter* features writers from England, Germany, Italy, and the United States reporting on a variety of Oxfordian research topics. Dr. Naomi Magri offers an updated transcript of the 1577 "Venetian Inquisition Inquiry into Orazio Cuoco," accompanied by background comments about the Earl of Oxford's plans, during his European trip, to avoid Milan for fear of the Catholic Inquisition. The teen-aged Cuoco testified that he left Venice with his parents' blessing, traveled to England with Oxford, and was employed by him as a page for eleven months. Despite the accusations of

some to the contrary, it appears that Cuoco was neither abused nor taken advantage of by Oxford, and that he was able to freely practice his religion and attend Mass during his residence in London.

In an article entitled "Portia and Shylock: Just mercy against the law of the Talion?," Robert Detobel analyzes several passages from *The Merchant of Venice* with respect to verses in the Old and New Testaments. One of his conclusions is that "Portia's intervention before the court is less of a fine homily on mercy by a high-pitched moral mind than of a lawyer's gross and treacherous sophistry to spare Antonio from a humiliating situation."

Michael Walker reviews the March/April 2001 issue of the German literary magazine *Literaturen* – half of which is devoted to the Shakespeare authorship debate. Walker points out that the magazine's presentation was "rather idiosyncratic and unprofessional," and that discussions of the authorship question in Germany seem to be affected by attitudes toward Marxism and capitalism.

In her article on Shakespeare's obvious knowledge of current developments in medicine, astronomy, and the law, Stephanie Hopkins Hughes speculates about why he omitted any overt mention of the Copernican theory, the most important development in astronomy in the 16th Century. In addition, she describes Edward de Vere's early exposure to the library of his tutor Sir Thomas Smith, where he had access to hundreds of important books, including the classics of Greek and Roman literature, histories, theological works, and the latest publications in law, mathematics, medicine, and philosophy.

Richard Malim explores the relationship between the writings of Giordano Bruno and several Shakespearean comedies, and suggests that the orthodox view that Bruno may have influenced Shakespeare is very likely backwards. He points out that Bruno was well known as a plagiarist, and that his comic dialogues of the early and middle 1580s appear to be indebted to *The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which Oxfordians have dated earlier.

In his introduction to the life and work of George Puttenham, the most likely author of *The Arte of English Poesie*, Charles Willis describes how Puttenham and Edward de Vere were related by marriage and common ancestry. Puttenham also had a close connection with Oxford's father-in-law, William Cecil, to whom he dedicated *The Arte*, which was printed in 1589 by Richard Field, the subsequent printer of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece.* In her "Occasional Diary," Verily Anderson relates her interesting experiences with filmmakers in connection with her book *Beware of Children*, which was made into a movie, and another, *The De Veres of Castle Hedingham*, which, though optioned, was not.

– *Ramón Jiménez*

THIS IS *YOUR* NEWSLETTER.

The Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter encourages your submission of...

- **Research Articles**
- **Essays**
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...of relevance to Shakespeare, Oxford and the Authorship Question.
Contributions should be reasonably concise. Original papers must include author's contact information and are subject to editing for content and length.

Send to:
Katherine Chiljan
kchiljan@earthlink.net
45 Wilder St., #1,San Francisco, CA 94131

Peacham ... Revisited (cont'd from p. 9)

Eugene Waith, following consultations with Prof. Clarence Miller, had already settled this problem: *quarto* = q^{rto}, *quinto* = q^{to}. But Berry has his own agenda to follow. He asserts that the tail of the letter q is shorthand for 'n' or 'm.' He therefore proposes that q^{o} = qn^{o} = q[ui]n[gentesim]^{o} = 500. But this suggestion is pure nonsense, since by using the same "logic," $qn^{\bullet}$ could just as easily equal q[ui]n[t]^{o} = 5. It is also useless for Berry to appeal to the letter's placing in the "hundreds" column because his method is supposedly independent of dating. And in any case, he has destroyed that argument by incorporating tens in the "units" column (i.e., q^{to} = 44).

Ignorant of this ambiguity in his system of dating, Berry proceeds to the next q, whose tail, but no superscript, evinces from him the conclusion that q = q[ui]n[quaginta] = 50. Again, why not q = q[ui]n[que] = 5; or perhaps q = q[ui]n[decim] = 15? Berry's shorthand explanation leaves him without an answer. The professor's final attempt at explaining q^{to} is not without humor. The manner in which the tail of the q has been written allows him to see this as yet another piece of medieval shorthand for "ra." He then asserts that the final superscript, $^{\bullet}$, actually means r^{to}. From this he produces, and I quote: q[uad]ra[gintaqua]r^{to} = 44. Alas, Professor Berry's knowledge of Latin does not seem to extend to an awareness that *quadraginta* is the cardinal number for 40, whereas *quarto* is the ordinal number for 4 in the ablative case. By combining these two disparate types of number into a single unit, he has finally descended to the level of farce. "44" should be written as either *quadragesimo quarto* in ordinal form or *quadraginta quattuor* in cardinal form.

In his introduction to *Titus Andronicus*, Prof. Waith wrote, concerning the chronogram, " ... 'q' (as it has sometimes been read) makes no sense." It is to be hoped that all persons of a discerning intelligence would now agree with that statement.

David Roper holds an honors degree in Mathematics and has for the past twenty years taught Pure Maths, Statistics and Applied Maths at advanced level to students studying for a place at university. He has also written some original mathematics which is presently awaiting recognition.

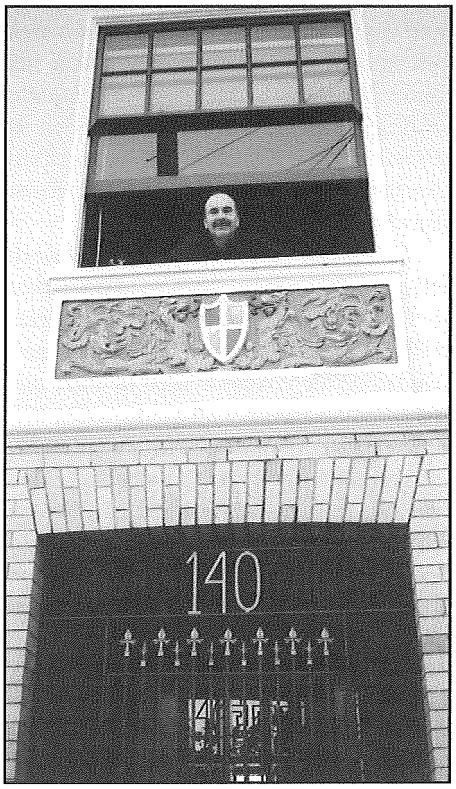
Meet the SOS Trustees

John Hamill

John Hamill was voted a member of the SOS Board of Trustees at the recent Carmel Conference. Hamill was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, and moved to California at age 18. What fostered his interest in Shakespeare was seeing the 1936 film *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on television when he was ten years old. It was a movie that had everything he liked: Greek mythology, magic, comedy, great lines and great music. That was when he first started to read Shakespeare.

Hamill first encountered the authorship issue in 1997, when he read *The 100 – A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* by Michael Hart. The chapter on Oxford as Shakespeare grabbed his attention. Hamill had never heard of Edward de Vere or the authorship question, other than that Hitler once claimed that Shakespeare was actually German. When Hamill mentioned the authorship issue to his father, he told him that he had just read a review of Joseph Sobran's *Alias Shakespeare*. It was that book that convinced Hamill that Shakespeare was Oxford, because it showed, "as with any other author, the works reflect his life and his life reflects his works." Hamill had never questioned Shakespeare's authorship before, and had visited all the sites at Stratford-upon-Avon: the "birthplace," his elementary school, and his burial site. The only thing that struck him as strange was to find out that there was no theater in Stratford when Shakespeare lived there.

After reading Sobran's book, Hamill joined the SOS, and attended the 1998 conference in San Francisco. Sobran's book and his own research inspired him to write a screenplay on Oxford, which was "a terrific learning experience." In his spare time from work at the Environmental Protection Agency, he continues research on Oxford and Southampton, whose relationship he believes might be the key to resolving the authorship question. "There is enough information available now to have Oxford be recognized as the true author. But as history shows us, a new paradigm is always hard to be accepted. Look how long it took to convince scientists that the earth was round. Even though the ancients knew this, the knowledge was lost – a parallel with Oxford?"



John Hamill, peering out of the window of his San Francisco home; built in 1925, the house features above the entrance a bas relief of griffins and a shield, which John repainted to reflect Oxford's colors.

James Sherwood

James Sherwood (see photo in Oxfordian News) was also elected as SOS trustee at the Carmel Conference, after fulfilling his appointment in September 2001. He was born in Hollywood in 1936. He learned about the authorship issue in 1952 at a meeting of the Theosophical Society in San Francisco at the home of his first writing agent, May MacArthur-Ratliff. He then read *Shakespeare Identified* and *This Star of England*, never lost interest, and began a lifelong study of the Works. Sherwood was unable to participate actively in any group due to responsibilities raising a family of six children and working in a family-owned business. Now that his children are grown (he now has five grandchildren), he finally has time to help out at the SOS.

Sherwood hasn't done original research on the authorship, but is a published writer (over 30 novels). He feels that his book *Shakespeare's Ghost* is his contribution to the authorship subject, thanks to the help of Pidge Sexton, Richard Whalen, Barbara Burris, and other friends. "It is a novel that will interest readers of poetry and lovers of fiction." (For more information about Sherwood's works, visit www.opusbooks.com.)

Sherwood's other interests include a passion for movies, especially those of the '30s and '40s, and the masters of the silents. "I wrote several screenplays, including a famous scene – 'the eating scene' – from the Oscar-winning *Tom Jones*." His other passion is Glacier National Park, Montana, where he grew up and where he spends five months a year in his home there (his other home is in Plandome, NY). "Perhaps it is the mountains of my beloved Montana that bring me so much closer to Shakespeare. It is poetry in nature – the only undesignated biospheric preserve (a completely self-contained eco-system) on our great Continent." Sherwood believes that the biggest challenge to recognition of Edward de Vere as author of Shakespeare is patience. "The truth is known and its recognition is inevitable…I care about the authorship because knowing who wrote them puts a voice into the otherwise anonymous works. The great joy of reading the Bible is that it has the sound of the Voice of God, whatever that could mean. It also has the sound of men addressing that same God, whoever He might be. Until one understands Edward de Vere, no reader can imagine whose voice is speaking or whom that voice is speaking to, but when you know Oxford, you meet Shakespeare on user-friendly ground."

President's Letter

Another big thanks to the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation for sponsoring the 25th Annual Conference in Carmel last October. It was a roaring success: excellent papers, tremendous productions and a captivating debate between Dr. Alan Nelson and David Roper. The Ford Foundation will be sponsoring the 26th Annual Conference in the Washington, D.C., Metro Area this fall. Details are virtually complete and we will let you know them soon.

A factor which could have adversely affected last year's attendance, but didn't thanks to so many dedicated members, was the 9/11 terrorist attacks and ensuing events. We still had over 100 attendees with less than ten cancellations. We expect as many or more in D.C. The new D.C. Metro SOS chapter has pitched in vigorously on the effort and we as members should be most grateful for their dedicated work. In light of the recent debate sponsored by the Smithsonian, and the continued strong interest in the legal community there (initiated long ago by the late David Lloyd Kreeger, Esq., and ably continued by his son Peter), it is an exciting time to be an Oxfordian, particularly for those inside and just outside the Beltway.

Meanwhile, the Society is continuing and completing many of the internal reform projects so important to a non-profit with a six-figure budget and growing. Treasurer Joe Peel and Assistant Treasurer Richard Desper have implemented continued checks and balances on the treasury that assure full disclosure and veracity. They have established an online shopping cart system for Blue Boar purchases. The Society's books for the year 2000 have been reviewed in the past year by the Boston accounting firm of Feeley and Driscoll in order to assure that the Society is in full compliance with required accounting practices and procedures. The Society's reviewed financial statements for the year 2000 are shown in the enclosure with this Newsletter. The Society's endowment fund currently stands at $41,048.41. The Board greatly appreciates the generous donations of our members as we seek to build the endowment to $100,000 within the next two years. I also wish to express our gratitude to the members of the executive oversight committee, chaired by James S. Hardigg, for their review of the Society's financial affairs and for their assistance.

As an integral part of the reforms, I announced at Carmel the appointment of Cheryle M. Sims, one of the Directors of the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation, as a fourth member of this committee that reviews fiscal and basic policy matters decided by the Board of Trustees. This is a vital part of maintaining financial integrity in the Society's operations and our accountability to you, the members. I was particularly grateful to Mrs. Sims for her letter supporting our Board's actions, read at Carmel, which reiterated the Foundation's continuing support of the Society, furthering Mrs. Ford's commitment to Oxford's authorship.

The Society is also planning a joint conference with the De Vere Society of England at St. John's College, Cambridge, (De Vere's own college, as well as Lord Burghley's) in the Summer of 2004. The event will commemorate the 400th anniversary of Oxford's death in 1604, and besides paper presentations, will include visits to Castle Hedingham, the De Vere tombs at Bures, Otley Hall, the Essex Records Office, the Tudor village of Lavenham, and attendance at a performance at the New Globe Theatre in London.

Finally, I am hereby soliciting resumes for the editorship of the Newsletter, since the recent appointments were interim only. Send resumes to Dr. Jack Shuttleworth (7770 Delmonico Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80919), who is chairman of the Publications Committee. Applicants should know the authorship issues well, have knowledge of layout and production, and have the ability to work well with writers and researchers.

We have an exciting year ahead with many new developments in the authorship debate, and we look forward to your continued support of our efforts.

– Aaron Tatum

Times (cont'd from front page)

prominently, although not altogether favorably, and the documentary film, *Much Ado About Something,* (see p. 20).

How did this boon for Oxfordians come about? Niederkorn says he had thought about doing an article on the subject since he was an English major at Georgetown. Then last June he moved from style news to culture news "and I suggested the article then," he explains. "John Rockwell, the editor of Arts & Leisure, was interested, so I started working on the article intensively, right up until it ran," he continues. "I think that if there was ever an example of the editorial process working well, this was it." A number of editors contributed to the process, he says, "particularly Andrea Stevens, the theater editor of Arts & Leisure, as well as John Rockwell (who has just become a senior cultural correspondent), John Darnton, William McDonald and John Storm, asked key questions and made deft suggestions that served the article well," he observes, adding that there was no resistance to running the piece.

The article elucidates why the issue has gathered momentum in recent years and how academics have largely ignored the question. It cites the three Supreme Court justices – John Paul Stevens, Harry A. Blackmun and William J. Brennan Jr. – who eventually changed their opinions about the validity of the Stratford Man after the celebrated moot-court debate in Washington in 1987.

Niederkorn mentions a host of leading Oxfordians throughout the years, from J.T. Looney and Charlton Ogburn to Derek Jacobi, Michael York, and Orson Welles. He also cites the "Rosetta Stone" for Oxfordians, Roger Stritmatter's successful thesis on the Geneva Bible with the many "Shakespearean" verses marked in De Vere's copy, as well as the successful debate at the Smithsonian in January.

It's not that this is the first time that the *Times* has touched on the topic of authorship. A November 1988 article covered a London debate at Middle Temple Hall entitled "Bard on Trial Again, and Again He Wins." A year later there was a derisive review of a play on Oxford's authorship, *The Queen's Men*, albeit with the lead line, "Yes, Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, is the actual author of the plays and sonnets ascribed to William Shakespeare." And ten years later, a review

(cont'd on p. 23)

Film Review

Much Ado About Something Explores Marlowe's Case for Authorship

By Anne Dobbs

"Come live with me and be my love" – that's Marlowe's poetic invitation, but is it Shakespeare's? In the US premiere of *Much Ado About Something*, a new documentary film by Michael Rubbo, this question is explored with humor, insight, and the Shakespearean intellects of the day, among them, John Michell (author of *Who Wrote Shakespeare?*), Jonathan Bate, and Stanley Wells. What does this mean for Oxfordians (whom Bate dismisses as mostly "American snobs")? A great deal.

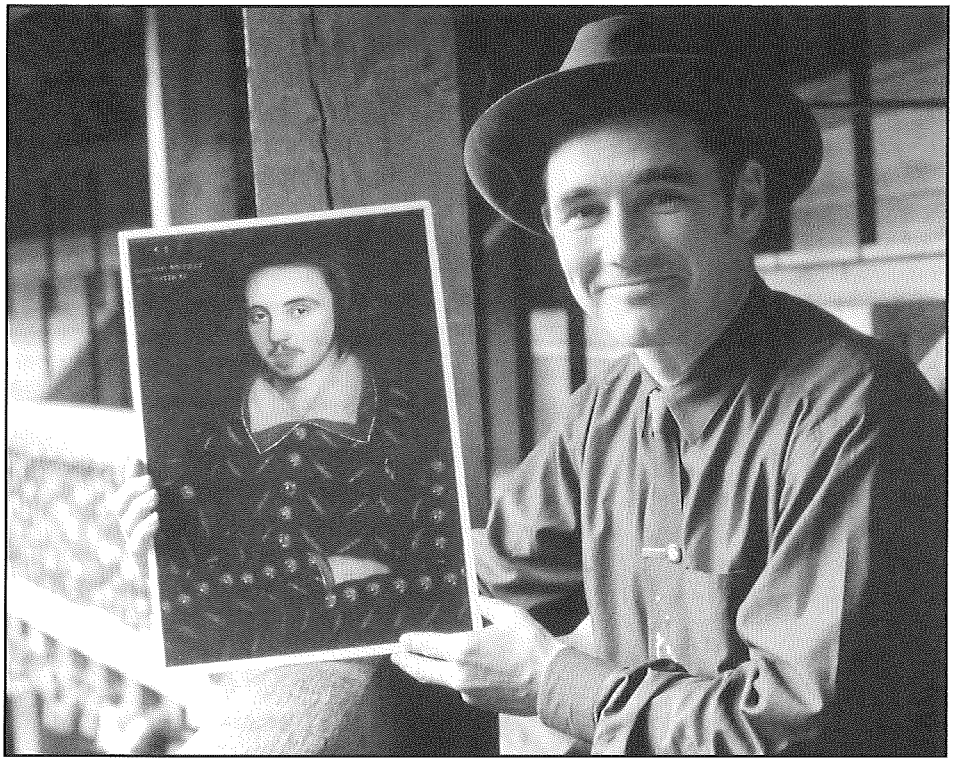
For one thing, it presents as least half of the Oxfordian case: why it's unlikely that William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon was the author. The film, in fact, begins with the doggerel poem on the Stratford Man's grave in Trinity Church: "Good friend, for Jesus sake forbear..." and goes on to explore the Shakespeare sights, such as the Poet's Corner. Also, a list of Stratford doubters like Henry James, Dickens, and Shaw are considered, and the film investigates, as Michell puts it, the "beautiful territory of the 16th Century mind."

Wells offers some interesting and amusing insights, like his suspicion that Shakspere bought New Place for a quiet place to work, a "private study," because he "didn't need to live in London," and that "the plays and poems show that he had a very good education." Mark Rylance, artistic director of the Globe in London, appears throughout the film with his usual cogent comments: "The only rational response is to say that it is an open question" and that he "came to it by a widening of my view."

The cornerstone of the Marlovian claim is that Christopher Marlowe did not die in 1593. The murder that was recorded was part of an elaborate plot to extricate him from the spy network with which he was involved, but instead he was spirited off to Italy where he continued to write plays and sneak them back to England to be passed off by a front man – William Shakespeare. This at least makes the accusation of conspiracies in the Oxfordian case seem quite tame.

All in all, it is an engaging and enjoyable detective story that will get the conversation going. Sadly, the passionate and committed doyenne of the Marlovian Society, Dolly Wraight, featured prominently in the film and author of a seminal work on the Marlovian case, died on February 15, 2002.

The 94-minute film has enjoyed a two-week run at New York City's prestigious Film Forum, has garnered favorable reviews from *Variety*, the *Toronto Globe & Mail*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, among others, and is hoping for wider distribution in the States. If you have a favorite independent theater that you think might run it, please contact: Jan Rofekamp at Films transit International, 514-844-3358, janrofekamp@filmstransit.com.



Mark Rylance (actor, INTIMACY*), Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe Theater in London, holding Christopher Marlowe's portrait in* Much Ado About Something.

Obituaries

OLGA IRONSIDE-WOOD

Olga Ironside-Wood of Worcestershire, England, died at age 88 on Oct. 12, 2001. Her play about Edward de Vere, *Proud Passionate Boy*, won the first Deep South Writers' prize in Lousiana in 1983. The judge for that inaugural contest was Charles Champlin, Arts & Drama Editor for the *L.A. Times*. Mrs. Ironside-Wood visited contest sponsors Ruth and Judge M.D. Miller and lectured about Shakespeare and De Vere at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Proud Passionate Boy was produced by Mrs. Ironside-Woods's own theater company, the Suffolk Players, at the Regal Theatre, Stowmarket, Suffolk, in 1988. "Whether it will persuade the unconverted is a matter for continuing debate," reported the *East Anglican Daily Times* (Oct. 15, 1988). "What is beyond doubt is the effective progress of the play, which...comes into its own as it steps back into the 16th Century to present an episodic, pageant-like view of de Vere's public and domestic life, with echoes and pointers to the plays." Olga and husband Lt. Col. (Ret.) Derek Ironside-Wood lived near Bures, Suffolk, not far from the St. Stephens Chapel, located on the property of Col. (Ret.) G.O.C. Probert. Mrs. Ironside-Wood often arranged visits by De Vere enthusiasts to this historic "Chapel Barn," housing rare Oxford effigies. Col. Probert introduced Ironside-Wood to the Oxfordian movement when he loaned her Ruth Loyd Miller's Third Edition of *Shakespeare Identified*.

– *Lawrence Wells*

VINCENT J. MOONEY, JR.

On September 5, 2001, Vincent J. Mooney Jr. died at age 57. There were times when it seemed the most active member of the local Washington, D.C. chapter of the SOS was a staunch Baconian, Vincent Mooney, the man whose smoke-filled living room formed the setting for so many debates and meetings. Charlton Ogburn Jr. remarked that Vincent was his "favorite Baconian," which was probably more flattering than it sounds. Vincent had a flair for tracking down authors whom he admired, knocking on their doors, and tackling them foursquare with an indomitable intellect and curiosity. Thus, he had landed in the Ogburns' Charleston, SC, living room one afternoon and kept the grand old man busy with a flurry of questions, which Charlton later described to me as a most enjoyable time. Stupidly, I remarked to him that Vincent was a Baconian, when suddenly the phone erupted with, "Well, that was a darned waste of time, then!" (but not exactly those words). Later Vincent was to become acquainted with the Groupist John Michell, whose 1996 book gave Oxford a very fair treatment (although it gave Bacon more than his due!). And of course, Vincent's friend, retired Judge Penn Leary of Omaha, Nebraska, had written two books about a Baconian "Caesar Cipher" which he had discovered throughout Shakespeare's works, and whenever asked why he remained a Baconian, Vincent would always cite Penn's book as his bible.

In January 1994, I hosted a debate between Charles Burford and author Irvin Matus, and a horrible ice storm hit us and kept every sane individual locked indoors. But, hearing that I had the two debaters locked up in my house, Vincent came all the way from Fairfax, VA, over to our Maryland neighborhood, barreling down the steep hill in front of our house, missing the turn, and casually parking his huge sedan right in the middle of our front lawn (covered with 18 inches of ice and snow). Charles Burford had been forewarned, so he immediately disappeared upstairs as I introduced Vincent to the always polite Mr. Matus, and disappeared myself, leaving the two at the dining room table where from a distance I could see poor Irv visibly sweating as the anti-Stratfordian par excellence grilled him unmercifully. It wasn't that Vincent spoke loudly, it was just that his enthusiasm for life would come roiling out of his barrel chest from Irish lungs, and remind the world that it simply heard too softly! After Vincent had left, Irv was entirely indignant that he had been assaulted with the presence of a Baconian, especially one who knew Shakespeare so well. At the debate itself, we took a poll before and after, and given the choice of Pro-Oxford, Pro-Shakspere, Neutral, or Other, only one hand rose for the fourth category, Vincent's. Afterwards, voicing his opinion that Charles had won the evening, Vincent lamented, "It's still a shame he gets the wrong man as Shakespeare," referring to Charles as well as Irv!

Vincent was the President of the local Chapter of the Mensa Society, and he was proud of the many lectures on Bacon he had given to various other chapters within driving range of his home, which was as far as a hundred miles away. He was kind enough to invite my family to some of his meetings, and I must admit he had some of the most eclectic of topics and speakers: the "face" on Mars; pre-Columbian native American alphabets (when most scholars believe that only the Maya were literate); the Viking Tower in Newport, Rhode Island, etc. After he had passed away, I was invited to select and keep some books from his immense library, and to my great surprise I discovered he had a tremendous collection of chess books (though he wasn't a tournament player as I had been in my youth). Goodness, what games we might have had together! Vincent is survived by two grown sons, the younger of them the Republican Mayor of Frederick, Maryland.

– *W. Ron Hess*

G.P.V. AKRIGG

The University of British Columbia alumni magazine reported the death of Dr. George Philip Vernon Akrigg in 2001. His book, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, published in 1968, is one that we Oxfordians so often make use of. Born in Calgary, Alberta, in 1913, Akrigg obtained his Ph.D. from the University of California in 1944 and taught English at U.B.C. for many years. Another of his interests was British Columbia history, and his *1001 BC Placenames* (1969) is the standard reference on that subject. His other books include *The Anatomy of Websterian Tragedy* (1944), *The Jacobean Pageant; or The Court of King James I* (1962); and *Letters of King James VI and I* (1984). (Thanks to Nina Green for passing on this information.)

Letters to the editor:

The article by John Hamill, "Who is Buried in Shakespeare's Grave" (Fall 2001 newsletter), features an email by Robert Bearman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in which he provides the text of the inscription on Anne Hathaway's tomb: "Heere lyeth interred the body of Anne, wife of William Shakespeare." The spelling "Shakespeare" (long a) struck me as quite odd since the spelling of the name on the monument is "Shakspeare" (short a). If the true spelling on Anne's gravestone is really "Shakespeare," then it would cut against the persuasive argument made by Richard Whalen that this spelling of the name was seldom used in Stratford-upon-Avon. Could someone verify the spelling of "Shakespeare" on Anne's tomb to see whether Mr. Bearman may have regularized the spelling as is common among Stratfordian scholars? Are we even sure that Anne's gravestone went into place in 1623, and that it was originally inscribed as it now reads?

Edward Sisson
Chevy Chase, MD

Your request for remembrances of Charlton Ogburn spurred me to write about the one memorable correspondence I had with him. In 1988, while writing an educational Study Guide/Workbook for *Twelfth Night*, I came upon Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* in the Poughkeepsie, NY, Public Library. I was overwhelmed by the cogency of Looney's and Ogburn's arguments and stunned by my own previous unquestioning acceptance of the Stratford canon. This experience was truly a road to Damascus event for me because now, no longer blinded by faith and tradition, I began to read the plays and sonnets with new insight and delight. In short, Ogburn's wonderful book has profoundly enriched my life. I was particularly intrigued by the obvious correlation between the Italian plays and Oxford's Continental trip and began to plan ways of getting involved in the authorship question. This quest has led to my co-authoring a book on Shakespeare in Italy, to be published by Balcony Press in 2003.

In 1992, I wrote to Mr. Ogburn to ask if, since the publication of his book, he had discovered any new details of Oxford's Italian and Sicilian journeys. His response was delightful. He thanked me for my comments in the most gracious way possible and added, "I feel sure that if Oxford's trail in Italy were assiduously followed it would lead to treasure, though I am sorry to say that all I know about his travels there is in my book; I am unable to add anything to that. Mother was always convinced that the Vatican files would be found to contain correspondence from agents in England during Oxford's lifetime that would furnish conclusive proof of his authorship." I agree with his mother and eagerly await the day when the miles of Vatican files are unearthed and cataloged.

Una Mason
Tempe, AZ

I met Charlton and Vera Ogburn at the SOS Conference in North Carolina, and asked him to autograph my copy of *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. I was charmed by both of them. I bought a second one, since the original had become tattered and torn from repeated use. I maintained a fairly regular correspondence with him and I would always receive an elegant and highly complimentary reply typed by Royal typewriter on index cards. I was overwhelmed with the erudite composition in the cards with the same eloquence as in his books, reflective of a highly refined mind. I found that we had an additional interest in common when I discovered his nature books and related to him my hobby as a birdwatcher since seven years of age. The singular aspects of Charlton Ogburn, Jr. are too numerous to mention here, but among them for me was his relentless pursuit of the truth with no other interest, be it money, self-promotion, or whatever, in mind; his keen interest in individuals who most writers place secondarily to their constraints of time or energy; his genuine concentration on a subject and an individual. Out of all the celebrities I have got to know in my life – from George Bush to Joe Walsh – Charlton Ogburn showed a profundity to me that telegraphs precisely what Dr. Livacari stated so aptly: that his book will become one of the most important ever in the Western world. To paraphrase Twain slightly, I will not have to ask Shakespeare who wrote the works when I get to heaven. Thanks to the revealing science of Charlton Ogburn, Jr. and his parents, I already know.

Aaron Tatum
Memphis, TN

Correction

In the Fall newsletter, the Carmel conference article erroneously reported that Bill Farina's presentation alluded to Titian's house "where hung his famous painting of the Rape of Lucrece, which is clearly described in Shakespeare's poem." Citing Dr. Magri's recent research, Farina did note that Titian's painting of Venus and Adonis (with a hat) may have been displayed at Titian's house when Oxford visited Venice, and that this was likely the inspiration for Shakespeare's poem. Farina had mentioned that Titian's "The Rape of Lucrece" may also have been displayed there, but that this was mere conjecture and that the painting is not clearly described in Shakespeare's poem. Regarding Lucrece, it is more likely that Oxford saw Giulio Romano's frescoes in the Trojan apartments at the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua, and that these frescoes are strongly suggested by that poem.

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

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

Dues, grants and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law: IRS No. 13-6105314; New York 07182.

Times (cont'd from p.19)

of Park Honan's book, *Shakespeare: A Life*, briefly mentions the subject. But this *is* the first time the "Grey Lady" has covered the material with a credible, accurate and unbiased approach.

(Actually, the *Times* was once poised to include the authorship question in an article about Shakespeare in its Sunday magazine. As reported in the Summer, 1996 issue of the SOS Newsletter, "Author Barry Singer had phoned Society President Charles Burford ... about the article, and after several contacts, we were in line to be included." But it didn't happen.)

Anticipating a plethora of mail on all sides, the *Times* reserved a full page in the February 24 issue of the Arts & Leisure section to accommodate the response. "I think the response was interesting," Niederkorn says. "I've seen about 80 or 90 letters, on all sides of the issue. I think the selection that ran in Arts & Leisure reflected the response well." Leading the page was the letter from the Honorable Secretary of the De Vere Society, Christopher Dams, explaining why the pseudonym would have to be perpetuated long after everyone was dead. Additionally, there were letters from Roger Stritmatter, SOS Board member Wayne Shore, Diana Price (author of *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*), and a New Jersey English teacher whose cogent comments speak directly to "why it matters." Letters from the "other side" included peevish comments from David Kathman and Terry Ross, editors of the Shakespeare Authorship website.

The *Times* piece has put the subject squarely on the table, opening the door for other papers to cover the topic with equanimity. Subsequently, the *Mail Tribune* of Medford, Oregon ran a lengthy two-page article, also including the Welbeck and the Droeshout, while the *Northwest Weekly* (*Boston Sunday Globe*), featured an article quoting SOS member Richard Desper on many aspects of the authorship question, and asserting, "The amount of circumstantial evidence Oxfordians offer as proof that de Vere used William Shakespeare as a pseudonym is hard to deny."

The door to mainstream media coverage has swung open with the *Times* coverage and Oxfordians can hold their head high as followers of Looney (Low-ney) and not loonies. Undeniably, it feels good to be treated with some respect.

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Orson the Oxfordian (cont'd from p. 8)

While in exile in Europe during the McCarthy years, Welles also directed and starred in a rich classic, *Othello*. While some thought there was too much emphasis on Iago, in the humble opinion of this reporter, this is the best *Othello* on film. The film took four years to make and was shot in Venice and Morocco in and around a Moorish castle. The backdrop is real. There are no cardboard-looking backgrounds or wooden sets. This film is vibrant and lives and breathes with conspiracy, intrigue and chaos. The story, lighting and entire timbre of the movie are immediately engaging and powerful. The long opening shot is stunning.

The vision required to shoot a film of this disturbing quality over so many years with virtually no money is astounding. When costumes did not arrive at one point, a scene was shot with everyone in a Turkish bath wearing towels; the amazing thing is, it works. Upon its release in 1952, Welles's *Othello* won the prestigious Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. The film would not be released in the United States until 1955, and then only in a very limited way. There are slightly different versions of *Othello* available. The "restoration" version of 1992, done with the aid of Welles's daughter, is considered by some critics to be questionable because of the digitizing of some of the sound. I do not completely share that opinion. The 1995 Criterion Collection laserdisc *Othello* is thought, by some, to be truer to the original.

Any discussion of Welles and the Shakespeare plays would be incomplete without a word about the film *Chimes at Midnight*. Many Welles aficionados consider this his best rendition on film of Shakespeare. Made in the mid-1960s and released in 1966, *Chimes* is a tour de force by Welles both as actor and director. Using sections of *Henry IV* parts 1 and 2 along with *Henry V*, *Chimes* is a vibrant retelling of the Falstaff-Hal story. As the author Joseph McBride pointed out, Welles "took a larger, subtler liberty in changing the emphasis of the Falstaff-Hal story from the moral awakening of the ideal king to the willful destruction of innocence by a young man newly conscious of power." Falstaff, portrayed by Welles, gets to tell his story, allowing the viewer to see Falstaff as a true main character, something more than the instructor of a future king. As Shakespeare aficionados and Oxfordians, readers may well enjoy embarking on a retrospective of Welles's work; I highly recommend any of the films mentioned.

Craig McGrath is an author and journalist who lives in Chicago. His novella, Grand Detour, *is an historical fiction about the life of Orson Welles.*

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