

## “SHAKESPEARE” IDENTIFIED IN EDWARD DE VERE THE SEVENTEENTH EARL OF OXFORD

BY J. THOMAS LOONEY (1920)

By Kevin Gilvary

On 04 March 1920, a quiet schoolmaster called J. Thomas Looney published a seminal study entitled *“Shakespeare” Identified in Edward de Vere the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*. This work established the theory that the Earl of Oxford was the concealed poet and playwright of the works of Shakespeare. To mark this centenary, The de Vere Society is devoting this issue of its quarterly newsletter to our founding father.

### Life

John Thomas Looney (pictured here in his wedding portrait) was born in 1870 to a Methodist family in South Shields, an industrial town near the mouth of the River Tyne. It lies about five miles downstream of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. At the age of sixteen, he attended the Chester Diocesan Training College, with a view to becoming a minister. After several years of study, he changed vocation and trained as a teacher there. The Principal at the time was the Rev. J. D. Best of Queens’ College, Cambridge.<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 1: Wedding portrait,  
c.1890s

He enjoyed a long and successful career in teaching, doubtless at Gateshead High School on the Durham Road. This establishment came under the authority of the local borough in 1894 when it admitted girls in addition to boys. It is unlikely that any other school in the borough would have been teaching Shakespeare. He lived nearby, at 15 Laburnum Gardens, Low Fell, a suburb of Gateshead and slightly closer to the centre of Newcastle. Aged 44 at the outbreak of the First World War, he was too old to be considered for active service.



**Fig. 2: Gateshead High School, c.1900**

During the Second World War, he was evacuated to the countryside in Derbyshire. He died at Swadlincote in 1944, aged 73, and was buried at Saltwell Cemetery in Gateshead, close to his home. He was survived by his two daughters, Evelyn and Gladys.



**Fig. 3: Headstone for Looney's grave, Saltwell**

In 2017, the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, with some assistance from the DVS, funded a memorial headstone for his grave.



**Fig. 4: Lit. & Phil. Club,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne**

A few miles north of where Thomas Looney lived and worked lies the prestigious Literary and Philosophical Club in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The club was established as a hub of learning and enlightenment. In 1825, it had moved into a purpose-built neo-classical building and soon developed its collection of books into the largest lending library outside London. It was here that Thomas Looney read widely and was able to quote from over 230 different books.

Looney was ably assisted by the staff at the Lit. & Phil. who were adept at obtaining loans from other libraries. *“Shakespeare” Identified* was widely reviewed and Looney wrote politely to reviewers, firmly responding to their observations. (See James Warren, 2019 edition.)

### Existing accounts of life of Shakspere

Looney read widely among those who had conducted biographical investigations of Shakespeare’s life, especially James Halliwell-Phillipps (1820–1889). In *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, first issued in 1881 but successively expanded, Halliwell-Phillipps published transcriptions of primary documents with his own detailed discussion.<sup>2</sup> Although *Outlines* is poorly organised and lacks a thorough index, Looney found many admissions which suggested doubt over the authorship.

In his initial search for answers he was lucky that in 1897 the editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Sir Sidney Lee, wrote the entry for ‘William Shakespeare’. This entry was by far the longest in the *DNB*, at about 63,000 words, reflecting more Shakespeare’s importance as a national figure than the paltry historical record of his life.<sup>3</sup> The publishers then released *A Life of William Shakespeare* in a separate monograph in 1898, amounting to almost 500 pages,

which was re-issued in many later editions.<sup>4</sup> The significance of Lee's study is not so much his views on 'critical points' in the life of Shakespeare but the fact that he attempted a coherent narrative at all — against the admissions by Halliwell-Phillipps and other biographical investigators of the nineteenth century. Lee made the astonishing claim that so much was known about Shakespeare as to make a biography possible. In this, he was echoing John Payne Collier, whose attempt at a full-length biography in 1844 depended on the forgery of a wide range of documents.

Unlike other commentators, Lee avoids making inferences from the plays, e.g. observing that in Prospero 'traces have been sought without much reason of the lineaments of the dramatist himself' (257). He takes the Sonnets to be mainly 'literary exercises', in contrast to critics who believe that 'Shakespeare avows the experiences of his own heart'. Lee's own speculation is signalled by the use of the word 'doubtless' on over seventy occasions: 'The Rose Theatre was doubtless the earliest scene of Shakespeare's pronounced successes alike as actor and dramatist.' There is no evidence for this claim. However, the most serious deficiency in this biography was that the character which emerged from the Stratford records did not accord in the least with that of a dramatist.

A completely different approach was adopted by the romantic writer Frank Harris in *The Man Shakespeare and His Tragic Life-Story* (1909). Harris relies extensively on his own conjecture: the tragedy of the title refers to an apparently loveless marriage with an older woman and an unrequited love for Mary Fitton (who at the time led the race to be crowned the Dark Lady of the Sonnets). For Harris, the character and the life events of Shakespeare could be found in the works:

'I intend first of all to prove from Shakespeare's works that he has painted himself twenty times from youth till age at full length: I shall consider and compare these portraits till the outlines of his character are clear and certain; afterwards I shall show how his little vanities and shames idealized the picture, and so present him as he really was, with his imperial intellect and small snobberies; his giant vices and paltry self-deceptions; his sweet gentleness and long martyrdom.'

Thus Harris portrays Shakespeare as gentle, amorous, music-loving, melancholic, unable to hold his drink. This was all very well in describing the character of the dramatist but little help in establishing the identity of the playwright.

## **The case against William Shakspere of Stratford**

During the course of his career, Looney taught *The Merchant of Venice* on a number of occasions.<sup>5</sup> He became puzzled that a writer from the provinces could be so much at ease with Italian culture. The traditional story was of a man who had never travelled abroad, and whose personal records showed no literary interests. Another puzzle was the fact that the records in Stratford indicate that William was a shrewd and successful property dealer, quite at odds with the protagonists of *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio and Bassanio, who were reckless spenders. The play suggested that the author thought of material possessions as trifles, written by an author certainly lacking an acquisitive nature.

Looney also read widely on those who had expressed doubt on the authorship. He dismissed the cryptographic approach of some Baconians, in particular Ignatius Donnelly.<sup>6</sup> However, he was very impressed by the writings of Lord Penzance, Judge Webb, Sir George Greenwood and Professor Lefranc, who he identified as ‘anti-Stratfordian writers’.<sup>7</sup> He noted Shakespeare’s expert knowledge of the law, as described in detail by a number of legal authorities. How did a provincial actor from Stratford acquire such expertise? He also noted Shakespeare was exceptionally conversant with the classics. Again, he raised the question of how Shakspere could have acquired such knowledge. He further noted the following puzzles:

- ‘Shakespeare’ was purely passive in respect of all the publications which took place under his name.
- While he was apparently working hard in London and having his plays published, he was also living in Stratford and buying property (especially in 1598–1602).

- Nothing is known of his doings in London and his addresses (known from his non-payment of taxes and from the Bellott–Mountjoy papers) add nothing to our knowledge of his literary and theatrical activities.
- After Greene’s (apparent) attack, and Chettle’s apology, he was largely ignored by contemporaries.
- References to the author between 1593–98 are confined to his narrative poems.
- References to the author as a dramatist occur only after the first publications were attributed to him in print in 1598.
- The public in the early modern period knew the name ‘Shakespeare’ only through printed works attributed to him.
- The sole anecdote of him from this period (concerning Burbage and a lady) are consistent with him being unknown as the writer. John Manningham had to explain the joke by saying that Shakspeare’s first name was William.
- He left no trace of any communication with anybody in London. The sole letter known to have been sent to him was concerned only with borrowing money.
- Edmund Spenser (d.1599) completely ignores him.
- There is no record that he ever acted in any of his own plays. He is recorded as having acted in only two of Jonson’s plays.
- The accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber mention him only once (in 1595), before he acquired his fame.
- The Lord Chamberlain’s Books of the period do not survive.
- His name is missing from the cast-list of Jonson’s *Every Man out of his Humour*; all the other members of the company are listed.
- His name is missing from the proceedings against the Earl of Essex and his Rising in 1601.

- His name is missing from the company's attendance on the Spanish Ambassador in 1604.
- His name is missing from the company's litigation in 1612.
- His name is missing from the company's involvement in the investiture of Henry as Prince of Wales in 1610.<sup>8</sup>
- His name is missing from the descriptions of the burning of the Globe Theatre in 1613.

### **Methodology: Profiling the Author**

Gradually, Looney became convinced that there was insufficient evidence to even suggest that Shakspere had written any plays, 'whilst there was a very strong *prima facie* presumption that he had not'. He concluded that the biographical record showed someone who was steady and business-like, a man of the world; but it did not support a case that the man from Stratford could ever be considered the author. While others such as Greenwood wished merely to establish doubt over the authorship, Looney took the argument further; he began a long search for the writer who had penned the plays. This self-imposed challenge was one which he saw 'required the application of methods of research which are not, strictly speaking, literary methods'. The schoolmaster devised his own methodology; he systematically examined the works of Shakespeare 'almost as though they had appeared for the first time, not yet associated with the name or personality of any writer'. He then identified characteristics in the plays which most readers would associate with the author. From such characteristics, he would select outstanding features to serve as paramount criteria in the search. Then he would proceed to a search for suitable candidates and finally would test the possible authors against all the known characteristics. All the time, he would maintain a crucial distinction between Shakspere, an actor and businessman from Stratford, and Shakespeare, to refer to the author and the works.

Looney decided to draw up a list of characteristics of the author. In this sense, he was developing a profile, a method used by Lord Macaulay when

investigating the pseudonym Junius in 1841.<sup>9</sup> Profiling criminals was a practice used by detectives at Scotland Yard when investigating the gruesome murders attributed to Jack the Ripper.<sup>10</sup> It was also an approach used by Sherlock Holmes. In modern times it is widely used, but in 1920 it was revolutionary. Looney began with hypothesising some general characteristics. Firstly, he believed the genius who composed the works of Shakespeare would have been observed as a man of talent but also that he was something of an enigma who shunned the limelight. He would therefore have passed a considerable part of his life apparently doing nothing. So these were his first characteristics: **of recognised genius and mysterious**. Next, he decided that anyone who lived such a life would be considered eccentric. That he lived apart from the irritating milieu by appearing aloof or even defiant. Such behaviour would give rise to him being considered inferior. So these were the next characteristics: **eccentric, aloof, unconventional**.

Looney's study of the history plays led him to decide that the author had enjoyed a **superior education**. He showed an enormous grasp of English history from 1400, the deposition of Richard II, until the birth of Elizabeth in 1533. His study of the comedies and the tragedies revealed a man of pronounced literary tastes, one completely **familiar with classical literature** and **with Italian literature**.

In addition, he decided that the author had an instinctive and unrivalled **grasp of drama**. Apart from writing the plays themselves, he makes many references to the stage, the actors and the theatre audience. Just consider Jaques' speech 'All the world's a stage' in *As You Like It* (II, vii. 138) and of course Hamlet's advice to the Players:

*Speak the speech I pray you as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue  
... Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand ... Be not too tame  
neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor, suit the action to the word  
...'*  
*Hamlet, III. ii. 1-4.*

There is the playwright's direct engagement with the audience. King Leontes, in *The Winter's Tale*, soliloquises about his suspicions of his wife's possible adultery, and turns to the audience to say:

*There have been,  
 Or I am much deceiv'd, cuckolds ere now;  
 And many a man there is, even at this present,  
 Now while I speak this, holds his wife by th'arm  
 That little thinks she has been sluic'd in's absence,  
 And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour,  
 Sir Smile, his neighbour.*

*The Winter's Tale*, I. ii. 191–96.

The poetic qualities of the plays must also make us suspect the author was **a lyric poet**, for which he might well have been recognised. We think of the snatches of songs in the plays — e.g. Desdemona's 'Willow' — or of passages such as Perdita's at the shepherd's feast in *The Winter's Tale*. There are many lines which are both drama and poetry.

The schoolmaster also noted some special characteristics. The playwright showed unique powers in representing royalty and the nobility in vital, passionate characters, as if he were 'to the manner born', and suspected the true author might be a court personage, with an innate **feudal** outlook. Thirty-four plays in the First Folio present the Ruler, Prince or Monarch of the state where the events take place. Many of these, from the Duke of Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors* to Cymbeline, King of Britain, exercise powers of life, exile, and even death. From this observation, Looney deduced that the author was an **aristocrat** writing for the aristocracy.

Moving on to the History plays, Looney enquired whether the author sided with one faction or not. He noted that Shakespeare shows no sympathy in the Lancastrian tetralogy with rebellion or usurpation of sovereignty, but he clearly favours John of Gaunt over Richard II and then emphasises that Bolingbroke is merely returning to claim what is his by 'fair sequence and succession'. Then comes 'the glorification of Prince Hal' in the succeeding plays. In the Yorkist tetralogy, Shakespeare downplays the weakness of King Henry VI, and portrays the Yorkists as being essentially the rebels. The tetralogy closes with the monstrous Duke of Gloucester:

‘The play of *Richard III* lays bare the internal discord of the Yorkist faction, the downfall and destruction of the Yorkist arch-villain, and the triumph of Henry Richmond, the representative of the House of Lancaster, who had received the nomination and benediction of Henry VI.’

In depicting Henry, Duke of Richmond as the righteous Lancastrian claimant, Looney concludes that the author came from a family with distinct **Lancastrian leanings**.

Intrigued, Looney considered the setting of the other plays. While Denmark and France feature in some plays, Italy is overwhelmingly the preferred setting, with an atmosphere of someone who really knew and appreciated the culture. He calls this an **enthusiasm for Italy**. Next our schoolmaster recalls how many references there are to aristocratic pursuits such as hunting and hawking. He therefore cites **aristocratic sports** as a characteristic of author. Looney was also aware that there are many passages in Shakespeare which fittingly describe the charm and power of music. He therefore took him to be an accomplished musician. Regarding money, we see the contemptible characters of Iago and Polonius as anxious about money in their advice to others. ‘Shakespeare’ expresses himself thus:

*How quickly nature falls into revolt*

*When gold becomes her object. For this the foolish over-careful fathers*

*Have broke their sleep with thoughts, their brains with care,*

*Their bones with industry; For this they have engrossed and piled up*

*The canker'd heaps of strange achieved gold.*

*2 Henry, IV. iii. 195–201.*

Looney also quotes from *Romeo & Juliet* (V. i. 85): ‘*There is thy gold, worse poison to men’s souls, Doing more murders in this loathsome world Than these poor compounds.*’ He therefore surmised that the author was **loose and improvident in money matters**.

With respect to women, the author is self-consciously ambiguous, from Hamlet’s damning judgement on his mother — ‘*Frailty thy name is woman!*’ — to misjudging faithful wives such as Imogen and Hermione. The plays often

conclude with the success of a female protagonist, against the more autocratic and chauvinist male hero. Taking into account the negative view of women expressed in some of the Sonnets, Looney suggested that the author had a **conflicting attitude towards women**.

Regarding religion, the author is keen on his monks and seems to show sympathy towards Catholicism, against the steady rise of Protestantism. In *Hamlet*, the ghost of the Old King is a very Catholic ghost, lamenting that he was murdered before he could receive the Catholic sacrament of the Last Orders, and that he would be '*Confined to fast in fires, / Till the foul crimes, done in his days of nature, / Are burnt and purged away.*' (*Hamlet*, I. v. 10). Looney concluded that the author was of **probable Catholic leanings, but touched with scepticism**.

### Searching for the Author

So now he began a systematic search for someone who displayed the characteristics and background which would be a more convincing fit for the author. He was methodical and logical. He was tentative, and he was rigorous. After a while without gaining a point of departure, he hit upon the narrative poem *Venus and Adonis*, which employed iambic pentameter in six-line stanzas with the rhyming pattern *ababcc*.

*He sees her coming, and begins to glow,  
Even as a dying coal revives with wind,  
And with his bonnet hides his angry brow,  
Looks on the dull earth with disturbed mind,  
Taking no notice that she is so nigh,  
For all askance he holds her in his eye.* (337–342)

Next he consulted the famous collection of poems known as Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*. He was expecting to find many poems in the period written in this stanzaic form but he found only one: a three-stanza poem on 'Women', by Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford:

*If women could be fair, and yet not fond,  
Or that their love were firm, not fickle still,  
I would not marvel that they make men bond,  
By service long to purchase their goodwill.  
But when I see how frail those creatures are,  
I muse that men forget themselves so far.<sup>11</sup>*

The subject matter of the poem, women's fickleness, accorded instantly with the characteristic established previously. There was little information in Palgrave beyond Lord Oxford's dates. Looney then consulted history books covering the period and found that Oxford was known for his Catholic sympathies. He then consulted the entry for de Vere, also written by Sir Sidney Lee, in Volume LVIII (1898) of the *DNB* and quickly found the following assessment of Oxford's character and interests:

Oxford, despite his violent and perverse temper, his eccentric taste in dress, and his reckless waste of his substance, evinced a genuine interest in music, and wrote verse of much lyric beauty. Puttenham [*Arte of English Poesie*, 1589] and Meres [*Palladis Tamia*, 1598] reckon him among 'the best for comedy' in his day; but although he was a patron of a company of players, no specimens of his dramatic productions survive. A sufficient number of his poems is extant, however, to corroborate Webbe's comment that he was the best of the courtier poets in the early years of Elizabeth's reign, and 'that in the rare devices of poetry, he may challenge to himself the title of the most excellent of the rest' [*Discourse of English Poetrie*, 1586].

Looney felt that if the name was deleted at the beginning of the paragraph, and a few particulars, almost everybody would accept that the assessment applied to Shakespeare.

## The conditions fulfilled

When Looney began to investigate Oxford's life in more detail, he found the conditions fulfilled. From Lee's description, he noted that Oxford 'set his patrimony flying', which indicated he was improvident in financial matters. He was eccentric, being known for his distinctiveness of dress, and his preference for the Bohemian literary and play-acting associates. He had his own company of players which performed at court and toured the country. He wrote comedies which have not been identified. His education was conducted by celebrated classical scholars and he was keen on travel, especially enjoying a year or so spent in Italy. From the entry in the *DNB*, Looney was able to conclude that most of the conditions had been fulfilled. Only four points needed separate corroboration, which he offered in the following manner:

1. In relation to sport we notice — and this is really the point that matters — that his poems, few as they are, bear decided witness to the same interest. The haggard hawk, the stricken deer, the hare, the greyhound, the mastiff, the fowling nets and bush-beating are all figures that appear in his lyric verses. In addition to this we notice that his father, John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford, who died when Edward was twelve years of age, had quite a reputation as a sportsman and, until his death, Edward was, of course, living with him. The article from which we first quoted mentions his interest in learning to shoot and to ride, so that there is abundant evidence of his familiarity with those sporting pastimes which Shakespeare's works so amply illustrate.
2. Though no statement of his actual sympathies with the Lancastrian cause has been found, we are assured by several writers that he was proud of his ancient lineage, which, taken along with the following passage on the relationship of the de Veres to the Lancastrian cause, may be accepted as conclusive on the subject:

John the 12th Earl (of Oxford) was attainted and beheaded in 1461, suffering for his loyalty to the Lancastrian line. His son John was restored to the dignity in 1464, but was himself attainted in 1474 in consequence of the active part he had taken on the

Lancastrian side during the temporary restoration of Henry VI in 1470 ... (He) distinguished himself as the last of the supporters of the cause of the red rose, which he maintained in the castle of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall for many months after the rest of the kingdom had submitted to Edward IV ... Having been mainly instrumental in bringing Henry (VII) to the throne he was immediately restored to the Earldom of Oxford, and also to the office of Lord Chamberlain which he enjoyed until his death in 1513.' (*Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 9, 1852, p. 24.)

3. So far as his attitude towards women is concerned, the poem already quoted in full is sufficient evidence of that deficiency of faith which we have pointed out as marking the Shakespeare Sonnets; the very terms employed being as nearly identical as Shakespeare ever allowed himself in two separate utterances on one topic. Then that capacity for intense affection combined with weakness of faith which is one of the peculiarities of Shakespeare's mind, has not, so far as we are aware, so close a parallel anywhere in literature as in the poems of Edward de Vere. It is not merely in an occasional line, but is the keynote of much of his poetry. Indeed we may say that it probably lies at the root of a great part of the misfortune and mystery in which his life was involved, and may indeed afford an explanation for the very existence of the Shakespeare mystery.
4. So far as the last point, his attitude to Catholicism, is concerned, the quotation we have already given from Green's *Short History* is all that is really necessary. The fact that his name appears at the head of a list of noblemen who professed to be reconciled to the old faith shows his leanings sufficiently well for us to say of him, as Macaulay says of Shakespeare, that he was not a zealous Protestant writing for zealous Protestants. When, further, we find that his father had professed Catholicism, it is not unlikely that on certain sentimental grounds his leaning was that way. Roman Catholicism would, moreover, be the openly professed religion of his home life during his first eight years. There is also evidence in the State Papers of the time that the English Catholics abroad were looking to him and to the Earl of Southampton for support.

At this point, Looney stated his conclusion:

‘On all the points then which we set before ourselves in entering upon the search, we find that Edward de Vere fulfils the conditions, and the general feeling with which we finish this stage of our enquiry is this; that if we have not actually discovered the author of Shakespeare’s works we have at any rate alighted upon a most exceptional set of resemblances.’

Much of the remainder of *“Shakespeare” Identified* was taken up with describing Oxford. Firstly, he considered the lyric poetry of Oxford and showed how it accorded with ideas, feelings and sentiments expressed in the Sonnets of Shakespeare. Then he recounted the life of Edward de Vere from contemporary records, with much discussion. He suggested that when Oxford’s company of players visited Stratford in 1584, young William Shakespeare might have joined them, leaving his wife to give birth to twins the following February. He argued that after his second marriage in 1591, Oxford devoted his life to revising, editing and preparing his poems and plays for publication.

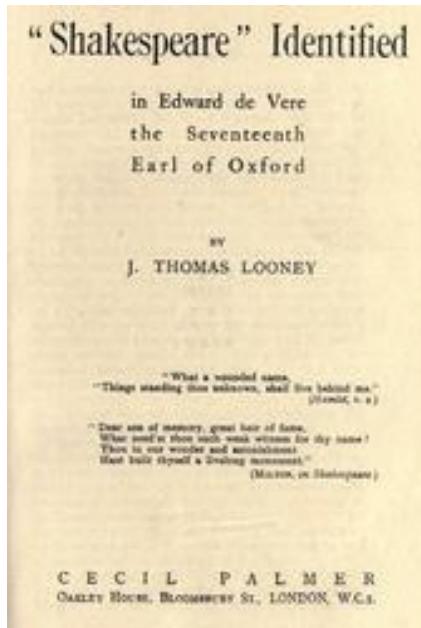
The period 1591–1604 was when a majority of plays were published in quarto and when William of Stratford gained enough wealth to buy New Place in 1597, as well as 107 acres of land (160) and an interest in the Stratford tithes. He also links events implied in the Sonnets to this period, e.g. the advice that the Earl of Southampton should marry.

Looney devotes a late chapter to what he found to be an astonishing number of coincidences between Oxford and Hamlet. Just from the first Act of the play, Looney could infer: both lost a father when they were young; both their mothers remarried; both have their rightful inheritance withdrawn; both have ambivalent views towards women; both are denied permission to travel. The scheming conniving Polonius is clearly Burghley and Ophelia is Anne. Laertes is Thomas Cecil. Both have associates named Francis/Francesco and Horace/Horatio.

Finally, Looney looked at posthumous considerations, noting that after his death, there followed an immediate arrest of Shakespearean publications. A number of other striking records indicated the removal of the great

dramatist, e.g. the reference to ‘our ever-living poet’ on the dedication to the Sonnets published in 1609 indicated that the poet had died. A small revival of publication in 1608–1610 gave additional support to the view that the author was by then dead.

When confronted with the problem of dating *The Tempest*, Looney opted against saying it was an early play (like *The Comedy of Errors*, which is the only other play to observe the unities of time, place, and action), but pronounced it as by another person. Most Oxfordians since have opted for the former explanation. Finally, he makes a plea for all sincere admirers of the works of Shakespeare ‘to examine, and even to insist upon an authoritative examination, of the evidence’. Before publication, Looney travelled to the British Library in London in 1918 so as to lodge a letter with the Head Librarian stating his intention to publish his theory and his findings.



**Fig. 5: “Shakespeare” Identified title page (1920)**

*“Shakespeare” Identified* was published in 1920 by Cecil Palmer in London and by Frederick A. Stokes Co. in New York.

## Positive Reactions to “*Shakespeare*” Identified

J. Thomas Looney helped to establish a literary society dedicated to researching the Authorship Question, from which three societies thrive in 2020: the Shakespearean Authorship Trust, The de Vere Society and the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship.

### Shakespeare Fellowship and its successors

On 6 November 1922, Thomas Looney and a group of other Shakespeare enthusiasts met in Hackney Library, London to establish the Shakespeare Fellowship. Sir George Greenwood was elected President; Abel Lefranc, who inclined towards Derby as the author, and L. J. Maxse (editor of *The National Review*) were elected vice-presidents. Colonel B. R. Ward was appointed Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary. Looney was invited to join the Board but declined due to his reclusive nature. Early members of the Shakespeare Fellowship included Percy Allen, Canon Rendall, Admiral Hubert Holland, Katharine Eggar, and Eva Turner Clark. The organisation was devoted to researching the Shakespeare Authorship Question, but not to advocate an individual candidate.<sup>12</sup> It had the following aims:

- To seek, and if possible establish, the truth concerning the authorship of Shakespeare’s plays and poems.
- To organise and encourage research, to promote the discussion of the authorship question and to provide means of publishing contributions to its solution.
- To maintain and add to a reference library of works on the subject.

The Fellowship’s activities were regularly reported by the *Hackney Spectator* and by the *Stratford Pictorial*. Montagu W. Douglas served as President from 1928-45.<sup>13</sup> Charles Wisner Barrell became the Fellowship’s treasurer in the 1940s. A later president, Judge Christmas Humphreys (1901–83), arranged for the Fellowship to change its name to the Shakespearean Authorship Society in 1959 and it became the Shakespearean Authorship Trust in the 1980s, all the while retaining its original aims. Recent chairmen of the SAT include Sir Mark Rylance and Professor William Leahy.

In 1957, as an American offshoot from the Shakespeare Fellowship, the **Shakespeare Oxford Society** (SOS) was dedicated to exploring the Shakespeare authorship question and to researching Edward de Vere as the true author of the works of ‘Shakespeare’. Among many distinguished contributors to the SOS were Charlton and Dorothy Ogburn; Charlton Ogburn, Jr.; Louis Benezet; and Minos and Ruth Lloyd Miller. Supreme Court Justice, John Paul Stevens (1920–2019), continued the tradition of lawyers as committed Oxfordians. Another American organisation emerged in 2002, the **Shakespeare Fellowship**. These organisations merged into the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship in 2015 under their respective presidents, John Hamill and the late Tom Regnier.

Studying Looney’s *“Shakespeare” Identified* and Charlton Ogburn’s *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (1984) helped inspire a profound interest in the authorship question in Charles Beauclerk, Earl of Burford, who founded **The de Vere Society** at Hertford College, Oxford in 1986. American benefactors included Ruth and Minos Miller, who furnished the library, and William O. Hunt of Chicago, who provided financial support. Early English patrons included Verily Anderson, Olga Ironside Wood, and the 13th Duke of St. Albans. The Senior Member of the Society during its Oxford years was Professor Edmund Ford of All Souls College, while early speakers included the Regius Professor of History, Hugh Trevor-Roper (Lord Dacre) and classical scholar J. Enoch Powell.

Christopher Dams then carried things forward in his rational, efficient and courteous way and re-established the Society under a new constitution in 1997. Sir Derek Jacobi served as patron. Latterly, Brian Hicks, Mike Llewellyn, Elizabeth Imlay, Kevin Gilvary and now Alexander Waugh have served as the Society’s chairman.

### ***The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford by Captain B. M. Ward (1928)***

The investigation of biographical materials for the Earl of Oxford was initially conducted by Colonel Bernard Rowland Ward (1863–1933) who was a soldier, a poet and a student of Elizabethan literature. He had served in the Royal

Engineers in India and Flanders and was made a C.M.G. in 1917. In February 1922, Colonel Ward travelled from London Victoria to Gillingham in Kent to give a lecture to a local literary society about the Sonnets. On the way, he read a favourable account of “*Shakespeare*” Identified in the *National Review*. This piqued his interest and he bought the book. Already conversant with the doubts expressed by Mark Twain and Henry James, he was immediately convinced that Oxford wrote Shakespeare. Colonel Ward then undertook much research himself and made his home in Buckinghamshire the centre of the incipient Oxfordian movement. He linked the sale of Brooke House in 1609 with the publication of the Sonnets that year. He also discovered the record of Queen Elizabeth I’s payment of a £1,000 annuity to Oxford and claimed that Oxford was involved in war propaganda at this time.

His son, Captain Bernard Mordaunt Ward (1893–1945), lived with him and published the biography *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* in 1928. He had taken on the task of investigating original sources, among them the State Papers in the British Library, the Public Record Office, and the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House. From these and many other records, he was able to establish a full account of the Earl’s life in an altogether more sympathetic portrait of the Earl than had hitherto been the case. He was, however, prevented from treating the Earl as the hidden author by his publisher, John Murray (London).

## Review of Looney by noted Cambridge academic

Joan Violet Robinson (1903–1983)<sup>14</sup> was one of the most important British economists of the twentieth century. Born in Surrey as Joan Maurice, she read economics at Girton College, Cambridge.<sup>15</sup> She was a fellow at Newnham College, Cambridge, published three books and several articles, became active in the British Labour Party, and gave birth to two daughters. Promoted to a full professorship at Cambridge in 1965, she was also a Fellow of the British Academy from 1958 to 1971. In 1933, she published a review article of ‘*Shakespeare*’ Identified in the *Cambridge Review*, an in-house magazine for Cambridge students.

## Joan Robinson's Review: "*Shakespeare*" Identified

From *The Cambridge Review*, 54, 12 May 1933, pp. 389–90, King's College, Cambridge

In 1920 a schoolmaster named Looney published a book called '*Shakespeare*' Identified in *Edward de Vere the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*. This does not sound very promising, and any sensible person would be inclined to dismiss it as some new Baconian nonsense and leave it unread. But Mr Looney's book is no such matter. He does not rely upon codes and anagrams, nor upon doubtful interpretations of the plays. Making use mainly of recognised authorities such as Sir Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, he succeeds in building up what any impartial reader must recognise to be at least a plausible case for de Vere.

In the first chapter he summarises the negative evidence which goes to show that William Shakspeare of Stratford could not have been the author of the plays. Now, as long as the only alternative to accepting William Shakspeare was to believe that the plays were written by Bacon or by the Man in the Moon, most people preferred to accept William Shakspeare. But when a reasonable alternative is offered the negative evidence begins to have weight.

It has always been surprising that Shakespeare (whoever he was) should have been so little remarked by his contemporaries. I do not wish to maintain that any poet of genius must necessarily have a striking personality, but I cannot help feeling that Shakespeare, of all writers, must have been very noticeable, and yet no one appears ever to have noticed him. This is perhaps merely a personal impression, but there is considerable circumstantial evidence to throw doubt on William Shakspeare's claim. I will quote merely one instance. The scholars have been perplexed by the marked differences in the handwriting of the six known Shakspeare signatures. Mr Looney suggests that Shakspeare was unable to write, and that when he had to sign a document he called upon whoever was with him to help. The orthodox, on the other hand, maintain that on one occasion he was

nervous, on the next he wrote beautifully, and on a third he was just recovering from a fit.

Having disposed of William Shakspeare with this and numerous other points (each of which separately, of course, can be explained away) Mr Looney set about to find another candidate for the authorship of 'Shakespeare'; with engaging simplicity he explains how he happened upon Edward de Vere by a fluke. Then he proceeds to construct his case. I will make no attempt to summarise the evidence, firstly because it is all circumstantial and built up by small touches, so that any condensation of it must make it appear unconvincing; secondly because I do not wish to spoil for anyone the purely detective-story pleasure of reading Mr Looney. I will merely endeavour to describe the final impression.

On the one hand we have the works of Shakespeare attached to the name of a person who, on all the external evidence, appears to have been a nonentity. On the other hand we have a very gifted, fascinating, and somewhat explosive character, claimed by his contemporaries to be the leading poet of the age, of whose work only a handful of early lyrics has survived. On the one hand we have an unknown provincial, arriving in London, it seems, with his pockets stuffed with accomplished and courtly verses (*Venus and Adonis* was published shortly after the date of the first recorded reference to Shakspeare). On the other hand we have the leading poet of the court, the patron of a company of players, known to be a prolific writer, publishing nothing after the age of twenty-six. The double coincidence is certainly striking. The mystery of de Vere's silence after 1576 is quite as great as the mystery of Shakspeare's sudden outburst in 1593. But to all this there is an obvious answer.

Hitherto de Vere has been an almost unknown figure. It is recorded of him that he had a quarrel in a tennis court and called Sir Philip Sidney 'puppy'. Successive historians, like sheep following each other through the gap in a hedge, have fastened upon this incident and left the rest of his life unexplored. In this convenient blank, it is

natural to argue, Mr Looney has been free to build whatever structure his fancy led him to prefer. Certainly Mr Looney appears to be painstaking and scrupulous, but he is admittedly an amateur at research; it is natural to say that, when a qualified student gets to work on the records, it would be a very strange chance if something does not come to light which will blow Mr Looney's theory sky high.

But now comes Mr B. M. Ward's *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* (1928). This is a meticulously impartial work, compiled entirely from contemporary documents, and dabbling in no controversial matters. When much unpublished material is brought to light by Mr Ward no single fact emerges that is incompatible with Mr Looney's hypothesis. On the other hand every fresh touch which is added to the portrait of de Vere makes him resemble more closely, in character and in circumstances, the kind of man who might have written 'Shakespeare'. Moreover it is remarkable that on several occasions where Mr Looney turns out to have made an error (for instance in the identification of Spenser's 'Willy') the removal of the error actually strengthens his case.

Meanwhile a follower of Mr Looney had pointed out this passage in the *Arte of Poesie* (1589):

In these days poets as well as poesie are become subjects to scorn and derision. Whoso is studious in the art, and shows himself excellent in it, they call him phantastical and lightheaded. Now of such among the Nobility or Gentry as be very well seen in the making of poesie, it is come to pass that they are loath to be known of their skill. So, many that have written commendably have suppressed it, or suffered it to be published without their names. And in her Majesty's time that now is are sprung up another crew of courtly makers, Noblemen and Gentlemen, who have written excellently well, as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest, of which number is first that noble gentleman, Edward Earle of Oxforde.

If this passage had started Mr Looney on his search the rest of the evidence might have been built round it, but on the contrary it turned up after Mr Looney's case was completed.

Mr Looney was no doubt right to avoid as much as possible the doubtful ground of internal evidence. But internal evidence cannot be neglected, and Dr Rendall, in his study of *Shakespeare's Sonnets and Edward de Vere* <sup>16</sup> has discovered evidence in plenty. The Sonnets have always presented a dilemma. They are obviously personal, sincere, and written by one equal for another; the attempt to twist them into artificial tributes from a poor poet to a noble patron can only be the result of a complete lack of sensibility. On the other hand to read them against the background of a murky, hand-to-mouth existence in theatres and ale-houses is quite impossible. No sensible reader ever attempts to do so; he reads them on their merits, entirely in a void. Indeed, he may very well protest that this is what he prefers, and that to have to remember Edward de Vere as he reads them would be quite as tiresome as to have to remember William Shakspeare. But Dr Rendall, who has both sensibility and common sense, makes it clear that to recognise de Vere as the author robs the Sonnets of none of their greatness, and adds to them many minor charms.

In all this I have made no attempt to restate the evidence. I merely wish to mention that it exists. The case constructed by Mr Looney and Dr Rendall has been supported by further research on minor points, and has been neatly flanked by some detailed work by Dr Rendall on the handwriting of de Vere, and by some strange stuff about the portraits which, if it can be established, may well prove unanswerable.

Now, if the case is as strong as I am affirming it to be, how does it happen that the orthodox scholars are content to meet it either by silence or by a few unkind jibes? Why do they not set seriously to work either to explode it or to establish it once and for all?

In the first place, the new theory is extremely disconcerting, the story which it unfolds is excessively queer, and, if it were established,

the joke would be far too good. No-one, particularly if he occupies a recognised position, wants to have his ideas so violently upset. Moreover the weight of vested interest, both of capital and of reputation, bound up with the Bard of Avon, is so great that the orthodox have naturally preferred to ignore the new hypothesis rather than to take the smallest risk of helping to establish it.

But secondly, there is some excuse for the scholars who refuse to put their natural scepticism to the test by trying to refute Mr Looney. For Mr Looney, as was to be expected, has been followed by a crowd of outrageous cranks. There are books in favour of de Vere which are full of more-than-Baconian orgies of cryptogram hunting, of fantastic identifications in the plays, and of such nonsensical theories as that the Sonnets are addressed to an unknown bastard son of de Vere. To the academic critics they have been a god-send, for it is easy enough to protest that to refute such creatures is merely a waste of time, and, lumping Mr Looney and Dr Rendall along with the rest, the academics dismiss the whole business with a shrug.

My own subject [Economics] provides instructive examples of the relationship between the academics and the cranks. To begin with the cranks have the right intuitions, but they use the wrong arguments. They are coldly received by the academics, who have been taught how to argue. Then the cranks become embittered and begin to abuse the academics, at the same time strengthening the academic position by piling one absurdity upon another in defence of the crank theories. The academics try to teach the plain man to sneer at the cranks, but the plain man feels in his bones that there must be something in what the cranks are saying. The whole position is very unsatisfactory to all concerned.

Then at last there arises someone who has the training of an academic, the insight of a crank, and the common sense of a plain man; and the whole muddle begins to be cleared up. The cranks, embittered by long oppression, attack him just as though he were orthodox, the academics look at him askance, and the plain man hails

him as a prophet. It would be rash to press the analogy too far. But it seems to me that this Shakespeare controversy has reached the second stage, but not the third, and, writing as a plain man in these matters, I appeal to Cambridge once more to come to the rescue.

### Correspondence with Looney

Looney received a letter from Joan Robinson, dated 28 August 1933, but this letter has not been traced.<sup>17</sup> Looney's reply, held in the archives of King's College, Cambridge, confirms her Oxfordian sympathies:

Will you please accept my warmest thanks for writing as you have done. After all, it is the quality rather than the volume of the support that one wins that matters most in a case like this; and from this point of view I have had little cause for complaint. Although you and your immediate associates many not be identified specially with literary interests, I do not doubt that, working as a group, you will eventually make yourselves felt ... The future is certainly with us, and, sooner or later, the authorities will have to succumb ... All the strength of the Stratfordian case consists in its long acceptance, and it is safe to say that, if the plays had come down to us anonymously, no reasonable person would hesitate to attribute them to the Earl of Oxford.

**Geoffrey Hodgson writes:** Looney acknowledges that Shakespeare specialists have invested too much in the Stratford man and turns for hope 'to the rising generation of students'. In a postscript to this letter, Looney expresses reservations concerning 'extravagant and improbable' theories concerning Oxford and Queen Elizabeth that 'are likely to bring the whole cause into ridicule'. Joan Robinson also wrote that 'Mr Looney '... has been followed by a crowd of outrageous cranks' but does not explicitly refer to any particular theory. She opines that apparently 'nonsensical' theories help the academic Stratfordians to 'dismiss the whole business with a shrug'.

## Sigmund Freud

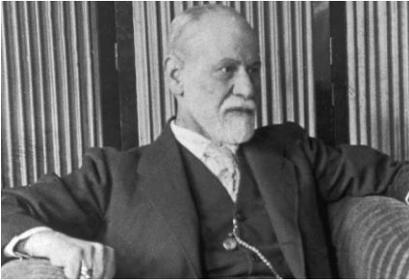


Fig. 6: Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), one of the greatest intellectuals of the twentieth century, was interested in the works of Shakespeare from an age and recognised Hamlet as the playwright's most self-revealing character by far.<sup>18</sup>

Freud read *“Shakespeare” Identified* in 1923 and was quickly persuaded that Hamlet was a perfect fit for the life, loves, passions and feelings of Oxford. ‘I no longer believe that William Shakespeare the actor from Stratford was the author of the works that have been ascribed to him’ he wrote in his *Autobiographical Study* (1927).<sup>19</sup>

I no longer believe that ... the actor from Stratford was the author of the works that have been ascribed to him. Since reading *“Shakespeare” Identified* by J. Thomas Looney, I am almost convinced that the assumed name conceals the personality of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford ... The man of Stratford seems to have nothing at all to justify his claim, whereas Oxford has almost everything.

Freud was ill when he was to be awarded the Goethe Prize in 1930 and sent his daughter, Anna, to collect it on his behalf. She read his speech in which she described her father's identification of Oxford as the true author. Freud continued to maintain this position for the rest of his life, especially when he fled from Austria and settled in the London suburb of Hampstead in 1939, despite the pleas of his pupil Ernst Jones and his translator, James Strachey.<sup>20</sup>

## Negative reactions to “*Shakespeare*” Identified

There have been many attempts to discredit Looney, often by silly personal attacks on him, his name or his background. Or, worse, by simply ignoring the value of his arguments. These objections have been collected by Samuel Schoenbaum writing fifty years later. Authorship sceptics were treated as pariahs and branded with the name ‘heretic’ as if there were some type of ‘Shakespeare Orthodoxy’ under divine guidance, dissent from which merited punishment by death. The terms ‘orthodox’ and ‘heretic’ were first applied in the Victorian period to anyone who doubted the traditional attribution of the works of Shakespeare. These ‘heretics’ were simply dissatisfied with the speculative, romantic biographies which had begun with Charles Knight (1843) and John Payne Collier (1844). Yet at no stage do any ‘orthodox’ Shakespeare commentators ever claim divine inspiration for their belief in the Stratford Man, nor could they ever.

The main objection to the new Oxfordian theory of Authorship was the fact that Oxford died in 1604, whereas the many plays had been dated afterwards. Schoenbaum (*Lives*, 601) makes an extraordinary admission: that Oxford had died before a string of plays had ‘appeared on the stage’. Against this, it should be noted that (a) there is no record of *All’s Well*, *Coriolanus* or *Timon of Athens* on stage in the early modern period anyway; so it was possible for plays to premiere after an author’s death; (b) there is NO contemporary record as to the date of composition of any play of Shakespeare; (c) the dates have been assigned closely prior to those published mainly in the 1590s; (d) the remaining plays have been allocated to dates roughly in the period assumed for Shakespeare’s working career, roughly 1590–1612. There is no independent basis for such dating.<sup>21</sup>

Here are ten more objections to Looney’s thesis, most of which are easy to dismiss even by someone who did not agree with Looney’s findings:

- i) Stratfordians seem unable to resist making silly quips about the name Looney. As if this were of any relevance to the theory proposed. There is a distinguished professor of Italian literature in the University of North Carolina, called Dennis Looney (b. 1955); it

would be an impertinence to attempt to ridicule his name, or any other person's family name.

- ii) It was also noted that the name is of Manx origin and that the Looney clan might claim descent from the Earls of Derby. Again irrelevant, as well as untrue. Looney never made this claim.
- iii) There were no books north of the River Wear, the location of Durham Cathedral and the University which was established in 1832. Again very silly.

Durham University established affiliated colleges in Newcastle from 1852. In the Act of 1908, it was recognised that the University of Durham had two divisions and that King's College, located in Newcastle, was teaching a full range of arts, sciences and medicine subjects.<sup>22</sup>



**Fig. 7: The Lit & Phil Library at Newcastle had opened in 1825**

- iv) He began training as a minister at Chester Diocesan Training College, before switching to become a schoolmaster. As if this could be twisted to impugn his character. Again irrelevant. Many people embark on one vocation and switch to another.

- v) Looney confessed that he was not an expert, but he had devoted years to the study of the subject. Who at the time was an expert? Professors and students of English literature at the universities were rare in 1920. Note that the most highly regarded Shakespeare authority of the nineteenth century was James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, as was Sir Edmund Chambers (1866–1954) in the twentieth century. Chambers had studied *Litterae Humaniores* (Classics) at Corpus Christi College Oxford, before spending his entire working life at the Board of Education.
- vi) Schoenbaum refers to Looney as a ‘gentle retiring soul’. Please be more patronising.
- vii) Schoenbaum states that snobbery apparently led Looney to look for a Shakespeare with blue-blood in his veins. Er, excuse me? Just reading the opening chapters of *“Shakespeare” Identified* should convince anyone as to why Looney was not satisfied with the traditional story and how he came to realise that the author was almost certainly from the nobility. After all, thirty-four plays have a court setting with the Monarch or Ruler as a speaking character. There are no plays which feature a provincial ale-taster as its hero.
- viii) Schoenbaum not only refers to Aubrey’s ‘presumably apocryphal anecdote’ about the Earl’s having broken wind in the presence of the Queen, he quotes it verbatim. Again irrelevant.
- ix) Pollard claimed that the works of Shakespeare could be fitted to almost any person. That is, any person except the son of an ale-taster, a glove-maker, a corn dealer, or a wool merchant from a provincial town, who absconded every time he had to pay some tax.
- x) Finally, Schoenbaum mentions Looney’s long list of correspondences between the life of Oxford and major characters in the works of Shakespeare. He dismisses these with an ironic comment: ‘Indeed the Earl can scarcely restrain himself from putting in appearances everywhere in the canon’. Perhaps the great Samuel Schoenbaum should have mediated upon that statement and compared how far any

character in the plays comes remotely close to the situation of William of Stratford.

Yet Samuel Schoenbaum makes a final admission in *Shakespeare's Lives*:

Perhaps we should despair of ever bridging the vertiginous expanse between the sublimity of the subject and the mundane inconsequence of the documentary record.

Now if Schoenbaum and other 'orthodox' writers simply reconsidered Looney's thesis with an open mind, they would find that the 'vertiginous expanse' had indeed been bridged.

*Kevin Gilvary, Hon. President of The de Vere Society, July 2020*

## Centenary Celebrations in 2020

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship planned many events to celebrate the publication of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*. Firstly, we have the excellent Centenary Edition of the book, edited by James Warren (2018) with a large number of footnotes, providing readers for the first time with accurate information on the books and papers he consulted in his research. A bibliography at the end of the book supplements those notes for easy reference to Looney's sources. Warren has also edited "*Shakespeare*" *Revealed: The Collected Articles and Published Letters of J. Thomas Looney* (2019) which reports eleven old and forty-two newly discovered articles and letters. These demonstrated just how politely but firmly Looney defended his ideas and continued to work to substantiate the validity of the Oxfordian claim after the publication of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*.

On 04 March 2020, the exact centenary of the first publication, the SOF held a symposium at the National Press Club in Washington, DC with an audience of about seventy distinguished members of the fourth estate. With **Bob Meyers**, President Emeritus of the National Press Foundation, chairing the event the following speaker gave an address:

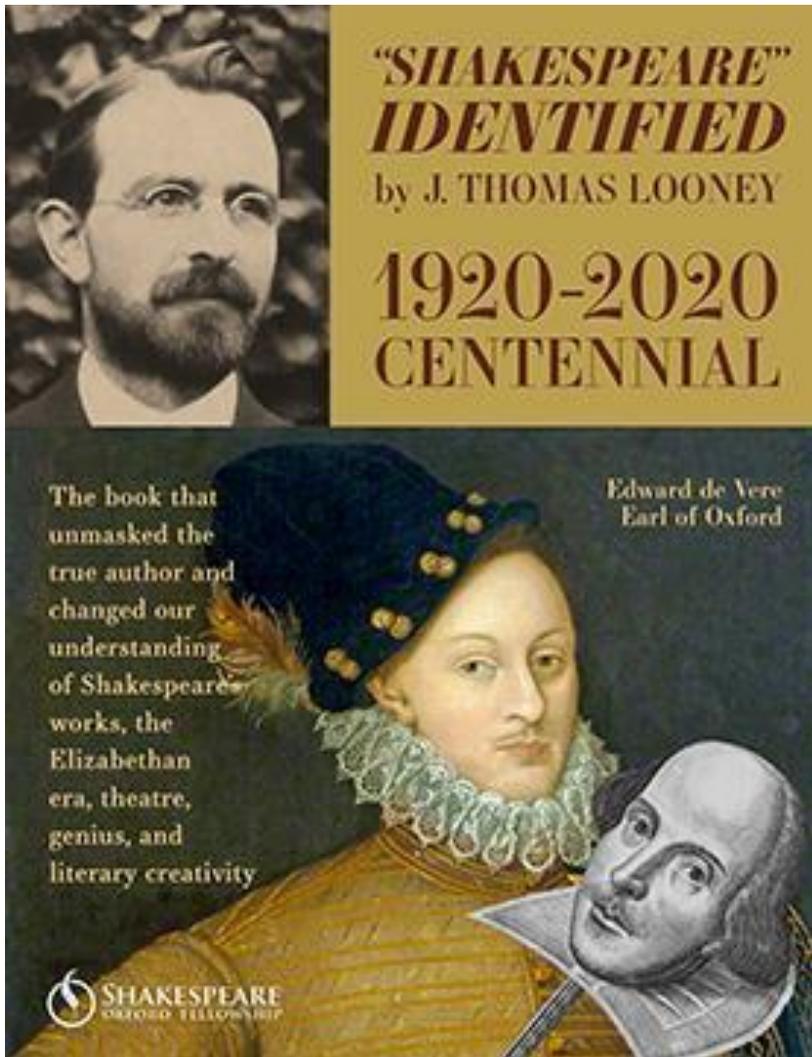


Fig. 8: Poster for the Centenary Celebrations 1920–2020 of *“Shakespeare” Identified* by J. Thomas Looney

**James A. Warren**, a former officer in the American Foreign Service, explained why “*Shakespeare*” *Identified* should be considered the most revolutionary book in the history of Shakespeare studies. He showed how Looney’s insights changed our understanding of many topics: the author ‘Shakespeare’, the great plays and poems, the Elizabethan theatre and era, and the nature of genius and literary creativity.

Attorney and former SOF president **Tom Regnier** spoke on Supreme Court Justice Stevens, the Law of Evidence, and the Shakespeare Authorship Question. He addressed the question of why some of the greatest minds of the last 100 years have been persuaded to doubt or reject the traditional theory of Shakespeare authorship, and often to embrace the Oxfordian theory — including lawyers, judges, and Supreme Court justices with lifetimes of experience analysing evidence. Sadly, Tom passed away six weeks later. (See page 39.)

**Cheryl Eagan-Donovan**, director of the Oxfordian documentary *Nothing is Truer than Truth* spoke on the theme that Every Author’s Life Tells a Story. **Bonner Miller Cutting**, author of *Necessary Mischief: Exploring the Shakespeare Authorship Question*, spoke on the topic of Profiling the Author Shakespeare. **Dr. Roger Stritmatter**, Professor of Humanities and Literature at Coppin State University in Baltimore, explored how the Oxfordian theory has influenced Shakespeare studies over the past century.

Unfortunately, The de Vere Society’s celebration of “*Shakespeare*” *Identified*, planned to be held in the Lit & Phil Club in Newcastle in July 2020, has been postponed due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

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Centenary Edition (2018 — see Warren below)

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Schoenbaum, Samuel, *Shakespeare’s Lives* (1970).

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Wilde, J.P., *Lord Penzance on the Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy — A Judicial Summing-Up* (1902).

## End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Ian Dunn, *University of Chester, 1839-2012: The Bright Star in the Present Prospect* (2002), Chester. Dunn does not mention Looney but does describe the origins of the institution and those who served as its principals. The Rev. Best was ordained as an Anglican minister and the connection with Queens’ College, Cambridge is a curious coincidence as it was de Vere’s college.

- 2 The seventh edition of *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* appeared in 1887 in two volumes with over 550 pages of supportive material (transcriptions of documents and illustrative notes).
- 3 The entry for Shakespeare was exceeded only by that for an even greater figure of national importance: Queen Victoria (when she died in 1901). According to the *ODNB* website, the entry for Shakespeare is the joint longest in the 2004 edition at about 35,000 words, with Churchill's and Queen Elizabeth I's.
- 4 The original publishers of the *DNB* were Smith, Elder & Co., who issued Lee's *DNB* entry as a monograph *A Life of William Shakespeare* in 1898. This biography was very popular: by 1899 it was into its fourth edition and by 1905 into its fifth edition. The seventh edition of 1915 was expanded to 776 pages to take into account the publication in 1909–10 of documents newly discovered by Charles and Hulda Wallace. These were published as *The Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars, 1597–1603* (1908), *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare* (1912), and *The First London Theatre: Materials for a History* (1913). Sidney Lee's *Life of William Shakespeare* remains in print.
- 5 We do not know which edition he used. One of the best critical editions of the play at the time was by C. K. Pooler in the first series of *The Arden Shakespeare* (1905).
- 6 Ignatius Donnelly (1888) *The Great Cryptogram: Francis Bacon's Cipher in the so-called Shakespeare Plays*.
- 7 James T. Wilde (1816-1899) was a prominent judge, and was created Baron Penzance in 1869. Thomas E. Webb (1821–1903) was the distinguished Regius Professor of Laws at Trinity College Dublin from 1867 to 1887 and also served as a High Court Judge. Lord Penzance and Judge Webb demonstrated Shakespeare's exceptional knowledge of law and the English legal system. They advocated Francis Bacon as the author. Sir George Greenwood (1850–1928) was also a lawyer and an MP, who participated in much public discussion over the authorship,

without inclining to any particular candidate. Professor Lefranc (1863–1962), an eminent professor of French literature, noted Shakespeare’s exceptional knowledge of France. He advocated Henry Stanley, Earl of Derby, as the author of the works.

- 8 Prince Henry (1594–1612) now held all six titles associated with the heirs-apparent of the Kings of England and Scotland. The investiture was celebrated by Anthony Munday’s pageant: *London’s Love to Prince Henry* (May 1610) and Samuel Daniel’s masque *Tethys Festival* (Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First*, vol. 2, 1828).
- 9 The Letters of Junius circulated publicly and anonymously in the 1770s, often highlighting incompetence and injustice in the Civil Service. So far the identity of Junius has not been established. Lord Macaulay drew up a list of characteristics in trying to identify Sir Philip Francis as the author. Thomas Babington Macaulay (1841), ‘Warren Hastings’ in the *Edinburgh Review* LXXIV, 160–255. Reprinted in *Critical and Historical Essays*, ed. Grieve, 1907.
- 10 See Brent E. Turvey’s historical review in the opening chapter of *Criminal Profiling: An Introduction to Behavioral Evidence Analysis* (2002). Looney was ahead of his time as the use of profiling in crime investigations was not developed in the USA until the 1960s.
- 11 Francis Turner Palgrave’s anthology of English Poetry, *Golden Treasury of English Songs and Lyrics* (1861 and frequently thereafter), page 26.
- 12 The Francis Bacon Society, established in 1886, publishes *Baconiana* regularly.
- 13 Lt. Col. Montagu Douglas (1863–1957) was a colonial administrator in India. He took up the Presidency of the SF when he returned to the UK. He asserted that ‘Queen Elizabeth had entrusted Oxford to oversee propaganda that would produce patriotic plays and pamphlets’. He wrote *The Earl of Oxford as “Shakespeare”*; an outline of the case (1931). In *Lord Oxford and the Shakespeare Group* (1952), he developed the argument that

Oxford was at the centre of a literary group which included Bacon and Marlowe.

- 14 The description of Joan Robinson and her correspondence with J. T. Looney was published in *DVS Newsletter*, March 2008 by Geoffrey Hodgson.
- 15 In the 1930s Joan Robinson became a member of the ‘Cambridge Circus’ group of economists around John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) who revolutionised the entire discipline.
- 16 Canon Rendell was Professor of Greek at Liverpool University 1891–98.
- 17 See James Warren’s editions of the many letters received by Looney that he responded to.
- 18 Sally Hazelton, ‘Freud and Shakespeare’ in *Great Oxford* (2004), ed. R. Malim.
- 19 Sigmund Freud, *An Autobiographical Study* (1925), (trans. James Strachey, New York: Norton, 1952). Reported by David Hilman, *Marx and Freud: Great Shakespeareans* (2014) Volume X, 133–34.
- 20 Peter Gay, *Freud, a Life for our Times* (1988), p. 643n. Also reported by David Hilman, *Marx and Freud: Great Shakespeareans* (2014) Volume X, 133–34.
- 21 For a fuller discussion of the problems of dating and chronology, as well as a consideration of the range of dates possible for each play, see Kevin Gilvary (ed.), *Dating Shakespeare’s Plays* (2010).
- 22 See Nigel Watson (2007), *Durham Difference: The Story of Durham University*.

