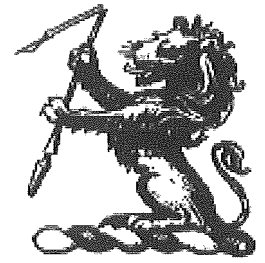




# The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



Vol. 38: No. 2

"What news from Oxford? Do these justs and triumphs hold?" *Richard II* 5,2

Spring 2002

## A Portrait of Southampton?

Two London newspapers, the *Observer* and the *Daily Mail*, and *The New York Times* have recently featured articles claiming that a newly found portrait depicts Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, the dedicatee of Shakespeare's poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and almost universally agreed as the "Fair Youth" of Shakespeare's Sonnets. The reason the picture has made such a splash in the media is that for all appearances, it is a portrait of a woman – or so it was thought until recently, thus reawakening "speculation over the possible bisexuality of Shakespeare," says the *NY Times*. But is this attribution justified?

The wood panel portrait is owned by Alec Cobbe, a designer and art restorer, and has been in his family for over 300 years. Cobbe took an interest in the painting a few years ago while cataloging the family treasures at the manor of Hatchlands Park, Surrey, for an exhibition. On the back of it was a label with a faded inscription, later determined to be the handwriting of Archbishop Cobbe of Dublin (1686-1765), an ancestor to the current Mr. Cobbe. The label identified the sitter as "Lady Norton, daughter of the Bishop of Winton."

By happenstance, the painting was seen by Alastair Laing, an art advisor to the National Trust. Laing came to the conclusion that the label was incorrect, and that the painting featured a young male sitter, not a female. The figure is seen with a beautiful face, rouged cheeks, lipstick, a large decorative

(cont'd on p. 10)

## Edward de Vere, Philip Sidney, and the Battle of Agincourt, "... in brawl ridiculous"

By Ramón Jiménez

*This is the final part of Jiménez's three-part series on Shakespeare's Henry IV-V trilogy. The paper was presented at the Sixth Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference.*

The relationship between Sir Philip Sidney and William Shakespeare, pseudonym of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, has long been a subject of literary interest. Although neither referred to the other in his letters, their contemporaries record that between 1569, when the fifteen-year-old Sidney was briefly a rival of De Vere's for the hand of Anne Cecil, and Sidney's death in 1586, they came into contact on several occasions. In their notorious "tennis court quarrel" in 1579, Oxford was said to have called Sidney a "puppy," but a clear picture of their relationship before that incident, or during Sidney's last years, has not emerged. Their literary connections are more apparent, and scholars have found numerous passages in Sidney's writings that they think are echoed, imitated, or reworded in the Shakespeare canon. Beginning with John T. Looney in 1920, several

Oxfordian scholars have seen satirizations of Sidney in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Twelfth Night*. Now, a previously unnoticed connection between Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry*, and several of Shakespeare's history plays has revealed a startling and historic exchange between Elizabeth's two most brilliant courtier-poets.



Sir Philip Sidney

In an article in the Summer, 2001, *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, I summarized the overwhelming evidence that Edward de Vere was the author of the anonymous play *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, and that it was probably his first play, certainly his first history play, written before 1577, and probably in 1574. This crude and short prose

effort of about fifteen-hundred lines, which bears the subtitle *Containing the Honourable Battell of Agin-court*, clearly represents the author's first attempt to dramatize the action and events of the subsequent Prince Hal plays, *Henry IV, Parts I and 2* and *Henry V*. The characters, plot, language, and sequence of events in the Shakespearean trilogy are obviously and

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# Oxford Document Bought by Film Composer

By Katherine Chiljan

As reported in the Winter 2002 Newsletter, the SOS did get a letter passed on to the new owner of the letter patent signed by the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, which was auctioned last year at Sotheby's. Graeme Revell contacted us recently and agreed to an interview, and we're happy to report that he indeed is an Oxfordian, "obsessed" with the topic since about 1995, when he read an abridged version of Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. "I've read most of the material that's around," said Revell, "and basically have become completely convinced in the subject. I think this story resonates because of the idea of somebody who was more or less cheated out of intellectual property is, I think, a very contemporary story." He has since kept abreast of the issue by reading the SOS website. "Somebody asked me recently, 'Are you convinced this is a true story?' and I said it's exactly like the O.J. Simpson trial: the evidence for one guy is about a quarter inch long, and for the other guy, it goes around the universe. Which one do you believe?"

Graeme Revell is a rare book collector who recently bought at auction four Shakespeare quartos that were owned by the late Sir John Gielgud: *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Lear*, and two editions of *Romeo and Juliet*. He believes that detailed research could show some differences in the quartos that might be very illuminating for the Oxford case. About six months ago, Revell bid unsuccessfully for a transcript (in manuscript) of the Essex trial: "I think that was a very key event with Oxford being up on the bench at the time, and I really wanted to find out what was in there." The document sold for about \$20,000. Besides Revell's new acquisition of the 1592 Oxford document, the only other Elizabethan manuscript he owns is a "wanted

poster" – a broadside, dated circa 1600 – advertising the trial of the Earl of Essex with a list of the accusations against him.

Born in New Zealand, Revell now lives in the Los Angeles area and is a film composer. He's written over sixty film scores including, *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*, *The Saint*, *Dead Calm* (for which he won the equivalent of the Australian Academy Award), and most recently *Collateral Damage*, *High Crimes* and *Human Nature*.

"I came out of performance art and rock and roll so my skills are fairly contemporary, so I get to work on films like *Tomb Raider*, not so highbrow as I might like."

Revell is convinced that a feature film of the Oxford story could turn history around, "almost the same way that the Queen used Edward de Vere – the English theater as propaganda. You can write a thousand books on the subject, but if you make one film the whole debate would turn on a dime." He would love to write the score for the Edward de Vere story. "I would like to start from the older material. Some of the music from that period has the most gorgeous melodies – Byrd, Dowland ... I'd like to update those and orchestrate them in a slightly more contemporary way." Perhaps soon Mr. Revell may have his chance, as at least three Oxford films are in development.

When asked how he felt about owning a piece of De Vere, Revell replied: "I suppose it's similar to reading one of the first editions I own – a feeling of awe and privilege to be holding in my hands a memento of such genius and dedication. It's very inspirational and challenging to my meager art. More particularly, in the case of the De Vere document, it's a challenge to all of us to keep working to reveal the truth."

## Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens Argues for Oxford's Authorship of Shakespeare

*Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens is a strong advocate for the Earl of Oxford as the true Shakespeare. Justice Stevens took office in 1975 and in the past quarter century has earned respect as a brilliant justice and legal scholar, thus his research, writings and public speeches about the Shakespeare Authorship problem are not easily dismissed. In 1992, he published a landmark legal opinion on Shakespeare in the University of Pennsylvania Law Review (140:1372-86), titled, "The Shakespeare Canon of Statutory Construction." On October 17, 2001, Justice Stevens addressed the Beverly W. Pattishall Inaugural Lecture in Trademark Law at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago. The following excerpts come from a transcript of that speech. The entire speech can be read on the internet at: [www.jmls.edu/ripl/default.htm](http://www.jmls.edu/ripl/default.htm).*

With your indulgence, I propose now to comment briefly on the question whether a rose would really be as attractive under an entirely different name. In the early days of my law practice, I occasionally was required to consider whether an advertised brand of a product such as milk, that commanded a higher retail price than an unadvertised brand of the identical product, was a good "of like grade and quality" within the meaning of the Robinson-Patman Act. A straightforward application of Juliet's observation about roses provides us with an easy answer, but I have often wondered whether trademark lawyers or economists might have a different view.

Consider names like Desdemona, Ophelia, Rosalind, Maryan, or Romeo, on the one hand, and names like Iago, Shylock, Caliban, Anselmo,

or Bottom, on the other. Is it merely the secondary meaning derived from knowledge about those characters that produces the different reaction to the sound of their names, or do the sounds themselves have independent significance? Some authors not only pick the names of their characters with special care, but also create special names for themselves. Do the names Mark Twain, O. Henry, or George Eliot convey the same message as the names Samuel Clemens, William Sidney Porter, or Mary Anne Evans? Rather than identifying the true source of a written work, a pseudonym may conceal the author's identity but nevertheless provide some distinctive assurance about the quality of the work. We know what a Coca Cola will taste like even if we know nothing about the company that produces it.

The fact that a play or a poem was written by William Shakespeare gives rise to a presumption that it is worth reading. Would that presumption be equally strong if we were persuaded that the true author of the Shakespeare Canon was Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, who elected to write under another name? I suppose Juliet would say that the same presumption would prevail, but it is at least possible that more knowledge about the true author might lessen – or indeed, it might strengthen – that presumption.

Edward de Vere was a brilliant, well-educated and well-traveled nobleman, a patron of acting companies and a favorite of Queen Elizabeth. In 1562, when he was 12 years old, his father (the 16th Earl of Oxford) died and Edward moved to London to become a ward of the Crown. He resided with William Cecil,

Queen Elizabeth's principal adviser. Nine years later Cecil became Lord Burghley and De Vere married his daughter, Anne. The ceremony was performed in Westminster Abbey and attended by the Queen.

Most scholars agree that the character Polonius, the King's principal adviser in *Hamlet*, is a caricature of Burghley. If we assume that Hamlet represented the author, it is only a small step to think of Polonius' daughter Ophelia as representing Anne. One more step would find an analogy between Polonius' employment of Reynaldo to spy on his son Laertes in Paris, and Burghley's use of a spy to learn about his own son's Parisian vices. This scenario suggests that a better understanding of the Burghley household, and the extent of the Stratford man's relationship to it, may shed more light on the authorship controversy.

The earliest of the plays now attributed to William Shakespeare were originally published without naming their author. The first work using that name to designate its author was the poem *Venus and Adonis*. The preface to the poem is a dedication to Henry Wriothesley, the third Earl of Southampton, signed by "William Shakespeare" and referring to the poem as "the first heir of my invention." Whether the word "invention" refers to the nom de plume of the author or to the work itself is not entirely clear, but it is clear that the identity of the dedicatee is significant. For, apart from the dedication itself, and a comparable dedication to Southampton of the later poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, there is no evidence that the man from Stratford ever met, or had any

*(cont'd on p. 21)*

# The Sixth Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference

By Gerit Quealy

On Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, the Sixth Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference at Concordia University, Portland, Oregon was kicked off to a rousing start with music – madrigals, to be specific. At St. Michael’s Lutheran Church, adjacent to the Concordia campus, Eric Altschuler, M.D., Ph.D., presented “De-fragmenting Shakespeare: Does Oxford = Shakespeare = Weelkes?” Altschuler, along with fellow researcher William Jansen, argue that 16<sup>th</sup> Century composer Thomas Weelkes’s music bears a striking resemblance to what we know of Oxford’s musicianship as well as what we know as Shakespeare’s compositions. The paper was “illustrated” by a sextet of singers, the Portland State University Madrigals Ensemble, who filled the chapel with a *cappella* madrigals of the works in question. A CD of Weelkes’ *Madrigals and Anthems* performed by the Consort of Musicke in England was available in the bookstore, but quickly sold out.

Preceding this was a talk by Charles Berney, Ph.D. on “The Adventure of the Stratford Bust,” a foray into the mysteries of the unusual effigy in Trinity Church. Examining early drawings depicting the monument, Dr.

Berney focused on the 1723 sketch by George Vertue, which used the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare as a model for the face. He posited that perhaps this drawing was commissioned for the purpose of replacing the bust of the grain merchant with one that could be taken for a poet, although ultimately this was not done. This was followed by Reverend John Baker, a Marlovian who genially joins Oxfordian proceedings, contributing a new thesis on New Place, entitled “Will Shakespeare: Actor, Theatre Manager and... Hostel Owner?” Rev. Baker explored the possibility that Shakespeare’s big beautiful new house was not a testimony to his London success as a playwright (as Stratfordians claim), but instead served as a hostelry. Because it was built wide along the street front, rather than deep as was heretofore thought, the dormer structure of the façade was more indicative of hostels of that time rather than a mansion solely for the use of the owner and his family. This hypothesis would certainly be more in keeping with what we know of Will’s mercenary ways.

Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, Edward de Vere’s birthday in 1550 (see related article pg. 6), began early with author Lynne

Kositsky giving a sprightly chronicle of the perils of being an Oxfordian author in the “bunny-eats-bunny” world of children’s publishing. A screening of the infamous *Firing Line* program hosted by William F. Buckley, featuring Charlton Ogburn pitted against Professor Maurice Charney was punctuated by hoots and hollers from the audience, followed by the official welcome by Professor Charles Kunnert, Ph.D, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Concordia. Professor Daniel Wright continued the welcome, reading letters from actor Michael York, Mark Rylance, actor and artistic director of Shakespeare’s Globe, London, and Lewis Lapham, Editor of *Harper’s*, who observed that *The New York Times* finally “condescended” to write about Oxford (William Niederkorn, the article’s author, was an attendee at the conference), and that the “De Vere star has begun to rise, still low in the East and obscured by clouds of drifting cant,” but he hopes that “in ten years the star will be at its zenith.”

The Keynote speaker, Hank Whittemore, offered a cunning “reconstruction” of the relationship between Ben Jonson and Will Shakspeare, which could have been subtitled “Ben and Will: The Untold Story” – a complex and fascinating examination of the connection between the two, involving spy rings, sedition, and plagiarism (Jonson coined the term) and Jonson’s role in the cover-up of the true author. Barbara Burris spoke next, further elucidating her research on the Ashbourne portrait at the Folger Shakespeare Library, the 300 page file there, and the extent to which the institution may have gone to obscure vital pieces of evidence in the painting found in Charles Wisner Barrell’s X-rays, including the fact that some “original paint was rubbed away so vigorously that perforations were made in the canvas.” She asserted that the

*This is a sketch by memory and description of Shakespeare House which was in Stratford on Avon. when he lived and dyed. on the wife after time 1609.*



*This is the outward appearance towards the street. the gate and entrance, (at the corner of chappell lane / the chappell. X. founded by S<sup>r</sup> Hu. Roper who built it and the Priory over Room.*

*This is the only known “authentic” illustration of New Place, which was pulled down in 1702. The sketch was made by George Vertue “from memory” in 1737.*

Folger seemed to wish to prove it was anyone but Oxford and that former SOS president Gordon Cyr may have been misled into agreeing that the portrait was of London's Lord Mayor, Hugh Hamersley (an identification the Folger claims to this day).

Hank Whittemore returned to speak on "A Real Life Inspiration for Hamlet's Mousetrap," detailing a performance of a play given before Queen Elizabeth (and possibly De Vere) which upset her so much she left in the middle. Jonni Lea Dunn followed with an excerpt from her thesis on Oxford's Literary Sponsorship, hoping to reverse the perception of Oxford's lingering bad reputation by focusing on the good he did in his life, illustrating with the statement, "flattery in dedications cannot be taken as sycophantic or insincere," ergo the dedications to Oxford were well earned.

Friday's events concluded with Prof. Steven May, Ph.D. on "The Earl of Oxford's Poetry in Context." Professor

May has done exhaustive work compiling all the printed texts of poems of the Elizabethan Age, much of which is in his book *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets* (Pegasus Press). He explained why writing poetry was a fashionable and popular pastime for noblemen of the time, describing the immediate poetic and cultural context out of which these poems grew. May elaborated on the commonality of language and its uses, offering the conclusion that, based on the few poems we have from Oxford's pen, De Vere doesn't exhibit the talent to have written the works of Shakespeare (needless to say, Prof. May is not an Oxfordian). He also offered a list of places where material may exist in manuscript form, a gauntlet thrown down for any assiduous Oxfordian researcher.

Saturday's papers began with Professor Paul Altrocchi, M.D. on "Did Edward de Vere Die of 'Ye Plague'?" and after examining and explicating the extant documents, his answer: an

unequivocal "No." Concordia's own Professor Kevin Simpson presented a summation of his ongoing research on the subject of "Greatness." He explored the artistic temperament and the "requirements" for those who achieve greatness in a particular field, alluding to the fact that Oxford meets many, if not all, of these precepts, contrasting it with the disparity in the Stratford man's biography.

Stephanie Hughes, editor of *The Oxfordian*, submitted a compelling case for Mary Sidney using the pseudonym John Webster in her paper, "Who Was 'The Duchess of Malfi'? The Relevance of John Webster to the Authorship Question."

After lunch, Richard Roe disclosed more of his absorbing research on Shakespeare in Italy. Roe has spent extensive time in Italy identifying all the places Shakespeare mentions in the Italian plays, proving the author's intimate knowledge of Italy *from having*

(cont'd on p. 20)

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## New Evidence Confirms Oxford's Birth Date

By Robert Brazil

This year, 2002, brought us the 452nd birthday of Edward de Vere. For some time, Oxford's nativity has been a debated issue, and the exact fixing of Oxford's birth date has been a challenge. Now there is new information – that a christening cup was delivered out of the Royal Treasury in April, 1550, on behalf of King Edward VI, as a gift to the 16th Earl of Oxford on the christening of his son and new male heir, Edward de Vere. Perhaps this 27.25 oz. gold and silver fact will help settle the matter once and for all.

U. C. Berkeley Professor Alan Nelson found the relevant document, and posted the information on his website.<sup>1</sup> Here is the entry, updated into modern English.

To our loving friend Sir Anthony Aucher, Knight, Master of the King's jewels and plate. The King's Majesty's pleasure, by our advice, is that you deliver unto Phillip Manwaring (Gentleman Usher to the King's Majesty): One standing cup, gilt with a cover, weighing twenty seven (and a quarter) ounces – By him to be delivered, as the King's Majesty's gift at the Christening of our very good Lord, the Earl of Oxford's Son. And these, our letters shall be your sufficient warrant and discharge therein. Given at the King's Majesty's Manor at Greenwich the 17th of April, the 4th year of his Highness' most prosperous Reign – King Edward the Sixth 1550.

The document in question is a warrant, a standard authorization for the delivery out of the royal treasury of any sum of money or particular piece of treasure. Sir Anthony Aucher was, in fact, the Master of the Jewel House of the Tower of London at that time.

The monarch of England was the boy King, Edward VI, only 17 years old in 1550. He died in 1553 and was followed on the throne by Jane Grey, who ruled all of nine days, and then by his elder sister "Bloody" Mary I of England, who

reigned from 1553-58.

Edward VI was a devoted Protestant, and his Privy Council were as well. So while we have no record of the ceremony, it is extremely likely that Oxford was christened in an Anglican, Protestant ceremony. This is relevant as the Veres had historically been Catholics, like all the old nobility, and thus there has been speculation, in the absence of evidence, that Edward de Vere might have had a secret Catholic baptism. The record of the christening gift by the Protestant King and Council strongly suggests that it was a Protestant baptism.

Baptism and christening generally refer to the same event, in both Catholic and Anglican practice. Though baptism was an initiation rite for adults in the early Church, infant baptism gradually became standard practice within Roman Catholicism. The Tudor-founded Church of England carried over the practice of infant baptism. As life was often brutal and quite short, it was thought to be a very good and wise thing to baptize infants quickly, guaranteeing entry into heaven, should they die in childhood. The central feature of baptism is purification by water, which represents the sacrament of Spirit, and removal of sin. The central feature of christening is the official naming of the infant or initiate.

Thus it is a technical triviality whether we refer to Oxford's baptism or his christening. The document uses the word "christening."<sup>2</sup>

In establishing Oxford's date of birth as an historic fact, the first problem was to sort out the disagreements among modern published sources. There has been a strange discrepancy in the various reference volumes which have printed birthdays of Edward de Vere.

In the first Oxfordian treatise, *Shakespeare Identified*, 1920, J.T. Looney gave April 2, 1550 for Oxford's birth date. Looney's knowledge of Oxford was based almost entirely on the *Dictionary of National Biography* entry, which includes the fact that

Oxford first took up his seat in Parliament on April 2, 1571. Perhaps the *DNB* editors subtracted 21 years from that date, missing the true mark by only ten days. B. M. Ward gave the ultimately correct date of April 12, 1550 as did the Ogburns, Senior and Junior, Ruth Loyd Miller, and other scholars on Oxford.

There are now several documentary sources that confirm the April 12, 1550 birth date: a Burghley diary entry of 1576, a manuscript by Percival Golding circa 1618, documents relating to Oxford's freedom from wardship and suing his livery in 1571, and now the Treasury warrant for the christening cup.

One source for Oxford's birth date is the *Table of Progeny of the Veres*. This manuscript was written circa 1618-1625 by Percival Golding, but clearly incorporated earlier notes. Portions of this manuscript were printed, inaccurately, by W. Kittle in his posthumous 1942 book: *Edward de Vere 17th Earl of Oxford and Shakespeare*.

In 1999, I obtained a copy of the actual Golding manuscript (Harleian MS 4189), and posted the relevant section on the web.<sup>3</sup> (See graphic on next page.)

Here follows the entry, in modern English.

Edward de Vere, only son of John, born the twelfth day of April, Anno 1550, Earle of Oxenford, High Chamberlain, Lord Bolebec, Sandford and Badlesmere, Steward of the Forest in Essex, and of the Privy Council to the King Majesty that now is. Of whom I will only speak what all men's voices confirm: He was a man in mind and body absolutely accomplished with honorable endowments. He died at his house at Hackney in the month of June, Anno 1604, and lieth buried at Westminster.

This evidence for Oxford's birthday is also notable as the only documentary source for the controversial notion that our Poet actually lies buried in

Westminster. It also seems to be the main source that proclaims or confirms that Oxford served on James' Privy Council. A careful reading of the line: "... Steward of the Forest in Essex, and of the Privy Council to the King Majesty that now is" allows that Golding is saying that the King "that now is," i.e. circa 1618, is the *same* King that Oxford briefly served in 1603-4. So that line is not necessarily an anachronism by Golding.

### The time is out of joint

A curious aspect of all late 16th Century dates is tied to the Gregorian calendar reform of 1582. Because of a technical error in the Julian calendar, the seasons were gradually slipping away from calendric expectations. This was putting Easter out of synch with the actual occurrence of spring, and forced the church to issue a correction. Ten days were added in the Catholic countries, in October 1582, to re-synchronize the church calendar and restore Easter to its rightful time. The Julian problem and its solution involved the question of how many leap years should be counted in a century. From the adoption of the Julian calendar in 46 B.C. to the 16th Century, the slippage and error had added up to ten days.

By official decree of Pope Gregory XIII, October 4, 1582 was followed immediately by Oct. 15, 1582. Was that adding 10 days or stealing 10 days? England noted the change with skepticism and laughter.

All of the Protestant countries, including England and Germany, and Russia (which kept the old Orthodox calendar), ignored, mistrusted, and refused to enact the 1582 correction and only came to their senses one by one,

centuries later.

When "correcting" dates from the past there is a sliding scale, not a static formula. English dates from 1582-1700 require a ten day correction. Dates from 1700-1752 require an eleven day correction; 1752 is the year Great Britain and her colonies fixed their system.<sup>4</sup>

Russia however, didn't correct its calendar until the Bolshevik revolution. So for Russian dates between 1700-1800 there's an 11 day correction, for 1800-1900 a 12 day correction, and from 1900-1920 a 13 day correction.

Now here's the rub. If Edward de Vere was born April 12, 1550 (by local reckoning) then the "corrected" or modern equivalent is often stated to be April 22. Such a correction, however, is only useful to astrologers, as today's April 22 Sun location is in an analogous position to April 12 of the old calendar.

As a general rule: *Historians have no reason to correct any dates prior to October 4, 1582.* Thus, the given birthdays of Queen Elizabeth, Leicester, and dozens of other Elizabethans born prior to 1582 are always printed in history books without correction. Shaksper of Stratford, who was baptized on April 26, 1564, and is given an "assigned" birthday of April 23 (to link with St. George's day) never gets a ten day correction to May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

So there is no precedent, nor reason to use April 22 as "Oxford's birthday." April 12 is the accurate day to celebrate this historic nativity.

Retroactive date correction is used in modern historical chronology when correlating accounts of a single event which has been described in neighboring

countries as occurring on two conflicting dates. The Elizabethans were the first generation in England to experience this strange problem first hand.

When Oxford was writing, or anytime after October 1582, one could receive a letter sent from Paris and read it on a date *before* it had been written, as France was ten days ahead on the Catholic calendar.

Shakespeare may have been thinking about this dilemma when he wrote:

"The time is out of joint, O cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right."

(*Hamlet* Act I, scene 5)

### Endnotes

1. The manuscript reference number is: British Library MS Add. 5751A, f. 283. The original spelling of the document is on Dr. Nelson's website along with his comments: <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~ahnelson/birth.html>.
2. There are several mentions of christening in Shakespeare. Note the following line, "two Noblemen bearing great standing-bowls for the christening gifts" in *Henry Eighth* Act V scene 5.

The palace – Enter TRUMPETS, sounding; then two ALDERMEN, LORD MAYOR, GARTER, CRANMER, DUKE OF NORFOLK, with his marshal's staff, DUKE OF SUFFOLK, two Noblemen bearing great standing-bowls for the christening gifts; then four Noblemen bearing a canopy ...

3. You can see the original document at: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/4260/pgoldingms.html>.
4. Chesterfield's Act of March 1751 decreed that throughout all of the dominions of the British crown, Wednesday, September 2, 1752 would be followed by Thursday, September 14, 1752.

Edward de Vere, only sonne of John, borne the twelfth day of Aprill A<sup>o</sup> 1550  
 Earle of Oxenford, Eigh Chamberlayne, Lord Holar, Sandford and  
 Delesmeur, Stuard of the Honour in Essex and of the privy Counsell to  
 the Kinge Ma<sup>tie</sup> that now is. Of whom I will only speake what all men  
 hono<sup>r</sup>ed confirme: he was a man in minde and body absolutely accomplis<sup>h</sup>  
 with hono<sup>r</sup>able endowments. He dyed at his house at Stratney in the  
 month of June A<sup>o</sup> 1604 and byt be<sup>u</sup>ryed at Westminster.

## Oxfordian News

### Don Foster Recants *Elegy* Attribution

In a stunning reversal, Vassar College professor Donald Foster has recanted his 1995 thesis that Shakespeare was the author of the 1612 poem, *A Funeral Elegy*, signed "W.S." Foster had received world-wide attention for his claim, and the poorly written *Elegy* was subsequently included in three major editions of the works of Shakespeare. An article in the May issue of *The Review of English Studies* by Gilles D. Monsarrat, professor of languages at the University of Burgundy in France, compares the text of the *Elegy* with the works of John Ford (1586-1640) and concludes Ford is the likely author of the *Elegy*.

A new book on Ford and the *Elegy* by Prof. Brian Vickers, director of Renaissance Studies at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, will be published in August. In an interesting twist, Vickers acknowledges that Oxfordian researcher Richard Kennedy was the first to identify Ford as the author of the poem.

This turn-around can be seen as a victory for the Oxford theory, because the *Elegy* was promoted by some as proof of a still-active Shakespeare author circa 1612. Oxford died in 1604.

#### London

The De Vere Society Annual Meeting and Conference was held on April 13, 2002 in historic Sutton House (built in the 1500s) in Hackney, London. In addition to English Oxfordians, attendees were in from Italy, Germany, The Netherlands, and the United States.

During the elections, Brian Hicks was re-elected Chairman and Christopher Dams was re-elected Honorable Secretary. Richard Malim was elected to serve on the DVS Committee to replace Derran Charlton whose term had expired and was unable to serve another term due to ill health.

Brian Hicks reported on his visit to the SOS conference in Carmel,

California, and stated his opinion that there was a positive relationship between the DVS and the SOS. He pointed out that both organizations are working together in trying to develop the international conference in Cambridge during July, 2004. Funding is needed to allow this conference to occur, and a go/no decision will have to be made by April, 2003.

Following lunch there was a tour of Sutton House focusing on Hackney in Edward de Vere's time. Sutton House is located about one-half mile from King's Place where De Vere lived. The house is no longer standing, having been demolished in 1964. A walk of about 300 yards from Sutton House to St. Augustine's Churchyard took members to the burial place of Edward de Vere. Only the bell tower of the original church is still standing. The guide indicated that the National Trust is trying to get an archaeological dig of the grassy area where the original church stood to see if anything, including tombs or markers, can be found.

Sally Hazelton made a presentation concerning Shakespeare's "Will" sonnets, with a focus on Sonnet 136. She made the point that there were several possible layers of meaning for several of the words in the sonnet.

The liveliest discussion was in response to Brian Hicks's motion which stated: "The De Vere Society considers the Prince Tudor theory to be unsubstantiated by any sound documentary evidence, and by claiming otherwise, its proponents are harming the Oxfordian cause. Therefore the De Vere Society will not provide a platform for discussion or promotion of the subject until evidence for the validity can be produced." Although no argument was made for the Prince Tudor theory, it was finally decided that the motion should be tabled until it could be considered by a larger membership group. The motion is to be reported in a future DVS newsletter.

The attendees assembled into one of four workshops. Topics were: 1) The best examples of connections between events or characters in the plays and events in Edward de Vere's life; 2) The maintenance of the pseudonym – open secret or conspiracy of silence?; 3) What was Shakespeare of Stratford's part in the Shakespeare venture?; and 4) The Way Forward – fundraising, widening the circle/recruiting, research topics. Each group made a record of its discussion, and reported to the entire conference. This format was excellent for allowing maximum participation from the attendees.

The conference was concluded with a coach tour of Hackney with stops at the sites of King's Place, De Vere's house, and St. Mary's Old Church, all in Stoke Newington, and Curtain Road in Shoreditch which contained a plaque mentioning Edward de Vere.

The day's activities were arranged by Sally Hazelton and Mike Llewellyn who reside in Hackney. The next DVS meeting will be on July 20th in Henley-on-Thames.

– Barbara and Wayne Shore

#### Los Angeles

Michael Dunn, a writer and actor based in Los Angeles, has developed a multimedia theater piece called "Sherlock Holmes and The Shakespeare Mystery," aimed primarily at the college market. An SOS member, Dunn wants to popularize the Oxford story by presenting evidence in a cogent and entertaining fashion. His one-man show has been well received in three public performances, and Dunn is looking for additional venues. If there are any Oxfordian groups around the country that might be interested in featuring his presentation, Dunn has a 14-minute video excerpt and brochure that he would be pleased to send out. For more details visit his website: [www.truebard.com](http://www.truebard.com).



### San Francisco

Over one hundred people attended the Shakespeare Authorship evening at the Mechanics' Institute Library on April 25, which featured presentations by SOS trustee Katherine Chiljan and Stratfordian professor Alan Nelson. In defending Oxford, Chiljan emphasized Shakespeare's extensive knowledge and experience, which can be accounted for in Oxford, but not the Stratford Man, and stressed that it was Oxford's family (the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery) who were responsible for the first complete edition of Shakespeare's plays. Prof. Nelson stressed that those who question Shakespeare's authorship are amateurs, and that beyond one or two professors, no one in academia takes the issue seriously. He also said that the authorship cover-up would have to have been a large conspiracy involving *First Folio* editors Heming and Condell. After a question and answer period, actors from the American Conservatory Theater performed selected readings from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets.

### Palo Alto, CA

The Hoover Institution at Stanford University has recently acquired the entire collection of *Firing Line*, the political talk show hosted by conservative William F. Buckley. The collection includes the show's transcripts, archives, and 1,504 television broadcast tapes, one of which featured an authorship debate between Charlton Ogburn and Prof. Maurice Charney that was taped on December 11, 1984 (program no. 630). In his responses to Ogburn's pro-Oxford argument, Charney used the words "preposterous," "totally preposterous," "wildly preposterous," and "a chain of absolute fabrications," but later softened by saying that Ogburn's then newly published *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* was a "beautifully written book and it's very learned."

### Nevada City, CA

On August 7, 2002, Charles Beauclerk (formerly Earl of Burford) will lecture on the authorship of Shakespeare and the

Earl of Oxford at the historic Nevada City Theater (located 60 miles north of Sacramento) – an appropriate venue considering that anti-Stratfordian Mark Twain also spoke there. In 1998, the Theater hosted a "Trial of Shakespeare" in which former SOS president Randall Sherman was subpoenaed as an expert witness and presented evidence in favor of Oxford to a fully booked house. Since that time, the city has become well versed on the authorship question and eagerly anticipate this subsequent presentation. The city newspaper, *The Union*, plans to feature a front-page article on Charles (and James, his seven year old son), so the expected attendance is high.

For more information, contact Randall Sherman at 530-265-2004 or [rsherman@newventureresearch.com](mailto:rsherman@newventureresearch.com).

### Chicago

The Chicago Oxford Society celebrated its second anniversary, along with the birthdays of Edward de Vere (and Will of Stratford), with a series of three events on April 25, 26 and 27. The total attendance was about 60 people, and a very high level of interest in the authorship issue was shown, both in the quantity and quality of questions asked of the speakers.

On April 25, Bill Farina presented a slide show entitled "Snippets of Shakespeare: Venus and Adonis (and Oxford)" at the Newberry Library in conjunction with National Poetry Month. On April 26, keynote speaker Dr. Jack Shuttleworth, Professor Emeritus of English at the United States Air Force Academy and SOS board member, gave an address entitled "To Be or Not to Be Will Shakespeare" at the Feltre School. This was preceded by a Bill Farina slide show "Snippets of Shakespeare: The Tempest and Oxford" to coincide with the new production by the Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

On April 27, The Shakespeare Project of Chicago gave a staged reading of "The 50-Minute Hamlet" at the Harold Washington Library Center Auditorium. Mr. Farina presented a slide show "Snippets of Shakespeare: Hamlet and Oxford" and moderated a panel discussion with Dr. Shuttleworth and two actors from the Shakespeare Project,

David Skidmore and Laura St. John. Afterwards, TSP Artistic Director Mara Polster declared the panel discussion "excellent." The weekend concluded with an open discussion at the Feltre School.

### New York

A new weekly publication, the *New York Sun*, offered a significant article on the Oxfordian approach to Shakespeare. The April 23 article, timed to coincide with the traditional Shakespeare birthday, was called: "What's in a Date? The Pearl Celebrates Shakespeare, But Skeptics Say 'Unhappy Birthday,'" and was written by Jeremy McCarter. He writes:

Devotees of Shakespeare's works celebrate his birthday today – except, that is, for the people who think Shakespeare didn't write them. A small but growing number of dissenters finds little reason to join with the marching bands, parades and Elizabethan impersonators who on April 23 mark the birthday of the man they consider to be the greatest impersonator of them all.

Aaron Tatum, president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, said that on April 23, the traditionalists have little choice but to roll out the "buttons and whistles and parades, since they lack historical facts. It's taken 400 years to dig up what they have, and it's very little," he said.

This piece in the *NY Sun* follows closely on the heels of the momentous February 10<sup>th</sup> article in *The New York Times* by William Niederhorn. The New York media are finally warming up to the many controversies surrounding Shakespeare, all formerly taboo subjects.

### Ashland, OR

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival will host a lecture/discussion at noon Friday, August 9, entitled "Shakespeare: The Authorship Dilemma," featuring Shakespeare actor, instructor and dramaturg Barry Kraft, and Tom Woosnam, a physics teacher and chairman of the science department at Crystal Springs Uplands School (in the San Francisco area). The lecture will be

(cont'd on p. 18)

*Southampton (cont'd from p. 1)*

earring, and an elaborate hairdo featuring a long tress down the front. A delicate hand is held over the sitter's heart. In reexamining his family history, Cobbe discovered that his family had close links to the Wriothesleys, the Earls of Southampton, as far back as the 16th Century. Cobbe claims he had an "Aha" moment, earlier this year, when he suddenly realized that the youth in the painting resembled the well-known portraits of the 3rd Earl of Southampton. When compared to other early portrayals of Southampton by Hilliard and De Critz (of Henry in the Tower with his cat), it looks like the same fellow.

In determining the portrait's provenance, Cobbe now believes that the "Lady Norton" mentioned in the inscription refers to Lady Elizabeth Norton, who was Southampton's great-granddaughter. She could have received the painting from her grandfather, the 4th Earl, who died leaving no male heir. The painting then would have passed to the Cobbe children through Honor Norton in the early 18th Century, where eventually Archbishop Cobbe either guessed at an Aunt Norton, or had a family legend to draw on.

For the sitter to be the young Southampton, the portrait must have been rendered in the early 1590s. Evidence for this dating was provided by Diana Scarisbrick, an expert on Elizabethan costume and jewelry, who claims the complicated lace-work collar the sitter is wearing was Italian and a style that was in vogue in the early 1590s; it was also extremely expensive.

The evidence presented so far by Cobbe is fairly slim – a similar lace pattern dated to 1590s Italy, and a resemblance to the Earl of Southampton, who is his ancestor. What hasn't been established is whether this painting definitely dates to the 1590s. Several art experts of that period should be able to confirm this, beyond scientific dating methods

(radiocarbon, dendochronology, etc.) which apparently have not been done. He also has to explain why this painting is not of a woman, or present evidence of male transvestism in 16th Century England, beyond practice on the stage. It would also help his case if he could present other examples of Elizabethan portraits of men that look like women.

According to the *NY Times*, Catherine MacLeod (curator of the National Portrait Gallery) initially noted, "the flat lace collar in the portrait was an early 17th Century fashion, which suggested

that the portrait was painted no earlier than 1600." There are numerous examples of this. Before Cobbe claims this portrait is of Southampton, perhaps he should look for portraits of his daughters Penelope, Anne and Elizabeth, as well as his granddaughters Elizabeth, Rachel, and Elizabeth, one of who may very well be the actual sitter.

If the Cobbe portrait can be proven to be the young Southampton affecting a feminine pose, then it would help strengthen the case that the Shakespeare sonnets addressed to the Fair Youth are homosexual in nature. The implication that an aesthetic or romantic involvement may have been at play between Shakespeare and the Fair Youth has been debated for over a century. Some Oxfordians have



embraced this theory, most recently Joseph Sobran in his *Alias Shakespeare*. It is fact that Oxford knew young Southampton, as his daughter was nearly engaged to him, and Oxford was accused of homosexuality by Henry Howard and Charles Arundel in 1581 after Oxford revealed their treasonable activity to the Queen.

Whatever the truth is regarding the Cobbe portrait, its recent revelation proves the public's continual fascination of anything touching upon the autobiography of Shakespeare.

Source Articles: *Observer*, April 21, 2002, article by Anthony Holden; *Daily Mail*, April 22, 2002; *The New York Times*, May 6, 2002.

## Book Review

# Elementary, My Dear Holmes

By Ramón Jiménez

*Discovering Shakespeare – A Handbook for Heretics* by Edward Holmes (Mycroft Books, 2001)

Those who pick up this new Oxfordian contribution to the Authorship Question will find a fast-moving and wide-ranging discussion that is both entertaining and frustrating, as well as not entirely reliable. The author describes his book as “an examination of the source material of Shakespeare’s plays,” and presents his argument in the form of a series of congenial conversations between his “alter ego” Mycroft Holmes and himself. The two men travel around Southern England, stopping regularly at such places as The Blue Boar, The Green Man, or The Dog and Duck for a pint or a ploughman’s lunch. Mycroft the researcher makes his case for Oxford in the course of twenty-four conversations addressed to “my dear Holmes.”

The newcomer will be frustrated by the scattered approach to the question, and the lack of a satisfactory background or introduction. Those familiar with the subject and the literature will be frustrated by careless citations, questionable or outdated sources, and so many obvious errors as to jeopardize any confidence in the author’s assertions. The reader might excuse garbled references, such as those to Henry Farmer, Honan Park, Thomas Thorny, and the “Friedman brothers.” On the other hand, claims that John Shakespeare was imprisoned in 1586, that Oxford wrote letters from Milan in 1576, and that Philip Sidney was a “Royal Ward” in the care of Lord Burghley – all made without documentation – are seriously misleading.

Even so, the author’s easy and genial style and deft topical touches – as a character Mycroft has at least two dimensions – are hard to resist, and hurry the reader along from play to play and place to place. Often it is a physical place

that stimulates one of Mycroft’s lectures, such as The Blue Boar Inn in Rochester (“where Shakespeare and Falstaff drank”), at which the friends lunch after their visit to the storied Gad’s Hill. Mycroft pulls out an old map on which the place-name “Shakespeare” appears at the edge of the Thames marshes, about a mile from St. Mary’s Hoo. The name has disappeared from modern maps, but local tradition has it that an Elizabethan house once stood on the site now occupied by a Victorian, described as “a lonely house by the sea” at “the place called Shakespeare.” There we are left wondering, while Mycroft mutters “the matter is crying out for attention.”

In a later chapter the pair make another visit to “the house called Shakespeare,” and this time Mycroft associates it with the house by the sea that Timon of Athens built for himself. Ruminating further on Timon, he says, “We are very close to the centre of the author’s personality here,” and “Timon is too raw, too real for comfort. It was begun too close to the catastrophe which prompted it. That must be why it was left artistically undigested, incomplete.” Such pungent pronouncements flavor every chapter, and few will draw arguments from Oxfordians.

As might be expected, Mycroft is not without wit; he describes Oxford as “the archetypal patrician bankrupt” and Shakespeare as “the mercenary midget from Stratford.” Nor is he gentle with Oxfordians: “Oh, I grant you the heretics have been largely routed. Only the Oxfordians have survived. But I am afraid they prove their own worst enemies. Their case has been poorly represented; they over-claim without justification and omit what they find disagreeable. . . It is a sad fact that the case for a defensible Oxford alternative has yet to be made. . .” He also offers a few well-worded insights. “. . . it is difficult to appreciate Shakespeare’s delineation of women,” he says. “No one

has written with a more instinctive grasp of a woman’s psychology. His women are miracles of sympathetic invention. But Shakespeare’s men reject them. They see them as light, or lewd, or fickle, or shrewish. When he lets his women speak for themselves we find ourselves in the company of creatures of grace and poise and virtue, a class above the men, without a hint of feminist envy.”

In a similar context he suggests that “Shakespeare has to work self-consciously at the banalities of ‘true love’; he does not seem very interested. Yet the conventional amorists look pale beside the fruitless passion of the ideal love dedicated to the boy in the sonnets.”

The author devotes three or four chapters to the Italian plays, relying heavily on Georges Lambin’s 1962 *Shakespeare’s Travels in France and Italy*. He does not seem to be aware of the work of Stratfordians Ernesto Grillo and Louise Clubb, or of the Oxfordians who have documented Shakespeare’s knowledge of Italy and Italian settings. One citation in the *Othello* chapter – “J. Fitzmaurice-Kelly. Oxford. 1922” – might reveal another source if it could be found in the “Selected Bibliography,” or otherwise identified.

In his conversation about *Pericles*, Mycroft locates the tournament in Act II on the island of Kos, which he suggests De Vere visited on his way to Turkey. He notes that there is no known source for the tournament scene, and hints that it is based on an ancient tale preserved on Kos. “It is indeed curious,” he says, “that this analogue of our play should have been discovered in the village of Asphendion on this tiny island of Kos in 1910, written by now in the dialect of the village and collected by one Jacob Zarraftis.” There the matter ends, and the curious reader is left with an endnote for the source of this information that refers him to “Dawkins,” a name found nowhere

(cont’d on p. 22)

*Agin-court (cont'd from p. 1)*

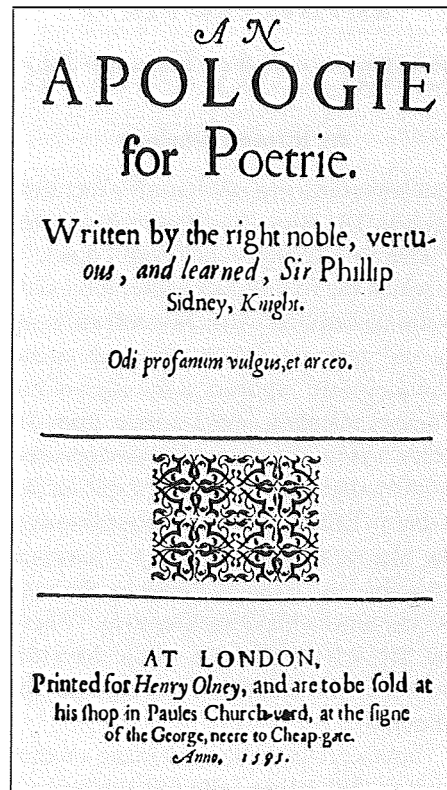
precisely based on those in the anonymous play, which were then refined, expanded, and improved upon by the maturing playwright.

In a second article in the Fall, 2001, *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, I presented evidence that the Chorus role in *Henry V*, and most probably the entire play, was written not in 1599, as nearly all Shakespearean scholars claim, but in the winter of 1583/84. According to this new evidence, the well-known passage in the Act V Chorus about Queen Elizabeth's general returning from Ireland refers not to the Earl of Essex in 1599, but to Sir Thomas Butler and his campaign in Ireland in 1583. A logical inference from this is that Oxford wrote the *Henry IV* plays, and very likely all the other history plays except *Henry VIII*, in the ten years prior to 1584. It is in *Henry V*, Oxford's fourth Prince Hal play, that we find his reaction to Philip Sidney's comments about his dramatic techniques in the first three.

Philip Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry* is a discourse on the nature and purpose of poetry that remains a seminal work of Elizabethan criticism. Although it was not published until 1595, Sidney's biographers uniformly assign it to the years 1581-83, most agreeing on 1582.<sup>1</sup> Near the end of the *Apology*, Sidney digresses from his main subject and inserts a fourteen-hundred-word commentary that is highly critical of the English drama. In it are what appear to be at least three references to Oxford's Prince Hal plays.

In the middle of his digression Sidney criticizes his country's playwrights because "all their plays be neither right tragedies, nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns not because the matters so carrieth it, but thrust in clowns by head and shoulders, to play a part in majestic matters, with neither decency nor discretion, so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mongrel tragic-comedy obtained."<sup>2</sup>

At the time Sidney wrote, the English stage had seen less than half-a-dozen plays now extant that included in their casts a king and a clown, that is, a comic character. Two of these were Robert Preston's *Cambyses* and Richard Edwards' *Damon and Pythias*. However, in neither of these did a clown and



a king appear in the same scene.

But in *The Famous Victories*, most likely written in the 1570s, three comic figures, including Sir John Oldcastle, the progenitor of Falstaff, appear with Prince Hal, the future King Henry V, in the very first scene. There are five comics surrounding Prince Hal in scene four, when he gives the Chief Justice a box on the ear, and in scene five Prince Hal cuts up with Ned, Tom, and Oldcastle until King Henry IV enters, accompanied by the Lord of Exeter. In scene nine, the new King Henry V chastises Ned, Tom, and Oldcastle, and orders them to keep ten miles from him, on pain of death, just as he does in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part Two*. Five of the next eleven scenes contain only clowns.

A play ostensibly about England's renowned warrior-king, *The Famous Victories* is so riddled with clowns that it might rightly be called a comedy punctuated by historical relief.

A few years later, in his two *Henry IV* plays, Oxford brought the technique of mingling clowns and kings to its finest moment with his most memorable comic character, Sir John Falstaff, sharing the stage, the action, the language, and the affection of the audience with two kings

of England.

According to Irving Ribner, the well-known historian of Elizabethan drama, it was the author of *The Famous Victories* who introduced the dramatic device of alternating comic scenes with those depicting English history, a technique duplicated in the Shakespearean trilogy.<sup>3</sup> Thus, when Philip Sidney objected in 1582 to the "mingling" of kings and clowns, it is highly probable that he had seen Oxford's first three Prince Hal plays, and had in mind the man who first brought English kings and clowns together on the stage.

In another passage in the same digression, Sidney protested that "our comedians think there is no delight without laughter," and explained that "Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present. Laughter hath only a scornful tickling." Furthermore, English playwrights "stir laughter in sinful things, which are rather execrable than ridiculous: or in miserable, which are rather to be pitied than scorned. For what is it to make folks gape at a wretched beggar or a beggarly clown; or against law of hospitality, to jest at strangers because they speak not English so well as we do?"<sup>4</sup>

*"The Famous Victories is so riddled with clowns that it might rightly be called a comedy punctuated by historical relief."*

A survey of Elizabethan drama reveals that "strangers," or foreigners, speak broken English in only two surviving plays that were staged before Sidney wrote *An Apology for Poetry*.<sup>5</sup> The anonymous *Morality, Wealth and Health* was staged fifteen years before Sidney wrote, and *The Rare Triumphs of Love And Fortune*, also anonymous, was staged at the end of 1582, possibly after

he wrote. Sidney may have been referring to these two, or others that have been lost, but another play he might have seen was *The Famous Victories*, in which scene thirteen consists entirely of a comical conversation among three French soldiers, a drummer, and a Captain. Although the Captain speaks perfect English, the others misuse “me” for “I,” “sh” for “ch,” and “t” for “th.”

Sidney’s *An Apology for Poetry* was not published until 1595, nine years after his death, but it is well known that manuscripts of his works circulated among the literati years before they appeared in print.<sup>6</sup> Thus there is a strong likelihood that Edward de Vere had access to a copy shortly after it was written in 1582, and the evidence for this is found in *Henry V*, composed the next year, where he reacts to Sidney’s complaints by expanding and elaborating one of the offending dramatic devices, and then mocking and retorting sarcastically to another.

I suggest that in response to Sidney’s criticism of the use of strangers and their broken English in *The Famous Victories* Oxford turned it up a notch in *Henry V*. In that play he not only retained the French soldier scene, but added scenes between Princess Katherine and her maid in Act III (scene 4), and between Katherine and Henry V in Act V (scene 2), in which he exploited Katherine’s ignorance of English for comic purposes. The former scene then drifts into sexual innuendo of a kind that embarrasses even modern Shakespearean scholars.<sup>7</sup> Although Shakespeare’s plays are full of sexual puns and bawdy repartee, this was perhaps an extra dose intended to twit the priggish Sidney, who was a well-known advocate of propriety and decorum in poetry.

Furthermore, in *Henry V*, Oxford introduced three additional characters, each of whom contributes his own regional dialect and stereotypical behavior. In the second scene of Act III, sometimes called the “international scene,” Fluellen, a Welshman, Macmorris, an Irishman, and Jamy, a Scotchman, join the Englishman Gower in a conversation about the tactics of siege warfare that becomes a celebration of the comic mispronunciation

of English. If Sidney found foreigners speaking broken English unfunny on the stage, he must have hated *Henry V*.

Some years later, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a play closely related to the *Henry IV* and *V* plays, Oxford assigned to Dr. Caius the identical mistakes made by the Frenchmen in *The Famous Victories* – further evidence that they were written by the same man.

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*“If Sidney found  
foreigners speaking  
broken English  
unfunny on the stage,  
he must have hated  
Henry V.”*

---

There is even stronger evidence of this historic exchange between these two giants of Elizabethan literature. Sidney complains, in the same section on drama in *An Apology for Poetry*, that English playwrights abuse the Aristotelian principle of unity of place, and make outrageous demands upon their audiences’ imagination.

Now ye shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by we hear news of shipwreck in the same place, and then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave. While in the meantime two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?<sup>8</sup>

At the time Sidney wrote, few pitched battles, as distinguished from two-man duels, had been presented on the English stage,<sup>9</sup> and it is highly probable that any he had seen would have been in Oxford’s history plays. His complaint about “two armies” flying in, “represented with four swords and bucklers,” may well have been directed at *The Famous Victories*

because that is exactly what takes place at the opening of scene fifteen, when the stage direction “The Battle” signals a depiction of the Battle of Agincourt. The evidence for this conclusion is the lengthy satirical response to Sidney’s complaints that Oxford made in the next play he wrote, culminating in an extraordinary retort by the playwright when he again presented the Battle of Agincourt on stage.

In *Henry V*, where the second half of *The Famous Victories* is more fully dramatized, Oxford used the device of a Chorus to respond to Sidney’s criticism. The Choruses preceding each of the five acts in *Henry V* are monologues by an actor who sets the scene, explains the action, and urges the audience to suspend disbelief and imagine the physical circumstances suggested by the dialogue. The first Chorus, or Prologue, is devoted entirely to answering Sidney’s complaint that the audience must imagine too much:

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
The brightest heaven on invention,  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,  
And monarchs to behold the swelling  
scene!

... Can this cockpit hold  
The vasty fields of France?  
Or may we cram Within this wooden O  
the very casques [helmets]  
That did affright the air at Agincourt?

Suppose within the girdle of these walls  
Are now confin’d two mighty  
monarchies,  
Whose high upreared and abutting  
fronts  
The perilous narrow ocean parts  
asunder;  
Piece out our imperfections with your  
thoughts;  
Into a thousand parts divide one man,  
And make imaginary puissance;  
Think, when we talk of horses,  
that you see them  
Printing their proud hoofs  
I’ th’ receiving earth.

The speaker ends this rather tongue-in-cheek appeal with a last request:

Admit me Chorus to this history;

*(cont’d on p. 14)*

*Agincourt (cont'd from p. 13)*

Who, prologue-like, your humble  
patience pray  
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

Less than four hundred lines later, at the beginning of Act II, the Chorus is again asking the audience to bear with him:

The King is set from London; and the scene  
Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton.  
There is the playhouse now, there must you sit;  
And thence to France shall we convey you safe,  
And bring you back, charming the narrow seas  
To give you gentle pass; or, if we may  
We'll not offend one stomach with our play.

Before Act III a similar exhortation by the Chorus ends with the line:

...Still behind,  
And eke out our performance with your mind.

The Choruses to Acts IV and V, each about fifty lines long,<sup>10</sup> are similar adjurations to suspend disbelief, and it is in the Chorus to Act IV that we find what must be a personal retort to Sidney by Oxford about his method of portraying battles in the playhouse. The speaker sets the scene – and one can easily imagine Edward de Vere himself on the stage<sup>11</sup> – by describing the fear and tension in the French and English camps on the night before Agincourt. But in the last six lines he speaks about the battle itself:



Henry V from *Stow's Chronicles*, 1580

And so our scene must to the battle fly,  
Where – O for pity! – we shall much disgrace  
With four or five most vile and ragged foils,  
Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,  
The name of Agincourt. Yet sit and see,  
Minding true things by what their mockeries be.

---

*“We may have, in  
the Choruses of  
Henry V,  
Shakespeare’s  
first response  
to a bad review.”*

---

“O for pity!”, Oxford says, that “we shall much disgrace” the name of Agincourt by portraying it with just four or five fellows armed only with light and blunted weapons used in fencing. This is clearly a reference to Sidney’s “two armies . . . represented with four swords and bucklers,” and many editors have pointed to the similarity of the two phrases. But most of them merely quote the passage in Sidney or direct the reader to it. In the latest Arden edition, T.W. Craik comments that “Shakespeare echoes Sidney’s criticism of stage conventions...”<sup>12</sup> But with the exclamation “O for pity!” Oxford is not “echoing” Sidney, he is deriding him. The phrase is facetious, even sarcastic. In fact, the entire device of apologetic Choruses before each act in *Henry V* is best read as a witty rebuff of Sidney’s complaint that English dramatists strain their audiences’ imagination with the exotic settings of their plays.<sup>13</sup>

Samuel Johnson was the first critic to remark on the incongruity of the Chorus’s apologies. “. . . nor can it be easily discovered,” he wrote, “why the intelligence given by the Chorus is more necessary in this play than in many others where it is omitted.”<sup>14</sup>

Today, we are entitled to ask why,

other than facetiously, would the playwright in the six Chorus speeches in *Henry V* refer to the limitations of his stage, and ask the forbearance of his audience more than thirty times? Why would the playwright, in at least his ninth or tenth history play, a rich panorama of the English past, filled with marches, voyages, and desperate battles – all reduced to the same modest stage, the same limited company, and the same compressed time period – why would he for the first time lament the confines of his theater and repeatedly apologize? My answer is that he did so to rebuke the fatuous Sidney, who, a few years before, on the tennis court, he had called “a puppy.”

Although several commentators have noticed the connection between Sidney’s complaints and the *Henry V* Choruses, only one that I know of has taken the next step and suggested a motivation. In a 1987 article, Sharon Tyler wrote: “It is tantalizing but pure speculation to see Shakespeare deliberately taking up the artistic gauntlet flung by Sidney.”<sup>15</sup> It is more than tantalizing, it is irresistible. Oxford takes Sidney’s contemptuous phrase about “four swords and bucklers,” turns it into poetry, and then flings it back in Sidney’s face:

four or five most vile and ragged  
foils,  
Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous

But then, instead of attempting any serious depiction of a battle, as he did in the *Henry VI* plays, he inserts only two words in the stage directions – “Alarm” and “Excursions.” He then trots out Pistol and his Frenchman, and the Boy, who engage in another comic dialogue in French and English that takes its humor from Pistol’s bluster and fractured French. We may have, in the Choruses of *Henry V*, Shakespeare’s first response to a bad review.

If these Choruses are actually the retort to Sidney that they appear to be, they supply further evidence that the same man wrote *The Famous Victories* and the Shakespearean trilogy.

Secondly, this clear connection between *Henry V* and Sidney’s *An Apology for Poetry* strongly suggests

that the two were written close in time to each other, in the early 1580s. Oxford's response to Sidney must have been written before Sidney's death in 1586.

As we know, Sir Philip died of wounds sustained in a cavalry charge on the battlefield, and was given a hero's funeral of a type usually reserved for great noblemen. He was an extremely popular supporter and patron of literature, and the recipient of more than forty literary dedications. On his death almost every English poet composed verses in his praise. It is unlikely that after this hero's death Oxford would have openly mocked his opinions about the English drama.

Further evidence of a connection between Sidney and Oxford can be found in another passage in *An Apology for Poetry*, where Sidney criticizes exotic "similitudes in certain printed discourses" as being "rifled up," "almost tedious prattling," and "as absurd a surfeit to the ears as possible."<sup>16</sup> Critics have identified this passage as an unmistakable reference to *Euphues* (1578) and *Euphues and his England* (1580), both by Oxford's protégé John Lyly, who dedicated the latter to him.<sup>17</sup> In her biography of Sidney, Katherine Duncan-Jones suggests that in another passage, where he complains about "derivative and unconvincing love poets," Sidney is referring to Thomas Watson and his collection of one hundred poems about love – *Hekatompathia* – which Watson dedicated to Oxford in the spring of 1582.<sup>18</sup>

The fact that neither Oxford's plays nor Sidney's *Apology* reached print until about fifteen years after they were written reflects their authors' indifference to publication, indeed, their distaste for poets whom Sidney described as those "who think it enough if they can be rewarded" by the printer.<sup>19</sup>

There is one last clue in *Henry V* to the chronological order of Oxford's history plays. In the Epilogue, which is a precise fourteen-line Shakespearean sonnet, the last six lines read:

Henry the Sixth in infant bands  
crowned King  
Of France and England, did this

king succeed,  
Whose state so many had the  
managing  
That they lost France and made  
his England bleed,  
Which oft our stage has shown;  
and for their sake,  
In your fair minds let this  
acceptance take.

As there are no other extant Elizabethan plays about Henry VI, virtually all modern scholars agree that Shakespeare completed the *Henry VI–Richard III* tetralogy before his Prince Hal series, and most of them think that the *Henry VI* trilogy, to the extent that he wrote it, was his first attempt to dramatize English history. This rough sequence accords with the evidence presented above, but only in terms of sequence. With the exception of *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare's history plays must be dated to the decade before 1584. The traditional dating of ca. 1588-1599 can no longer be sustained.

### Endnotes

1. Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney, Courtier Poet*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991, p. 230; F. G. Robinson (ed.) *An Apology for Poetry*. Indianapolis, 1970, p. xvi.
2. Katherine Duncan-Jones (ed.), *Sir Philip Sidney, A Critical Edition of the Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 244.
3. Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*. New York, 1979, pp. 70-1.
4. Duncan-Jones (ed.), *A Critical Edition*. op. cit. p. 245.
5. Wilson O. Clough, "The Broken English of Foreign Characters of the Elizabethan Stage." *Philological Quarterly* 12 (1933) pp. 255-68, Table 1. Clough also lists *Hymenaeus* (1579), but its text is in Latin, and Fredericus, the "foreigner" employs a medley of Latin, Dutch, and German.
6. H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558-1640*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 234; K. Duncan-Jones. *A Critical Edition*, op. cit. p. 397, n. 7.
7. John J. Norwich, *Shakespeare's English Kings*. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1999 p. 212.
8. Duncan-Jones (ed.), *A Critical Edition*, op. cit. p. 243.
9. Charles Edelman, *Brawl ridiculous, Swordfighting in Shakespeare's Plays*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992, pp. 13, 52.

10. In the *First Folio* there is no Chorus preceding Act IV, which is actually marked "Actus Tertius." The second half of the original Chorus to Act III (marked "Actus Secundus" in the Folio) was transferred to its current place preceding Act IV by later editors.

11. "I am inclined to believe . . . that . . . the part of the Chorus . . . had been originally . . . played by an actor called William Shakespeare." John Dover Wilson (ed.), *King Henry V*. Cambridge, 1947, p. xiii.

12. T. W. Craik (ed.), *King Henry V*, The Arden Shakespeare. London: Routledge, 1995, p. 256.

13. Alwin Thaler makes the same observation on pp. 19-20 of *Shakespeare and Sir Philip Sidney*, Cambridge, MA, 1947. Another commentator on *Henry V*, Robert Ornstein, writes that "the apology is as sly as it is gratuitous" in *A Kingdom for a Stage*, Cambridge, MA, 1972, p. 176. A similar viewpoint is expressed, albeit with some confusion, by Peter B. Erickson in "'The Fault / My Father Made': The Anxious Pursuit of Heroic Fame in Shakespeare's *Henry V*," *Modern Language Studies* 10, 1979, pp. 10-25.

14. H. R. Woudhuysen (ed.), *Samuel Johnson on Shakespeare*, London, 1989, p. 211.

15. Sharon Tyler, "Minding true things: the Chorus, the audience, and Henry V" in *The Theatrical Space, Themes in Drama* 9, James Redmond (ed.), New York, 1987, pp. 69-80.

16. Duncan-Jones (ed.), *A Critical Edition*, op. cit. p. 247.

17. Geoffrey Shepherd (ed.), *An Apology for Poetry*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973, p. 230; Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, op. cit. p. 237.

18. Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, op. cit. p. 237.

19. Duncan-Jones (ed.), *A Critical Edition*, op. cit. p. 241.

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## Shakespeare's "Fluellen" Identified as a Retainer of the Earl of Oxford

By Charles Wisner Barrell

For I do know Fluellen valiant,  
And, touch'd with choler,  
hot as gunpowder,  
And quickly will return an injury...  
*Henry V*, Act 4, sc. 7, 171

*From time to time the Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter will reprint significant articles by pioneering Oxfordian scholars that are not generally available to contemporary readers. The following article appeared in a slightly longer form in the August, 1941, issue of the Newsletter, the publication of the American branch of the Shakespeare Fellowship of England.*

The opening chapter of Prof. E.E. Stoll's new book, *Shakespeare and Other Masters*, provides a good example of the ill-natured, opinionated belittlement which professional Stratfordians offer in lieu of logical rebuttal of the Oxford-Shakespeare evidence.

Meanwhile, Oxfordian research industriously continues to pile documentary proof upon documentary proof that the literary nobleman, Edward de Vere – amply certified by his contemporaries as the foremost poet at Elizabeth's Court – is inextricably bound up with the very warp and woof of the Shakespearean creative mystery. Where William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon fails most signally to present credentials of personal accomplishment, Lord Oxford appears in person to answer the oft-repeated question: "How could Shakespeare have known that point of law, that particular bit of Court etiquette – or that Elizabethan notable so well?"

The long-observed personality of this eccentric genius who disposed bit by bit of one of the greatest earldoms in the Tudor realm to help bring to flower

the golden age of English drama, comes to light between the lines of the Shakespeare plays as unmistakably as his hidden features and personal symbols have been brought to the surface of the most ancient of the painted portraits of the Bard.

We are in the position to prove, beyond all reasonable doubt, that it is in this man's life and activities that the true and satisfying answers to the most thorny questions of the Shakespearean creative background are to be found. Edward de Vere provides the human solution to every problem that has gone by default when submitted to the uncouth and inarticulate businessman of Stratford who had such difficulty in writing his own name legibly.

Instead of Stratfordian assumptions, based upon familiarity with the printed works without attempting to account for the human agency which made them possible, Oxfordians offer facts relating to the many-sided genius of the cruelly misunderstood peer who looked like Shakespeare, wrote like Shakespeare, and had so many of the personal experiences and personal associations which are adumbrated in the plays and poems. The discovery of a new and highly significant Shakespearean association of the literary Earl can now be announced. This brings to our attention one of the most picturesque real life notables of Elizabethan times, the doughty Sir Roger Williams, the Welsh soldier of fortune, who is said by all modern editors of *King Henry the Fifth* to have been the prototype of Shakespeare's characterization of Captain Fluellen. Both Sir Sidney Lee and Prof. John Dover Wilson of Cambridge have written at length to prove that the dramatist had Williams clearly in mind when he drew the colorful figure of the Welsh firebrand. The idiosyncrasies of the living soldier and

his stage counterpart are, as a matter of fact, identical. The parallels embrace not only broad outlines of appearance, nativity and calling, but extends to those known tricks of speech, peculiarities of reasoning, and reaction to events, as well as the telling *defects of character* which lend verisimilitude to all true portraits.

No one who studies the contemporary account of Sir Roger Williams, together with the published writings of this remarkable swashbuckler – with his delightful mixture of bravery, impulsiveness, native honesty, chauvinism, pawky humor and resolute devotion to "discipline" – can for one moment doubt that the author of *Henry the Fifth* had this particular Elizabethan notable before his mind's eye when he created Fluellen. The two men think, speak and act exactly alike. They even use the same verbal similes and the same historical incidents to drive home identical arguments.

In his sketch of Sir Roger Williams in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Sir Sidney Lee tells us that the Welsh hero was born in Monmouthshire (exactly the same county which Fluellen so pridefully claims as his birthplace); 1540 is the year given as the most probable date for this event. Anthony a Wood says that Williams studied at Brasenose College, Oxford, beginning in 1554, and that soon after he left Oxford, he became a soldier of fortune.

From other sources, including his own writings, it is known that Williams was among the British soldiery to serve on the Continent during Elizabeth's reign. In fact, nearly all of his mature life can be shown to have been spent in active service in the Lowlands, in France and other continental countries. In referring to Sir Roger's character, Lee states: "He rapidly acquired a wide



reputation for exceptional courage and daring. Like Shakespeare's Fluellen, he was constitutionally of a choleric temper and blunt of speech, but the defects of judgment with which he is commonly credited seem exaggerated." Serving under Henry of Navarre during the late 1580s and early 1590s, after a long experience in the Low Countries, Sir Roger Williams finally returned to London in 1594 with the French Ambassador. His first book, *A Brief Discourse of War, with his Opinion concerning some part of Military Discipline* had been published in London in 1590. It was not until 1618, however, that the volume upon which his literary fame rests, *The Actions of the Lowe Countries*, was finally printed. Broken in health, Williams did not long survive his return to Elizabeth's Court in 1594. His death was the occasion of public mourning during the following year.

While the evidence proving Sir Roger Williams to have been the prototype of Shakespeare's Fluellen is too voluminous and clear-cut to admit of doubt, no particle of proof has ever been adduced to show that William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon ever came face to face with this dashing Welsh military hero. Neither can it be shown that Shakspeare was ever vouchsafed a glance at the manuscript of Williams' book, *The Actions of the Lowe Countries*, published posthumously in 1618, though many of the speeches that the author of *Henry the Fifth* puts in the mouth of the argumentative Fluellen are merely poetical paraphrases of Sir Roger's own arguments and "instances" in the *Actions*.

Both Williams and his stage double are extravagant admirers of Edward III and his military exploits. (See Williams' account of the Battle of Middleburgh and Fluellen's reference to Edward III in *Henry the Fifth*, IV, 7, 89.) Both men refer quaintly to Alexander the Great, speak boastfully of their native soil and evince reverence for "the literature of the wars." Williams is a firm advocate

of military discipline, which he expatiates upon endlessly and uses in the wording of two of his book titles. This same insistence upon "discipline" becomes a catchword with Fluellen: "the disciplines of the wars," "the disciplines of the pristine wars of the Romans," "the true disciplines of the wars," *ad infinitum*. In his amusing encounter with the Irish engineer, Captain Macmorris, Fluellen immediately

suggests, "a few *disputations* with you, as partly touching or concerning the disciplines of the wars." At the end of his chapter describing the Battle of Middleburgh in the *Actions*, Williams exclaims in the unmistakable phraseology of Fluellen: "But I will dispute against any *souldier*, that no fight hath been comparable unto it by sea, these five hundred yeares ..."

These are but a few of the verbal

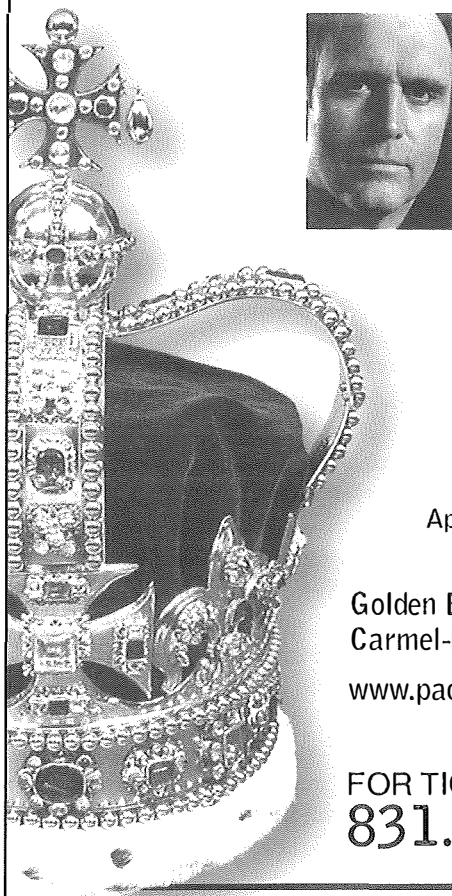
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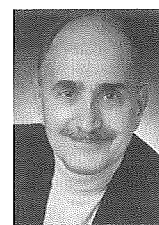
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## The Shakespeare Oxford Society 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., October 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002

The Shakespeare Oxford 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.

Featured speakers include Prof. Peter Usher (Pennsylvania State Univ.) on astronomy and *Hamlet*; Dr. Frank Davis on the dating of *Twelfth Night*; Stephanie Hughes on John Webster's *The White Devil*; Robert Brazil on Oxford's Books; Bill Farina and Dick Desper, each speaking on *The Winter's Tale*, as well as Prof. Alan Nelson, Prof. Jack Shuttleworth, Dr. Daphne Pearson, Joseph Sobran, Katherine Chiljan, Sally Mosher, Ramón Jiménez, Peter Dickson, and Derran Charlton.

There will be a panel of experienced high school teachers and two college faculty for local teachers, and an open session on an Introduction to the Authorship Question for interested locals in the D.C. area.

**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.

*Oxfordian News (cont'd from p. 9)*

held in Carpenter Hall, which holds about 150 people; they expect the event to be sold out fairly soon. Reservations can be made through the box office at 541-482-4331. This will be the third time that Woosnam, an SOS member, has lectured at the OSF.

### Portland, OR

Concordia University's Institute for Oxfordian Studies will be offering a seminar this summer on August 11-17. The seminar will be conducted by Prof. Daniel Wright and will feature guest lecturers and special events. Participants will live in the dormitories on campus. For further information, contact Dr. Wright at Concordia University, 2811 NE Holman, Portland, OR, 97211, or: [dwright@cu-portland.edu](mailto:dwright@cu-portland.edu).

### Washington, D.C.

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, Joseph Sobran spoke at the Newberry Lecture Series at DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired) at their Washington D.C. headquarters. Sobran, author of *Alias Shakespeare*, detailed the Shakespeare Authorship

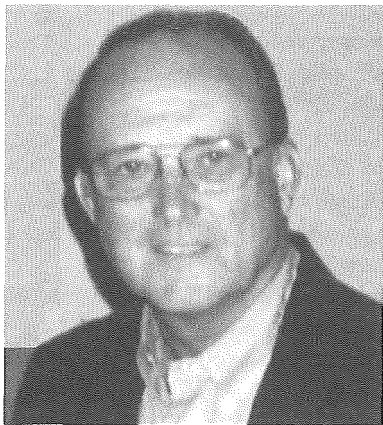
debate that has raged for over a century. He discussed the parallels between the Earl of Oxford's life and Shakespeare's Hamlet, including phrases that Oxford used in his private letters that appear in the play. For example, Hamlet complains of "the law's delay" while Oxford complained of "the delay of the law." Hamlet cites a proverb about the horse that starves while waiting for the grass to grow; Oxford cited the same proverb. Sobran mentioned that the plays often quote or refer to verses in the Bible. For example, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* speaks of "Goliath with a weaver's beam," and the verse in the Geneva Bible that compares the shaft of Goliath's spear to "a weaver's beam" is underlined in Oxford's personal copy, now at the Folger Library. No such parallels can be found in Shakespeare's life. Sobran concluded his talk with a quote from Orson Welles: "I think Oxford wrote Shakespeare ... if you don't, there are some awfully funny coincidences to explain away." A glowing review of the event appeared in the DACOR *Bulletin*, sent to its 3,000 members.

## Call for Papers

For the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, sponsored by the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation, 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 Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80919 Email: [deVereinCo@aol.com](mailto:deVereinCo@aol.com)

## Meet the SOS Trustees



### Dr. Frank Davis

"I grew up with Shakespeare, due to my father's continual study of the canon," says Dr. Frank Davis, who was elected last year at the Carmel SOS Conference, "and I believe this helped shape my father's wonderful, patient personality." Born in Montgomery, Alabama, Dr. Davis is a retired neurosurgeon living in Savannah, Georgia. After reading Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, Dr. Davis was inspired to telephone Mr. Ogburn, who was listed in the local phone book. "After speaking with him for a while, he invited my wife and I over for tea with him and Vera. This was the start of our friendship. It was uncanny how much he reminded me of my father."

Ogburn presented Dr. Davis with a copy of *The Medical Mind of Shakespeare* by Aubrey Kail, encouraging him to look at Shakespeare's medical knowledge, which got him started in research. "I continue to look for references/significances regarding Shakespeare's knowledge of medicine, as well as studying other Elizabethan physicians and their contemporary medicine."

He is also studying *Willobie his Avis* and searching for the "lost" Fleming manuscript of a "conceit" by Oxford. Dr. Davis has also completed a paper on the dating of *Twelfth Night*, which he plans to present at this year's SOS Conference.

Beyond his research projects, Dr. Davis was also inspired to form a local Shakespeare group (called the Southeastern Horatio

Society), which now comprises about thirty members. Only ten are Oxfordian converts, but Davis reports that the rest are slowly gaining respect for the authorship question: "We should care about the authorship because it enlightens the understanding of the works, and we should always search for the truth, whoever is the true author."

Dr. Davis believes that persuading academics is the biggest challenge for Oxfordians. "Absolute proof that they will accept is unlikely to happen, and the preponderance of circumstantial evidence doesn't seem to persuade them," he says. What Dr. Davis loves about Shakespeare: "The words with their profound expression. No matter how many times you read a play or poem, you pick up on new thoughts and expressions. Also I enjoy the relevance to history of the period."

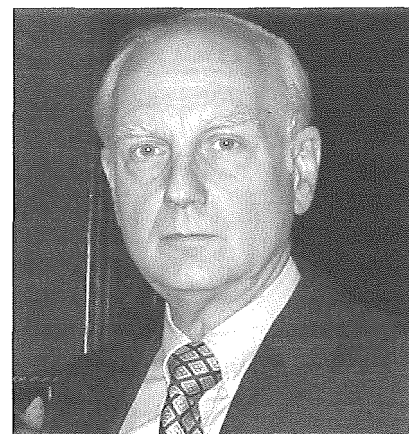
### Wayne Shore

Wayne Shore, who was also elected to the SOS Board of Trustees at the Carmel Conference, believes "Shakespeare's expressions of a wide range of human conditions are quintessential." Shore was born in High Point, North Carolina and resides in San Antonio, Texas. He got hooked into the authorship question after seeing the Firing Line debate on television between Charlton Ogburn and Prof. Charney, and after reading Ogburn's book. "I like to try to solve puzzles using scientific methods," says Shore, who is a research psychologist by education and the founder of two companies performing scientific and technical services. A retired Air Force officer, Shore currently serves as a consultant for the Air Force performing data analysis projects. Shore also does Oxfordian research, "but only in areas which can be quantified, such as stylometrics, or areas for which probative evidence is possible."

Shore explains that stylometrics is literally the measurement of an author's style. "Examples of a stylometric approach are average sentence length, average word length, percent of words

with the prefix 'ex,' the ratio of 'and' to 'but,' and so on. Typically, the researcher collects and examines much data, hoping that some small part of it will resolve a question." He also notes that stylometrics was used to identify the writers of the Federalist Papers: "My current effort is to bring to bear a wide variety of stylometric techniques to determine: 1) Did Shakespeare have a hand in writing some plays not generally attributed to him, and 2) did other authors have a hand in the Shakespeare canon? I realize that this project is ambitious, perhaps excessively so. It may ultimately fail, but it's rewarding me with data that I find very interesting."

Shore believes that the Oxfordian movement so far has failed to sufficiently engage our rational people with their rational people. "The first step is to get people to recognize that the authorship issue is unresolved. Without that, no one will search for an alternative to Shakespeare." He feels that resolution of the authorship question will help us understand the world in which we live. "Is the canon the product of immaculate perception, i.e., written by the unqualified Shakespeare, and therefore inexplicable? Or do the rules that we understand which govern qualifications and productivity hold? Are the Shakespeare works an incomprehensible miracle, or a superlative, but understandable achievement?"



Wayne Shore

*Portland Conference (cont'd from p. 5)*

been there. Working from the premise that the author was "writing a play, not a travelogue," he explained that the dialogue describes the scene and why it needs acute study by a perspicacious reader to identify the detailed information on Italian customs and locations. Focusing on the *Merchant of Venice*, Roe exposed the author's awareness of the intricacies of Jewish society in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Venice and, because the "play provides bizarre details about the ghetto and Shylock's house," went on to reveal the exact site of the house (still standing!) from clues in the text.

Andrew Werth, a Concordia graduate, continued his identification of Homeric sources in Shakespeare, amusingly recounting the wide range of confused and contradictory Stratfordian scholarship over whether Shakespeare knew any Greek at all. Appropriately, our favorite Stratfordian scholar, Professor Alan Nelson of U.C. Berkeley, concluded the day by illuminating the relationship between Edward de Vere and his stewardship (Nelson would say mishandling) of the Earl's Colne Grammar School. Professor Nelson's manuscript of his biography, *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of*

*Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford*, has gone to Liverpool University Press, to be released later this year. He felt compelled to say that it is "not a polemical book," but that "[you] cannot write a biography without forming an idea of a person."

Later that night, at the Annual Awards Banquet held at the Columbia Edgewater Country Club, Professor Nelson accepted the university's Vero Nihil Verius award for Excellence in Scholarship from Concordia University President, Dr. Charles Schlimpert. Dr. Schlimpert also presented the award for Excellence in the Arts to Sir Derek Jacobi who was unfortunately unable to attend as he was performing in *The Hollow Crown* with Diana Rigg in Wellington, New Zealand, but his acceptance letter was read to the delight and amusement of all.

Highlights of Sunday's papers included Mark Alexander exploring "25 Curious Connections" between Shakespeare and Oxford. He compared the situation to that of a pointillist painter: each dot, in and of itself, means nothing, but together they form an astounding picture. Roger Stritmatter, Ph.D. examined the imagery of the Boar

in *Venus & Adonis*; Professor Ren Draya of Blackburn College asserted that the sports and gambling mentioned in *Henry V* "reflect the strengths, opinions, and background of Edward de Vere;" and Ramón Jiménez on "In brawl ridiculous": Philip Sidney, Oxford and the Battle of Agincourt" postulated that the unusual Choruses in *Henry V* were Oxford's reaction to Sidney's criticism of *The Famous Victories*, and "Shakespeare's first response to a bad review" (see cover story).

Richard Whalen (a former SOS president) also weighed in on the proceedings with a compelling presentation on another and earlier source for *Macbeth*, William Stewart's *Chronicles of Scotland* – a work existing only in manuscript form in the mid-1500s – and in the hands of the nobility such as Burghley and Lady Lennox where Oxford would have had access to it. Whalen underscored this point by citing Stratfordian scholarship ascertaining that "in every case where Stewart differs from Holinshed, Shakespeare goes with Stewart!"

All in all, the Sixth Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference was an undeniable success with the highest attendance on record to date.

## THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

The Shakespeare Oxford Society welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items of relevance to Shakespeare, Edward de Vere, and the Authorship Discussion.

Contributions should be reasonably concise and when appropriate validated by peer review. Submissions must include the author's contact information and may be subject to editing for content and length.

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*Justice Stevens (cont'd from p. 3)*

connection whatsoever with, Southampton.

There is, however, abundant evidence of a close relationship between De Vere and Southampton, beginning in 1581, when Southampton – as De Vere had some years earlier – became a royal ward under the care of Lord Burghley.

Whether these facts will increase or decrease the likelihood of confusion over the identity of the author of the Shakespeare Canon; whether a different, but nonetheless distinctive, name will come to be associated with that venerable body of work; and whether the Canon will remain as sweet if that is the case, are questions that I will leave in the more capable hands of literary scholars, trademark lawyers, and, perhaps, future lecturers in this series.

For now, suffice it to say, far more than forty winters have besieged both my brow and the brow of Beverly Pattishall since the Coca Cola antitrust litigation caused our paths to cross. His writing may not equal Shakespeare's, but we can be certain that if he has given an opinion that it is lawful to copy not only the recipe, but also the design and the packaging of Banbury Tarts, it is safe to do so.

### Historical discovery!

Three hundred coded signatures have been found in *Hamlet* identifying De Vere as author!!

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This issue's Banner quotation comes from Shakespeare's *Richard II*:

YORK: Well, bear you well in this new spring of time, Lest you be cropp'd before you come to prime. What news from Oxford? Do these justs and triumphs hold? *Richard II* Act 5, Sc. 2

*Just* is an old or obsolete form of *Joust*. Some editions of Shakespeare use the modern spelling. A *triumph* was a public processional or festivity celebrating victory.

## President's Letter

In a long-anticipated major step, the Society has recently relocated its national office and the Victor Creighton Library from Malden, Massachusetts to Washington D.C. Our new address is 1555 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 200, Washington D.C., 20036, and new telephone number, 202-207-0281. Nonprofit Management Inc., a firm specializing in management of nonprofit organizations, will be administering our day-to-day operations so that board members will be able to concentrate on other programs and expansion. In the past two years, Joe Peel and Richard Desper have been handling many of the functions that will now be administered by NMI. We especially want to thank Richard for his tireless work as Assistant Treasurer and Blue Boar fulfillment, and Treasurer Joe Peel for spending long hours putting the Society's tax returns in order and for finding and working out the details with NMI. Trustees Jim Sherwood and Barboura Flues were instrumental in advising us in the early planning stages of the move, and a special thanks goes to Boston-area member Jean Sullivan, who spent long hours preparing the office and the library books for the move.

The Society's move to D.C. is especially exciting now since the Capitol is the location of this year's conference, scheduled for October 10-13 at the Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia. The Gertrude C. Ford Foundation deserves our deepest gratitude for its continued sponsorship of the Society's conferences, as well as for its substantial donations to the Endowment Fund. The Foundation has given us \$35,000; \$5,000 of which is designated for the endowment fund. The \$30,000 is designated for the conference sponsorship and that amount not used for the fall conference will be allocated to the endowment, according to the Ford Foundation's wishes.

The Society has been blessed with several loyal individual contributors, for which we are most grateful, especially James Hardigg, a constant friend and

supporter of the Society for many years.

The centerpiece of any national headquarters is an active local chapter and the D.C. area members have come together for five meetings this year already with 20 plus attendees at nearly every meeting. Joan Jungfleisch and Cindy Silberblatt, who are very active in the D.C. chapter, have been appointed as the conference co-chairs. Edward Sisson, Esq., from the D.C. law firm of Arnold and Porter, has been appointed to the Board of Trustees. We are most grateful to all of these excellently qualified people for coming forward to join our cause.

The Board of Trustees of the Shakespeare Oxford Society would also like to offer special recognition to fellow trustee Katherine Chiljan, who organized and edited the last four issues of our Newsletter; she did this on a volunteer basis, outside of her regular full-time job. The Board wishes to thank her for this generous contribution to the Society. In addition, the Board also recognizes Gerit Quealy for the extensive writing and reporting she did on the last issue of the newsletter.

The Board has named Robert Brazil as interim editor of the Newsletter. Mr. Brazil is a writer and researcher, a former History teacher, and an Oxfordian since 1988. He presented his research at the 1995 SOS conference in Greensboro, NC, and in 1999 in Newton, MA, and has authored books, articles, and websites on the Oxford Theory.

Aaron F. Tatum

### The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society

is to establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, (1550-1604)

as the true author of the Shakespeare works, to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication, and to foster an enhanced appreciation and enjoyment of the poems and plays.

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

Dues, grants and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law:  
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Book Review (cont'd from p. 11)

else in the book, and otherwise unidentified. From Kos (in the southeast Aegean), Mycroft takes De Vere to Troy, and then Trebizond on the Black Sea; from there into Syria and Antioch, and to Tyre, in modern Lebanon, and Alexandria, and then back to Sicily.

In his Preface the author admits that Mycroft's work is unfinished, and that he only wishes to "stimulate investigation." But although he supplies more than 260 end notes, many simply name a book, or consist of an unhelpful phrase, such as "Privy Council Papers," or "Cecil Papers, 1575." Unfortunately, many of them are also misnumbered or misplaced and, worse yet, dozens of quotations and assertions go unidentified or undocumented.

A related shortcoming is the lack of attention to recent research, especially by Oxfordians. Less than ten of the two-hundred-plus sources in the "Selected Bibliography" are post-1990. And aside from a vague reference to recent "American Oxford Newsletters," no Oxfordian research later than *This Star of England* is cited.

The well-read Oxfordian will find nothing new and much that is old in *Discovering Shakespeare*, and the newcomer's head might whirl awhile, but both will be charmed and intrigued by the loquacious Mycroft and his dutiful straight man.

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## Letters to the editor:

What may be most intriguing and rewarding toward establishing concrete evidence that Edward de Vere used "William Shakespeare" as his nom de plume could lie in his European travels from March, 1575 to April, 1576. There may be Oxford's continental correspondences that exist within the libraries that archived his foreign acquaintances. Those possible letters of English ambassador to France, Valentine Dale or the seventy-year-old Sturmius, director of the Strasbourg Gymnasium in Germany, or the Italian financier Baptista Nigrone, the Doge of Venice, or acquaintances at Padua University may offer just a few of the many public or private venues of written communication with the Earl of Oxford.

What treasure troves may exist concerning De Vere's musings and artistic responses within the written impressions of like-minded men, is to my knowledge, essentially little known. What influences of both literary and experiential nature exist during De Vere's foreign sojourn that seeded and imbued the creative mind of Shakespeare's works. Perchance, just perchance, the sources of the Bard toward literary genius lie in the mind of their author and in the pens of his European contemporaries.

Ronald Harrison Fenn  
Dennis, MA

While Bob Prechter's "Veres and De Vere" in the latest newsletter was a good read, I think he missed the obvious answer to his question and failed to answer a larger question. Those of us with Scots ancestry probably never wondered why the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford and indeed the 16 earls before him were referred to as De Vere instead of the family name of Vere. The chiefs of clans (families) are distinguished from other members of the clan by the addition of *the* – as in *the* MacFarlane of MacFarlane. The Scottish king we all know as Robert *the* Bruce was, in fact, from a family not unlike the Veres. His ancestor, whose family name was Brus, came to Britain because of William the Conqueror in 1066, and in due course Robert *de* Brus, as chief of

his clan, became chief of his nation – Robert *the* Bruce, King Robert I of Scotland. One can only assume that the use of *the*, as the Scots use it, or *de*, as the Normans use it, is simply the designation for the most powerful and/or honored member of the clan or family. The 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford would, of course, be Edward *de* Vere. The issue becomes clouded and the usage erratic only when origins are not understood. What I was hoping Mr. Prechter would cover, or at least address, in his detailed article was if the British adopted the custom from the Normans or if the Normans learned it from the cross-culture that emerged in Britain after 1066.

Receiving the latest newsletter is always the highlight of the day for me, and I never skip over a word. Thank you for all you do; keep the newsletters coming.

Elaine McFarland Radney  
Colorado Springs, CO

Regarding Mrs. Radney's observation: the same was true in Irish clans, even in Elizabethan times. The heads of the O'Connor and O'Neill clans were known as "The O'Connor" and "The O'Neill."

Richard Desper  
Ayer, MA

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*Fluellen (cont'd from p. 17)*

parallels. Space does not permit at this time of a complete presentation of the Williams-Fluellen characterization. The portrait is, indeed, so realistic that it is abundantly evident that the creator of the stage Fluellen knew Sir Roger Williams as intimately as Charles Dickens knew the original of the irrepressible Mr. Micawber. Yet it is not susceptible of proof that the Stratford native ever came into contact with the Welsh soldier of fortune. What is the answer of this riddle?

As usual, we find a reasonable and satisfying answer in the documentation relating to the 17th Earl of Oxford, the great concealed dramatist of Elizabeth's Court. In Volume 17 of the *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, published 1938 by the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission, I have come across the transcript of a holograph letter written by Sir Francis Vere (1560-1609), favorite cousin and intimate friend of the 17th Earl of Oxford, to Sir Robert Cecil, Principal Secretary

of State. It is dated November 17, 1605, and evidently accompanied another letter from one Thomas Morgan, a notorious spy, at this time in the pay of certain continental interests desirous of stirring up trouble in England. The first paragraph of Vere's letter reads as follows:

I received the enclosed from Thomas Morgan this morning by an Englishman, a stranger to me, but as he says well known to Sir William Waad. It was delivered to him by Sir Robert Dormer. The contents are strange to me, for I never borrowed money of him, nor to my remembrance spake with him; but such a man I saw when I was very young at Paris, *by reason of the company I kept with Sir Roger Williams and one Denys a Frenchman, followers of my Lord of Oxford's*, to whom he sometimes resorted.

Here we have unquestionable

contemporary proof that the playwriting Earl of Oxford knew the prototype of Shakespeare's Fluellen from personal contact! Merely a coincidence? But as these innumerable coincidences continue to come to light, their cumulative effect creates a documentary case history of impressive proportions. Such evidence as this, which shows the close relationship between Lord Oxford and the original Fluellen, cannot but strengthen belief that the Shakespeare plays are – contrary to orthodox pronouncement – full of topical allusions, and alive with speaking portraits and biting satires of many famous Elizabethan characters.

It is undoubtedly this very quality of lifelike portraiture in the dramatic recreation of such personalities as Sir Roger Williams as Fluellen, the Great Lord Burghley as Polonius, Sir Christopher Hatton as Malvolio, and Oxford himself as Hamlet that has given these stage figures their deathless vitality down the centuries.

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