

*Dedicated to the proposition that the works of Shakespeare were written by Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford*



## *The de Vere Society*

**Honorary President:** Christopher Dams Esq.

“Report me and my cause aright To the unsatisfied.”

*Hamlet V ii*

**[www.deveresociety.co.uk](http://www.deveresociety.co.uk)**

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Vol. 22. No. 4, October 2015

### *DVS Meetings*

The Autumn Meeting for the DVS will take place at the Thistle Hotel, Marble Arch, London on 17 October 2015. The AGM will take place on 9 April 2016 in London

### *The Shakespeare Authorship Trust*

The SAT will hold its annual meeting at Shakespeare’s Globe, London on 22 November 1000 – 1900, on the theme of the History Plays.

### *Oxford’s Capture by Pirates, 1576*

Jan Scheffer has been making interesting discoveries in the Dutch archives.

### *New Portrait of Edward de Vere*

Read about the sale of a portrait of Edward de Vere earlier this year..

### *Newsletter*

Contributors express their own views, which are not necessarily those of the Society or the Committee. The next issue is planned for January 2016. Please send your comments, letters, suggestions and articles (up to 2,000 words with image files sent separately) to [chairman@deveresociety.co.uk](mailto:chairman@deveresociety.co.uk) or by post to Editor, DVS Newsletter, 6 Rosedale Close, Fareham, Hants, PO14 4EL, UK.

The Committee will be looking to appoint a new editor of the Newsletter from April 2016 onwards.

## In Memoriam

The De Vere Society was very sad to hear of the deaths of the following members and friends.

**Howard Peel** from Worcester passed away after a brave struggle against illness. He and his wife Marion regularly attended DVS meetings. Although it was Marion who held the main enthusiasm for the Oxford cause, nevertheless Howard showed considerable interest in all of the DVS activities and contributed many useful ideas both to the case and to the running of the Society. We shall miss him.

Marion, who contributed the chapter on *Twelfth Night* to *Dating Shakespeare's Plays* has taken a break recently from contributing to the newsletter but will resume her own scholarly investigations in the near future. [N. B. There is no relation with Joe Peel.]

**Norman Nugent Robson**, of North Palm Beach, Florida, died in May this year aged 90. He is survived by his wife of over sixty years, Margaret. Norman was an ardent believer in De Vere's authorship and kept up to date with Oxfordian developments in England through the DVS newsletter. Originally from Ohio, Norman studied architecture and became involved in theatrical design. Working for Dramaturgy Inc., he became a scenic artist in New York with NBC. Norman was a dedicated member of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. Margaret Robson has just renewed her membership of the De Vere Society.

**Susan Sheridan** recently died at her home in London. She was known for her voice work on radio and television. Susan was part of the original cast for BBC Radio 4's *Hitch Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy* Radio Series where she played highly trained astrophysicist Trillian. She also appeared on stage in many productions, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, her own one woman show *The Merry Wife of Wilton*, as well as various touring productions from Ayckbourn to Shakespeare.

Susan was always very sympathetic to the Oxfordian cause. She completed an MA course in 2009 on Shakespeare Authorship Studies at Brunel University London and gave talks and presentations on the authorship question - most recently at the Globe Theatre. She has written a book, due to be published in 2015, entitled *Shaking the Spear*.

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### ***Message from the Chairman***

The Chairman, Kevin Gilvary, has indicated that he will be standing down when his three-year term of office expires in April 2016. The Society will therefore be looking to elect a new chairman at the next AGM.

# The de Vere Society

- Welcomes everyone who appreciates the works of Shakespeare and is interested in the Shakespeare Authorship Question.
- Is dedicated as a Society to the proposition that the works of Shakespeare were written by Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. Individuals sometimes hold slightly different views.
- Has demonstrated that the case for William Shakspere of Stratford as the author of the Shakespeare canon is very weak: *The Man who was Never Shakespeare* by A. J. Pointon and *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* by John Shahan and Alexander Waugh (eds).
- Has shown that the traditional chronology for the works of Shakespeare is based on conjecture in *Dating Shakespeare's Plays* (ed. Kevin Gilvary, 2010)
- Has explored the role of Edward de Vere, seventeenth earl of Oxford, not only as the author of the Shakespeare oeuvre but also as the leader of the movement to establish drama in early modern England, in *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of Shakespeare* by Richard Malim.

## DVS Committee, 2015

### Members

Hon. President	Christopher Dams	
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Hon. Secretary	Richard Malim	secretary@deveresociety.co.uk
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Member	Alexander Waugh	
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### Other Positions

Newsletter Editor	Kevin Gilvary	chairman@deveresociety.co.uk
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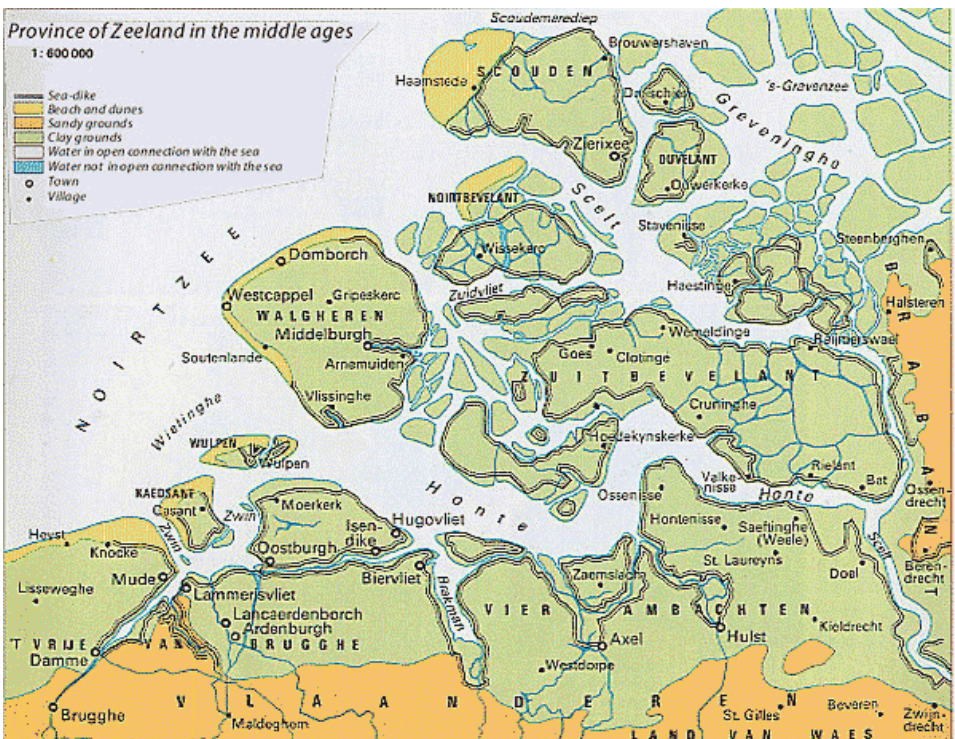
# Oxford's Capture by Pirates, April 10th/11th 1576

*Jan Scheffer, from Holland, writes about his country's link with Oxford*

## Prelude

It was an American from Boston, John Lothrop Motley, who wrote the first treatise on *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* in 1856. The person who had stimulated him in this, Robert Fruin, is a well-know historian in Holland. Partly as a commentary on Motley he wrote "Prelude to the Eighty year War" in 1859, he found Motley too harsh in his verdict of Charles V and his son Philip II. About the Netherlands, Fruin states that in the period within which our war of liberation took place,

*an antiquated medieval feudal state developed into the present day state, in one country quicker than in the other and in a variety of shapes, according to the individual character of the different nations.*



Fruin remarks:

*In our country the dukes of Burgundy and Austria were responsible for the foundation of this new type of state, in the 17 provinces that comprised the Lowlands, the dukes saw to it that both territory and power increased and in order to secure the unity of the state, unification of justice was sought by establishing a High Court and a similar supervising body for the local taxation was created in the Court of Finances. To this end a body of civil servants was created who were 'tools' in the hand of government which attempted an ever increasing control over the Dutch nation, partly under development. Because of a number of unfortunate royal deaths, the crown of the Lowlands passed from Burgundy to the Austrian Monarchy. Soon afterwards, Spain and the Lowlands ended up with the same monarch. As a result of which two nations, situated a thousand miles apart, speaking totally different languages, with different culture, customs, contradictory interests were, you could say a mismatch 'accidentally' coupled.*

Fruin asked himself the question: "How much blood would flow, how many tears cried, ere this unnatural union would be dissolved?"

## The Netherlands under Spanish rule

In 1500, Emperor Charles V was born in Ghent, 'a Dutchman at heart'. In 1506, he became Duke of Burgundy through his paternal grand-mother. In 1516, he became King of Spain (and its American territories) through his maternal grandparents, Ferdinand and Isabella. After the death of his paternal grand-father in 1519, he became Holy Roman Emperor in 1519. He ruled this wide range of territories until the 1550s, when he abdicated. His brother Ferdinand became Holy Roman Emperor and his son Philip then became king of Spain and King of the Netherlands in 1556. Philip II still held the honorary title of King of England as Queen Mary's consort.

Philip II (1527-1598) chose Castile as the seat of his government. He had been brought up in Spain as a devout Catholic. When he attended his father's Court in Brussels, he felt himself ill at ease. However, before he departed for Spain, he appointed as governor to the Low Countries his half-sister Margarethe van Parma.

In 1559, Philip called an assembly of the 'Staten' of all seventeen provinces in Ghent to celebrate his departure. However, he was confronted with a demand for the removal of all Spanish troops and to have government entrusted to the local gentry. Philip suspected that Orange and Count Egmont were behind this demand and publicly confronted Orange, stating that no representative of the states would have dared speak to him like this: "Not the Staten, but you, you, you!" Philip waited a fortnight at Flushing for a favourable wind and departed, never to return to the Low Countries.



*William of Orange, (1533-1584)*  
*Prince of Orange-Nassau*

Nicknamed ‘the Silent’, he is commonly referred to as Orange. He was the favourite nobleman of Charles V. He was murdered by a cleric at Delft in 1584.

## Dutch Protestants or ‘geus’

Because of the oppression, persecution and execution of Protestants especially with the ‘bloodplackards’, in 1565, members of the lower gentry, representing the people, formed what was called a ‘Compromise’, a league, which grew rapidly and called for military action against the government. Orange was able to mitigate its intentions to offering a petition to the Governor, begging for leniency towards the Protestants and, in fact, asking for religious freedom. On 5 April 1565, a long procession of these lords through Brussels entered Margarethe’s palace where the marriage of her son Alexander was taking place. One of the noblemen, Henry van Brederode, offered her the petition. Not knowing who these people were, she asked Berlaymont, one of the members of the Council of State (comparable to the Privy Council). Berlatmont replied: “*N’ayez pas peur Madame, ce ne sont que des geux*” - “there is nothing to fear, Madame, they are only beggars.” This remark was overheard and, no sooner was it mentioned on the 8th of April to the assembled lords, who were still awaiting an answer to their plea, than they adopted this name ‘geus’ as one of honor instead of insult: “*vivent les geux*”! Later on the word ‘geuzennaam’ was adopted for a pejorative used as something honourable, in the sense that ‘Monstrous Adversary’ could be a geuzennaam (reappropriation or reclamation) for Oxford.

## The Dutch Revolt, 1566

June 1566 saw the first Protestant open-air services; many now adopted the name 'geus' which thus also became synonymous with 'Protestant'. The uprising went further and in present Northern France, Steenvoorde, the first iconoclasm took place. Like a tidal wave it spread across Flanders and then to the provinces of Zealand and Holland, the most powerful ones of the Netherlands, next Utrecht and the other provinces.

Although Margarethe was still inclined to leniency, the orthodox Philip saw tolerance of heretics as a threat to the Catholic order and his authority, the revolt to be quenched at all cost. At first he procrastinated and gave the impression that he could be persuaded to tolerance but in 1567 he sent the Duke of Alva over as Captain General of the Netherlands, with an elite army force. The Spanish called the revolt 'Arson in the Netherlands'. Alva took over justice and had a special court installed colloquially called 'Bloedraad', the Council of Blood. He imposed heavy taxes, called 'tiende penning' or 'ten percent' both to which the States also protested vehemently – without effect. With her authority taken away from her, Margarethe let her brother know that she resigned from her function as governor. On a personal level, the Duke of Alva was at first friendly and inviting - which led to some of the nobility meeting with him in Brussels; Orange however was suspicious and thought that Alva was dissembling. He remained in his ancestral Castle Dillenburg in Germany. Alva then kidnapped Orange's oldest son Philip Willem and sent him as a hostage to Spain; father and son were never to meet again. With his arrest of counts Egmond and Hoorne and their subsequent beheading, Alva started a campaign of terror which cost many their lives and with his well trained army he conquered so many towns and territory that the situation for the revolt and its leader, Orange, became steadily worse.

## The influence of the Watergeuzen

The situation on land deteriorated with no town able to resist Alva. Although Orange lacked the aid of the French Huguenots and the English Protestants, he found support from 'watergeuzen', sea-beggars, or corsairs, united in their hatred of the Spanish and all Papists. They consisted of hungry Hollanders and Zealanders, many Walloon laborers out of work and Protestants from Liege joined by Huguenots from la Rochelle. This force of Watergeuzen were *'exiles, insurgents, and suspects, mixed with thieves and adventurers'*. Commanding these ships were mostly gentry, from the southern Netherlands, Brabant, Liege, Limburg. In 1568, William of Orange contacted the watergeuzen.



There was no intention at this stage to declare independence: if the French came to the rescue, they would be offered the provinces of Flanders and Artois and if England came along, Holland and Zealand to Elizabeth. De Watergeuzen, who were as yet an unruly band, formed a big problem. The present admiral, de Lumbres was replaced by William II de la Marck, the Lord Lumey (1542 -1578), from Liege, who gained some authority over them. Nevertheless Louis wrote to Elizabeth saying he wished that she would punish the Watergeuzen who, up until then, had had a safe haven in English ports. There they could trade their spoils from Spanish ships and even traded Spanish prisoners as slaves which were bought by English coastal towns with the idea of a large ransom later on.



**Flushing (Vlissingen) in the sixteenth century**



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## English Aid

The town of Dover made the local prison available to this end! In February 1572 the English government ordered the Watergeuzen to leave English ports, at the same time Orange made his brother Louis the leader of the Watergeuzen in the hope that an end would be put to the indiscriminate ransacking of ships. Interestingly enough, this led almost immediately to turning their attention back to their homeland and on the first of April 1572, Lumey took the town of Briele (Brill) by surprise, the Spanish stadhouders, or lieutenant, Bossu failing to retake the town. Alva, sensing danger, wanted to fortify his garrison at Flushing with its strategic position at the Scheldt mouth, but when some civil servants appeared to prepare this, an uprising by fishermen drove the Spanish ships away.

Lumey, in spite of having been driven from the English ports wrote to Elizabeth asking for help against the Alva's central government, he received a reply - though not openly - "*the English government allowed considerable bands of volunteers to part for Flushing in aid of the uprising*". A couple of month later, town after town, beginning with Enkhuizen, had similar events taking place: while magistrates and the rich upper class generally opposed the Watergeuzen the ordinary civilians favoured them, took the town, had Catholics relinquish their churches to them and introduced Protestant services. Magistrates and many of the rich subsequently fled to Amsterdam, where Alva had his headquarters. At the end of 1573, realizing the adverse effect of his ruthless policy and having lost three naval battles against the Watergeuzen, he asked to be released of his function. He was replaced by a more moderate Requesens, duke of Milan.

However, Dutch hopes of assistance from the French Huguenots were dashed by the massacre in Paris on St Bartholomew's Day, 24 August 1572, in which their leader De Coligny was killed and Henri of Navarre only just escaped.

A person of great importance was Count Louis de Boisot, a nobleman from Liège, whose his father had been a counsellor to Charles V. Boisot was condemned by the Council of Blood in 1570 and fled the country. He fled to flee to England in 1573 where he started operating as watergeus, together with his brother, Charles. In August 1573, Boisot became lieutenant-admiral of Zeeland, took over the Watergeuzen at Lillo, near Antwerp. Under Boisot, the Watergeuzen beat the Spanish fleet in 1573 before Flushing and again in January 1574 at the Battle of Reimerswaal, where he lost an eye.



In March 1574 he also became admiral of Holland and West Friesland. He then relieved the town of Leyden, but drowned, probably from exhaustion while swimming from his ship which had stranded during attempts to break the Spanish siege of the town of Zierikzee on the 27th of May 1576. There are a number of letters of his written directly to Elizabeth, for instance about complaints from the Merchant Adventurers brought to his attention by Robert Beale.

### ***Count Louis de Boisot***

Much of what concerns these naval events has been recorded in H.J. Smit, '*Sources to the History of the Trade with England, Scotland and Ireland*' (1950) which contains a vast correspondence and comprises some eight volumes. In 1575 for instance the High Court of the Admiralty mentions several acts of piracy by Flushingers:

*Mary Daniell, captain Thomas Estgate, with goods from Petrus de Morga and other Spanish merchants in the company of the ships the Prymrose and the Christ of London when they were sailing to Dunkirk, were attacked by six ships of Flushing, taken and lead to Zeeland.*

*Another ship was captured by Symon Vrege, Captain of the Beare of Flushing, in 1577. By order of the English Admiralty this pirate ship was arrested in Chatham Water.*

It contains frequent reports by Daniel Rogers, (1538-1591) English envoy to Orange, about the problems of English ships, taken by the Dutch Watergeuzen, particularly "them of Flushing". The Merchant Adventurers had a trade monopoly with the Netherlands, initially largely in wool. Many of the problems referred to had to do with taxes in this trade with Holland, Zeeland, Brabant and Flanders. In March 1575 Boisot captured Merchant Adventurers ships on their way to Antwerp. In June 1575 Daniel Rogers, mentions to the Zeeland Admiralty, Louis Boisot, that the sale of goods of a certain merchants was in violation of their agreement with Orange that all ships of those merchants would have to enter Flushing harbour. The town of Flushing doubled its population, from approximately 4000 to 8000, between 1570 and 1582.

## Capture of Oxford by the Watergeuzen

On the 10th of April 1576 Oxford returned home on a Merchant Adventurers ship. Mark Anderson in *Shakespeare by Another Name* on page 112 states: “the most expressive account is Shake-spear’s in Hamlet”:

*Ere we were two days at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put up a compell’d valor, and in the grapple I boarded them on the instant they got clear of our ship, so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy, but they knew what they did: I am to do a good turn for them.*

The pirates of very warlike appointment boarded de Vere’s ship and stripped it bare. De Vere’s luggage was ransacked and the pirates even took the clothes from Oxford’s back, he was ‘left naked, stripped to his shirt, treated miserably, his life in danger had he not been recognized by a Scotsman’ according to a despatch by the French ambassador, Michel de Castelnau, Sieur de la Mauvissière on 21 April (quoted by Alan Nelson, in *Monstrous Adversary*, p. 137). Nelson understandably does not refer to *Hamlet*, but quotes Nathaniel Baxter who was part of De Vere’s entourage in Italy about the event in 1606 in *Sidneys Ourania*:

*Naked we landed out of Italie,  
 Inthral’d by Pyrats men of noe regard,  
 Horror and death assayl’d Nobilitie,  
 If princes might with crueltie be scar’d  
 Lo thus are excellent beginnings hard.*

Robert Beale 1541-1601, diplomat, administrator, clerk of the Privy Council was dispatched to Orange on the 17th April in order to try to recover Oxford’s goods.

The Privy Council notes:

*The same day Mr Beale was dispayched towardes the Lowe COUNTRY upon occasion of a spoile committed upon thearle of Oxford at the seas in his passage, and for other injuries donne by them of Flussbinge against diverse of her Majesties subjects, according to instructions remaining in the hands of Mr. Secretary Walsingham.*

*A letter to thearle of Oxford signifieng what their Lordships had donne in respect of that injurie donne onto him, that Mr. Beale should come onto him to be informed of the manour of the outrage and the particulars of his losses, and either to deliver him prefect instructions or to send some servante of his with him that knowe his stuff and whereof be made moost accompt.*

*For his dispatche there were signed by his lordship sundry letters of credit for Mr. Beale, as to the Prince of Orange and the Admirall of Flusshinge and the Governor of Middelburghe.*

Elizabeth also wrote to Orange about the matter as did Francis Walsingham and Leicester. The same day Burghley's letter included an emotional appeal:

*if Mr Beale shall speak with the Prince, he may do well to think that such an outrage as this is, cannot take en without more offense to him and his than may be the hanging of five or six such thieves, as, if he were rid of a hundred of them, his cause would prosper better and his friendes would increase, which if he shall by subterfuge in answer delay, he will fele shall nether prosper.*

Beale was also instructed to speak to Oxford himself about his losses; he met him at Rochester. Nelson states that the apparent date of Oxford's arrival at Dover was 20 April 1576. The French ambassador, Mauvissière, reported to his king, Henri III:

*[the Queen] was marvellously angry that the Earl of Oxford...was left naked, stripped to his shirt, treated miserably, his life in danger if he had not been recognized by a Scotsman. The Queen dispatched Lord Howard to Dover to welcome and console him for it is said that he had brought with him a great collection of Italian garments, which were taken from him, over which his regret is infinite.*

Daniel Rogers mentions the arrival of Robert Beale in Delft on the 5th of May. Orange had already left for Brill, Beale followed him and spoke to Orange and the Count of Culemborg on the 7th. Orange wrote four letters on the 31st of May, one to the Queen, to the Privy Council, Walsingham to Lord Burghley and to Oxford himself (at least, according to Robert Beale, see below), apologising:

*that I was greatly displeased when I heard from Mr. Beale of the injuries which the Earl of Oxford had received by certain seacaptains who call themselves being from Flushing. I do not wish to tolerate these insolences some of them are already in prison.*

Daniel Rogers in his May journal reports:

*the 10th, departed Mr. Herbert with Mr. Bodenham towards England and took with him **two pistolls** which were taken from the Count of Oxenforth. (The 29, I sent a couple of letters into England by Philipp [Roger's brother ?, JS], the one to sir Thomas Smithe, the other to Mr. Wilson.)*

## Oxford's Escape

Robert Beale described Oxford's escape in a letter to Burghley, dated 5 June 1576:

*besides the generall letter which I have written to all Ther Lordship of the doings with the Prince here, I knowe not what to advertise Your Lordship particularly of. In the matter of my Lord of Oxford, I have delt as earnestlie as I could, and the rather for that by a letter of your Lordshippes, which yt pleased Mr. Secretarie Walsingham to shewe onto me before my departure. I perceaved the great care Your Lordship had thereof... indede the case deserved. And, yf so moche has not ben don therein, as erason were and as Your Lordship doth desire, I shall most humbly beseche Your Lordship to attribute the same rather to the unreasonableness of these persons with whom I have to do, than to that is my default ( as God ys my witness).*

*For notwithstanding the Princes letters to both Your Lordships a ...his faire promises to me that justice shallbe.. and that the parties be in prison appears en ...ry, I cannot learne, but that only one hath been apprehended, whose name is Lambellon\* who ... is but kept in a townesman house in Flusshing, and has liberty to walke abroade. And appears that my Lord of Oxford wilbe appeased with a letter which I understand he sent unto his Lordship when I was in Holland. He trusteth to escape: and, when I regard the small consideration they have of her Majesty and your Lordship letters (more than in faire words)... partly believe yt. And therefore in my simple... bothe your lordships are to deale earnestly in your next letters for justice. For considering the carelessness and imparity of soche offenses in these places, all wilbe little enough.*

*And where they demand more particular information, I have declared unto them the manner of the outrage committed to his parson, as I understode yt from His Lordship at Rochester. And as for the particularity of the goodes, Althoughe I demaunded to have them restored, yet my chiefest desire was, seing jam constat de facto by the confession of the said Lambellon and the things taken here, to have justice don for the reparation of injurye and dishonor. As an appon my information they found **the daggers** which were sent by Mr. Herbert, so they might find more stuff yf they listed. But I heare sum of his **golden stuff** hath cam to sum of the cheef officers' hand, which now beare out the matter. I have ben fedd in this matter, as in the rest, with delayes, and , if her majesty send not a pleasing answer to the Prince's writing, they seem to be so desparate that I thinck no justice, nor ought els wilbe had of all my demands.*

Obviously, Orange was in difficulty over the whole matter: he desperately needed the Watergeuzen for his campaign and with the recent loss of both his undaunted admiral Boisot and his brother Charles, governor of Flushing, he could not afford to alienate them, yet at the same time he needed his English alliance all the more. The

capture of the Merchant Adventurers' ship with Oxford on board clearly was a mistake. Orange agreed to return the captured Merchants Adventurers' ships only if Elizabeth would return four ships from Flushing that had been detained in Falmouth. As to Orange, Daniel Rogers in his June 1576 journal complains that having 'offered' the provinces of Holland and Zeeland to her Majesty if she would help him, "*he never had any answer.*" On the 6th of August the Privy Council gave instructions to William Holstock, controller of her Majesties ships, about:

*them from Flushing have recently taken many English ships and they rob ships of any nationality, ...that you shall apprehend all shippes that you shall fynd at the seas within the coorse that you be appointed to keepe, which do belong to them of Flushing or to the portes thereabouts of Holland and Zeland and bring them to some port of the realme..*

In November 1576, six months after Oxford's capture by the Dutch sea-beggars, Elizabeth agreed to help Orange finance the Revolt with £100,000 of which £20,000 was immediately dispensed.

### Note

Van Grol in 'Het Zeeuwsche prijzenhof te Vlissingen' ('The Zeeland Prize Court in Flushing'), *bijdragen en mededelingen van het historisch Genootschap*, XXXVI, p. 235) gives an overview of captured ships from 1575-1577. Lambrecht Lambillon is mentioned twice in November 1575 and twice in February 1576 as captain of a ship that took prizes. From the 15 of March till the 16 April 1576 however, no takings are mentioned.

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For the real biography of William Shakspere, see his life story by Richard Malim on the website [deveresociety.co.uk](http://deveresociety.co.uk)

## The Case against William of Stratford

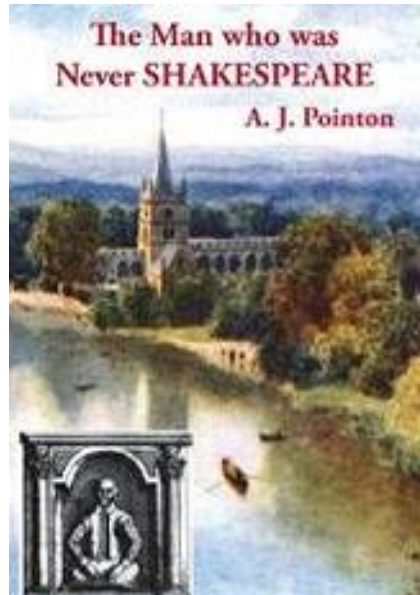
By Tony Pointon

There are many reasons to doubt that a man from Stratford wrote the works of Shakespeare. Here are twenty such arguments, prepared by Tony Pointon. Further details can be found in Professor Pointon's book *The Man Who Was Never SHAKESPEARE* (Parapress 2011).

Firstly, an important distinction:

William **Shakspere** was a business man from Stratford

William **Shakespeare** (or **Shake-speare**) was the name used by the author of the plays & poems



1. **The Stratford man who is said to have written the plays poems was baptised as Shakspere in 1564 and buried as Shakspere in 1616, and never used the name 'Shake-speare' or 'Shakespeare' in his life.**

It is known that an actor-businessman of Stratford upon Avon was baptised in 1564 as William son of John Shakspere. He married as William Shaxpere, was buried as William Shakspere and had three children who were named as Susanna, Judith and Hamnet – all Shakspere. His family name was Shakspere and he never used the name 'Shakespeare'. Similarly, the Elizabethan writer called 'Shakespeare' never used Shakspere. Legally, that's good evidence they were two different men.

2. **This man had two daughters, both baptised Shakspere, both illiterate. A writer's children?**



Shakspeare's family through four generations were illiterate, except that his daughter Susanna learnt to write her first name – very poorly – when she wed the Stratford doctor, John Hall in 1607.

**3. When Shakspeare's name appeared on legal documents in place of his mark, it was never 'Shakespeare'; it had to be written in for him by different people. Shakspeare literate?**

There are six samples of Shakspeare's name written on legal documents where he would have signed his name, if he could write. None read Shakespeare. More important, they have been shown to have been written for Shakspeare by different people. So Shakspeare was illiterate.

**4. Nobody mentioned him as a writer during his lifetime, not even his son-in-law, Dr John Hall.**

Nobody in Stratford ever referred to this Shakspeare as a writer, not even his son-in-law Dr John Hall when he was writing about his other patients who wrote things or supported writers like the poet Michael Drayton or the Countess of Northampton. Though he spent much time in London, nobody kept letters written by him. Yet, if he were Shakespeare, they were precious.

**5. Shakspeare tried to get a Coat of Arms: though refused at first, he never said he was the writer.**

If Shakspeare were the poet and playwright, his Coat of Arms would present two puzzles. Father John Shakspeare first applied for it in 1576 and William re-applied in 1596. The first puzzle would be his trouble in getting it, when the poet Drayton got his with none. Shakspeare had "*Non, sanz droict*" written on his Arms – Norman-French for "No, without right". It was not approved till 1602, so father John was buried in 1601 without the title "Gent" the Arms would have given him.

Yet, even when he had trouble, Shakspeare never claimed he was a writer like Drayton. Another puzzle is that, when Shakespeare's plays came out in 1623, the Shakspeare Coat of Arms was not put on the title page to identify them as his.

**6. Shakespeare's top characters were all aristocrats; like emperors, etc. The lowest was a knight. But ordinary people and crowds had rough treatment. Was that a glover's son writing?**

Shakespeare knew and understood law so well he used it as part of his ordinary language. He referred to abstruse cases only available in the Inns of Court, one only

available in Norman-French. He made legal jokes which some interpret as errors. He used legalities where no one would expect – as when Romeo sees Juliet, seemingly dead, and says “Seal with a righteous kiss, a dateless bargain with engrossing death”, using three legal terms and the audience in tears. Shakespeare had to have been at the Inns of Court, Shakspeare certainly was not

**7. Shakespeare wrote expertly about aristocratic things - the Court, politics, falconry, etc. Was that an actor-businessman writing? Knowledge has to be learnt, not imagined.**

A typical example of Shakespeare’s peculiar knowledge is falconry, of which great familiarity is shown in Shakespeare’s works, more than any other field sport. Yet falconry was limited to the aristocracy by law, and Shakspeare could not have taken part in it, and its language was private.

**8. Shakespeare used over 500 books for his plays in seven languages, so he had to have access to them and to tutors. Yet it is unlikely Shakspeare even went to a Grammar School – his brothers didn’t.**

Though Shakespeare used books in English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Latin and Spanish, no one has shown how Shakspeare could have done that. If he had gone to Grammar School, he could have done Latin, but he had no one to teach him to read and write to even get to a Dame School, and none of his three brothers went to school.

Shakespeare had much specialist knowledge, like a complete range of English usage and the largest vocabulary of any writer – though it would not be taught in Grammar School in the Elizabethan period and the first English dictionary was 1604. He had to have had tutors. But no tutor, teacher, schoolmate or school fellow ever claimed fame from their association with him.

**9. Shakespeare’s nine comedies based on Italy show detailed knowledge of that country, from Sicily to Milan. No one has explained how Shakspeare got such knowledge.**

It has not been explained how Shakspeare could have got the knowledge of tradition and geography used in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Yet more serious is how he might have got the knowledge and love of Italy shown in the 9 comedies which dealt with Venice, Verona, Palermo, Messina, Syracuse, Mantua, Milan, Florence, Pisa, Padua, etc. which has taken years for scholars to identify. And then there is his knowledge of the closed Court of Henry of Navarre.

Even if Shakspere was a genius, he could not have created his knowledge out of thin air. But no one has shown how he got Shakespeare's knowledge – like his early awareness, shown in *Coriolanus*, of Harvey's unpublished theory of the circulation of the blood, or the four Jewish names in *The Merchant of Venice*, including Shylock and Jessica, which only occur together in the then un-translated Hebrew Bible.

**10. Stratford is missing from Shakespeare's plays. No dialect, no accent, no places, no people, no events.**

If Shakespeare had been born and brought up in Stratford until he was over 21, like Shakspere, he would have used a Warwickshire accent and dialect. Yet, although Shakespeare used accents and dialects in his works, Warwickshire is one of those totally absent. Some writers have claimed Shakespeare wrote about Stratford, but not so. He used neither its language, history nor geography. Some say, e. g. , that the word "Cotsall" in the plays refers to the Cotswolds, but not so, even though the OED used to say so: it is a village north of Wolverhampton on Watling Street, which, it has been shown Shakespeare, whoever he was, knew well.

**11. When Shakspere died in 1616, nobody mourned the death of a great poet.**

If this Shakspere had been the writer William Shakespeare, his death in 1616 would have been a national event, but nobody noted it. When other great writers died - Chaucer, Spencer and Jonson – many tributes were written, and they were buried in Westminster Abbey: not Shakspere. It should be no surprise that people who knew of both Shakspere and Shakespeare never connected the two.

**12. When Shakspere died, he left no books, diaries, journals or letters.**

We know Shakespeare used over 500 books for writing his plays, many valuable and in languages other than English. When Shakspere died, if he had had books, he would have left them to his main heir, John Hall; yet John Hall mentioned no books from his father-in-law, and left no special books to his descendants. Shakspere mentioned no valuable collection in his will. Nobody has been traced in Stratford who got a book belonging to Shakspere or Shakespeare.

**13. In 1623, Shakespeare's plays were collected, with an introduction by Ben Jonson, but Shakspere's Coat of Arms was not put on them.**

Shakspere was first hinted at as a writer, seven years after his death, when 36 Shakespeare plays were published in 1623 in the First Folio. Then, in order to cover up the real author, hints were printed over the printed names of two of Shakspere's

friends that he may have been ‘Shakespeare’ the author. The form of that introduction shows it was written by the unreliable Ben Jonson.

**14. Nobody named Shakspere or Shakespeare ever received any money for the plays and poems.**

There are many records showing how other playwrights such as Jonson received payment for writing plays, but there is no record for any payment to William Shakspere or for any play of ‘Shakespeare’. According to entries in the 1590s in Henslowe’s diary, the usual payment for a play was about £6. Yet Shakespeare of Stratford became much wealthier, buying land at £320 and a share in the tithes at £440. He certainly became rich – but not from writing plays.

**15. In 1623, a bust of Shakspere as a trader was put in Stratford Church. No pen, no paper.**

When that First Folio appeared in 1623, with hints of Shakespeare being from Stratford, a monument also appeared in the Stratford Church, with a scam epitaph indicating Shakspere might have been a writer: yet, the figure on that monument was a trader with a sack of goods, and the present monument of a man with a pen was a propaganda replacement made in 1749.

**16. During Shakspere’s lifetime, people suggested the name ‘Shakespeare’ was a pseudonym.**

Nothing has ever been found to show Shakespeare wrote under his own name – no letters, no manuscripts, no school records, no praise by him for a writer, no books he owned, no payments for writing, etc. We have enough for all his top 24 rivals to show they were writers, but nothing for Shakespeare (or Shakspere): the name Shakespeare was clearly a pseudonym for someone whose identity was well hidden. Many other writers were punished for their writings, but not Shakespeare, and Shakspere was not even questioned in 1601, when the Privy Council sought the perpetrators of the performance of *Richard II* which had been staged to help raise a rebellion against the Queen in February 1601.

**17. The writer Shakespeare was never punished like other writers for things he had written.**

The above indicates the name Shakespeare was a pseudonym for someone not wishing to be identified, not Shakspere. Equally indicative is that Shakespeare never wrote any commendatory poems or elegies or eulogies for anyone – which was

normal for ordinary poet-playwrights. Also, when the name Shakespeare first appeared on the poem *Venus and Adonis*, the writers Thomas Nashe and Thomas Heywood both parodied it and indicated the author was hiding himself.

The Lord Chamberlain's Men were contracted to stage *Richard II* on the eve of the Essex Rebellion in February 1601. The players' agent, Augustine Phillips, was questioned about the performance before the Privy Council. However, the author of a play which depicted the deposition of an anointed king, was not – despite the decree of Elizabeth who had stated “I am Richard; Know ye not that?”

**18. No one in Shakspeare's family ever owned anything of 'Shakespeare' the author.**

The name most used to put on other people's works to help sell them was Shakespeare's, and his works were the most pirated for publication. Yet, if Shakespeare was Shakspeare, a man who sued over the smallest debt, it is unbelievable he never sued over the abuse of his name, or the theft of his works, and actually never complained, though somebody else did on his behalf.

**19. Shakspeare's will has no sign of being by a literary person in content or style.**

We know Shakespeare used over 500 books for writing his plays, many valuable and in languages other than English. When Shakspeare died, if he had had books, he would have left them to his main heir, John Hall; yet John Hall mentioned no books from his father-in-law, and left no special books to his descendants. Shakspeare mentioned no valuable collection in his will. Nobody has been traced in Stratford who got a book belonging to Shakspeare or Shakespeare.

**20. Many people claim that Shakspeare the Stratford businessman was Shakespeare the playwright because that was his name. The names are different!**

It is often said nobody ever doubted Shakspeare was Shakespeare until some people began making mischief around 1850, but not so. Nobody suggested he was Shakespeare until seven years after his death, by when several people had already suggested 'Shakespeare' was a pseudonym. Two people suggested it was a pseudonym in 1593. In 1598, two people suggested it was hiding Francis Bacon. In 1769, a friend of actor David Garrick said Shakspeare was a theatre horse-holder who tried passing himself off as a writer, and there were hints from others, perhaps less overt because it was not proper to mention it, as it sadly remains for English scholars to this day.

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## The Case for Oxford

### J. T. Looney      *Shakespeare Identified* (1920)

In trying to find a match between the works and an author who could have written them, claims have been made for Bacon or Marlowe. However, many more scholars are now persuaded by a considerable body of evidence and a wide range of arguments that Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was in fact the author known as ‘Shakespeare’.

The Oxfordian Case was first articulated by a British schoolmaster, John Thomas Looney in *Shakespeare Identified* published in 1920, who profiled the author, as follows:

#### **Main characteristics:**

1. A mature man of recognized genius.
2. Apparently eccentric and mysterious.
3. Of intense sensibility — a man apart.
4. Unconventional.
5. Not adequately appreciated.
6. Of pronounced and known literary tastes.
7. An enthusiast in the world of drama.
8. A lyric poet of recognized talent.
9. Of superior education — especially classical — the habitual associate of educated people

Next, Looney adduced some secondary characteristics as follows:

10. A man with Feudal connections.
11. A member of the higher aristocracy.
12. Connected with Lancastrian supporters.
13. An enthusiast for Italy.
14. A follower of sport (including falconry).
15. A lover of music.
16. Loose and improvident in money matters.
17. Doubtful and somewhat conflicting in his attitude to woman.

Looney then consulted the *Dictionary of National Biography* and found that Edward de Vere was a very good fit for all of these characteristics.

A brief review of Oxford’s life reveals close matches with the plays, among them *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear*.

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## Short life of Edward de Vere (1550-1604)

Edward de Vere was born in 1550. His father, John de Vere, the sixteenth earl, held the title of Lord Great Chamberlain (as Edward did later) and officiated at the coronations of both Mary and Elizabeth. In 1561, when Edward was eleven years old, his father entertained Queen Elizabeth at Castle Hedingham with four days of masques, feasting and entertainment. From a young age, Edward had scholarly tutors, including Sir Thomas Smith and Lawrence Nowell, Dean of Lichfield. When his father died in 1562, young Edward became a royal ward (like Bertram in *All's Well*). As a royal ward in the household of William Cecil, the Queen's Secretary, his personal curriculum included, French, Latin, and Greek. His education included a spell at Queens' College and at St John's College, Cambridge. He later enrolled at Gray's Inn.

His maternal uncle, Arthur Golding, was a visitor at Burghley's house while Edward was still a ward. In 1567 Golding published his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, an extremely influential text throughout the works of Shakespeare. In 1570, Oxford purchased a copy of the Geneva Bible (the version preferred by 'Shakespeare'). This copy has many marginal annotations of obscure passages, often echoed in the plays.

In 1571, Edward married Anne Cecil, the daughter of his former guardian, who was ennobled at this time as Lord Burghley. The marriage was not a happy one and Edward preferred to travel. In 1575-76, he toured Europe, spending a year in Italy, mainly Venice, the setting for many plays. Oxford was acknowledged in his lifetime as a poet, playwright and a particularly generous, literary patron. The writers and dramatists, John Lyly and Anthony Munday, were at this time under Oxford's patronage and part of his household. In 1586, at a time of national crisis, the Queen awarded Oxford an annual pension of £1000 for no apparent reason. Oxfordians believe that Oxford had become the concealed court playwright, presenting history plays to promote national unity.

Oxford was associated with Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton (1573-1624). Southampton was seen as a prospective husband for Oxford's eldest daughter, Elizabeth, in 1593, the year that *Venus and Adonis* was dedicated to Southampton. The younger earl, however, chose another woman and the Lady Elizabeth married the Earl of Derby in 1595. In 1603, James I renewed the annual pension to 'Great Oxford'. A year later, Edward de Vere died intestate in 1604 at the age of 54.

We do not know who instigated the publication of the First Folio in 1623. However, the two nobles to whom the First Folio was dedicated had close connections to Oxford's daughters. William, Earl of Pembroke, had once been betrothed to Bridget Vere. Philip, Earl of Montgomery, married Oxford's youngest daughter, Susan in 1604.



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## Oxford as author of *Hamlet*

*Hamlet* is Shakespeare's longest play, it contains the longest part in any one play, and it also has the most lines of soliloquies. For these reasons, many scholars have followed Freud (a renowned Oxfordian) and viewed Hamlet as "the most autobiographical character" in which the author reveals himself intimately. However, there is little similarity between the situation of Hamlet and the life of the Stratford man.

Sigmund Freud was among those to recognise that the situation and character of Hamlet closely correspond to Oxford's life at the age of 21. Both Hamlet and Edward de Vere were brought up at court, with a distaste for the Queen's lover. Both lack respect for the counsellor; both are involved romantically with the counsellor's daughter; both have a rivalry with the counsellor's son. Both enjoy the company of players and understand their influence over public opinion. Both are good at fencing and both kill a man with a rapier.

There are many further parallels. Polonius's advice to Laertes is almost word for word the same as Burghley's advice to his son, Robert Cecil, which was contained in a private letter. Polonius (named Corambis in Q1) is clearly a caricature of Lord Burghley (motto: *Cor unum via una*) as is accepted by many, especially if Q1 dates to the 1580s. The name was changed to Polonius in 1604 in Q2, as a mark of respect for Burghley who died in 1598. When Hamlet enters reading a book, Polonius asks: "What do you read, my lord?" The book has been identified by scholars as *De Consolatione*, by the Italian Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576). Its English translation, *Cardanus' Comfort*, was published in 1573 at the request of Oxford.

When Hamlet is en route to England, he is taken by pirates but escapes. When returning from Holland in 1576, Oxford lost his possessions when captured by pirates in the Channel. Another parallel occurs when Hamlet states: 'I am but mad north-north-west'. In 1577, Oxford had lost heavily on investments made in the unsuccessful voyage by Frobisher in search of the North-West Passage in 1577. Yet another point of similarity lies in the topicality of *Hamlet* at the time of the trial of Mary Queen of Scots in 1586-7. Parallels between Hamlet's quest for revenge and Elizabeth's dilemma over the execution of an anointed monarch have been explored in detail since the eighteenth century. Oxford was a senior peer on the tribunal which condemned Mary.

Thus it is most likely that Oxford was the author of *Hamlet*, Contemporary allusions to a play about Hamlet in 1589, 1594 and 1596, usually dismissed as to a lost play on the same subject by another author, are probably to an early play by Oxford, (the Q1 text), which he later revised and enlarged into the Q2 version.

## Oxford as author of *Twelfth Night*

The conventional account of the Bard's career derives mainly from evidence within the plays and relies on a large number of suppositions, which stretch the imagination. It states that William of Stratford, without any documented access to court or any seat of learning and without travelling in Italy, wrote a series of brilliant comedies about royals and nobles in the period 1590 – 1602. These displayed an exceptional knowledge of court life, foreign literature and Italian customs. For a provincial actor to have written witty, but biting satire on the Queen's private life and her courtiers is beyond belief.

Since all the sources for the play can be dated before 1579, it is much more plausible that *Twelfth Night* was an early play, composed by a marginalised aristocrat in the late 1570s or early 1580s, when there was still interest and hope at Court in the question of the Queen's Marriage. This was also the time when romances were popular: *Delight* (1580) and *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* (1582) were both performed at court before the Queen.

*Twelfth Night* was probably intended for performance only to a private aristocratic circle by a private acting company. Lord Oxford's Men were very active from the late 1570s and were prominent at court and in the public playhouses. In 1580, he took over the Earl of Warwick's acting company and Lord Oxford's players were prominent until 1584, when the Queen's Men were formed.

One important character is the clown. Feste is tolerated by Olivia and shows more insight than any other character in the play. The role of an allowed fool seems to mirror Oxford's own position at court extremely closely.

*This fellow is wise enough to play the fool  
And to do that well craves a kind of wit:  
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,  
The quality of persons, and the time,  
And like the haggard, check at every feather  
That comes before his eye. This is a practice  
As full of labour as a wise man's art:  
For folly that he wisely shows is fit;  
But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit.* (TN 3,1, 61-9)

*Twelfth Night* would then have been revived at short notice (perhaps renamed) for a court performance on 6 January 1601, with a subsequent performance at the Middle Temple in January 1602. Oxford's background, education and knowledge place him ideally as the author of *Twelfth Night*. William of Stratford's background does not.

## Oxford as author of *King Lear*

*King Lear* is a tragic tale depicting the fall of a great man, forced to divide his ancestral patrimony among three daughters; two of whom are married to powerful noblemen and promise respect; the youngest, who is unmarried, replies honestly and with a misplaced wisdom that enrages the old man. While the older daughters and their husbands divide their fathers' spoils between them, the old man is left to fall into poverty and ruin, regretting his earlier wrath and seeking the forgiveness of his youngest daughter.

Strangely, this is not only the ancient story of Lear, King of England, but also of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, who was so deep in debt in 1591 that he signed away his family seat at Castle Hedingham in Essex. He divided his remaining land holding between his elder daughters, Elizabeth and Bridget. These two married William Stanley, sixth Earl of Derby, and Francis Norris, the Earl of Berkshire. His youngest daughter, Susan, continued to live with him, away from the court in relative obscurity until his death in 1604. Soon afterwards, Susan married Philip Herbert, one of the Incomparable Pair of Brethren to whom Shakespeare's First Folio was dedicated in 1623.

The coincidences between the story of King Lear and Edward de Vere are extensive and as the earl's impoverishment was well known, it is very likely that plays such as *The moste famous Chronicle historye of Leire kinge of England and his Three Daughters* (1594) and *King Lear* (in 1606) would have suggested de Vere's ruin. Since it was illegal to portray a living person on stage, writers used fables and symbols for their contemporary allusions. Perhaps after watching *King Leire* or *King Lear*, the court might have been tempted to think that Oxford had been badly treated after all.

The conventional account of Shakespeare's career is highly speculative. It states that Shakespeare (in a sea of depression inconsistent with his material prosperity in Stratford) wrote a series of moving tragedies about neglected royals and nobles in the period 1601 – 1606. He was led to compose *King Lear* after inheriting 30/s from an actor in 1605 (Park Honan, *Shakespeare: A Life*, 1998) or as a political tract to please the King (Anthony Holden *William Shakespeare*, 1999).

A more convincing explanation is that *King Lear* was originally composed in 1594, when the government was concerned about the royal succession; it was performed for the Queen and Court (perhaps at Greenwich in March 1594) as a farewell to public life by a lord; a revealing self portrait of a tortured noble, embittered at his treatment by relatives; by an earl whose property had been seized by others; a lord whose final concern was for a daughter he had wronged.

## FAQs

### **What is the Shakespeare Authorship Question ?**

The Shakespeare Authorship Question (SAQ) raises the issue of who wrote the works traditionally ascribed to ‘Shakespeare’. There are many reasons to doubt, which collectively indicate that there is a serious problem of attribution.

There was a man from Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, called William Shakspeare, to give the customary form of spelling his name. He was baptised on 26 April 1564 and was buried on the 25 April 1616. He bought property in both Stratford and in London and he was a sharer in a theatre company.

However, there is no record for any payment for any play of ‘Shakespeare’, no record of anyone who dealt with Will either as a poet or a playwright in his lifetime. Full-scale biographies of ‘Shakespeare’ only emerged two centuries after Will’s death. These Victorian biographers freely filled in the extensive gaps in line with their view of a national poet with almost divine status. Their myths have been perpetuated ever since.

### **But surely nobody in Stratford ever doubted that Will wrote the works?**

Quite true in that there is no record that anybody in Stratford ever expressed any doubt that Will wrote the great works of ‘Shakespeare’. But there’s a simple reason for that: just as nobody ever expressed any doubts that Elvis Presley was the first man on the moon, nobody ever said that he was. There was no chance to express doubt about a proposition that was never made.

We need to recognise that in his last will and testament William of Stratford never claimed to have written anything. He mentioned no books, whether owned, borrowed or loaned out. He left no money to the wonderful school where he had apparently received the “world-class education” which set him out to super-stardom. He left no money to help promising pupils attend school. He left no journals, no business papers, no letters claiming he was a writer. None of his family ever claimed that he was a poet and playwright. Nor did anybody else from Stratford for almost a century after his death. The reason that there was no expression of doubt is that there was no claim in the first place.

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## Isn't the Authorship Question a modern invention?

Not at all. It is usually claimed that the first person to express doubts over the attribution of the plays to Will of Stratford was Delia Bacon in the 1850s. Interestingly, she was reacting against the earliest biographies which had just emerged, in which a romanticised life of the Bard was imagined. However, there were many occasions, over the two hundred years between the 1640s and 1850s when doubts were cast. Different modes and discourses were chosen to express these, and, on occasion, provide a cover of deniability. The fact that these doubts surfaced at intervals over a span of two centuries testifies to what we might call an 'underground stream' of doubt. Here are a few examples:

In 1645, *The Great Assizes Holden on Parnassus by Apollo and his Assessors* describes a mock trial of contemporary authors. On the second page, the writer of weekly accounts is identified as 'William Shakespeare'. At the end of the trial, Apollo condemned him to pass back and forward over the river Styx as a go-between, a fixer, a dealer. In 1728, a Captain Goulding wrote *An Essay Against Too Much Reading* to satirise incipient bardolatry and suggest the works were the result of proxy authorship. In 1827 the author of *Tremaine* (Robert Plumer Ward) wrote *De Vere or the Man of Independence*. The title page brings together De Vere, Shakespeare, and Francis Bacon and almost every one of the 26 chapters is headed by a quote from Shakespeare. In 1852, Robert Jamieson posed the question WHO WROTE SHAKSPEARE? in an essay in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*. These examples are explored by Julia Cleave in her article under DVS Research entitled [Early Doubters of Shakespeare's Identity](#).

Much of this has also been described by Charlton Ogburn in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. The trail leads back into the 17th and even the 16th centuries, with numerous literary allusions to the pseudonymous character of the name 'Shakespeare' and to Oxford's acknowledged status as a writer of pseudonymous comedies and other "rare devices of poetry." In 1610 John Davies refers to Shakespeare as "Our English Terence," alluding to the well-known renaissance belief that Terence was actually the front man for the aristocratic Roman comedian, Scipio.

## Don't we know that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare because his name is on the works?

Saying that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare is like saying that Mark Twain wrote the works of Mark Twain or George Eliot wrote *The Mill on the Floss*. It is an empty tautology. The question concerns the identity of the author known as 'Shakespeare' and

by the way, the name of William Shakspere (as the family name appears in Stratford records) is not the same as William Shake-speare which appears on published works.

There are commendations in the First Folio (1623) written by Ben Jonson, but give no personal information about the author. Jonson was probably encouraged to write these at the behest of the publishers Edmund Blount and Isaac Jaggard. Elsewhere, he wrote literary puffs for which he was paid. And the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, who had supported the publication, were his benefactors. So, there's nothing in the commendation to show that Jonson knew the author personally.

## **Why bother with the author when we have the works?**

Credit where credit's due. Firstly, we should recognise and honor the true author of the works and restore a sense of authenticity and truth to the work we study and enjoy under the name 'Shakespeare'.

Then we can note that literary biography provides insight into the meaning and significance of a text. So attaching the wrong author's name and life to the work leads to a host of false assumptions which in turn spawn further misperceptions of the work. Acknowledging Oxford's authorship restores, among other things, the political dimensions of his works which the Stratford story obscures. Like Hamlet himself, Shakespeare conceived drama and its players as being the "abstract and brief chronicles" of the time." No one seriously questions, for example, that John Lyly's *Endymion* (circa. 1584) depends on parallels between characters in play and major figures in the Elizabethan court. An awareness of the parallel between Lyly's main female character Cynthia and the Virgin Queen is a prerequisite to appreciating the play. The great poets of the Elizabethan period such as Edmund Spenser, routinely disguised their more incendiary comments in metaphors or allegories. Such writers published works commenting, often in cleverly oblique ways, on controversial current events which could not be treated more directly under the Tudor court's regime of strict censorship.

Third, acknowledging Oxford's authorship radically transforms our understanding of politics, propaganda and history. After all, if you take Oxford as the author, then a vast contemporary backdrop falls into place, and one apprehends a whole new dimension to the plays: that of political satire. *Hamlet* for instance becomes an intriguing expose of court life under Elizabeth (written by the Hamlet of Elizabeth's Court) which provides us with innumerable valuable insights into the private Court history of the time. The value of this extra dimension for actors and directors is difficult to overestimate. After all, an actor playing Polonius in *Hamlet* can gain enormous

psychological insight into his character by reading up about the historical original, William Cecil, Lord Burghley.

Finally, the topic is of interest from the point of view of intellectual history. Does it matter that for more than two hundred years students have been memorizing a point of view which now seems, to an increasing number of informed scholars, to have been false? It would certainly seem so!

## **Aren't Authorship sceptics just anti-Shakespeare?**

No, we are not anti-Shakespeare. We greatly admire and appreciate the works of Shakespeare and strongly recommend them to others. We are non-Stratfordians in that we believe that it is very unlikely that the works were written by William of Stratford. Of course, if it could readily be proved that he had written the plays and poems that would be an end of the matter. But there is no contemporary record which indicates his status as an author. There is very little evidence even to suggest his involvement – and what little there is casts even more doubt on the claim that he was any kind of author.

## **Aren't Authorship sceptics just conspiracy theorists?**

The term 'conspiracy theorist' seems to be used to denigrate a view before it's been examined. Members of the De Vere Society and other authorship sceptics share a great interest in the works of Shakespeare and a desire to identify and honour the person(s) who wrote them. Much of the material for Ronnie Barker's comedy sketches was attributed to Gerald Wiley and then to Jonathan Cobbold, names used to hide Barker's own contributions. Similarly, authors have used the names Mary Westmancott and Robert Galbraith to conceal their real identities. Thus, the name 'Shakespeare' involves the use of a pseudonym, not a conspiracy.

## **Aren't authorship sceptics just snobs?**

It is often asserted that authorship sceptics are just snobs who can't accept that someone from a modest background can have written the works. The answer to this is simple: no thank you, we are not, just as those who accept *War and Peace*, a great work of literature, are not snobs even though it was written by Count Leo Tolstoy. This line of attack uses the discredited *argumentum ad hominem*, in which opposers seek to ignore the message by denigrating the messenger.

We note that contemporary writers such as Edmund Spenser (1553-1599), Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593?) and Ben Jonson (1573-1637) came from modest



backgrounds and composed some great works of literature. But in each case, there is considerable contemporary evidence, a ‘paper trail,’ about their literary activity. In the case of William of Stratford, there are no contemporary records to suggest that he was any kind of author. The authorship question asks not who could have written the plays, but who did. Everything about the Shakespearean canon, as observers like Charlie Chaplin and Mark Twain have noted, suggests an author of an aristocratic background and bias. Almost all the plays portray kings and nobles as their protagonists. One play which doesn’t was nevertheless set near a great royal castle and depicts a pageant, where the Queen of the Fairies gives an extensive description of an important royal ceremony. If William of Stratford was writing a play about the gulling of a fat knight, it was more likely to have been called *The Merry Wives of Wilmcote* than the *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

## **Can’t everything be explained by genius?**

‘Shakespeare’ was most certainly a genius and authorship sceptics agree that ‘Shakespeare’ had supreme natural talents. However, in explaining how an artist came to produce outstanding works of art, genius alone is not an explanation. We insist that the talents of a genius have to be recognised and advanced from an early age; that knowledge had to be acquired, that skills had to be developed, that dramatic techniques had to be practised. Michelangelo’s talents as a painter and as a sculptor were appreciated at an early age and so he was apprenticed to a master who was working on frescoes at the Sistine Chapel. There Michelangelo studied classical sculpture, a necessary prerequisite for his ‘David’. Mozart’s genius was recognised at an early age: he began performing publicly by the age of five or six and he was taught intensively. He also studied the works of Handel before he could emulate and surpass them.

In the case of William, there is neither any record of early promise nor any suggestion that he was introduced to a wide range of classical and renaissance literature from an early age. There is no record that he ever attended school – neither in Stratford nor anywhere else, nor that he was ever noticed when he was young. In the case of ‘Shakespeare’, nobody seemed to notice him until works began to be published under this name from 1593.

## **If not William of Stratford, then who wrote the plays?**

There have been various suggestions as to the true identity of the concealed author: among them Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, Mary Sidney and Henry Neville. We respect all of these researchers and clearly share the common idea that ‘Shakespeare’

was a pseudonym. While a reasonable case can be made for these candidates, we believe that by far the best candidate is Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604).

Oxford's claim was first made by a schoolteacher John Thomas Looney in 1920 in his book *'Shakespeare' Identified*. This publication gradually gained support among intellectuals of the time: Sigmund Freud, the actor/director Leslie Howard, and the novelist John Galsworthy. In 1984, Charlton Ogburn published a monumental study, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* which deals with many aspects of the SAQ and Oxford's claim. Today, Shakespeare lovers are increasingly aware of the authorship question while Oxford's claim has been made compellingly by Mark Anderson in *Shakespeare By Another Name* (2005).

## **Was Oxford known as a poet and a playwright?**

Early references to Oxford's literary activities are also abundant and compelling in their effect. In the 1580s, William Webbe (*Discourse of English Poetrie*, 1586) referred to Oxford as deserving the "title of most excellent" among Elizabethan court poets. The anonymous author of *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), in writing of those "noble Gentlemen in the court that have written commendably well and suppressed it agayne, or else suffered it to be publisht without their own names to it", and then referring later in the same work to those whose writing would be seen as [excellent] "if their doings could be found out and made publicke with the rest, of which number is first that noble Gentleman, Edward Earle of Oxford", clearly provides significant evidence of Oxford's status as one of several anonymous and pseudonymous Court writers of the 1580s. A few years later, in 1598, Frances Meres lists Oxford as the "best for Comedy among us" in *Palladis Tamia*. Henry Peacham lists Oxford first among the greatest Elizabethan poets in *The Compleat Gentleman*. This work was published in 1622 when the First Folio of 'Shakespeare' was nearly finished. Yet Peacham does not mention Shakespeare at all. For more information, read Peter Dickson's article at <http://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/oxfords-literary-reputation/>

## **Why should the author use a pseudonym?**

We are not sure as there is no contemporary documentation. We know that many writers use a pen name, although we are not always sure why. Even if they offer an explanation, we cannot be sure that this is the main reason. It is likely that many other writers have used a pseudonym without ever revealing their names. Witness the dispute as to whether Truman Capote wrote or revised Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

In the Elizabethan period, poets such as Edmund Spenser published under a false name. The polemical Mar-prelate tracts also concealed the identity of the author. In 1596, Sir John Harington published *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* under the pseudonym of 'Misacmos' as he made unfavourable allusions to the Earl of Leicester.

Many Oxfordians believe that there was no secret about Oxford's authorship of comedies performed at court in the late 1570s and early 1580s. Some plays, perhaps an early version of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, were intended for performance among aristocrats with no intention of showing it to the court since they contained unfavourable satires of Elizabeth. But Elizabeth and her Secretary, Lord Burghley, needed Oxford's dramatic talent to forge a sense of national consciousness through the history plays. Thus during the 1580s, when England was threatened by the Catholic League, led by the Spanish Armada, 'Shakespeare' loyally presented English history on stage in plays such as *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and the anti-Catholic *Troublesome Raigne of King John*. According to this view, the identity of 'Shakespeare' was a state secret, not a conspiracy. De Vere's intimate and conflicted relations with powerful persons such as William Cecil, Elizabeth I, and later James I often resulted in an ambiguous portrait of power and authority. After his death, the pseudonym stuck as it was needed to sell the works in print. Who now would pay to watch a film starring Norma Jean Baker (née Mortenson), or attend a pop concert by Gordon Sumner, or buy a spy novel by David Cornwell?

## What about plays written after Oxford's death in 1604?

Contrary to popular belief, there is no contemporary document to date any play of 'Shakespeare'. Neither records of performance nor of publication indicate when any play was composed (or when or whether it was revised). We can note that by the time of William's death in 1616, 18 plays in the First Folio had yet to be published. On the assumption that William began writing plays when aged 26, a possible chronology has been accepted stretching from 1590 until 1610 or so. However, some Stratfordian scholars believe that he was an 'early starter' and thus date his first plays to 1586 or so. Since there is a wide range of possible dates for the composition (and revision of plays), topical allusions remain conjectural.

The year of Oxford's death in 1604 is an interesting turning point in the publication of quartos of 'Shakespeare'. In the six years preceding, twelve plays appeared in print attributed to 'Shakespeare' and two others appeared for the first time but without attribution (*Romeo & Juliet*, *Henry V*). By contrast, in the following twelve years until the death of William of Stratford, only three new plays appeared in print.

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## Could Oxford write the plays if he was a misogynist?

Some (but not all) geniuses were less than pleasant people in their private lives. John Lennon wrote the most moving love songs but admitted to being chauvinistic and even physically abusive towards his first wife, Cynthia. Beethoven and Wagner were very difficult to get on with while Picasso had a string of mistresses. Yet their private lives have not been seen as a bar to recognition of their talents. Anyone who claims that a misogynist cannot have written the works of ‘Shakespeare’ has obviously not read *Othello* or *The Taming of the Shrew* or seen the actions of Bertram in *All’s Well*.

The suggestion that Oxford was a misogynist rests on slender evidence. In fact, Oxford was ridiculed during his life, mainly for his wife’s apparent infidelity. He was on his continental tour in 1575, when his wife, Anne (née Cecil) bore a daughter, the Lady Elizabeth Vere. Rumour spread that Oxford had been cuckolded (a familiar Shakespearean theme). Upon his return to England in 1576, Oxford refused to recognise either his wife or her daughter. Eventually, he was reconciled with his countess by the stratagem of a bed trick (sounds familiar). After Anne died in 1588, he married Elizabeth Trentham. Oxford may not have been the perfect husband, but his treatment of women is no worse than the behaviour of many others and does not invalidate his claim as author of the works.

## Should we still use the name ‘Shakespeare’?

Without being able to look into the seeds of time, it is difficult to be sure, but the name ‘Shakespeare’ is likely to continue. Who now refers to the fictions of Charles Dodgson?

## How can I keep in touch with developments in the SAQ?

Three easy steps:

1. Join the De Vere Society;
2. Read the quarterly newsletters;
3. Discuss the SAQ with other members at DVS events.

You can find a wealth of useful material on the website of our sister organisation in North America, the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, at

<http://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org>

Don’t forget the Shakespeare Authorship Trust

<http://www.shakespeareanauthorshiptrust.org.uk>

And make sure you sign the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt at

<https://doubtaboutwill.org/declaration>

## Portrait of Edward de Vere auctioned by Pandolfini, Italy.

*April 21 2015, SOLD for 70,000 euros*

Scuola inglese, fine sec. XVI-inizi XVII.

Ritratto di Edward de Vere (1540 [sic]-1604), XVIII [sic] Conte Di Oxford

Olio su tavoletta, cm 17.8x15.2 senza cornice, sul retro etichette relative all'esposizione e all'effigiato. *Provenienza*: già collezione John Harley.

*Esposizione*: **Exhibition of the Royal House of Tudor**, The New Gallery, Regent Street, London 1890, cat. 245 p. 76

### *From 1890 Catalogue, page 76, no. 245 (= p.10 of e-book online):*

Small bust, towards left, black dress trimmed with gold, white shirt collar edged with gold, black hat with jewels and feather. Panel 6 X 5 in. Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, only son of John, 16th Earl, and Margaret, dau. of John Golding, born about 1540, was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, and at an early age travelled in Italy, whence it is said he was the first to import scented gloves and perfumes into England, both of which he presented to Queen Elizabeth. In 1580 he had a serious quarrel with Sir Philip Sidney, which brought him but little credit. In 1585 he went to the Low Countries with the Earl of Leicester, and in the next year sat as Lord Chamberlain at the trial of Mary, Queen of Scots, as he afterwards did on the Earls of Arundel in 1589, and Sussex and Southampton in 1601. He displayed great activity in the preparations to oppose the Spanish Armada, and dying in 1604, was buried at Hackney, July 6. His first wife was Anne, dau. of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, whom he ill-treated out of spite to her father for refusing to save the life of the Duke of Norfolk. His character appears to have been marked with haughtiness, vanity, and affectation. He aped Italian dresses, and was called the "Mirror of Tuscanismo." He was the author of several comedies that have perished, and of a number of odes and sonnets published under the title of *Diana*. Lent by John Harley, Esq., M.D.

### **NOTES by Jan Cole**

Although I've traced John Harley MD in the list of Royal College of Physicians (1868, 1875, 1889), I can't find him in the genealogy of Edward Harley – though he may have been one of the many illegitimate children of the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford & Mortimer (died 1849), who were known as 'the Harleain miscellany'.

## 245. EDWARD DE VERE, 17TH EARL OF OXFORD.



Age of sitter? Late-teens? Early 20's? Do his features compare to the Welbeck portrait of 1575? Was John Harley MD fl.1868-90, who owned the portrait in 1890, a descendent of Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford (by 2nd creation), of Welbeck Abbey, whose wife (Elizabeth Cavendish Holles) was the great-great-granddaughter of Oxford's cousin, Horatio de Vere, and inherited the so-called Welbeck portrait of the 17th Earl of Oxford, i.e. the 1575 portrait? Could the early 'Edward de Vere' portrait have also been at Welbeck at some point in its history?

# Oxford's Land Sales, Castle Hedingham and the Sheepcote in *As You Like It*

by Jan Cole

The topography of the Shakespeare plays has been of interest for many years, and some Stratfordian biographers still believe that Warwickshire scenery can be found in them.<sup>1</sup> More recently, even orthodox commentators have shown great interest in the Italian plays' topography, and in 2011 Richard Paul Roe's original investigations discovered multiple exact locations in the Italian-set plays that leave the reader in little doubt that the playwright was drawing upon first-hand experience.<sup>2</sup>

With Oxford as the proposed author, it seems worthwhile to look for Essex locations, particularly any located near Castle Hedingham, Essex, the seat of the Earls of Oxford. Oxford was born there in 1550 and although he probably moved away at a very early age to be educated by Sir Thomas Smith elsewhere in Essex, it is probable that he was returned to his father for Christmas and summer holidays. The 11-year-old Oxford is likely to have been there in August 1561 when Queen Elizabeth visited on her annual progress, and he may have been present in 1583 when his unnamed infant son and sole heir was buried at St Nicholas's Church, Castle Hedingham. In any case, he remained familiar with the layout of the parish through the work of his uncle, Arthur Golding, who managed the rents from his estates after 1562 when he was taken into royal wardship, and through the land survey and maps drawn up by Israel Amyce in 1592 in relation to its sale to Oxford's father-in-law, William Cecil.<sup>3</sup>

This essay will look at one location in Castle Hedingham that may have been used to provide local colour in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. It is a field located due west of Hedingham Castle called 'Sheepcote Field' on the 1592 map. It lies immediately below the road going south that Amyce marked as 'the way leading from Castle Hedingham towards Halstead'. This road is known today as 'Sheepcote Road'. On the Amyce map a building is depicted at the top of 'Sheepcote Field' near the road and labelled 'a tenement belonging to Colne Priory', which suggests that its rents were paid into Oxford's Earls Colne estate, which was also sold in 1592.<sup>4</sup>

## The sheepcote in *As You Like It*

The 'Forest of Arden' in the play is, of course, an imagined composite, associated with the *Ardennes* region in Flanders and the English woodland that the audience would have related to the area in Warwickshire anciently held by the Arden family. It also contains some exotic Mediterranean or eastern features (olive trees, palm trees, lions).

However, significantly for the plot, it is also a rural agricultural terrain containing pasture, sheep, a tenanted sheepcote or shepherd's cottage, two shepherds (Corin and Silvius), a shepherdess (Phoebe), a country girl (Audrey), a country youth (William) and a country vicar 'of the next village' (Sir Oliver Mar-text). Also significantly for the plot, Arden is part of an aristocratic estate that contains woodland, foresters, parkland and deer that are formally hunted in 'the chase'.

Act 4, Scene 3 of the play finds Rosalind and Celia (disguised as youths) in the 'forest' after the hunt has finished. The shepherd Silvius enters and, a little later, the shepherd Corin. Later still, Oliver, one of the sons of Rowland de Boys and elder brother of Orlando, enters carrying a bloodstained napkin. It is he that asks the question:

*Good morrow, fair ones. Pray you, if you know,  
Where in the purlieus of this forest stands  
A sheepcote fenc'd about with olive-trees?*<sup>5</sup>

Celia's answer gives some precise directions in the following lines, and these are the lines crucial to my hypothesis in this essay:

*West of this place, down in the neighbour bottom,  
The rank of osiers by the murmuring stream,  
Left on your right hand, brings you to the place.  
But at this hour the house doth keep itself,  
There's none within.*<sup>6</sup>

Oliver's immediate response is to recognise the disguised pair, dressed as boys but 'of female favour', and he asks of Rosalind: 'Are not you / the owner of the house I did enquire for?' Celia replies: 'We are'.

Oliver then shows them the bloodstained napkin and explains how he has grappled with a lioness who was about to kill his brother Orlando. This causes considerable



alarm to Rosalind and the comedy of disguise moves forward. Rosalind faints, partly at the thought of Orlando's death and partly because she knows that Orlando, whom she loves, loves her. At the end of this scene they exit, and no more is said about the sheepcote.

However, we have already learnt about the sheepcote, though not yet given directions to it, in Act 2, scene 4. There, the disguised Rosalind and Celia are faint with hunger in the forest. They meet the court fool, Touchstone, and Corin the shepherd, and ask the way to a place where they can rest and buy food.

Corin decides to help them, explaining that he looks after the sheep but does not shear them, a distinction that stresses the two distinct occupations, and perhaps implying that they have been left unshorn, since all is not as it should be. He tells them that the master (i.e. the landowner) whom he serves is a man 'of churlish disposition' who is not likely to show hospitality – and, anyway, his master is not living there locally. As the editor of the current Arden edition of the play notes, 'Corin is not his own master, but employed by an absentee landlord... a situation which created major social tension'.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, as Corin explains, the land is up for sale:

*Besides, his cote, his flocks and bounds of feed  
Are now on sale, and at our sheepcote now  
By reason of his absence there is nothing  
That you will feed on. But what is, come see,  
And in my voice most welcome shall you be.*<sup>8</sup>

Celia and Rosalind discuss the proposed sale, suggesting that Corin buys the cottage, pasture and flock, and (somewhat improbably, perhaps) that they will 'amend his wage' and give him sufficient money to buy it. Celia remarks, 'I like this place, / And willingly could waste my time in it', and Corin (perhaps regretfully) admits, 'Assuredly the thing is to be sold'.

## An Oxfordian analysis

In these passages a rural situation of considerable reality is presented, including a flock of sheep, 'the bounds of feed' (i.e. complete pasture land, likely to be extensive), the sheepcote or shepherd's cottage, an apparently uninterested absentee landlord, a potential sale of land, property and livestock, low agricultural wages, and lack of food and the wherewithal for hospitality as a direct result (it is implied) of the landowner's

absence. We are also given precise directions regarding the position of the sheepcote in relation to 'this place'. Taken all together and from an Oxfordian viewpoint, this scenario suggests not only a geographical allusion to Castle Hedingham, but to its impending sale in 1592.

### D/DMh M1



### Essex Record Office

As the Amyce map of 1592 shows, from the castle keep (to the immediate west of which stood the great hall or residential building of the de Veres), a road runs due west through the village to the junction of today’s St James Street and its continuation (downhill towards the river and the parish boundary) as Queen Street.

The first junction with Queen Street is Sheepcote Road, abutting with Sheepcote Field. Sheepcote Road is parallel to the River Colne about half-a-mile down the hill in the low-lying river valley at the junction of the two neighbouring parishes of Castle Hedingham and Sible Hedingham. As a resident of Hedingham, I have been able to trace the directions in the play as follows. If you walk away from the entrance gates of Hedingham Castle, you go ‘west from this place’ down Castle Lane into Falcon Square, which continues into St James Street. Continuing westwards, you enter Queen Street. Continuing along Queen Street you proceed downhill towards the parish boundary,

which is the River Colne. However, if you turn left from Queen Street into Sheepcote Road, the river is on your right side, and walking a little way further you come to a building which today is the Hedingham Scouts Hut. It is approximately on the same site as the building shown at the top of Sheepcote Field on the Amyce map. There is some ambiguity in the play's text in the lines 'left on your right hand', but 'left' here can be read as meaning 'leaving the stream on your right side', or as the editor of the Arden edition paraphrases in her note, 'If you leave the line of willows [i.e. osiers] by the stream on your right hand, the path [i.e. road] will bring you to the house [i.e. the sheepcote].

The directions in the text can be compared to Hedingham as follows:

<b>west of this place</b>	<b>west of Hedingham Castle</b>
down in the neighbour bottom	downhill at the junction of the bottom of the parish of Castle Hedingham with the parish of Sible Hedingham
the rank of osiers by the murmuring stream	Osiers were willows whose long slender shoots were cut, peeled and tied into bundles to be used for basket-making. Osiers were grown along the River Colne for this purpose until the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century and sent to Halstead for basket-making.
left on your right hand	leaving the stream on your right-hand side
brings you to the place	brings you to the sheepcote (in Sheepcote Field below Sheepcote Road in Castle Hedingham).

With some slight alterations – the sheepcote in the play would seem to be at the bottom of the field rather than at the top as it is on the Amyce map; a stream is not a river, but the Colne is no more than ten feet across at this point – all five features and the directional relation between them fits the geography of Castle Hedingham, today almost unchanged since the sixteenth century.

## Conclusion

It might be argued that the directions to the sheepcote in the play could be relevant to geography in Warwickshire or anywhere else in England for that matter. However, they correspond exactly to Castle Hedingham and can be verified both on a contemporary map and in present-day actuality. The cumulative scenario of sheepcote, osier-banked stream on a low-lying parish boundary, the impending sale of this land and an absentee landowner, matches Castle Hedingham and its status in relation to Oxford's ownership in 1592. Even Celia's pensive remark, 'I like this place / And willingly could waste my time in it' could reflect Oxford's memories of his birthplace, with its fertile fields and pasture beside the River Colne - a place that would be lost to him forever by the end of that year.

## Notes

1. Weiss, R. *Shakespeare Revealed* (2007).
2. Roe, R.P. *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* (2011)
3. Pearson, D. *Edward de Vere (1550-1604): the crisis and consequences of wardship* (2005), see appendices 1-4 for the extent and sales of Oxford's lands.
4. Pearson, 232.
5. Act 4, Sc.3, ll.74-76 (Dusinberre, J. ed), *As You Like It*, Arden Shakespeare, 2006, rp.2014, p.307).
6. Act 4, Sc.3, ll.77-81, op.cit., p.307
7. Act 2, Sc.4, op.cit., p.208. Later, in Act 3, Sc.5, ll.108-109, we learn that the absentee landlord is 'old Carlot'. Carlot is simply an obsolete word for 'churl', cf. Corin's description of him as a man 'of churlish disposition'.
- 8 Act 2, Sc. 4, ll.82-86, op.cit.,pp.208-209

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## Orthodoxfordians

Richard Malim, the Honorary Secretary of the De Vere Society, has formed a Facebook group, called Orthodoxfordians. There are now 130 or more members, many of the great and good from both sides of the Atlantic. Do join !

## Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship

### ***Brief Chronicles VI* now available**

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship journal, ***Brief Chronicles VI***, produced by general editor Roger Stritmatter, PhD, and managing editor Michael Delahoyde, PhD, is now available online to SOF members under the Publications Tab on the SOF website. This is the first edition released under the new SOF membership policy that provides members electronic access to SOF publications, but does not provide hard copy editions free of charge as in the past.

#### ***Brief Chronicles VI* includes:**

‘From the Pulpit: A Few Home Truths — A British Introduction’ [to BC VI] by  
Alexander Waugh

‘Sisyphus and the Globe: Turning (on) the Media’ by Don Rubin

‘Biography, Genius, and Inspiration’ by Bernd Brackmann

‘Strat Stats Fail to Prove that ‘Shakspere’ is Another Spelling of “Shakespeare” by  
Richard F. Whalen

‘Arms and Letters and the Name “William Shake-speare” by Robert Detobel

‘The Use of State Power To Hide Edward de Vere’s Authorship of the Works  
Attributed to “William Shake-speare” by James Warren

‘Chaucer Lost and Found in Shakespeare’s Histories’ by Jacob Hughes

‘*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: Shakespeare’s Aristophanic Comedy’ by Earl Showerman

‘Mark Twain and “Shake-Speare”: Soul Mates’ by James Norwood

‘Ben Jonson and the Drummond Informations: Why It Matters’ by Richard Malim

‘Was William Scott a Plagiarist? A Review of Scott’s *The Model of Poesie*’ reviewed by  
Richard Waugaman

‘Dr. Magri’s Bow and Quiver: *Such Fruits Out of Italy: The Italian Renaissance in  
Shakespeare’s Plays and Poems*’ reviewed by William Ray

‘Towards a Pragmatechnic Shakespeare Studies: A Review-Essay on U. Cambridge’s  
*Shakespeare and the Digital World*’ reviewed by Michael Dudley.

With the release of the latest edition of *Brief Chronicles*, the previous edition —*Brief Chronicles V*— has been removed from password protection and is now available to all readers on the SOF website under the publications tab.

Hard copy issues of *Brief Chronicles VI* will now be available to both membership and the general public at low cost through Amazon’s CreateSpace print-on-demand publishing arm at Amazon.com. A Kindle version is not currently anticipated by the SOF board. SOF president Tom Regnier, JD, LL.M., said that members were informed of the new publishing policy in the Fall 2014 edition of the SOF newsletter and directly by email. Regnier said:

*Through CreateSpace, we are able to make printed copies of BC6 available to you from Amazon for only \$12.99, plus shipping. At present, BC6 is available through Amazon.com (U.S.) and Amazon affiliates in the European Union. Our Canadian members may purchase through Amazon.com. BC6 will sell for £8.29 in British pounds and under €12.50 in Euros (prices vary slightly from country to country). We think you will enjoy BC6 whether you prefer to read it digitally or in print form. We thank you for helping us bring the truth to light.*

The SOF board of trustees hopes that news-page readers will support the work of research into the Shakespeare authorship by joining the SOF.

For a glimpse into the new edition of *Brief Chronicles*, see SOF trustee and University of York professor Don Rubin’s historical accounting of the press war incited by the 2013 authorship conference in Toronto.

Rubin’s article: “Sisyphus and the Globe: Turning (on) the Media published in *Brief Chronicles VI* is available free to our readers. A video of Rubin’s presentation of this account given at the 2014 authorship conference in Madison WI will also be available on this site soon. Professor Rubin’s study of Nestruck’s craven attempts to have him discredited serves as a fascinating case study into how a human might behave when he is hell-bent on keeping a raft afloat that is slowly and ingloriously submerging beneath the muddy waters of a rising tide.

In his introduction to *Brief Chronicles VI*, Alexander Waugh referred to Rubin’s Toronto adventures:

*Professor Don Rubin, who has achieved much success in inspiring students at the University of Toronto to take a keen interest in the Shakespeare authorship problem has, like most of us, made his fair share of enemies along the way. In this issue he tells of the hair-raising animosity levelled against his work by one James Kelly Nestruck, a theatre critic of Toronto’s Globe and Mail. Stratfordians enjoy speculating on the psychological aberrations that motivate those who question their orthodoxy — we are snobs, anarchists, neo-romantics, Shakespeare-haters, mentalists, holocaust deniers, supporters of South African apartheid, etc., etc., ad nauseam. Above all we are scary.*

## Paris Match covers the Authorship Question



### Les impostures littéraires

### Être ou ne pas être Shakespeare

Le 25 juillet 2015

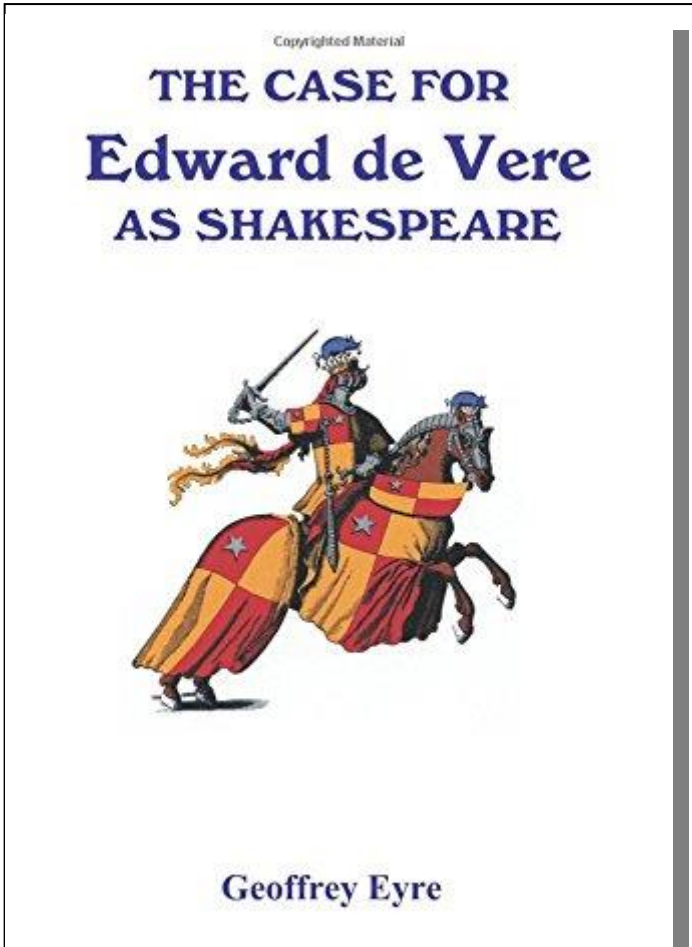
Gilles Martin-Chauffier

**Marco Polo, Shakespeare, Molière, Dumas... Leur gloire est universelle. Et si elle était usurpée? A tout seigneur tout honneur, Gilles Martin-Chauffier se penche sur la cas du "barde immortel" mais néanmoins douteux, William Shakespeare.**

«To be or not to be.» Dans la bouche de Hamlet, c'est la réplique la plus célèbre de Shakespeare. La légende fait bien les choses car, quatre siècles après sa mort, on se demande encore si Shakespeare fut bien l'auteur des pièces signées Shakespeare. Pourquoi? Parce que trop de mystères entourent sa vie et sa personne. C'est simple: on ne sait à peu près rien du plus grand dramaturge de tous les temps. Ses meilleurs analystes le reconnaissent: dans toute biographie du «barde de Stratford», il y a 5% de faits avérés et 95% de conjectures. [*In every biography there are 5% confirmed facts and 95% conjecture*]. Prenez n'importe laquelle et vous saurez tout sur «la reine vierge», sur la vie quotidienne à Londres, sur les cycles agricoles dans le Devon mais sur Shakespeare, vous n'aurez à peu près rien. Croyez-le ou pas: il a signé cent pièces, publié soixante sonnets et écrit neuf cent mille mots mais on n'a aucun document de sa main et, pour tout matériel, les savants n'ont que douze mots à étudier: six signatures apposées sur des documents administratifs. Et encore! Aucune ne s'écrit Shakespeare. On trouve Shaksp, Shakespe, Shakspere et Shakspeare. Quant à des textes littéraires, n'y songez pas! Il n'en reste aucun. On dirait que la culture a glissé sur le notable de Stratford comme l'eau sur les rives de l'Avon.

A sa mort, dans son testament, il lègue des lits, des draps, des meubles et des maisons, mais pas un livre, pas un seul. L'homme savait tout de l'Antiquité de l'Italie, de l'histoire anglaise mais jamais il n'aurait eu à consulter un seul ouvrage. Tout aurait été dans sa tête. Etrange pour un jeune homme qui ne fit pas d'études. Tout comme il est inexplicable qu'on n'ait aucune image dessinée du vivant de l'homme dont les tragédies et les comédies attiraient à jet continu les foules londoniennes. . . .

Just published and available from Amazon at £9.95.



Edward de Vere the 17th Earl of Oxford was a generous patron of writers, actors and musicians in the London of Queen Elizabeth I. But was he also ‘Shakespeare’, the greatest writer in the English language? The reasons for believing so are set out clearly in this study.

Geoffrey Eyre is a long-standing member of the De Vere Society and writes as an independent scholar.



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*Following on from their very successful On the Trail of Edward de Vere in England in 2013, Ann Zakelj is organising another trip.*

## Shakespeare in Italy: 14-21 June, 2016

In April, the itinerary is planned to include:

**Padua**, our base for Venice and Bassana dal Grappo

**Venice** (*Merchant of Venice, Othello*) include The Rialto, The Greek Church (San Giorgio dei Greci), Shylock's penthouse, Belmont/Villa Foscari, Jewish quarter – il ghetto, Santa Maria Formosa Church.

**Bassana dal Grappo** (near Venice) (*Othello*), monkey frescos on Piazzotto del Sale.

**Mantua** (*Rape of Lucrece, Winter's Tale, Hamlet*) is our base for Verona and Sabbioneta. Palazzo Ducale (Appartamento di Troia fresco by Giulio Romano), Palazzo Te (Sala dei Giganti fresco; Sala degli Stucchi; Chamber of Amor and Psyche by Giulio Romano); Basilica di S. Andrea (Romano's Monumento Strozzi); Santa Maria delle Grazie (Ippolita & Castiglione's tomb).

**Verona** (*Romeo and Juliet, Two Gentlemen of Verona*) Canals, Sycamore grove at West wall (Porta Palio), Villafranca di Verona, Scaliger Castle, On the Piazza dei Signori, the tomb of Bartolomeo della Scala (Escalus) in Santa Maria Antica (known as Arche Scaligeri), Via Montecchi (Montague) home, 23 Via Capello – Capulet house, former monastery San Francesco al Corso (scene of marriage & Capulet crypt), San Pietro Incarnario, Juliet's parish church.

**Sabbioneta** (La Piccola Atena or "Little Athens") points of interest (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) Ducal Palace (Hall of the Horses, Sala dei Cavalli - Romano's paintings of horses not extant), Porta della Vittoria (aka the Duke's Oak), The Temple – la Chiesa dell' Incoronata.

**Milan** (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*) Santa Maria della Sanita in Il Lazaretto, Church of San Gregorio, site of il Pozzo di San Gregorio (St George's Well).

## Extension

There will be an extension to the tour to Florence and Siena from 21-26 June. You can contact Ann Zakelj at [ankaaz@aol.com](mailto:ankaaz@aol.com)

For current details and booking, go to Pax Travel, 57-59 Rochester Place, London NW1 9JU phone 020 7485 3003 Website: [www.paxtravel.co.uk](http://www.paxtravel.co.uk)

SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE, Nancy Knowles Lecture Theatre  
Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Box Office 0207 401 9919. Tickets £45  
Sunday, 22 November, 2015 11am – 6pm

# The Shakespearean Authorship Trust

in collaboration with Brunel University London

Presents

*This paper is the history of my knowledge*

## SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

### Whose agenda do they serve?

Attribution . Collaboration . Dating . Chronology . Sources . Topicalities .  
Historiography

**Professor Andrew Hadfield** Shakespeare's Political World

**Donna Murphy** Shakespeare and the Earl of Northumberland in  
*Edward III, Henry IV & VI* and *Richard II & III*.

**Gerit Quealy** Playful reflections on the Henries in the light of the  
authorship question

**Greg Thompson** directs scenes from the Histories:

**John Casson** *King John*: Research, Revision, Politics and Prequel

**Ramón Jiménez** George Peele didn't write *The Troublesome Reign of  
John*

**William Leahy** Panel Forum and Q&A Chairman:

**Ros Barber** Advances in the Authorship Question

Characters and scenes to be played by: (subject to availability on the day)

**Richard Clifford . Derek Jacobi . Annabel Leventon . Mark Rylance**

Tea and coffee from 10.30 am. Free book and wine reception from 1830 for  
the launch of *30-Second Shakespeare*.

[www.ShakespeareanAuthorshipTrust.org.uk](http://www.ShakespeareanAuthorshipTrust.org.uk)

# *The de Vere Society*

**Autumn Meeting at Thistle Hotel, Marble Arch,  
Oxford Street, London.**

Saturday 17 October 2015.

## **Entrance in Bryanston Street.**

- 1000      Meet at Thistle Hotel, Marble Arch. Tea / Coffee  
1245      LUNCH  
1600      Refreshment Break

The de Vere Society regrets charging more than for previous meetings but it is not possible to book a room with lunch in central London for less.

Speakers to include:-

**Heward Wilkinson**, on *Hamlet* and the evolution of consciousness.

**Jan Cole** on Oxford's Great Garden property and The Boar's Head Inn.

**Alexander Waugh** reveals more about Shakespeare's 'vulgar scandal'.

**Julia Cleave**, on Shakespeare and the Visual Arts.

**Charles Bird**, on Discoveries at Tilbury Parish Church.

**Wayne Shore**, on using computers in Shakespeare Studies

**Topics for discussion** include: celebrating 2016; use of social media.

There will also be a full report on the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship conference in Ashland.