

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

PREFACE

Sonnet 123

NO! TIME, THOU SHALT NOT BOST THAT I DO CHANGE,
THY PYRAMYDS BUylT UP WITH NEWER MIGHT

A cryptic clue for you to solve!

* * *

My research (an Odyssey as it turned out) started by accident and debatably at an academic disadvantage – my profession being one of running manufacturing organisations – well away from the convolutions of academia.

In 2004 I received a thank-you present from a professional colleague whom I had helped and who knew of my love for Shakespeare, Calvin Hoffman's 1955 book, *The Man who was Shake-Speare*. Hoffman's theory was that Shake-Speare was a resurrected Christopher Marlowe leading me on to read, for the very first time, the Shake-Speare Sonnets. (There is a hyphen which recurs in most of the early quartos of the plays.) Having read the opening eighteen of one-hundred-and-fifty-four sonnets I sensed the author was a young *woman* called Mary or May; but what did I know!

When, in time for Christmas that same year, I self-published *The Darling Buds of Maie*, telling the story of the two lovers who had composed the Shake-Speare Sonnets, I still firmly believed that William Shakespeare was a London actor and playhouse shareholder, born at Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, who had written the plays printed in the *First Folio* of 1623. My innocent thirst for better understanding led me to research into the plays, especially as the so-called *difficult plays*. *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus & Cressida*, *All's Well that Ends Well* and two others – *Pericles* and *A Winter's Tale*; all seemed to allude to the two lovers whom I had identified had fashioned the Sonnets, the Queen's maid-of-honour, Mary Fitton, and William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke; *not* Shakespeare.

In 2008 I read Lamberto Tassinari's *The Man Who Was Shakespeare* which promotes authorship by the lexicographer John Florio. It somewhat reinforced an intuitive feeling that the ubiquitous Florio had an influence in writing *some* of the plays. As for Marlowe, by then I was convinced it was not his corpse that was subjected to a post mortem on 1st June 1593 – making it feasible that he too had a hand in the plays; here one should include the playwright Earl of Oxford, Edward de Vere, not to mention many others.

I had noticed in Shakespeare's will that the bequest of £1 6s 8d to each of the three London actors, *his fellows* John Hemmings, Henry Condell and Richard Burbage,

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was an interlineation in a different hand. In my extensive reading no scholar or commentator had ever drawn specific attention to this, understandably, since should it be a forgery it meant there was nothing whatsoever to connect this Warwickshire Shakespeare with the London stage. It begged the question, whether there was another Stratford on another river Avon; and there is.



Stratford-sub-Castle is a small village on the left bank of the Wiltshire Avon three miles north of Salisbury; the *Castle* is that of derelict Old Sarum, a massive natural mound, once fortified, which dominates the village, here painted by John Constable. A local historian told me over the phone that an ancient manor house in the village had been lived in from 1603 to 1619 by Philip Herbert then Earl Montgomery. Philip was married to the vivacious thespian, Susan, the daughter of the same Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford and the house was held on long lease by Philip's brother, William, the Earl of Pembroke.

These brothers had a famous literary mother, Mary Sidney, Countess Pembroke, (who owned summer homes on the banks of the same river Avon) and an even more famous uncle, her brother, the soldier-poet Sir Philip Sidney. In the early 1590's it was the Pembroke Players, sponsored by Mary Sidney, Countess Pembroke, who performed the embryonic Shake-speare plays and thirty years later the 1623 collection of thirty-six Shakespeare plays was dedicated to the *brethren* Earls, Pembroke and Montgomery. Discovering all this swung the axis of my perception of who was *Shakespeare* swung into a whole new plane. If this Stratford on this Wiltshire Avon had *all* these indisputable connections to the plays, then who *was* Shakespeare if *not* the Bard of Warwickshire?

But there was a problem – the evidence. In the June 1616 probate copy of the Shackspeare will the bequest to the three actors was firmly embedded in the text, *proving* ill-founded any suspicion that the interlineation I had seen was a forgery. However, by then I had made a number of significant findings which seriously undermined the *orthodox* biography and perceived history. My research was telling

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me one thing, the probate copy was telling me I was wrong; I am dogged but not stubborn and I had to accept I was wrong. Until...!

The history of Shakespeare and its supporting research and commentary stretches back to around 1709 when copyright laws were changed and Jacob Tonson published *The Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by the actor Nicholas Rowe, in six volumes extending to 3,324 pages, and containing forty-three plays. Little has been discovered over the last century. What was quite evident, concerning theatre and drama, is that little was known about Warwickshire-Shakespeare until his will appeared around 1747. Over the following forty years deeds were discovered that pertained to Shakespeare's property in the Blackfriars.¹ In 1908 the *Sanders Portrait* claiming to be Shakespeare was pulled from under a bed. Early in the twentieth century American academic, Charles Wallace, *dredged up* a collection of deeds and documents from the Public Records Office (PRO) which identified the shareholding in the Blackfriars and Globe theatres, and the location of the Globe, and in 1989 a purported site of the Globe theatre was excavated.

By now there was so much *evidence* built up in thin layers that it seemed inconceivable that Shakespeare was a hoax or myth as some people had thought. However, the true history is a complex matrix of playwrights, plays, publishers, printers and patrons and yet throughout the *persona* of William Shakespeare is conspicuous by his ubiquitous absence. I will consider the Shakespeare will at the right time.

ALL THAT IS KNOWN FOR TENTATIVE CERTAINTY IS THAT BETWEEN 1597 AND 1616 SOMEONE GOING BY THE NAME OF WILLIAM SHAKSPERE WAS A SHAREHOLDER IN THE GLOBE AND THE BLACKFRIARS PLAYHOUSES, AND HE MIGHT HAVE ACTED. WE DO NOT KNOW IF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE WAS HIS REAL NAME, BUT WITH SOME CERTAINTY, A WILLIAM SHAKSPER OF STRATFORD-UPON-AVON OWNED A PROPERTY IN THE BLACKFRIARS AREA OF LONDON.

Countless numbers of people have searched for anything that would give substance to this apparent genius. If it was a pseudonym (which it was, as I'll demonstrate in the Sonnets) there clearly was nothing to be found. It left the field wide open to invention, distortion and forgery, and then, through rote, a tacit acceptance of the fabricated as true history.

¹ I do not doubt that Stratford Shakespeare owned property in London. Owning property in London meant that probate had to be granted by the see of Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PCC.

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One simple example of forgery; Shaksper's son was christened Samuel and was buried Samuel. A forger changed the name to Hamlet to relate to the play, *Hamlet*, adding an element of authenticity to Warwickshire Man.

If the Bard did not exist he could hardly complain – and although the man in Warwickshire called Shaxper was litigious for even small amounts, there was never a complaint about all the other, some inferior, works bearing his name – but not by him. There is, however, good evidence which indicates that the *first folio* of Shakespeare plays was compiled to commemorate the sixtieth birthday of Mary Sidney, a consummate poet, who had enjoyed, patronised, commissioned and probably edited and contributed to the thirty-six plays; the edition being part-funded or underwritten by her sons, Pembroke & Montgomery.² Sadly during the course of printing, and a month before her significant birthday, Mary Sidney died. Printing stopped for a year's mourning before restarting. The book was eventually puffed by Ben Jonson and its quality and extent made it the success it has become; but one cannot prove that someone does not exist.

I present the facts. I have not knowingly omitted any facts that would support that man from Warwickshire ever wrote anything. At times I mass together facts in the form of a fiction that has a high probability of having happened, but in a way that this fiction does not affect the truth. So

Occam's razor

Occam's razor is the problem-solving principle that recommends searching for explanations constructed with the smallest possible set of elements. Here is the simple solution within which everything is explained.

- The first folio collection of thirty-six plays was assembled to honour Mary Sidney, Countess Pembroke's, sixtieth birthday. Mary Sidney was what would today be called an influencer in the fields of literature and drama.
- The (Sweet swan of) Avon and the Stratford Moniment (sic), mentioned in the *First Folio*, are in Wiltshire, homes to Mary Sidney and the Pembrokes; not in Warwickshire.
- William Shake-speare was a pseudonym, a brand name. The name itself was a euphemism for onanism.

² Pembroke's contribution may have been to use his clout as Lord Chamberlain to ensure the availability of the plays from the various people who had title to them.

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- Mary Sidney's son, William Herbert used the alias Shakespeare to enable him to enjoy actively participating in theatre before he came of age.
- The so-called biography and history of the Bard are inventions and documentation is strewn with forgeries.

I liken the authorship question to Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*; who was the murderer? They all were. So who or what was the playwright Will Shake-Speare – Marlowe, Florio, Chettle, Drayton, Munday, Dekker, Chapman, Greene, Heywood, Jonson, Barnfield, de Vere, Stanley, Rutland, Mary Sidney, Mary Fitton, Peele or Pembroke? Probably they all were – and others.

So many *experts* have laboured to find evidence and relics of a manifestation, a spectre, that was in fact nothing more than a pseudonym. Of course they failed but rather than admit defeat, and to gain kudos or credibility they have had a propensity to forge, forgeries which have become the bedrock that supports a myth. As we travel through time the forgeries and their associated fictitious histories appear with regularity. *Shakespeare* is an industry; it is an institution. It is a massive money-earner. To expose a myth is to threaten peoples' livelihoods and reputations.

In the seventeenth century owning a property in London meant that probate had to be granted by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC). As William Shaxper owned property in the Blackfriars in London, when he died in 1616 probate was awarded to his daughter Susana and her husband John Hall. That appears to be fact but I will later show that the Probate record has been rewritten – and therefore is forged.

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PROLOGUE

I cannot recollect upon what particular occasion, but I rather think I had been occupied in the perusal of the mortgage-deed formerly in the possession of David Garrick Esq which is to be found printed in Johnson and Steeven's Shakespeare, when the idea first struck me of imitating the signature of the bard In consequence of this, I made a tracing of the facsimiles of Shakespeare's signature, both to his Will in the Commons³ and the deed before mentioned which are to be found in the aforesaid edition of Shakespeare's Works. I had hastily noted down the heads of this deed and thus fortified I repaired to chambers Having cut off a piece of parchment from the end of an old rent-roll, I placed a deed before me of the period of James the First, and then proceeded to imitate the style of the penmanship making a lease between William Shakespeare & John Heminge with one Michael Fraser & Elizabeth his wife.

William Henry Ireland's Confessions 1805

Despite having had six wives, Henry VIII was survived by only three legitimate children, Princesses Mary and Elizabeth and Prince Edward. Although each was destined to become monarch to the realm of England, Ireland and Wales all three were to die without producing an heir. However, they were not Henry's only progeny; he almost certainly sired Henry and Catherine Carey the children of Mary Boleyn, sister of his second wife, Queen Anne Boleyn and mother of Princess Elizabeth. Catherine Carey had a striking resemblance to her cousin (or half-sister) and her progeny were appointed to many responsible positions at Queen Elizabeth's court.

³ The Doctors Commons in Castle Baynard Ward was where the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) probate records were kept. The building, originally a common and hostel for Doctors-of-Law, was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666. It was subsequently rebuilt. Baynard's, a former royal castle held by the Pembrokes, also destroyed by the Great Fire, was alongside the Thames near to today's Blackfriars Railway Station.

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When Henry died in 1547 it was nine-year-old Prince Edward who succeeded. Edward VI had been brought up a Protestant and proved to have all the makings of a serious monarch. However, on 6th July 1553, suffering with consumption (coupled possibly with syphilis and or arsenic poisoning) he died at the age of fifteen cradled in the arms of his devoted school-friend, Henry Sidney; also present was a Protestant minister, a recent immigrant from Italy, Michel Angelo Florio.⁴

The young king had been managed and manipulated by the regent, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland. One of Edward's last acts had been to sign a will naming as successor his cousin, Lady Jane Grey, wife of the Duke's youngest and teenage son. Even if the Duke had poisoned the sick youth, any such mischief and ambition proved to be in vain; within six months he, his son and the Lady Jane Grey, Queen for nine days, had been beheaded on the orders of the rightful Queen, Mary Tudor, Edward and Elizabeth's middle-aged and Catholic half-sister. To escape Mary's persecution of Protestants, in November 1553, Michel Angelo Florio, whose pupil Lady Jane Grey had been, fled with his small family to Switzerland.

Queen Mary (1516-1558) had few childbearing years remaining when she married Philip II of Spain in 1554. Had they produced an heir England might have become a Spanish province but in 1558 Mary died of dropsy. It left the so-called *bastard*,⁵ Protestant Elizabeth, daughter of the beheaded Anne Boleyn, to take the reins and

⁴ Born in Siena, he arrived in 1550 in England having been persecuted in Rome. Whether it was his reputation, intellect, charisma or contacts, Florio remarkably quickly established himself within the highest echelon of English aristocracy.

⁵ A bastard in the eyes of the Catholic church as Henry's divorced wife was still alive when he married Elizabeth's mother.

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with her ministers sort out the political mess Mary had created with Spain. Thirty years later the Spanish King Philip perhaps somewhat frustrated to find his claim to the English throne resisted by a *mere* woman, launched a massive armada of troop-bearing ships to invade England. It was the *mere* woman who prevailed. With the help of her admirals under Charles Howard,⁶ her councillors under William Cecil and favourable winds, the Spanish force was scattered. England, somewhat safer, could relax; a little. 1588 signified a tentative start to a more secular and liberal society. One of the first manifestations of the new era was in its drama. This book is about drama not history.

It was one of Henry VII's Privy Councillors, Edmund Dudley (1462-1510), who founded the Dudley dynasty which proved to have panache and – despite a number of decapitations – resilience.⁷ Robert Dudley, another of the beheaded Duke of Northumberland's sons, became Queen Elizabeth's favourite and died a natural death. The Queen created him Earl of Leicester, making him powerful, influential and rich. Away from matters of state, Leicester and his Queen enjoyed theatre. As a young man he had been Master of the Revels at the Inner Temple Court and later patronised his own acting group, the *Leicester Players* who travelled with him when he served the Low Countries in the 1580's.

Leicester's sister, Mary Dudley, married Henry Sidney, the friend of the late King Edward. Today the Lords de L'Isle, the Sidneys have retained their gift from Edward VI, their seat at the enchanting, castellated *Penshurst Place*, twenty-five miles south-east of London near Tunbridge Wells in Kent.

This Dudley-Sidney marriage produced three remarkably gifted children, Philip, Mary and Robert. Philip married the daughter of Francis Walsingham the Queen's Private Secretary and spy-master. Robert married a Welsh heiress⁸ and Mary became Countess Pembroke having married Henry Herbert, the second Earl of Pembroke whose family seat, since 1547, has been at Wilton House near Salisbury in Wiltshire, ninety miles west of London.

The Pembrokes were rich. They owned most of Glamorgan and held estates in Somerset and Wiltshire. When in London, until destroyed by the Great Fire of

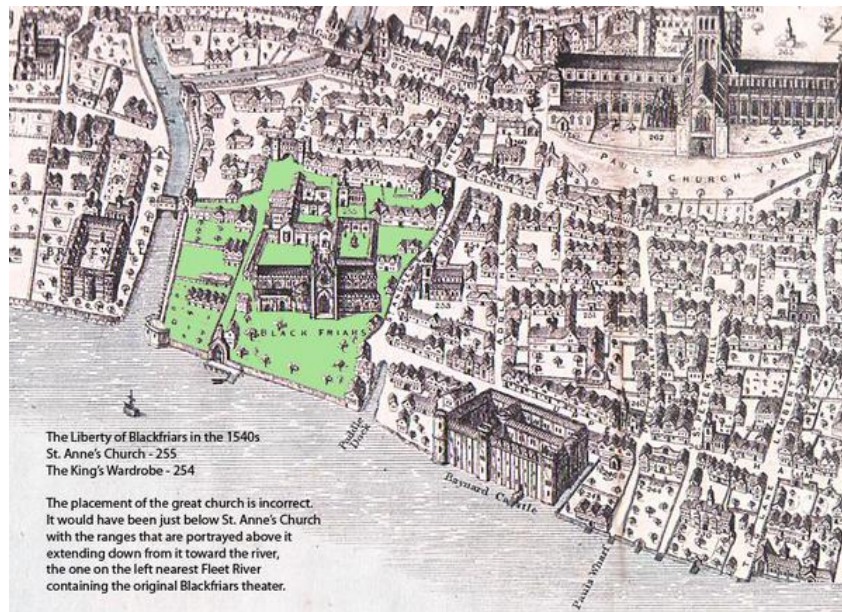
⁶ Her mother's first cousin.

⁷ Dudley amassed considerable wealth for Henry VII and for himself in the most insidious, odious regime of graft, terrorising the rich and the not-so-rich. His life was shortened in 1509 when seventeen-year-old Henry became king and ordered Dudley's head to be chopped off.

⁸ The wedding to Barbara Gamage was arranged at short notice and conducted in haste as the Queen's messenger rode in vain to forbid the marriage in the chapel of St. Donat's Castle in the wilds of South Glamorgan under the auspices of Robert's uncle, the Earl of Pembroke.

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1666, they lived on the north bank of the Thames adjacent to Blackfriars, in the massive Baynard's Castle given to the family by Henry VIII as part of the settlement of his sixth marriage; Catherine Parr and Pembroke's wife were sisters. Baynard's also provided accommodation for the Sidneys when in London.⁹ The Pembrokes also enjoyed theatre and patronised their own *Pembroke Players*.



Henry Herbert (Pembroke) and his Countess Mary Sidney Herbert¹⁰ had two sons, William who on the death of his father in Jan 1601, became the third Earl Pembroke, and Philip who became the fourth Earl in 1630 when William died without an heir. A daughter, Anne, who performed at all the masques at Court, died unmarried in her twenties.

It was to this *incomparable paire of brethren*, William & Philip Herbert, the Earls of Pembroke and of Montgomery, that in 1623 was dedicated a book of thirty-six plays printed on nine hundred and eight pages of folio. Entitled *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories & Tragedies* this 1623 collection is today known universally as the *First Folio*. It contained a spectrum of plays, some poor, even unplayable, one unfinished, others mediocre, the majority, through the mouths of great actors, brilliantly reflecting life's torments, humours, tragedies and achievements. Almost all the plays are set in or around a sovereign court, two thirds contain trials, over half have broad, Italian connections and exile is a

⁹ In the map one can see the enormous Baynard's Castle. Immediately to the north is Addle Street where Valentine Simmes's printworks, yards away, produced most of the quartos of Shakespeare plays. To the west is the Blackfriars' monastic complex.

¹⁰ To clarify the identity of some married women the maiden-name is inserted. Her niece, also a Mary Sidney, who married Sir Robert Wroth, is known as Mary Sidney Wroth.

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recurrent theme. All but four plays were derived from established stories in the literature and histories of Italy, Greece, France, Denmark, England, Scotland and Wales.

Its content and its extent made the *FF* outstanding and legendary, but it had a precursor in 1616, the collected *Works* of the playwright and poet, Ben Jonson. Jonson's work has been snobbishly relegated to a lower division than that of *Shake-Speare*. He was close to the Sidney cousins, and to Pembroke who paid him a stipend, sponsored him in his Oxford degree, and almost certainly employed him to edit the *First Folio*. Two of the commendatory poems in the *First Folio* are by Jonson.

Jonson's biography has substance; there are many contemporary references to him including his killing of another actor and imprisonment accused of sedition. Shakespeare's biography is cigarette-paper thin; in fact, the biography of *Mr. William Shakespeare* has no substance, one never, ever encounters the character. The mythos has been steadily sculptured over four-hundred-years based on few facts, mostly contradictory, barely believable, often invented. It is a literary *Emperor's invisible suit of clothes*. It is a complex of vague possibilities, exaggerated into probabilities in turn converted into hard facts through repetition. The biography readily pirates the limits of people's credibility, making wild extrapolations on meagre assumptions, and at times using forgeries to string things together. Academics and historians have woven thin strands of air into a mantra the world has been taught to believe; *genius*. They fiercely protect this mantra of *genius*, avoiding any questioning of its veracity.

One simple example; people are cosily led to understand that the play *As You Like It* was set in the *Forest of Arden* in Warwickshire, close to Stratford.¹¹ In fact the play, based on the 1591 novel *Rosalynde* by Thomas Lodge, was set in France with a *Forest of Arden* located (misplaced) east of Bordeaux.¹²

¹¹*The Essential Shakespeare Handbook* (2004) says of *As You Like It* that *The Forest of Arden* does not appear in the sources and was Shakespeare's own invention. "He may have been thinking of his mother's maiden name, Arden, for the forest, or the real Forest of Arden which can be found in the playwright's native Warwickshire. Records show *Shakespeare* himself was cast in the role of *Adam*, the kind old servant who follows Orlando into the forest to serves him faithfully." I think not!

¹² In Lodge's *Rosalynde*, Rosador (Orlando) and Adam "*knowing full well the secret waies that led through the vineyards, stole away privily through the province of Bordeaux, and escaped safe to the forrest of Arden..... Thinking still to pass on by the bywaies to get to Lions, they chanced on a path that led to the thicke of the forrest, where wthey wandered five or six dayes without meate... .*" The single assumption of the servant Adam being played by Shakespeare was no more than hearsay forty years after the play was published but subtly plants a seed that there was an actor called Shakespeare.

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So much has been written with seeming authority from minds of great intellect that any questioning of authorship has been met by denial and questioners being looked on as idiots. Questioning Shakespeare is akin to denying God. In reality one is challenging vested interests and reputations. Academics steer away from questions about authorship with either practised silence, flippancy or almost irrational vehemence.¹³ Hardly a year goes by without one or more new books by intelligent people questioning who Shakespeare was and providing their own new answer. I am one more. Why so many theories? Why never a satisfactory answer? A Catholic produces a book saying he was a Catholic, a homosexual says he was a homosexual, a woman says he was a woman, a Jew says he was Jewish, an Italian says he was an Italian – and the Italian is closer to the truth. There is dissatisfaction with the story we were taught at school, yet one has no problem and complete probity of the reality of great playwrights such as Jonson, Moliere or Dante.

The biography depicts a man from Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 6QW, purported to have no identifiable education who acquired the most extensive vocabulary of any English writer, exponentially ahead of well-educated poets such as John Milton;¹⁴ a man who was completely at ease with at least five foreign languages yet who never travelled outside England. He was a self-taught psychologist who had an encyclopaedic mind with omniscient, working knowledge of politics, medicine, law, naval & other military matters, farming, horticulture, flora, fauna, finance, property, theatre itself and other professions, as well as intimate details of the aristocracy at Court and their politics and pastimes such as hawking and silk needlework, and the nuances of love, sex and lust. (Gosh! I am describing AI.) Yet, strangely, or perhaps not so strangely, the playwright was never mentioned in any living correspondence. When Queen Elizabeth died and James I succeeded, every poet of note made some expression of sadness or joy, except William Shakespeare. When this *genius* died nobody noted his passing. The man has strutted through literary history with less the substance than the ghost of Hamlet's father. To believe that any one person could have such a diversity of attributes is delusional – except, of course, if one is making a living out of promulgating the myth or snobbishly or vicariously associating oneself with this ersatz genius.

¹³ I have a letter from one of the eminent Shakespeare scholars who told me that Shakespeare and another playwright were close friends because they used the same printer.

¹⁴ A well-educated person has a vocabulary of about 4,000 words, Milton had 8,000, the Shakespeare *Works* have 17,000 of which 3,000 were considered innovative by the OED. If he did go to the school in Stratford who was the genius who taught him and where was the library of books from where he self-taught himself French and Italian? It is simply delusional to think one man with barely an education could assimilate such knowledge.

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What is known is that there is documentation that identifies a man named William Shakspeare who was a shareholder in the *Globe* and *Blackfriars* playhouses and who appeared to be an actor. He *entered* in 1599 without history or fanfare and *exited* sometime after 1610 without anyone noticing – leaving nothing of his being.

This is the story of *Will Shake-Speare* and in parts a love story. It is like a jigsaw puzzle where at first none of the pieces seem related, but eventually a picture emerges and it is completely at variance to the one we thought we knew. A starting point is 27th October 1561, a date that only a lifetime later will hold significance.

But before we move on a note of explanation; the word *will* was then a euphemism for genitalia; *shaking* was what lovers did under and over the bed sheets, and every man carries a *spear*. In modern parlance this is the story of Willy Wanker.

We remove to the Welsh Borders (known as the Marches); the year 1561.

1561 – 1587

27th October 1561: Tickenhill Palace, Worcestershire; enter Mary Sidney.



The 27th October 1561; Sir Henry Sidney, the once school-friend of the late Edward VI, was now President of the Council of Wales. He and his wife, Mary (shown), sister to Sir Robert Dudley the Earl of Leicester, were living at Tickenhill Palace in Worcestershire where the Welsh Council met. That autumn day his wife went into labour. The baby was christened Mary. Her godfather was the first Earl of Pembroke, a most powerful men in the Privy Council. Her precocious brother, Philip, was seven-years-old. The baby survived and on 21st April 1577 at the age of fifteen (and a half) Mary Sidney married Henry Herbert the future second Earl of Pembroke. She was his third wife. He was almost three times her age. It proved to be a lasting, scandal-free marriage.

1563 - 1564 Kent & Warwickshire

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Christopher Marlowe, son of a shoemaker, was born in Canterbury, Kent, in 1563. Aged nineteen he would take a master's degree from Cambridge and would become one of the world's greatest playwrights.

That same year Michael Drayton, son of another shoemaker, was born at Hareshill in Warwickshire in the heart of the ancient forest of Arden. He was educated in the nearby home of his master, Sir Henry Goodier of Polesworth. There he fell in love with his master's daughter but although he could never marry her, they remained lifelong friends. He too became a redoubtable playwright.

The following year William Shaxper, possibly the son of an illiterate glover, was born in the same county. There is no evidence that Shaxper received any education or ever wrote a word of poetry. For all the *genius* with which he has been endowed, his children were illiterate.

25th February 1570: The Vatican

In Rome Pope Pius V published the bull *Regnans in Excelsis* excommunicating Queen Elizabeth from the Church and from her throne. Since her father had remarried while his first wife was still alive the Vatican conveniently regarded Elizabeth as a bastard. The bull theoretically divided the people of England – making every Catholic a potential threat to the Crown – and caused the Queen's ministers to develop, under spymaster Francis Walsingham, an infrastructure of espionage not only in England but also across Europe.

1571; London

John Florio, aged twenty, after an absence of seventeen years, returned to London from the Continent. His father, the Siena-born Michel Angelo Florio, a Protestant minister and theologian, had come to London, an exile from Italy in 1550, and left in 1553 with his wife and child when the Catholic Queen Mary launched her persecutions of Protestant ministers. It was said he also left under a cloud having been expelled from William Cecil's ¹⁵ house after an incident of fornication; he later married the woman he was living with.

In the short time he was in England, Michel Angelo Florio had become a tutor to Lady Jane Grey, the future Queen. Jane's sister, Catherine, was Earl Pembroke's daughter-in-law during a three-week, unconsummated marriage to Henry Herbert, the future second Earl. ¹⁶ Somehow the Florios had the highest possible entry-level to society.

¹⁵ Lord High Treasurer and for forty-years confidante and chief adviser to the Queen.

¹⁶ This first Earl Pembroke was married to the sister of Catherine Parr, the King's sixth wife.

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John Florio was about two-years-old in 1553 when his father fled with him to Europe, firstly to Strasbourg then to Soglia in Switzerland on the border with Italy where his father eventually died. By the time John Florio returned to England he had an exceptional grasp of the English language and soon started a career as lexicographer, translator and tutor in Italian and French to the aristocracy. Logic would suggest that he had an extremely well-educated English mother (his father could barely have taught him English to such proficiency).

A possible link to reach the aristocracy is through the Siena-born, Protestant reformer and theologian, Bernardino Ochini; c1487-1565. Ochini was working alongside Michel Angelo Florio in London and his sermons had caught the attention of Anne Cooke (c1528-1610) who had them printed in 1548.¹⁷ Anne was a formidable scholar, the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, (a tutor and guardian to Edward VI), and had command of Latin, Greek and Italian. Ochini left London in 1553, a few months ahead of the Florios and made a base in Basle, eighty-five miles from Strasbourg. Ochini and Michel Angelo Florio clearly had high intellect and charisma making an enduring impression on the mighty of England. One now muses exactly what was the nature or extent of Florio's fornication? Could John Florio have been a child of the English gentry?

Anne Cooke's sister, Mildred, had married William Cecil the future first Lord Burghley in 1545. Their son, Robert, would eventually follow in his father's footsteps as First Minister to Queen Elizabeth. In 1553, the year Florio and Ochini left London, Anne became the second wife of Sir Nicholas Bacon and after the loss of two daughters gave birth to sons Anthony (1558) and Francis (1561). Francis Bacon is a suggested candidate for the authorship question; he was well-educated and had pedigree – was he a *Shakespeare*?

25th May 1572: London

The Queen signed the passport of eighteen-year-old Philip Sidney who was to accompany Edward Fiennes de Clinton to France to sign the Treaty of Blois on 23rd June. Philip remained in France with (his future father-in-law), the English Ambassador, Francis Walsingham, and on 9th Aug was created a gentleman of Charles IX's bedchamber. He was in Paris in August at the marriage celebrations of King Henri de Navarre and Marguerite de Valois.

At the French court Philip Sidney was known as *Le Cygne*, French for *Swan*.

10th August 1578; London

¹⁷ Ochini's eldest daughter, Aurelia, would have been known to Michel Angelo Florio whose granddaughter, John's daughter, was also given the same name.

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John Florio's *First Fruits* of Italian texts and their English translations was available for sale from publisher Thomas Woodcock. It was the first of four lexicons and teaching-aids Florio was to produce over the next thirty years. That same year he was appointed a lecturer at Oxford University. There he met the poet Samuel Daniell, married Daniell's sister and their three children were baptised there in 1585, 1588 & 1589. Around 1590 Daniell joined the household of Mary Sidney as a tutor to her two sons.

October 1578; Penshurst, Kent

Sir Henry Sidney covered the £10 debt of his son Mr. Philip Sidney unto *Benjamin Furnor for Segnor Prospero*.¹⁸

June 1579: Canterbury

Mary Sidney Countess Pembroke aged seventeen and Christopher Marlowe aged sixteen were both in Canterbury. She conceived that month. How rumours can be created!

August 1579, London

Late August 1579, at the Westminster Palace tennis court, the teenage Countess of Pembroke was supporting from the gallery as her elder brother, the handsome Sir Philip Sidney, swung his racket backwards to cut the ball up on to the penthouse. A frown formed as she saw Philip and his partner, Fulke Greville, distracted as behind them the dark and roughened visage of Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, burst on to the court with three other players. She watched the Earl force play to stop and his telling her brother to leave. She suppressed a laugh as Philip's response infuriated Oxford who *denounced Sidney by the name of Puppy* to which Philip then calmly asked Oxford to repeat it, which he did this time more loudly, *upon which Sidney gave him the lie direct before he and his companions left the court*.

The incident would have ended in a duel, save that the Privy Council were alerted, the Queen informed and taking Sidney aside she told him *how the gentleman's neglect of the nobility taught the peasant to insult upon both*. Sidney and Oxford avoided a duel and due to mediation by Philip's uncle, Earl Leicester, it was not too long before the two antagonists were riding on the same team in the tilting yard.¹⁹

¹⁸ Manuscripts of De L'Isle & Dudley; p 258. Prof Frank Muir's *Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* suggests the *Tempest* echoes the history of Prosper Adorno, Duke of Milan, who was deposed in 1561 and reinstated by Ferdinando, King of Naples, in 1577.

¹⁹ The story of the dual is true; the nickname *seventeen* is plausible. Mary Sidney's presence is inserted for effect. Oxford's daughter, Susan, would later marry Mary Sidney's younger son, Philip. Fulke Greville *was* the witness to the spat and was a friend of Mary Fitton's mother.

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Away from the tennis court Countess Pembroke harboured the knowledge that her course had not arrived. Her baby was born just before midnight on the 8th April 1580, two days after a massive earthquake rocked and terrified southern England. The boy was christened William. His godmother was the Queen.

c1585 London

A letter to Francis Walsingham complaining about:

“... the daily abuse of stage plays is such an offence to the godly and so great a hindrance to the gospel as the Papists do exceedingly rejoice in the blemish thereof. And not without cause. For every day of the week, the players’ bills are set up in sundry places of the city; some in the names of her majesty’s men, some the Earl of Leicester’s, (Robert Dudley), some the Earl of Oxford’s (Edward de Vere) some the Admiral’s (Charles Howard) ... so that when the bell tolls to the lectors, the trumpets sound to the stages, whereat the wicked faction of Rome laughs with joy while the godly weep for sorrow. Woe is me; the play houses are pestered when the churches are naked. At the one it is not possible to get a place, at the other void seats are plenty.”²⁰

1586; Wilton, near Salisbury, Wiltshire; and Penshurst, Kent

The symbiotic Sidney and Herbert families had successfully navigated the complex political ways of the mid-century before tragedy struck. On 5th May 1586 Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess Pembroke, now a mother of two boys, was mourning the loss of a three-year-old daughter, Katherin, when news came that her father had caught a chill and died unexpectedly at Worcester. His body was buried in June at the family church at Penshurst. On 9th Aug her mother, Mary Dudley Sidney, after a long illness, followed her husband to the grave. She was left to be chief mourner as her brothers, Sir Philip and Robert Sidney, were on military duty in the Low Countries with their uncle, Robert Dudley, Earl Leicester.²¹ Profound grief and heartache became a tragedy. Desperately ill at Wilton, late in September the Countess received news that her brothers had been injured in a skirmish at the village of Zutphen. Four weeks dragged by before news came of the death on 17th Oct of Sir Philip, the brother whom she had looked up to and deeply loved.²² Philip left a widow, Frances, daughter of the Queen’s minister of State, Sir Francis Walsingham, and their young child, Elizabeth. Devastated by four family deaths, the twenty-six-year-old Countess remained reclusive at Wilton House in Wiltshire, sometime in summer at her houses on the banks of the meandering Wiltshire

²⁰ Thanks to Robert Hutchinson – Elizabeth’s Spymaster (Francis Walsingham).

²¹ Serving under Dudley in Holland was Captain William Knollys, second cousin to the Queen, on whom *Malvolio* was latter based. The English were supporting the Dutch against the Spanish.

²² A signatory to a codicil to Sidney’s will was Sir Henry Goodier to whom the playwright, Michael Drayton, was then a servant.

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Avon. Here she found comfort in translating French plays and completing her brother Philip's unfinished poetical works.

20th September 1586 London / Northamptonshire

Anthony Babington and five others were executed for high treason having conspired with Mary Queen of Scots to murder the English Queen. On 25th Oct after a trial at Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire, Queen Mary herself was found guilty. Reluctantly Queen Elizabeth signed a death warrant and the Scottish Queen was beheaded there on 8th Feb, to be interred with little ceremony at Peterborough on 31st July.

16th February 1587; London

In stark contrast to the execution of a queen, a commoner, Sir Philip Sidney, three months after his death, was accorded a seven-hundred-strong state funeral through the City of London to St. Paul's Cathedral. This procession, a show-of-strength, only a week after Queen Mary's death, had been organised well in advance by Philip's father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham.

1588 – 1592

1588: The English Channel

During the Summer of 1588 an armada of Spanish ships taking troops to the Netherlands in preparation for an invasion of England was frustrated by unfavourable winds in the English Channel. English men-of-war under Admiral Sir Francis Drake chased, harried and destroyed parts of the Spanish Fleet which fled North to circumnavigate Scotland before returning to Spain. On the flagship Ark Royal, serving under Lord High Admiral Charles Howard was his son-in-law, lieutenant volunteer, eighteen-year-old Richard Leveson ²³ from Staffordshire.

In her fifty-fifth year the Queen, with a much-reduced threat from Catholics, finally found herself with some semblance of control of her destiny. However, a few weeks after the naval victory, Robert Dudley, her favourite, died.²⁴ She had lost a rare and valued friend and the Leicester Players lost their Patron and its actors sought work elsewhere..

November 1st, 1588

²³ Pronounced Luson.

²⁴ There is a story that when Queen Victoria visited Wilton the Earl of Pembroke produced a document indicating that Elizabeth had married Robert Dudley. Victoria is said to have thrown the letter into the fire saying *it was better not to meddle with history*.

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The Accounts of the *Master of the Revels* were closed for the year. These accounts, which record the finances for the Sovereign's entertainment, are continuous in the *Public Records Office* from 1570 up to this date, 1588. They are then lost from the Records Office until 1611-1612; these are the *Shakespeare* year. In essence, the *Shakespeare* years are missing, an argument that they were destroyed because no evidence of *Shake-speare* could be found! Stopes²⁵ shows that a comparable document of 1604 is so full of errors it must be considered a forgery, likewise a comparable document of 1611-12.

November 1589; Wilton, Wiltshire.

Mary Sidney, Countess Pembroke, emerged from three years of mourning and reclusion to rejoin London Society. In a great procession of carriages, with nearly a hundred servants in the blue and gold livery of the Sidneys, she left Wilton to return to her husband's Baynard's Castle, life in London and presence at Court. She was to embrace her late brother Philip's persona and, through her, Sir Philip Sidney's spirit and poetry lived again. Her poet friends alluded to her as the *Phoenix*.

A year later on 26th Nov 1590 at Ramsbury, her country retreat a few miles from Wilton, the Countess completed *Antonius* a translation from the French of Garnier's play *Mark Antoine*. In London William Ponsonby published *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia written by Sir Philip Sidney*.²⁶ Both books were to have a profound influence on theatre and narrative poetry. *Mark Antoine* became a blueprint for a new five-act structure to plays, and *Arcadia* encouraged the passions of pastoral love.

January 1591 Essex House, The Strand, London ²⁷

Tall and skinny, twelve-and-a-half year old Mary Fitton,²⁸ known as Mal, stood looking around the long-room of Essex House overlooking the Thames. She noted the three generations of Fittons around her. Her parents were among the many invitees of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and his wife, formerly Frances Sidney Walsingham, to celebrate the christening of their son, Robert. Mal's great-uncle Francis and her father,

²⁵ C C Stopes; the Seventeenth Century Accounts of the Master of the Revels, 1922

²⁶ In 1586 Philip Sidney had left a copy of *Arcadia* with his friend Fulke Greville who edited it probably with the help of John Florio. In the second edition of 1593, H. S. (Hugh Sanford, Pembroke's Secretary) on behalf of the Countess took Florio to task for sloppy scholarship. Florio responded in print in 1598.

²⁷ This gathering is a reconstruction. The characters knew each other socially. Sir Edward Fitton worked for the Earl of Essex but his influence alone was not enough to place Mal Fitton as a Maid of Honour. It needed someone higher up the food chain.

²⁸ She was known as Mal, a pet name for Mary and spelled her surname Phytton.

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Sir Edward Fitton, were in conversation with Henry Herbert, Earl Pembroke – she guessed talking about Ireland and their days there together. She was very fond of her great-uncle, the Fitton patriarch, with his new wife, the widowed Katherine Neville; he was equally fond of her.

Her mother, Lady Alice, was chatting, perhaps about theatre, to an old friend, Margaret Hoby, the daughter of Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, the Queen's cousin and Lord Chamberlain. Her brothers, Edward and Richard, were listening to Richard Leveson, her father's second cousin, handsome in his naval captain's cape. Leveson's father and Mal Fitton's father were first cousins.²⁹ It looked to her as if Richard was impressing the young men with stories of the defeat of the great armada of Spanish ships, still fresh in people's minds. Leveson, in marrying the daughter of Lord High Admiral, Charles Howard, had become known to London society but the recent news was that his wife of four years, having lost a baby, refused to leave their home in Shropshire and, worse, the rumour was true that she had become lunatic.

Mal's seventeen year old sister, Anne Newdigate, married in 1587 at thirteen and (so she told Mal) still a virgin, was talking quietly to her husband, John Newdigate. John's father had bought an estate in Warwickshire for the couple but it was common knowledge he was using Sir Edward Fitton's money.

Sir William Knollys, her father's friend passed by, casting an exaggerated smile at her. She curtly curtsied. Knollys was uncle to the Earl of Essex, second-cousin to the Queen and nephew of the Lord Chamberlain through the Carey branch. Sir William, tall, aloof and pompous was tacitly assumed by many to be a grandson of Henry VIII. Mal did not like him; he kept looking towards her with that peculiar broad smile almost a leer that made her uncomfortable. But then what *was* exciting was to be standing so close to Earl Pembroke's lively wife, the gracious Countess Mary, sister to her hero, the late and famous *courtier, scholar, soldier* and poet, Sir Philip Sidney. The Countess was talking to a short, skinny, olive-faced man with a hooked nose and a goatee beard whom she quickly grasped was the author John Florio. The subject was a commendation for his new book. Also listening to the conversation was the Countess's precocious son, ten-year-old William Herbert, over whom Mal towered.

"I shall write the commendation for you," William boasted, "a sonnet, like Uncle Philip's."

"Your Grace, perhaps I too could attempt to write one," offered Mal, knowing she was about to flatter the Countess who had recently completed and published her brother Philips's poetic works. "It will not take me long. I know your books, Mr. Florio, we have your *First Fruits* in my father's library at Gawsworth; that is in Cheshire; to the North. I too can write a sonnet in the style of Sir Philip. I have my own copy of Sir Philip's poems, my Lady," she bobbed a curtsy, "they are most wonderful to read. I read them again and again, every night. They are exciting." The Countess flushed with pride at

²⁹ In 1570 the Fitton motto was FIT ONUS LEVE. One meaning could be *make work light*. The play on words has FIT-ON joined to a reversing of LEVE-SUN.

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the recognition if only from this tall, twelve-year-old girl who was blushing deeply. She did not notice her son William's half-open mouth.

"Then we have a challenge!" exclaimed the forty-five year old Florio. "It is to be another, a new Sidnean Sonnet, fourteen lines, iambic pentameter, di-dum, di-dum, di-dum, di-dum, di-dum; one hundred and forty syllables, *pas de moins, pas de plus*. Whichever is the better, the Countess will decide, will be printed to front my book, *Second Fruits*, of no less, may I modestly tell you, of no less than six-thousand Italian proverbs that I have brought out of Italy. So, to the study and pencils and paper for our two young poets. Hear! The clock strikes; I suggest we permit these young adversaries exactly one hour."

Florio articulated like the schoolmaster he was. His ancestors had been brought up in the Jewish faith but his father, after being tortured in Rome, had converted to become a Protestant and left Italy to be a pastor to other Italians living in London. His son, John, born in England, educated in Germany and at Oxford was also making a living as a tutor.

William Herbert showed bad grace when his own mother announced that Mal Fitton's Sonnet was the better by the thickness of a cat's whisker. The Earl of Essex clapped his hands and asked for quiet and introduced Mal and confidently to the most distinguished audience with a good and emotive speaking voice the slender, young lady recited her sonnet;

*Sweet friend, whose name agrees with thy increase
How fit a rival art thou of the spring!
For when each branch hath left his flourishing,
And green-locked summer's shady pleasures cease
She makes the winter's storms repose in peace
And spends her franchise on each living thing:
The daisies spout, the little birds do sing,
Herbs, gums, and plants do vaunt of their release.
So when that all our English wits lay dead
(Except the laurel that is evergreen)
Thou with thy fruits our barrenness o'erspread
And set thy flowery pleasance to be seen.
Such fruits, such flowerets of morality
Were ne'er before brought out of Italy.*

The oohs! and ahs! and applause was generous and as she looked around the room her eyes met those of Henry Wriothesley (pronounced Rose-lea), the young Earl of Southampton. He was clearly amused. She averted his look but immediately caught that of the Earl of Essex who appeared intrigued by her. She glanced back to Southampton who smiled and winked. Suddenly she felt hot and wanted to sink into the ground. She bobbed a curtsy and quickly made her way back to her father's side; but Harry Wriothesley with his long, curly locks had fired her imagination and she was

not unaware that she may also have fired that of the Earl of Essex, despite his recent marriage and new baby.

Mal Fitton's commendatory sonnet was printed in John Florio's *Second Fruits* and given the title *Phaeton to His friend Florio*.³⁰ She had to accept that it would have been improper, sacrilegious and a scandal for a lady to lend her own name and have her private poetry put into print, and so her identity remained obscured. It was her first published poem. She savoured the taste of seeing her work in print and craved for more. She also craved for Harry Wriothesley; at night her body started to ache for him; he was never far from her thoughts. That single wink was to change her life in a way that could only be invented in a story book. But Harry Wriothesley had no real interest in her.

30th April 1591; at the Black-Bear, London

John Florio's *Second Frutes* was put on sale at Thomas Woodcock's stall at the Black-Bear. The book was a teaching aid; *Part-One* having Italian texts facing their English Translations; *Part-Two* was a *Giardino di Recreatione* containing six-thousand proverbs in Italian, some of which would later appear, anglicised, in *Shakespeare* plays.

1592

26th January 1592; Flushing, the Netherlands

Countess Pembroke's brother, Robert Sidney, wrote from Flushing to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, the Queens First Minister, concerning one Christopher Marley (Marlowe):

Right Honourable,

Besides the prisoner Evan Flud,³¹ I have also given in charge to this bearer my ancient two other prisoners, the one named Christofer Marly, by his profession a scholar,³² and the other Gifford Gilbert a goldsmith taken here for coining, and their money I have sent over unto your Lordship: The men being examined apart never denied anything, only protesting that what was done was only to see the Goldsmith's conning; and truly I am of opinion that the poor man was only brought in under that colour, whatever intent the other two had at that time. And indeed they do one accuse another to have been the inducers of him, and to have intended

³⁰ Parts of Florio's *First Fruits* had taken from James Sanford's 1573 *Garden of Pleasure*. The Poem's title, *Phaeton*, does not relate to its contents, *Phaeton* sounding like Fitton who signed Phytton.

³¹ Evan Fludd (Roll3; Mich. 36-37 Eliz. 1594 -95) a Recusant in Cambridge had land seized in 1595-96.

³² OED: One who gains a living by literary work.

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to practise it hereafter: and have as it were justified him unto me. But howsoever it happened a Dutch shilling was uttered, and else not any piece: and indeed I do not think that they would have uttered many of them: for the metal is plain pewter and with half an eye to be discovered. Notwithstanding I thought it fit to send them over unto your Lordship to take their trial as you shall think best. . . . The Goldsmith is an excellent workman and if I should speak my conscience had no intent hereunto. The scholar says himself to be very well known both to the Earl of Northumberland and my Lord Strange. Baines and he do also accuse one another of intent to go to the Enemy or to Rome, both as they say of malice one to another. Hereof I thought fit to advertise your Lordship leaving the rest to their own confession and my Ancients report. And so do humbly take my leave at Flushing the 26 of January 1591. Your honours very obedient to do you service. R. Sydney

4th February 1592; Stationers' Register

Samuel Daniell's sonnet sequence, *Delia*, was entered to the Stationer's Register on 4th February 1592. Its fawning dedication was to Countess Pembroke at which time he was a tutor to her son William, aged twelve. In a later dedication (1603) to her son, William, now Earl Pembroke, he acknowledged that Mary Sidney had taught him much about writing poetry. Daniell would later have considerable influence in the London theatre and his Civil War histories were sources for some of the *Shakespeare* plays.

The following year William, aged 13, became a student at New College, Oxford.

3rd March 1592; South Bankside, London

The first of sixteen performances of *Henry VI* was given by Strange's Men ³³ at Mr. Philip Henslowe's *Rose* playhouse on the Bankside. This, the first of three *Henry VI* plays, was published only thirty-years later in the 1623 *First Folio*.

Three months after the death of the playwright Robert Greene in 1592, a colleague, Henry Chettle, wrote an apology to three other playwrights whom he felt may have been slighted by Greene's short story, *A Groatsworth of Wit*. Greene had also talked about a fourth person, *an upstart crow*;

Base minded men all three of you, if by my miserie you be not warned: for unto none of you (like me) sought those burres to cleave: those Puppets (I mean) that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange, that I, to whom they all have been beholding: is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall ... be both at once of them forsaken? Yes trust them not: for there is an *upstart Crow*, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as

³³ Earl Derby's heir held the courtesy title of Lord Strange. Ferdinand, Lord Strange, had a strong association with drama.

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well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be imploied in more profitable courses: & let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions. Delight not (as I have done) in irreligious oaths; for from the blasphemers house, a curse shall not depart. Despise drunkenness, which wasteth the wit, and maketh men all equal unto beasts. Flie lust, as the deathsman of the soul, and defile not the Temple of the holy Ghost. Abhor those Epicures, whose loose life hath made religion lothsome to your ears: and when they sooth you with terms of Maistership, remember *Robert Greene*, whom they have often so flattered, perishes now for want of comfort. Remember Gentlemen, your lives are like so many lighted Tapers, that are with care delivered to all of you to maintain: these with wind-puft wrath may be extinguisht, which drunkenness put out, which negligence let fall: for man's time is not of itself so short, but it is more shortened by sin. The fire of my light is now at the last snuff, and for want of wherewith to sustain it, there is no substance left for life to feed on.

The *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, could well have come from the *Shakespeare* play 3H6 i4 (O *Tygers hart wrapt in a Woman's hyde*) but the expression may have antedated both quotations.

It appears that a mediocre playwright had had his work much improved by the pens (quills or feathers) of Greene and other playwrights – and then passed the work off as entirely his own.

August 1592; London

On 23rd Aug 1592 the will of the actor Simon Jewell was administered by his colleague members of the *Queen's Players*. It had been written four days earlier. That month the players had been in the vicinities of Bristol, Bath, Southampton and Winchester so one can assume that they performed at Wilton House as, in the will, he asked that his share of money *given by my Ladie Pembroke or by her means* should go towards the cost of his funeral. The implication is that the Countess, rather than her husband, organised and paid for the entertainment,.

The same year William Ponsonby published *Discourse of Life and Death. Written in French by Ph. Mornay* and *Antonius a Tragedie Written also in french by Ro. Garnier. Both done in English by the Countess of Pembroke*.

6th October 1592 The Strand London³⁴

It was Anne Fitton Newdigate's eighteenth birthday and a pivotal point in the lives of sisters Anne and Mal Fitton lives. To mark the occasion their father,

³⁴ This gathering to unveil the painting is fiction. The painting is at Arbury Hall which also houses an interesting collection of paintings which includes a full length painting of Mary Fitton in the orange, silkworms' gown, facing her is a companion painting of Sir Richard Leveson, there are also paintings of Charles Howard, Earl Nottingham, and Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper.

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Sir Edward, had invited the Fitton, Leveson and Newdigate families to their home on the Strand. During the past few weeks the two girls had been sitting for a painting. Anne was about to leave London with her husband, John Newdigate, and settle down to married life at Arbury Hall, near Nuneaton, the dowry estate in the ancient Forest of Arden in Warwickshire. In the portrait unveiled that day, posterity showed Anne wearing a severe but handsome black gown; in one hand holding a carnation and in the other a fan on which is embroidered a Pansy. Mal, younger and shorter, with her blue-grey eyes and dark-brown hair, was dressed in a white gown and in her left hand held a posy of pansy, honeysuckle and rosebuds. Sir Edward, who was so proud of his daughters and of his historic family with its emblem, the Pansy, *genus viola*, was saddened because he knew he would always reflect on this birthday as the day his family was fragmented into separate ways; Anne to Warwickshire, his elder son in London staying at Greys Inn to pursue his law career, his younger son to learn medicine and he intended that he and Lady Alice would soon leave London to retire to the seclusion of their home and estates in Cheshire. He yet had a difficult announcement which might well spoil the day. The Queen had confirmed through his friend, Sir William Knollys, that she would accept his daughter, Mal, to become one of her maids-of-honour. He had discussed the matter with his wife, Lady Alice, knowing how she would swell with pride at the suggestion. Sir William Knollys, the Comptroller of the Queen's Household, had agreed to be Mal's mentor and guardian and would establish her at the very nucleus of the Court. He looked again at the painting, seeking courage and inspiration. The family emblem, pansies, *pansies are for thoughts*, he mused. He thought of his daughter, Mal, his gifted young lady who so much liked flowers, music, theatre and poetry. It was what his wife wanted, but he still thought it cruel to sacrifice a daughter to the vicissitudes of the Queen and the jungle of Court. He called for quiet and nervously made the announcement. Everyone looked towards Mal. She smiled, genuinely happy, immediately thinking of Harry Wriothsesley whom she knew spent much time at Court. "It will be a great honour to the family," she said with diplomacy, dignity and confidence. Sir Edward Fitton sighed. In private he cried.

Although there was great excitement that day, what Sir Edward had observed over many years was the isolation of the Queen's maids-of-honour. They became chattels whom the Queen treated ambivalently as daughters, maids whose duty was to help look after and entertain her, and as ornaments to her person. Mal would receive fifty pounds a year from the Queen's coffers and he would have to dig deep into his own to provide his daughter with expensive gowns; the reward would come if Mal could marry well. But he also knew that young men and women at Court, away from their parents, were vulnerable with much to tempt them. The Maids' proximity to the Queen made them targets for unscrupulous men who could dazzle them with gems, promise of property, of marriage, of titles. *Promises! Puh!* Although the Maids were

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supposed to be beyond reach, there were affairs at Court amongst healthy young men and women and scandals as the occasional maid became pregnant; Essex had legendarily infuriated the Queen when he became the father to Anne Vavasour's child. He held very mixed feelings for the future of the feisty and gifted daughter whom he so much loved.

1593

6th January 1593; Twelfth Night

The Twelfth Night entertainments at Court on St Steven's Night, 26th Dec 1592, and 6th Jan 1593 were provided by the *Pembroke Player*. Their repertoire included *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of a Shrew*, *Henry VI* (Parts II & III) and Marlowe's *Edward II*.

Early 1593, Westminster, London.

Tall and skinny, grey-eyed, dark brown-haired, fifteen-year-old Mal Fitton was pleased with herself. It was the end of the dark, winter months and here it was, *the first heire of her invention*. She secretly had to admit she had had help from her friends, her tutor, the poet Master Richard Barnfield, his friend Michael Drayton and others, but she felt the poem her own. She had signed it *William Shakespeare*, daring in its salacious pseudonym. Richard Barnfield had organised the printing and publication by John Harrison. The authorship, however, had to be kept secret; it was considered a profanity for nobility to have their private writings put into print and convention did not even countenance women writing original works. She could not believe she was turning over the crisp, fresh pages of this printed copy of her own work; it was such a good, almost sensual feeling. Turning to the Dedication:

*To The Right Honorable Henry Wriothesley
Earle of Southampton, and Baron of Tichfield.*

*Right Honourable, I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my
unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure
mee for choosing so strong a proppe to support so weak a burthen
oneye, if your Honour seeme but pleased, I account my selfe highly
praised, and vowe to take advantage of all idle houres, till I have
honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heire of my
invention prove deformed, I shall be sorie it had so noble a god-
father, and never after eare so barren a land, for feare it yeeld me
still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your
honor to your hearts content; which I wish may alwaies answere
your owne wish and the world's hopeful expectation.*

Your honors in all dutie, William Shakespeare.

Would he feel her passion for him? She turned to the second verse and checked the third line:

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*Thrise fairer than my selfe (thus she began)
The fields chiefe flower, sweet above compare,
Staine to all nimphs, More lively than a man
More white and red than doves or roses are:
Nature that made thee with her selfe at strife,
Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.*

Yes! Thankfully the compositor had not made a mistake; there was her name. She hoped that Harry would be curious enough to seek out the author's real identity and work out the anagram, *Mall Phiton*, from *to all nimph*. Did he even care for her? She and Dick Barnfield had spent their spare hours during dark evenings composing the two-thousand-line poem. Her breath shortened as in reading the words they had put into Venus' mouth. She was aroused by its pornography.

*The tender spring upon thy tempting lip
Shows thee unripe; yet mayst thou well be tasted:
Make use of time, let not advantage slip;
Beauty within itself should not be wasted:
Fair flowers that are not gathered in their prime
Rot and consume themselves in little time.*

*Were I hard-favoured, foul, or wrinkled-old,
Ill-nurtured, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,
O'er worn, despised, rheumatic and cold,
Thick-sighted, barren, lean and lacking juice,
Then mightst thou pause, for then I were not for thee
But having no defects, why dost abhor me?*

*Thou canst not see one wrinkle in my brow;
Mine eyes are grey and bright and quick in turning:
My beauty as the spring doth yearly grow,
My flesh is soft and plump, my marrow burning;
My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt,
Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt.*

She lay back on her bed and let her mind wander. It was and yet it wasn't her original work. She, Richard and Michael had taken a small part of the tenth story of Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and composed, in verse, the story of *Venus & Adonis*, a dominant, tall, grey-eyed goddess's attempt to seduce a beautiful young man. Was that not what she wanted to do to Harry? Would Harry even like the poem or understand he was her Adonis? Would he recognise her by her grey eyes and that she and Venus were both tall? Would he

notice that from the blood of Adonis a flower of purple and white would grow, a pansy, the emblem of the Fitton's.³⁵ She doubted it and sighed, imagining the naked body of the handsome twenty-year-old Earl of Southampton, a master of the tilt-yard.³⁶

Her *team* were already working on another Ovid poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, which was more serious in its content. *Lucrece* was going to be her present at Harry's coming-of-age on 6th Oct 1594; she likened *Lucrece's* fidelity and constancy to that of her own.³⁷

Mary had known Richard Barnfield since she was a child and the passing years were eroding their four-year age difference. Son of Richard Barnfield and Mary Skrymsher; baptised at Norbury in Staffordshire in 1574, his mother had died

³⁵ A pansy, different in colour to today's purple, white and yellow.

³⁶ *Venus & Adonis*, first printed by Richard Field for John Harrison in 1593, was reprinted in 1594 (6 copies survive), 1595?, 1596, 1599, 1602, 1608, 1612, 1617 and later. *The Rape of Lucrece*, first printed, again by Richard Field for John Harrison, in 1594 (9 copies survive) and in 1600, 1607, 1616 and later. It was these two books that introduced the Shakespeare name.

³⁷ John M Robertson, 1897, gives an interesting assessment of the quality of the two narrative poems: "It can be shown that the initial work of the *greatest of our poets* when near the age of thirty, to which he presumably brought all the powers of which he was then conscious a man (who can be shown to be brought up in the Warwickshire dialect) were the uninspired and pitilessly prolix poems of *Venus & Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, the first consisting of some 1,200 lines and the second of more than 1,800; one a calculated picture of female concupiscence and the other a still more calculated picture of female chastity: the two alike abnormally fluent, yet external, unimpassioned, endlessly descriptive, elaborately unimpressive. Save for the sexual attraction of the subjects, on the commercial side of which the poet had obviously reckoned in choosing them, these performances could have no unstudious readers in our day and few warm admirers in their own, so little sign do they give of any high poetic faculty save the two which singly go so often without any determining superiority of mind - inexhaustible flow of words and endless observation of concrete detail. Of the countless thrilling felicities of phrase and feeling for which Shakspeare is renowned above all English poets, not one, I think, is to be found in those three thousand fluently-scanned and smoothly-worded lines: on the contrary, the wearisome succession of stanzas, stretching the succinct themes immeasurably beyond all natural fitness and all narrative interest, might seem to signalise such a lack of artistic judgment as must preclude all great performance; while the apparent plan of producing an effect by mere multiplication of words, mere extension of description without intension of idea, might seem to prove a lack of capacity for any real depth of passion. They were simply manufactured poems, consciously constructed for the market, the first designed at the same time to secure the patronage of the Maecenas of the hour, Lord Southampton, to whom it was dedicated, and the second produced and similarly dedicated on the strength of the success of the first. They succeeded as saleable literature....."

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giving birth to his sister. The two children were brought up by their aunt, Elizabeth Skrymsher, at Johnson's Hall in nearby Eccleshall.³⁸ Mary Fitton knew Richard was in love with her but his soft feminine manner did nothing to excite her, not compared with her Harry; the best she could provide was sisterly friendship. As for Henry Wriothesley, with whom she had been infatuated; he ignored her. He was much more interested her colleague maid-of-honour, Elizabeth Vernon from Shropshire, whom he would one day make pregnant – and marry under duress.

6th May 1593 London

A licence to tour England outside of London (during a time of plague) was granted to Edward Alleyne, servant to the Lord High Admiral (Charles Howard) and five of Lord Strange's players, William Kemp, Thomas Pope, John Hemmings, August Phillips and George Bryan.³⁹ [21st Dec 1596 Bryan was payee for the Chamberlain's men.]

Alleyne, probably acting as manager, would quit acting to go into business with his father-in-law, Philip Henslowe, at the *Rose*, *Fortune* and their other theatres. Bryan became a Sharer in the *Fortune*; he died in 1612.

In 1599 Kemp, Pope, Hemmings and Philipps were joined by a *William Shakespeare* in owning a half-share in the *Globe Playhouse*. The other half being owned by the Burbadge brothers.

29th May 1593; The Marshalsea Prison, Southwark, London

John Penry's wife could not understand. As had been arranged, she and her four young daughters had come to the Marshalsea Prison to visit her husband but entry had been denied and no explanation offered. There had been no choice but to walk away. Some hours later two men escorted the unfettered, thirty-year-

³⁸ Sir Francis Leigh of Newnham Regis in Warwickshire had daughters, Juliana and Alice. Juliana married Mary Fitton's nephew, Richard Newdigate. Alice married Richard Barnfield's cousin, John Skrymsher. Richard Barnfield's grandfather, Thomas Skrymsher, married Dorothy Gatacre of Gatacre in Shropshire. Mary Fitton's daughter married John Gatacre of Gatacre. There can be little doubt the Fitton/Newdigate and Barnfield/Skrymsher families actively knew each other.

³⁹ A John Bryan (died 1578 and married to Margaret died 1593) was for a time a theatre business partner to James Burbadge (died 15970) and father of Richard and Cuthbert; they fell out. Burbadge's wife was Helen Bryan, John's sister. John and Margaret's wills make no mention of children. Here George Bryan's place in the group is interesting in that here one might have expected to see the name William Shakespeare. John and George Bryan may not have been related, perhaps George was a bastard child. [Elizabethan Stage, Vol II]

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old Penry from his cell to the prison yard where they gently helped him on to a cart, pulled off his boots and told him to lie down on his back.

For a whole week the sentence of death had hung heavily upon him but he knew for certain his time was not yet up, reasoning with confidence that he was not on his way to the gallows; every condemned prisoner was given the right to say last good-byes to their wife and children. The horse's hooves set a rhythmic beat as he watched, against the blue sky, the last of the eaves disappear, replaced by fresh spring leaves of overhanging oaks. He could smell the horse and taste the carter's tobacco smoke. He did not recognise his escorts, handsome men, well dressed, with soft sympathetic faces. He sought to exchange a smile but they were not looking in his direction. He thought of leaping from the cart but he knew he would be caught and that would compound matters for his family. He asked where they were taking him; an unusually gravelly voice answered *it won't be long*. It was not. The carter turned off the Dover road and went along a narrow track to a clearing in which was a deserted croft. In silence, the men helped him down from the cart. Blackbirds sang, challenging each other. He noticed a fourth man looking after three saddled horses. For a young man the carter had a surprisingly yellow face. Penry winked bravely at him; the carter returned a half-smile and shrugged his shoulders. He was not surprised when the man with the gravelly voice ordered him to take off his clothes. He could not argue. Naked, he looked around at the trees, choosing to avoid the men's eyes. It was very warm. He was given clothes, with hose and shoes, to dress into and noted with admiration the weathered but handsome jerkin of black and gold and the quality of the footwear, better than he could ever afford. He looked at the men. One of the horses whinnied and its companions answered. It was the last he heard or saw. A blow to the side of his neck stunned him and he twisted and fell on his back. Two of the men lay across his chest and within minutes the third had suffocated him. They lifted the dead body on to the cart and covered it with a blanket. "*In two days; you know where and when,*" the carter was told. He nodded before secreting in his orange, leather jerkin the gold coins passed to him before they mounted for their ride to Deptford port, three miles away, to wait at the safe-house. The carter led his horse and cart to the back of the cottage, released the horse and tethered it on a long rope to a small tree. He looked at the dead body, gauged the direction of the slight breeze, and relit his pipe.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ It was reported that John Penry was hung in front of very few witnesses. The jerkin of black & gold is a fiction but relates to a portrait supposedly of Christopher Marlowe but could equally be Robert Sidney born the same year. It would be of interest to examine the buttons of the jerkin which appear to be embroidered with porcupines, an emblem of the Sidneys.

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Three days later at Deptford, Friday 1st June 1593

The room was crowded with a jury of sixteen men, mostly strangers to each other, drawn in from the marketplace by the Beadle. In the oppressive heat of that afternoon of the first of June they coughed and covered their mouths as they endured the acrid smell of death from the body on the table by the window. Two benches at the table and a bed in the opposite corner were the only other pieces of furniture. The smallness of the room had forced six of the men to sit on the bed which creaked with every movement. William Danby, the Queen's Coroner, entered the room. Out of respect, those sitting tried to stand but there was insufficient room so they slumped down again. Everyone except the Coroner wanted to get things over as quickly as possible, return to their daily business and to fresh air. They were to have a long wait in stagnant heat while the coroner, having removed the dead man's jerkin of black and gold, carefully examined the body, noticing a bruise on the shoulder and peering from different angles at the dagger-wound above the eye. He examined the deposition of the three men who had been with the deceased since the fight on the evening of the 30th May; they told him they had remained within the garden or the building with the corpse. He also heard the deposition of the woman who owned the house. All four identified the dead man as Christopher Marlowe. One, Ingram Frizer by name, freely admitted there had been an argument; that Marlowe, sitting between his colleagues had attacked him with a dagger had cut his head in two places. He showed the jury the two bloody marks. In self-defence Frizer had stabbed Marlowe to the eye with Marlowe's own dagger. They maintained that Marlowe had died immediately despite their attempts to save him.

No juryman had any idea that Christopher Marlowe, aged thirty, was England's greatest playwright. The coroner closed the inquest, instructed the body in its jerkin be taken to the church for burial, and went away to write his report. The burial of Christopher Marlowe, *slain by ffancis Frezzer*, was recorded in the Register of the Deptford Church the same day.

John Penry's wife never found where her husband was buried.

The Rose Playhouse, Southwark, London; Saturday 2nd June 1593

Deeply saddened by the news of Kit Marlowe that had whispered its way from mouth to ear across London, the businessman Philip Henslowe walked slowly round his empty *Rose* playhouse and ponderously climbed to the padlocked room where he did his accounts. Broadcast was the news that Marlowe had been slain in a tavern brawl. It was a Saturday afternoon and his great playhouse on the south bank of the Thames was deathly quiet. He opened his ledger; there was nothing to add except costs. Pestilence across London had closed the *Rose* and other playhouses since the first day of February when Lord Strange's Men

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had played Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. The exodus of the rich and not so rich from the London was making vagrancy in the countryside a significant problem.

He resumed writing to his son-in-law, the actor Edward Alleyn, *as for my Lord of Pembroke's which you desire to know where they be, they are all at home and have been this five or six weeks for they cannot save their charges with travel as I hear and were fain to pawn their apparel for their charges*. Talk was that the Pembroke players were being forced to disband and the Admiral's Players and Harry Hunsdon's, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, were keen to engage the better players to bring with them their best plays including *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of a Shrew* and the two parts of *Henry VI*.

Wistfully he looked across a lazy, putrid Thames to Baynard's Castle on the north bank. He selfishly wondered if he could get hold of another Marlowe play, wonderful drama the likes of which London had never experienced. *Tamburlaine*, *Edward II*, *The Jew of Malta* and *The Tragical History of Dr Faustus* had all played to full houses and the excellence of the scripts had forced other playwrights to improve their own output. Was it true that he was gone, the man who more than anyone had removed the stuffy vestiges of church dominated drama and introduced everyday speech into performance? It was Marlowe sitting alongside George Peele who had helped write plays for both the Pembroke Players and for Lord Strange's Men and these plays had been performed at Court *to great acclamation*.

He mused how, over the years, a number of earls had lent their names, patronage and livery to the various bands of players, appointing them their *servants* and thus giving legitimacy to their meandering around the country. Players *without* evidence of patronage would be deemed vagrants or sturdy-beggars and risked being flogged on the pillory and being sent back to their home town. When times were bad or during the summer season, the players under their Lords' patronage, would leave for the country, moving from town to town entertaining the wider public in town halls, taverns and in streets on rudimentary stages of planks on barrels.

He found the relationships between players and their patrons unusual; the players were employees of their patron but received little pay. Henslowe was coming to realise that the acting groups had become the playthings of the lords' wives, rather than of the lords themselves, especially the Pembroke Players where he felt the strong influence of Countess Mary Sidney and the shadow of her late brother. At Court the great gala nights of theatre were at Christmastide on *St. Stephen's Night*, New Year's Day, and *Twelfth Night*, and on *Shrove Tuesday* afore Lent. The country's best players were invited to perform the latest and best plays for Queen and Court in the great hall of one or other of the Royal

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Palaces alongside the Thames – at Greenwich, Westminster, Kew, Hampton Court, Richmond or Windsor.⁴¹ By rights the Patrons had first call on their own players but it was the brothers-in-law, Charles Howard, *the Lord Admiral's*, and Harry Hunsdon, *the Lord Chamberlain's* Players who were dominating these gala nights; productions with large casts often required two or more companies to work together.

Same day at Baynard's Castle across the river to the Rose Theatre

In the corner turret of Baynard's Castle, high above Puddle Dock, the thirty-two-year-old Countess Pembroke gazed across over the river to the *Rose* playhouse. She too had heard the shocking news of Kit Marlowe. After dinner she had feigned a migraine and retired to her study to smoke tobacco, shed some private tears and pray that what she had heard was not true. Kit's friend and patron was Sir Thomas Walsingham; she knew she could rely on her former sister-in-law, Frances Walsingham, now Essex's wife, to tell her what Sir Thomas knew of his protegee.

The accusation of atheism against Kit made no sense to her. Why should William Cecil have wanted to be of Kit when he had always been a faithful servant to the Crown which hitherto had always given Kit its full support? And now the talk; that he had been stabbed in a tavern-brawl within days of the warrant for his arrest; *political murder was the more likely* but why? Her eyes glazed as she recalled first meeting Marlowe in Canterbury in 1579; she seventeen, he sixteen; how he had impressed her the summer she had conceived her now thirteen-year-old William. More recently she had been enthralled by Marlowe's plays written for her players. She was troubled and saddened and needed to escape from the foul smells that drifted up from the river below; to get away from the plague that was killing a hundred a day in the subdued city.

She loved Baynard's which, on the King's marriage to Katherine Parr in 1543, had been given by Henry VIII to her godfather, subsequently father-in-law, William Herbert, the first Earl Pembroke married to Katherine Parr's sister. The Castle had been built to protect the western walls of the City; the White Tower served the eastern walls. Baynard's with its long history served not only the Pembrokes but also her own Sidney family who had apartments and offices there. She enjoyed the cool of castles in summer but in winter returned to the Sidney's more homely Penshurst Place in Kent.

It was at Ludlow Castle in Shropshire where she had grown up – her father was Lord President of the Welsh Marches. On marriage she had been given

⁴¹ One intimate theatre was the Cockpit at Westminster Palace, effectively a Wooden-O.

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Cardiff Castle by her husband and their elder son, William, had assumed the courtesy title of *Lord Cardiff*.

In her private rooms, high above the Thames, she found peace amongst her many books and used the good light to compose and translate. She had recently tasked herself to continue rewriting the Psalms into a more rhythmic and modern style; her brother Philip had completed up to the thirty-fourth Psalm before his untimely death. She fastidiously sought out the company of professional men of high intellect with whom there developed mutual, unconditional respect and whom she patronised; men such as Thomas Moffet her physician, Abraham ffraunce, Samuel Daniell, Thomas Howell, Nicholas Bretton and the aging Thomas Churchyard were at times part of her household and there were others, such as Michael Drayton, Richard Barnfield and John Florio. She was a woman of great capability, an active and true patron of the literary arts and well-supported by her husband whose secretaries, Hugh Sanford and Arthur Massinger, were not only tutors and mentors to their children but also men of considerable literary ability.

As the great castle gently quietened for the night her thoughts went to the countless men and women whose history had been formed within the stone walls of this fortress erected by Humphrey Duke of Gloucester in 1428. A fire had destroyed the previous fort constructed in William of Normandy's time. It was here that Richard, Duke of Gloucester was acknowledged King Richard III and whose home it became. After Bosworth battle Henry VII had altered the state rooms. Here, too, Mary daughter of Henry VIII was proclaimed Queen.

Far below her in the Great Hall her husband, the second Earl, was drinking Beaujolais and talking politics and horse-racing to friends at the long dining table. He would be sixty the next year and no longer enjoyed good health. She was now half his age, only fifteen when they married. She had never expected it to be such a good marriage; but it had lasted. They respected each other and each other's space. She was his third wife but not jealous of either predecessor. His marriage with Catherine Grey⁴² had been annulled after a year when Henry was twenty and his bride thirteen and still virgin, as far as he knew; it had simply been a wise decision of political expediency. The second marriage had lasted fourteen years before Catherine Talbot died, aged thirty, without producing an heir. They now had three handsome children, their son and heir, William, with his clear blue eyes and his auburn hair, Philip and Anne with similar colouring.

10th June; 1593; Penshurst Place, Kent

⁴² This had been a double wedding when her sister, Lady Jane Grey, married Guilford Dudley, the youngest son of John Dudley Earl of Northumberland.

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Countess Pembroke's husband had left London for home in Wiltshire. She had returned, as she often did since her childhood, to Penshurst Place, the Sidney family home near Tunbridge. Here she could pass time with her brother, Robert, and his family. She much preferred her late father's extensive, centuries-old, castellated manor house to the forty-year-old, modern but imposing buildings her father-in-law had built on the site of an old priory at Wilton. Penshurst was a strict household in which Robert Sidney required every member to attend chapel twice a day and *reverently behave themselves*. No blasphemy, drunkenness or fighting was tolerated and each evening the porter shut the gates at ten after which no one was allowed to enter. The place was kept clean and handsome; leftover food was given to the poor.

The Countess was sitting on the grass in the Italian Garden with her brother, the redheaded Robert, when Countess Essex, Frances Walsingham, arrived. They had been playing with her favourite niece, her namesake, goddaughter, an even brighter redheaded, another Mary Sidney, affectionately known as Malkin. Frances had been married to their brother, Philip, and after four years of widowhood secretly married another Zutphen survivor, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex who had become the Queen's new favourite after the death of their uncle, Robert Dudley. Following refreshments, brought out from the buttery, the four talked as they walked around the various themed gardens, Frances making a point of complementing on Penshurst's legendary peach trees.

About Marlowe; Frances could tell them that he had been staying with her cousin and his patron, Thomas Walsingham, at Scadbury a few miles from Deptford when officers arrived and served him with a warrant. With no word of dissent, Marlowe immediately rode back to London with the men. His appearance in the *Star Chamber* was presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Keeper, The Lord Treasurer, the new Lord Derby, the Lord Chamberlain, Lord Buckhurst, Sir John Wolley and Sir John Fortescue. He was bailed and commanded *to give his daily attendance on their Lordships until licensed to the contrary*. Frances' husband had remarked with surprise at the remarkable collection of high-ranking members of the establishment. Marlowe's treatment was totally at variance with that given to the playwright Thomas Kyd who, he told her, had been tortured in the Bridewell, and whose evidence had given rise to the warrant for Marlowe's arrest; the charge *atheism*. Marlowe had returned to Scadbury, thereafter riding up to London each day until his disappearance. Sir Thomas had written her giving what details he had gleaned of the killing at Deptford, only eight miles away. She was stunned to find that it was one of Thomas's own servants, now facing trial, who had stabbed Marlowe. There seemed no knowledge as to why the four men had spent the day together in a private house by the quayside. Frances's husband had read the coroner's report and it seemed that the killing arose out of an argument. The wound was an inch wide and two inches deep and had entered just

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above the eye and death had been immediate. As far as Frances knew, Marlowe had been laid to rest at the churchyard there.

She had met Marlowe on a couple of occasions at her father's Walsingham House, found him good company and was immediately impressed by the young man, his looks, intelligence and easy manner. The two women, who both enjoyed theatre, had seen his plays performed by the Pembroke Players and others. They admitted that they had been fascinated by *any* news of Marlowe, especially the rumours that he was a writer behind the John Penry pamphlets. She knew from her father that Marlowe and John Penry had been friends since their first Cambridge University days in 1580; though at different colleges. Marlowe had called Penry *The Shepherd*, the nickname his friends had dubbed on the shy son of a Welsh sheep farmer.

Her brother, Robert, pointed out that Kyd, Penry and Marlowe had all been accused of atheism, hostility towards the establishment, and treason. Penry had been arrested on a warrant signed by Archbishop Whitgift, convicted, and sentenced to death. They well understood the embarrassment Penry had been causing the established church – if he indeed was the author of the so-called *Martin Marprelate Tracts* which attacked its bishops. She was certain that Marlowe, who professed he was a scholar, had been an intelligence agent in the pay of her father, and that he seemed to have had good friends in high places; six years earlier when he had been denied his master's degree by Cambridge University, he appealed to the Queen's Privy Council who not only commended him for his service to the Queen but also authorised his degree. The order to grant was signed by five Privy Councillors. Ironically, the first named was John Whitgift. It seemed remarkable that two friends, Penry and Marlowe, appeared to have died within three miles and within two days of each other. Six-year-old Malkin listened with fascination.

That evening the Countess wrote to her physician and friend, Dr Thomas Moffett, who arrived from London the following evening. He had discussed the Marlowe incident with an army surgeon and they had agreed that such a wound was unlikely to be fatal but, if so, that the victim would have taken a long time to die. Moffett had been at dinner the previous night with a mutual friend, the lawyer Abraham ffraunce, who cynically observed it was remarkable that the Queen's own coroner was so near Deptford at the time of the killing and had been mandated to take charge of the inquest. Dr Moffett pointed out that by the time the inquest started, the body would have cooled and lost its stiffness which meant that there would have been no way of confirming that the killing had taken place on 30th May or even days earlier. Was the body Penry's? Was Marlowe still alive? Had he escaped?

In private she spoke to her brother, Robert, who advised that she would be wise not to talk about the business. Robert Sidney kept to himself that he knew about Penry at the Marshalsea; the gift of office of Keeper of the Marshalsea was his (it had been their uncle Robert Dudley's) and he had been consulted in the matter of

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Penry's execution. He was not unduly surprised that this was the same Marlowe, the scholar whom he had sent back as a prisoner from Flushing the previous year; the same man that had claimed that he was well known to Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and to Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange.

During dinner the subject matter changed. Dr Moffett could see that the Countess was out of sorts and advised she stayed well-away from plague ridden London. He also took the opportunity to show the Countess the manuscript of a new poem he had dedicated to her, *Of Silkworms and their Flies*. After graduating as a doctor in Basle, he had studied silkworms in Italy before returning to England where he continued his fascination with insects, especially spiders.⁴³ The Countess was enchanted with the extracts he read to her and he left the manuscript for her fuller appraisal and comments. Before she slept that night she designed a gown to be made in orange silk and covered with life-size moths and flies. Moffett delivered the sketches to her dressmaker when he returned to London.

Her stay at Penshurst ended, she travelled by coach to Wilton House to join her husband for the summer. Moffett was soon to follow; turning his back on London life, he took a lease on Bulbridge Farm near Wilton village. In August it was reported the Countess had an ague by which time Frances Walsingham had written to say that on 28th June Ingram Frizer, the man who had killed Marlowe, had been granted the Queen's Pardon and was again working and living on the estate at Scadbury. The Countess recalled how much the Queen had enjoyed Marlowe's plays but trembled at the power of those closest to the Queen, that a killer could obtain the Queen's pardon less than a month after the death and released immediately. Was Kit really dead? ⁴⁴

6th July 1593 London

Within a month of his reported death, Christopher Marlowe's play, *Edward II*, was entered on the Stationers' Register to William Jones who published it in 1594 as having been acted by the Pembroke Players; the printer appears to have been Richard Braddock. At that time there were about twenty printers in the Stationers' Guild, augmented by a much larger number of publishers.

24th September 1593

⁴³ His daughter was supposed to be the *little Miss Muffett who sat on a tuffett*.

⁴⁴ If Marlowe's death was faked the subterfuge could not have been organised without the knowledge of Francis Walsingham and the conspirator-witnesses lied about the identity of the corpse. Knowing he was not dead they could not be hanged for murder. I suggest John Penry's was the corpse at Deptford in which case the rumours that Marlowe made a new life at Wilton or in Italy may have mileage. Frasier's speedy pardon would suggest Marlowe *was* indeed alive.

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The Earl of Derby died. His son, Ferdinando Stanley, became the fifth Earl so relinquishing the courtesy title of Lord Strange. His players, *Lord Strange's Men*, became *Lord Derby's Men* and were on tour in the countryside, well away from London.

6th October 1593, Arbury Hall, Warwickshire

Anne, the wife of John Newdigate, reread the letter from her sister, Mary Fitton. They kept in touch through occasional letters but this one was a short note to mark her birthday.⁴⁵

*Sinc distanc bares me from so great hapenes as I can seldom
hear from you, which when I do is so welcom as I esteme
nothing more worthie, and for your love which I dout not of
shall be equaled in ful mesure, but lest my lines to tedious weare,
and time that limets all thinges bares me of wordes, which eles
could never ses to tel howe dear you ar, and with what zeale I
desire your retorne, than can wish nothing more then your
hartes desire, and wil ever continue; your afectina sister. . .
Mary phytton*

Anne smiled to herself. How beautifully her sister wrote in her Italian script; quickly too and economical with letters and too intense even to stop to read what she had written. There was a great friendship between them and currently they shared the butt of their humour, Sir William Knollys, who had been writing to Anne asking her to act as intermediary as he attempted to woo Mary, the fifteen-year-old girl to whom he was supposed to act as guardian. However, ever vigilant Anne sensed that Sir William was proving difficult for Mary. His late mother was the Queen's cousin and as Controller of the Queen's household he had significance at Court. He was over three times her age, married and a man reported to have some extremely lustful feelings – on one occasion having walked semi-naked into the maids' bedchamber with a candle in one hand reading aloud from the pornographic works of Aretino.

19th October 1593; London

Samuel Daniell's heroic poem, *Cleopatra*, was entered on the Stationers' Register and soon published. The previous year Daniell had completed a cycle of sonnets to *Delia* dedicated to Countess Pembroke. One discovers that Delia lived on the banks of the river Avon and the sonnets to her were inspired by his memory of her when he was in Italy. Daniell had been William and Philip Herbert's tutor.

26th December 1593, London:

⁴⁵ One should compare this letter with the dedications to *Venus & Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece*.

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After a closure of eleven months due to the high numbers dying of plague, the *Rose* playhouse reopened for St. Stephen's Night only, when a capacity audience of hundreds enjoyed a performance of *God Speed the Plough* by *Earl Sussex's Men*.

1594

12th March 1594, London, Stationers Hall

Bookseller Thomas Millington completed the registration of former Pembroke Players' plays at the Stationers' Hall; the two parts of *The Great Contention* and *Titus Andronicus* and commissioned printings with three different printers, Thomas Creed, Peter Short and Edward White. *Titus Andronicus*' title page stated its having been performed by Derby's, Pembroke's and Sussex's men, the collaboration probably needed for a large cast.

16th April 1594

Ferdinando Stanley, fifth Earl of Derby, died at Lathom, the Derby's family seat in Lancashire, leaving a widow and three daughters. It is thought he was poisoned. He was succeeded by his brother, William, aged thirty-two who, the story goes, was then in Russia. Their father, the fourth Earl, had died seven months earlier and his widow, Alice Spencer Stanley, complicated the inheritance by claiming she was carrying a posthumous heir. She wasn't.

The *Lord Derby's Players* swiftly obtained the patronage of the Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, first cousin to the Queen, and became known as the Chamberlain's Men. Henry Carey's sister was married to Charles Howard, the Lord High Admiral, patron of the rival *Admiral's Men*. Howard's son-in-law was Richard Leveson, a second cousin to Mary Fitton, the Queen's maid-of-honour.

14th May 1594, London

The *Rose* playhouse reopened for the season with Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, played by the *Admiral's Men*.

31st May 1594, Stationers' Hall, London

A year after Alice, the widow of printer John Charlewood, of *The Half-Eagle and Key in the Barbican*, had married James Roberts, a long-established bookseller, her late husband's *copies* were entered to Roberts by order of the Stationers' Court.

11th June 1594 London

Registered in the Stationers' Hall on 2nd May 1594 to Peter Short was *A Pleasant Conceyted historie called the Tamyinge of a Shrowe*. It was later printed in quarto as *A pleasant Conceited Historie called The Taming of a Shrew. As it was sundry times acted by the Right Honorable the Earle of Pembroke his servants. Printed in London by Peter Short and are to be sold by Cuthbert Burbie at his shop in the Royal exchange*. The play was the precursor to the Shakespeare *Taming of The Shrew*. The author quoted freely from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and his *Dr. Faustus*. On 11th June the play was performed at Henslowe's *Rose*. Two days earlier, *Hamlet* (which had been referred to by Thomas

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Nash in his *Menaphon* registered in August 1589) had been performed on the same stage. *Hamlet* appears not to have been printed in quarto. Both plays were performed by the Admiral's and Chamberlain's men.

1594; Addle Street, London

Printer Valentine Simmes stood in the evening gloom outside his premises at the sign of the *White Swan* in Addle Street and thought with attachment to his small print-works set against the towering backcloth of Baynard's Castle. His compositors had left for the day. The press was quiet and he felt fulfilled. He had just been paid for his first book, Master Michael Drayton's *Matilda*, a book his colleague James Roberts had printed the previous year; he had saved money using up Robert's stock of the same paper. Three more titles were going through his works.

How life had changed. Five years earlier he had been arrested and questioned about his having printed clandestine pamphlets for the Marprelate Press and, ever since, life had been unsettled; he had learnt better than to fall foul of the authorities. That was his past and this evening he was proud to be *dwelling in Adling street, at the sign of the White Swan, neare Bainards Castel*.

1594 London

Richard Barnfield, three years out of Brazenose College, Oxford, and newly discovering London that summer of 1594, had wondered what people would think of his first book of poetry, *The Tears of an affectionate Shepheard sick for love; or the complaint of Daphnis for the love of Ganymede*. The poem was his translation from the Latin works of Publius Virgilius Maro but he was quite aware that for the first time a living poet was writing about a man's love for a boy.

11th October 1594; London

The first section of Samuel Daniell's long, historical poems of *The Civile Warres betweene the two houses of Lancaster and Yorke* was entered in the Stationers' Register. By now Daniell's employment with the Pembrokes had been severed and he had appealed to the patronage of Charles Mountjoy and Fulke Greville.⁴⁶ His first four books (of eight by 1609) were twice published in one volume in 1595.

Nov 1594 London

In November 1594, the Lord Mayor of London complained in vain to Lord Burghley about goldsmith Francis Langley's (1548-1602) plans to build another

⁴⁶ Fulke Greville (1554-1628) lived in Warwickshire and was a friend of Philip Sidney and of Mary Fitton's mother. His library contained four remarkable volumes of Shake-Speare poetry in pristine condition which were eventually obtained by the British Library; *Venus and Adonis* (second edition), *Rape of Lucrece* (first), *Sonnets*, and *Poems* (1640).

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theatre on the Bankside – the *Rose* and the *Bear-garden* already being located there. Langley had speculated in buying an estate known as the *Paris Gardens*⁴⁷ hoping to make it into a centre of entertainment.

28th December 1594; Greenwich

The Exchequer Pipe Rolls [E351/542 f107b] declared accounts of November 1595 records payments in March 1595 by the Treasurer of the Queen's Chamber totalling £20 to *Willm Kempe, Willm Shakespeare and Richard Burbage servants to the Lord Chamberleyne upon the councelles war^d dated at Whitehall xvth Martii 1594 (1595) for two several comedies or Enterludes shewed by them before her Mat^e in xphmas tyme laste year paste vizd vpon St. Stephens day (26th Dec.) & Innocentes day (28th) £13 6s 8d and by way of her mat^es Rewarde £6 8s 4d.*

This entry is anomalous as the usual record is simply of the form “*Thomas Pope and John Hemynges servauntes to the Lorde Admmyrall, £60*”. The presence of the names of what would be junior members, Kempe and Shakespeare, are unique in these accounts and at a time when there is also a record of a payment to the Lord Admiral's Company for a performance at Court on the same day (28th). It is also known that the Lord Chamberlain's players performed *The Comedy of Errors* in the holiday revels of Grey's Inn that same night.⁴⁸ The entry feels wrong.

The entry in the roll of the *Pipe Office declared accounts* contains the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber from September 1579 to July 1596. These were drawn up each year by the clerks in the Pipe Office and signed by the Accountant. In 1594 Sir Thomas Heneage was Treasurer of the Queen's Chamber and in May married Mary, widow of Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. When Heneage died in October 1595 no *declared accounts* had been produced since September 1592. The Queen issued her warrant to the Countess, as widow & executrix of the late Treasurer, commanding her to render the account which she duly did, covering

⁴⁷ Or Parry's

⁴⁸ The accounts of the *Treasurer of the Chamber* show payments made for performances of the Burbadge's Company from 1597 to 1616, except for 1602 the record of which is missing. One finds mention of Heminge, Burbadge, Cowley, Bryan, Pope and Augustine Phillipps but not once does the name Shakspere occur in these accounts; note that Burbadge is spelt correctly. As to the Lord Chamberlain's books, which, quoting Mrs. Stopes, *supply much information concerning plays and players*, the documents she adds, *unfortunately are missing for the most important years of Shakespearean history*. Quoting Mr. Looney, *In the light of all the other mysterious silences regarding William Shakspeare and the total disappearance of the Shakespeare manuscripts, so carefully guarded during the years preceding the publication of the First Folio, the disappearance of the Lord Chamberlain's books, recording the transactions of his department for the greatest period in its history, hardly looks like pure accident. The loss is certainly remarkable and most unfortunate to scholars.*

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29th Sep 1592 to 30th Nov 1595. The entry in question would have been prepared by a clerk to the Treasurer of the Chamber and then sent to the Pipe Office on behalf of the Countess who thus was only formally connected with the account but probably never even saw the entry – which may well have been a fiction, if not, simply inaccurate.

1595

Greenwich, London, 26th January 1595

Sir William Stanley was at the embassy in Moscow when he learnt that both his father and his brother the fourth and the fifth Earls, had died. Now the sixth Earl Derby, his capricious escapades, prize fighting and fencing across Europe, and his many years of travel had to end. He made his way back to London to assume his new responsibilities and it did not take long for the astute William Cecil to convince the Earl, Lord Lieutenant and owner of the greater part of Lancashire and Cheshire, that his (Cecil's) granddaughter, Elizabeth de Vere, Oxford's daughter, would not only be a good match but also a valuable political alliance. The wedding was a great Court occasion at the Palace at Greenwich beside the Thames. It was followed by a majestic banquet at Salisbury House on the Strand with extensive entertainment. Everyone especially looked forward to the evening's finale as the Earl was well known to be a great lover of theatre and a writer of plays. Great efforts had been made to produce a sparkling play on the theme of *love and marriage*. It had taken intensive searching of a large library to furnish the four great story lines and wonderful characters; North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* and *The Merchant's Tale*; and other writers' works such as *Huon of Bordeaux*, Robert Green's *James IV*, Montemayor's *Diana*, Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, and Preston's *Cambises*.

The play was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*⁴⁹ and in a great piece of theatre an effete lion with a scant roar jumped out from behind a bush. Remembering back

⁴⁹ Do the characters of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (MSND) mimic characters at Elizabeth's Court? To parody current romantic intrigues would greatly heighten the play's enjoyment; not to do might have left expectancy unsatisfied. Performed out of sight of the public, it is not inconceivable that these were the actors and their number of lines.

Theseus	233	William Stanley, Earl Derby
Hippolyta	34	Elizabeth de Vere
Lysander	178	Alexander Radcliffe
Demetrius	134	Henry Wriothesley, lusting after Elizabeth Vernon
Hermia	166	Elizabeth Vernon, Maid of Honour, or Elizabeth Carey

to a miss-reported incident in Egypt, Lord Derby's own great roar of laughter at the theatrical joke, startled his bride and she was somewhat peeved when she saw her husband catch the eye of the Countess of Pembroke and wink to her. The Countess nodded back, proud and delighted at the sensational effect that had been achieved. Later when the bride's father, Edward de Vere, Earl Oxford, met with Countess Pembroke, they congratulated each other and discussed in outline a marriage between her elder son, William, and his middle daughter, Bridget.

The Countess also sought out Mal Fitton and invited her to Baynard's. She had asked Mal's help to help polish up the rhyme and the verse; Mal had displayed valuable insight into some of the characters at Court.

"Thank you, Mal, for working with us on the *Dream*," the Countess told her. "It was a wonderful night; did you not think so? This is a play that will be performed for many years to come. Would you accept something from me to thank you and remind you of Earl Derby's wedding day? I suspect you could value another robe, a very special one, and perhaps one that is not white. I have one which rarely have I but once worn. It is embroidered with *silk worms and their flies* and although you and I are of a similar height, my girth has altered more than a mote." She smiled at Mal who was both delighted and honoured to receive the orange-silk dress with its heightened embroidery of silk worms and moths. Mal invariably worn white because she had few gowns compared with the other maids with their many gowns of different styles and colours. She was not unaware that she had been branded the *White Hind*⁵⁰ by the young bucks at Court.

1595 Warwickshire

Michael Drayton's master, Sir Henry Goodier, died and within months his daughter, Anne, for whom Drayton had a strong affection, married and made a home with her husband at Clifford Chambers, a hamlet two miles south of

Helena	229	Mary Fitton, then in love with Henry Wriothesley
Egeus	41	Edward de Vere or George Carey
Philostrate	24	Mary Sidney Herbert (Philip of Stratford)

Was Mary Fitton known as *The Nymph*? Checking the frequency in the Concordance, of nine entries three are in MSND where Oberon, Demetrius and Lysander all refer to Helena as a Nymph. Hamlet calls Ofelia a nymph.

⁵⁰ Elsewhere White Doe. The anecdote is based on the gown Mary Fitton wears in her portrait at Arbury Hall which shows in relief silk worms and their moths, the subject of a book by Thomas Moffat, Mary Sidney's doctor. A *White Hind* is found in *Lucrece*. AYLI; If a hart do lack a hind Let him seek our Rosalinde. In *All's Well that Ends Well*; The hind that would be mated by a lion must die for love. The Pembroke shield was three lions.

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Stratford-upon-Avon. Drayton, a Warwickshire man, was to visit Anne many summers during his lifetime. He now entered the service of Lucy, daughter of John Harington of Exton in Rutlandshire, probably as her tutor. In December 1594 Lucy aged of thirteen was married to Edward Russell the Earl of Bedford. She and her mother had strong characters and were to have considerable influence at Court.

London 1595

Richard Barnfield reverently turned the pages of his newly published, second book, *Cynthia with Certain Sonnets*, this time dedicated to William Stanley, Earl Derby. It had the same homoerotic vein as his first book. It started with a *commendation* in verse by an author whose initials were TT, the same TT who a few weeks earlier had also written a commendation for a work by John Trussell called *The first Rape of Fair Helen*. The commendation – to purchase and read Barnfield's *Cynthia* – had ended with the lines:

*So those rare Sonnets, where wits tipe doth lie,
With Troian Nymph, doe soare thy fame to skie.*

He smiled and felt warmth as he thought of the *Troian Nymph* who had helped him perfect *Cynthia* and its twenty companion sonnets. He chuckled, knowing that *Troian Nymph* was an anagram for *Mari Phitonn*. Working so close to Mary Fitton had awakened in him the natural attraction of men for women – and he had grown to love her. So he thanked *his Mistress*, in a short poem asking her to be his Muse, alluding to her *sacred name*. It could only be platonic love for there was a boundary he could not and dared not cross; she was a maid-of-honour to the Queen – her future would be decided by the Queen. It was hardly likely she would be content to take a husband from the Staffordshire gentry.

He barely remembered his mother who had died giving birth to his sister. Her unmarried sister, Aunt Mary Skrymsher, and his Uncle John Skrymsher of Eccleshall in Staffordshire had been a big influence as he grew up. They had several times met the Fittons of Cheshire, cousins to the Leveson family who lived at nearby Lilleshall Hall.

Richard Leveson had a heartbreaking marriage to the beautiful Margaret Howard, daughter of the Lord High Admiral. Soon after the stillbirth of their only child, Margaret had become deranged and would be looked after for the rest of her life at Oxley Hall, one of Leveson's houses near Wolverhampton. Although neighbours, Barnfield rarely met Leveson, an active sea captain serving under Admiral Sir John Hawkins who was active in either pirating Portuguese and Spanish ships returning with booty from the Americas, or patrolling the Channel to protect England's shores. When they did meet he developed an

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admiration for Leveson, a man of high intellect, who enjoyed theatre, music and literature. He dedicated this poem to Leveson, then a naval captain:

*To his friend Maister R. L. -
In praise of Musique and Poetrie.*

*If Musique and sweet Poetrie agree,
As they must needes (the Sister and the Brother)
Then must the Love be great, twixt thee and me,
Because thou lou'st the one, and I the other.*

*Dowland to thee is dear; whose beaueuly tuch
Upon the Lute, doeth rauish humaine sense:
Spenser to me; whose deep Conceit is such,
As passing all Conceit, needs no defence.*

*Thou lou'st to hear the sweet melodious sound,
That Phæbus Lute (the Queen of Musique) makes:
And I in deep Delight am chiefly drownd,
When as himself to singing he betakes.*

*One God is God of Both (as Poets faigne)
One Knight loves Both, and Both in thee remain.*

Barnfield mentions Rowland,⁵¹ Michael Drayton's poetic sobriquet, as *my professed friend*. Drayton was also a friend of Thomas Lodge but for some reason exhibited a jealousy of Samuel Daniell.

6th October 1595; Flushing, Holland

Sir Robert Sidney wrote to his wife, *I thank Malkin* [their nine-year-old daughter and, as an adult, the author, Mary Sidney Wroth] *for her letter and am exceeding glad to see shee wrights so wel, tel her from me, I will give her a new gown for her letter.*

25th October 1595; Westminster Palace

On 25th Oct 1595, Earl Pembroke introduced his fifteen-year-old son and heir, William Herbert, Lord Cardiff, at Court, and also to eighteen-year-old Elizabeth Carey as a prospective wife. Elizabeth, daughter of Sir George Carey, son of Lord Hunsdon, with her mother had been expected at Wilton in September but did not arrive; the reason – that Lady Carey *expected at Court a dispatch that should descend to her daughter and lest the speech of marriage might overthrow it 'twas thought best to put it off till another time. My Lord Harbart likewise being a suitor for certain parks and reversion, 'tis feared if the marriage were spoken of, that might bring hindrance unto it. And therefore here in the place chosen fittest for the two young ones to have an interview, where without suspicion they*

⁵¹ Lodge's *Rosalind* (1591) was the source for the play *As You Like It*. The characters names were changed except that of Rosalind. The names of her love, Orlando, and his father, Roland, could well indicate Drayton's involvement in the script. Drayton and Lodge were friends.

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may oft meet in secret, and to that end comes my Lord Pembroke up upon Monday next. I hear that it is a motion very pleasing to both sides.

29th October 1595

Sir Robert Sidney's secretary, Rowland Whyte, ⁵² wrote from Baynard's to inform Sir Robert, in the Low Countries, that Earl of Pembroke was a persuader to fortify Milford Haven ⁵³ but that the charges are thought to be intolerable; however £500 was to be allowed to repair Pembroke Castle. He also reported that the extremely wealthy Lord Hertford was under house-arrest and had to show that his first marriage to Catherine Grey was lawful and his children legitimate. ⁵⁴ A few days later Hertford and his two sons were committed to the Tower; his wife ⁵⁵ was reported to be *stark mad*. Whyte subsequently quoted the Queen, *that neither her husband's life nor living should be called in question.*

Thursday, 20th November 1595, from Baynard's Castle



The speech of marriage between Lord Harbart and Mistress Carey was broken off by his not liking. Sir George Carey took it very unkindly that Lord Pembroke broke off the match between Lord Herbert and his daughter. Three months later, 19th February 1596, Elizabeth Carey married Sir Thomas Berkeley. ⁵⁶

⁵² Roland Whyte had been with Robert Sidney throughout their time at Oxford University and was absolutely trusted as a friend, an agent at Court and as his principal secretary.

⁵³ The Haven rather than the town.

⁵⁴ In 1558, aged twenty, Hertford won £40 in a session of cards with Lord Robert Dudley. His magnificent memorial is to be found in a corner of Salisbury Cathedral. Now fifty-seven. Hertford had been married to the sister of Lady Jane Grey who was second-in-succession to Queen Elizabeth, so Hertford's elder son had a decent claim to the throne. To further muddy matters, Hertford's grandson, William, in 1610 as Duke of Somerset would marry Arabella Stuart, another claimant to the throne.

⁵⁵ Frances Howard (died 14th May 1598) was sister of the Lord High Admiral and first cousin of Anne Boleyn.

⁵⁶ It has been mooted that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed for the first time in public during the celebrations.

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September 1595 London

Valentine Simmes watched his printing press being carried back into the workshop and gave a huge sigh of relief. He would have liked to blame others but he had been discovered to have printed a book, the privilege of another printer. His punishment by the wardens of the Stationers' Guild's was the removal for three months of his press and paper stocks to the Stationers' Hall. After three months his press was back but he yet needed a carter to retrieve some twenty reams of paper.

1596-1597

4th February 1596, London

James Burbadge Gent. of Hollowell in the County of Middlesex paid £600 to purchase a property in the former precinct of the Black-Friar preachers. When he died in 1597 he was succeeded by sons, Cuthbert and Richard, actor with the Chamberlain's Players. Local residents petitioned the Privy Council to prevent its use as a playhouse but it was leased for twenty-one years to Henry Evans who ran *The Children of the King's Revels*. The authenticity of the petition is questionable as one of the signatories is Lord Hudson, the Lord Chamberlain. A counter-petition published by (the discredited) Collier in the nineteenth century, which gave the names of Pope, Burbadge, Hemings, Phillips, Kempe, Sly and Tooley, is a forgery. Tooley was not associated with the company before 1605.

2nd March 1596; Stationers' Hall, London

Lexicographer and translator John Florio's *Vocabolario Italiano & Inglese* was registered in Stationers' Hall; published two years later in 1598.

June 1596, Stationers' Hall, London

The Court Book of the Stationers' Hall registered Valentine Simmes and another printer, Robert Baines, to *have put out their two apprentices unto James Roberts and not to take on any more apprentices until these have finished their time*. For the past three years Simmes had enjoyed a solid working relationship with Roberts, sub-contracting work and passing jobs to each other. Roberts with a similar-sized print-works was often short of work and relied on other printers. Simmes on the other-hand was finding he had surplus work but not enough printing capacity.

1596 London

Following its registration on 1st Dec 1595, the play *Edward III* was printed for Cuthbert Burby. Act 2.1 contained the line *lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds* which reappears verbatim in Shake-speare Sonnet 94. (1609)

Chronicles have that in 1341 King Edward III raped the Countess of Salisbury. This is glossed over in the play where instead the Countess proves virtuous and deftly able to rebuff all the King's advances. The site of Salisbury Castle is the fortified hill known as Old Sarum outside modern Salisbury, owned in 1596 by

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the Earl of Pembroke. It is possible that the play was effectively a tribute to Mary Sidney, Countess Pembroke, who lived near Salisbury. There was no Earl Salisbury as the title was forfeit on the execution of the Earl of Warwick in 1499.

June 1596 Cadiz, Portugal.

Earl Essex knighted Richard Leveson for the part he had played against the Spanish at the siege of Cadiz under his father-in-law, Lord Howard.

November 1596; Court of King's Bench Controlment Roll [KB29/234]

In November 1596 Francis Langley, owner of the *Swan Playhouse*, obtained restraining orders from the sheriff of Surrey, in which Southwark is located, against two parties, William Gardiner and (stepson) William Wayte. Wayte then took out a writ; *Be it known that William Wayte seeks sureties of the peace against William Shakspeare, Francis Langley, Dorothy wife of John Soer and Anna Lee for fear of death or do forth; attachment to the Sheriff of Surrey.*

This dispute had escalated after Gardiner had accused Langley of slander for having accused him of perjury. Faced with Langley's robust defence Gardiner dropped the charges. Shakspeare's role in this dispute is not known, John Soer appears to have run a brothel or flophouse in the Paris Gardens close to the *Swan*.

2nd February 1597; London

James Burbadge, actor, impresario, joiner, and theatre builder was buried on 2nd Feb, aged 66. He left two sons, actor Richard and businessman Cuthbert, who would have a redoubtable partnership, owning half the lease in the Globe theatre which they commissioned in 1599, and their father's Blackfriars Playhouse.

Feb 1597 Bankside, London

A reconstituted group of players under Pembroke patronage was formed. It coincided with the theatre-loving, seventeen-year-old William Herbert, Lord Cardiff, the future third Earl Pembroke, becoming domiciled in London at Baynard's Castle. The players signed a contract with Langley to play at Langley's new theatre, the *Swan*.⁵⁷ Their contract mentions the theatre had already been in use for plays, which points to activity in the summer of 1596.

William's mother, Countess Pembroke, the *Sweet Swan of Avon*, may well have inspired the theatre's name; the juxtaposition of the future Lord Pembroke should be noted. One can easily imagine young William Herbert being rowed across the river to watch plays or even perform under an alias. [*Shakespeare in Love*]; if so, he would be alongside other Pembroke players, including Ben Jonson then twenty-four-years old.

⁵⁷ See Nov 1594.

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18th July 1597 London

Philip Henslowe records: Hertford's man, *Marten Slather* [Martin Slater/Slaughter] a player *went for the company of my lord admeralles men.*

28th July 1597, Privy Council

28th July: the Privy Council, angered by what it termed *very seditious and scandalous matter in* Thomas Nashe & Ben Jonson's play, *The Isle of Dogs*, ordered all London theatres be shut down for the remainder of the summer. Nashe fled London and Jonson, along with Gabriel Spencer and Robert Shaa were hauled in front of the Privy Council, spent time in prison, but released on 2nd Oct. The following year Gabriel Spencer was killed by Jonson in a duel, perhaps some bad blood had been stirred over the *Isle of Dogs* affair. When the prohibition on the other theatres was lifted it was kept on Langley's *Swan*, dealing his theatre business a major blow. The players at the *Swan* disbanded and all, but no Shaksper, signed two-year contracts with Henslowe/The Admirals at the *Rose*.⁵⁸

Philip Henslowe records: *the xj of octobe begane my lord admerals & my lord penbrockes men to play at my howsse.* They played *Jeronimo, Comedy of Humours, Faustus, Friar Spendleton, Hardicanute* and *Bourbon*. By 5th January 1598 the collaboration between the two companies at the *Rose* had ended.

The remnant Pembroke's Men, perhaps with some replacements, played in Bath,⁵⁹ Bristol, Dover and other towns during 1598-99 but seemed to fade away during the terminal illness of Earl Pembroke in 1600 and his death in Jan 1601.

29th August 1597

Valentine Simmes printed *Richard II* soon after publisher Andrew Wise had entered it in the Stationers' Register. The play has an associated number of features;

- It has a high percentage of rhyming lines, 19%.
- A lack of prose.
- One of its sources is Samuel Daniell's *Civil Wars* (1595)
- Two other sources were in French chronicles.
- A possible link to the Pembroke Players of 1597.

⁵⁸ Best information is that the following were Pembroke players in 1597; Ben Jonson, Robert Shaa, Gabriel Spencer, Thomas Downton, Richard Jones and William Bourne (alias Bird); also Martin Slater. Downton, Jones and Bourne joined the *Admiral's Players* at the *Rose*. There is nothing further about the William Shaksper who was in the vicinity in Nov 1596, or of a William Shaksper who was listed as a defaulter in Bishopsgate Ward in Nov 1596, and again in 1600 listed as a defaulter now in Surrey. The *Swan* was directly across the Thames to Baynard's Castle. *Pembroke Players* were reconstituted in 1625 when Pembroke, was Lord Chamberlain.

⁵⁹ One assumes also at Wilton House, 35 miles from Bath.

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These features could indicate Mary Sidney's being involved in the authorship.

October 1597; Wiltshire & London

On 16th August 1597, two years after the failed betrothal of their heir to Elizabeth Carey, the Earl and Countess of Pembroke wrote separately to Burghley, the Lord Treasurer, indicating that the interview at Court between their seventeen-year-old son, William, and his thirteen-year-old granddaughter, Bridget de Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford, had gone well; that their impression was that their son had liked the young lady and that a marriage between the two young people would be welcomed. Negotiations continued through September revolving around the dowry and also the intention for William to travel in Europe after the betrothal. Bridget's father, the side-lined Oxford, welcomed the marriage. Eventually negotiations were broken off because of disagreements over finance and a rumour, strongly denied by the Countess, that Earl Pembroke had attempted to block Burghley's acquisition of the title of Viscount Cranborne. Burghley and Pembroke owned neighbouring estates in Wiltshire.

15th November 1597

In a list of individuals in *St. Ellen's Parish* who are either dead, departed and gone out of the said Ward; the London Tax Commissioners record that William Shakespeare of the Parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate Ward, is a defaulter in respect of a tax payment of 5s. based at one shilling in the pound for goods of the value of £5. The payment had been due at or before February 1597. [Exchequer; King's Remembrancer, Subsidy Roll, E.179/146/354.] A further sum of 13s 4d, at 2s 8d in the pound (on £5), is recorded a year later on 1st Oct as being in arrears.

1598

28th February 1598; Stationers' Hall, London

The rights of the *First Part of Henry IV* were registered to Andrew Wise.⁶⁰

1598 Addle Street, London

Valentine Simmes printed Thomas Lodge's novel *Rosalynde*, a well-structured story having many delightful poems which Lodge called *sonnets*. Simmes also ran two print runs of *The Tragedie of King Richard the Second*.

16th May 1598, London; from Henslowe's Diary

⁶⁰ If the Lord Chamberlain's company *were* having their plays printed, they did not have a favourite publisher. Over seventeen years there were twelve different publishers for twenty different plays. Of these Valentine Simmes was the most prolific.

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Martine Slather (Slater) sold five plays to the Admiral's Men; the two parts of *Herculus & Focus & Pethagores & Elysander & lodwicke which last boock he hath not yet delivered.*⁶¹

1598 London

Amongst Richard Barnfield's *Poems in Divers Humors* is *A Remembrance of some English Poets* in which *Shakespeare* is mentioned alongside Spenser, Daniell and Drayton.⁶²

*Live Spenser ever, in they Fairy Queene :
Whose like (for deepe Conceit) was never seene.
Crownd mayst thou bee, unto thy more renowne,
(As King of Poets) with a Lawrell Crowne.*

*And Daniell, praised for thy sweet-chast Verse:
Whose fame is grav'd on Rosamonds black Herse.
Still mayst thou live: and still be honored,
For that rare Worke, The White Rose and the Red.*

*And Drayton, whose wel-written Tragedies,
And Sweete Epistles, soare thy fame to skies.
Thy learned Name, is aequall with the rest ;
Whose stately Numbers are so well addrest.*

*And Shakespeare thou, whose hony-flowing Vaine,
(Pleasing the World) thy praises doth obtaine.
Whose Venus, and whose Lucrece (sweete, and chaste)
Thy name in fames immortall Booke have plac't.*

*Live ever you, at least in Fame live ever:
Well may the Bodye dye, but Fame dies never.*

⁶¹ *Hercules I & II* (Heywood's *Silver and Brazen Ages* (?) / Pythagoras / Phocas / Alexander & Lodovick. Litigation took place at London's Guildhall on 3rd Nov between Slater and the Admiral's men, Gabriel Spencer & Thomas Downton to recover a sixth book. At this time Slater appears to have been Pembroke Player. In the meantime Spencer had been killed in a duel with Ben Jonson who was in prison.

⁶² Michael Drayton, 1563-1631, known by his poet friends as Rowland was born in Hartshill, Warwickshire, a few miles from Arbury the home of Mary Fitton's sister. He formed a lifelong friendship with Anne Goodere, the daughter of his former master, who married Henry Rainsford of Clifford Chambers in Gloucestershire, one mile from Stratford-upon-Avon. In 1631 William Shaxper's son-in-law, Dr John Hall, treated Drayton for constipation but he died the same year. In 1600 Drayton was a co-author of the Shakespeare play *Sir John Oldcastle*.

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The juxtaposition of Barnfield, his friend Rowland (Michael Drayton), Samuel Daniell and Edmund Spenser, all patronised by Mary Sidney, might indicate that the fifth poet was indeed Mary Sidney, using a pseudonym.

1598; St. Paul's Churchyard, London

Poet Richard Barnfield delighted in opening this new book, *Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury* printed by Peter Short. Its thickness, its seven-hundred pages and the inimitable smell of a book opening for the first time. Registered to publisher Cuthbert Burby on 7th Sep 1598, it had been compiled by his friend, Francis Meres. It was a small encyclopaedia of religious and philosophical topics in the form of a compilation of essays drawn from the sages of antiquity. Meres had commissioned him to write a section on modern writers and he had chosen to compare them as *A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greek, Latin, and Italian Poets*. He had plagiarised similar reviews written a decade earlier in William Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetry* (1586) and George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1589). All he had done was rewrite it adding the modern authors. He turned the stiff leaves to page 282 to read what he had said about *Shakespeare*; *As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for comedy, witness his Gentlemen of Verona, his Errors, his Love Labours Lost, his Love Labours Won,*⁶³ *his Midsummer's Night Dream, & his Merchant of Venice; for tragedy, his Richard the 2, Richard the 3, Henry the 4, King John, Titus Andronicus, and his Romeo and Juliet.*⁶⁴ Of Edward, Earl of Oxford, he wrote (borrowed from George Puttenham) that he was *the best for comedy amongst us.*⁶⁵ Of his friend Michael Drayton, "*Michael Drayton ... is held of a man of virtuous disposition, honest conversation, and well governed carriage, which is almost miraculous among good wits in these declining and corrupt times... Michael Drayton in now penning in English verse a poem called Poly-Olbion geographical and hydrographical of all the forest, woods, mountains, fountains,*

⁶³ Possibly *Taming of the Shrew*.

⁶⁴ Had his friend Mary Fitton given him a list of the gala plays at court on St. Steven's, New Year's Eve and Twelfth Nights?

⁶⁵ *The best poets for comedy among the Greeks are the best for comedy amongst us be Edward Earl of Oxford, Doctor Gager of Oxford, Master Rowley, once a rare scholar of learned Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, Master Edwards, one of her Majesty's Chapel, eloquent and witty John Lyly, Lodge, Gascoigne, Greene, Shakespeare, Thomas Nash, Thomas Heywood, Anthony Munday, our best plotter, Chapman, Porter, Wilson, Hathway, and Henry Chettle.*

Heywood, Munday, Chapman, Porter, Wilson, Hathway, and Chettle were being commissioned by Henslowe to produce plays for the Admiral's (Nottingham's) men at his *Rose* playhouse. One could infer that if one team was working for the Henslowe's *Rose*, the other team was writing for the Burbages' *Globe*.

rivers, lakes, floods, bathes and springs that be in England.” He smiled to himself; it had been easy work.⁶⁶

June 1598

Playwrights Anthony Munday, Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker and others were working together for the Admiral’s Men, financed by theatre impresario, Philip Henslowe. Around this time a manuscript of a play called *Thomas Moore* was being heavily censored by Edmund Tilney, Master of the Revels. It contained five hands, identified as those of Munday, Chettle, Dekker, Thomas Heywood and one other. The play was abandoned but the manuscript survived.⁶⁷

22nd July 1598; Stationers’ Hall, London

Entered to J(ames) Roberts (subject to licence from the Lord Chamberlain): a book of the *Marchaunt of Venyce*, or otherwise called the *Jewe of Venyce*. The play was subsequently transferred to T(homas) Haies on 28th October 1600 and first printed off Robert’s press for Heyes in 1600.

1st October 1598

In an indenture of the Petty Collectors for Bishopsgate Ward; The London Tax Commissioners list William Shakespeare as a defaulter in St. Helen’s Parish (north-east side of London) in respect of a tax payment of 13s 4d due in 1598 upon goods of value £5 at 2s 8d in the pound. [Exchequer; King’s Remembrancer, Subsidy Roll, E.179/146/369.] From an entry of 15th Nov 1597 this William Shakespeare had left St. Helen’s owing five shillings in tax.

In the Exchequer Lord Treasurer’s Remembrancer, Accounts of Subsidies [E359/56] the payment of the 5s is referred to seventeen years later 1614 in the Pipe Roll of the 11th Exchequer year of King James but this has not been traced.

28th December 1598, Shoreditch, London

The 21-year lease having expired, the carpenter Peter Short on behalf of the Burbadge family dismantled the *Theatre* playhouse, beam by beam. It was stored

⁶⁶ Barnfield’s *signature* to this article is an obscure reference to his own works which only he himself is likely to have known about: *As noble Mecaenas, that sprung from the Etruscan kings, not only graced poets by his bounty, but also by being a poet himself, and as James the 6, now king of Scotland, is not only a favourer of poets, but a poet, as my friend Master Richard Barnfield hath in this distich passing well recorded: “The King of Scots now living is a poet, As his Lepanto and his furies show it...”*

⁶⁷ Commentators too readily believe the fifth hand is that of Shake-Speare. Because the fifth hand cannot be proved to be *not* Shake-Speare, it does not mean that it is Shake-Speare. The evidence actually shows that Munday, Chettle, Dekker and Heywood working together could produce a Shake-Speare-quality play and if the fifth hand *was* Brad’s then it is evidence that he worked in concert and therefore not quite the genius!

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until better weather allowed it to be reconstructed across the river in Southwark as the *Globe*.⁶⁸

1599

21st February 1599, London

[according to C W Wallace 1910; Court of Requests, Documents of Shakespearean interest. ⁶⁹]

Evidence given by Heminges and Condell, 28th April 1619 defending a suit brought by John Witter who had married the widow of Augustine Phillipps who died in 1605.

A thirty-one-year lease on a plot of land in Southwark was taken from Nicholas Brende by seven partners. Cuthbert and Richard Burbage were responsible for half the lease. The other half was to be paid by William Shakespeare, Augustine Phillipps, Thomas Pope, John Heminges and William Kempe. The latter five actors were *tenants in common* but collectively were *joint tenants* with the Burbadge brothers. The land was to build the *Globe* Playhouse. Later that year William Kempe quit the Chamberlain's Players and his share was reallocated to the other four, each having one eighth of the whole.

London; 5th March 1599

Elizabeth Sidney (1584-1612), the fourteen-year-old daughter of the late Sir Philip Sidney and Frances Walsingham, married twenty-two-year-old Roger Manners, the fifth Earl of Rutland (1576-1612). The last act of *Henry V* and its royal wedding would fit well with entertainment at their nuptial celebrations. Elizabeth was first cousin to both William Herbert and Mary (Malkin) Sidney, and the stepdaughter of the Earl of Essex who had married her widowed mother. Roger Manners, a minor at the time of his father's death, was educated both scholastically and in the art of war and was well-travelled. At Padua University in 1596 he had been a classmate of Messrs. Rosencrantz & Guildenstern, the names of two characters in *Hamlet* – giving rise to an assertion that he may have written *Hamlet*.⁷⁰

March 1599, London

⁶⁸ George Hubbard, *On the Site of the Globe Playhouse of Shakespeare*, 1923, has established the Globe was on the site of the old *Bear Baiting Ring*, on the north side of Maiden Lane; now Park Street.

⁶⁹ Around 1910 C W Wallace *discovered* and published a number of documents containing the name William Shakespeare which had escaped the searches of Malone, Halliwell-Phillipps, Collier and many others. His findings were not celebrated, the academics choosing not to give credibility, or perhaps suspecting forgery.

⁷⁰ Equally, Roger Manners could have written to his first cousin, William Herbert, with the names of these two students,

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A military expedition to Ireland led by the Earl of Essex left London on 27th March. Act V of *Henry V*, which relates to the wedding of Henry V and Katherine, the daughter of the King of France, has Chorus probably referring to anticipated success of Essex:

*Were now the general of our gracious empress
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
Bringing Rebellion broached on his sword.*

It is quite probable that the *Cockpit* referred to in the *Prologue* is that built by Henry VIII near Whitehall Palace, which apart from blood-sport was used occasionally as a theatre. It suggests that the play was first performed in front of the Court and explains *this wooden O*;

*Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire
Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all,
The flat unraised spirits that have dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object: can this **cockpit** hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this **wooden O** the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?*

16th May 1599, London

[Chancery Inquisitions Post Mortem, C142/257/68]

In Latin from the Inquisition Post Mortem of Thomas Brend; *One house newly built with a garden pertaining in the parish of St. Saviour's aforesaid in the said county (Southwark in Surrey) in the occupation of William Shakespeare and others.*⁷¹

1599; London

⁷¹ Thomas Brente or Brand of West Molesey in Surrey twice entertained the Queen in Progress, in September 1580 and August 1592. This entry is bizarre; if *William Shakespeare* held only tenth share-holding it is barely conceivable that he should be named in lieu of, or ahead of brothers, Cuthbert & Richard Burbadge who held five tenths and were the negotiators. This may have been a simple message not the *Globe* playhouse. Secondly, if this was the site of the *Globe* playhouse this valuable property was not mentioned in either Thomas Brend's will of 1597 or that of his son Nicholas in 1601 – it was Nicholas who allegedly owned and leased the property to the partners, not Thomas. According to the wills, neither father nor his estranged son held property in St. Saviour's.

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A private printing was made of a small anthology of twenty-one poems; *The Passionate Pilgrime By W. Shakespeare*.⁷² The book was not entered in to the Stationers' Register. The publisher was William Jaggard and, whereas the ornament on the title page suggests the printer was Thomas Judson, the ornaments on the subsequent pages are those of the printer Valentine Simmes (his print-works were adjacent to Baynard's Castle), with whom Judson was working. Only a handful of the poems were attributable to *Shakespeare*, three of which were taken from *Love's Labour's Lost*. The others were written by Thomas Deloney, Richard Barnfield (two), Bartholomew Griffin, Thomas Weelkes, Christopher Marlowe and Walter Raleigh. Six were not attributable and resembled verse from the Shakespeare *Venus & Adonis*.

What to give her for her twenty-first birthday only a few days away? What better than some of their favourite sonnets which he had noted down in his commonplace book? How many times had he passed by the print works of Valentine Simmes in Addle Street some tens of yards from Baynard's Castle. He entered its portal. The aroma of new newly printed books hit his senses. The printer, Simmes, broke off a conversation with a gentleman to approach the dapper, young man who had appeared in his finery; but it was the other man, William Jaggard, who recognised William Herbert, Lord Cardiff, and facilitated the conversation. Jaggard explained that William needed not only a printer but, according to the rules of the Stationers' Company, he needed a named publisher, which role Jaggard volunteered. Speed was essential and Simmes suggested another printer, Thomas Judson, could help. Three days later sample copies of the stitched booklet were brought to Baynard's Castle but it did not take many minutes before William Herbert found too many errors and in a fierce temper ran out of Baynard's to the print works. The stitching in the booklets was cut apart, several quires were reprinted and the whole was glued between hard boards with a title, *The Passionate Pilgrim* by W. Shakespeare; and only just in time. William was the pilgrim. One probable reason William had turned down marriage to Bridget de Vere when he first came to Court in 1597 was that he had once again met up with Mary Fitton, no longer a child but a mature maid-of-honour to the Queen.

*My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.*

[R&J 1.v.]

⁷² I believe there was only one printing but the customer was dissatisfied and asked for the edition to be unstitched and corrections made, hence some pages printed on one side and others on both.

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24th June 1599 London

Mary Fitton celebrated her twenty-first birthday. One of her presents was a booklet, *The Passionate Pilgrim*, by W. Shakespeare in which she read words from *Love's Labour's Lost*:

*Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,
'Gainst whom the world could not hold argument,
Persuade my heart to this false perjury?
Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.
A woman I forswore; but I will prove,
Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:
My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;
Thy grace being gained cures all disgrace in me.
My vow was breath, and breath a vapour is;
Then, thou fair sun, that on this earth doth shine,
Exhal'st this vapour vow; in thee it is:
If broken, then it is no fault of mine.
If by me broke, what fool is not so wise
To break an oath, to win a paradise?*

London 1599

According to the 1616 collection of Ben Jonson's *Works*, the Lord Chamberlain's players who performed Jonson's *Every Man His Humour* in 1599 were Will Shakespeare, Aug Phillips, Will Slye, Will Kempe, Ric Burbadge, Joh Hemings, Tho Pope and Joh Duke. The actors' names were not included in the original quartos.

The Curlews, Ireland, 5th August 1599.

A distant dog barked the warning. The handsome, young horseman was alarmed. As the English Vanguard, a regiment of six-hundred which he commanded, was reaching the top of the rough incline, the sounds ahead of them were changing. Fevered with an ague he looked up from the stony rocks beneath him and surveyed the flat hilltop ahead. Was this God's purpose they served that early morning, climbing *The Curlews* in the west of Ireland, marching to relieve O'Connor Sligo trapped in his castle by Bernard O'Donnell?

Heavy August rain had softened the ground and loosened the rock. The guide they had employed, with his yellow and red hat and distinctive saffron yellow coat, had well-earned the gold he had been given to lead the fifteen-hundred men across this difficult terrain and up towards the pass. Behind him, stretching down the hill, he could see a thousand troops, the *Battle*, and the *Rearguard* all concentrating on the slow climb. The horseman looked to his lieutenants. It was clear that the enemy was close. Terror started to show in their faces. Barely had they time to draw their swords when the skyline filled with armed men and hails of arrows

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showered down. Minutes later the yelling Irishmen fell on them, throwing ash-handled javelins as they approached. He heard and saw the constant flashes of musket fire into their flanks and his men screamed as red-hot lead ripped into their bodies. O'Donnell's men had surprised them. The *Vanguard*, surrounded, was forced to engage in hand-to-hand fighting. A hundred yards behind them, Sir Arthur Savage, commanding the *Rearguard*, gave immediate order for his regiment, without firing a shot, to retreat and his men fled back to the Abbey of Boyle where they had spent the night. The *Battle*, followed by the remains of the *Vanguard*, gradually escaped back down the hill but not before a musket shot killed the expedition commander, Sir Conyers Clifford. In less than half an hour the English lost well over two-hundred soldiers with as many seriously injured. The redheaded Irish stayed to survey the spoils; heads cut off as trophies, weapons and saddles taken, bodies ransacked. Laughter echoed as wagers were made as to who could throw severed limbs furthest down the hill. The guide whose yellow and red hat had acted as a marker was embraced by O'Donnell. By midday the hillside was deserted of men, populated by crows and hummed with a myriad of flies. As the sun set that summer evening a curlew called over to its mate who answered with a plaintiff cry. Bloody nosed foxes with their young took over to enjoy their fill.

Five days later that handsome young man, twenty-five-year-old Sir Alexander Radcliffe of Ordsall, arrived back in Dublin to break the news of the defeat to the Earl of Essex, Lord Deputy of Ireland. By the time Essex had the courage to write to the Privy Council on 14th August, Alexander Radcliffe, once a darling of the London Court, was dead. He would be brought to mind as *Sebastian* in the play *Twelfth Night*.

Hampton Court, London, August 1599.

The Queen felt faint as she emerged from meeting her Privy Councillors. It was not an unusual feeling; every decision was a big decision as matters of state eventually rippled through and effected every one of her five-million subjects. This time she felt physically sick as her maids busied themselves to escort her back to her rooms. She looked round for Margaret Radcliffe, twin to Sir Alexander Radcliffe; how beautiful, graceful and innocent she looked and yet her face revealed an eternal sadness. In this time of heightened conflict in the Low Countries and Ireland, with an unending traffic travelling to and from Dublin, Essex's letter telling of the massacre at *The Curlews* had not taken long to reach her Council. The Queen had embargoed the news; *by the Queen's command (news) is kept from her, who is determined to break it unto her herself*. Of the half-dozen maids in her entourage, Margaret was her favourite. For Christmas the previous year she had given her own Caxton printing of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The haze of time cleared for a moment as she recalled the day, a decade earlier, when the fifteen-year old twins, Alexander and Margaret, had arrived at Court, beautiful young people with soft, northern accent, loved by everyone for their good humour, their ability to entertain, their grace and their compassion.

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The Queen procrastinated. It was several days before she drew the young lady to walk alongside the river. As best she could, she gently broke the news. Not even a Queen could soften the distress or stifle the awful wail of anguish of a sibling on hearing of the death of the twin with whom she had shared her life; and he was not the only brother she had lost that year – brother William had also died awfully in Ireland and two other brothers had died of the Belgian fever.

Margaret was given permission to return to the family home, Ordsall Hall in Salford, just a mile from the parish church in Manchester where the twins had been baptised on 26th January 1574, a week after their birth. It was the same church in which her father, Sir John Radcliffe, who died on 19th January 1590, was buried on 11th February 1590; the twins were sixteen. Their birthdays were never to be fully enjoyed again; the day marked the passing of the father whom they had loved and who had cherished them. The twins' spirits were committed to perpetuity in the characters of Viola and Sebastian in the Shake-Speare play, *Twelfth Night*.

Viola: My father had a mole upon his brow.
Sebastian And so had mine
Viola And died that day when Viola from her birth
 had numbered thirteen years.
Sebastian O, that record is lively in my soul!
 He finished indeed his mortal act
 That day that made my sister thirteen years.

Sir William Knollys was trembling as he left the Council meeting. Seven months previously the Queen had wanted him to go to Ireland as Lord Deputy but his colleagues had insisted on appointing his nephew, Essex. It looked as if Essex had failed and that he might again be asked to take command. Not only did he not want the posting but did not want to leave the Court in England or Mal Fitton, especially now because of her involvement with that Pembroke boy.

The Council Chamber was empty except for the Queen's chief Minister, Robert Cecil, who had followed in the shoes of his father, William Cecil, Baron Burghley. He was a supremely confident man of thirty-seven. His father had taught him to have faith in his massive intellect, memory, speed of thought, political awareness and incisiveness. Since before he had been born, his father had served the Queen as her Chief Secretary of State; he himself had been groomed for the role which he had recently assumed. His father was not long dead but he evoked stern, paternal warnings about the ambition of Essex, Robert Devereux, and now the Queen could not bring herself to admit to him that Essex's campaign in Ireland was a disaster. Was the Queen simply getting old? She had always demonstrated a rod of iron in matters of State but had been unable to hide her distress by the news of the death of Alexander Radcliffe. It hurt him too. Not only did he love his Queen, but she was also the only person he truly respected as an intellectual equal; whom he and his father had unconditionally served – and from their positions of power and influence had grown fabulously wealthy.

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They formed an odd couple, the Queen over-tall perhaps to balance his shortness. In time he came to realise that she was probably the most astute monarch that England had had since Alfred. During her reign, the Spanish had been defeated by an English Fleet – the Fleet, Alfred's idea for defeating the Vikings. Alfred, Henry Tudor and his daughter, Elizabeth herself, had invested heavily to establish and maintain a Royal Navy whose purpose was to stop invaders reaching English shores. Strategically and tactically Elizabeth Tudor could not be faulted. Academically the Queen had been a prodigy. By the age of ten, she could read and write English fluently and already had a considerable grounding in Latin which she used to advantage with foreign ambassadors. In the archives to which he alone was privy he had seen her letter written two months before she was eleven, to her stepmother in elegant Italian hand, soon after she was twelve, another letter to Catherine in French, enclosing a copy of her translation of *Calvin's Institutes*; and on the same date to her father in Latin with version of the *Queen's Prayers and Meditations*. She was, at the age of twelve, fluent in Latin, French and Italian and had a grounding in classical Greek. Like him, she then studied the New Testament in Greek. By 1550 she had a wide knowledge of theology, philosophy and history; [Just like our Brad!]. She had been provided with exceptional tutors. Her precocious progress had been due to the evangelical programme of *New Learning*, of which her mother, Queen Anne Boleyn, was a leading patron.

His Queen was in pain and that hurt him. More so, Sir John Radcliffe, the twins' late father, had been his close friend.

On 1st September 1599

George Gilpin wrote from London to Sir Robert Sidney that *Mrs Ratcliffe keeps her chamber. I hear her brother settled his estate with good annuities to his brothers; and to his sisters means to live.* Later that month he wrote; that he *intended to break unto the Lord Admiral the marriage of Lord Herbert with the Admiral's niece and if you were here and wrought to deal in it, you might induce Lord Herbert and his mother to hearken to it....* Rowland Whyte added a few days later *I perceive the Admiral would be glad to have Lord Herbert match in his house.*

September 1599; London

The debt of 13s 4d of William Shakespeare of St. Helen's Parish's in Bishopsgate Ward's is noted in the Pipe Rolls [E372/444] of the fortieth Exchequer year of Queen Elizabeth under the Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer heading *Residuum London*. However, he answers in the following year's Pipe Roll for the County of Sussex where the Sheriff is the Accounting Officer for both Sussex and Surrey.

1599 London

During 1599 Valentine Simmes printed Thomas Moffet's *Of Silkworms and their Flies*. He also printed Weever's book of Epigrams. *Epigram 22; Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare:*

Honie-tong'd Shakespeare when I saw thine issue

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*I swore Apollo got them and no other,
Their rosie-tainted features cloth'd in tissue
Some heaven born goddess said to be their mother*

*Rose-cheeked Adonis with his amber tresses,
Faire fire-hot Venus charming him to love her,
Chaste Lucretia: virgine-like her dresses,
Prowd lust-stung Tarquine seeking still to prove her
Romea Richard more whose names I know not,
Their sugred tongues, and power attractive beuty
Say they are Saints althogh that Sts they shew not
For thousands voves to them subjective dutie:*

*They burn in love thy children Shakespear bet them,
Go, wo thy Muse more Nymphish brood beget them.*

Weever, born about 1576, had been a student at Cambridge. He coupled a brilliant mind with extreme physical shortness to make himself a well-known and noticeable character amongst the more theatrical at the university. Here he identifies the two Shakespeare narrative poems and two Shakespeare plays. In Weever's *Faunus & Melliflora* (1601), M D (Michael Drayton) points out that the *Greek Comoedian fitly doth compare Poets to Swans*.

The Rose Playhouse; Southwark; 1st November 1599

Philip Henslowe had struck a good bargain. Two weeks earlier he had paid four playwrights, Michael Drayton, Richard Hathway, Anthony Munday and Robert Wilson, £14 for *Sir John Oldcastle*, a play for the Admiral's Men. The money included a £4 earnest for a second part to *Sir John Oldcastle*. Tonight had been the first-night and the play having been well-received he gave the authors an extra ten shillings. In it the playwrights publicised a previous play, *Henry IV*, in which they mention the escapades of the highwaymen, *Falstaff* (by now too fat to get onto a horse), *Poins* and *Peto*. The play also runs in time-parallel to *Henry V* from which it clearly draws and is set as Henry was preparing to sail for France. The play was registered on 11th August 1600 to T. P. (Thomas Pavier) to be sold at the *Cat & Parrot*. The authors used the same historical sources for all three plays.

Between December 1597 and May 1602 Michael Drayton in collaboration with other playwrights produced twenty-three plays for the Admiral's Company at Henslowe's *Rose* playhouse. At any one time Henslowe was paying between six and eight playwrights, the principal ones bring Chettle, Day, Dekker, Drayton, Hathway, Haughton, Munday, Smith and Wilson. Lesser contributors from noteworthy playwrights were by Chapman, Heywood, Jonson, Middleton, Rowley and Webster. Some of these playwrights may also have been working the *Globe*.

10th November 1599

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It was proposed to Sir Robert and Lady Sidney that their daughter, Mary (Malkin), aged thirteen, should marry the fifteen-year-old son of Sir Thomas Maxwell. The offer was rejected.

1599 London

Countess Pembroke's renderings of the Bible's Psalms were circulated amongst her friends. Written in the vernacular, almost all the psalms had their own unique format, were rhythmical and melodious such that they could be, and were set to music. Psalm 21 starts;

*What, and do I behold the lovely mountains
Whence comes all by reliefs, my aid my comfort?
O there, O there abides the world's Creator
Whence comes all by reliefs, my aid my comfort?*

Hampton Court, Richmond, London, November 1599

Margaret Radcliffe had been home at Ordsall Hall in Salford for under a month before news reached the Queen that her maid had stopped eating. The death of her twin brother had been the final straw in a year in which three other brothers had died on military campaigns. The monarch sent word for her maid to return to Hampton Court. Margaret, a wasted shadow of the woman she had been, obeyed and in the great palace beside the Thames her father had taken from Cardinal Wolsey, the Queen nursed, coaxed and begged the young woman to drink and eat. But what could an old lady do? England's greatest Queen, perhaps England's greatest monarch, could not take away the pain. It was reported that Margaret "*pined in such strange manner as voluntarily she hath gone about to starve herself, and by the two days together hath received no sustenance: which, meeting with extreme grief, hath made an end of her maiden modest days at Richmond upon, Saturday last, her Majesty being present.*" As Margaret Radcliffe's life ended, cradled in the arms of Elizabeth Tudor, the queen of England weeping unashamedly as she slowly released the emaciated body.

On a dull November morning the remains of Margaret Radcliffe were buried at St. Margaret's in Westminster. The church was packed with courtiers as the steely but wet-eyed Queen led the mourning with the other maids-of-honour – all dressed in uniform, black, mourning weeds. Ben Jonson had written the epitaph with its acrostic.

*Marble, weep, for thou dost cover
A dead beauty underneath thee
Rich as nature could bequeath thee:
Grant, then, no rude hand remove her.
All the gazers on the skies
Read not in fair heaven's story
Expresser truth or truer glory,
Than they might in her bright eyes.
Rare as wonder was her wit,*

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*And like nectar ever flowing,
Till time, strong by her bestowing,
Conquered hath both life and it.
Life whose grief was out of fashion
In these times. Few have so rued
Fate in a brother. To conclude
For wit, features, and true passion,
Earth, thou hast not such another.⁷³*

The Queen had ordered an autopsy. No traces of poison were found in the body leaving a question of whether the strings to Margaret Radcliffe's heart had literally been broken.⁷⁴ But matters of state and life at Court never permitted time to stand still and of the five remaining maids-of-honour it was Mary Fitton who emerged as the Queen's new favourite.

15th Dec 1599; Baynard's Castle

Henry Herbert, Earl Pembroke, was desperately ill. The reports of eight physicians were sent to the Queen who sent a doctor back to him with some broth. At the same time discussions were taking place about a marriage between his daughter, Lady Anne, and the Earl of Hertford who had been a widower since his wife, Frances, sister of Charles Howard, died in May 1598.⁷⁵

1600

8th Jan 1600 London

Philip Henslowe and his son-in-law, former actor Edward Allen, of St. Saviour's Parish, Southwark, Surrey, gentlemen, contracted, for a sum of £440, to be paid in two payments, with carpenter Peter Short to construct, before 25th July, a playhouse near Golding Lane in the Parish of St. Giles-without-Cripplegate, in the style of the late erected *Globe* – to be called the *Fortune*.

Thursday, 6th March, 1600 London

⁷³ Jonson later wrote an epigram to Sir John Radcliffe the one surviving brother.

⁷⁴ When Rosalynd in *As You Like It* (1600) makes the observation *men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love*, was it alluding to the death of Margaret Radcliffe?

⁷⁵ Hertford had his own players but was it his wife who was the patron? If so she, her brother and their sister (The Lord Chamberlain's wife) were patrons of the Hertford's, the Admiral's and the Chamberlain's Players.

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Philip Henslowe was cheerful. The *Fortune* playhouse was progressing and Easter Week had been exceptionally busy, the highlight being the second part of *Sir John Oldcastle* performed by the *Chamberlain's Players* before Verreicken, the envoy of Archduke Albert of Austria. At the end of the first part, set in 1415, Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, had avoided an accusation of heresy but was still subject to a *hue and cry* and a false accusation of treachery. The only person who could remove the stain was Henry V but the King he had just left Southampton for France. His playhouse had been filled for the dénouement. In October Henslowe had paid playwrights, Drayton, Hathway, Munday and Wilson for the *First Part* but on behalf of the *Admiral's Men*.

27th May 1600, Stationers' Hall

On a spare leaf in the Stationers' Register two plays belonging to *My Lord Chamberlain's men* were recorded to Master Roberts. Both were subject to *further authoritie*.⁷⁶

Saturday, 31st May 1600; Baynard's Castle.

Roland Whyte reported that [sixty-one years old] *Lord Hertford is often at Wilton House expressing his love for the Lady Anne*, William Herbert's [teenage] sister. Ironically, Hertford having been married to Pembroke's first, divorced wife was proposing marriage to Pembroke's daughter by his third wife, Mary Sidney.

Baynard's Castle, London. The early hours of 17th June 1600

In the first light of the long June day William Herbert studied the wonderful curvatures of the long back of the sleeping woman in the bed beside him, noting the mystical beauty of the odd dark moles. He loved her completely and still lusted for her even after these hours of passion they had enjoyed. The wait of two years, the goodwill he had cultivated had borne a most luscious fruit. Her breathing was shallow.

He had not expected this outcome when, the previous afternoon, he had collected the maid-of-honour in his carriage and taken her to the church to be married. Walking down the aisle had been something special. He could feel the eyes of the lords and ladies of the Court on them, she a beauty, he a handsome young man and heir to the great Earldom of Pembroke. On reaching the Queen, who had been rowed by Royal Barge from Westminster to witness the occasion,

⁷⁶ Were *blocking entries* placed in the Stationers' Register to prevent advance publication of a play to be staged by Royal Command? One ought to evaluate the size of the market for printed copies of plays. When it then cost one or two pence to watch a play at the *Rose* who would buy a play printed in a pamphlet for six pence? The answer is only the rich, not all of whom would have been interested in hard copy; the market was therefore limited. It is possible plays were printed for Court and gifted on the night, remainders to be sold in the nominated shop.

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he bowed and the bride released his arm and gave the deepest of curtsies. The Queen's face showed mixed feelings. She was displeased to be losing yet another maid but pleasure in a marriage she welcomed. They reached the alter and Anne Russell had gently kissed his cheek and thanked him. She turned towards the groom, the Earl of Worcester, and within minutes was a married woman, and a countess to boot.

The congregation led by the Queen and her maids followed the couple out of the church to be greeted by some hundreds of curious Londoners. William Herbert stayed close to the Queen to be close to Mary Fitton. At one point he was able to squeeze her hand only to be told *to desist*. The evening was spent at Lord Cobhams's in festivities, food, entertainment and dancing. The highlight was a spectacular masque that his May⁷⁷ had organised. It was *"...a strange dance newly invented; their attire is this; each hath a skirt of cloth of silver wrought with silks and gold, a rich waistcoat wrought with silks and gold and silver, a mantle of carnation taffeta cast under the arm, and their hair loose about their shoulders, curiously knotted and interlaced."* *"Mistress Fitton led and after they had done all their own ceremonies, these eight lady masquers chose eight more ladies to dance the measures. Dancing to the music Apollo brings, Mistress Fitton went to the Queen and wooed her to dance; her Majesty asked what muse she was; "Affection," she said. "Affection!" said the Queen; "Affection is false." Yet her Majesty rose and danced."*

He had watched and heard it all. The sight of May so provocatively dressed as a Muse and her long, elegant legs had resolved his mind. After the last guests had departed and the Royal entourage was left to go to their chambers he at last found a moment to speak to her. She looked hard into his face. Years later she would put that night into verse:

*For, lo, his passion, but an art of craft,
Even there resolved my reason into tears;
There my white stole of chastity I daff'd,
Shook off my sober guards and civil fears;
Appear to him, as he to me appears,
All melting; though our drops this difference bore,
His poisoned me, and mine did him restore.*

"May?"

"Yes, Master Will? My Lord Cardiff?"

"May," he asked, "I beg you, be my wife."

"Yes, Will," she had replied with a slight smile but without a moment's thought. "Husband, when the Queen is settled come to my chamber. I am

⁷⁷ He called her May, maybe an echo of his Uncle Phillip's masque, *The Lady of May*.

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sharing with your cousin, Malkin. I will send her to bring you and she can sleep in your room.”

And he had come to her room where he had discovered her innocence and she his experience. She had become a full woman in every sense of the word. For hours they had held each other, professing undying love, sharing their innermost feelings. She loved him for himself, for his intellect, his humour, his melancholia and the times when he was a rogue.

Mary woke with the midsummer sunrise. William was dressed and sitting watching her.

“Husband, why sad?”

“Sir William.”

“Knollys, the Clown?”

“The Clown. He boasts he will have you. He is in earnest.”

“I know, but he has a wife.”

“This leaf was posted under the door; a sonnet.”

“Read it to me.”

William held the leaf up to the morning light.

*When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unskilful in the world's false forgeries.*

*Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although I know my years be past the best,
I smiling credit her false-speaking tongue,
Outfacing faults in love with love's ill rest.*

*But wherefore says my love that she is young?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O, love's best habit's a soothing tongue,
And age, in love, loves not to have years told.*

*Therefore I'll lie with love, and love with me,
Since that our faults in love thus smother'd be.*

“He knows we are here. It is him, who else? Yes, he believes I would marry him if he were free and I have not disabused him of the idea. And now I must; he will be enraged with me.”

“No! Not yet. Doctor Lister tells me father will not live to see my twenty-first birthday; April next. By then I will be Earl and, May, my May, my Mistress May, I shall be master of the Pembroke title and estate. We can marry without impediment; except I should tell you ...”

She frowned, “Except...?”

He hated to see her frown at him. “Except, I should advise you, there is of a

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prognostication that I have carried with me from birth – the shadow that I will never see my fiftieth birthday.”

She laughed, “but, my Doctor Faustus, that is thirty years away and it is a stupid prognostication. Tush! I must dress and attend her Majesty. You go and wake up your little cousin and bid her return. We will meet soon, husband.”

“I may not see you again before I travel North.”

“North?”

“I leave tomorrow for Scotland.”

On his return they had for chaperone, William’s young cousin, Malkin, now thirteen years old, tall, beautiful, well-educated and little escaped her notice. There were times when the two Mary’s would share a bed, Mal Fitton would talk about William and Malkin would absorb every detail. What Mal Fitton never noticed was that Mary Sidney cleverly hid she too was passionately in love with William. They were rivals and Malkin could only vicariously enjoy the lovers’ passion for each other.⁷⁸

While William Herbert was away from London, Mary Fitton was left to confront the distressed, disturbed and angry Clown, Sir William Knollys, author of the sonnet.

July 7th, 1600; from Court; Sir Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sydney;

“*The Queen is to go in progress to Basing; so to Totnam, the Earl of Hertford’s and so to Ramsbury*”, Mary Sidney, Countess Pembroke’s, favourite country home in Wiltshire. On the 19th he wrote the Queen would begin her progress on 29th, would go to Lord Hertford’s in North Wiltshire but would strike out Ramsbury. On 27th July, Whyte; “... *Her Majesty’s displeasure continues towards the Earl of Essex; and my Lady Rich is appointed to be before the Lords. And the scholler that writt Harry the 4th is comytted to the Towre...*”. The scholar was John Hayward whose *Life and Reign of King Henry VIII* gave offence to the Queen. It dealt with 1399, the last year of Richard II, forced to resign his crown and deposed by Parliament the following day who chose Henry IV to succeed. Succession to Elizabeth was a touchy subject; playwrights beware!

1600 London

Valentine Simmes reprinted *The first part of the contention between the two famous houses of York and Lancaster*, a history about Henry VI, published by Thomas Millington. He had used a copy of the 1594 first edition printed by Thomas Creed. Simmes

⁷⁸ In 1621 Mary Sidney Wroth had published an allegory of her social milieu, *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*, in which she, her cousin Pembroke and Mary Fitton were principal characters.

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and Creed had collaborated in 1597 and 1599 and between them developed a reputation for being able to produce at short notice commercial copies of plays for theatre-goers. They tried to keep some production capacity in reserve ahead of St. Stephen's Night, Twelfth Night, Shrove Tuesday, Court Weddings and State Occasions when they anticipated being requested to print souvenir copies of the gala plays.

That same year Ling published Christopher Middleton's *The Legend of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester* to which Michael Drayton, his friend John Weever and Robert Allott contributed commendatory verses.

4th August 1600, Stationers' Hall.

Four plays belonging to the Chamberlain's Company, *As You Like It*, a book; *Muche A doo about nothing*, a book; *Henry the ffift*, a book; and Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* were registered on the same spare page of the Stationers' register as the entry of 27th May. All four plays were noted *to be staied* (see 23rd August). The lead character of *Much Ado About Nothing* was Benedick, a young Lord who claimed he would never fall in love or marry, until he met the quick-witted and articulate heroine, Beatrice. [cf. William Herbert & Mary Fitton?]

11th August 1600, London

Having registered parts one and two of the play *Sir John Oldcastle* at Stationers' Hall on 11th August, Valentine Simmes had two print-runs (Q1) of *The first part of true and honourable history of Sir John Old-castle, the good Lord Cobham. As it hath been lately acted by the right honourable the Earl of Nottingham the high Admiral of England his servants. London. Printed by V S for Thomas Pavier and are to be sold at his shop the Cat & parrot near the Exchange. 1600.*

A further quarto (Q2) as *Written by William Shakespeare printed for T P 1600* was in fact (fraudulently) printed in 1619. The anonymous Q1 is considered the superior. Pavier in 1619 was trying to promote sales by branding under the Shakespeare name. One should note that the first part was performed by the Admiral's men whereas the second part, by the same authors, was performed by the Chamberlain's.

14th August 1600, London.

Having been *staied* on 4th August, *The historie of Henry the Vth with the battle of Agencourt was sett over to Thomas Pavier* who also was the publisher of the companion *Sir John Oldcastle*.

It would appear that a few days earlier (4th August) an inferior text of the play was already in print, the title page of the first edition reading: *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift, with his battell fought at Agin Court in France. Together with Auntient Pistoll. As it hath bene sundry times playd by the Right honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. London. Printed by Thomas Creede for Tho. Millington and Iohn Busby. And to be sold at his house in Carter Lane, next the Powle head. 1600.*

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23rd August 1600, Stationers' Hall.

The Second Part of King Henrie the Fourth, and *Muche a Doo about nothings* wrytten by master Shakespeare were registered at the Stationers' Hall to Wise and Aspley; both were printed the same year by Valentine Simmes.⁷⁹ Wise had already obtained the rights to *The First Part of King Henrie the Fourth* in Feb 1598.

Baynard's Castle, August 1600

May and Will lay side by side, their bodies glistening in the cool of the castle, cocooned from the summer heat. They were reading a manuscript. May, imagining herself as Rosalynde, had sensed that Thomas Lodge's 1591 book, *Rosalynde*, could be made into a play. She had spoken to Richard Barnfield who in turn had spoken to his Warwickshire friend, the poet and playwright, Michael Drayton who was a friend of Lodge's. Drayton had produced a wonderful script which they were reading to each other. Drayton had collaborated with Lodge, Thomas Dekker, Richard Hathaway and Anthony Munday. Munday had recently been touring with the Pembroke Players in the Low Countries where they had entertained William's Uncle, Robert Sidney. William had insisted the playwrights envisioned his May as *Rosalynde*, confident, tall, beautiful, intelligent, feisty and having a delicate sense of humour. The script was faithful to Lodge's story, other than changing all the characters' names except Rosalynd's, creating a priest called *Sir Oliver Martext*, *Audrey* a country wench and a simple-minded peasant, *William*, to be played by one young, rich, arrogant, well-educated nobleman known to be shy of marriage. Enter William, the country clown;

William	Good ev'n, Audrey.
Audrey	God ye good ev'n, William.
William	And good ev'n to you, sir.
Touchstone	Good ev'n, gentle friend. Cover thy head, cover thy head; nay, prithee, be covered. How old are you, friend?
William	Five and twenty sir.
Touchstone	A ripe age. Is thy name William?
William	William, sir.
Touchstone	A fair name. Was' born i'th'forest here?

⁷⁹ ***The second part of Henrie the fourth***, continuing to his death and coronation of Henrie the fift. With the humours of Sir John Falstaff and swaggering Pistol. As it hath been sundrie times pulikely acted by the right honourable the Lord Chamberlain his servants. Written by William Shakespeare. Printed by V. S. For Andrew Wise and William Aspley, 1600. ***Much Ado about Nothing*** as it hath been sundrie times pulikely acted by the right honourable the Lord Chamberlain his servants. Written by William Shakespeare. Printed by V. S. For Andrew Wise and William Aspley, 1600.

Both plays had lost the hyphen pf Shake-speare although it appears again later.

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William Ay, sir, I thank God.
Touchstone "Thank God" a good answer. Art rich?
William Faith, sir, so-so.
Touchstone "So-so" is good, very good, very excellent good; and yet it is not, it is but so-so. Art thou wise?
William Ay, sir, I have a pretty wit.
Touchstone Why, thou sayst well. I do now remember a saying: "The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool" The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to eat a grape, would open his lips when he put it into his mouth, meaning thereby that grapes were made to eat and lips to open. You do love this maid?
William I do, sir.
Touchstone Give me your hand. Art thou learned?
William No, sir.
Touchstone Then learn this of me: to have is to have; for it is a figure in rhetoric that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other. For all your writers do consent that ipse is he. Now, you are not ipse, for I am he.
William Which he, sir?
Touchstone He, sir, that must marry this woman. Therefore, you clown, abandon - which is in the vulgar "leave" - the society - which in the boorish is "company" - of this female - which in the common is "woman" - which together is "abandon" the society of this female or, clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest; or, to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death, thy liberty into bondage. I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel; I will bandy with thee in faction; I will o'errun thee with policy. I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways. Therefore tremble and depart.
Audrey Do, good William.
William God rest you merry, sir.

Performed privately at Court (or at Wilton), the character *William* had but ten lines and when played by William Herbert generated hysterical tears of laughter. History has not noticed that Michael Drayton left a clue to his authorship. In Lodge's book the late father of the three brothers (in the play – Orlando, Oliver and Jacques) was called John of Bordeaux; in the play he became *Roland du Boys (Bois)*. Drayton's fellow poets had long since given him the poetical accolade of *Rowland*. He came from the *Woodlands* area of Warwickshire formerly known as the *Forest of Arden*, where a Dubois family had existed in ancient times. It is hardly coincidental that the main lead was named Orlando, a re-spelling of Roland.⁸⁰

For the two lovers it was a wonderful summer. Whenever she could, May would slip away; once reported running along the Strand to Baynard's Castle

⁸⁰ Drayton's 1593 *The Shepherd's Garland* was written under the pseudonym *Rowland*.

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disguised as a boy to spend time with her lover. William obtained permission to borrow his Uncle Robert's best horse, Bay Leigh, to go riding with May who rode Bay Fitton, allocated to her by the Queen.

London 1600

In 1600 actor Will Kempe after quitting the Lord Chamberlain's players, wrote a pamphlet to *satisfie his friends* about his 1599 *daunce from London to Norwich*; *Kemps nine daies wonder*. He dedicated the book to the Queen, *the true ennobled Lady and [to] his most bountifull Mistris, Mistriss Anne Fitton* ⁸¹ *Mayde of Honour to the most sacred Mayde Royall Queene Elizabeth*; performed in a *Morrice from London to Norwich* starting on the first Monday in Lent.

He concluded – writing of his search for an honest ballad-maker: *Still the search continuing I met a proper upright youth, only for a little stooping at the shoulders: all heart to the heel, a penny poet whose first making was the miserable stolen story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth, or Mac somenbat: for I am sure a Mac it was, though I never had the maw to see it.* ⁸²

September 1600

The Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer Pipe Rolls E372/445 under *Residuum London* records the still outstanding debt of 13s 4d. by William Shakespeare of St. Helen's Parish's. A note alongside the entry reading *Epo Winton* now refers this to the Bishop of Winchester who owned property in Southwark, principally his Bishop's Palace and the adjacent prison known as *The Clink*. One can interpret this that either Shakespeare was living in one of the Bishop's houses in the vicinity alongside the river that were used as stew-pots – or was in prison for debt. ⁸³

6th October 1600; London

A Midsummer Night's Dream was registered at Stationers' Hall as the copy of Thomas Fisher, a bookseller *at the signe of the White Hart* in Fleet Street. The title page stated that it *hath been publickly acted by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine*

⁸¹ Clearly a mistake; Mary Fitton was the maid of honour at the time. Kemp must have recognised her love for theatre suggesting she witnessed rehearsals at the various palaces.

What Will Kemp did not have the *maw* to see was a play, not a ballad. I suspect the *upright youth* was Thomas Middleton, aged twenty.

⁸² From Arber's transcript of the Stationer's Register; Entered 27th August 1596; *Thomas Millyngton was ... fined ii.s vi.d for printing a ballad contrarye to order, which he also presently paid. Md. - the ballad entituled the Taminge of a shrewe; also one other ballad of Macdobeth [Macbeth?]*. W. Greg considered this a forgery by John Payne Collier about 1830.

⁸³ A letter found in a book in 2025 relates to a Mrs Shakespeare who lives in Trinity Street – which is in Surrey.

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his servants. Written by William Shakespeare. The printer's name was not given but the first page carried both the decorative letter *N* and the ornaments of Valentine Simmes.

October 1600

William Herbert's father, Earl Pembroke, had granted his son, William with his younger brother, Philip, permission to live at Baynard's Castle away from their country home at Wilton. It is reported that, *My Lord Harbert is practising at Greenwich. He leaps he dances, he sings – he makes his horse run with more speed.*

At first William Herbert had not recognised her when he had slipped into her room. Her face had been changed with the heavy paint and her eyes were lined with streaks of blackness and her eyelids darkened. She saw the startled effect it had on him and immediately regretted the image she had tried so hard to create.

"May?"

"You do not like it?"

"I thought you a stranger."

"Never, my Lord. You still love me? It is important." She wiped at a dark smudge on his forehead close to his mole.

They kissed; lovemaking and lust cemented their feelings. Lying on their sides, hot and exhausted. As they held each other's eyes she softly told him, "Will, I am carrying your child." His eyes widened.

"Mine?"

"No other's."

"When?" he asked.

"The Wedding; at Lord Cobham's – in June – our first, wonderful night."

He was not surprised. He kissed her soft lips and mumbled, "I love you; a child, my child." Reassured of his reaction, she smiled and fell asleep. He was gone when she awoke. On his pillow he had left a sonnet.

*127 In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were it bore not beauty's name:
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And Beauty slandered with a bastard shame,
For since each hand hath put on Natures power,
Fairing the foul with Art's false borrowed face,
Sweet beauty hath no name no holy bower,
But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my Mistress' eyes are Raven black,
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem,
At such who not borne faire no beauty lack,
Slandering Creation with a false esteem,*

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*Yet so they mourn becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says beauty should look so.*

Mary Fitton thought everything would be all right.

19th October 1600, at Penshurst, Kent

Mary (Malkin) Sidney celebrated her fourteenth birthday. Her cousin, whom she loves, William Herbert is now aged twenty.

28th October 1600, London

The Comical History of the Merchant of Venice was printed by John Roberts for Thomas Heyes. The principal source was *Il Pecorone*, a collection of stories by Ser Giovanni of Florence, published in Italian in 1558 and *not* translated into English, indicating that the author of the Shake-Speare play had command of Italian.⁸⁴

1601

Westminster, London, Jan 1601

It was late evening on 6th Jan 1601. A full year had passed since the tragic deaths of the Radcliffe twins. During the last few hours Christmas festivities had come to an end; few of the hundred-and-twenty-thousand inhabitants of the many London parishes were not snoring, coughing or farting in their sleep. Outside the Palace of Westminster the occasional horse neighed as grooms in livery sat waiting patiently with their masters' coaches, talking quietly to each other, catching up on news, spreading gossip; some playing cards. Inside the Palace dinner had finished and the Court had assembled in the candlelit Great Hall to be entertained by a new play, *What you Will* or *Twelfth Night*. Two of the main characters whom they were about to meet were twins, *Viola* and *Sebastian*. They were also about to embrace another great character, *Malvolio*, a wonderful piece of parody on the stuffy Sir William Knollys, Comptroller of the Queen's Household, whom everyone, excepting perhaps Sir William himself, would recognise. Rumours had leaked out from rehearsals of a great comedy and many were anticipating that the butt of the jokes would indeed be Sir William, married and in his fifties who had failed to obfuscate that he was helplessly in love with Mistress Mary Fitton, the tall, nubile maid-of-honour for whom he was supposed to have been acting with propriety as guardian. By this same *Twelfth Night*, the curtains of twenty-two-year-old Mistress Fitton's gowns could barely hide six month's pregnancy.

⁸⁴ Shakespeare Survey 47. A hint at John Florio.

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The putative father, twenty-year-old William Herbert, heir to one of the wealthiest and most eminent English Earldoms, had absented himself from Court against the Queen's wishes; at his peril but with reason – he was ninety miles away at Wilton House near Salisbury with his father, the second Earl Pembroke, who was close to death. He himself was about to become an Earl.

On stage, in the makeshift playhouse on the floor of the Great Hall, the twins, separated by shipwreck and thinking each other dead, are eventually identified to each other by the fact that their father died on their birthday and had had a mole on his forehead. Whoever wrote the play knew some quite obtuse detail of Court life. The well-founded rumours of Mal Fitton's pregnancy had been circulating Court for weeks, some whispered that the father was the Comptroller.

Wherefore are these things hid? Wherefore have these gifts a curtain before 'em? are they like to take dust⁸⁵ like Mistress Mall's picture?" asks Sir Toby Belch, a character in the mould of Sir John Falstaff. There was only one Mistress Mall at Court and she was six months pregnant. Dust was slang for *semen*; picture would sound like *pitcher*, a vessel; semen in a vessel – cruel humour!

The Queen had greatly enjoyed the evening and its theatre but now she could not sleep. She was feeling her age, her mortality. Waking-hours were increasingly precious. High in the gatehouse, accompanied by three Maids-of-the-Bedchamber, she looked out towards the flickering lights of London with its countless home-dwellers spread out along the banks of the Thames from Westminster to Deptford. She had watched from on high as the carriages left. It had been a long night and there were still some long, winter hours before dawn. Occasional cries of sexual joys and muted laughter could be heard from the rooms farmed out to her favourite, paying guests. The gentle rumble of the great city, a mile away down the Strand was quiet in comparison, but she knew that when daylight broke the revellers in the rooms below would be fast asleep and in the City her subjects would once again create the bustle of vibrant streets. They were all her subjects, here in London and throughout the land; subjects who accepted a total interdependence between town and country and a monarch who provided justice and security. The towns harboured industries consuming materials and labour, creating commerce and supporting livelihoods. The country providing sustenance. Three years earlier a rainy summer had caused the harvest to fail and people had starved to death. She could do little. She feared plague – that of 1593 had taken one in five of the London population.

⁸⁵ Slang for *semen*; picture would sound like *pitcher*, a vessel; cruel humour!

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A new year had begun. No one could predict the end or severity of that winter, foresee a hot summer or another wet harvest. Could she, would she avoid wars or civil unrest? Affairs in Ireland were just as bad and, with resentment, she admitted to herself that Essex had failed her in his expedition against the rebels. However charming he was, she could never forgive him. She could never marry and had made up her mind as to who would succeed. As allegiances and political alliances changed across Europe she relied on faithful ministers to establish the integrity of her State and counter the constant political threats. She thought back to the short reign of her elder, half-sister, Queen Mary, after she had succeeded their brother, Edward. Mary had kept in tow a husband who was King of Spain and the de facto King of England; England, unbelievably, had a Spanish king! She shivered; the stars in the cloudless sky signalled a sharp frost. Mistress Mary Radcliffe, a maid of the Bedchamber, passed her another cape and she tightened it around her proud shoulders. Her thoughts wandered and mumbled. "If my sister and that Spaniard had had surviving children, England, Wales and Ireland would today be some part of a Spanish dominion and I would probably have had my head cut off." Her eyes welled as she recalled her mother, Anne Boleyn, executed at the Tower where she too had been incarcerated. Then there was bloody Scotland flirting as it had done for years with a prospect of French sovereignty. "Puh!" She uttered as she turned to leave the tower. "Puh!" She was wearying of being Queen; at least Christmas was over. "Let us get some sleep," she told her ladies. Relieved, the equally weary maids smiled bravely. Their skirts rustled as their torches lit the way to the Queen's chambers.

Wilton House, Wiltshire. 6th January 1601

Ninety miles away Wilton House was silent. A lonely wisp of cloud shaded the moon and darkened the white façade of the mansion. William Herbert had too much time to think. He paced outside his father's chamber. Through the open door he could see his father breathing shallowly, occasionally fitfully. In weeks, days or even in hours he would become the third Earl of Pembroke. It was his moment in history and he had never felt so melancholy. He had sent a letter to Robert Cecil, excusing himself from the *Twelfth Night* festivities – despite the command from the Queen that *all* her lords should attend. On returning to London he would have difficult explanations to give, but how he explained away his situation with May Fitton was beyond any man's wit; his mother was one kettle of fish, Cecil another and the Queen was a cauldron. He knew he was the one in hot water.

He felt himself age as he increasingly sensed the gravity of the Pembroke, Dudley and Sidney dynasties with their colourful family histories. He recalled his childhood, when six-years-old, the great funeral procession of Uncle Philip and the stories of adventure Uncle Robert had told him. It had been 1586 when the two brothers, Sir Philip and Robert Sidney, were caught in a minor skirmish at a river crossing near the village of Zutphen in the Netherlands. Uncle Philip's thigh had

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been shattered by a Spanish musket-ball and twenty days later, in the nearby town of Arnhiem, he had died of a blood poison. Poor Uncle Robert had witnessed it all. As nephews of the late Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the Queen's bosom companion, the family had been treated royally at Court while their uncle was in favour, especially because their mother nursed the Queen through smallpox. Philip Sidney was a soldier, a statesman and a poet, a man of exceptional ability, much loved and respected. And now William vaguely recalled 1583 being dressed up as a pageboy in 1583 at the marriage of Uncle Philip to Frances, the daughter of the Queen's Secretary of State, Francis Walsingham, paymaster of the network of spies, arresting traitors whose information under torture protected the Queen. His mother had told him that had Uncle Philip lived beyond his thirty-five years he would have become one of the great men of English history. Every man in every tavern in England seemed to know the manner of his death; his thigh shattered, he was offered water but famously refused saying to a dying soldier nearby, "*thy necessity is greater than mine*". He died in October but it was fully four months, in February 1587, before his interment with a state funeral procession through London. William, then a child, had watched the from a first floor window.

In that night's moonlight he reflected on the procession that had vastly outstripped his uncle's rank, who was neither lord nor high-ranking commander, just a modest governor of Flushing, a fortress that commanded the Westerschelde Estuary which led to Antwerp. He had since witnessed a number of funerals but none like that one. Seven hundred had marched in procession. At the head the funeral cortege, his uncle's horse with his helmet carrying on its crest Uncle Philip's porcupine, and the pheon,⁸⁶ the downward pointing arrowhead, like a spearhead, of the Sidneys on their livery. As a child he had loved that helmet as much as he loved his Uncle and whenever he was at Penshurst, the Sidney's home in Kent, he would ask to play with it. Years later, puzzled why the funeral was out of all proportion, his Uncle Robert had explained; seven days before the funeral, Mary, the Scottish Queen, had been beheaded. The procession had been made into a State occasion to demonstrate to the citizens of London and to foreign ambassadors the absolute power of the Monarchy.

He recalled with sadness how his mother and uncle had mourned their brother. It had been a terrible year for the Sidney family. His grandfather and grandmother had died within months of each other and he had a vague memory that his mother, Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke was still grieving the loss of his three-year-old sister, Katherine, whom he still saw fleetingly in his dreams, her red hair, like his. Mother had avoided society for three years, then one day, like a phoenix rising from the ashes of despair, with great joy they had all left Wilton House. In an

⁸⁶ The sharp end of a spear is a pheon.

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imposing cortege of carriages they rode at pace the ninety miles to London to take up residence in their pied-à-terre, the colossal, exciting but comfortable Baynard's Castle. He had been nine-years-old; now he was approaching twenty-one and once again his whole world was changing, and seemingly just as rapidly. Baynard's and the many other properties and estates in Wiltshire and Glamorgan would be his to enjoy with their great income, but not before 8th April when he came of age; and in that respect there was a problem; he might yet be made a ward of Court. He walked into the library and a solicitous, mournful servant lit extra candles. They burned with hardly a flicker. He went to a bookshelf and drew out his Uncle Philip's book of sonnets, *Astrophel and Stella*. He flicked through the pages and stopped at *Sonnet 38*;

*This night while sleep begins with heavy wings
To hatch mine eyes, and that unbitted thought
Doth fall to stray; and my chief powers are brought
To leave the sceptre of all subject things:
The first that straight my fancy's error brings
Unto my mind, is STELLA'S image; wrought
By LOVE'S own self, but with so curious draught,
That she, methinks, not only shines but sings:
I start! look! hark ! but what in closed up sense
Was held, in open sense it flies away;
Leaving me nought but wailing eloquence.
I, seeing better sights in sight's decay;
Called it anen, and wooed sleep again:
But him her host, that unkind guest had slain.*

Uncle Philip had died without completing the work and his mother had spent many hours retouching the one-hundred-and-eight sonnets to her own satisfaction; Mother was never fully-satisfied with anything she composed. He had read them several times, each time with increased appreciation as he himself understood more about sex and the sexes. As a teenager his uncle had been passionately in love but the young woman, Penelope Rich, was married. William knew Penelope as an adult, here in the poetry twenty years earlier she was a fifteen-year-old girl being admired and loved. Uncle Philip had brought into fashion the Sonnet, a poem of fourteen lines made up of three quatrains of four lines, and a final couplet of two. The first two quatrains tending to support each other, the third quatrain giving a converse view, and the final couplet binding the logic together and move one on to a new plane. Writing in sonnet form had become a family peculiarity emulated by his mother and Uncle Robert. Even May had started to write to him in sonnets. He treasured all she wrote; she wrote beautifully, never afraid to play with, or even invent words. He did not know whether to believe her when she had boasted to him that it was she who had written *Venus & Adonis*. It made him constantly wary of Southampton although she swore nothing had happened between them.

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He pictured her in the Great Hall in London watching *Twelfth Night*. A few weeks earlier he had felt their baby kick; enter a new generation to replace his father's exit. He missed her. She had not lied to him. He had taken her virginity, but marriage?

London; 8th January 1601

Mary Fitton had returned to the maids' chamber to pack her chests. Repeatedly, she turned over in her mind the audience with the Queen. She had listened calmly as the Queen sharply told her the history of the Fittons, how her father, grandfather and great-grandfather had served her in Ireland under the Earl of Pembroke. She reminded Mary of when she had first come to serve as her Maid and some of the moments they had shared together. Then she had asked if she was with child but gave no time for an answer, "*The father is Lord Cardiff, no other?*" Mal's bowed head gave the answer. "*Not Sir William Knollys?*" Mal shuddered under her robe; she shook almost imperceptibly and tried a weak laugh. The Queen raised a hand as if to cuff her then smiled to offset the tears that were forming. "*Thank the Lord for one mercy, that old fart. It is arranged; you will stay with Lady Margaret Hawkins in St. Dunstan's until your coming-to-bed. A coach will be in the yard for you tomorrow at midday. Bay Fitton will remain in my stables and I shall deal with Lord Cardiff on his return. You will know his father is dying, of course. Either you will come back to Court as the new Countess of Pembroke or not at all. God be with you, Mistress Fitton.*"

With the grim conversation behind her, Mary was relieved. As she tidied her many pieces of jewellery each held its own memory of William. Perhaps there would be a future after the baby was born? "*Not Sir William Knollys?*" the Queen had asked. No, she had not given herself to Knollys. "*I must ignore Knollys. Ignore Knollys!*" Was she being stupid? Was the bastard growing inside her to be a child of shame? Would it live? She remembered their first St. Stephen's Night together.

Three Earlier: Westminster, 26th December 1597

St. Stephen's night's entertainment had started with tumblers and jugglers as the Court dined in magnificence. She had played harpsichord to accompany Jack Wilson's mellifluous voice. She recalled three of her colleagues, the cousins Mary and Margaret Radcliffe and Anne Russell, fussing around the Queen who was laughing as she caught her eye; she had curtsied. The Queen looked at her quizzically, frowned and with a sudden broad smile and a short dismissive wave indicated she was released to join the courtiers as they made their way through the corridors of the Palace of Westminster to the Great Hall. Scaffolding had been erected supporting tiers of seating, and at one end on a raised dais the Queen's throne stood under a white and gold canopy. She could see herself ease her tall and slender body, with its wide, white gown, through the crowd aiming to position herself close to Will Herbert. It was Will's first Christmas at Court and she knew the drama of the playhouse excited him. She could see the thrill on his face and his slight embarrassment when she sat down beside him. She

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was still much the taller, he the younger, but their eyes, his blue, hers grey, had been flirting with each other all evening and they had been acutely aware of each other's presence for weeks. They were not strangers. The Fittons, the Sidneys and the Herberts had served a common agenda in various matters of State and the youngsters' paths had crossed from time to time. Most recently they had been with the Queen in her Progress around the countryside. There had been a stay at Penshurst, a second home to him, and had the good fortune to shyly talk as would any young couple who find themselves attracted to each other. In common they had music, literature, theatre and riding. They were both attractive, passionate, moody, articulate and exceptionally gifted.

The intoxication of the crowds around them had heightened the feeling of proximity to each other and isolation from everyone else. Great expectations were in the air as the cream of English society jockeyed for places on the tiers in the vastness of the Great Hall with its massive oak hammer-beam roof high above them. Minstrels were playing at the head of the staircase at one end, and rudimentary scenery had been placed on the marble floor; enough to stimulate the imagination and make a few hours' fantasy into a virtual reality. Of course, it was no coincidence that the two young people found themselves sitting next to each other. And it was not unnoticed and current gossip that seventeen-year-old William Herbert, Lord Cardiff, was flirting with one of the Queen's favourite maids; a favourite because feisty Mal Fitton reminded the Queen of herself at the same age of nineteen. As the inebriated nobility absorbed the sense of occasion there were a few gossips who wondered whom William Herbert would next reject as his parents strove to find him a wife and dowry to secure the posterity a male heir would create. William had already turned down the granddaughter of the First Minister, William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, and the daughter of the Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey. He was getting a reputation of being shy of marriage.

The Master of the Revels was pacing like a mother hen around the stage. Effectively the Court's Theatre impresario, his task at hand was to provide the best entertainment for this the most intellectual, demanding and inebriated of all audiences. The Court expected the best so nearly every play at Court was developed out of one or more proven stories or histories from the best of Latin, Greek, Italian, French, Nordic, Spanish or English. The plays were repeatedly distilled by playwrights and players to produce the very best of their arts, and the players of the Lords Chamberlain and of the High Admiral were *the* state of the art. The Master of Revels also had to ensure that this most discerning audience were not only well-entertained but that the content would not introduce political controversy, unacceptable propaganda or subverted messages. It is barely conceivable that any playwright would attempt to circumvent the censor with a subterfuge that would stir up the Catholics, could support one faction against

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another or besmirch the Tudor monarchy. Careers could be ended with an innocent wrong word.

The play was *Love's Labour's Lost* and as it was about to start there was a great laugh from the Queen as she watched Mistress Fitton cover her beautiful face with the mask of an Ethiop. With half the Court looking in his direction William Herbert could only blush in the semi-darkness, but as the first words of the play were articulated and the crowd went silence, not wishing to miss a single nuance, he felt a long, slender and moist hand reach for his. And so began a story of lust and love that has echoed and still echoes in theatres all over the globe. What William Herbert did not know was that Mary Fitton had finally shaken off her infatuation for Harry Wriothesley now he was too deeply absorbed with her friend and colleague, Elizabeth Vernon. William Herbert may not have known that he was not the first lord that Mistress Fitton had been attracted to; but Sir William Knollys knew. Despairingly he had been watching it all.

Knollys, sitting opposite the young lovers, and bristling with envy at seeing them together, was Comptroller of the Queen's household. He was married to Lady Chandos, who happened to be a godmother to William Herbert's own mother. Lady Chandos was quite some years the elder and Sir William daily berated the fact that she would not die. His own father was the Queen's first cousin, being the grandson of Mary Boleyn, Queen Anne's sister. He was in his fifties when Mal Fitton was entrusted to his guardianship by her father, Sir Edward. The Fittons had homes in London on the Strand and at Gawsworth in Cheshire. However, soon after his elder daughter, Anne, had started married life with John Newdigate at Arbury Hall in Warwickshire, Sir Edward Fitton had retired to Cheshire. From Court Sir William Knollys wrote to Mal's father that he would protect *the innocent lamb from the wolfish cruelty and fox-like subtlety of the tame beasts of this place which when they seem to take bread at a man's hand will bite before they bark; all their songs be Syren-like, and their kisses after Judas fashion, but from such beasts deliver me and my friends. I will with my counsel advise your fair daughter, with my true affection love her and with my sword defend her if need be. Her innocency will deserve it and her virtue will challenge it at my hands, and I will be as careful with her well doing as if I were her true father.*

From Knollys' letters to Anne Newdigate it was evident that he was in love with her sister and would readily marry her the afternoon of the morning that Lady Chandos died, forever anticipating that day. Lady Chandos would not oblige. Only one letter survived of the undoubted loving correspondence between the two sisters but reading between the lines of Knollys' letters to Lady Anne, Mary Fitton was keeping her distance and giving him the run-around.

Sir William Knollys, behind all his pomposity and royal connections, was a salacious old man. At Westminster his chamber was next to that of the Queen's

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maids so he could hear them giggling into the night. One night, dressed only in a nightshirt he walked into their room with a book of spicy pornography by the Italian Aristo Arotini and started reading to the young women. The Queen was exasperated to find that Knollys was a constant pest to Mistress Fitton and that her maid was unhappy and wary under his care. She had found out from Knollys that Mal Fitton was moody and it aggrieved him when she gave him the cold-shoulder every time he passed her room at night, especially on one occasion when he was suffering from toothache and she did not wish him *goodnight*. His feelings for Mary did not go unnoticed around the Court and he made himself look ridiculous when in an attempt to look *a-la-mode* he dressed himself in outmoded yellow stockings and dyed his beard three different colours.

For two years William Herbert had seized every opportunity to be with Mistress Fitton and tried every stratagem to deprive her of her virginity. He bombarded her with gifts and all sorts of jewels; a jewel to remind her of their every meeting, he wrote her love letters and composed many a poem. At court they danced together, attended theatre together, and sought out the company of poets and wordsmiths but there was one line she would not cross. William became frustrated, he discovered other women and the glittering prize he represented in their eyes. All knew it could not be long before the father died and William would become the third Earl Pembroke with title to his father's massive estate. He had charm, good looks, wit and humour and he took advantage as the single and married women at Court sought him out. Then on 16th June 1600, after the heady wedding of her friend and colleague, M^{rs} Anne Russell, he had asked her to marry him. She had said yes.

Mary had read the script of the night's play, *Twelfth Night*, had attended snatches of the rehearsals and immediately recognised that the character Malvolio was based on the pompous Sir William Knollys so proud of his white staff of office.

Wilton House; 8th January 1601

Mary Sidney Herbert sat on her husband's bedside, her small hands clasping his cool, bloated fingers. His heart was much weakened and coverlets hid the engrossed body with its retained fluids. The surgeon had tried to drain the legs but her dear friend, Doctor Lister, at her shoulders had gently told her there was little hope. She knew it. She would never forget the smell of the seeping wounds.

By the age of fifteen she had had all the benefits that *New Learning* and the finest opportunities education could provide; these in turn had proved a model for their own children. She mused; her marriage in 1577 at the age of fifteen to the forty-five-year-old Henry Herbert had quickly become one of mutual respect and then love despite the age difference. On the death of his father Harry had become an earl and she a countess. Three of their children, William, Philip and

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Anne, had survived and grown to have very differing characters; Wilkin – intense, Pip relaxed and Anne effervescent. The Countess had passions and interests and was, in this first year of the seventeenth century, probably the greatest patron of the literary arts in English history – and also a poet, writer and translator in her own right. Nor was she reliant on her husband's wealth; she had her own estate in Cardiff. Her standing had allowed her to surround herself with gifted professionals who shared her love for the spoken word. Baynard's was home not only to the Pembrokes and the Sidneys but also a meeting place for her many friends. Brother Robert had married well. His wife Barbara Gamage had produced a large family of well-adjusted children and given him stability and happiness. There had been a fleeting rumour of Robert's infidelity in Paris which may have explained the Queen's transferring him to the Netherlands – and then found himself stuck there. He too enjoyed literary pursuits and aside from politics and diplomacy also took great pleasure in providing the Court with peaches from his extensive well-stocked gardens at Penshurst. Robert's daughter, nicknamed Malkin, was a very special niece who enjoyed the literary arts as much as she did and was a gifted musician. She treated her niece like a daughter. Malkin was seven years younger than her son, William, but by the time she was thirteen and William twenty these two cousins had clearly developed a rapport. William, however, was unaware how deeply his young cousin was in love with him. During this past year little Malkin had spent increasing amounts of time with her literary aunt as the two of them had watched, with differing expressions of emotion, William courtship of Mary Fitton, a courtship the Queen had not discouraged. Had she and her husband made mistakes in trying to find a suitable bride for William? Three sets of negotiations had all failed through the unwillingness of their son and the insufficient marriage portions that had been offered. So what of the Fitton girl; was the rumour true that she was carrying her first grandchild?

It had been here at Wilton House where her firstborn, William, was born, near midnight, 8th April 1580. From that day she feared for his life and cursed the soothsayer who had portended that William would not live into his fifty-first year. She had surrounded him with tutors. At the age of twelve he went to New College, Oxford. At fifteen he was briefly presented at Court and again at seventeen when he started to live in London.

She relished the company of the gifted men in her entourage; Samuel Daniell was her children's tutor for a couple of years, Abraham ffraunce a man of letters who made a living as a barrister, and Thomas Moffet her doctor who again had the ability to produce handsome works of literature. Her husband employed two

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gifted secretaries and authors, Hugh Sandford and Arthur Massinger whose son, Philip was a play-friend to her own William.⁸⁷

Her marriage to a great earl was also a marriage to England. In return for their Crown Estates dating back to the Norman Conquest of 1066, and the gifts of church estates after the appropriation of the church lands by Henry VIII, the nobility, her peer group, contracted to supply men, money and arms in times of crisis to protect the common weal. Differing religious convictions could be both divisive and destructive, plots were designed, plots were discovered, and from time to time dukes' and earls' heads were severed from their bodies and estates forfeited; even the Scottish Queen. There were about thirty great Earls whose vast estates produced great incomes. The money was used both wisely and unwisely. The Earl of Oxford, a reputable *playwright for comedy*, had financed his profligate lifestyle and continental travel by steadily selling his smaller estates – to the great dismay of his wife and her father, Lord Burghley.

1587 had been a turning point in her life with the death of her parents and brother and the following year, 1588, was a turning point in English history. While the massive Spanish armada of ships carrying troops destined to invade England sailed up the Channel, the family waited nervously at Wilton with plans in place to escape to France should the invasion have succeeded. Fortunately the English Navy under her friend Charles Howard and his admirals (and a favourable wind) had been able to disperse the Spanish ships. Those stormy years of succession to Henry VIII through his children Edward, then Mary, were finally dissipated under *the bastard* Elizabeth. Government was operated through a cabinet known as the Privy Council, led by the chief adviser to the Queen, William Cecil, Baron Burghley, her Secretary of State. Running a country and making oneself rich was serious stuff, full of political traps and requiring a master spy, Francis Walsingham, to run an extensive network of informers. For forty years William Cecil organised it all, including political allegiances engineered by the marriages of many of the offspring of the great Lords. Sir Philip Sidney was married to Francis Walsingham's daughter, Frances. Cecil's own daughter, Anne, was married to the profligate Oxford. Cecil became guardian to their teenage grandchildren and tried to ally his family to the Stanleys, Pembrokes and Sidneys. Young William Herbert had upset Burghley and Oxford when he refused to marry Oxford's eldest daughter, Bridget, but ironically the Countess had noticed that her son, Philip, had eyes for Susan the youngest of Oxford's three daughters – and the most vivacious.

⁸⁷ William Herbert paid the college expenses of Philip Massinger for the four years he was at Oxford but he did not take his degree. By 1613, at the age of thirty, Massinger had become John Fletcher's primary collaborator. Nothing is known of Massinger between 1606 and 1613. His father, Arthur, died in 1603.

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When she had attempted to follow the various earls' family trees back four or more generations, she had found that almost everyone was related to each other; to expect family loyalty through bloodlines was an invidious process. Loyalties were mainly reinforced by repeated marriages between families; the Pembrokes had a history of marrying the Talbots, the family of the Earls of Shrewsbury, and in doing so both families attempted to secure their estates to themselves. Her family, however, the Sidneys and the Herberts had evolved as an extended family who respected each other and freely moved between each other's homes. The two families had come to the fore in the latter years of the reign of Henry VIII and having served their monarch well were handsomely rewarded. Her father-in-law, Henry Herbert, had politically survived the reigns of Edward VI and Mary before going on to serve Elizabeth who appointed him President of Ireland. Her father, Henry Sidney, had been President of Wales and she and her brothers, Philip, Robert and Thomas, spent much of their childhood at Ludlow Castle. In Ireland, Henry Herbert was served by two deputies, one of whom was Sir Edward Fitton, President of Connaught, who was succeeded in the post by his son of the same name, Mary Fitton's father.

From her father and father-in-law she had learnt that being granted stewardship of a part of the realm was no political whim. It was onerous for the incumbent who had to perform well if only to maintain the *status quo*, especially in Ireland. She never underestimated these men of great knowledge, understanding, political ability and loyalty, and in turn her sons were educated, instructed and brought up to emulate and better their father. Her husband ensured excellent tuition was provided from a very early age with fixed but small periods allowed for child-play. She had education manuals to help bring the best out of each of her children. The boys could speak basic Latin and Greek before they were learning to write in their mother tongue and as soon as the tutors thought that William had the intellect and stamina, he was sent to Oxford. He was twelve-years-old, three years younger than the average scholar but with his noble ancestry it was not thought precocious.

Time hung heavily. She tried to recall the names of her children's many tutors but to mind came her late father's words; how no children ever had more education than the three children of late King Harry who had insisted on education, education and even more education for Edward, Mary and Elizabeth. She tried to imagine the Queen in her classroom as a young Princess Elizabeth, the daughter by Anne Boleyn, and she mused at the eternal whisper that King Henry had sired two children by Mary Boleyn, his Queen's sister. Mary Boleyn, married to William Carey, had carried a son whom she named Henry, who eventually became Earl Hunsdon, one of Queen Elizabeth's confidants and a friend. Late in life Henry Carey had fathered a child by his young mistress, the poet Aemelia Lanier. Katherine, one of Mary Boleyn's daughters, had married Francis Knollys, another member of the Privy Council, whose son was *that* Clown, Sir William Knollys, who was hopelessly infatuated with the Fitton girl.

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Was she in danger from him? Earl Hunsdon's other sister was married to Charles Howard, Earl Nottingham, who had been the Queen's Admiral of the Fleet since before the year of the Spanish Armada. One of Charles Howard's daughters was married to Sir Richard Leveson, a bright young man, whose mother was a first cousin of Sir Edward Fitton. In the Careys, Howards, Sidneys, Herberts and Fittons the Queen was surrounded by trusted families, and moreover by many of the same religious minds, well-educated gifted, and in whom she placed her trust. The business of running the country was almost *family business* and her husband, Henry, had been accepted as part of that family. She sighed, "Harry, Harry, O Harry! have I been a good wife and mother?" Her husband stirred, a single, weak, involuntary cough, but it was nothing. Being an earl and a countess was intense business; politics fickle and fragile, whispers dangerous, lives, estates and reputations constantly at stake. They had all worked hard and diligently but in recompense their leisure hours were royally entertained; most gambled, some gambled most dangerously. She looked fondly at her dying husband and wondered if he had ever heard any rumours about her. If so, he had said nothing.

8th January 1601, London.

Mary Fitton felt at home with Lady Margaret Vaughan Hawkins. Lady Margaret, now in her eighties, had been a Lady of the Queens' Bedchamber before she married the widower Admiral, Sir John Hawkins. She was a good and generous woman and, after Hawkins died in the Caribbean in 1597, of considerable wealth. Mary had been given a large room on the ground floor at the back of the house with plenty of light. She was angry with herself that she had left some of her books at Court, *The Passionate Pilgrim* which William had given her, the latest printing of *Lucrece*; Thomas Middleton's *The Ghost of Lucrece* which she had not had a chance to read; the poem *Emaricdulfe*⁸⁸ by E.C. – dedicated to her brother Edward Fitton, and the latest printing of *Venus and Adonis*.

The books were found and put aside by her friend Mistress Onslowe, another maid-of-honour – but never returned. Mary picked out a small book from one of her chests, a gift from Sir William Knollys for her twenty-first birthday in 1599. The book's, *A Woman's Woorth Defended against all the Men in the World, proving them to be more perfect, excellent, and absolute in all virtuous Actions than any Man of what qualitie soever. Written by one that hath heard much, seene much, but knows a great deal more.* Had Sir William had written his own poem in dedication to Mistress Mary Fitten?

This testimonie of my true hart's zeale,

⁸⁸ E-mari-C-dulfe I believe is a combination of the author's initials E & C, Mary, the young woman's name and an anagram of Flude (Flood). There are only two known copies.

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*Faire and (for euer honord) vertuous maide:
To your kind fauor humbly dooth appeale
That in construction nothing be mis-saide.
Those fierie spirits of high temperd wit,
That drink the dew of Heaven continually:
They could have graced you with termes more fit,
Then can my lowlie, poore, **weake ingenie**.*

***Let not my love** (yet) nightly pass respect,
Devoted onely to your excellence:
Winke woorthy Virgin at my lines defect,
Let will extenuate what ere offence.*

*It is no bountie that is given from store,
Who gives his hart, what gifts can he give more?*

Curiously she studied the poem; she noted that the seventh line ended with *fit* and line-eight started with *then*, to make *fitthen*. She had laughed as she read the word *Willy* in the initial letters - **Weake Ingenie. Let (not My) Love Yet** nightly pass respect and wondered what exactly he meant by *nightly pass respect* and *will extenuate*? She placed the book on a shelf and next picked up her commonplace book from which poems had been printed in *The Passionate Pilgrim*. She had not cried since her meeting with the Queen but now the tears flowed. When eventually she stopped she took out her other books. She treasured the quarto-sized souvenir copies of the plays at Court especially those of the great gala nights. She loved theatre, its romances and its comedies more than the histories and the tragedies; a death on stage still made her faint. One attraction of being with Lady Margaret was her closeness to St. Paul's Yard where she could browse amongst the many booksellers' shops. She thought everything would be all right, unaware of the lampoon that was circulating;

*The Reindeer was embossed,
The White Doe ⁸⁹ she was lost,
Pembroke struck her down
And took her from the Clown. ⁹⁰*

Wilton House, near Salisbury, Wiltshire; 19th January 1601

⁸⁹ Or *White Hind*. In *Lucrece* we have mention of the elusive "*White Hind*". In *All's Well that Ends Well* Helena says *the hind that would be mated by a lion must die for love*. The Pembroke emblem was three lions.

⁹⁰ ... The white hind was crossed / Brave Pembroke struck her down / And took her from the clown / like a good woodman. [C C Stopes; The Third Earl of Southampton].

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The last words of Henry Herbert, the second Earl Pembroke were “remember me, remember me.” His children, the siblings William, Philip and Anne watched as their mother touched the lips, then closed the eyelids of her white-haired, dead husband. Trembling she slowly made the sign of the cross on his forehead and with great dignity, fighting to contain the emotions within her, she turned and walked away from the side of their marital bed and out of the room. The new Earl of Pembroke, touching his father’s arm, looked into the face and was startled as one eye opened as if to interrogate him. He bolted to follow his mother. Brother Philip smiled weakly at his sobbing sister and gently closed the eye. In the corridor William caught up with his mother.

“Mother?”

“Yes, your Grace.” William was surprised to hear his title from his mother’s lips.

“He was my father?”

Mary Sidney Herbert slapped his face. Then, stifling a cry of anguish, she curtsied, went down on one knee, and bowed her head. “My Lord Pembroke, I advise you return to Baynard’s. You are in jeopardy of becoming a ward. I will write to the Queen; she must not be ignored. I am going to the chapel to pray. Help me up. You may join me in prayer should you wish.” He did not wish, and at first light that winter’s day William Herbert, aged twenty, three months short of his majority, now an Earl, left Wilton for Baynard’s Castle and his fate in London.

The Fleet Prison, London; 27th Jan 1601

Earl Pembroke looked around. It was of good size as cells went with a generous fire and he knew he would not want for anything other than his freedom. His servants at Baynard’s were only a few minutes’ walk away from which a comfortable bed and other furniture had soon been brought.

On his return to Westminster he had been led into the Presence and found himself confronted not only by the Queen but also Robert Cecil, Sir William Knollys and May’s father. He had not been able to see May but found she was already under house-arrest at Lady Margaret Hawkins’. The Queen had asked him directly if he was the father of Mistress Fitton’s child. He admitted he was. Cecil’s face did not change; Knollys found it hard to contain a smirk; Sir Edward’s rouged in suppressed rage. The Queen did not hide her irritation and paced the floor. He was then asked whether he would marry Mistress Fitton. After a few seconds of silence, shuddering throughout his body as he looked in turn to each of the men, he had bowed his head and softly articulated, “I regret.” It was the end of the interview. The Queen sent him to the Fleet Prison to reconsider.

February 1601; London

Cecil, Lord Burleigh, wrote to a friend, *there is a misfortune befallen Mistris Fitton, for she is proved with chylde, and the Earl of Pembroke being examyned confesseth a fact but utterly renounced all marriage.*

February

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

From Baynard's William obtained copious sheets of paper, ink and quills and his first thought was to write to May. Her reply to him by the same messenger was quite unexpected and in the form of three sonnets.⁹¹

1 *From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory;

But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.

Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own buduriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.

Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.*

2 *When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tattered weed of small worth held.

Then being asked where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
To say within thine own deep-sunken eyes
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.

How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use
If thou could'st answer, 'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse'
Proving his beauty by succession thine.

This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.*

3 *Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest*

⁹¹ Psychologists should be able to recognise, from Sonnet-18 to Sonnet-126, the five stages of grief (Kuber-Ross; denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance) or seven stages (shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, testing, and acceptance.) not always quite in the same order as circumstances changed.

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*Now is the time that face should form another,
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.*

*For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
Of his self-love to stop posterity?*

*Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime;
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time;*

*But if thou live remembered not to be,
Die single, and thine image dies with thee.*

As flocks of snow drifted past the cell's window, Pembroke wrote to May explaining how desperately unhappy he was and his wish to die. He told her about his father appearing to him in waking-time as if he were still alive and of the phantom conversations they had had together. Three more sonnets arrived to comfort him, asking *him* to marry (*her*).

4 *Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing but doth lend,
And being frank she lends to those are free;*

*Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess given thee to give?
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?*

*For having traffic with thy self alone,
Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive;
Then how when nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?*

*Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee,
Which used, lives th' executor to be.*

5 *Those hours that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell
Will play the tyrants to the very same,
And that unfair which fairly doth excel;*

*For never-resting Time leads summer on
To hideous winter, and confounds him there,
Sap checked with frost, and lusty leaves quite gone,*

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Beauty o' and bareness everywhere.

*Then, were not summer's distillation left
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it nor no remembrance what it was;*

*But flowers distilled, though they with winter meet,
Lease but their show, their substance still lives sweet.*

6 *Then let not winter's ragged hand deface
In thee thy summer ere thou be distilled;
Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place
With beauty's treasure ere it be self-killed.*

*That use is not forbidden usury
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;
That's for thyself to breed another thee,
Or ten times happier be it ten for one.*

*Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
If ten of thine ten times refigured thee;
Then what could Death do if thou shouldst depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?
Be not self-willed, for thou art much too fair
To be Death's conquest and make worms thine heir.*

Through writing he could express the turmoil and anguish in his mind. He felt like Amleth, the Prince of Denmark; threatened by all around, that baby growing inside the woman he loved but would not marry, by her father and brother who pressed for a wedding, by the Queen and her First Secretary, by the magnitude of the responsibility of being one of the great earls, by the grief of not being able to attend his father's funeral, and by Time itself. Here he was, in the Fleet unable to do anything but write. His twenty-first birthday on 8th April was still weeks away and he dared not even hope that his mother would be able to persuade the Queen not to make him her Ward. But he was determined he would not marry May until after the child was born. He was confused and in his melancholy his thoughts drifted towards suicide.

When at New College, Oxford, he had acted the part of Marcellus in a play called *Hamlet*. Thomas Kyd had written it at the behest of his mother soon after her parents and his Uncle Philip, *the Courtier, Schollar, Souldier, all dasht and splintered thence*, had died; leaving his helmet at Penshurst for William to play with, the helmet topped with the Sidney crest, the *Porpentine* (Porcupine). His problems were indeed *like quills upon the fretful porpentine*. His Uncle Robert visited him and recalled how Elsinore Castle reminded him of Ludlow where he and William's mother had lived as a child, how after brother Philip's death both the siblings' minds would play

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tricks and they each found themselves in conversation with their dead brother. Now William was hearing his own father talking to him.

Hamlet had enjoyed small commercial success; Henslowe had played it only the once at his *Rose* Playhouse. William recognized the play was incomplete in that it lacked romance. So he sat down and wrote. He imagined himself Hamlet and created Ofelia in the image of his May. He wanted to explain so much to her but it would be better if it did not come from his own lips. He used the mouth of her stage brother, Laertes. Corambis was Ofelia's father.

Laertes to Ofelia;

*Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,
His greatness weighed, his will is not his own,
For he himself is subject to his birth;
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The sanity and health of the whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed;*

He thought it good but too cruel to inflict on his darling May. He put the speech aside but sent her others to read and amend. He was missing her and found her again in his dreams. He wrote sending her more drafts of his revised *Hamlet* and this sonnet.

128 *How oft when thou my musike musike playst,⁹²
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers when thou gently swayst,
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,

Do I envy those Jacks that nimble leap,
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips which should that harvest reap,
At the woods boldness by thee blushing stand.*

⁹² This poet wrote music.

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*To be so tickled they would change their state,
And situation with those dancing chips,
O're whom their fingers walk with gentle gate,
Making dead wood more blest then living lips,*

*Since saucy Jacks so happy are in this,
Give them their fingers, me thy lips to kiss.*

May amended his script and sent it back with another sonnet;

*8 Musick to hear, why hear'st thou musick sadly,
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:
Why lov'st thou that which thou receav'st not gladly,
Or else receav'st with pleasure thine annoy?*

*If the true concord of well tuned sounds,
By unions married do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear:*

*Mark how one string sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire, and child, and happy mother,
Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing:*

*Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee thou single wilt prove none.*

3rd March 1601; The Fleet Prison

The will of Henry Herbert, second Earl Pembroke, requested his remains be interred in the family vault under the Choir of the *Cathedral church of Sarum*,⁹³ *without anie blackes, more than for the Ladie Marie, Countesse of Pembroke, my wife, my children and servants of the houshold*. On the day of the interment his son, the third Earl was in London in the Fleet Prison, writing in a frenzy to keep away the dark thoughts that were puzzling his mind. In his waking dreams his darling May was Ofelia, Leartes – her brother Edward, Corambis – her father, Sir Edward Fitton; Queen Gertred inescapably bore his mother's face. In brief moments of lucidity he knew that his father did not have a brother and had died from lingering infirmities but William's mind was tormented by tensions from many directions and he was close to suicide as he wrote:

⁹³ The old name for Salisbury. The residents of the original old Sarum based around the fortified hill to the north of the present Salisbury, New Sarum. Old Sarum was a notorious Rotten Borough controlled by the Pembrokes and later by the Pitts. The hill overlooked the river Avon, alongside which was the village of Stratford.

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HAMLET TO BE, OR NOT TO BE, I THERE'S THE POINT,
TO DIE, TO SLEEP, IS THAT ALL? I ALL:
NO, TO SLEEP, TO DREAM, I MARY THERE IT GOES,
FOR IN THAT DREAM OF DEATH, WHEN WE AWAKE,
AND BORNE BEFORE AN EVERLASTING JUDGE,
FROM WHENCE NO PASSENGER EVER RETURNED,
THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY, AT WHOSE SIGHT
THE HAPPY SMILE, AND THE ACCURSED DAMNED.
BUT FOR THIS, THE JOYFUL HOPE OF THIS,
WHOL'D BEAR THE SCORNS AND FLATTERY OF THE WORLD,
SCORNED BY THE RIGHT RICH, THE RICH CURSED OF THE POOR?
THE WIDOW BEING OPPRESSED, THE ORPHAN WRONGED,
THE TASTE OF HUNGER, OR A TYRANTS REIGN,
AND THOUSAND MORE CALAMITIES BESIDES,
TO GRUNT AND SWEAT UNDER THIS WEARY LIFE,
WHEN THAT HE MAY HIS FULL QUIETUS MAKE,
WITH A BARE BODKIN, WHO WOULD THIS ENDURE,
BUT FOR A HOPE OF SOMETHING AFTER DEATH?
WHICH PUZZLES THE BRAIN, AND DOTHS CONFOUND THE SENSE,
WHICH MAKES US RATHER BEAR THOSE EVILS WE HAVE,
THAN FLY TO OTHERS THAT WE KNOW NOT OF.
I THAT, O THIS CONSCIENCE MAKES COWARDS OF US ALL,
LADY IN THY ORISONS, BE ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED.

OFELIA MY LORD, I HAVE SOUGHT OPPORTUNITY, WHICH NOW
I HAVE, TO REDELIVER TO YOUR WORTHY HANDS, A SMALL
REMEMBRANCE, SUCH TOKENS WHICH I HAVE RECEIVED OF YOU.

HAMLET ARE YOU FAIR?

OFELIA MY LORD.

HAMLET ARE YOU HONEST?

OFELIA WHAT MEANS MY LORD?

HAMLET THAT IF YOU BE FAIR AND HONEST,
YOUR BEAUTY SHOULD ADMIT NO DISCOURSE TO YOUR HONESTY.

OFELIA MY LORD, CAN BEAUTY HAVE BETTER PRIVILEGE THAN
WITH HONESTY?

HAMLET YEA MARY MAY IT; FOR BEAUTY MAY TRANSFORM
HONESTY, FROM WHAT SHE WAS INTO A BAWD:
THEN HONESTY CAN TRANSFORM BEAUTY:
THIS WAS SOMETIMES A PARADOX,
BUT NOW THE TIME GIVES IT SCOPE.
I NEVER GAVE YOU NOTHING.

OFELIA. MY LORD, YOU KNOW RIGHT WILL YOU DID,
AND WITH THEM SUCH EARNEST VOWS OF LOVE,
AS WOULD HAVE MOVED THE STONIEST BREAST ALIVE,
BUT NOW TOO TRUE I FIND,
RICH GIFTS WAX POOR, WHEN GIVERS GROW UNKIND.

HAMLET I NEVER LOVED YOU.

OFELIA YOU MADE ME BELIEVE YOU DID.

HAMLET O THOU SHOULDST NOT A BELIEVED ME!
GO TO A NUNNERY GO, WHY SHOULDST THOU
BE A BREEDER OF SINNERS? I AM MY SELF INDIFFERENT HONEST,
BUT I COULD ACCUSE MY SELF OF SUCH CRIMES
IT HAD BEEN BETTER MY MOTHER HAD NE'RE BORNE ME,
O I AM VERY PROUD, AMBITIOUS, DISDAINFUL,
WITH MORE SINS AT MY BECK, THEN I HAVE THOUGHTS
TO PUT THEM IN, WHAT SHOULD SUCH FELLOWS AS I
DO, CRAWLING BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH?
TO A NUNNERY GO, WE ARE ARRANT KNAVES ALL,
BELIEVE NONE OF US, TO A NUNNERY GO.

OFELIA. O HEAVENS SECURE HIM!

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HAMLET WHERE'S THY FATHER?

OFELIA. AT HOME MY LORD.

HAMLET FOR GOD'S SAKE LET THE DOORS BE SHUT ON HIM,
HE MAY PLAY THE FOOL NOW WHERE BUT IN HIS
OWN HOUSE: TO A NUNNERY GO.

OFELIA HELP HIM GOOD GOD.

HAMLET IF THOU DOST MARRY, I'LL GIVE THEE
THIS PLAGUE TO THY DOWRY:
BE THOU AS CHASTE AS ICE, AS PURE AS SNOW,
THOU SHALT NOT ESCAPE CALUMNY, TO A NUNNERY GO.

OFELIA ALAS, WHAT CHANGE IS THIS?

HAMLET BUT IF THOU WILT NEEDS MARRY, MARRY A FOOL,
FOR WISE MEN KNOW WELL ENOUGH,
WHAT MONSTERS YOU MAKE OF THEM, TO A NUNNERY GO.

OFELIA PRAY GOD RESTORE HIM.

HAMLET NAY, I HAVE HEARD OF YOUR PAINTINGS TOO,
GOD HATH GIVEN YOU ONE FACE,
AND YOU MAKE YOUR SELVES ANOTHER,
YOU SIGH, AND YOU AMBLE, AND YOU NICKNAME GOD'S CREATURES,
MAKING YOUR WANTONNESS, YOUR IGNORANCE,
A POX, 'TIS SCURVY, I'LL NO MORE OF IT,
IT HATH MADE ME MAD: I'LL NO MORE MARRIAGES,
ALL THAT ARE MARRIED BUT ONE, SHALL LIVE,
THE REST SHALL KEEP AS THEY ARE, TO A NUNNERY GO,
TO A NUNNERY GO. EXIT.

OFELIA GREAT GOD OF HEAVEN, WHAT A QUICK CHANGE IS THIS?
THE COURTIER, SCHOLAR, SOLDIER, ALL IN HIM,
ALL DASHED AND SPLINTERED THENCE, O WOE IS ME,
TO A SEEN WHAT I HAVE SEEN, SEE WHAT I SEE. EXIT.

He envisioned what May was experiencing; the worry and fear of a first child-bed to contend with. Was she becoming distracted? He imagined his *lady of the flowers*. May loved flowers and she had a country name for them all. Furiously and fearfully he wrote a scene where he imagined that May had gone mad.

LEAR. WHO'S THIS, OFELIA? O MY DEAR SISTER!
I'ST POSSIBLE A YOUNG MAIDS LIFE,
SHOULD BE AS MORTAL AS AN OLD MANS SAW?
O HEAVENS THEMSELVES! HOW NOW OFELIA?

OFELIA WELL GOD A MERCY, I A BIN GATHERING OF FLOWERS:
HERE, HERE IS RUE FOR YOU,
YOU MAY CALL IT HERB A GRACE A SUNDAYS,
HERE'S SOME FOR ME TOO: YOU MUST WEAR YOUR RUE
WITH A DIFFERENCE, THERE'S A DAISY.
HERE LOVE, THERE'S ROSEMARY FOR YOU
FOR REMEMBRANCE: I PRAY LOVE REMEMBER,
AND THERE'S PANSY FOR THOUGHTS.

LEAR. A DOCUMENT IN MADNESS, THOUGHTS, REMEMBRANCE:
O GOD, O GOD!

OFELIA THERE IS FENNEL FOR YOU, I WOULD A GIVEN YOU

SOME VIOLETS, BUT THEY ALL WITHERED, WHEN
MY FATHER DIED: ALAS, THEY SAY THE OWL WAS
A BAKERS DAUGHTER, WE SEE WHAT WE ARE,
BUT CAN NOT TELL WHAT WE SHALL BE.
FOR BONNY SWEET ROBIN IS ALL MY JOY.

LEAR. THOUGHTS AND AFFLICTIONS, TORMENTS WORSE THAN HELL.

OFELIA NAY LOVE, I PRAY YOU MAKE NO WORDS OF THIS NOW:
I PRAY NOW, YOU SHALL SING A DOWN,
AND YOU A DOWN A. 'TIS A THE KINGS DAUGHTER

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AND THE FALSE STEWARD, AND IF ANY BODY
ASK YOU OF ANY THING, SAY YOU THIS.
TO MORROW IS SAINT VALENTINES DAY, ⁹⁴
ALL IN THE MORNING BETIME,
AND A MAID AT YOUR WINDOW,
TO BE YOUR VALENTINE:
THE YOUNG MAN ROSE, AND DAN'D HIS CLOTHES,
AND DUPT THE CHAMBER DOOR,
LET IN THE MAID, THAT OUT A MAID
NEVER DEPARTED MORE.
NAY I PRAY MARK NOW,
BY GISSE AND BY SAINT CHARITY,
AWAY, AND FIE FOR SHAME:
YOUNG MEN WILL DO'T WHEN THEY COME TO'T
BY COCK THEY ARE TOO BLAME.
QUOTH SHE, BEFORE YOU TUMBLED ME,
YOU PROMISED ME TO WED.
SO WOULD I A DONE, BY YONDER SUN,
IF THOU HADST NOT COME TO MY BED.
SO GOD BE WITH YOU ALL, GOD BWY LADIES.
GOD BWY YOU LOVE.

Later that day May Fitton read in the words that, despite all his misgivings, Will loved her. However, the words haunted her through the night and for days to come. *"You may call it herb a grace a Sundays, You may call it herb a grace a Sundays, You may call it herb a grace a Sundays, rue, the herb or repentance. He was repenting. You, May, call it herb-a-grace-a-Sundays, and she did. There's rosemary for you. There's rosemary for you and pansy for thoughts. Pansy for thoughts. Pansy for thoughts. Pansy, Pansy, Pansy Fitton, Pansy Fitton, The pansy was the Fitton's emblem, rose mary pansy fitton, rose mary pansy fitton. You, may, call it herb-a-grace-a-Sundays."* He was talking to her through the words on the paper, *a document in madness*; a document written in *his* madness. She loved him so much and was somewhat reassured when he wrote that Ofelia's death was an accident; a fall out of a willow tree into a stream. Ofelia could be buried in consecrated ground.

By the time the Leap Year ended Mary had sent William Herbert seventeen sonnets hinting and stressing he should marry.

24th March 1601, St Dunstan's, London.

The early morning sun was shining into the room. Outside the few pedestrians turned their heads as Mary Fitton screamed *Will! Will! Will!* and with a last push forced her bastard child into the world. The midwife looked across to Lady Margaret Hawkins who raised an eyebrow then nodded. Mary heard a slap and tried to look around as her baby cried out. Her sight was blurred, her eyes stung. The midwife expertly cut and tied the cord and Lady Hawkins bundled the baby into a sheet and laid it on Mary's pillow.

⁹⁴ Valentine's Day 14th March.

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“You have a son; he is very weak. Maybe an hour. I regret.” Lady Margaret left the room and the midwife bathed Mary’s face.

“Does he have all his fingers and toes?” The new mother asked.

“All twenty. No more no less; you have a name for him?”

“His father’s, William. William, of course, my little William. O God protect him.”

“Earl Pembroke’s?” asked the midwife.

“Who else? I was chaste, Mistress.”

“I see,” said the midwife, “We all were; once. Try to sleep.”

Mary Fitton drifted into sleep. When she awoke the child was gone. Lady Margaret was watching over her. She followed the old lady’s thin lips articulate each syllable – *the child is gone. He is in a better place and you must not think of him*; the words were to haunt her. Mary Fitton, exhausted and bewildered, could only whimper.

With the child gone it was no longer seemly to press Will to marry her and there was no compelling reason why he should. She visualised herself as the monstrous Venus and blamed herself. Her new Adonis, Will Herbert, could be excused for pledging to marry her in a moment of weakness; like Venus most women could control a man with their sex; few men had the power of Adonis to resist. All she could do was to love him and hope he would in time marry her and she could return as a countess to the Court life she enjoyed so much. To be married and a Countess; the Queen and his mother would forgive them; her father and elder brother would be delighted, her own mother would be able to hold her head up high in Cheshire and they could live happily ever after. So she thought; so she hoped.

John Manningham’s Diary of March 1601

Manningham recorded a number of anecdotes or pleasantries

*Vpon a tyme when Burbidge played Rich. 3.
there was a Citisen goene soe farr in liking
nth him, that before shee went from the play
shee appointed him to come that night vnto
her by the name of Ri: the 3. / / / Shakespeare
overbearing their conclusion, went before, was
intertained, and at his game ere Burbidge
came / . / Then message being brought that Rich.
the 3d. was at the dore. / Shakespeare causd returne
to be made that William the Conquerour
was before Rich. the 3 / . / / Shakespeares name Wllm*

8th April 1601, London

William Herbert came of age a prisoner in the Fleet. He had avoided having been made a ward of court and once released, could gain control of his father’s extensive estate.

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April 1601, St. Dunstan's in the East, London.

Margaret Hawkins had been kind to her. She still wept when emotion overtook her but over the weeks she had healed well and was able to start composing again. She had not felt incarcerated while the child was still inside her but now as weeks passed, she felt the loss of freedom and had difficulty sleeping. At night images of the last year tumbled across her mind but all finished with the phantom of the softness of his downy cheek pressing hers and the sound of his voice, close to her ear whispering her name, her name, time and time again as she felt again the rhythm of their bodies together, “*May, May, May, May, May, May...*”

The rough winds of April bought changing weather. She wept with the showers and brightened with the sun. She speculated about the baby that had been taken from her. Had he lived and been given to a good family to look after, or had he indeed died? Nobody could or would tell her, and she was afraid to ask. Confident that she could conceive and carry to child-bed there could be other children. And that child had been a bastard and could not inherit. She imagined Will's arms encircling her body, cupping her enlarged breasts, his slender fingers squeezing her buds and whispering his pet name for her, *May, May, May* but the fascination diminished as her body regained its normal size. Her humour started to recover; she felt optimistic and she sent him more sonnets.

18 *Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of Maie,
And Summers lease hath all too short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or natures changing course untrim'd:

But thy eternal Summer shall not fade,
Nor loose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wandr'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,

So long as men can breath or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee,*

19 *Devouring time blunt thou the Lion's paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood,
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce Tiger's jaws,
And burn the long lived Phoenix in her blood,

Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,
And do what ere thou wilt swift-footed Time*

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*To the wide world and all her fading sweets:
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime,
O carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen,
Him in thy course untainted do allow,
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.*

*Yet do thy worst old Time despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.*

One day she would have their poems printed and the world would forever know how much she loved him.

26th April 1601, London

The Earl Pembroke's physician testified his patient was suffering with an ague. On 26th April William Herbert was released from the Fleet and his carriage took him back to Baynard's Castle. Barred from Court, he returned to Wilton.

I have not been a day in the country, and I am so weary of it as if I had been a prisoner there seven year . . . Therefore I pray, if the Queen determine to continue my banishment, and prefer sweet Sir Edward (Fitton) before me, that you will assist me with your best means to get leave to go into some other land, that the change of climate may purge me of melancholy.

16th May; Stanmore, Middlesex.

Mary Fitton's father, Sir Edward, was snoring in the next room. Before retiring to bed he had shown her his letter to Sir Robert Cecil.

I can say nothing of the Earl, but my daughter is confident of her chance before God and wisheth my Lord and she might meet before in different scenes. But for myself I expect no good from him that in all this time hath not shewed any kindness. I count my daughter as good a gentlewoman as my Lord is though the dignity of honour be greater only in him, which hath beguiled her I fear, except my Lord's honesty be the better vertues.

That morning Mary had been totally surprised when her father appeared at Lady Hawkins' and told her to have her chests packed – he was taking her back to Cheshire. She had neither time to think nor remonstrate but as the coaches set off she knew for certain her days at Court were ended. As for Pembroke, the Queen had flatly refused his request to return to Court and from a good source Mary heard Pembroke had requested leave to travel abroad.

Outside on Watling Street the rumble of a solitary wagon drawn by a single horse had passed in the moonlight heading south towards London. In the stillness Mary could hear a man in the street below urinating hard against the side of the coaching house and farting with a squeal into the warm air. She was too weary to

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sleep. For the last year she had hoped that her Wilkin would make her his wife; her father and mother still expected it – until that morning. The game was lost.

The room was hot. She opened the copybook he had given her in which she copied the sonnets she had composed for him. She gazed into the dark out of the open window and thought of the man she worshipped:

*26 Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit;
To thee I send this written ambassage
To witness duty, not to shew my wit.*

*Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to shew it;
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy souls thought (all naked) will bestow it:*

*Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
Points on me graciously with faire aspect,
And puts apparel on my tottered loving,
To show me worthy of their sweet respect,*

*Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee,
Till then, not show my head where thou maist prove me.*

*27 Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travail tired,
But then begins a journey in my head
To work my mind, when body's work's expired.*

*For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see.*

*Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents their shadow to my sightless view,
Which like a jewel (hung in ghastly night)
Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new.*

*Lo thus by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for my self, no quiet find.*

They stayed a week at Arbury near Nuneaton with her sister, Anne; her husband, John Newdigate, was conducting business in London concerning his coal mines. Among family, Mary began to feel better. Anne, who now had two small children and had lost another at childbirth, was a great comfort. The two sisters accompanied their father as he rode with pride around the estate, his gift to Anne and her husband. The days passed easily, here was joy and innocence with her

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nephew and niece; but at night when alone her mind became a whirl of passion and despair.

It was sunset when Sir Edward Fitton and his daughter reached Gawsorth Hall, their ancestral home in Cheshire. Mary had lived away for nearly a decade and had not expected to feel so emotional about the house and garden with the nostalgic fragrant smells of evening flowers which she had so enjoyed in childhood. Born in Ireland, the family had returned to England when she was weeks old. She had learnt alongside her brothers' tutors and separately, with her sister, had been taught the feminine skills of music and embroidery. But now things were so different, she was no longer an innocent and there was a new tension. Her mother looked at her with contempt. Her father stood by as if deaf and dumb as Lady Alice told her wayward daughter that she could sleep in the house for this one night, but thereafter she would have to live and sleep at the Rectory, half a mile away. For a last time in the bedroom of her childhood she undressed and, naked, sat on the bed, watching the new moon light up the tilt yard below and the faint clouds hovering over the hills. She lit an extra two candles, retrieved her copybook and wrote;

*28 How can I then return in happy plight
That am debarred the benefit of rest?
When day's oppression is not eased by night,
But day by night and night by day oppressed.

And each (though enemies to either's reign)
Do in consent shake hands to torture me,
The one by toil, the other to complain
How far I toil, still farther off from thee.

I tell the Day to please him thou art bright,
And do'st him grace when clouds do blot the heaven:
So flatter I the swart complexioned night,
When sparkling stars twine not thou gild'st th' even.

But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
And night doth nightly make griefs length seem stronger.*

Not a word passed between mother and daughter the following morning. Mary for the first time felt the enormity of the weight of shame she had brought on her family and understood why her mother had taken things so badly. By the time she had broken fast a cart was waiting with her chests. The servant whom she knew of old talked kindly as they passed out of the grounds, turned left past the lake, and stopped with the church on the knoll on their left and the Rectory on the right. Her father provided her with a servant, a footman and a maid, and these three were to become close companions for the years to come.

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Isolated in the Rectory, sleep evaded her and she worked through each night perfecting her sonnets before fitful slumber. Waking with the false dawn light, barely clothed, hair awry, hands sullied by ink, she sometimes walked to the top of the hill as crows cawed from trees overhead to watch the sun rise over the Derbyshire peaks.

29 *When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon my self and curse my fate.
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least,
Yet in these thoughts my self almost despising,
Happly I think on thee, and then my state,
(Like to the Lark at break of day arising)
From sullen earth sings hymns at Heaven's gate,
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with Kings.*

30 *When to the Sessions of sweet silent thought,
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye (unused to flow)
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep a fresh loves long since cancelled woe,
And moan th'expense of many a vanished sight.
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell ore*

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*The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay, as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee (dear friend)
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.*

*Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give,
That due of many, now is thine alone. (S31)*

*Even so my Sun one early morn did shine,
With all triumphant splendour on my brow,
But out alack, he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now. (S33)*

May 1601, London

Maid-od-honour, Mistress Onslowe, hearing of Mary Fitton's flight from London, picked up the five booklets Mary had left, intending to return them in due course. They did not meet again and, having torn off the title page of *The Passionate Pilgrim* on which William Herbert had written his dedication, she later had the booklets bound into one volume with her own initials embossed on the velum cover.

29th May; Baynard's Castle

It was his mother who had told her son, William, the history of the *Feather of Diamonds*. His great-grandfather, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, had had the brooch made for his wife to wear at their wedding and it was bequeathed to his daughter, her mother, Mary Dudley, who rarely wore it as its splendour could outshine the Queen's jewellery. In turn she gave it to his uncle, Robert Sidney, whose wife, Barbara Gamage, considered it gross, outdated and not to her fashion. When Robert Sidney, in need of cash, mentioned to William that he was prepared to sell the piece they agreed a price of £1,500.⁹⁵

Summer 1601

The two lovers had a brief meeting after which she was left full of conflicting emotions. She later wrote:

*34 Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travail forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds ore-take me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke.*

⁹⁵ (Part Fiction) The provenance or destination of the Feather of Diamonds is unknown.

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*'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace:*

*Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief,
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss,
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offences loss.*

*Ah but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.*

By return messenger came:

*141 In faith I do not love thee with mine eyes,
For they in thee a thousand errors note,
But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,
Who in dispiht of view is pleased to dote.*

*Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted,
Nor tender feeling to base touches prone,
Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited
To any sensual feast with thee alone:*

*But my five wits, nor my five senses can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,
Who leaves unswai'd the likeness of a man,
Thy proud hearts slave and vassal wretch to be:*

*Only my plague thus far I count my gain,
That she that makes me sin, awards me pain.*

Back with the same messenger:

*35 No more be grieved at that which thou hast done,
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud,
Clouds and eclipses stain both Moon and Sun,
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
All men make faults, and even I in this,*

*Authorising thy trespass with compare,
My self corrupting salving thy amiss,
Excusing their sins more then their sins are:*

*For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense,
Thy adverse party is thy Advocate,
And gainst my self a lawful plea commence,
Such civil war is in my love and hate,*

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*That I an accessory needs must be,
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me,*

*36 Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.*

*I may not ever-more acknowledge thee,
Least my bewailed guilt should do thee shame,
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
Unless thou take that honour from thy name:*

September 1601, Wilton.

Pembroke made a plea to the Queen for the Patent of the Forest of Dean to be given to Sir Edward Fitton, May's father.⁹⁶ It was rejected, *destroying* as he put it, *that poor reputation I was desirous to preserve.... I am disgraced*. The Queen was not going to pay for Pembroke's misdemeanours.

10th October 1601, London

Nicholas Brende of West Molesey in the county of Surrey, Esquire, [supposedly the ground landlord of the Globe playhouse] made his will proved on 16th Nov. He was survived by his wife, son John and three daughters. His will made no mention of the site of the Globe. (Brende had been admitted a law student at Inner Temple, London, in Nov 1581, indicating he died aged about 40. His father, Thomas's, will of 1597, proved 8th May 1599, also made no mention of the Globe but after token bequests made it quite clear that he had disinherited Nicholas – the last two lines, *I have stryken out my sonne to be one of my executors in consideration that he did marry without my knowledge or consent*. Just before he died, on 6th March 1600 Nicholas Brende had a son christened Mathew at Saint Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, London. There is no recognition of the baby in the will. Either he had died; or he was alive but a bastard child; or for March 1600 read March 1601 in which case his wife was four months pregnant – yet still no provision for an unborn child.

[According to *Shakespeare in the Public Records; 1964; p14*; In March 1624 Sir Mathew the son of Nicholas Brend increased the jointure of his wife, Dame Frances, by *All the messuage or tenement and all the playhouse commonly called The ... Globe Set In or near Mayden Lane Now or late being in the possession of John Heminge, Cutbert Burbage,*

⁹⁶ The Forest's coal mines would have been of particular interest to Fitton's son-in-law, John Newdigate, who owned coal mines in Warwickshire.

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Richard Burbage, Willm Shakespare, or any of them. Enrolled in the Chancery Close Roll in the PRO reference C54/3594[.].

December 1601

Having served in Parliament since October, Pembroke, still excluded from Court, was granted permission by the Queen to travel abroad. It is not known whether he went or not.⁹⁷

1602

18 January 1602, Stationers' Hall.

John Busby registered – *for his copy under the hand of Master Seton, a booke called an excellent and pleasant conceited commedie of Sir John Faulstof and the merry nyves of Windsor.* On the same day in a different hand: *Arthur Johnson; entered for his copy by assignement from John Busby, a booke Called an excellent and pleasant concyted Comedie of Sir John Faulstafe and the merye nyves of Windsor.* The play was a much-shortened and garbled version, printed by T.C. (Thomas Creed) as *By William Shakespeare as it hath bene diuers times Acted by the right Honourable my Lord Chamberlaines seruants, both before her Maiestie, and else-where.*⁹⁸

On 19th April 1602; London

The wardens at the Stationers' Hall entered the transfer of the two parts of *Henry VI* and *Titus Andronicus* from Millington to Thomas Pavier who already had a poor version of *Henry V* entered to him.

12th July 1602, Stationers' Hall.

The first quarto (Q1) of the play *Hamlet* was registered at Stationers' Hall to James Roberts. When the *First Folio* was printed in 1623 it was from an author's manuscript but used references to Q1 & Q2.

1602 London

Two plays, *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well that Ends Well* were written about this time although not published until 1623. The storyline appears to echo the separation and longing that existed between a lady of lower-ranking birth, Mary

⁹⁷ He did not go to the Continent, however, travelling abroad might have meant freedom to go to Scotland. His immediate empathy with King James and the Scottish Earls on their arrival in England in 1603 would suggest he had visited Scotland.

⁹⁸ One begins to wonder whether the stated performances were nothing more than hype.

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Fitton, and a noble Lord, William Herbert; similar sentiments reflected in the relationship between Hamlet and Ofelia.

3rd June 1602; Portugal

Sir Richard Leveson and Sir William Monson, commanding a small squadron of ships, captured a fully-manned Portuguese carrack as she lay at Cezimbra Bay under the protection of the fort and surrounded by galleys. The English forced two of the galleys to surrender and the remainder retreated with heavy losses leaving the English to carry off the Prize in the face of ten-thousand troops on shore.⁹⁹ Shortly after Leveson's return to England his father, Walter, imprisoned for debt, died in the Fleet prison and Leveson became Mary Fitton's protector – with whom she conceived.

September 1602: London.

Philip Henslowe: *Lent unto the company to pay their bills for tailors & others for the new play of the earl of barfurd (Hertford) the sum of 32s.*¹⁰⁰

1602

Mary Fitton noticed Pembroke's relationship with his cousin, Mary Sidney, (Malkin, with whom she was also friendly) was becoming deeper as Malkin matured into womanhood and had started to compose love poems to her cousin. May wrote to Pembroke:

40 *Take all my loves, my love, yea take them all, What hast thou then more then thou hadst before? No love, my love, that thou maist true love call, All mine was thine, before thou hadst this more: Then if for my love, thou my love receivest, I cannot blame thee, for my love thou usest, But yet be blam'd, if thou this self deceavest By wilful taste of what thy self refusest. I do forgive thy robb'rie gentle thief Although thou steal thee all my poverty: And yet love knows it is a greater grief To bear loves wrong, then hates known injury.*

Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows, Kill me with spites yet we must not be foes.

41 *Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits, When I am some-time absent from thy heart, Thy beauty, and thy years full well befits, For still temptation follows where thou art. Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won, Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed. And when a woman woes, what woman's son, Will surely leave her till he have prevailed. Aye me, but yet thou mightst my seat forbear, And chide thy beauty, and thy straying youth, Who lead thee in their riot even there Where thou art forst to break a two-fold truth:*

Hers by thy beauty tempting her to thee, Thine by thy beauty being false to me.

⁹⁹ J E Neale: "Queen Elizabeth I".

¹⁰⁰ Was Earl Hertford the author or it his the name of the play or the p

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42 *That thou hast her it is not all my grief, And yet it may be said I loved her dearly, That she hath thee is of my wailing chief, A loss in love that touches me more nearly. Loving offenders thus I will excuse ye, Thou do'st love her, because thou know'st I love her, And for my sake even so doth she abuse me, Suffering my friend for my sake to approve her, If I loose thee, my loss is my love's gain, And losing her, my friend hath found that loss, Both find each other, and I lose both twain, And both for my sake lay on me this cross, But here's the joy, my friend and I are one, Sweet flattery, then she loves but me alone.*

25th December 1602

Pembroke spent Christmas at Sir John Harington's at Exton in Rutland, fifty miles from Arbury, in the company of his uncle, Robert Sidney. In London William's cousin, Malkin, Robert Sidney's daughter, *on St. Stevens day in the after noone daunced before the Queen two galliards with one Mr Palmer, the admirablest dawncer of his tyme; both were much commended by her Majestie.*

1603

6th January 1603, London

Hertford's Men played at Court, payment being made to Martin Slater.¹⁰¹ It was eleven years since Hertford's had last performed at court, also on Twelfth Night.

7th February 1603, Stationers' Hall, London.

The booke of Troilus and Cressida as yt is acted by my lo: Chamberlens Men was entered in the Stationers' Register *for his full copie* to Mr Roberts. The story was set in the seventh year of the Trojan Wars. Troilus was then in his twenty-third year (as was William Herbert when the play was entered). The romance with Cressida was a relatively small episode in the play and almost irrelevant to the satire on the romance of war. The two Trojan lovers having sworn to be faithful and consummated their passion were separated. Cressida was driven to make a political marriage with a Greek whom, to the chagrin of Troilus, she all too readily accepted.

22nd March 1603, Queensborough, Thames Estuary, Kent

¹⁰¹ In 1608 Slater became a sharer in the Whitefriars Playhouse and was licensed with Michael Drayton to travel with the *Children of the Revels*. Samuel Daniell was in 1604 appointed licenser of plays to the *Children of the King's Revels*.

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A fleet of eight ships sailed under the command of Admiral Sir Richard Leveson on coastal patrol until 5th May. Captain William Polewhele commanded the *Lion's Whelp*. Although Leveson was having an adult relationship with Mary Fitton it was Polewhele who was to become her first husband.

24th March 1603, London.

On the death of Queen Elizabeth, William Herbert was not only released from his disgrace but having, during the last couple of years established (through correspondence or having visited?) an excellent relationship with the new King James, he could look forward with confidence to the new regime.

All the principal poets of the age paid tribute to the late Queen except one; Shakespeare was conspicuously absent.

6th April 1603; Berwick

James VI of Scotland and the First of England entered England at Berwick. One of his first acts was to order that Fotheringay Castle, where his mother had been beheaded, be destroyed.

At Queen Elizabeth's funeral Pembroke with Thomas, Lord Howard, carried the Great Banner of England. Pembroke had already pledged his allegiance to the new King at Burghley House and had been very well received – causing a stir when it was not certain whether he had kissed the King's cheek or his lips.¹⁰²

Rowland (Michael Drayton) was reproved by Henry Chettle for acclaiming the new King before he had mourned the late Queen. Drayton had anticipated recognition from the new King and later castigated himself that he had been *shipwrecked by his forward pen*.

May 1603 London

Butten days after the King arrived in London from Scotland a warrant under the Signet Seal was produced on 17th May and copied on 18th under the Privy Seal who sent this copy to the Keeper of the Great Seal who on Thursday 19th May enrolled in Chancery the letter Patent for the King's Players under the Great Seal.¹⁰³ The wording on the three documents was identical and the Players of the former Lord Chamberlain became the King's men. *Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard*

¹⁰² The king was bisexual.

¹⁰³ No like warrant exists for the Queen's Players or the Prince's Players which one assumes ought to have been granted at the same time. The shortness of time after the King's arrival in London and the speed with which the documents were passed from one office to another, all in two days, should be noted especially the miss-spelling of Burbidge and Heminge. Could the 1619 document have been copied and the names changed?

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Burbage, Augustine Phillippes, John Heminges, Henry Condell, William Sly, Robt Armyne and Richard Comlye were licensed and authorised to freely use and exercise the Arte and facultie of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes &c . . . when the infection of the plague shall decrease as well within their now usual house called the Globe. Renewed patents were granted in 1619 & 1625, virtually identical in form except for any changes in names. [Note: Burbage should have been spent Burbadge.]

1603 London

Valentine Simmes with the consent of his colleague printer, James Roberts, printed *The tragicall historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke by William Shake-speare. As it hath been diverse times acted by his Highness servants in the cittee of London: as also in the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere; At London printed for N L and John Trundell.*¹⁰⁴

This was the First Quarto printing of the play. The Second Quarto was almost quite double in length.

Summer 1603

Sir Richard Leveson returned to shore on 5th May. Anne Fitton, alias Leveson, was probably conceived about this time, Mary Fitton having recently taken up the lease of Perton Hall, owned by Leveson. Some months later, heavy with child, there is good reason to suggest she travelled to Tenby in South Wales, to stay with the Barretts, the family of her brother's wife.¹⁰⁵

*50 How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek (my weary travels end)
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say
Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend.

The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods duly on, to bear that waight¹⁰⁶ in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider loved not speed being made from thee:

The bloody spur cannot provoke him on,
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me then spurring to his side,*

¹⁰⁴ There was extensive Plague in London in 1603. It appears they were on tour.

¹⁰⁵ An illegitimate child born in England could not inherit but could if born in Wales. It was common for unmarried mothers to cross the Severn to give birth in the Principality.

¹⁰⁶ A waite was another name for a being, chap or person. I have not found any record of Brad being pregnant.

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*For that same groan doth put this in my mind,
My grief lies onward and my joy behind.*

*54 Oh how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give,
The Rose looks faire, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour, which doth in it live:*

*The Canker blooms have full as deep a die,
As the perfumed tincture of the Roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly,
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:*

*But for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwooed, and unrespected fade,
Die to themselves. Sweet Roses do not so,
Of their sweet deaths, are sweetest odours made:*

*And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall vade, by verse distils your truth.*

25th June 1603, Stationers' Hall;

The rights of *Richard II*, *Richard III* and *The First Part of Henry IV* were transferred from Andrew Wise to Mathew Lawe. William Aspley retained the rights he and Wise had shared in *The Second Part of Henry IV* and in *Much Ado about Nothing*.¹⁰⁷

25th June 1603, London

From Henslowe's Diary (114 verso): *I talked with Mr. Pope at the scrivener's shop where he lies concerning the taking of a lease anew of the Little Rose & he showed me a writing between the Parish & himself which was to pay twenty pounds a year rent & bestow a hundred marks upon building, which I said I would rather pull down the playhouse, which I would do so & he bade me do & said he gave me leave & would bear be out for it was in him to do it.*¹⁰⁸

Probably Thomas Pope, a shareholder in the *Globe* and the *Curtain*, whose friend, Basil Nicholl, was a scrivener and an executor of Pope's will, written a month later.

2nd July 1603 Windsor Castle

¹⁰⁷ Lawe & Aspley held the rights to five plays; Thomas Pavier to four.

¹⁰⁸ Here a two-inch length of page has been cut away leaving six inches blank below. There is no indication what was removed or whether any significance pertains to the verso or the recto.

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Within three months of the Queen's death, fortune changed for twenty-three year old Earl Pembroke. On 6th April James VI of Scotland had entered his new kingdom to become the first King James of England. On 13th May Pembroke's uncle, Robert Sidney, and Sir William Knollys were created Barons. On 2nd July Pembroke, was invested with the *Order of the Garter* in the hush of St. George's Chapel Windsor, his mother and sister, Anne, watching proudly from behind screens. In contrast, ten miles away, London was whimpering in the grip of plague. After the Coronation on 25th July the King went on Progress through Surrey, Hampshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire before resting in Wiltshire in the Autumn, some of the time at Pembroke's Wilton House.

22nd July 1603; London

Thomas Pope, actor with the Lord Chamberlain's Men, signed his last will and testament on 22 July 1603: probated 13th Feb 1604. He left legacies to Robert Gough, an actor with the Lord Chamberlain's Men, who continued with the King's Men after 1603; and to John Edmans, or Edmonds.

He left his share in the *Globe* playhouse and share in the *Curtain Theatre*, to a Mary Clark and a junior, Thomas Bromley. Mary Clark now held one-fifth part of a moite, that is one-tenth part of the *Globe*. In 1612 this *Globe* share was owned by a John and Mary Edmans (one assumes the former Mary Clark).¹⁰⁹

1603 London

Valentine Simmes printed for Edward Blount, *The Essayes, or morall, politike and millitarie Discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne, first written by him in French but now done into English by John Florio*. The commendatory poem was by Samuel Daniell¹¹⁰ and the book was dedicated to three pairs of women including the Countess of Rutland, the Countess of Pembroke's niece, (William Herbert's first cousin), Penelope Devereux (the once young woman who had captured Philip Sidney's heart twenty years earlier) and the Countess of Bedford in whose house the book had been finished. In a preface Florio suggested that Countess Pembroke had failed in her attempt to mend her late brother's unfinished manuscript of *Arcadia*.

18th October 1603, Kent

¹⁰⁹ In modern parlance, Mary Clark was Pope's partner who appears to have been god-mother of an orphan, Thomas Bromley, Pope treating them as his wife and child. His will makes provision for his mother and siblings thus avoiding a family dispute should he have married Mary.

¹¹⁰ Daniell here described Florio as *my dear brother and friend, one of the gentlemen of her Majestie's most royal Privie Chamber*. A copy of this book was sold in 1836 to the British Museum containing a forged signature purporting to be *William Shakespeare's*. In 1611 Daniell reciprocated the praise providing a prefatory poem for Florio's enlarged *Italian Dictionary*.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

According to your letter of the 12th of this present, we repaired into the house of Bryan Annesley of Lee in the county of Kent and finding him fallen into such imperfection and distemperature of mind and memory, as we thought him thereby become altogether unfit to govern himself or his estate, we endeavored to take a perfect inventory of such goods and chattels as he possessed in and about his house. But Mrs. Cordell, his daughter refuseth to suffer any inventory to be taken, until such time as she hath had conference with her friends, by reason whereof we could proceed no farther in the execution of your letter.

Signed John Wildegos, Tymothe Lawe & Samuel Lennard.

This story may have inspired a new version of the *King Lear*. Sir Bryan Annesley, the Queen's Master of Harriers, former Warden of the Fleet Prison and a landowner in Kent, had three daughters, Grace, Christianna, and Cordell. The eldest, Grace, had married Sir John Wildgoose at Lee in October 1587 and the second daughter married Lord Sandys. Cordell, the youngest, was unmarried at the time. In the spring of 1600, Annesley wrote a will bequeathing most of his estate to Cordell. This contravened the local Kentish law of *gavelkind* which stated that all heirs should inherit an estate equally. Three years later in 1603, Annesley was nearing death. Lady Wildgoose with the support of her sister, Lady Sandys, tried to have their father certified senile so that his earlier will could be nullified, both on the grounds of mental incompetence and breach of *gavelkind*, opening the way for both sisters to legally manage his estate. However, their efforts were thwarted. Cordell successfully defended her father by arguing to Cecil the King's chief minister, that her father had not actually been certified insane and after all his years of service to the Crown did not deserve to be classified as a lunatic. The original will was upheld after Annesley's death in 1604 and Cordell inherited the estate. Cordell then went on to marry one of the will's executors, Sir William Harvey.

Wiltshire 26th October 1603

The Privy Council at Wilton sent an order to the Sheriff of Middlesex that Sir Richard Leveson should attend Lord Gray with an escort of fifty horse to the place of trial.¹¹¹

2nd Dec 1603; A hamlet below Old Sarum near Salisbury.

The ancient, ruined castle towering above them on the hill served as a backdrop. Their carriage stopped in front of a large but empty family house. Half a century

¹¹¹ This places Leveson in England in October 1603 and Pembroke at Wilton. Gray was tried at Winchester alongside Lord Cobham and Sir Griffin Markham and were sentenced to be executed on 9th December. The execution was suspended. The King had appointed Leveson a *gentleman of the privy chamber* in May 1603 so it is probable he would have been at Wilton when the King held his court there.

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earlier it had been leased to the Pembrokes for ninety-nine years. The house brought back many childhood memories to brothers William and Philip Herbert. To avoid the coachman's prying ears, they walked down to the shallow river; it had been a long, dry Autumn. The river was low. A large group of swans standing on a sand bank in the middle of the stream shuffled like soldiers closing rank to face them. The brothers walked and quietly talked to each other in the misty morning air.

"Pip, you know the King loves you?" asked William.

"He shows me great favour."

"Indeed, he loves you, as a man loves a woman."

"I am not unaware."

"To incur his wrath would be both unwise and dangerous."

"I know. We have much to gain. He trusts you, Wilkin."

"And I shall be faithful; be assured. You know his passion for hunting?"

"It is my passion too; you know that."

"Huh! Talking about wrath. Sir Robert Wroth always obsessed with the Chase openly courts the King's favour who is enjoying the hunt on Wroth's Essex estate. So, we should permit him, Wroth, and others to pay for the King's entertainment. He is not clever enough for high office but the King will give him a place in the privy council and that will be reward enough. He has cunning, too fat to appeal to women, yet loyal. Stay close by the King, enjoy the hunt, do play not cards to excess, and keep out of the stews, but I beseech you, Pip, on no account make the Queen jealous."

Philip smiled and slapped his shorter, elder brother on the back. Despite having very different characters, William the less manly to Philip's more masculine disposition, the brothers understood each other well. They looked back to the house.

"Pip, you need the privacy of your own home here in Wiltshire. Would you live here in Mawarden Court? I will lease it to you for a mustard seed, a peppercorn, fifteen years I suggest. It was the first Pembroke home when Wilton was being built. It was good enough for our grandfather and grandmother."

"So good enough for me. Susan should be happy here."

"*Seventeen's* pretty one. You would marry her?"

"We see much of each other at Court. She is a good friend of the Queen. Wilkin, with your permission. You smile. I recall, you would not marry her sister?"

"Eight years ago I was a boy. Her old man is spent and cannot live long. Marry her, yes, marry her! She is a beautiful woman, will be a good companion, and is a friend to the Queen. It might not please her uncle, Cecil, but it should serve us well."

"Will, we love each other."

William laughed. "You and Susan! Love," he mused aloud, "First Pip, a man must be politic and a woman must have wealth. Let us return to the King and mother. You can hear the players from London are arriving. I promise you, we

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shall enjoy a great play after dinner, *As You Like It*. Have you read Doctor Thomas Lodge's *Rosalind*? No, of course not, your interest is chemistry. Someone is riding towards us."

It was one of the servants with a note for Philip from their mother asking him to ensure that the King would dine with them that evening, that she wanted a reconciliation between the King and Sir Walter Raleigh, and especially as *the man Shakespeare* was at Wilton.¹¹² The message launched a myriad thoughts in Pembroke's mind. He was anxious to return but first they had to find the King – somewhere in Salisbury. It was mid-afternoon when Pembroke re-entered his courtyard at Wilton. There was the greatest of surprises. Ahead of them and emerging out of a carriage he could not but notice the magnificent cloaks of Charles Howard, the Lord High Admiral, with a much younger woman whom he did not recognise, followed by Howard's son-in-law, Captain Sir Richard Leveson, accompanied by a woman whom he knew instantly from her height. Mary Fitton, his own *Rosalind*, was wearing that orange silk gown. She saw him, smiled and gracefully dropped her head in a gently bow of acknowledgment. She was just as beautiful. Back from sea, Richard Leveson, married but to a beautiful lunatic, understood the vagaries of the tides in men's lives. Before dinner Mary Fitton entertained with readings from *Venus & Adonis* and after dinner William Herbert took the part of William with the King's Players who under Richard Burbadge perform *As you Like It*. Leveson played cards through the night. Mary revealed to Pembroke she was with child.

London 1603

According to Ben Jonson (*in his collected Works 1616, dedicated to Pembroke*); the Kings Players who performed Ben Jonson's *Sejanus his Fall* in 1603 were Ric Burbadge, Will Shake-Spear (note the hyphen), Aug Philips, Will Sly, Joh Lowin, Joh Hemings, Hen Condel and Alex Cooke.

1604

8th January 1604: Hampton Court, Surrey

The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses, a court masque written by Samuel Daniell, was performed in a lavish production at Hampton Court by Queen Anne and eleven of

¹¹² It is doubted whether the letter ever existed. It allegedly asked her son, Philip, to bring the King to Wilton from Salisbury so that she might intercede on behalf of Sir Walter Raleigh. It also mentioned that the play *As You Like It* was to be presented and that *we have the man Shakespeare with us*. There is evidence that Burbadge and the Company of Players were paid to come from Mortlake to perform.

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her ladies. The splendour of the new year at Court contrasted sharply with the old year in which over thirty-thousand had perished of plague in London alone.

On 4th February Daniell was appointed licenser of the playhouse group, *The Children of the Queen's Revels*. He then sublet the license to the four men who trained the children and presented the plays. Within a year he had sold the license on.

January - February 1604; Court

1 st January	a play called <i>All Fools</i> was performed
6 th January	<i>A Masque of Blackness</i>
2 nd February	<i>Labour Lost, Every Man in His Humour</i>
10 th & 12 th	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
12 th	<i>The Spanish Maze</i>

Early 1604

Mary Fitton felt close to death as she entered the last weeks of pregnancy, depressed with the thrall of the companionship of Richard Leveson.

66 *Tyr'd with all these for restful death I cry,
As to behold desert a begger borne,
And needie Nothing trimmed in jollitie,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplast,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tung-tide by authoritie,
And Folly (Doctor-like) controlling skill,
And simple-Truth miscalde Simplicitie,
And captive-good attending Captain ill.*

*Tyr'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that to die, I leave my love alone.*

67 *Ah wherefore with infection should he live, And with his presence grace
impietie, That sin by him advantage should atchieve, And lace it self with his
societie ? Why should false painting immitate his cheek, And steal dead
seeing of his living hew? Why should poor beautie indirectly seek, Roses of
shadow, since his Rose is true? Why should he live, now nature banckrout
is, Beggerd of blood to blush through lively veins, For she hath no exchequer
now but his, And proud of many, lives upon his gains? ¹¹³ O him she stores,*

¹¹³ Leveson shared the booty of the ships he captured.

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*to show what wealth she had, In days long since, before these last so bad.
[68] Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn, When beauty liv'd and
dy'ed as flowers do now, Before these bastard signs of faire were borne, Or
durst inhabit on a living brow: Before the golden tresses of the dead, The
right of sepulchers, shorne away, To live a second life on second head, Ere
beauties dead fleece made another gay: In him those holy antique bowers are
seen, Without all ornament, it selfe and true, Making no summer of an
others green, Robbing no old to dress his beauty new, And him as for a map
doth Nature store, To shew false Art what beauty was of yore.*

Thursday, 15th March 1604, London

King James's inauguration procession, with his Queen and Prince Henry, from the Tower through the City of London was organised by the Office of The Earl Marshall.

The accounts of Sir George Hulme, Master of the King's Wardrobe, record the issue of cloth for the occasion to over eleven-hundred Court staff and officers. Although the King's players were not mentioned as having walked in the procession, the accounts shows four-and-a-half yards of red cloth given to each of William Shakespeare, Augustine Phillipps, Lawrence Fletcher, John Hemmings and Richard Burbidge (at the bottom of one page) and William Slye, Robert Armin, Henry Cundell and Richard Cowley at the top of the next (although there was sufficient space at the bottom of the previous page for the names of Slye, Armin, Condell and Cowley).¹¹⁴ Cloth was likewise issued to the ten Queen's players and to the nine Prince's players.¹¹⁵

March 19th & 26th 1604, London

Sir Richard Leveson MP helped with the swearing-in of Members of Parliament.

¹¹⁴ Halliwell-Phillipps appears the first to have published these documents in the *Athenaeum* of 30th April 1864. [Alan H Nelson]. The King set aside £6,000 (£1.5m in today's purchasing power) for the procession and it appears that the Lord Chamberlain, through the Master of the Great Wardrobe and others, spent right up to this amount. The price they paid for red cloth averaged 21s 6d a yard, whereas the national price (Beveridge 1939) appeared to be about 5s 9d, a factor of nearly four! For comparison, in 1662 a coat of 4.5 yards was provided for the Manchester Beadle at a cost of 6s 8d per yard, plus 4s 4d of trimmings and 5s 0d for the making. There appears to have been no provision in the 1604 accounts for the making up of these full length cloaks at prices today's equivalent of well over £1,000.

¹¹⁵ **Queen's:** Christopher Beeston; Robert Lee, John Duke, Robert Palante, Richard Purkins, Thomas Haward, James Hoult, Thomas Swetherton, Robert Grene & Robert Beeston. **Prince's:** Edward Allen, William Bird, Thomas Towne, Thomas Dowton, Samuel Rowley, Edward Jubie, Humphrey Jeffs, Charles Massey, Anthony Jeffs.

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7th April 1604, London

The King granted Sir Richard Leveson *Lieutenancy of Admiral of England* for life. Anne Fitton, alias Leveson, the daughter of Mary Fitton and Leveson was born about this time.¹¹⁶

14th July 1604

Robert Sidney wrote to his wife that Mr. Samford¹¹⁷ had come from Lord Pembroke to say that if his master could find the £1,000 for Malkin's wedding to Sir Robert Wroth, they would have it. If not the marriage would have to be put off until Michaelmas by which time he, Pembroke, would have the money.

27th September 1604: Michaelmas, London

Mary, Sir Robert Sidney's daughter, married Sir Robert Wroth, a member of the Privy Council and a hunting companion of the King. The dowry was settled at £3,000. On 25th August the officers of the garrison at Flushing in Holland had subscribed £200 on the approaching marriage which unbeknown to them became part of that dowry.

3rd October 1604 Hampton Court;

William Herbert concluded a letter from Hampton Court to the Earl of Shrewsbury, soon to be his father-in-law, with a P. S. *You must pardon my short writing. I am half drunk tonight.*

10th October 1604 London

Sir Robert Sidney on business in London wrote to his wife after a chance meeting with their new son-in-law, Robert Wroth, *there is somewhat that doth discontent him: but the particulars I could not get out of him: only that he protests that he cannot take any exceptions to his wife, not her carriage towards him. It were very soon for any unkindness to begin.*

16th October

Pembroke again wrote to his future father-in-law, Shrewsbury; saying his brother, Philip, had privately become engaged to Susan de Vere to the consternation of her uncle, Robert Cecil, but that the King *had made peace on all sides.*¹¹⁸

Thursday 1st November 1604; Forgery

¹¹⁶ I often question whether Mary Fitton's children were by Pembroke. Pembroke by now had enormous influence. Was it possible that the award of Admiralty was to keep Leveson quiet?

¹¹⁷ Sanford was secretary to both the second and third Earls Pembroke.

¹¹⁸ Curiously the King was in love or infatuated with Philip, William Herbert's brother. Who was groom of the Royal bedchamber and slept beside him.

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Despite the fact that the Account Books of the Office of the Revels, from 1589 to 1611 (the key Shakespeare years) have been “lost”, an isolated extract exists for 1604-1605 in the Public Records Office (Audit Office Accounts Various A.O.3/908/13), showing that *The Mour of Veins* (sic), one assumes *Othello*, was performed by His Majesty’s Players in the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall Court, followed on Sunday 4th November by their performing the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. This document, almost certainly a forgery which the academic world fails to condemn and chooses to accept, records fourteen different performances of plays by Shakespeare, named *Shaxberd*, and other playwrights. The authenticity of this document was questioned by Charlotte C. Stokes (*The seventeenth century accounts of the Master of the Revels*, 1922) who demonstrated that the document is simply too full of errors to be considered genuine. Stopes’ thirty-six page pamphlet is well worth reading for its forensic analysis. The forgery is written by an idiot inventing spellings that look oldie-worldy and every v being replaced by a u as one would find in a contemporary printed document, except this was not printed!

Sunday, 4th November 1604; Sheffield

William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke, married the *dwarfish and unattractive* Mary Talbot, a coheiress to Gilbert the seventh Earl of Shrewsbury. In the marriage settlement Pembroke had been insistent that, should his wife die, he would have the benefit of the property she brought into the marriage during his lifetime. The negotiations were ultimately fatuous; Pembroke was the first to die, and without an heir and on her death in 1649 the wealth Mary Talbot brought into the marriage went first to one sister who also was heirless and finally to a younger sister, Althea, who had married into the Norfolk family.

1604 London

Valentine Simmes printed *The History of Henrie the fourth*. During the same year he worked with another printer, George Eld, to complete two books, one of which was Ben Jonson’s part in the *Entertainment of King James* when he entered the City of London in 1603. It was Eld who in 1609 would print the *Shake-Speare Sonnets*.

Christmas 1604; Baynard’s Castle, London

William Herbert knew even before he had agreed to marry Mary Talbot, Shrewsbury’s daughter, that it would be a loveless marriage. Apart from the estate that she brought with her in settlement, there was nothing about her that he liked. She was not unintelligent and had been brought up to meet her station in life, but she was short, unattractive bordering ugly, and her back suffered with a hump and a twist. They went through the motions of sex, but she failed to conceive, and there was no pleasure; nothing compared to the passion of lovemaking with his May. Soon after the wedding the new Countess Pembroke returned to live with her parents, staying alternately at Worksop in Nottinghamshire and Sheffield in Yorkshire. He made infrequent trips north to visit his wife and her father, stopping

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on the way to meet up with friends. Shortly after his wedding he wrote to his darling May:

Can you suspect a change in me, And value your own constancy? O! No, you found that doubt in your own heart: Where Love his images but kissed. Not graved; fearing that dainty flesh would smart, And so his painful Sculpture would resist But wrought in mine without remorse; Till he, of it, the perfect statue made As full of sweetness as of force: Only unkindness may the work invade And so it may defaced remain But never can another form retain.

*While we dispute our liberty, I have lost mine:
And which is worse, incline
To love that knavery.
Not the great Charter, nor King's-Bench can free
Me from the Chain, wherein my thoughts she tied:
For our dull Earth what care we had is had we see,
Yet easily let our mind
Into more thralldom slide
O that she were but kind!
To give for that a pledge;
There were my Law, and there my Privilege.*

Dear, can you take my soul from me, And yet have no belief That I have grief? Oh, did your fair eyes ever see (Without a painful force) That bad divorce! The Soul and Body love like me, Not you; the Evening kind, The morning or another mind, And every several hour Slack, and increase that power. They are by Love made perfect One No less then Death makes them become Alone. When the resistless flames of my desire Make Ætna of my heart, And I enraged, impart The torments unto you, and press For pity in this violent distress; You sing, and think I feign this fire. Because one frown of yours can all control; Wrong not my pains, you are the true Higher part of my soul, The lower tyrant is to me, and slave to you. Why do you give me leave to sip, And pull the cup from my so thirsty lip Before I drink? Desire hath left my heart to think, And is dispersed in every outward part, My hands, lips, eyes, That all restraint despise. While it was in my heart It did your will, in chains of slavish fears, But these have all no ears.

It did not take May long to notice that the first letters of the second verse; W A T N M F Y I O T T was an anagram of MAY FITTON leaving two letters W & T - the first and last letters of his name - to envelope hers. In the fourth verse the initial letters of the second to tenth lines gave W H B T and M A Y F T. In Sonnet 76 she almost gave away her name when she wrote *That every word doth almost tell my name*. In her italic handwriting the word *every* resembles *Mary*.

1604 London

James Roberts printed for Nicholas Ling *The tragicall historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as*

it was, according to the true and perfect coppie. At London printed by I R for N L And to be sold at his shoppe under Saint Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet, 1604. This was the longer quarto, Q2, with 4,024 lines.¹¹⁹

1604

After the weddings of William Herbert's to Mary Talbot, and Malkin' (Mary Sidney) to Sir Robert Wroth, Mary Fitton heard that Malkin had struck an unfortunate match and had turned her romantic attentions to her cousin with a number of love poem. He teased her for her lack of quality. The stoic Mary Fitton wrote to him in Sonnet 79:

*Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace,
But now my gracious numbers are decayed,
And my sick Muse doth give another place.*

*I grant sweet love thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen,
Yet what of thee thy Poet doth invent,
He robs thee of, and pays it thee again,*

*He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word,
From thy behaviour, beauty doth he give
And found it in thy cheek: he can afford
No praise to thee, but what in thee doth live.*

*Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee, thou thy self dost pay.*

26th December 1604

A forged extract purporting to be from the Revel's Account Book records:

On St. Steuens night in the hall, a play caled mesur for Mesur; mayd by Shaxberd and performed by His Majesty's Players.

The play when it was performed was set in Vienna,¹²⁰ the heroine, Isabella, a novice nun, has her chastity compromised by the city's governor in order to try to save the life of her brother imprisoned by the governor for fornication. The source of the story was Giraldi Cintio's *Ecatommiti* (1565) set in Ferrara in Italy. It had been designed for stage in George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* 1578.

28th December 1604; Innocent's night

¹¹⁹ In the *First Folio* lines that might impugn the Queen as being complicit in the husbands murder are removed from Q2.

¹²⁰ Internal evidence shows that the play was set in Ferrara in Italy.

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A plaie of Errors was played at Court. A forgery according to Stopes.

1605

January 1605, at Court in London

In a magnificent ceremony, Philip Herbert married Susan de Vere, daughter of the late Edward, seventeenth Earl of Oxford. During lavish celebrations at the lower end of the Great Hall, Philip's brother, Pembroke, and others performed a masque in the couple's honour.

January 1605: London

Samuel Daniell's play, *Philotes*, was performed before the King by the *Children of the Queen's Revels*. The play was considered to have drawn too many parallels with the Essex insurrection of 1601 and Daniell had to defend himself against the charge of *sedition under cover of drama*.

25th March 1605

Admiral Sir Richard Leveson of Lilleshall *about to journey beyond the seas* made what was to be his last will. He referred to the lease he had recently made with Mary Fitton's father, Sir Edward Fitton, Sir Robert Harley and John Tirrische, which had raised £10,000. He made a number of bequests through intermediaries to persons not named in the will. His cousin, Sir John Leveson of Haling, Kent, a member of the Privy Council, was to be his heir and main beneficiary.¹²¹

28th March 1605, Portsmouth

Charles Howard, Lord Admiral, sailed for Spain to confirm the peace with Spain at the Spanish Court. Commanding the ships was his son-in-law, Sir Richard Leveson, and in the large party was Captain William Polewhele who is listed next to an Edmund Fitton.¹²²

4th May 1605, Greenwich:

Philip Herbert was created Earl Montgomery and his uncle, Robert Sidney, invested as Viscount de L'Isle.

4th May 1605, Mortlake, Surrey: Augustine Phillips, gent., made his will in which he made a bequest to his fellowe William Shakespeare a xxx^s peese in gould, to my fellow henry Condell one other xxx^s peese in gould....¹²³ The will does not mention

¹²¹ The Countess of Dorset, a first cousin of Richard Leveson, would try to make claim to the estate.

¹²² Mary Fitton's future husband alongside her brother.

¹²³ This is from the Probate Record. Bequests of £5 silver bowls were made to John Hemminge, Richard Burbadge, William Slye and £20 to Timothie Whithorne. There is no mention of

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he was a shareholder in the Globe or Blackfriars playhouses where, according to the evidence of John Heminges in *Witter* (Phillip's widow's new husband) *vs Heminges & Condell* in 1619, a tenant in common. However, it would also appear that the widow was granted the rights and income from her late husband's share which should have been forfeited when she married John Witter around the end of 1606.

Summer 1605: Perton, Staffordshire

Mary Fitton's new-born son was baptised William. She started to feel normal again writing in naval terms – seemingly relating to the Admiral, but to the biological father, talking about his son:

[80] *O how I faint when I of you do write, Knowing a better spirit doth use your name, And in the praise thereof spends all his might, To make me tongue-tied speaking of your fame. But since your worth (wide as the Ocean is) The humble as the proudest sail doth bear, My sawsie bark (inferior far to his) On your broad main doth wilfully appear. Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat, Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride, Or (being wrackt) I am a worthless boat, He of tall building, and of goodly pride. Then if he thrive and I be cast away, The worst was this, my love was my decay. [81] Or I shall live your Epitaph to make, Or you survive when I in earth am rotten, From hence your memory death cannot take, Although in me each part will be forgotten. Your name from hence immortal life shall have, Though I (once gone) to all the world must dye, The earth can yield me but a common grave, When you intombed in men's eyes shall lie, Your monument shall be my gentle verse, Which eyes not yet created shall ore-read, And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse, When all the breathers of this world are dead, You still shall live (such virtue hath my Pen) Where breath most breaths, even in the mouths of men.*

2nd July 1605 The Peace Delegation led by Admiral Charles Howard, Earl Nottingham, returned from Spain.

2nd August 1605, Chelsea

The Earl of Nottingham wrote to the Earl of Salisbury.

I am very sorry to have such a subject to write of, which is that my son Lewson is most dangerously sick and to be much doubted of his recovery. For he is the weakest man that ever I saw and is still in the extremity of the burning fever and now in a very great looseness. There is little hope of him. And as you know my poor daughter, his wife in what case of weakness she is; and I know how ready men are to seek after such things at his Majesty's hands and because I know it chiefly concerns your offer, although I know her state is not so weak as by law she can be found so imperfect, yet I would be loth it

Cuthbert Burbadge. John Payne Collier in the 1850s or 1860s noted the original will was on two pages of different sizes and each page was in a different hand. Had one page of the Probate copy been rewritten?

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should come in question being my daughter. Therefore in your love to me prevent it and let me have the custody of my own daughter, that her imperfection which it has pleased God to lay on her may not be so known to my great grief in the end of my years. It is well known what she was till God called, her only child away, which her nature and weak spirit could not resist; and with all that, which you know of, her bad father-in-law's dealing with her, whom God forgive for it. If God call him, the King shall lose a worthy servant and myself one that I accounted rather my natural son than a son-in-law. Good my lord, you are a father and therefore you best know my case in this Chelsea, 2 August.

Presently after I had written my letter to your lordship which I sent by Tho. Trevor my servant I received word from Mr Manaryng and others about my son Lewson that there was no hope of life in him and that the physicians say he cannot live. Sir, I am as much perplexed for the loss of him as ever man was for a man. My nephew this bearer came this instant from him who tells me that there is no hope in this world of his life. Chelsea, this 2 at 2 of the clock

Leveson's will was proved on 28th August and he bequeathed his extensive estate to his cousin, Sir John Leveson of Haling, Kent. Sir Richard's intention had been that his natural daughter, Anne, would be brought up by John Leveson and in time marry John's son. Mary Fitton resisted this and won the custody case.¹²⁴

25th August 1605

The newly created Viscount de L'Isle wrote to his wife that he has seen his daughter Wroth's letter and that he will refund his wife any money that she gave her daughter, *I shall be very loth that she did want.*

30th August 1605: Oxford

At Oxford the Queen was entertained by Samuel Daniell's play *Arcadia Reformed* which Daniell had part-translated from an Italian pastoral play. The dedication of the printed play showed conflict between Daniell and Ben Jonson.

1605 London

Two Ben Jonson plays were the earliest printed which referred to the Blackfriars playhouse.

1605 London

Valentine Simmes shared the printing of five books, one with George Eld for Simon Waterson and another with Thomas Creed for Nathaniel Butter. During the year James Roberts sold his printing and publishing business to William Jaggard, a time-served printer who sold books in St. Dunstan's Church Yard in Fleet Street.

¹²⁴ The Levesons became the Leveson-Gowers, subsequently the Earls of Ellesmere and then Dukes of Bridgwater.

Winter 1605

William Herbert was furious. Firstly, in her most recent sonnet May had teased him about his friendship with Mary Wroth;

83 *I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your faire no painting set,
I found (or thought I found) you did exceed,
The barren tender of a Poets debt:

And therefore have I slept in your report,
That you your self being extant well might show,
How far a modern quill doth come to short,
Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow,

This silence for my sin you did impute,
Which shall be most my glory being dumb,
For I impair not beauty being mute,
When others would give life, and bring a tomb.

There lives more life in one of your faire eyes,
Then both your Poets can in praise devise.*

But he had also heard that May was betrothed to a Captain William Polewhele – yet she had sworn to him she would never marry in the expectancy that his wife, Mary Talbot, could not live many years.

In 1603 Polewhele had commanded *The Lion's Whelp* serving under Sir Richard Leveson on the *Repulse*. “Yet another William,” Pembroke thought. Apart from himself she had been associated with Sir William Knollys and the infant, William whom she swore was by Richard Leveson.

He had observed her sonnets display increasing wildness and wondered if she was becoming deranged and, or whether she would ever let him go. Her tone changed with every sonnet.

87 *Farewell thou art too dear for my possessing, And like enough thou knowst thy estimate,
he Charter of thy worth gives thee releasing: My bonds in thee are all determinate. For
how do I hold thee but by thy granting, And for that riches where is my deserving? The
cause of this faire gift in me is wanting, And so my patent back again is swerving. Thy
self thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing, Or me to whom thou gav'st it, else
mistaking, So thy great gift upon misprision growing, Comes home again, on better
judgement making. Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter, In sleep a King, but
waking no such matter.*

91 *Some glory in their birth, some in their skill, Some in their wealth, some in their bodies
force, Some in their garments though newfangled ill: Some in their hawks and Hounds,
some in their Horse. And every humour bath his adjunct pleasure, Wherein it finds a joy
above the rest, But these particulars are not my measure, All these I better in one general
best. Thy love is better then high birth to me, Richer then wealth, prouder then garments*

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cost, Of more delight then Hawks or Horses be: And having thee, of all men's pride I boast. Wretched in this alone, that thou maist take, All this away, and me most wretched make.

23rd December 1605; London.

Sixty-one-year-old Baron William Knollys, Privy Councillor, his wife having died on 31st October, and having heard of the betrothal of Mary Fitton, married nineteen-year-old Elizabeth Howard, eldest daughter of the Earl of Suffolk.¹²⁵

1606

6th January 1606; Court

Taking parts in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* were Queen Anne and the Ladies Anne Herbert, Mary Wroth, Susan de Vere Herbert, Elizabeth Howard and seven other notable ladies, who had all blacked themselves as Ethiops.¹²⁶

4th March 1606; Gawsworth, Cheshire

Mary Fitton's father, Sir Edward, died and was buried at Gawsworth, Cheshire.

*94 They that have power to hurt, and will do none,
That do not do the thing, they most do show,
Who moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, could, and to temptation slow:*

*They rightly do inherit heavens graces,
And husband natures riches from expense,
They are the Lords and owners of their faces,
Others, but stewards of their excellence:*

*The summers flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to it self, it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed out-braves his dignity:*

*For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds,
Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds.*

¹²⁵ In a letter to Mary Fitton's sister Knollys had called his wife *the old bough* which he was *waiting to fall*. His wife hung on. He waited over a decade for Mary Fitton!

¹²⁶ This could have been the occasion that created William Herbert's nickname of Niger, a nickname I have read about but cannot find the source.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

London, 1606

In 1606 George Eld printed a *Foure-fould Meditation* for the publisher Francis Burton. Its dedication was *To the Right Worshipfull and Vertuous Gentleman, Mathew Saunders, Esquire; W.H. wisheth, with long life, a prosperous Achievement to his good desires* adding “Long have they lien hidden in obscuritie, and haply had never scene the light, had not meere accident conveyed them to my hands. But, having seriously perused them, loath I was that any who are religiously affected, should be deprived of so great a comfort, as the due consideration thereof may bring unto them.”

These poems of piety had been thought to be by the Jesuit Robert Southwell. They were, however, composed by the Catholic Philip Howard, 13th Earl of Arundel, who died *a martyr* in the Tower of London in 1595. On 24th Sep 1606 Thomas Howard, the newly created second Earl of Arundel married, Alethea Talbot, daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury and a younger sister of Mary Talbot, Countess Pembroke. It is plausible that William Herbert had the book printed for his brother-in-law. It was the same George Eld who printed Shake-Speare’s Sonnets dedicated to a *Mr. W.H.*. A Mathew Saunders, originally from Welford in Northamptonshire, lived at Shankton (Shangton) in Leicestershire and was a friend of Mary Fitton and her sister.

1st December 1606, Tettenhall

William, the son of William Polewhele and his wife, Mary Fitton, was christened at Tettenhall. He had been conceived at the beginning of March 1606 coinciding with the death of Mary’s father.

December 1606; Cambridge

William Herbert’s sister, Lady Anne Herbert, died after a recurring illness. She had been a favourite of the new Queen, having taken part in many court Masques.

1607

9th January 1607; Tettenhall in Staffordshire

William Fitton, the bastard son of Mary Fitton, was buried. The father may have been Sir Richard Leveson but Leveson did not give this child his name. One possibility is that the father was William Herbert and he was the child born in March 1601.¹²⁷ We learn from a letter of her great-uncle Francis of 4th Feb 1607 Mary Fitton was now married to William Polewhele and again in favour. Perhaps it

¹²⁷ In Mary Wroth’s allegory *Urania* (1621), *Antissia* (Mary Fitton) gives birth to a male child by *Amphilanthus* (William Herbert) who is taken away at birth and reappears years later as a knight – the story-line is not developed.

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is speculation that William Herbert suspected Mary Fitton of poisoning Richard Leveson in 1605 to prove her love to him. To William Herbert the death of young William Fitton, who may have been his own blood, and so soon after the birth of William to Mary Fitton and her husband, Polewhele, may have heightened his suspicions of foul play and angered and distressed him. Life held many vices, but murder was the blackest. Pembroke wrote two abusive sonnets to her.¹²⁸

135 *Who ever bath her wish, thou hast thy **Will**,
And **Will** too boot, and **Will** in overplus,
More then enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet **will** making addition thus.*

*Wilt thou whose **will** is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my **will** in thine,
Shall **will** in others seem right gracious,
And in my **will** no fair acceptance shine:*

*The sea all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store,
So thou being rich in **Will** add to thy **Will**,
One **will** of mine to make thy large **Will** more.*

*Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill,
Think all but one, and me in that one **Will**.*

136 *If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy **Will**,
And **will** thy soul knows is admitted there,
Thus far for love, my love-suit sweet fulfil.*

***Will**, **will** fulfil the treasure of thy love,
I fill it full with **wills**, and my **will** one,
In things of great receipt with ease we prove.
Among a number one is reckoned none.*

*Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy store's account I one must be,
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold,
That nothing me, a something sweet to thee.*

*Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lovest me for my name is **Will**.*

¹²⁸ The word will was an euphonism for genitalia, both male and female; today's Willy.

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Mary Fitton replied:

111 *O For my sake do you wish fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide,
Then public means which public manners breeds.*

*Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it workes in, like the Dyer's hand,
Pity me then, and wish I were renewed,
Whilst like a willing patient I will drink,
Potions of Eysell gainst my strong infection,
No bitterness that I will bitter think,
Nor double penance to correct correction.*

*Pity me then dear friend, and I assure ye,
Even that your pity is enough to cure me.*

112 *Your love and pity doth th'impression fill,
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow,
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o're-green my bad, my good allow?*

*You are my All the world, and I must strive,
To know my shames and praises from your tongue,
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steeled sense or changes right or wrong,*

*In so profound Abyssm I throw all care
Of others voices, that my Adder's sense,
To critic and to flatterer stopped are:
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense.*

*You are so strongly in my purpose bred,
That all the world besides me thinks y'are dead.*

The word *Eysell* made him search his copies of the play, *Hamlet*. A mistake had been made in the first printing, *vessel* had been printed instead of *eisel* but transcribed correctly in the second printing. As Ofelia was being buried:

HAMLET I LOVED OPHELIA. FORTY THOUSAND BROTHERS
COULD NOT, WITH ALL THEIR QUANTITY OF LOVE,
MAKE UP MY SUM. WHAT WILT THOU DO FOR HER?

KING O, HE IS MAD, LAERTES

QUEEN FOR LOVE OF GOD, FORBEAR HIM.

HAMLET 'SWOUNDS! SHOW ME WHAT THOU'LT DO.
WOO'T WEEP, WOO' FIGHT, WOO'T FAST, WOO'T TEAR THYSELF,
WOO'T DRINK UP EISEL, EAT A CROCODILE?

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

Whilst like a willing patient I will drink potions of Eysell gainst my strong infection; Mary Fitton had reminded him of how much he had once loved her and she had answered his question; she indeed would suffer for him. She had playfully called herself an Adder in response to his calling her a Python, an anagram of Phyton. But the sonnet kept going through his mind, he had read the sentiment somewhere before. But where? And then he recalled the source – his own mother’s version of Psalm 58.

*But what could they, who ev’n in birth declined,
From truth and right to lies and injuries?
To show the venom of their cancred mind
The adders image scarcely can suffice;
Nay scarce the aspicks may with them contend,
On whom the charmer all in vain applies
His skillfull’st spells; ay missing of his end,
While she self-deff, and unaffected lies.*

William Knollys, William Herbert, their baby William of 1601, William Fitton, the child who had just died, William Polewhele her husband, and William Polewhele the child in wedlock:

*Who ever hath her wish, thou hast thy **Will**,
And **Will** too boot, and **Will** in overplus,
More then enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet **will** making addition thus.*

22nd January 1607, Stationers’ Hall

Amongst others works, on 22nd Jan 1607, four plays, *The Taming of a Shrew*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Loves Labour Lost* and *Hamlet* were registered in the Stationers’ Hall as being transferred first from Cuthbert Burby to Nicholas Ling, then from Ling to John Smethwick.¹²⁹

The play *Timon of Athens* was thought to have been written about his time. It first appeared in print in the *First Folio* proving to be copied from a manuscript that could not be used for performance. It lacked a plot of any complexity, had little tension or passion, and was in a state that can only be described as unfinished.

¹²⁹ Lawe & Aspley now held the rights to five *Shakespeare* plays. Pavier and Smethwick each held four. In the twenty years before the publication of the First Folio in 1623, Aspley, Pavier and Smethwick barely exercised their rights, producing four quartos from ten titles. Lawe published nine quartos from his RII, RIII & IHIV. In 1623 Blount registered sixteen *Shakespeare* plays, by which time these four publishers held rights to twenty-nine of the thirty-six plays printed in the First Folio.

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There was no romance in the play and the only two women's parts in total counted for ten lines. The women, mistresses to an Athenian General, are named Phrynia and Timandra and are accused by Timon of being whores.¹³⁰

2nd March 1607; Stationers' Hall, London

William Hall was admitted as printer in the place of Valentine Simmes. Simmes continued to work as an occasional jobbing printer but eventually became destitute. The Poor Book of 23rd June 1618 records the first of quarterly payments to him which continued until September 1623.

10th April 1607 London

In London some hundreds of subscribers bought shares in the newly formed Virginia Company whose object was the habitation and plantation of an area of America called Virginia administered from Jamestown. Pembroke was the second-largest investor with £400.

31st July 1607 Stationers' Hall

George Vincent, entered for his copy A tragedy called "The Misery of an Enforced Marriage". A ward promises himself to a young woman but is forced to marry another by his guardians. The play, by George Wilkins, was printed the same year. Although based on the murder in Yorkshire of two children (dramatised as *The Yorkshire Tragedy* and printed by R B for Thomas Pavier as having been written by *William Shakespeare*); played alternatively as a comedy it has a happier ending.

Monday 5th October 1607: Hampton Court

Viscount Lisle, wrote to his wife that he was to meet his nephew, Earl Pembroke, at Loughton Hall in Essex, the home of their daughter, Mary Wroth. Two weeks earlier Mary Wroth had been at Penshurst with Susan de Vere, Countess of Montgomery.

26th December 1607, London.

A month after *King Lear* had been entered to the Stationers' Register, the play was performed on St. Stephen's Night at the palace of Whitehall by the King's servants. The first printing of the play was in 1608; Nicholas Okes the printer for Nathaniel Butter who published: *M. William Shak-speare: his true chronicle historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three daughters. With the unfortunate life of Edgar, sonne and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his sullen and assumed humor of Tom of Bedlam, by his Majestie's servants playing usually at the Globe.*¹³¹

¹³⁰ A coincidental that the first letters of the women's names are an anagram for *Mary Phitainn*?

¹³¹ The 1608 quartos of *Lear*, *Pericles* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* were the first making reference to the Globe playhouse and to his Majesty's servants. The last quarto making reference to the Globe, before it was demolished, was Beaumont's *Philaster* in 1639. Over thirty years only sixteen plays were printed as having been performed at the Globe, fourteen performed at the Blackfriars.

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The playwright based the play on a previous *King Leir*, printed in 1605 by Simon Stafford for John Wright, which had been performed, with little success, in April 1594 at Henslowe's *Rose Playhouse* by the Queen's & Sussex's men. The updated *King Lear* introduced one-hundred-and-sixteen words new to the *Shakespeare* vocabulary but *had* been used by John Florio in his 1603 translation of *Montaigne's Essays*. Another 125 rare words appeared both in the *Montaigne Essays* and in *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* and *Macbeth* show commonality of this rare vocabulary.¹³²

London 1607

The *Revenger's Tragedy* was printed by George Eld to be sold at his house in Fleet Lane at the sign of the *Printers Press*. His former colleague, Valentine Simmes, was around this time in prison, being released before the following Easter. I surmise that Eld took over Simmes' business and found new premises in the Fleet from where he printed the *Shake-Speare Sonnets*.

31st December 1607

Edmond Shakespeare, a player, was buried at St. Saviour's, Southwark, *with forenoon knell of the great bell*. Earlier that year, on 12th Aug the register of St. Giles's Church, Cripplegate, records the burial of *Edward the son of Edward Shackspeere, Player, base-borne*.¹³³

1608

2nd February 1608, Sheffield Lodge:

William Herbert's father-in-law, the Earl of Shrewsbury, wrote from Sheffield to the Earl of Salisbury; *My Lord of Pembroke is now here, having made a posting journey hither for no other errand but to visit us. He returns tomorrow, unless he will be entreated to stay one day longer.*

¹³² This presents a strong case that Florio was involved in play-writing. John M Robinson's *Montaigne and Shakspeare* (1897) identifies *Hamlet* Q2, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus & Cressida* and the *Tempest* as plays written with recourse to the *Essays*. While it is relatively easy to translate an idea from an essay into dramatic speech the absorption and the sudden and extensive use of another person's vocabulary is most unlikely.

¹³³ These register entries were abstracted by John Payne Collier in the 19th Century. Collier perpetrated a number of frauds on the academic world and will be discussed later. A William Shakespeare was still a shareholder in the Globe after this date.

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On the same day at Tettenhall near Wolverhampton in Staffordshire, Frances, the daughter of William Polewhele and his wife, Mary Fitton, was baptised, only to survive five more days and be buried on 7th February.

29th March 1608; London

Having been critical of the French Ambassador in one of their plays at the Blackfriars, the acting group *The Children of the Queen's Revels* was closed down by the Privy Council. Henry Evans who rented the playhouse surrendered the lease back to the Burbadge brothers, thirteen years early.¹³⁴

Good Friday, 1608, London

Valentine Simmes had been released from prison. He had only himself to blame; business had been poor and he had tried to fill his presses by taking on work for Master Henry Owen. He was not unaware that the twenty tracts that had gone through his presses had espoused the Popish cause; he had convinced himself that under the new King the tracts would not have been considered seditious. The authorities did not agree. He was condemned on account of his having printed the Marprelate Tracts and seven other counts of printing Popish books. It was small comfort that his printer colleague, George Eld, had promised to look after his business in his absence; but Eld had actually taken over the business. Destitute, Simmes appealed to Stationers' Hall for help. They gave him five shillings.

4th April 1608, London.

Henry Cavendish to the Earl of Shrewsbury; *We came to London on April 3. My Lady Arabella, the elder Countess of Arundell, the Lady of Arundell, the little sweet Lord Maltravers, My Lord and Lady Pembroke we heard are all well. Lady Pembroke came today to welcome her Aunt and me, poor soul, to London.* [The ladies Arundel & Pembroke were sisters.]

20th May 1608, Stationers' Hall.

A book called the book of Pericles, Prynce of Tyre was entered to Edward Blount in the Stationers' Register. The story drew in part on John Gower's *De Confessione Amantis* printed in 1554 and three other works all published in 1607. The same year *The Painful adventures of Pericles prince of Tyre; being the true history of the play of Pericles as it was presented by the worthy and ancient poet John Gower was printed by T P(urfoot) for Nat: Butter*, using the characters' names from the *Shakespeare* play. The same day Blount also registered *Anthony & Cleopatra*, not printed before the *First Folio* of 1623.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ From *Shakespeare & the Second Blackfriars theatre* – Leeds Barroll 2005.

¹³⁵ In 1623 Blount registered fourteen plays ahead of the publication of the Shakespeare First Folio ensuring his copyright of these plays. *Anthony & Cleopatra* was in the group although Blount appears to have registered it in 1608. The play *Pericles* was not in this group since Thomas Pavier had ownership; it was not printed in the *First Folio*.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

9th August 1608; London

A new syndicate is created to manage the Blackfriars playhouse. Half held by the Burbadge brothers and half held by William Shakespeare, Henry Condell, John Hemmings, Thomas Evans and William Slye. Plague, meanwhile, had broken out in London and would prevent public performances until 1611. On 17th November two managers of the Whitefriars playhouse were imprisoned for a performance *during the time of the present infection*.

1609

January 1609, Perton, Staffordshire

Mary Fitton Polewhele examined George Eld's first, and also his replacement printings of *Troilus and Cressida*. It had been six years since *The booke of Troilus and Cressida as yt is acted by my lo: Chamberlens Men* was listed on the Stationers' Register. It had been reassigned to Richard Bonian and Henry Walley on 28th Jan 1609. The title page from the first printing was *The historie of Troylus & Cresseida. As it was acted by the Kings Maiesties servants at the Globe. Written by William Shakespeare*. The second printing had a new title, *The famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid. Excellently expressing the beginning of their loves, with the conceited wooing by Pandarus Prince of Licia. Written by William Shakespeare*. Unique to the second edition was a preface in the form of an unsigned epistle.

Mary thumbed through the newly cut pages till she found the description of Troilus, *O Admirable youth! He ne're saw three and twenty*. Six years earlier when the play had been written she had been twenty-four and Will had been twenty-two; not yet *three-and-twenty*.

She had once promised William there would never be another man in her life but had found herself bound to the late Sir Richard Leveson and now married to William Polewhele. And Will had married that Talbot woman before she ever met Polewhele who had given her a new name and respectability; so much for vows! That afternoon she reread the play. A satire, of which the eponymous love affair set during the Trojan War was an inconsequential fraction, but it brought back to mind her first meeting with Will, the vows they had made to each other, the bed they had pressed on their first night together and their parting. She wondered whether Will would ever read or see the play and share the same feelings, or whether she would become a leper-beggar as had Cressida. Mary knew she had come so close to losing her sanity – like Leveson's poor wife. It was time to let Will go. She wrote her last five sonnets to him.

122 TThy guift,, thy tables, are within my brain
Full characted with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain
Beyond all date even to eternity.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

*Or at the least, so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist,
Till each to razed oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be mist:*

*That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score,
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
To trust those tables that receive thee more,
To keep an adjunct to remember thee,*

Were to import forgetfulness in me.

123 *No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change,
Thy pyramyds built up with newer might
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange,
They are but dressings of a former sight:*

*Our dates are brief, and therefor we admire,
What thou dost foist upon us that is old,
And rather make them borne to our desire,
Then think that we before have heard them told:*

*Thy registers and thee I both defy,
Not wondering at the present, nor the past,
For thy records, and what we see doth lie,
Made more or less by thy continual haste:*

*This I do vow and this shall ever be,
I will be true despite thy scythe and thee.*

124 *YF my dear love were but the child of state,
It might for fortune's bastard be unfathered,
As subject to time's love, or to time's hate,
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gathered.*

*No it was builded far from accident,
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thrall'd discontent,
Whereto th'inviting time our fashion calls:*

*It fears not policy that Heretic,
Which workes on leases of short numbered hours,
But all alone stands hugely politic,
That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.*

*To this I witness call the fools of time,
Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.*

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

125 *Were't ought to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which proves more short then waste or ruining?*

*Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
Lose all, and more by paying too much rent
For compound sweet; Forgoing simple savour,
Pitiful thrivers in their gazing spent.*

*No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual render only me for thee.*

*Hence, thou suborned Informer, a true soul
When most impeached, stands least in thy control.*

126 *O Thou my lovely Boy who in thy power,
Dost hold times fickle glass, his fickle hour:
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st,
Thy lover's withering, as thy sweet self grow'st.*

*If Nature (sovereign mistress over wrack)
As thou goest onwards still will pluck thee back,
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill.
May time disgrace, and wretched minute kill.*

*Yet fear her O thou minion of her pleasure,
She may detain, but not still keep her treasure!
Her Audit (though delayed) answered must be,
And her *Quietus* is to render thee.*

()
()

She had wrestled in her mind whether she should *sign* the sonnets with an anagram. How often she had sworn that their love affair would remain a secret, but it was so tempting to insert for posterity some mark of her, their identity. By *not* creating a final couplet she had established finality and with the brackets made it clear that she had done so expressly. Her last words were an anagram of *storie's ends there*.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Her use of the word *quietus* links her uniquely to Hamlet's soliloquy.

TO GRUNT AND SWEAT UNDER THIS WEARY LIFE,

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

But Mary Fitton succumbed to temptation. She provided posterity with conundrums to identify them, the two lovers. In sonnets 122, 123 and 124 she unequivocally embedded their names – and thus she made her quietus.

The publisher followed the Sonnets with Mary's poem giving an account of her seduction, *A Lover's Complaint by William Shake-Speare*; it should have been printed ahead of the sonnets, the prequel. The seduction came first.

20th May 1609

The Stationers' Register shows:

*Th. Thorpe Entrd for his copie under the Hande of Mr Wilson & Mr Lownts Warden
a booke Called Shakespeares sonnetts*¹³⁷

23rd May 1609 London

The two-year-old Virginia Company with its hundreds of subscribers was granted a Royal Charter. Its Council was made up of fourteen lords, thirty-six knights and two others. William Earl of Pembroke, named second on the Council (to Southampton) and fourth named on the Charter, was the second-largest *adventurer* having subscribed £400. His wife, brother and uncle were also subscribers.

In May 1609 a fleet of nine ships with five-hundred colonists set sail for the Virginia Settlement. On 25th July during a storm the *Sea-Venture* was separated from the fleet and forced to run ashore on the Bermudas. It took a year for the shipwrecked crew to reach Virginia where they joined colleagues to farm tobacco, an extremely valuable cash crop. The news of the shipwreck when it reached London became a feature in *The Tempest*. Pembroke County, Bermuda, is named after the Earl.¹³⁸

26th September 1609; Tettenhall near Perton, Staffordshire

William Polewhele of Perton, Co. Stafford, husband to Mary Fitton, was buried at St. Michael's & All Angels, Tettenhall, near to Perton where they had lived together for two years (when he was not at sea). From his will of 19th Sep 1609,

WHEN THAT HE MAY HIS FULL QUIETUS MAKE,
WITH A BARE BODKIN, WHO WOULD THIS ENDURE,
BUT FOR A HOPE OF SOMETHING AFTER DEATH?
WHICH PUZZLES THE BRAIN, AND DOTTH CONFOUND THE SENSE,
WHICH MAKES US RATHER BEAR THOSE EVILS WE HAVE,
THAN FLY TO OTHERS THAT WE KNOW NOT OF.

¹³⁷ There are many small inconsistencies in the letter formations of the entry that would merit a vindication that this is not a forged entry.

¹³⁸ Pembroke College, Oxford, where he became Chancellor, also bears his name.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

proved on 23rd June 1610 we learn that Mary was pregnant with a daughter who would be christened Mary. Executors were his wife, Sir Walter Leveson of Ashmores (cousin to the late Sir Richard Leveson) and Sir Richard Tichborne of Tichborne. Ultimately their son, William, would inherit the parsonage of Brownsover, Rugby, Co. Warwick.

Autumn 1609

Mary Fitton Polewhele gently opened the small book of *Shake-Spears Sonnets* and turned over the title page to examine the Dedication.

TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .
THESE . INSVING . SONNETS .
Mr . W . H . ALL . HAPPINESSE .
AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .
PROMISED .
BY .
OVR . EVER-LIVING . POET .
WISHETH .
THE . WELL-WISHING .
ADVENTVRER . IN .
SETTING .
FORTH .
T . T .

It looked correct but she needed to check. From her writing desk she took the sheet of paper on which she had created a cypher. Meticulously she counted the characters on each line and compared the figures with those on her sheet. Every line was correct but one, which annoyed her; her own mistake. Will, using their cypher should be able to quickly decipher her message. It was luck to have Thomas Thorpe register the book at the Stationers' Hall. Would anyone ever suspect that T.T. was her monogram and not Thomas Thorpe's initials? ¹³⁹

It had been her father who had shown her how, on the crest above the door to Gawsworth Hall, the Fittons had woven a play on words into their motto; the Fittons joining with the Levesons had recreated their Latin motto, under the three Cheshire sheaves of corn, of *Fit Onus Leve*, meaning *make work light*; the first part making Fit-on and the second half making Lev-e-sun.

¹³⁹ There was no reason for Thomas Thorpe to use only initials and every reason for him to promote his own name. Elsewhere in his various publications he used Th. Thorp (1610), Th Thorp (1613), T Thorp (1614), Tho. Thorp (1622); never T. T..

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

There they were, in print, her first seventeen sonnets coaxing William to marry, then one-hundred-and-eight which expressed her many varying emotions until she let him go, her final twelve-line poem, then twenty-six of some of his sonnets composed for her over the years, finally an envoi of two similar sonnets. To round it all off, her poem, *A Lover's Complaint*, which recounted her being seduced by William. George Eld, who had assumed the business of the ageing and destitute Valentine Simmes, had produced a most pleasing book.

1609; Printed in London

The late and much admired play, called Pericles, Prince of Tyre: with the true relation of the whole history, adventures and fortunes of the said prince; as also the no less strange and worthy accidents in the birth of his daughter Mariana. As it hath been diverse and sundry times acted by his Majesties servants at the Globe on the Bank-Side. Imprinted at London for Henry Gosson, and to be sold at his sign of the Sun in Pater-noster row, 1609. By William Shakespeare.

The play had been registered to Edward Blount on 20th May 1608 and had been performed for the French and Venetian ambassadors early in 1608.¹⁴⁰

1610

1610 London

Ben Jonson dedicated his play, *The Alchemist*, to Lady Mary Wroth. This Sonnet demonstrate closeness and familiarity between them.

A SONNET, TO THE NOBLE LADY, THE LADY MARY WROTH.

I that have been a lover, and could shew it,
Though not in these, in rhymes not wholly dumb,
Since I exscribe your sonnets, am become
A better lover, and much better poet.
Nor is my Muse or I asham'd to owe it
To those true numerous graces, whereof some
But charm the senses, others overcome
Both brains and hearts ; and mine now best do know it :
For in your verse all Cupid's armoury,
His flames, his shafts, his quiver, and his bow,
His very eyes are yours to overthrow.
But then his mother's sweets you so apply,

¹⁴⁰ Fifteen copies survive of the 1609 print-run and four of the 1611. We shall read of the Duke of Lennox entertaining his guests after dinner with a private performance.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

Her joys, her smiles, her loves, as readers take
For Venus' cestion every line you make.

February 1610; London

The Public Records Office holds a suit of documents in the form of transcriptions, of the originals allegedly discovered by Wallace in 1910 in the action of Robert Keysar v Richard Burbage. Henry Evans who had held the Blackfriars playhouse from Burbage had conveyed one-sixth interest to John Marston and from Marston to Keysar. Keysar claimed the King's Men had been buying up three private playhouses, Blackfriars, Whitefriars¹⁴¹ and Paul's in order to suppress them.¹⁴² Named in the papers were King's Men, Richard Burbage, Cuthbert Burbage, John Hemings and Henry Condell who responded that Evans had let the building fall into decay, failed to fulfil their covenant for repairs and, therefore, forfeited his bond for £400. Shakespeare was not named. According to the documents Kaysar claimed a share on profits of £1,500 which would have been an absurd claim since plague had closed the playhouse since 1608.

<https://archive.org/details/universitystudie101910univ/page/356/mode/2up>

12th April 1610; Harefield, Middlesex

John Newdigate, husband to Anne, Mary Fitton's sister, died and was buried in the family vault at Harefield.

Virginia; 15th July 1610

William Strachey a leader of the American colonists completed his *True Reportory of the Wrack* and sent the document to the Council of *The Virginia Company* in London. The document, which was not printed until 1625 and remained confidential to the Council told of the shipwreck in the Bermudas of two ships from the 1609 fleet. Commentators concur that whoever wrote *The Tempest*, which did not have a defined source story, had access to Strachy's document. Earl Pembroke was the second named member of the Virginia Council.

The *Tempest*, the first play printed in the *First Folio*, half the length of *Hamlet*, is supposed to have been written about 1611. One-third of the lines are given by

¹⁴¹ The Whitefriars was occupied by *The Children of the King's Revels* managed by Keysar, and actor Martin Slater, the poet/playwright Michael Drayton and Lording Barry the playwright.

¹⁴² Keysar was paying Pierce of St. Paul's £20 a year *not* to put on performances.

Prospero, Duke of Milan, shipwrecked on a mystical island with his daughter, *Miranda*, the romantic heroine, who falls in love with *Ferdinand, Prince of Naples*.¹⁴³

Professor Frank Muir in his *The Sources of Shakespeare Plays* wrote:

“There are some remarkable resemblances to *The Tempest* in *scinari* of the *commedia dell’arte*. In *Li Tre Satiri* the magician’s servants in the form of wild men; some shipwrecked mariners steal the magician’s book and desire the virginal Phillis; and even more strikingly, *Zannni* escapes from a rock in which he had been imprisoned by a necromancer for refusing to obey his behests – as Ariel refused to obey Sycorax. In *Capriccio* there is an enchanted banquet which is removed by spirits. In *I Forestieri* shipwrecked sailors get drunk; In *Arbore Incantato* the magician has a wild man as a servant; in *Arcadia Incantata* a good magician raises a storm, shipwrecked sailors are tormented by spirits and prevented from eating; and *Pantaloncino* the magician throws away his wand and book of spells.”

Muir then goes on to name two Spanish stories from which the plot could have been derived; one in particular, Eslava’s *Primera Parte de las Noches de Invierno*. This alone is sufficient to deflect authorship from a provincial landowner and pinpoint John Florio, steeped in Italian drama and with working knowledge of Spanish, as the principal author of the *Tempest*.¹⁴⁴

Florio functioned in the milieu of the literati and his will (1625) identifies his more than nodding-acquaintance with William Herbert, a Council Member and major investor in the Virginia Company who would have had sight of Strachy’s report.

1611

1611, London

¹⁴³ The last chapter of Lamberto Tassinari’s *John Florio – The Man Who Was Shakespeare* has a very convincing argument that *The Tempest* was written by John Florio.

¹⁴⁴ Sharon L Smith (online) gives a balanced analysis of the question of sources.

The Arden Shakespeare *Tempest* (1989) discusses at length these Italian and Spanish sources (and German – Sie Shone Sudea) and leaves the question open-ended. However, their 2011 edition chooses *not* to discuss them as if they are *an inconvenient truth* and otherwise spends many pages fixated with Caliban and cannibalism. If the authors had the courage of their convictions they would have had an argument to rebut Lamberto Tassinari’s *The Man who was Shakespeare* (2009) who maintains that John Florio was the author of the *Tempest*; politics ahead of truth obfuscating the authorship question.

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John Florio's Italian-English dictionary, *Vocabularo Italiano & Inglese*, was published. Florio was by now well-established as a gentleman-groom of Queen Anne's Privy Chamber. In Florio is found a man with a massive vocabulary, close to the Royal family and to the aristocracy.

29th September 1611, London

Earl Pembroke is appointed to the Privy Council.

1611 London

George Eld printed [Q3] *The tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect coppy. At London printed for John Smethwicke and to be sold at his shoppe in Saint Dunstan's Church yearde in Fleetstreet, Under the Diall, 1611.*

1611 Perton, Staffordshire

John Lougher was handsome, intelligent and kind, a man of status with enough wealth to look after her. She had first met him seven years earlier when, pregnant, she had escaped to Tenby seeking refuge with the Barretts, the parents of her brother Edward's wife. In those last weeks of her pregnancy and her confinement imminent, tormented by her desperate love for Will Herbert, she was quite unaware, as they had slowly walked along the deserted beaches below the castle, that John Lougher had fallen for her. He was her only companion at a time when she felt she had the word *scandal* blazoned across her brow and wanting to bury herself away. More recently fate had made them neighbours and their friendship developed. He had attended William Polewhele's funeral and thereafter gently intruded himself into her life, first a companion and then her lover. That afternoon they had married. Her love for him was mature. It was agreed that they would live at Perton and have their own children adding to her three, Anne Leveson, and William and Mary Polewhele. She was happy, again pregnant and, at the age of thirty-four, no longer needed to scribble and play with words to deal with her emotions. She was free, away from Court and its influences and they could look forward to a life within their own control.

1611 London

Valentine Simmes, working as a journeyman, printed *The first and second part of the troublesome raigne of John King of England*. Almost destitute, his career as a printer was at an end. In the shadow of the walls of Baynard's Castle he had printed nine of the eighteen plays of William Shake-speare and also Mistress Aemelia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Iudaeorum*.¹⁴⁵ In the early 1590's Lanyer, a musician, had been the

¹⁴⁵ Aemelia Lanyer was considered by A. L. Rowe, a commercial historian, to be the Dark Lady of the Sonnets.

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Mistress of Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, and had carried his child. *Salve Deus* is considered the first poetry by a named woman to be printed and contained a series of poems dedicated to great ladies including Mary Sidney, the Dowager Countess of Pembroke, whom she praised for her patronage of the arts. She also highlighted the Countess was an author:

*Though many Books she writes that are more rare,
Yet there is honey in the meanest flowers:
Which is both wholesome and delights the taste:
Though Sugar be more finer, higher prized.*¹⁴⁶

c1611 Warwickshire

Soon after John Newdigate's death, Francis Beaumont (Senior)¹⁴⁷ staying at his brother's house at Saunders Hall nearby Bedworth, wrote in a letter to the widowed Anne Newdigate (Mary Fitton's sister); *Your fair & worthily beloved Sinkefoyl I most kindly salute, which like being unto a heartsease hath three leaves of one sort and two of another. I pray God from my very heart, that they may for ever bring ease of heart to that thrice-worthy Root that bear them.*

Anne recognised a *situation* about to cause her embarrassment with this elderly man, the second son of Nicholas Beaumont of Cole Orton and Anne Saunders of Welford. Beaumont. In naming the five-leaved cinquefoil, he was alluding to the pansy, the Fitton emblem, and to Anne's two sons and three daughters. Sister Mary become an intermediary, advising Beaumont who was also being advised by a cousin, Mathew Saunders, who too was a friend of Mary. After Beaumont was coolly rejected, Saunders decided it was his turn to throw his hat in the direction of Anne Newdigate – but with the same cool outcome. Anne Newdigate may not have found the situation amusing but a team of playwrights, Beaumont & Fletcher, certainly did and in 1616 used the story and the characters in the stage play *The Scornful Lady*.¹⁴⁸

1612 – 1616

1612 London

¹⁴⁶ Prof Margaret Hannay, Mary Sidney's biographer, sensed the Countess wrote much more than the few pieces printed under her name; Robin P Williams proposes that MS *was* the *Sweet Swan of Aron* – which I agree with.

¹⁴⁷ The playwright Francis Beaumont's elder brother, John, was a friend of Michael Drayton.

¹⁴⁸ In 1606 a *W.H.* had dedicated a book of pious poetry to Mathew Saunders. Was it at Saunders Hall where William Herbert and Mary Fitton rendezvoused?

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W. Jaggard published a second edition of the *Passionate Pilgrime* by *W. Shakespeare*.¹⁴⁹ It was a copy of the 1599 edition with two extra poems by Thomas Heywood who, upset by the use of his poems without permission, wrote *An Apology for Actors, Epistle*:

Here likewise, I must necessarily insert a manifest injury done me in that work, by taking the two Epistles of Paris to Helen, and Helen to Paris, and printing them in a lesser volume, under the name of another, which may put the world in opinion I might steal them from him; and he to do himself right, hath since published them in his own name: but as I must acknowledge my lines not worthy his patronage, under whom he hath publisht them, so the Author I know much offended with M. Jaggard that (altogether unknown to him) presumed to make so bold with his name.

11th May 1612; London

[One of the suits discovered in the early twentieth century by Charles Wallace of the U. of Nebraska.]

In the Court of Requests William Shaksper gent of Stratford-upon-Avon in the County of Warwickshire gave evidence in the case of Belott versus Mountjoy. Belott was suing his father-in-law, claiming an unpaid dowry. Shaksper said he had known the family for about ten years and lodged in their house in St. Olave's Parish at around 19th Nov 1604, the date of the marriage. The young couple had soon left the parent's house after an argument and taken lodgings with a victualler, George Wilkins of the Parish of St. Sepulchre. The testimony was signed *Wm Shak.*

A George Wilkins probably corroborated to produce the *Shake-Speare* plays, *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles*.¹⁵⁰

10th March 1613, Blackfriars, London

Testimony of Edmund Malone; 1795

"On the 10th March 1612-13, Shakespeare purchased from one Henry Walker a small estate in Blackfriars for one hundred and forty pounds, eighty of which he appears to have paid down; and he mortgaged the premises for the remainder. In the year 1768 the Mortgage Deed was

¹⁴⁹ I believe the first and second editions of 1599 were a composite of a rectification of an inadequate first printing; making 1612 the second, not third edition.

¹⁵⁰ Roger Prior, Shakespeare Survey 25, *The Life of George Wilkins*, links this George Wilkins with Henry Gosson of St. Lawrence Poulteney, the publisher of *Pericles* and of Wilkin's pamphlet, *Three Miseries of Barbary*. In March 1611 Gosson stood surety for Wilkins, who was frequently up in front of the magistrates, this time accused of abusing one Randall Borkes, a bookseller, and kicking a pregnant woman in the belly. On the bench that day was Magistrate Henry Fermor to whom in 1608 Wilkins had dedicated his novel *The Painful Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre*. [See March 1857, Halliwell hints that the extra page is a forgery.]

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found by Mr. Albany Wallis among the title deeds of the Rev. Fetherstonhaugh of Oxted in the County of Surrey and was presented by him to the late Mr. Garrick."

According to E K Chambers, this deed was enrolled in Chancery Close Rolls¹⁵¹ on 23rd April 1613, (St. George's Day; supposedly William Shaxper's birthday) and can be found in the index under the name of W. Shakespeare, the purchaser, instead of H. Walker, the vendor, *contrary to the ordinary practice*.¹⁵²

The deed shows that the property was sold to William Shakespeare of Stratford Upon Avon, William Johnson, John Jackson and John Hemming, but Hemming was not a signatory. However, a document dated 10th February 1618 which released the property to Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna Hall, through her solicitors, was signed by Johnson, Jackson and this time Hemming who, by not signing the first document, had no legal title.

11th March 1613, Blackfriars

The following day a Mortgage Deed was signed by William Shakspe^{er}, Wm: Johnsonn & Jo: Jacksonn in the presence of Will: Atkinson; Ed: Ouery; Robert Andrewes, scr; & Henry Lawrence, servant to the same scrivener, the same names who had attested the conveyance deed for the same property dated 10th March. The deed reverted ownership of the property to Henry Walker, the vendor, until the balance of £60 was paid to Walker by Shakespeare no later than 29th September. Again John Hemyng, one of the purchasers, did not sign the deed.

22nd April 1613, London.

The sale of the Blackfriars property by Henry Walker to William Shakespeare was enrolled on the Close Roll 11 Jac. P. 31. The first ten lines are on membrane 45 which is stitched to membrane 46. This could only have been enrolled when the £60 debt had been paid off, which appears to have been done five months early.

29th June 1613, Southwark, London.

On 29th June 1613, in a mid-afternoon performance of *Henry VIII*, a canon was fired at the end of Act-One to mark the entrance of the King. Held by the drama, nobody noticed sparks rose to set the roof thatch alight. There was panic and the

¹⁵¹ E K Chambers *William Shakespeare* (1930) gives Close Roll 11 Jac. p31. This enrolment is not registered on the PRO computerised records but I have a digitised copy of C54/2184 m45.

¹⁵² Who's mistake! Malone had failed to find the Enrolment. Although Shaxper of Henley Street, Stratford, may indeed have had a property in the Blackfriars, there is reason to question the integrity of the deeds which appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century.

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theatre evacuated but it was too late to save the *Globe* which was totally destroyed and had to be rebuilt at the expense of its owners (sharers) the following year. It remained open until playhouses were closed at the start of the Civil War in 1642.

23rd August 1613; Worms, Germany.

Baron Sir John Harington of Exton, 1539-1613, died aged seventy-three at Worms while returning home from Germany. He was guardian to James I's daughter, Elizabeth, and had travelled with her and her new German husband to Heidelberg after their wedding celebrations in London. He left debts of about £35,000.

He was kinsman and friend of Sir Robert Sidney and of William Herbert who both stayed at his Exton estate in Rutland at Christmas 1602. His daughter, Lucy, was the redoubtable Countess of Bedford who had been tutored by Michael Drayton. A translator, satirist, poet, politician, friend of the Dudleys, courtier, soldier and sufferer of gout, Harington's 1610 catalogue of books showed he owned copies of about three quarters of the known plays printed in London from 1588 to 1610 (124 of 168). Probably twice as many plays were performed over the same period which were never published. For his 1596 New Year celebrations it appears he employed the Chamberlain's Men to perform the *Shakespeare* play *Titus Andronicus* at Burley on the Hill, his second Rutland residence.

14th March 1615; Essex

Sir Robert Wroth died. Knighted by James I in 1603, he had inherited his father's estates in 1606. He left considerable debts for his widow, Mary Sidney Wroth, pregnant with their only child who was to die in its third year. Widowhood allowed Mary Wroth the freedom to take up residence in Baynard's Castle and become her cousin, William Herbert's, mistress. It was about this time that she started to write her play, *Love's Victory*, in which the characters represent herself, William and Philip Herbert, the Rustic as her late husband, and possibly Mary Fitton as the articulate but fickle Dalina.¹⁵³ The play is an allegory on Love's (Venus & Cupid's) victory over mortals, represented by arcadian shepherds. When Philisses (William Herbert) challenges Dalina (Mary Fitton) with *You fain could solve this business*, she replies, *Who? Would I? Nay, my care is past.* [Act 2.1]

23rd December 1615, Westminster, London

Earl Pembroke was presented with the white staff of Office of Lord Chamberlain. Apart from the management of the King's household, one of his main

¹⁵³ Mary Fitton was depicted as Antissia and as Dalinea in Wroth's 1621 *Urania*.

responsibilities was jurisdiction over London's plays and playhouses. The appointment to this high office marked a turning point in his life.

1616

25th January 1616, Stratford-upon-Avon

The will of William Shackspere was drawn up on 25th January in the 14th year of King James I (1617). There was in error as the 14th regnal year did not start until 24th March 1616. The January date was subsequently crossed out and 25th March conveniently substituted. In a later interlineation there is a bequest to his wife of *my second best bed with the furniture*.¹⁵⁴ He left to each of his fellows, Richard Burbage,¹⁵⁵ John Hemminges and Henry Condell, 26s 8d to buy memorial rings; here commentators consistently fail to mention this too was an interlineation *and* in a different hand. One other aspect is the extremely long-winded and fatuous entail quite unnecessarily, meaningless in law, taking up forty percent of the will and is nothing more than a space-filler;

..... *To have and to hold all and singular the said premises with their Appurtenances unto the said Susanna Hall for and during her terme of her natural lief and after her deceas to the first son of her body lawfully yssueing and to the heires Males of the bodie of the said first Son lawfullie yssueinge and for default of such issue to the second sonne of her bodie lawfullie yssueing and so to the heires males of the saied second sonne lawfullie yssuinge & for default of such heires to the third Sonne of the bodie of the saied Susanna Lawfullie yssueing and of the heires Males of the bodie of the saied third Sonne Lawfullie yssueing, And for default of suche issue the same soe to be & Reamin to the fourth, ffythe, sixte and seaventh sons of her bodie lawfully issueing one after Another and to the heires Males of the bodies of the saied ffourth, fythe, Sixte & Seaventh sonnes lawfully yssueing in such manner as yt ys before Lymitted to be & remaine to the first, second and third Sonns of her body and to their heirs males. And for default of such issue the saied premises to be & Remain to my sayed Neece Hall and the heirs Males of her bodie Lawfully yssueing and for default of such issue to my daughter Judith & the heires Males of her bodie lawfullie yssueing, And for default of such issue to the Right heires of me the said Willm Shackspere for ever.*

¹⁵⁴ The absence of Mrs. Shakespeare from the will has been open to much legal interpretation. A simple answer could be that she was suffering with acute senile dementia. Another explanation is that she was already dead and the recorded death in 1623 is a forgery.

¹⁵⁵ Burbadge's will has *Burbadge* not Burbage. Ben Jonson and Pembroke also called him Burbadge as did Manningham in 1601 (Burbidge). The "d" is articulated. So why did not Shakespeare?

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At the time of the will Susanna, Shakespeare's daughter, nearly thirty-three, had been married to John Hall for nine years. They had one child, Elizabeth, aged eight. The verbiage here is effusive, excessive and does not meet the testator's obvious intention that his main beneficiary should be Susanna and her successors exhausting any male line ahead of female (which is what happened), failing which to his daughter Judith and her male then female successors. Had the child Elizabeth died prematurely and Susanna had another daughter but no son, that daughter would have been excluded from this will – not what appears to be intended. This surfeit of words covering up to the seventh male yet unborn was gratuitous, almost biblical, and could well be considered a space-filler. On the one hand Shakespeare wanted the estate to be passed through a successive male line yet on the other he is relaxed that a female, his granddaughter (niece), should inherit.

There are other strange aspects to this will including one fact, never reported, that when one attempts to fold the three sheets the third sheet fails to nestle with the other two.¹⁵⁶ To explain away these perversities the commentators say that the will was a draft. One commentator points out that the will has no "voice"; one does not hear the man reputedly associated with the greatest collection of works in the English language.

6th March 1616; London

The Scornful Lady, written by playwrights Beaumont and partner, John Fletcher, was published, having been *acted (with great applause) by the children of Her Majesty's Revels in the Blackfriars*. Fletcher's name was attached to that of a *William Shakespeare* as co-writer of the play *Two Noble Kinsman*.

Beaumont, born 1584, was the third son of a father of the same name, a Justice of the Common Pleas. In 1600 the young man had been sent by his father to the Inner Temple to pursue a career in Law – but Junior preferred to write plays. *The Scornful Lady* with its cast of four women and four men, was a farce involving a widow, her sister, a lady-in-waiting called *Abigail*, and the capricious antics of two over-mature brothers, *Elder-Loveless* and *Younger-Loveless*, who sought to woo the women. *Abigail* is reviewed by the brothers:

...to this day she loves a youth of eighteen; she heard a tale how Cupid struck her in love with a great Lord in the Tilt-yard¹⁵⁷, but he never saw her; yet she in kindness would needs

¹⁵⁶ I made a replica of the three pages. There are two horizontal fold lines and one vertical. Each sheet is slightly different in size, pages one and two have watermarks, page three has no watermark. Only page two has a page number and a mark indicates that there was a probate inventory, but the probate shows no valuation.

¹⁵⁷ yard = penis.

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wear a willow-garland at his wedding. She loved all the players in the last Queen's time once over: She was struck when they acted Lovers and forsook some when they played Murthers. She has nine Spur-royals, and the servants say she hoards old gold.

The characters uncannily resembled Anne Newdigate (*The Lady*), Mary Fitton, (*Martha*, the Lady's sister, who had few lines, and also *Abigal*, the Lady's waiting-gentlewoman), Francis Beaumont Senior (*Elder-Loveless*) and Matthew Saunders who lived in Welford (*Younger-Loveless*). Three other characters made up four couples; a *Rich Widow*, *Sir Roger*, the *Lady's* curate, and a man called *Welford*. In the denouement *Younger-Loveless* married the *Rich Widow*; *Elder-Loveless* married the *Lady*; *Welford* married *Martha* and *Sir Roger* married *Abigal*.

Mary Fitton fits uncannily well as the Maid *who fell in love with the great Lord in the tilt-yard but he never saw her*, Southampton, and she mournfully would have attended his wedding to her friend Elizabeth Vernon. Mary Fitton, to her great delight, would have been a constant theatregoer, attending all the plays performed at Court. Another association is the name Welford, a name which few except the sisters Mary and Anne and the two protagonists in the wooing of Anne Newdigate would ever recognise; and the *youth of eighteen* whom she still loves could well have been William Herbert but equally Henry Wriothesley, was known to be a master of the tiltyard. The play has all the semblance of being founded on a true story, and why not?

Francis Beaumont was a youth of sixteen at the time of the Fitton-Pembroke scandal, so when he co-wrote the play over a decade later his knowledge of Mary Fitton would have been from apocryphal tales. In 1606 a W. H. dedicated a book to Mathew Saunders.¹⁵⁸

25th April 1616

The last burial in April recorded in the Register of the church in Stratford upon Avon is that of a Will Shakspeare, gent.

1616 London

The collected *Works of Benjamin Jonson*, the first ever such collection of plays and poetry, was printed by William Stansby and dedicated to the Earl of Pembroke. They commemorated the plays and other works of Jonson (1572-1637).

Each play named the performing group and the principal actors. Two plays named Shakespeare. The principal actors of *Everyman In His Humour* (1599) are listed as

Will Shake-Spear Ric Burbage

¹⁵⁸ Did William Herbert use Saunder's home as a staging post on his way to and from his father-in-law and wife in Yorkshire? Welford is about 20 miles from Arbury Hall.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

Aug Philips	Joh Hemings
Hen Condell	Tho Pope
Will Slye	Chr Beeston
Will Kempe	Joh Duke

and in *Sejanus his Fall* (1603). These are the only times Shakespeare is named as an actor relating in any specific play. The original, quarto printing of each play more than a decade earlier had a list of characters but *did not* name any actors. I suggest that *William Shake-speare* was young William Herbert's stage name.

Chambers' *Elizabethan Stage* (Vol II, p198) identifies Kemp, Pope, Heminges, Philips, Bryan, Burbadge, Duke and Slye as the core that became the *Chamberlain's Players*; but not Shakespeare. So, a rhetorical question, why is Shake-Spear heading the list, in a book that is dedicated to the William Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke?

One of the commendatory poems to the Jonson Works, in sonnet form, was signed *Cygnus* and in 2023, Professor Laoutaris identified *Cygnus* as William Shakespeare; however, *cygnus* meaning *swan* was attributed to Sir Philip Sidney (William Herbert and Mary Wroth's uncle and Countess Pembroke's brother) when he was stationed at the French court. All three were friends of Jonson and wrote sonnets; I favour the clarity of Mary Sidney, Countess Pembroke.

To the Deserving Author

*When I respect thy argument, I see
An image of those times: but when I view
The wit, the workmanship, so rich, so true,
The times themselves do seem retrieved to me.
And as Sejanus, in thy tragedy,
Falleth from Caesar's grace; even so the crew
Of common playwrights, whom opinion blew
Big with false greatness, are disgraced by thee.
Thus, in one Tragedy, thou makest twain:
And, since fair works of Justice fit the part
Of tragic writers, Muses do ordain
That all Tragedians, Masters of their Art,
Who shall hereafter follow on this tract,
In writing well, thy tragedy shall act. CYGNUS*

25th May 1616, London

Uncle (John) Lougher took his wife's, Mary Fitton's, two nephews, John and Richard Newdigate, to watch a play on the Bankside.

22nd June 1616, London

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

PRO records show Probate granted to John Hall, son-in-law of the late Mr. Shackspere,¹⁵⁹ on 22nd June 1616 mentioning Susanna Hall as the other executor. A full copy of the will was entered into the records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury where the Probate scrivener used the spelling Shackspeare. The will itself was twice endorsed on the back by a clerk to the Prerogative Court as that of Mr. Shakspere.

Sheffield; 10th August 1616

Gilbert, Earl of Shrewsbury, William Herbert's father-in-law, was buried. He had died on 8th May. Herbert's wife became a co-heiress to her father's massive estate.

Westminster, London; 7th November 1616

Sir William Knollys was created Viscount Wallingford. Had Mary Fitton married him she would have become a Countess! Knollys' wife had by now given birth to two children – by Edward Vaux, Lord Harrowden. The children took the name Knollys.

1617 – 1618

12th February 1617, at Baynard's Castle

Masters of Arts of Oxford University, meeting at Baynard's Castle, elected Earl Pembroke to be Chancellor of their University.

9th March 1618; London

Sir Benjamin Ruddier (Pembroke's secretary) was appointed Master of the Court of Wards. In the *Poems of William Herbert* edited by Donne and printed in 1660, there appears to be a poetic dialogue/repartee between Herbert and his Secretary, poems by nine named authors, and six other poems.¹⁶⁰

2nd August 1618, Salisbury

Robert Sidney, Viscount de L'Isle, Earl Pembroke's uncle, was created Earl of Leicester.

London; c1618

¹⁵⁹ The Probate copy of the will is on three pages. The will starts at the very top of recto and ends at the very bottom of verso. The probate statement follows on a third page but does not mention Stratford. I will later demonstrate that the probate copy of the will is a forgery.

¹⁶⁰ *Poetry of William Herbert* was published in 1959 by the *Augustan Reprint Society*. The initial letters of the second verse of the first poem are an anagram of MAY FITTON which is how we know that he called his girlfriend/mistress *May* – as in *the Darling Buds of Maie*. As secretary, Ruddier could have served as a conduit for correspondence between the two lovers. The 1660 edition also included poetry assigned to Dyer, Wotton, Raleigh, King, Carew, Corbett, John Grange, Sir Thomas Neville and William Strode.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

The second verse of a poem in the handwriting of William, Earl of Salisbury;

*As I went to Bedford House
To that puritan shrine,
Met twice beggar Hamleton
And a friend of mine.
Met I weak Lord Chamberlain,
Doncaster there was he,
Met I proud Lord Arundell
Foolish Montgomery.*

The Marquis of Hamilton was a colleagues and friend of the Lord Chamberlain, William Herbert, Earl Pembroke, whose wife was sister to Lord Arundel's wife. The sisters were the daughters of Gilbert Talbot, seventh Earl Shrewsbury, whose seat was at Doncaster. Earl Montgomery was Pembroke's brother, Philip.

21st December 1618

Francis, son of Francis Leigh of Newnham, was made a Baron. One of his sisters, Juliana, was married to Richard Newdigate, Mary Fitton's nephew. Another sister, Alice, was married to John Skrymsher, Richard Barnfield's cousin; evidence that confirms the friendship between Barnfield and Fitton, aka TT.

1619

8th March 1619, London

Richard Burbadge gent. of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, Middlesex, one of the great actors of the era and shareholder in the Blackfriars and Globe playhouses, died aged fifty. He was the son of James Burbadge who had purchased the building that became the Blackfriars playhouse. He died in extremis and left all his possessions to his wife. His will was proved on 22nd April.

28th April 1619, London [Eight documents in Latin and English relating to this case are lodged in the Court of Requests and were discovered around 1910 by Wallace. See 21st February 1599.]

Soon after Richard Burbadge's death, John Witter, widower to the widow of the late Augustine Phillipps, took out a suit against Heminges & Condell claiming a share of the profits from the Globe Theatre. Heminges explained how the shareholding in the Globe had changed over time and that Witter had failed to contribute to the rebuilding of the playhouse after it had been destroyed by fire. These documents would apparently show that Shakespeare held one-seventh part of the Globe as late as October 1615.

3rd May 1619; London

The Court of the Stationers' Company met to discuss a letter from the Lord Chamberlain, Earl Pembroke. They record: *Hen. Hemmings: Upon a letter from the right*

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honourable the Lord Chamberlain. It is thought fit and so ordered that no plays that his Majesty's Players do play shall be printed without the consent of some of them.

The publisher Thomas Pavier had pushed his luck a bit too far. He and printer Isaac Jaggard had published, from earlier quartos, ten plays all purporting to be by *William Shakespeare* half of which Pavier had the absolute rights to print. About forty bound sets containing all ten plays had been produced; the two parts of *the Whole Contention*, *Pericles*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Sir John Falstaff and the Merry Wives of Windsor*, *King Lear*, *Henry V*, *The First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Pavier was not so much annoyed at his misfortune but, as he saw it, neither the Lord Chamberlain nor the Players had any right to prevent plays being printed for which he had title, or for which he had been given permission by the title holder, especially on the spurious pretext that the King's players had to be protected. He had the right to print three of the plays and *Sir John Oldcastle* was not one of his Majesty's Players' plays. He was not, however, prepared to take issue with the Lord Chamberlain, a powerful Earl and friend of the King. Nevertheless, he found it a curious decision that the Lord Chamberlain had used his might to prevent him doing something that was not illegal. He questioned motive; the Lord Chamberlain had not needed to get involved – and the Players had not been injured.¹⁶¹

May 1619; London

Had William Herbert known the after-dinner entertainment was to be the play *Pericles*, he would probably have excused himself from dining at his friend the Duke of Lennox's home that evening. Finding himself distressed at the interval, he was unable to return to the performance and wrote to a friend . . . *and even now the company are at the play, which I being tender harted could not endure to see so soone after the loss of my old acquaintance Burbadge.*

However, the plot of the play may also have troubled his conscience if he identified himself as *Prince Pericles*.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre, wished to marry the daughter of Antiochus, King of Antioch. The King set him a riddle from which Pericles realised that the King and his daughter were incestuous lovers. He answered the riddle but rejected the girl. Realizing that King Antiochus sought to kill him, Pericles fled Tyre. Reaching Tharsus, he was able to relieve the famine there with corn from his ships. Pericles continued his travels, was shipwrecked and lost everything. He struggled ashore at Pentapolis where King Simonides and his daughter,

¹⁶¹ The question of the context of Pavier's 1619 editions is analysed in the excellent *Shakespeare and the Stationers* by Leo Lirschbaum (1955).

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Thaisa, were presiding over a tournament. Pericles took part and despite his mean attire Thaisa fell in love with him and Simonides agreed to their marriage. In Tyre the death of Antiochus and his daughter freed Pericles to return with his new wife. On the voyage home, a storm arose. Thaisa apparently died giving birth to a daughter and her body was cast overboard in a coffin. The coffin came ashore at Ephesus where it was opened to find Thaisa still alive. Pericles reached Tharsus and before travelling on to Tyre, left the baby Marina with the governor of Tharsus and his wife Dionyza. At Ephesus Thaisa was restored to health but believing Pericles dead resolved to become a priestess of Diana. Pericles returned to Tyre, and Marina, separated from her father, grew up to be beautiful and accomplished. Dionyza, jealous that Marina overshadowed her own daughter, plotted to kill her but, before the murder could be carried out, Marina was seized by pirates. She was taken to Mytilene and sold to a brothel. Pericles voyaged to Tharsus to see Marina only to discover she was assumed dead. Despite being a prisoner in a brothel Marina guarded her virginity. She was visited by Lysimachus, governor of the town, who honoured her chastity and gave her gold which, together with her accomplishments, helped her to escape. Pericles, still grieving for Marina, by chance arrived at Mytilene. Lysimachus, learning that Pericles was ill with grief, sent for Marina to help him recover. Pericles, seeing Marina's resemblance to Thaisa, questioned her. Father and daughter were reunited and Lysimachus was betrothed to Marina. Overwhelmed with joy, Pericles slept. Diana appeared to him in a dream and ordered him to go to Ephesus where in Diana's temple Pericles and Marina were reunited with Thaisa.

It is thought the play was written around 1607. The names of the characters were taken by the playwright from the *Confessio Amantis*, an old story by Gower, and *Pattern of Painful Adventures* by Lawrence Twine – except for the name of the lost daughter, Marina.

Was William Herbert feeling the loss of Mary Fitton, the woman who ought to have been his wife, and of one or more lost children? The loss of a wife and a child was also the theme of *The Winter's Tale* and was *Pericles* too upsetting for it to be included in the *First Folio*?

17th July 1619, Oxford

Ben Jonson was commended by Chancellor Pembroke for an honorary degree at the University of Oxford.

July 1619 London

Pembroke had been ensconced at Baynard's Castle during May, sickened by an ague. In July he and the Marquis of Hamilton left London for business in Scotland.

On 14th Oct 1619; Somerset

Samuel Daniell, scholar, poet, historian, playwright and theatre manager, died at The Ridge, the farm he rented at Beckington in Somerset. He had been a tutor to

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the Herbert children and to Lady Anne Clifford who erected a monument to his memory in the parish church. A probate copy of his will is recorded in the Prerogative Court at London. It was written by the same amanuensis as that of the probate copies of Warwickshire Shakspeare and of William Polewhele, Mary Fitton's first husband.

Comparing these three documents, Shakespeare's copy has a *tell* which gives away that it is not original; it is a forgery.

1620 - 1622

6th February 1620

Poet Richard Barnfield died aged 46 and was buried at Market Drayton in Shropshire. He lived his final years in the village of Edgmond two miles from Lillishall where Richard Leveson had lived, and fifteen miles from Perton where Mary Fitton (now Lougher) was living.

16th April 1620 Baynard's Castle

William Herbert's son, born 16th April, was baptised Henry but died on 3rd June. The godparents *in absentia* were King James, the Marquis of Hamilton and grandmother, the Dowager Countess Pembroke.

About this time Edward Herbert, First Baron Cherbury, sent a congratulatory poem to Mary Wroth, *A Merry Rime Sent to Lady Mary Wroth upon the birth of my Lord Pembroke's Child. Born in the spring*. Mary now had two children by Pembroke, William and Katherine. Ironically, both Pembroke's wife of sixteen years and his cousin had been pregnant at the same time with his children!

1620 London

Bookseller Edward Blount and printer W. Jaggard, together with booksellers, Smethwick and Aspley, agreed to underwrite the printing by Isaac Jaggard of a folio book of plays, *Comedies, Histories & Tragedies*, attributed to *Mr. William Shakespeare*.

This is probably why they, the previous year (through the Lord Chamberlain who would have an active interest in the publication), pre-empted Pavier from publishing any more *Shakespeare* plays.

May 1621

Barbara Gamage Sidney, the wife of the Earl of Leicester and mother of Mary Sidney Wroth died. Leicester would soon remarry.

Spring 1621, London

Composition and printing started on the Comedies of *William Shakespeare* today known as the *First Folio*. Commentators suggest that some rough scripts were given to Ralph Crane to transcribe into printable plays. The opening play, considered the

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last written, was *The Tempest* – one of Crane's. My view is that these plays were *presentation* manuscripts produced by Crane (for Pembroke's household?) and being readily available, and not being tied to any printer or publisher, were the first four printed; *The Winter's Tale* in 14th position. All five plays had not previously been printed.

25th September 1621; London

Mary Sidney Herbert, Dowager Countess of Pembroke, died of smallpox at her home in Adlersgate Street, London. She would have celebrated her sixtieth birthday on 27th October. Immediately after her death (early October) printing of the folio edition of *Shakespeare* plays stopped. Fourteen comedies and one history had been completed and a start made on *Richard II*.



A third of the book, three hundred pages, had been printed but printing had fallen behind because of the slow rate of composition.

The funeral of the Dowager Countess took place at St. Paul's Cathedral, before a magnificent torch-light procession of hundreds of carriages left London to escort her remains to Wilton, thence to be interred beside her husband in Salisbury Cathedral. ¹⁶² Her epitaph in Salisbury Cathedral reads:

*Underneath this sable herse
Lies the subject of all verse,*

¹⁶² Funerals at night avoided the cost of draping the Cathedral in black.

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*SIDNEY's sister, PEMBROKE's mother;
Death! ere thou hast slain another
Learn'd and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.*¹⁶³

William Herbert gave his brother, Philip, Earl Montgomery, all his mother's personal estate, including Cardiff Castle.

1621 London

The first part of *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, written by the right honorable the Lady Mary Wroath, daughter of the Noble Robert Earl of Leicester and Niece to the ever famous and renowned Sr. Philip Sidney, knight and to the most excellent Lady Mary Countess of Pembroke, late deceased, was published from a manuscript of nearly 350,000 words.

Circulation of the book was arrested when Lord Denny complained that his family was being unfairly satirised. A second manuscript, two-thirds the size, would remain unpublished for nearly 400 years. The two books were a complex allegory of the society within which she, Mary Wroth, moved. Families were represented by countries or country states and earls and their ladies became Kings, Queens, Princes and Princesses. *The Countess of Montgomery* was her friend, Susan de Vere, married to her cousin, Philip Herbert, Earl Montgomery.

In *Urania* Mary Wroth is a main character allegorised as Pamphilia who had always been in love with her cousin Amphilanthus, whose name means *more than one lover* and is undoubtedly William Herbert. Amphilanthus was the son of the Queen of Naples, a barely disguised representation of Mary Sidney. The large Sidney family could be identified by anagrams of their names and there are some two-hundred allegorical characters, some of whom had two or more fictitious names. Most of the characters are youthful and the stories drew on Mary Wroth's memory of her teenage years. Some events are recognisable, for instance Amphilanthus' wedding (William Herbert to Mary Talbot). Wroth's memory of events after up to twenty years may not have been accurate, would have been seen from her own point of view, and may have been exaggerated, but her writing helps one enter her world and understand the real relationships that existed between the protagonists. The allegory, sometimes repetitive, is difficult, often impossible to decipher; but here we have impassioned feelings told by a witness who watched (with jealousy and desire) as William Herbert's life and loves unfolded. She told of his loveless marriage to Mary Talbot, his exploits and his seven-year love affair with *Antissia*, the daughter of the *King of Romania*. *Antissia* mean rival, and Antissia was both

¹⁶³ If she was the *object* of all verse poets would have been writing about her. The converse is that *subject* means the initiator of all verse.

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Pamphilia's friend and rival for the love of Amphilanthus. If one teases out the Antissia strands from the many different stories woven by Mary Wroth, it embroiders the history of Mary Fitton. Mary Wroth made it evident that Antissia did something terrible that nobody ever dared talk about.

October 1622

John Bill, the King's Printer, produced a catalogue of the Frankfort Book Fair with an appendix of English works that had been printed since April that year. It included *Plays, written by M. William Shakespeare, all in one volume, printed by Isaack Jaggard, in folio*. Printing of the plays actually restarted in the November 1622, exactly a year after the burial of the dowager Countess Pembroke. John Bill was a little previous in promoting the book.

A twentieth century convoluted explanation for the one year hiatus runs as follows; Jaggard had agreed, at the author's expense, to reprint Ralph Brooke's *Catalogue and Succession of the Kings, Princes, Marquesses, Earls and Viscounts of the Realm*. As Jaggard's was a large printworks, the Brooke's book less than one-third the size of the Shakespeare works and a fraction of the quantity, this explanation is insufficient.

My explanation; the hiatus reflects three year-long periods of mourning. The first; following the deaths of members of Mary Sidney's family in 1586 – she only returned to London in 1592 after a long period of seclusion at Wilton – after which Shakespeare appeared. The second was following the death of her husband in January 1601; in the twelve months that followed no new Shakespeare play was registered or printed but either side of that year fourteen plays appeared.

The indication is that the First Folio was to be dedicated to Mary Sidney to celebrate her sixtieth birthday – except she died four weeks earlier, and hence the exactly twelve-month hiatus in a mark of respect.

1623 –1630

April 1623

John Bill, the King's Printer's latest catalogue of the Frankfort Book Fair again had an appendix of English works that had been printed since October 1622. It included *Master William Shakespeare workes printed by Edward Blount, in folio*; at last!

8th August 1623, Stratford-upon-Avon

The register of the parish church recorded the death on August 8th of *Anna Uxor Richardi James*. Above this entry the death of Mrs. Shakspeare has been written and the two entries bracketed together.

1623	{ Mrs. Shakspeare
August 8	{ Anna Uxor Richardi James

The use of brackets in the Stratford register is unique in such a context and all the

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entries except that of Mrs Shakespeare are in Latin. This could mean that Anne, the widow of William Shakspeare, had remarried a Richard James. It could be two completely unrelated entries. But why no *Vidua*, why the brackets, and why what appears to be an afterthought? The tombstone provided twenty-five or more years later gives the *body of Ann, Wife of William Shakespeare who died on 6th day of August 1623; being of the age of 67 years.*

8th Nov 1623: Stationers' Hall, London

Seventeen plays which had never been entered or published were this day registered at the Stationers' Hall by Master Edward Blount. They were:

The Tempest ; Two Gentlemen Of Verona; Measure For Measure ; Comedy Of Errors; As You Like It; All's Well That Ends Well; Twelfth Night; A Winter's Tale; The Third Part Of Henry The Sixth; Henry The Eighth; Coriolanus; Timon Of Athens; Julius Caesar; Macbeth; Anthony And Cleopatra; Cymbeline.

These are almost half of the collection of thirty-six plays Blount and his colleagues published the following month.

December 1623, London

The thirty-six plays of *William Shakespeare* were published in folio on 908 pages. The book was *printed at the charges of W. Iaggard, Ed. Blount, I Smethweeke and W. Aspley*. Based on the ratio of the folios that still exist, Jaggard & Blount underwrote eighty percent of the copies, Smethwick and Aspley ten-percent each. On the title page was a portrait engraved by *Martin Dro es hout*¹⁶⁴ showing a lightly-moustached, balding man with a woman's face whom the reader is led to assume to be a likeness of *William Shakespeare*. It appeared like an oversized head stuck on to a tailor's dummy with a shield-like ruff and one arm back to front. For such an important and expensive volume the engraving is a travesty. To the left, on the facing page, was a poem by Ben Jonson: it holds one remarkable attribute;

*To the Reader:
This figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut:
Wherein the Graver had a strife
With Nature, to outdo the life:
O, could he but have drawn his wit
As well in brass, as he hath hit*

¹⁶⁴ *Martin Dro es hout* is an anagram of The Man ist Our Dor? To Dor was to jest or prank. Martin was slang for a monkey or ape.

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*His face, the Print would then surpass
All, that ever was writ in brass.
But, since he cannot, Reader look
Not on his Picture, but his Book.*

The poem of 352 characters is devoid of the letter M, statistically there should be about nine. The poem has been engineered so that the M is missing. Mary Sidney signed herself M. This, combined with the fact that in her absence her sons became the dedicatees, that Thomas Pavier was prevented from publishing any Shakespeare just ahead of the project starting by the Lord Chamberlain, Mary Sidney's son, and the twelve-month hiatus that followed the death of Mary Sidney is sufficient to reach a conclusion of the involvement of the Sidney-Herbert families in the Shakespeare plays.

Apart from the plays that Blount had registered on 8th November, of the other twenty that had been published, twelve carried the name of *Shakespeare* and eight were anonymous. Of the twelve, nine had a hyphen between *Shake* and *speare*. The rights to the plays belonged to twelve different people, including Thomas Pavier who owned four. This time the Lord Chamberlain had used his might to ensure there were no objections to the printing from copy-holders whilst Edward Blount had assumed the rights for the sixteen plays. The play *Pericles* was omitted. All but three of the plays borrowed from one or more well-established story-lines. The exceptions were *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

In a long preamble of commendations by various poets, designed to induce the readers to buy the book, Ben Jonson talks about a *Sweet Swan of Avon*, and L(eonard) Diggs refers to the author's *Stratford Moniment* (sic). From these two separate statements the world has been led to believe that *Shakespeare* came from Stratford-upon-Avon, a small town in Warwickshire where families called Shaxper or Shagspur had lived.¹⁶⁵

It was the ancient Greek, Socrates, who penned the term *swan song*. Although mute during most of its adult life, the swan is supposed to sing most beautifully in the moments before its death, singing, according to Socrates, the praises of Apollo, god of music and poetry. It has been noted that the female swan is called a pen, with which poetry is written, and Avon in another name for a brook. In one portrait of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Penbrook, she wears a lace ruff

¹⁶⁵ Playwright Michael Drayton would have known the Shagsper families of Stratford as he frequently visited of Clifford Chambers.

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embroidered with swans. Her late brother, Philip Sidney, when posted to Paris was known as Le Cigne (swan).

Modern analysis of the First Folio highlights the great inconsistency in the types of copy supplied to the printer. Fourteen plays were based on previous printings, four of which were modified using the prompt books. Six used the prompt books alone. Eleven used the author's manuscripts and five used copies of the author's manuscripts. Twenty of the plays were broken into acts & scenes; seven had acts only and nine had neither acts nor scenes. There is no correlation between the type of source document and whether a play had divisions. These inconsistencies would suggest the plays had a range of authors and owners.

4th April 1625, Tettenhall, Staffordshire

Mary Fitton's daughter, Anne Fitton, alias Leveson, married Sir Robert Charnock of Chorley in Lancashire. The marriage portion was a massive £4,000.¹⁶⁶

11th July 1625

The PRO holds an Affidavit of Basil Nicholl aged 52 of Maiden Lane, near Wood Street, London. Wood Lane is in Cripplegate Ward which contains Aldermanbury Church where Henry Condell worshipped.¹⁶⁷ Basil Nicholl was a friend and executor of the actor Thomas Pope.

Autumn 1625, Fulham, London

John Florio died in Fulham. In his will he made the following bequest:

Item: I give and bequeath unto the right honourable my singular and ever honoured good Lord William, Earl of Pembroke, Lord Chamberlain to the King's most excellent Majesty and one of his royal council of state (if at my death he shall then be living) all my Italian French and Spanish books, as well printed as unprinted, being in number about three-hundred-and-forty, namely my new and perfect dictionary as also my ten dialogues in Italian and English and my unbound volume of diverse written collections and rhapsody's, most heartily and entreating his honourable lordship (as he once promised me) to accept of them as a sign and token of my service and affection to his honour and for my sake to place them in his library either at Wilton or else at Baynard's castle in London humbly desiring him to give way and favourable assistance that my dictionary and dialogues may be printed and the profit thereof unto to my wife.

¹⁶⁶ Was she Leveson's or Herbert's child? She was born around 1604. One assumes she had come of age, twenty-one.

¹⁶⁷ There is also a St. Olave's church. Southwark also has a Maiden Lane and a St. Olave's church.

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Pembroke is thought to have refused to accept the collection of books and papers. One could imagine they finished up in Oxford's Bodleian Library where as a benefactor Pembroke's statue stands guard at the entrance to the building. More likely if they were accepted they were lost when the Great Fire destroyed Baynard's. However, the bequest and its conditions demonstrate that there was a meaningful relationship between Florio and Pembroke.

13th July 1626, at Penshurst

Just before noon on 13th July, Mary Sidney Wroth's father, Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, brother to Philip and Mary Sidney, died at Penshurst Place. He had suffered a stroke a few days earlier on the barge taking him from Court to his lodgings at Baynard's from where he had been rushed by carriage to Penshurst.¹⁶⁸

4th August 1626, Stationers' Hall

The Stationers' Register recorded that Mistress Pavier assigned over to Edward Brewster and Robert Bird *all the estate right title and interest which Master Thomas Pavier her late husband had in the copies here after mencioned*. The list includes his rights in *Shakesperes plaies or any of them* and *Tytus and Andronicus*.

London 1627

Michael Drayton wrote in 1627

*Shakespeare thou hadst as smooth a comicke vain
Fitting the socke and in thy naturall braine,
As strong conception, and as cleere a rage,
As any one that trafiqu'd with the stage.*

29th December 1627, Aldermanbury Church, London

Henry Condell, actor, was buried at St Mary, Aldermanbury, to be joined by his wife, Elizabeth, on 3rd October 1635. He was born around 1576.

2nd February 1629, London

The youngest daughter of Edward, 17th Earl of Oxford, Susan de Vere, Countess of Montgomery and wife to Philip Herbert, died at the age of forty-one and was

¹⁶⁸ In 1973 his hand-written notebook was found in Warwick Castle a collection of sonnets, songs, pastorals, elegies and epigrams. [Lois Elsden's website.]

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buried at Westminster. A Lady of the Court and a friend of Queen Anne, she had performed in all four of Ben Jonson's masques.

1630

8th April 1630; Baynard's Castle, London

William Herbert awoke at Baynard's on the day which marked his fiftieth birthday feeling both elation and trepidation. Elation because he felt he had cheated the prognostication given at birth – that he would not reach this day; trepidation because he knew that he had been born just before midnight. With a long day and an evening ahead he chose not to take any risks but stayed in Baynard's, read and did not get drunk. Later that morning a messenger came from Christina Cavendish, Countess of Devonshire, reminding him of the dinner party she was giving in his honour the following evening to celebrate his birthday.

9th April 1630

As his carriage carried him the short distance back to Baynard's he looked back on an evening full of nostalgia. It had been a select gathering; Christina Cavendish was host; his widowed brother, Pip, was there with his new lady, Anne Clifford; May was in town without her husband; his cousin, Mary Wroth; two poets, Ben Jonson, Michael Drayton and an old man called Kit. He noticed May's fleeting pang of jealousy when she saw Mary Wroth wearing the *Feather of Diamonds* but it did not spoil the evening. It was a dinner party of intimate, long-standing friends, smoking the best tobacco from Virginia. Many toasts were made and everyone got drunk in the smoke-filled room. Round the table they went telling their anecdotes, fondly toasted the dead; their parents, Mary Sidney, Harry Earl of Pembroke, uncles Philip and Robert, the Fittons, Richard Barnfield, Edward de Vere and his daughter Susan, Philip's late wife. The late King and his Queen Anne, that Italian John Florio, Samuel Daniell, Henry Carey, Charles Howard, Richard Leveson and others including the actors Burbadge and Kemp. The loudest toast proposed by Will was to William Shakespeare. *William Shak-espere!!* they cried out in concert and then reduced themselves to fits of laughter. They reminded themselves of what each had contributed. A story, an anecdote, a play, a jest. Matters of State forgotten, tonight was a night to remember – theatre, the many plays they had enjoyed together. Ben's play, *The Alchemist* which he had dedicated to Mary Wroth; the ones they had had their own hands in, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Troilus & Cressida*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, and of course, *Hamlet Prince of Denmark*. This was their history, their legacy. In the centre of the table was one heavy folio sized book and on it a small, thin quarto.

"Would you read to us, May?" Will asked.

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"The thick book or the thin book?" her eyes twinkled.

"The thin book. Choose your favourite sonnet."

"One of mine? Or one of yours? They are all favourites, like children."

"Yours were always superior than mine."

"Sonnets or children?"

"A man never knows," Kit piped in. May glared at him, laughed then picked up the small book, opened it, and turned the pages.

"I cannot choose; they all bring back such memories. Number six and seven; I was at Lady Hawkins' and you Will were so unhappy in The Fleet. You remember? Can you ever forget? It was winter, two months before coming to my first child-bed. No! I cannot read you those. Yes! Here is Sonnet Twenty. She went and sat on his lap and caressed his face and hair as she read:

*20 A woman's face with nature's own hand painted,
Hast thou the Master Mistress of my passion,
A woman's gentle heart but not acquainted
With shifting change as is false women's fashion,
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling:
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth,
A man in hew all hews ¹⁶⁹ in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.

And for a woman wert thou first created,
Till nature as she wrought thee fell a doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.

But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love and thy loves use their treasure.*

Words from her sonnets were still echoing in his mind when they got out of the carriage in the Baynard's courtyard.

"Malkin?" she asked.

"She is staying with Christina. You are my best birthday present."

"I am an old lady of fifty-two, Will." She kissed him. "Nine child-births, not quite a virgin."

"I was the first?"

"Yes, you were the first."

He caressed her face. "I never stopped loving you."

¹⁶⁹ Many suggestions have been made as to the meaning of *hews*. On his coming-of-age William Herbert owned most of county Glamorgan, so a probable reference, by a playful lover, is the Welsh surname Hughes. There would have been many Hughes in South Wales.

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“Love?” She fluttered her eyelids and rolled her eyes.

“Lust, affection.”

“Puh! Affection is false. You know that, Will. You know that.”

He laughed and they leaned on each other as she led the way to his bedroom.

10th April 1630

May Fitton left as the sun rose; she was distraught. Only the porter saw her leave, and all he saw was a stooping old lady, in a dark cloak, her head covered with a shawl shuffling in the direction of the Fleet Bridge.

It was Mary Wroth who came to the room late that morning to wake her cousin. When she saw his naked dead body her scream faded to nothing as she collapsed in a faint on to the bed beside him. On regaining consciousness, she stumbled to her feet, looked at him for a last time, then covered his nakedness with a sheet. She had been in love with him for nearly forty years. She wanted to shake him, angry for his leaving her in this way, but recoiled on the touch of the cold stiff arm. He was dead, he would always be dead. She went to the door and shouted for help, sent a note to Philip Herbert, then went to find their two children.

Philip Herbert, the new, fourth Earl Pembroke, arrived some hours later escorted by Lady Anne Clifford. Mary Wroth instantly resented the intrusion on her private grief by this woman and her feelings must have shown on her face. She was at a loss for words as the women stared at each other and totally alone, her father, her Aunt Mary, William her child by her husband and even her husband all gone. It was salt into her open wound when Anne Clifford carefully took off her glove to show a sparking engagement ring. Mary stared at her cousin, Philip, who mumbled that Anne had agreed to become his wife, and then across into the cold but confident owl-like eyes of the future Countess Pembroke. Mary Wroth did not believe him the doctor when emerged from the bedroom and announced that signs showed Pembroke had died of an apoplexy.¹⁷⁰

Philip left with Anne and Mary went back into the bedroom. By his bed, on a small table, she had found the *Shake-speare* book of *Sonnets* held open by a wine glass lying on its side. She had first thought the drips of wine on the page were his blood. She got caught up in reading Mary Fitton's words in Sonnet Six:

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface

¹⁷⁰ A stroke sometimes brought on by extreme anger.

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*In thee thy summer ere thou be distilled:
Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place,
With beauty's treasure ere it be self killed:

That use is not forbidden usury,
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;
That's for thy self to breed another thee,
Or ten times happier be it ten for one,

Ten times thy self were happier then thou art,
If ten of thine ten times refigured thee,
Then what could death do if thou shouldst depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?

Be not self-willed for thou art much too fair,
To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.*

She sat rocking, cross-legged on the floor like a child and reflected. Fitton, whom she herself loved, but for that clown, Knollys, would have given William an heir and made him a good wife; she had been created to carry and nurture children, the child of 1601; the two children that bore Richard Leveson's name, three by that Captain Polewhele and three more with John Lougher. Nine Children by four – or was it perhaps less or even more men? And she too had given birth to two robust children from Wilkin's seed. It was an afterthought that she needed to inform Mary Talbot of her husband's death and that Pip was to marry Clifford. Huh! Mary Talbot would probably be quite relieved that she was no longer the Countess; her coronet had never fitted her small head well. Their one child had died after two months; a tragedy, a waste of shame. She turned to her favourite Sonnet-116. She could never match the passion and vision of May;

*Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments, love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no it is an ever fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come,¹⁷¹
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,*

¹⁷¹ Lines 9-10; Love is not fooled by sexual acts. Compass = penis.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

*But bears it out even to the edge of doom:
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.*

He was dead. Dead! Dead and with no legitimate heir of his body. She wiped the pages on the fallen bed-sheet and closed the book. She had never felt so angry. She got to her feet and with all her energy and with a piercing scream she threw the book through the open window and into the Thames. From the window she watched the river carry away the tiny book, choked, thought of throwing herself out, thought of their children and leaned over and vomited into the river.

1st June 1630: London

When widow Anne Clifford married widower Philip Herbert she became Countess of Pembroke and of Montgomery. She was to bear him two children but by 1635 the couple were living apart.

26th June 1630: Stationers' Hall, London

Recorded in the Stationers' Register on 16th November.

ALLOT: Memorandum master Blount assigned over unto him all his estate and right to in the copies here after mentioned as appeareth by a note under Master Blunts hand dated the 26th of June 1630 in the time of Master Warden Perfoot whose hand is subscribed thereunto; 7 shillings.

The Tempest ; Two Gentlemen Of Verona; Measure For Measure ; Comedy Of Errors; As You Like It; All's Well That Ends Well; Twelfth Night; A Winter's Tale; The Third Part Of Henry The Sixth; Henry The Eighth; Coriolanus; Timon Of Athens; Julius Caesar; Macbeth; Anthony And Cleopatra; Cymbeline

These were the seventeen plays which were registered by Edward Blount ahead of the publication of the *First Folio* in 1623. This transfer was two years ahead of the publication of the *Second Folio*.¹⁷²

October 1630; London

John Heminge, actor and shareholder in the Blackfriars and Globe playhouses, died aged 74.

July 1631; Stratford-upon-Avon

¹⁷² I think it is not a coincidence that the transfer of the plays to Allot happened so shortly after the death of Pembroke, on 9th April. There is circumstantial evidence that some of the plays were out of the Pembroke *stables*. Of Henry Condell & John Heminge who had subscribed their names to the *First Folio*, Condell had died in 1627; Heminge was close to death.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

Dr John Hall of Stratford-upon-Avon (married to Susana Shakspear) prescribed for Michael Drayton an *emetick infusion one oz. syrup of violets a spoonful which wrought very well both upwards and downwards* – a remedy for constipation.

23rd Dec 1631 London.

Michael Drayton scholar, poet, historian, playwright and theatre manager died at his lodging in Fleet Street below Saint Dunstan's Church; not *rich but well beloved, that the Gentlemen of the Four Inns of Court and others of note about the town, attended his body to Westminster, reaching in order by two and two, from his lodging almost to Strand Bridge*. He was buried in Westminster Abbey alongside Chaucer and Spenser. Anne Clifford (Countess Pembroke) donated to his monument as she had for that of Samuel Daniell. It would be over a hundred more years before a monument was erected to the *Bard*.

1632 London

The second folio edition of the *Plays of William Shakespeare* was printed by Thomas Cotes for Robert Allot who now published this edition with William Aspley, Richard Hawkins, Richard Meighan and John Smethwick.

25th May 1632

The Earl of Banbury, William Knollys (Malvolio), died at the age of eighty-five. He left the bulk of his estate to his wife, Elizabeth Howard, who within a few weeks married her lover, forty-four-year-old Baron Edward Vaux – almost certainly the father of her two sons, which line now claimed title to the Earldom. Nearly two hundred years later, in 1813, the claim was finally rejected by the House of Lords.

1632 Tong Parish Church, Staffordshire

On the tomb of Sir Thomas Stanley who died in 1632 is an epithet considered to have been composed by Shakespeare.

*Ask who lyes here but do not weep
He is not dead he doth but sleep
This stoney register is for his bones
His fame is more perpetual than these stones
And his own goodness with himself being gone
Shall lye when earthlie monument is none.
Not monumental stone preserves our Fame
Nor sky aspiring pyramids our name
The memory of Him for whom this stands
Shall out live marble and defacers' hands
When all to tyme's consumption shall be geaven
Standley for whom this stands shall stand in Heaven*

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

Tong is only five miles from Perton where Mary Fitton was living; note the name Mary in *pyramids our name*.

1634 London

Thomas Cotes printed *Two Noble Kinsmen* for John Waterson, as *written by the memorable worthies of their time John Fletcher & William Shakespeare*. Fletcher had died of plague in 1625. The Waterson's were long-time friends of the late Samuel Daniell. The play was absent from the *First Folio* whereas *Henry VIII* on which Fletcher had also collaborated was included as one of the *Histories*. The other *Shakespeare* play not printed in the *First Folio* was *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* which had been transferred from Thomas Pavier's widow to Brewster & Robert Bird and thence on 8th Nov 1630 to Thomas Cotes who printed it in 1634-5.¹⁷³

1635 Chester

John Lougher, Mary Fitton's second husband, died at Chester. He had been sheriff of Pembrokeshire, 1624-1625. He left a wife and three natural children, Elizabeth, John and Lettis, together with three stepchildren. In his will he asked to be buried at Gawsorth.

Circa June 1635, London

A dispute broke out between the shareholders in the Globe and Blackfriars playhouses and some long-serving actors who pressed to become shareholders. The Lord Chamberlain, Philip Herbert (4th Earl Pembroke) was asked to arbitrate. The plaintiffs, Robert Benfield, Helliard Swanston¹⁷⁴ and Thomas Pollard explained how the share-holding had developed. At some time the Globe share-holding was divided into sixteen parts of which Cuthbert Burbage and his sister (or sisters) held 8, Henry Condell's widow 4 (Condell had been buried on 29th Dec 1627), and Mr. Heminges 4. At the time of the dispute the share-holding had changed with Heminges selling his shares and the holdings being; Burbage 3.5, Robinson 3.5, Condall 2, John Shankes 3, Taylor 2 and Lowen 2. These pertained to a lease to be extended by nine years from Lady Day 1635, to be confirmed by Sir Mathew Brand, the ground landlord.

On first sight it would appear that Mathew was the son of Nicholas Brende (Nicholas Brand of Moulsey, Surrey, admitted to the Inner Temple, Nov 1581) and had been baptised on 6th March 1600 at Saint Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, Cripplegate Ward.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Cotes later printed Benson's *Poems of William Shake-speare*.

¹⁷⁴ The will of Eylardt Swanston gent of St. Mary Aldermanbury 1651: Probate 11/217.

¹⁷⁵ Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines...* 11th Ed. p312. In 1887 H-P had no knowledge of the documents that Wallace would produce in 1909. Nicholas Brende made his will on 10th Oct. 1601 and

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

10th June 1637 London

Philip Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke & Montgomery, wrote to the Stationers' Company reiterating a letter sent to them in 1619 by the then Lord Chamberlain, his brother, William Herbert:

*Whereas complaint was heretofore presented by my dear brother & predecessor by his Majesty's servants the Players, that some of the company of printers and Stationers had procured, published & printed diverse of their books of Comedies, Tragedies, Chronicle Histories, and the like, which they had (for the special service of his Majesty and for their own use) bought and provided at very dear and high rates, by means whereof not only they themselves had much prejudice, but the books much corruption to the injury and disgrace of the authors; and thereupon the Masters and Wardens of the company of printers & stationers were advised by my brother to take notice thereof & to take order for the stay of any further impression of any of the plays or interludes of his Majesty's servants without their consents. Etc..*¹⁷⁶

In a similar way in 1619 Thomas Pavier had been stopped from printing the King's Players' plays under the name *Shakespeare*. The Lord Chamberlain's excuse or reason was that he was trying to prevent plays being printed that had been *stolen & gotten from them by indirect means*.

4th November 1639, London

John Benson registered the *Shake-Speare Poems* which he published the following year. There is no evidence of the transfer of copyright to Benson from Thomas Thorpe which supports my suspicion that the accepted entry to Thorpe for the Sonnets in 1609 might be a forgery.¹⁷⁷

John Benson: entered for his copy under the hands of Doctor Wyres and Master Ffetherston, warden, An addicion of some excellent poems to Shakespeares Poems by other gentlemen viz. His Mistress drawne and her mind by Beniamin Johnson. An Epistle to Beniamin Johnson by Ffrancis Beaumont. His Mistris Shade by R Herrick. Etc..

probate was granted on 11th Nov.. There is no mention whatsoever of the baby in the will. Either he had died, or this was an unconnected Mathew Brand, or he was alive but a bastard child, or for March 1600 read March 1601 in which case his wife was four months pregnant, yet still no mention or provision for an unborn child.

¹⁷⁶ The full text in Greg's *The Shakespeare First Folio*.

¹⁷⁷ I am not a conspiracy theorist, but so much thought to be known about *Shakespeare* is suspicious.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

1640 St. Dunstan's Church Yard, London

John Benson published about fifty works between 1635 to 1661, selling them from his premises on Fleet Street. In *Poems: Written by Wil. Shake-Speare. Gent, printed by Tho. Cotes*¹⁷⁸ to be sold by John Benson dwelling at St. Dunstan's Church Yard, he published all but eight of the Shake-Speare's Sonnets, together with the poems from the *Passionate Pilgrim*, and a considerable number of other poems by other poets. This time the sonnets were arranged thematically and in a different order starting with *The Glory in Beauty* (Sonnets 67, 68, 69) then *Injurious Time* (60, 63, 64, 65, 66). In places the pronoun *he* was changed to *she*. Occasional sonnets drawn from *Shakespeare* plays were from *Loves Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It*.

Was Benson actually the editor of the 154 sonnets? The immediate answer is *most unlikely* in which case *who had the intimacy with the sonnets to edit this volume?*¹⁷⁹ 1640 coincided with the tenth anniversary of the death of William Herbert.

The book is adorned by an engraving by W. M similar to the Dro es hout, under which:

*This shadow is renowned Shakespear's? Soule of th'age
The applause? Delight? The wonder of the Stage.
Nature her selfe, was proud of his designes
And joy'd to wear the dressing of his lines,
The learned will Confess, his works are such,
As neither man, nor Muse, can prayse to much.
For ever live thy fame, the world to tell,
Thy like, no age, shall ever paralell.*

12th April 1640, Lancashire.

Anne, the daughter of Mary Fitton and the putative Richard Leveson, and wife of Robert Charnock Esquire of Astley (Asley), was buried at the parish church of Chorley in Lancashire. She was thirty-six and died childless.

19th December 1640, Perton, Staffordshire

Mary Fitton Lougher made her will.

19th Sep 1641, Perton, Staffordshire

Mary Fitton died on 19th Sep 1641, nine months before the English Civil War broke out. The will was proved in the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of

¹⁷⁸ The only time Benson was involved commercially with Cotes.

¹⁷⁹ Mary Fitton would fit the bill, the book being a collection of her poems. Her lover William Herbert's collection was printed in 1660.

Canterbury on 5th July 1647, only after the Royalists were defeated. Her son and daughter, William Polewhele and Elizabeth Lougher, were appointed executors, but probate was granted to William Polewhele alone as “surviving executor”. She bequeathed the lease of Perton to her son and the leases of two properties in Pembrokeshire to her daughter. She made a bequest to her granddaughter, Ann Gatacre, and mentioned her son-in-law, Robert Charnock. She asked to be buried at Gawsworth.¹⁸⁰

21st September 1643; Staffordshire

Ellen, the daughter of William Polewhele and granddaughter of Mary Fitton was baptised at Tettenhall. [Probably the author of *The Frolicks*, 1671.

Easter 1647 [23 Charles I]

A fine on vellum in Latin; *from Susannah Hall, widow & Elizabeth Nashe, widow*¹⁸¹ *to Richard Lane gent & William Smith gent (solicitors Lane & Smythe), of three messuages and gardens, one orchard, 107 acres of land, and 20 acres of pasture in Stratford-upon-Avon, Old Stratford, Bishopton and Welcombe, co. Warwick, and of a messuage in the parish of St. Anne, Blackfriars, London, for £220.* On 5th June 1649 Elizabeth Nashe married John Barnard of Abington, Northants, where she was buried on 17th February 1670.

However, on 29th November 1647 the Blackfriars property was sold by solicitors Lane & Smyth to William and Thomas Hathaway who appear to be the nephews of Anne Hathaway, William Shaxper's wife. Thomas's son, Thomas (bap. 5th Aug 1627), then went to work in London; father and son were both joiners. It looks as if Thomas junior lived in the Blackfriars house up to the date of the fire.

According to J Orchard Phillips, after the Great Fire of 1666 an Edward Bagley conveyed for £35 land in the Blackfriars to Sir Heneage Fetherston.¹⁸² Phillips makes a gross and wrong assumption that this was the Shakespeare property. The Blackfriars property held by Fetherston (later descended to the Fetherstonhaughs) had been in their family from or before the 1620s.

1647 – 1666

¹⁸⁰ DNB: Her daughter Lettice Lougher married a Thomas Denton (1612-1643). Their child was Henry Denton (c1640-1687).

¹⁸¹ Elizabeth Nash's husband, Thomas, died on 4th April 1647; her mother Mrs. Susannah Hall, the daughter of William Shaxpere, died on 2nd and was buried on 11th July 1649.

¹⁸² In 1765 Albany Wallis (see below) “discovered” title to a property in the Blackfriars bought by William Shakespeare for which £140 was paid. This would leave just £80 for the rest of the Warwickshire properties and lands; see 1723.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

1647 - 1651 London & Elsewhere

By 1640 William Herbert, the natural son of William Herbert and Mary Sidney Wroth, had settled in Ireland. At the start of the Civil War in 1642 he was a captain under Sir Henry Herbert and by 1651 he had become a colonel under Prince Maurice. His sister, Katherine, born c1619, married a John Lovett of Liscombe around 1642. After Lovett died in 1643 she remarried a James Parry and had two sons. It is thought that Katherine preserved the first manuscript of her mother's *Urania*.

The collection of plays of Beaumont & Fletcher published in 1647 was dedicated to Philip Herbert, Fourth Earl Pembroke. The same year fire destroyed much of Wilton House.

Mary Talbot, Dowager Countess of Pembroke, widow of William Herbert, died at Ramsbury, Wiltshire in March 1649.

On 23rd Jan 1650 Philip Herbert, Earl Pembroke, died.

1656 London

Sir William Dugdale published his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* in which (p520) he drew a sketch of a monument fixed on the north wall of the Chancel to Shakspeare, one assumes William, who died on 23rd April 1616 aged 53. The drawing has many differences to the one in situ today. He recorded *Near the wall where the monument is erected lyeth a plaine free stone underneath which his body is buried with this epitaph;*

*Good friend for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust inclosed here
Blest be the man that spares these stones
And curst be he that moves my bones.*¹⁸³

Other memorial inscriptions¹⁸⁴ on the floor of the Quire, from left to right in front from the Shakespeare effigy, are to

Anne the wife of William Shakespeare who departed this life on 6th August 1623 being of the age 67 years.

¹⁸³ Actually, the stone is anonymous and could relate to anyone. I've seen the text elsewhere.

¹⁸⁴ The uniformity of these large, monumental stones (except *Good Friends...*) would suggest they were contemporary with 1649 and the absence of a monument to the other Shakespeare daughter and her family would indicate that they may be the legacy of Shakespeare's granddaughter (Elizabeth Hall/Nashe/Barnard). Judith Quinney nee Shakespeare died in 1662 and is not commemorated.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

(The stone - Good friend for Jesus' sake forbear)

Thomas Nashe Esquire: he married Elizabeth, the daughter of John Hall, gentleman. He died April 4th, 1647, aged 53.

John Hall, gent. He married Susanna, daughter & coheir of William Shakespere, gent. He deceased November 25th, 1635, aged 60 years.

Susanna wife of John Hall, gent, the daughter of William Shakespeare gent. She deceased the 2nd day of July 1649 ages 66. grizzly

WS (Wall) / AS 1623 /Bones 1616 / TN 1647 /JH 1635 /SH 1649.

On reflection, it must have been a pretty gruesome occasion when bodies were exhumed from the graveyard and reburied in the choir; or perhaps there is nothing under the stones which serve only to enthrall tourists.

1658 London

Fifty year old Aston Cokayne published *Small Poems of Divers Sorts*. One of the poems was a funeral elegy to Michael Drayton who died in 1631:

*You Swans of Avon, change your fates, and all
Sing, and then die at Drayton's Funeral.
Sure, shortly there will not a drop be seen,
And the smooth-pebbled Bottom be turn'd green,
When the nymphs (that inhabit in it) have
(As they did Shakespeare) wept thee to thy grave.*

Fantasy and hyperbole! There were absolutely no expressions of grief on the death of a poet called Shakespeare!

1660 London

John Donne edited the *Poems written by the right honorable William Earl of Pembroke Whereof many of which were answered by way of Repartee by Sir Benjamin Ruddier, Knight, With several distinct poems written by them occasionally and apart.*

The poetry had been entrusted by Pembroke to his friend Christina Cavendish, Countess Devonshire, before he died in 1630. Ruddier was Pembroke's secretary and later a prominent MP.

1662 London

A third folio edition of the plays of *William Shakespeare* was published by Philip Chetwinde; he had married Robert Allot's widow. Seven plays were added: *Pericles Prince of Tyre*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *Lochrine*, *The Puritan*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *The London Prodigal* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

2nd September 1666 London

The Great Fire of London destroyed thirteen-thousand properties and claimed five lives at it spread westward from near London Bridge to beyond Blackfriars. St. Paul's Cathedral and Baynard's Castle (with its Library) were notable casualties, as was the whole of the Blackfriars area which included the Doctors' Commons and the *Shakespeare* property.¹⁸⁵

1667 London

According to J Orchard Phillips,¹⁸⁶ after the Great Fire of 1666 destroyed the Shakespeare Blackfriars building, Edward Bagley conveyed for £35 the land to Sir Heneage Fetherston who was eventually succeeded by the Fetherstonhaughs.¹⁸⁷

1671 London

The Frollicks or A Lanyer Cheated, a play by a young woman, E Polewhele, was printed. She had previously written two manuscripts, her *Faithful Virgins* and *Elysium*. In her dedication to Prince Rupert she wrote of her being *haunted with poetic devils*. I believe Ellen Polewhele was the twenty-eight-year-old granddaughter of Mary Fitton – which would explain the *poetic devils*.

1680 London

The antiquarian John Aubrey, born in 1626, compiled a book of *Brief Lives* containing short biographies of eminent people. Of his own work he said *it was not fit to be lett flie abroad*. He created folklore:

Mr. William Shakespeare was born at Stratford upon Avon in the County of Warwick. His father was a butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of his neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he killed a calf he would do it in high style and make a speech..... This William being inclined to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess about 18: and was an actor of one of the playhouses, and did act exceedingly well: now B Johnson was never a good actor, but an excellent instructor. He began to make essays in dramatique poetry, which at the time

¹⁸⁵ It is not known when, after the Great Fire, Prerogative Court records were first held in the Doctors Commons.

¹⁸⁶ *Life of William Shakespeare*, 1848.

¹⁸⁷ Heneage Fetherston (1627-1711) had two sons, his heir Henry (1654-1746) and Heneage (1657-1711) who died four months before his father. The Will of Heneage Fetherston, Merchant of London was proved 21st June 1711. Both sons failed to produce an heir. The family lived in the Manor House of Hassingbrook at Stanford-le-Hope, Essex, the manor having been held by the family from the time of the accession of James I when Cuthbert Fetherston (buried 1615 at St. Dunstan's in the West), the King's Usher, arrived from Stanhope, Durham. Cuthbert's son, Henry, was buried at St. Anne's in the Blackfriars and Henry's son was the Heneage, born 1627.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

was very low, and his plays took well. He was a handsome, well-shaped man: very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit. The humour of the constable in Midsummer Night's Dream, he happened to take at Grendon, in Bucks (I think it was midsummer night that he happened to lie there) which is the road from London to Stratford; and there was that constable about 1642 when I first came to Oxen. Ben Johnson and he did gather Humours of men daily wherever they came..... He was wont to go to his native country once a year. I think I have been told that he left 2 or 300 pounds per annum there and thereabout to a sister. I have heard Sir William Davenant and Mr. Thomas Shadwell (who is counted the best comedian we have now) say that he had a most prodigious wit and did admire his natural parts beyond all other dramatical writers. His comedies will remain wit as long as the English tongue is understood for that he handles mores hominum (the ways of mankind). Now our present writers reflect so much on particular persons and coxcombeities that twenty years hence they will not be understood. Though Ben Johnson says of him, that he had little Latin and less Greek, he understood Latin pretty well: for he had been in his younger days a schoolmaster in the country. He was wont to say that he never blotted out a line in his life. Said Ben Johnson, I wish he had blotted out a thousand.

1685 London

A *Fourth Folio* edition of the plays of *William Shakespeare* was published by Bentley, Chiswell, Herringman and Brewster, containing the same forty-three plays of the third edition.

1709

1709 London

In the same year that copyright laws were changed, Jacob Tonson published *The Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by the actor Nicholas Rowe, in six volumes extending to 3,324 pages and containing forty-three plays.¹⁸⁸

Rowe wrote the first highly conjectural and shallow biography of the poet stating *he had three daughters of which two lived to be married, Judith the elder*¹⁸⁹ *married Mr. Thomas Quinney and having three sons who had no children, and Susanah who married Dr John Hall who had a daughter who married firstly Thomas Nash and secondly Sir John Bernard of Abbingdon.*

1714; Knaresdale in Northumberland

¹⁸⁸ The first of a number of multi-volume editions published or issued through subscription. Each editor would have his own idea on how plays were to be presented and what emendations to make to “correct” typographical errors in the original or improve sense of what they had not understood of Elizabethan and Jacobean speech.

¹⁸⁹ The Younger.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

Albany Wallis was baptised at Knaresdale in Northumberland, the son of James Wallis and Ann Bell.¹⁹⁰ He would be involved in Shakespeare forgeries in the latter part of the century.

19th Feb. 1717; Hereford

David Garrick (1717-1779) was born in Hereford. His parents soon moved to Lichfield where he was educated by Dr Samuel Johnson. He would become the foremost Shakespearean actor of the century and a close friend and associate of Albany Wallis who would eventually be his executor.

London 1723

In 1887 James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, a collector & dealer in Shakespeareana, compiled a list of *Rarities* held at his home in Brighton. Item 165 is an abstract of title, 1590 to 1723 of the Fetherstonhaugh London estates. *It contains much valuable information respecting Shakespeare's house in the Blackfriars nowhere else to be found, the original deeds, with the exception of one or two, not being known to be in existence.* The twenty-five-page listing in two sections, A & C, is now in the Folger Library; leaf-20 refers to a Blackfriars property opposite the Queen's Wardrobe. On the front of each section are "Fetherstonhaugh, Blackfriars" at the top and "Wallis" at the bottom.¹⁹¹

From the Preface of Lewis Theobald's seven-volume Shakespeare, 1733.

How much our Author employed himself in Poetry, after his retirement from the Stage, does not so evidently appear: Very few posthumous sketches of his pen have been recovered to ascertain that point. We have been told, indeed, in Print, but not till very lately, That two large chests full of this Great Man's loose papers and manuscripts, in the hands of an ignorant Baker of Warwick, (who married one of the descendants from our Shakespeare) were carelessly scattered and thrown about, as Garret-Lumber, and Litter, to the particular knowledge of the late Sir William Bishop, till they were all consumed in the general Fire and Destruction, of that Town. I cannot help being a little apt to distrust the Authority of this tradition; because as his Wife survived him seven years, and as his favourite daughter Susanna survived her twenty six years, 'tis very improbable, they should suffer such a treasure to be removed, and translated into a remoter Branch of the Family, without a scrutiny first made into the value of

¹⁹⁰ His siblings were Thomas, Mary who married Thomas Reay, and Hannah who married Thomas Baxter of Town Green. An Anne, wife of James Wallis, died on 18th August 1738 aged 54 years, 4 months, 17 days, giving her birth as 1st April 1684.

¹⁹¹ Solicitor Albany Wallis (1714-1800) must have held, copied, compiled or appropriated these lists at some time, clearly not in 1723 as he was still a schoolboy. Section-A covers 1590-1723 and Section-C 1547-1631. There is a good indication that Wallis acted for the Fetherstonhaugh and or Fetherston families. The list may have been drawn up on the death of Henry Fetherston in 1746.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

it. This, I say, inclines me to distrust the Authority of the Relation: but, notwithstanding such an apparent improbability, if we really lost such a Treasure, by whatever Fatality or Caprice of Fortune they came into such ignorant and neglectful hands, I agree with the Relater, the Misfortune is wholly irreparable.

1737 Lichfield

After the failure of Edial House, Dr Samuel Johnson's school near Lichfield, David Garrick, a student there with his brother, left with Johnson to make a new life in London. Johnson, born in Lichfield 18th Sep 1709, famous for his Dictionary and as an editor of the Shakespeare *Works*, would die in London in December 1784.

c1740

Graville Leveson-Gower changed his name to Egerton on his marriage to Louise Egerton and thus inherited the Egerton wealth. The Leveson-Gowers were the direct descendants of Sir John Leveson who inherited the estate of his cousin, Admiral Sir Richard Leveson.

1741 London

A life-size monument to *William Shakespeare*, designed by William Kent and executed by Peter Scheemaker was erected in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner. The sponsors were the third Earl of Burlington,¹⁹² Alexander Pope, Dr. Mead and a Mr. Martin. The index figure points at a scroll which misquotes from *The Tempest* (IV.1.152).

*The Cloud Cap't Tow'rs, The Gorgeous Palaces,
The Solemn Temples, The Great Globe itself,
Yea all which inherit shall dissolve
And like baseless Fabrick of a vision
Leave not a wreck behind.*

The fourth line should read *And like this insubstantial pageant fading* and in the next line *wreck* has been substituted for *rack*, a rack being a small, isolated cloud. The following lines, which I much prefer, would have been;

*We are the stuff that dreams are made on
And our little life is rounded with a sleep.*

In 1743 a near identical Scheemaker copy of the Westminster Abbey statue was placed conspicuously in the entrance hall of the Pembroke's Wilton House. It would have been paid for by the Pembroke family.¹⁹³ Here the quotation on the

¹⁹² Burlington was an architect and a colleague of the Earl of Pembroke, also an architect.

¹⁹³ In doing so the Pembrokes indirectly sponsored the Westminster Abbey statue (BOGOF!).

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

scroll is not from *The Tempest* but from *Macbeth* and the statue's figure points to the capitalised word SHADOW. There are four capitalised words; LIFE, SHADOW, PLAYER and STAGE – *a life, a shadow, a player on a stage* – the word PLAYER being directly above the word STAGE. The Pembrokes are stating for posterity that William Herbert was the actor Shakespeare; not Shaxper – *a life, a shadow, a player on a stage*.

The third Earl Pembroke was from 1616 until his death in 1630, Chancellor of Oxford University and in 1629 he donated many manuscripts to the Bodleian Library. Today a bronze statue of the earl “guards” its main entrance. Until 1723 this statue stood in the Earl's family seat at Wilton. It was sculpted by Hubert Le Sueur (1580-1658). If one compares the Bodleian statue to those at Wilton and Westminster I believe the jest is exposed. It is the same face; the family knows – William Herbert, the third Earl Pembroke, was a user of the pseudonym *Shakespeare*.

According to the Wilton tradition, *Shakespeare* and his players first performed *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* at Wilton House. A rumour has also trickled down through the years that Mary Sidney sheltered Christopher Marlowe at Wilton after a faked death at Deptford. A more outlandish story suggests that William Herbert was Christopher Marlowe's son, a historian having noted Marlowe and Mary Sidney being in Canterbury in the Summer of 1579. What is certain is that the 1623 *First Folio* was dedicated to two of the Earls of Pembroke. By 1743 the fact that the *First Folio* was dedicated to these two Earls and maybe two *Shakespeare* plays, well over one hundred years previously, had been performed at Wilton House, seems insufficient to commission such an expensive statue – unless, of course, the Pembroke connection was much more meaningful to the family.

Stanford-le-Hope in Essex; 1746

Sir Henry Fetherston (1654-1746) of Hassingbrook died aged 92 and was buried in the family church of St. Margaret-of-Antioch at Stanford-le-Hope, Essex. He was the second son and ultimately heir of Heneage Fetherston (1627-1711) whose family owned a property in the Blackfriars. He had no heir.¹⁹⁴

Heneage's father, Henry Fetherston, interred at St. Anne's in the Blackfriars, was the son of Cuthbert Fetherston (buried 1615 at St. Dunstan's in the West). The family had held Hassingbrook Manor from the time of Cuthbert's arrival from Stanhope in Durham at the accession of King James, to serve as King's Usher.

¹⁹⁴ His daughter-in-law Frances died the same year (14th June) aged 77 having been a widow since his son died in 1711.

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The bulk of the £400,000 estate passed to a distant cousin, Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh (1715-1774) of Fetherston Castle, Northumberland,¹⁹⁵ whose brother, Rev Utrick Fetherstonhaugh, the same year became absentee incumbent at Stanford-le-Hope, living his life out as Rector of Oxted in Surrey. The brothers were born at Fetherston, Northumberland around 1715. Fetherston is the parish adjacent to Knaresdale Parish, four miles from where solicitor Albany Wallis was baptised in 1714. (It will be Wallis who claimed he found the mortgage deed to Shakespeare's Blackfriars property in Utrick's papers about 1768.)

1747 London & Stratford

In 1747 the Rev. Joseph Greene, master of the Stratford Grammar School, made two copies *of a copy* of the document purporting to be a copy of the probate copy of the will of William Shakespeare; he kept one for himself and sent the other on 17th Sep to his friend, the antiquarian James West MP of Alscot, with the following letter:¹⁹⁶

I have been extremely concerned I should disappoint you in your expectation of seeing Shakespeare's will: as soon as you left me I made a diligent search, and at length had the luck to meet with it and hope for the time to come I shall have more prudence than to promise what I cannot readily perform. I have now transcribed it a second time, which transcript, as some small atonement, I humbly beg your acceptance of.

I am pretty certain the thing itself will not come up to the idea you may have entertained of it, as it bears the name of Shakespeare's will. The Legacies and Bequests therein, are undoubtedly as he intended; but the manner of introducing them, appears to me so dull and irregular, so absolutely void of the least particle of that spirit which animated our great Poet; that it must lessen his Character as a Writer, to imagine the least sentence of it his production.

¹⁹⁵ His heir, Henry Fetherstonhaugh, at the age of seventy married for the first time, his head-dairymaid.

Henry Fetherstonhaugh of Kirkoswald, Cumberland, was succeeded in 1626 by his son Sir Timothy 1601-1651 who had a son, Philip, and a grandson, Thomas. Sir Timothy was a notable Royalist in the Civil War. Following the Battle of Worcester he was tried at Chester by Court Martial alongside the Earl of Derby. The voting was rigged and both executed.

¹⁹⁶ Halliwell-Phillips [see later] obtained one of Joseph Greene's copies and stated it was a copy of the original three-page document said to have been located at the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the *Doctor's Commons* in London. However, a discovery in 1948 of another copy indicates a different source for Greene's copies; this *Birthplace Copy* is today held by the Birthplace Trust in Stratford.

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The only satisfaction I receive in reading it, is to know who were his relations, and what he left them, which perhaps may just make you also amends for the trouble of perusing it.

The original will which was not known in 1747, but was known in 1765, and located in the *Doctors Commons*, was dated as follows:

Vicesimo Quinto die Januarii Anno Regni Domini nostri Jacobi nunc Regis Angliae etc decimo quarto & Scotie xlixo Annoque Domini 1616.

[The 25th day of January in the regnal year of our Jacob, the fourteenth of England, and the forty-ninth of Scotland; and anno domini 1616.]

In those days the year ended on 24th March, so the above date as written was actually 25th January 1617, nine months after the parish Register shows *Shakespeare* was buried. If one accepts that the will was written on 25th January 1616 then the regnal year would have been the thirteenth year of King James, not the fourteenth. Elizabeth I died coincidentally on 24th March 1603 which became the first day of James I regnal year. If the January was crossed out and changed to March then one should have seen the regnal year change from decimo tercio to decimo quarto. The deletion of what appears to have been Januarii, but which could have been a modified Februarii, was replaced by Martii.

The Stratford Register recorded that Judith, Shakespeare's daughter, was married on 10th Feb 1616, and there is an inference that it was this marriage that prompted alterations to the will and gave rise to the March date, six weeks later. Each page had an inconsistent signature of *William Shakespeare*. Only the second page was numbered. The third page folds differently to the first two and would not nestle with the first two pages; the inconsistencies are more than curious!

1750

1750 London

Solicitor of the Inner Temple, Albany Wallis, aged 36, originally from Knaresdale in Northumberland, moved offices to 20 Norfolk Street in the Strand. The following year, 31st May 1751 at St. Peters Church, Sandwich, Kent, Richard Ironmonger Troward, was baptised. He was admitted to Grays Inn in March 1775 and by 1782 was Albany Wallis's business partner.¹⁹⁷ Troward's death was recorded in the Gentleman's Magazine of 18th Oct 1815. His son, also Richard, was admitted to the Middle Temple in July 1810. These two men retained the *Shakespeare* deeds.

27th Dec. 1753; Knaresdale, Northumberland

¹⁹⁷ Law Directory 1790; partners Albany Wallis & Richard Troward, 20, Norfolk St., The Strand.

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Mary Wallis, the sister of Albany Wallis married Thomas Baxter.

1760, Saint Clement Danes, Westminster, London

Aged forty-six, Solicitor Albany Wallis married Elizabeth Vaughan.

1762; Knaresdale, Northumberland

Albany Charles Wallis, son of Albany Wallis was baptised at Knaresdale.

1765 London

J & R Tonson published *William Shakespeare's Works* in eight volumes, edited by Dr. Samuel Johnson including the first printing from the Registry of the Archbishop of Canterbury of the *Shakespeare* will.¹⁹⁸ The will itself simply appeared, unheralded, without a back-history! In the preamble Johnson were previous prefaces to sets edited by Pope, Theobald, Hanmer, Warburton, and Rowe's 1709 account of the life of the Warwickshire man.

Rowe also included two pages giving the *Baptisms, Marriages and Burials of the Shakespeare Family* abstracted from the Stratford registers by the Hon. James West.¹⁹⁹ It provided the same information that is current today – except that the male twin, born on 2nd Feb 1585 who died on 11th Aug 1596, was *not* named Hamnet but Samuell, which accords with the biblical names of his twin sister, Judith, and elder sister, Susanna.

Late in the 18th century the Registers were for some decades in the hands of Edmund Malone (1741-1812), a retired Irish barrister living in London who established himself as the foremost authority on *Shakespeare*. However, Malone was known not to be above the art of skullduggery and had to be pressed to return the Registers.²⁰⁰ It is quite easy to amend *Samuell* to *Hamnett*.

1766 London

¹⁹⁸ Halliwell-Phillipps later gave the world to understand that Rev. Joseph Greene, master of the Grammar School in Stratford, had *discovered* the will at the Doctors' Commons in London. In fact Greene copied a *copy* of the Prerogative Court *copy*, not the will. The 1765 preface to Dr Johnson's edition has "brown best bed" and a blank for [Thomas] Hart.

¹⁹⁹ Dr Johnson's footnote states these were provided by George Steevens via James West the friend of Joseph Greene, the Stratford schoolmaster.

²⁰⁰ Actually, these were not the original registers in that all the records of Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths prior to 1601, written on individual sheets, were transcribed by law into bound ledgers and therefore subject to occasional errors.

[In 1798] Malone, the Shakespeare *expert*, claimed; *in the year 1766 Mr. Steevens, in my presence, traced with the utmost accuracy the three signatures affixed by the Poet to his will* which was then in the Doctor's Commons.²⁰¹

1768 London

Solicitor Albany Wallis, of Norfolk Street on the Strand, claimed that during this year he found the 1613 Mortgage Deed of the *Shakespeare* Blackfriars property. He said it was among the title deeds of a Reverend Utrick Fetherstonhaugh of Oxted, Surrey.²⁰² The same year Wallis presented this most valued deed, bearing a Shakespeare signature, to the foremost Shakespearean actor, David Garrick, who responded;

Mr. Garrick presents his best compliments to Mr. Wallis & returns his ten thousand thanks for his kind offices to the gentleman who has done him the honour of bestowing such a jewel on him as the handwriting of Shakespear. If he knew how to direct to him, he would instantly thank him as he ought: Mr. Garrick once more returns to his bes [sic] acknowledgements to Mr. Wallis & shall be proud of any opportunity to shew his gratitude. Mr. Garrick begs pardon for writing on such paper & with such a pen, but he is at the Playhouse and has taken such as he could, just returned from Hampton.

From Garrick's letter of 21st April [1768] Wallis appears barely known to Garrick although later he was to become his solicitor, great friend – and an executor who robbed Garrick's widow. Since this letter is in the third person and appears not to have been written by Garrick it could have been fabricated by Wallis, Garrick's executor, hence the apology for the handwriting, all which helped create provenance for the Blackfriars' Mortgage Deed which nobody would ever think to question.

²⁰¹ It seems plausible that the will was located in the Doctor's Commons. Today the will is held in the National Archives at Kew, London. The three un-watermarked pages can be downloaded as a .pdf file. They print on to A4 at nearly two thirds of actual, near folio size. The pages are of differing dimensions indicating three different sources of paper. There is no consistency in the creases or weathering in the sheets and were glued to backing paper to prevent deterioration. The three horizontal and one vertical fold lines are clearly visible and are most pronounced on the last page where wear holes have appeared in the folds. A physical reconstruction of the three pages shows that when folded horizontally they do not have a snug fit. However, when the vertical fold lines are aligned, it is not possible to fold the will at all. The British Library recently showed that not all the pages are original.

²⁰² An appointment of a Rector was made at Oxted in 1746 at £300 p.a.. On 21st Apr 1754 Sarah the daughter of a William Fetherstonhaugh was baptised. On 11th Sep 1774 Utrick & Katherine Fetherstonhaugh baptised their son Henry Rowland.

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6th September 1769; Stratford-upon-Avon

David Garrick's *gigantic comic fiasco* as he later termed it, a three-day celebration of the bicentenary of Shakespeare's birth (albeit five years late), was opened, a collaboration between Garrick and the Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation. Many eminent people travelled from London only to find an acute shortage of hotel accommodation and to be beset by heavy rains on the second and third days with parts of the town flooding. However, the influx of tourists was still a bonanza to the townsfolk and Corporation of Stratford who wanted Garrick to stage a similar event in 1771. Garrick who had lost an estimated £2,000 refused. This nationwide publicity of the Jubilee launched *Shakespeare* into a new level of idolatry which by the tercentenary Jubilee of 1864, and the advent of the railways, saw a record of thirty thousand tourists in the town. Today Shakespeare is celebrated every day of the year in Stratford; it is the industry on which the town survives, with approaching six million visitors each year.

23rd May 1771; Kirkhaugh, Northumberland

An Albany Fetherstonhaugh married a Francis Wallis at Kirkhaugh, the next village to Knaresdale, where Albany Wallis was born.

3rd March 1773; London

Elizabeth, the wife of Albany Wallis and mother of eleven-year-old Albany Charles Wallis, was buried in the Temple Church in London.

19th March 1774; Stanford-le-Hope; Essex

Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh, a friend since childhood of Albany Wallis, died and was succeeded by his son Harry. Harry removed from Essex and made his home at Uppark near Petersfield in Sussex.

18th August 1775; London

A year after stepping down as MP for Anglesey, sixty-six year old widower, Lord Lieutenant Sir Nicholas Bayly Bt. (1709-1782), married his second wife, Anne Hunter (the new Lady Bayly), who the same year gave birth to a son baptised Lewis.

When the solicitor Albany Wallis died in 1802 he left his fortune estimated at £70,000 to Lady Bayly for her son Lewis who, in gratitude, changed his name to Lewis Bayly Wallis.

1776; London

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Frederick Madden of the British Museum recorded in 1837 that in 1776 George Steevens traced from the will of Shakspere the three signatures attached to it and that they were engraved for the first time in the second edition of Shakspere by Johnson & Steevens of 1788. *The first two sheets decidedly Shakspere.*²⁰³

29th March 1776; Westminster, London

Westminster scholar, Albany Charles Wallis, aged thirteen, son of Albany Wallis, drowned in the Thames. David Garrick, Wallis's friend and later Garrick's executor, erected a monument to the boy's memory in the Abbey where he is described as *amantissi Patris unica spes*.

1st February 1779; Westminster, London

The funeral of David Garrick took place in Westminster Abbey. In 1741 Garrick had become the foremost actor of Shakespearean leads and was actor-manager and trustee at the Drury Lane Theatre up to his retirement in 1776. A friend in his later years was the solicitor Albany Wallis, also a trustee, who framed his will, was one of its executors, and who with Edmund Burke paid for the Abbey's monument to his friend's memory, probably using Garrick's money!

1780 London

Known today as Henslowe's Diary, in 1780 the manuscript book of Mr. Philip Henslowe's business accounts for the *Rose Playhouse* dating back to 1593 was discovered in the library of Dulwich College founded by Henslowe's son-in-law, actor Edward Alleyn, in 1619. The Diary was borrowed before 1790 by Edmund Malone who made transcripts of parts. Malone retained the Diary for over twenty years until his death in 1812 when his executors returned it to the College. Malone's manuscript of the transcripts, having changed hands several times, was purchased by the Governors of Dulwich College in 1895. The Diary revealed that the play *Sir John Oldcastle* which was published in 1619 as by William Shakespeare and republished in the Shakespeare Folios of 1634 & 1685 was in fact co-written by Michael Drayton, Anthony Munday, Richard Hathway and Robert Wilson. Sections of the Diary have been cut away either innocently, strategically or for autographs. Over two-hundred plays are revealed of which a number were either

²⁰³ And the third sheet?

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precursors of *Shakespeare* plays or could have been *Shakespeare* plays.²⁰⁴ Twenty-seven playwrights are mentioned but not *Shakespeare*.

11th Jan 1789; London

John Payne Collier (1789-1883) was born into an affluent middle-class family. He would have a career working for newspapers and, aside from his reporting the proceedings of the House of Commons, he became a self-taught expert in Elizabethan drama. This expertise gave him entrées to the rich libraries of the nobility, a privilege he would ultimately abuse. He became a co-founder of the *Shakespeare Society*, one of its principal editors, and a *subscriber* of many of the articles written above a string of aliases.

1800

July 1800, Norfolk Street London

Samuel, father of the forger William Henry Ireland, died, *his spirits gone, his heart broken by his son's activities*.

3rd Sep 1800; London

Albany Wallis died. In his will of 28th August he made a number of bequests one of which was to Thomas Baxter, his brother-in-law of the *Town Grove* in the Parish of Knaresdale, Northumberland. He appears to have already settled property, including a bequest of Peterwell House in Sussex to Lady Ann Bailey of Pall Mall, mother of his ward, Gen. Lewis Bayly, who are both beneficiaries and executors, together with Richard Troward, Wallis's partner. Mary Gordon of the Pallmall was left £500. Lewis Bayly now stretched his name to Lewis Bayly-Wallis.

Three documents relating to Shakespeare's Blackfriars property remained dormant in the office at Norfolk Street, the fourth, the Mortgage Deed apparently given to David Garrick, had not been traced (but will turn up later – no spoiler!).

1800 London

²⁰⁴ Henry VI, King Leir and his Three Daughters, Titus Andronicus, Hamlet (early), The Taming of A Shrew, Henry V, Troilus & Cressida, Malcolm King of Scots [Macbeth?], Caesar's Fall, The Danish Tragedy (Hamlet?)

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Longman & Rees of Paternoster-Row publish in four volumes *Rimualdo; or the Castle of Badajos. A Romance* by William H. Ireland, author of *The Abbess &c.*. Ireland in his early twenties proved to be a master of the Gothic novel in its most voluptuous and salacious form with abominable descriptions in monastic atrocities, supernatural gore, unnatural parents, persecuted lovers, murders, groans and spectres with plots modelled on Shakespearean tragicomedy. Ireland had a vivid imagination.

3rd Dec 1800; London

The Times advertised a sale of cloth by Mills, Halliwell & Evans, Linen Drapers & Calico Printers. A later advert of April 1801 showed Evans no longer involved in the business. The Halliwell family was from Chorley in Lancashire and the birth of Thomas, son to Thomas & Elizabeth, was registered on 25th Oct 1777 at nearby Deane-by-Bolton. Thomas Halliwell junior's son was James Orchard Halliwell (later Halliwell-Phillipps – HP) a dealer in books and manuscripts and probably the most notable and fastidious self-styled expert on Shakespeare in the 19th century. After HP's death the best parts of his massive collection of antique books and documents were sold across the Atlantic and now lie in the Shakespeare Folger Library in Washington.

London 1802

In 1802 Mrs. Freeman, Samuel Ireland's *housekeeper* died; there are indications she was William Henry's mother. Born Anne Marie de Burgh Coppinger into a wealthy family, she had been mistress to the 4th Earl Sandwich and had published a novel in her own name. With his two *father-figures* (his father and Albany Wallis) and Mrs Freeman all dead, William Henry Ireland could now write his confessions – without fear of contradiction and some help from his vivid imagination.

10th January 1803, Drury Lane Theatre, London

At a meeting of the Debenture holders at the *Crown & Anchor*, pursuant to the advertisement for choosing a new Trustee in the room of the late Mr. Albany Wallis Esq, George Biggin Esq was unanimously chosen.

Circa 1804 London

After a short first marriage, William Henry Ireland married for a second time. His bride was a widow, Martha Bayley. Baptised Martha Colepepper on 17th Sep 1769, her first wedding on 25th Aug 1791, aged 21, was to Capt. Paget Bayly RN, brother of the Earl of Uxbridge. Her first husband had died a few months earlier on 15th Nov 1804. In 1796 the Earl of Uxbridge, Sir Henry Paget, had been elected MP for Milborne Port in Somerset, adjacent to the constituency of Ilchester where Lewis Bayly had been elected MP in 1799. Lewis Bayly was the son of Lady Ann Bayly,

née Hunter, who was Paget Bayly's father's second wife. It would appear that Albany Wallis had introduced William Henry Ireland into the Bayly family.²⁰⁵

In 1805, without fear of contradictions, the romancer William Henry Ireland published his *Confessions*. He and his wife travelled around England, he spending some time in York's debtor prison, before returning to Paris in 1814 with two daughters,²⁰⁶ living near the Barracks in the Faubourg St. Germain. After an interview with Napoleon during the *hundred days* after Elba, he was appointed to a position in their National Library. When they ran out of money in 1823 the family returned to England.

21st Jun 1820; London

James Orchard Halliwell, a son to linen draper and businessman Thomas Halliwell of Chorley in Lancashire, was born. He grew up to be a dealer and collector of antiquarian books and documents, especially those relating to Shakespeare. He had started his collection as a schoolboy and pursued his hobby both enthusiastically and commercially from the age of sixteen when he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, to read mathematics. His hobby became his vocation and at the tender age of seventeen gained a ticket for the Reading Room of the British Museum. By the early 1840's he was one of the foremost authorities on Shakespearean documents, manuscripts and history and would spend much of his life searching (with little real success regarding the playwright) and chronicling all pertaining to Shakespeare. He was also a mover to select a suitable building and purchased the *Shakespeare Birthplace* for the Corporation of Stratford – with whom he eventually fell out.

A few months later (13th Sep 1820) the American, Washington Irving, visited Stratford and we have his *Sketch Book* account of Shakespeare's Birthplace *the house is shown by a garrulous old lady, in a frosty red face lighted up by a cold blue anxious eye, and garnished with artificial locks of flaxen hair, curling from an exceedingly dirty cap. She was peculiarly assiduous in exhibiting the relics with which this, like all other celebrated shrines abounds. There was the shattered stock of the very matchlock with which Shakespeare shot the deer on his poaching exploits. There, too, was his tobacco-box; which proves that he was a rival smoker of Sir Walter Raleigh; the sword also with which he played Hamlet; and the identical lantern with which Friar Laurence discovered Romeo and Juliet at the tomb! There was an ample supply also of Shakespeare's mulberry-tree, which seems to have as extraordinary powers of self-*

²⁰⁵ Could Albany Wallis have been William Henry Ireland's father? In which case Ireland and Lewis Bayly may have had the same father.

²⁰⁶ One daughter named Anna Maria de Burgh Ireland after Mrs. Freeman. [thanks to Bernard Grebanier, *The Great Shakespeare Forgery*].

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multiplication as the true cross; of which there is enough extant to build a ship of the line... I am always of easy faith in such matters and am ever willing to be deceived where the deceit is pleasant and costs nothing.

1827-1843 at Worthing, Sussex

Six five-act plays in verse were self-published by an author at his private press,: *Mary Queen of Scots; The first Part of King James I; The Second Part of King James I; The Life and Death of King Charles I; Cromwell; King Charles II.* The author, Albany Wallace (if not a pseudonym), was probably the son of John Wallace who was baptised on 26th July 1788 at St. Paul, Covent Garden. Perhaps a coincidence, but misses out on Henry VII, Edward VI and Elizabeth!

1831 London

J P Collier had free use of *Henslowe's Diary* when he printed his *History of Dramatic Poetry*. As a leading expert on *Shakespeare* and had access to all the then known quartos of the plays, at the British Museum, the Bodleian in Oxford, the Duke of Devonshire's Library, and the Bridgewater Collection. Today it is explicit that he forged and fabricated elements of his work to support and enhance his many publications on Shakespearean, Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatic verse. Even his works that do have integrity remain suspect because of his knavery.

17th April 1835; Southwark, London

William Henry Ireland, writer and forger, died. He gained infamy through his forgeries but in his lifetime published ninety literary works, including Gothic novels, many under quite unusual pseudonyms such as Anser Pen-Drag-On Esq and Satiricus Sculptor Esq.

Jan 1837; Journal of Literature & Science

At a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries in London, Sir Thomas Phillipps communicated a copy of the will of Augustine Philips, at the time of James I residing in Mortlake, giving to William Shakespeare a 30s piece of gold and Burgage [Burbadge] appointed one of the executors in the event of the testator's wife marrying again. At the same meeting Sir Frederick Maddon of the British Museum communicated a paper on the autograph of Shakespeare on the flyleaf of the first edition of Florio's translation of Montaigne's essays, the property of a gentleman in whose family it has been ever since the year 1780 and perhaps beyond. The autograph had been examined by experts who attested that it was beyond spuriousness and that it resided in the custody of one of the libraries of the British Museum.

The following year Maddon bought the Montaigne book on behalf of the British Library for £130 – only for the autograph later to be considered a forgery.

13th August 1840; London

British Museum director, Sir Frederick Madden, on behalf of the Museum bought thirty-three manuscripts from bookseller Thomas Rodd. They were part of a collection Rodd had bought from James Halliwell – then seriously in debt. Halliwell had already offered his collection to the collector Sir Thomas Phillipps with whom he had established a literary and business relationship. Phillipps, a fastidious acquirer of rare books and manuscripts, had declined.²⁰⁷

1841 Literary & Scientific Intelligence Magazine (page 365)

The Deed [Purchase of the Blackfriars property] dated March 10th 1612, bearing the signature of Shakespeare, the recovery of which was announced by Sir John Frederick Maddon in our number of July last (1840) has been brought to sale [from the library of an eminent collector] by Messrs Evans on 24th May and knocked down for the very large price of 155 guineas.²⁰⁸ This is £62 15s more than the sum given for the autograph in (John) Florio's Montaigne, now in the museum. The present is an inferior specimen of the poet's autograph being cramped by the narrow slip of parchment to which the seal is appended. This document has been found duly enrolled in Chancery although Malone failed to trace it. At the same sale an autograph letter of Garrick to Mr Albany Wallis Esq thanking him for the present of "such a jewel as the handwriting of Shakespeare" in reference to the mortgage deed of the same property that is still missing, was sold for £3 5s..

These documents had been in the offices of Albany Wallis.

7th August 1842, Broadway Church, Worcestershire

James Orchard Halliwell eloped with and married Henrietta Phillips the daughter of the wealthy book-collector, Sir Thomas Phillipps. In 1842 Halliwell had visited to discuss matters relating to Phillipps's massive library and fallen in love with Henrietta, an heiress in her own right from her grandfather's legacy. She was to become a devoted wife and mother over many years. For reasons not thought to pertain to the marriage (although it is known that Halliwell had wanted a larger dowry), for the rest of Phillipps's life and beyond, Halliwell was barred from entering Phillipps's house and library.

²⁰⁷ Perhaps Halliwell was offering them too cheaply and with questionable provenance. Sir Thomas Phillipps was one of an elite number of seriously rich men who either inherited or put together fabulous private libraries, collecting in the way philatelists collect rare stamps. Apart from the Dukes of Devonshire and Bridgewater, other libraries were established by Sir William Tite (1803-1873), George Daniell and Richard Heber. Scholars craved access to the books, some unique others extremely rare, and if access was denied had to wait for a death or a public sale for the books to appear briefly at auction.

²⁰⁸ Elkins subsequently advertised it for £200 guineas.

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18th May 1843; Evans' Auction Room, London

Bought to Evans' Auction Room, the *signed counterpart of the deed of conveyance* of the Blackfriars property from Henry Walker to William Shakespeare and others of 10th March 1613. *The auctioneer introduced the lot with an eulogium on Shakespeare that drew forth much applause. The first bidding was £10, the second £100 offered by Mr. Sainsbury, proprietor of the Napoleon Museum. It was run up to £145, Mr. Sainsbury having bid £140, and finally knocked down to Mr. L. Jones for, it is understood, the library of the City of London collected at the Guildhall. The room was excessively crowded by gentlemen and book collectors to witness the extraordinary sale. The vendor was a Mr. Elkins who had bought the deed at the same auction rooms in May 1841.*

This was the document produced by Albany Wallis when he claimed he revisited Rev Featherstonehaugh's papers during the fiery episode of the Ireland forgeries. *The Times* quotes from the auction catalogue; *this deed is regularly enrolled in the chapel of the Rolls and can be found in the index under the name of W. Shakespeare, the purchaser, instead of H Walker, the vendor, contrary to the ordinary practice.*²⁰⁹

The Times also reported Sir Frederick Madden's British Museum's assessment of the various acknowledged, *genuine* signatures of Shakespeare; John Florio's translation of Montaigne's Essays, bought in 1836 by the British Museum; the document at auction above; the associated Mortgage Deed of 11th March 1613; the remaining three being on the Shakespeare will, dated 25th March 1615-1616 which he said was held at the Prerogative Court at the Doctors' Commons.²¹⁰

15th Feb 1845 British Museum, London

Uncomfortable news for the trustees of the British Museum: they were informed by the chief Librarian that in the opinion of himself, of Sir Henry Ellis, Sir Frederick Madden and Mr. Panizzi, that *in the case and circumstances of the manuscripts improperly abstracted from Trinity College Library as it currently stood, Mr. Halliwell is not a fit person to have admission to the Reading Room.*

In effect, James Halliwell was accused of being a thief; stealing from the Cambridge Library, selling to the bookseller Thomas Rodd, who in turn had sold most of the manuscripts to the British Museum. The same eleven manuscripts were now discovered to be missing from Trinity College, Cambridge, where Halliwell read mathematics. Halliwell asserted he had bought many documents but

²⁰⁹ Malone had searched in vain to find this enrolment. One must wonder why such a mistake could have been made; had the enrolment been under "Walker" it may never have been noticed.

²¹⁰ One can read online how there is complete inconsistency in the various signatures.

never kept records of his sources. This major scandal in the literary world had many taking sides and rolled on for over a year, Halliwell at one point taking out a writ for deformation which never came to court but proved very costly to himself. In the end there were no admissions and, to avoid their negligence being exposed in public trial; without more ado *Reading Room* rights were restored to Halliwell by both the British Museum and Trinity College; a cover-up.

1845 London

J P Collier published for the *Shakespeare* Society (which he had founded and for which he was editor-in-chief) most if not all of the dramatic matters found in *Henslowe's Diary*. He stated that pages had been removed since Malone's first transcription.²¹¹

London 1848

In the *Athenaeum* of 8th Jan 1848, Peter Cunningham reported that James Halliwell's contention that "the mortgage deed of Shakespeare's property in the Blackfriars, containing Shakespeare's signature, had been lost or mislaid" was erroneous and that it "*belongs to Mr. Troward and was exhibited at the last general meeting but one of the Shakespeare Society.*"²¹²

Mr Troward was the son of Albany Wallis' partner. This is the document Wallis claimed, *after* Garrick's death, that he had gifted to Garrick and which Garrick's wife could not find at the time of the Ireland forgeries' scandal.

²¹¹ John Payne Collier's journalistic forte was parliamentary reporting, his having excellent shorthand skills. Away from earning a living, like his younger colleague J O Halliwell he became an authority of Elizabethan poetry and drama. His extensive knowledge and expertise led to free access to both the monumental Devonshire and Bridgewater collections and through the Dukes' patronage represented them at auctions of rare documents. This gave him the opportunity to copy many unique tracts before they found new homes and disappeared into private collections. These he used to his own advantage in various associations' journals to which he subscribed or edited. He became the subject to an accusation and scandal at the hands of the British Museum of having forged documents to serve his own purposes as a publisher. One can read the story of the *Annotated Perkins*, second Shakespeare Folio, in *Fortune & Men's Eyes* by Dewey Ganzel. Ganzel's view was that Collier appears not to have been an innocent nor does he appear to have been guilty of the main accusation against him of annotating the *Perkins* Folio, but that he falsified the provenance of the book to hide where and how he had obtained it. He seems to have been only just at arm's length from the thefts of documents from the Ellesmere (Bridgewater) collection and it is posited that he forged entries in *Henslowe's Diary*. Freeman & Freeman (2004) show that Collier had a history of hoaxes and canards and that, for whatever motivation, deliberately and wilfully did emend the *Perkins* Folio.

²¹² Richard Troward 1791-1854. His sister Sarah Troward (bap. 22nd July 1798) married Thomas Hewitt Kay on 26th Sep. 1824. Their daughter would have been Filleul's wife.

28th April 1849, Highgate Cemetery, London

Thomas Rudd the younger, bookseller at 2, Great Newport Street, Covent Garden, died aged 53 and was buried in Highgate Cemetery. He had taken over his father's business in 1821 before the elder's death in 1822. Amongst his more notable clients were John Payne Collier and James Orchard Halliwell. It was from Thomas Rudd that Collier bought the annotated "*Perkins*" second folio of the Shakespeare plays of 1632.

1856

18th September 1856; *The Times*

The Times reported the sale at auction of a 1603 quarto edition of *Hamlet*, missing its title page, to J O Halliwell for £120. (The title page might well have given an indication of the provenance.)

28th March 1857; *Athenaeum Magazine*

John Payne Collier informed readers of the *Athenaeum Magazine* of the discovery in Zurich by Herr Tycho Mommsen of a copy of *The Painful Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre* with a dedication, on an additional leaf after the title page, to the magistrate Henry Fermor and signed by George Wilkins.²¹³ This dedication is unusual in that it is absent from the unique copy held by J O Halliwell but it served to name an author's name for what had previously been published anonymously in 1608. J O Halliwell commented that the dedication was *in a longer form, & if at all belonging to the work (which I doubt) was unquestionably a subsequent introduction.*

14th June 1858; London

²¹³ Indebted to *Freeman & Freeman*, 2004. If Wilkins did not write *The Painful Adventures of Pericles* the connection with Shakespeare is broken and one must look for a different co-author of the play *Pericles*. The publisher, Henry Gosson, who stood surety 1611 was prolific and could link George Wilkins, the victualler/bawdy-house keeper of Cow Street with any number of authors. The British Library Short Title Catalogue (STC) records a unique copy of *The Painful Adventures* lodged in the British Library.

On 29th June 1607 a play, *The Travels of Three English Brothers*, was registered and printed for John Wright. It was based on the 1607 book with the same title by Anthony Nixon. Greg in his *A Bibliography of English Printed Drama*, 1939, comments on the second, identical printing of the play, all in the same year, in which an additional leaf after the title page had an epistle to the family of the brothers Shirley, and signed by John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins. Greg's note: *The leaf appears to be added after most of the copies had been sold. In one copy it appears to have been recently supplied and in one copy (of the first edition) a facsimile of it has been inserted.*

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The British Museum bought for £315, at Sotheby's Auction, the *Mortgage Deed* of 11th March 1613 signed by Shakespeare relating to the conveyance of a property in the Blackfriars in London, from Henry Walker to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon in Warwickshire. The vendor was a Mr. Filleul whose wife was the niece of Mr. Troward, the son of Albany Wallis's partner, who with Albany Wallis had signed Samuel Ireland's *Certificate of Belief*. Both Mr. Troward (1841) and Mr. Filleul (1858) had shown the deed to Sir Frederic Madden, Keeper of the British Museum, together with Albany Wallis's letter with which he had presented the deed to the actor, David Garrick around 1768.

From *The Times*; 10th Feb 1865

The (John) Sainsbury Collection was broken down and sold at auction over two days.²¹⁴ Lot 913 on the second day was the (*unsigned* by Shakespeare) *indenture and bargain and sale between Henry Walker, citizen and minstrel of London, and William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, gentleman, William Johnson citizen and vintner of London, John Jackson and John Hemmyng, of London, gentlemen, for 140l, of a house or tenement with the appurtenances, situate within the precincts of the late Black Fryers, London &...; March 10, 1612. – £55 – to Mr. J O Halliwell.*

The Provenance was (a) William Shakespeare & his successors (b) to Unknown (c) to Sainsbury to (d) to Halliwell to (Halliwell claimed after Sir William Tite was dead) (e) Sir William Tite (f) to Halliwell.

Sir William Tite attended the first day of the sale buying for five guineas a 1434 autographed document on vellum of the Bishop of Winchester.

Also sold to Mr Ellis for £50, lot 915; *conveyance of the premises in Blackfriars (described in the preceding document) by John Jackson and John Hemmyng of London to John Greene of Clement's Inn and Mathew Morrys of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, gentlemen, according to the true intent and meaning of the last will and testament of William Shakespeare of Stratford aforesaid, gentleman, etc..* Albany Wallis had possessed this in 1795 and it appears that after the auction Ellis sold this lot on to Mr. Halliwell.

8th August 1867

²¹⁴ John Sainsbury, approaching 70, was thought to be on a trip to Paris in 1861 when he vanished and by December 1864, two months before the Sotheby Sale, was assumed dead. He had amassed a vast collection of letters from celebrities, most notably Napoleon. *The Times* of 6th Nov 1860 reported that Sainsbury was being sued by auctioneers Chinnock & Galsworthy. He had received an advance from them of £1,500 against paintings thought to raise £20,000 at auction. A small part of the collection was sent to auction but did not realise the advance and the auctioneer sought compensation. The decision was appealed in Chancery on 11th Dec. A Mr G B Sainsbury (son?) was examined for bankruptcy on 11th May 1861. Faced with financial difficulties did John Sainsbury commit suicide?

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The Times reported the sale at auction of a *First Folio* edition of Shakespeare Plays to J O Halliwell for £410.

Jan 1871; South Kensington London

J O Halliwell proposed to subscribers he published limited editions of facsimiles of eleven key documents relating to Shakespeare and the early English Stage. The first document, which was already prepared, was the *Indenture respecting Shakespeare's property in the Blackfriars, 1612-1613*. Fifty copies were eventually published in 1884, but only a decade after its stated owner Sir William Tite's death in 1873.

6th February 1872, London

J O Halliwell's father-in-law, Sir Thomas Phillipps, died. Despite or because of the animosity that existed between them, Halliwell changed his name to Halliwell-Phillipps.

20th December 1872; Brighton

J O Halliwell-Phillipps claimed (only in 1884) that on 20th December 1872, four months before Sir William Tate MP's death, he exchanged his cheque for Tate's *Indenture of the Deed of Sale of the Shakespeare property in the Blackfriars*.

20th April 1873; Torquay

The *Times* announced the death of Sir William Tite, architect and Member of Parliament for Bath, aged 75. He had been repeatedly ailing of late.

May 1874 Sotheby's Auction Rooms, London.

Sir William Tite's Library of 15,000 books was sold at auction for £20,000.

Oxford 1879

Oxford University started to compile its English Dictionary. It involved countless volunteer compilers reading extensive numbers of documents and books to identify the differing usages of each word over the centuries. As each unique use of a word was identified it was accepted into the Dictionary and its source attributed together with its context. Since *Shakespeare Works* were so extensive and its language at times so rich, it was inevitable that a large number of words were seen printed for the first time in new contexts, especially when the authors of the *Works* enjoyed experimenting with word forms or developing compound words. Of the twenty-five thousand words in the Dictionary, about three thousand appear to have had no antecedents before the *Shakespeare Works*.

The fact that a word was seen for its first instance in a *Shakespeare* work does not mean that it did not exist before or that the authors had *invented* a word or phrase. The Elizabethan audiences may well have enjoyed the sound of new words and stimulus of divining and internalising their meaning. It is poor logic to suggest that the authors created three-thousand new words for their plays, an average of nearly one-hundred per play, at the risk of losing a plays empathy with its audience.

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Although the *First Folio* was a monumental recording of the English vernacular, the English language did not change because of the printing of thirty-six plays. However, the repetitious reading of the *Shakespeare Works* from the early 18th century brought Tudor and Jacobean phases back into currency.

1881 Dulwich College London

G F Warner wrote his *catalogue of the Manuscripts and Muniments of Alleyn's College of God's Gift at Dulwich*. In it he described *Henslowe's Diary* as a small folio of 238 leaves excluding four blank folios in the middle of the book. In it he listed a number of entries in the *Diary* which were known to be forgeries.

17th September 1883; Maidenhead

John Payne Collier died at home in Maidenhead, aged 94 and was buried in Bray Churchyard. Throughout his long life he had been a rogue-scholar interlacing excellent academic articles with his own fictitious compositions which served only to sour the credibility of his real achievements. He had an interesting working friendship with Halliwell who must have known what Collier had been doing but who never reproved him – as if not to risk the world starting to question some of the Shakespeare histories and anecdotes that he, HP, had launched on the unsuspecting and gullible literary world.

1st February 1884, Brighton

[A transcription of the second paragraph of the preface by J O Halliwell-Phillipps, to the Facsimile of the *Deed of Sale of the property in the Blackfriars*.]

This deed of conveyance was formerly one of the leading treasures of the Sainsbury Collection of manuscripts and autographs. It was put up to auction in London about thirty years ago [ca. 1854], but the reserved price was not attained. After the owner's death, it was again submitted to public competition, and was then bought for the late Sir William Tite, MP, a gentleman of large wealth who had given an unlimited commission for it. It remained in Sir William's possession for several years, and until, at my urgent solicitation, he very kindly and generously transferred the purchase to me. The day on which I exchanged my cheque for the old indenture, December the 20th, 1872, is an epoch in my Shakespearean life.

March 1884; Brighton, Sussex.

James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps completed his preface to the *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*. A man of immense energy, not always scrupulous, he had devoted a major part of his life in search of *Shakespeare*, while collecting and dealing in documents and books relating to the Elizabethan Stage. In *Outlines* he tried to pull together his comprehensive knowledge and background to Shakespeare with transcriptions of supporting documents and deeds. His two-volume work, annoyingly without an index, represents a plateau in what was then known and it is written in a style of absolute confidence as to its veracity – confidence hiding ignorance. It has since been a source document for many authors whose copious

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footnotes bear the recognisable initials HP who was always able to create a turn of phrase to cover absence of fact.

An avid collector of anything related to Shakespeare or Stratford, in Volume I of *Outlines* HP has a section on *The Later Theatres* in which he provides transcriptions of eleven known deeds and manuscripts pertaining to the Blackfriars and Globe playhouses.

- The purchase on 4th Feb 1596, by James Burbage for £600 from Sir William More of Loseley, co.Surrey, of the building that was to become the Blackfriars playhouse.
- An undated copy (made around 1631) of a petition of November 1596 objecting to the Blackfriars playhouse.
- The contract dated 8th Jan 1600 between Philip Henslowe and Peter Short, carpenter, for Short to build the Fortune playhouse. It mentions the newly erected Globe. Copied from the original in Dulwich College.
- An order of the Privy Council dated 22nd June 1600 for the restraint of the immoderate use and company of playhouses and players.
- A letter of the same date concerning the above to the Surrey justices.
- A Letter of complaint dated 31st Dec 1601 concerning the above.
- A letter of the same date to the Magistrates concerning the above.
- A letter to the Lords of the Council dated April 1604 desiring them to sanction performances at the Globe, Fortune and Curtain playhouses after they had been prohibited by reason of the plague. From a contemporary transcript at Dulwich College.
- A poem about the Globe playhouse written in the early 17th century.
- An order by the Corporation of the City of London dated 21st January 1619 to suppress the Blackfriars playhouse, the residents complaining that the conversion of a private house to a playhouse was attracting so great a resort of people and a multitude of hackney coaches which the street cannot contain them. It refers to a similar request from the public in 1596 at the time the building was being converted to a playhouse.
- A collection of six contemporary transcripts from the Lord Chamberlain's Office relating to the 1635 share-holding in the Globe and Blackfriars playhouses. In essence three actors wanted shares in the playhouses, in particular the Globe. The share-holding about 1627 was in sixteen parts of which Cuthbert Burbidge and his sister(s) held eight, the widow of Henry Condell four, and Mr. Heminges four. By 1635 the share-holding had changed and there were six sharers. About 1634 Sir Mathew Brand (Brende) had granted a nine-year prolongation of the expired lease. Cuthbert Burbadge explained that the actors' reward was an ample recompense and how their late father, James Burbadge, had built the Theatre playhouse on land leased for twenty-one-years. After their father died and as the term of the lease was ending there was a dispute with the ground landlord. So he and his late brother Richard altered from thence and had built the Globe on land with a thirty-one-year lease. He also explained how their father had purchased and created the Blackfriars playhouse and had leased it out to one

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Evans for the acting group known as Queens Majesty's Children of the Chapel. In time they bought back the lease and placed men players which were Hemings, Condell, Shakespeare &c with the youths Underwood Field and Ostler. He and his brother had *joynd those deserving men, Shakspeare, Hemings, Condell, Philips and others partners in the profittes* in the Blackfriars, and *Hemings, Condell, Shakspeare, &c* in the Globe. Paradoxically, according to HP, these documents, known as the *Sharers Papers*, are transcripts from the Lord Chamberlain's Office of documents that had been held in the Lord Chamberlain's Office but no longer exist.

HP's *Outlines*, however accurate or inaccurate, was the limit of the available knowledge until 1910 when Charles W Wallace produced his discoveries,

1885 New York

James Appleton Morgan submitted a paper to the New York Shakespeare Society, *Venus and Adonis, a study in Warwickshire Dialect*, to demonstrate how Shakespeare's earliest poem gave evidence of the author's Warwickshire origin. Of over twelve-hundred words in the vernacular used in the *Works* for which a Warwickshire dialect word existed, only one Warwickshire word could tentatively (urchin for hedgehog) be identified. Appleton quoted Halliwell-Phillipps' comment; "*Those who have lived so long as myself in the midst of Shakespearean criticism will be careful not to be too certain of anything.*"

1886 The Bacon Society; England

The Bacon Society was founded in 1886 and still advocates that Francis Bacon, 1561-1626, wrote the Shakespeare *Works*.

3rd Jan 1889

James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps died aged 69. The following day *The Times* carried a short obituary.

27th August 1890; To The Editor of *The Times*

Ernest E Baker of Weston-Super-Mare wrote to *The Times* advertising his thoughts that funds ought to be found to buy the Halliwell-Phillipp's collection of Shakespeare manuscripts for the British nation and prevent its being taken to the United States.²¹⁵ He did not mention that he was nephew and executor of Halliwell-Phillipps' estate. Seven years later in January 1897 Halliwell-Phillipps' collection of rarities, documents and books, was sold to Mr. Marsden J. Perry of Providence,

²¹⁵ Birmingham Corporation had been given the chance to raise £10,000 in the twelve months after Halliwell-Phillipps' death, which had now expired.

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Rhode Island, USA. It contained, the purchasers' (unsigned) deed, one of the three key documents purporting to relate to the purchase by *William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon in the County of Warwickshire, Gentleman*, from Henry Walker of a house, in the occupation of William Ireland, on the west side of St. Andrew's Hill in the area known as Blackfriars. This was the indenture held by the purchaser of the property.²¹⁶ The American press reported

*Halliwell had obtained the mortgage deed from his father who was in partnership as a solicitor with Albany Wallis, one of the executors of David Garrick. Wallis, it seems, found the document in 1768 among the title deeds of the Rev. Fetherstonhaugh, Oxted, Surrey. Fetherstonhaugh instructed Wallis to present the deed to Garrick whom he greatly admired, and the actor lent it to George Steevens who in his 1790 edition of Shakespeare gave a facsimile of his signature and a copy of the deed. After Garrick's death his widow gave the document to Wallis through whose hands it passed a second time.*²¹⁷

Photographs show the wax seals on the parchment tags of the *purchase deed* and of the *mortgage deed* have the initials H. L., above which are signatures of *William Shakespeare*. Both the seals and the signatures are clearly at variance with each other.²¹⁸ One or both are forgeries.

1900

1904-1907 London

In 1904 Walter Greg published a meticulous transcription of the *Diary of Philip Henslowe* with subsequent notes in 1907. He recorded that, apart from signatures cut out by autograph hunters, significant numbers of pages had been torn from the *Diary* or had been shortened. He also alluded to an Appendix to his book containing Malone's notes purported to be from entries in the *Diary* that cannot be

²¹⁶ The other two documents were the signed *Deed of Conveyance* of 10th March 1613, bought by the Corporation of London in 1843, and a *mortgage deed* dated 11th March, bought by the British Museum in 1858.

²¹⁷ Journalese! Thomas Halliwell was a linendraper by profession. The family was from Chorley in Lancashire and the birth of Thomas, son to Thomas & Elizabeth, was registered on 25th Oct 1777 at Deane by Bolton. Thomas junior moved to London where, with his father-in-law, he became successful in the property market. It appears most unlikely that he worked for the Wallis-Troward legal partnership having developed his career as a draper by his early twenties, by which time Albany Wallis was long dead (1800). It is unlikely that Garrick's widow gave Wallis the deed, she despised the man.

²¹⁸ Two rulers placed alongside the upright strokes of the H and the L are not parallel but pointing downwards, converge on the Mortgage Deed and diverge on the Purchase Deed.

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found in the *Diary*. Forgeries by Collier were also identified. The *Diary* over its eleven years recorded two hundred and thirty different plays of which ten appear to be Shake-Speare or forerunners of Shake-Speare plays:

Lord Strange's Men playing sixteen performances of *Henry VI* between March 1592 and February 1593.

King Leir and his Three Daughters by the Queen's & Sussex's men, April 1594.

Titus Andronicus performed at different times between Jan 1594 and June 1594 by Sussex's Men, the Admiral's Men, and Chamberlain's Men.

Hamlet performed in June 1594 by the Admiral's & Chamberlain's Men.

The Taming of A Shrew also performed in June 1594 by the Admiral's & Chamberlain's Men.²¹⁹

Henry V performed thirteen times from Nov 1595 by the Admiral's Men.²²⁰

Payments to Chettle & Dekker in April 1599 on behalf of the Admiral's Men for a play called *Troilus & Cressida*.

Payment of £5 on behalf of the Admiral's men to Charles Massey, in April 1602 for a play book called *Malcolm, King of Scots* [Macbeth?]. In 1598 Massy and Samuel Rowley²²¹ had been hirelings to the Admiral's Men.

Payment on behalf of the Admiral's men to Drayton, Munday, Webster, Dekker and Middleton in May 1602 for a play book called *Caesar's Fall*.

Payment on behalf of the Admiral's men in earnest to Henry Chettle in July 1602 for a play book called *The Danish Tragedy*.

1905 London

Charles Wallace (1865-1932), a professor of Latin and English at *Nebraska University*, published the 1615 *Bill and Answer* in the suit of *Bendishe et al* (including Shakespeare's name which was an interlineation) *vs Bacon*. [c2/JasI/B11/9 and C33/127, p1074]

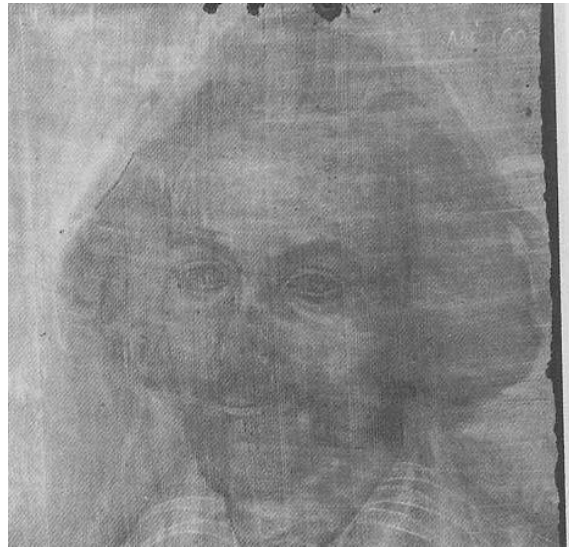
1908 London

²¹⁹ See the following two notes.

²²⁰ See the following note.

²²¹ The brother of the playwright, William Rowley. On stylistic grounds H D Sykes assigned to Samuel Rowley a share in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *The Taming of a Shrew* and Robert Greene's *Orlando Furioso*. MacDonald P Jackson attributed his writing *Richard II*.

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A portrait purporting to be William Shakespeare was pulled from under a bed. Today known as *The Sanders*, it had been handed down by about eight generations of the Sanders family as a portrait of *Shakespeare*. The family were only able to trace themselves back to around 1709 in Worcestershire. They hoped to link to a minor actor called Sanders (Saunders) at the turn of the 16th Century.

The portrait is of a young man with flowing auburn hair, blue eyes and a mole above his left temple. He is wearing a shield shaped ruff very similar to the etching in the First Folio and a jerkin fashionable to that period. The picture on the right is the x-ray of *The Sanders*, on the left a portrait of William Herbert, Earl Pembroke. In 2002 Canadian journalist Stephanie Nolan wrote a book, *Shakespeare's Face*, about the portrait and its purporting to be Shakespeare. The portrait's owner, Mr Lloyd Sullivan, had submitted the painting, on a wooden panel, to forensic tests, all of which showed that the wood, paint, fashion and style were absolutely consistent with the date on the painting, 1603.

The Sanders portrait is very similar to a miniature of William Herbert owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington. William has flowing auburn hair, blue eyes and a mole above his left temple.

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2nd & 4th October 1909 London / 1910; Nebraska USA

The Times carried two articles by Charles Wallace, *Professor* of English Dramatic Literature at *Nebraska* University, researching extensively in London on the subject of the Elizabethan Stage. Four years earlier, in 1905, he had published the *1615 Bill and Answer* in the suit of *Bendishe et al* (which included Shakespeare, an interlineation) *vs Bacon*. The newly found documents purported to describe the share-holdings in the Globe and Blackfriars playhouses and also the precise location of the Globe. Wallace's findings were published in 1910 in the little-read, and until recently quite inaccessible, *Nebraska University Studies*, Vol. X (now on line). The transcripts dealt with Court of Requests documents relating to *Keysar v Burbage 1610* (they do not mention Shakespeare), *Bellot v Mountjoy 1612* (Shakespeare the Lodger) and *Witter v Heminges & Condell 1619* (concerning Burbage, Heminges and Condell related to playhouse ownership).

The previous year Wallace had published the 1615 case, in Latin, of *Ostler v Heminges*. Over a decade, up to 1916, Wallace and his German wife had conducted an extensive survey of the Public Record Offices in London boasting that they had searched through over three million documents.²²²

²²² Wallace later made his fortune speculating in finding oil. He had obtained his doctorate at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau in 1893. His brother Grant (born 1868) was described as a dilettante who having made a living as a journalist, politician and story-writer became obsessed with the occult and communication with spirits beyond the grave, including individuals on Mars. Their father, Thomas Dickey Wallace, was born in Acworth, New Hampshire on 17th Nov 1820. He married an Olive McEwan. There exists a list of nine children of which Charles (not Charles W) was the sixth. Acworth genealogists have documented the Dickey and Wallace families from their entry into North America, but Thomas Dickey Wallace does not appear and the names of

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5th October 1909, London; (Regarding the site of the Globe playhouse.)

In his letter to *The Times*, Sir Sidney Lee, the foremost authority on Shakespeare, gave a tepid commendation to Prof Wallace for his work. Letters followed on 7th & 8th on behalf of the owners of the local Brewery, Barclay & Perkins Company, who claimed that Wallace had misidentified the location of the playhouse although Wallace is quite explicit about the location of the site and the people and neighbours associated with it.

.... all that parcel of ground just recently before enclosed and made into four separate garden plots recently in the tenure and occupation of Thomas Burt and [Sir] Isbrand Morris, diers, and of Lactantius Roper, salter, citizen, of London, containing in length from east to west two hundred and twenty feet of assize, or thereabouts, lying and adjoining upon a way or lane there on one side and abutting upon a piece of land called The Park upon the north, and upon a garden then or recently in the tenure or occupation of one John Cornish toward the west and upon another garden plot then or recently in the tenure or occupation, of one John Knowles toward the east, with all the houses, buildings, structures, ways, easements, commodities, and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any manner pertaining; Which said premises are situate, lying, and being within the parish of Saint Savior in Southwark in the county of Surrey; And also all that parcel of land just recently before enclosed and made into three separate garden plots whereof two of the same [were] recently in the tenure or occupation of John Roberts, carpenter, and another recently in the occupation of one Thomas Ditcher, citizen and merchant tailor of London, situate, lying, and being in the parish aforesaid in the aforesaid county of Surrey, containing in length from east to west by estimation one hundred fifty and feet of assize or thereabouts and in breadth north to the south one hundred feet of assize by estimation or thereabouts ; lying and adjoining, upon the other side of the way or lane aforesaid, and abutting upon a garden plot there then or recently just before in the occupation of William Sellers toward the east, and upon one other garden plot there then or recently just before in the tenure of John Burgram, saddler, toward the west, and upon a lane there, called Maiden Lane, toward the south; with all the houses, buildings, structures, ways, easements, commodities, and appurtenances to the last recited premises or to any part or parcel thereof belonging or in any manner, pertaining, together with fees ingress, egress, and regress, and, passage to
....

1st May 1914, London

To celebrate the 350th Shakespeare anniversary *The Times* once again carried a feature by Charles Wallace discussing seven Jacobean documents he had

his parents are unknown. Although there is evidence of his being a judge, the 1880 census of Hopkins, Nodaway, Missouri gives his livelihood as farming.

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discovered in 1909, but only now was he choosing to present for the first time. They related to the ownership by grandfather, father and son, Thomas, Nicholas and Mathew Brend, and their successors of what Wallace maintained was the site of the Globe playhouse. The *Times* announced that it was now going to publish these seven documents in full – but appears not to have done so.

The *Times*' article appears quite authoritative but in his research Wallace could not have seen Thomas or Nicholas Brende's wills. Thomas had struck off his son, Mathew, from executing his will as he had married without his knowledge or consent. Wallace erroneously claimed that Nicholas's heir was Mathew; Nicholas Brend clearly states in his will that after his daughters have been provided for and other bequests made, the residue of his estate would go to his wife Margaret and his son John.

There is another error. Wallace's documents state that *on February 14th, 1614, Cuthbert Burbage, Richard Burbage, John Hemminges and Henry Condell on behalf of themselves and their partners went out to West Moulsey and got the signatures of young Mathew, his mother as his guardian, and his uncle as a witness, to the renewal of the original Brende lease for an extension to 25th December 1644*. However, in 1635 John Shanks made it quite clear that when he obtained his share-holding in the Globe in 1633, there were only two years left of the lease, which fits with a twenty-one-year lease from 1614. The Burbages elsewhere bemoan the fact that they were troubled with twenty-one-year leases.²²³

In *The Times* articles Wallace's documents, which he translated from Latin, give a precise position of the Globe supported by a plethora of subsequent leases he had perused covering the next centuries. Wallace was adamant that the Globe site was two plots of land with a lane between them on the north side of Maid or *Maiden Lane* (today Park Street). In 1989 archaeology excavations placed the Globe, demolished in 1644, on the south side of Park Street under a building called Anchor Terrace. John Rocque's 1746 map of Southwark shows an alley called *Globe Alley* running East to West from *Dead Man Lane* to the physical / archaeological site of the Globe; Wallace's work was seriously flawed at best and fraud at worst.²²⁴

The two plots of land which Wallace described can be seen on Rocque's map on the north side of Maiden's Lane joining to make one area. They are not quite rectangular. The northern one is about 220 feet wide by about 150 feet deep and the southern one is about 150 feet wide by about 100 deep. All Wallace's documents support the Globe being on this site, but in fact it was on the other side

²²³ In Part II of Chambers' *William Shakespeare – A study of Facts & Problems* (1930) Chambers makes scant reference to Wallace's seven extra documents reported in *The Times* in 1914 although he gives the texts of the earlier Wallace documents.

²²⁴ Wallace would have learnt lessons from the pitfalls that had trapped people like William Ireland and John Payne Collier.

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of Maiden Lane. Wallace and his wife had clearly found a cache of self-supportive documents that could be amended, transcribed or forged to include the Globe playhouse & William Shakespeare and his fellows. As for those documents in Latin, Wallace was a “Professor” of Latin. Can credence be given to any of the Wallace discoveries? ²²⁵

Although Wallace’s research is flawed, the documents display many accurate elements in terms of people and dates. Today’s on-line archives of the Nation’s Public Records Office fail to discover many of the documents which Wallace alluded to. Considering their apparent importance in the biography of Shakespeare one would have thought they would be catalogued and to hand, but Wallace vaguely intimated these records may have been in private possession and gone to the United States with him.

1919 London

H. Dugdale-Sykes identified the hand of Samuel Rowley (d. 1624) as a co-author of *The Taming of A Shrew*, *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (printed by Thomas Creed 1598 - *As it was plaide by the Queenes Majesties Players*) and additions in 1602 to Marlowe’s *Dr Faustus*.²²⁶ Rowley was considered a comic dramatist *par excellence* by contemporary audiences. *The Taming of A Shrew*, the prequel of *Taming of The Shrew*, was printed in 1594 as having been performed by the Earl of Pembroke’s Servants. Rowley could well be considered a candidate co-author of the Shakespeare plays. From around 1597 he was involved as a player and playwright with the Admiral’s Men at Henslowe’s *Rose* but by 1605 was a servant of the Prince of Wales when his play *When you see me You Know Me* was published.

20th February 1920 Longnor Hall, Shropshire

London newspapers announced the discovery by Richard Francis Burton in his muniments room at Longnor Hall, Shropshire, of a collected volume of five Elizabethan items of verse, bound in vellum, embossed with the initials G. O.. They were

<i>The Passionate Pilgrim</i> - W. Shakespeare	(two other copies);
<i>Lucrece</i> - William Shakespeare 1600	(unique);
<i>The Ghost of Lucrece</i> - Thomas Middleton 1600	(unique);
<i>Emaricdulf</i> - 1595 by E. C.; dedicated to Edward, Mary Fitton’s brother	(one other copy);

²²⁵ I sense the Belloit vs Mountjoy papers are authentic but these place Shakespeare a lodger north of the river when other *so-called* evidence places him in Southwark, south of the Thames.

²²⁶ The Shakespeare Association 1920

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Venus and Adonis - William Shakespeare 1599 (unique).

The volume was bought by Mr. Folger. Having examined a photograph of the cover the initials could equally be C O. I surmise that this was Mistress Cordlia Onslowe, a colleague maid-of-honour of Mary Fitton.²²⁷ Evidence of the continued presence of Burtons at Longnor identifies a Thomas Burton and Katherine his wife of Severnes Longnor in 1595 and the will of Thomas Burton of Longnor of 1695. A hand-written inscription in the *Passionate Pilgrim* claims that at some time a George Ffolowes was the *true owner*.

1926 Los Angeles

Allison Gaw in her *The Origin and Development of 1Henry VI* demonstrates that the origin of the play was probably the co-authorship of Marlowe, Peele and Greene and that the *Shakespeare* touches were a later augmentation.

1948, Canada;

E. M. W. Tillyard, Litt. D., Master of Jesus College Cambridge, England, presented that year's series of Alexander Lectures to the University of Toronto. The series was entitled *Shakespeare's Problem Plays*, and they discuss the three dark comedies, *Troilus & Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Measure for Measure* to which he added the tragedy of *Hamlet*, the four plays being a cluster which echo each other. They marked a sea-change from the lightness of *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, and the dour, history plays.

Stratford 1948

The *Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust* acquired what appears to be one of the earliest known transcripts of Shakespeare's will. The discoverer was Miss C. Hartwell Lucy who found it in the papers of her grandfather, the Reverend Edmund Lane, a collector of rare books and manuscripts who had grown up in Stratford-upon-Avon and died around 1898.²²⁸ This *Birthplace*-held copy purports to be a copy of the Prerogative Court copy and is in the handwriting of the early 17th Century. There are some variations compared with the Probate Court copy some of which had been corrected in a different coloured ink. The watermark cannot be dated but it appears the copy was made by a notary public, William or Gilbert Rothwell. The

²²⁷ I cannot trace with certainty her first name nor that she married a man called Gifford, but it is feasible that when Mary Fitton left Court at short notice early in 1601 Mistress Onslowe took possession of these five works. One can imagine the title page of the first item carried an inscription which identified the owner or the donor and this was cut away as was one other page. Chambers' *Elizabethan Stage* gives Mistress Onslowe as Lady Cordelia Harvey, née Ansley, maid of honour who was present at Harefield House 31st July 1602.

²²⁸ A Richard Lane had acted for Shaksper's daughter and granddaughter in the disposal of property in 1647.

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indications are that when, in 1747, Joseph Greene wrote to James West at Alscott with a transcription of the Shakespeare will, it was this, the *Birthplace* copy, that he had copied. A space before the second of the Hart siblings in the original and probate copies of the will has been filled by the name Thomas in the *Birthplace* copy.²²⁹

1956 Marlowe Society Founded

The Marlowe Society today promotes the contribution of Christopher Marlowe to creating the drama that laid the foundation for the *Shakespeare* works. Members accept there is reasonable doubt as to Marlowe's death at Deptford in 1593. His survival and continued contribution to Elizabethan drama in the name of *Shakespeare* would not come as a surprise.

1957 Shakespeare Oxford Society Founded

The *Oxford Society* now has some hundreds of members who believe that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, 1550-1604, was *Shakespeare*. The evidence that Oxford could have written the plays appears compelling but his promoters are habitually thwarted by his dying in 1604 and new plays appearing in print after his death.

1997 Arizona

Edited by Prof Josephine Roberts, Arizona State University published Lady Mary Wroth's *First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, originally published in 1621. It was followed in 1999 by the *Second Part*, being published for the very first time. In a love triangle Mary Wroth depicts herself as Pamphilia, her cousin and lover, William Herbert, as *Amphilanthus* (lover of two) and Mary Fitton is depicted as *Antissia* (opponent). *Antissia*, who wrote poetry and plays, had a tutor who thought he could write better poetry than Ovid.

2002: Professor Brian Vickers in his *Shakespeare, Co-Author* identified that at least five *Shakespeare* plays had co-authors: George Peele for *Titus Andronicus*, George Middleton for *Timon of Athens*, George Wilkins for *Pericles*, and John Fletcher for both *Henry VIII* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*.

²²⁹ Levi Fox's - Early Copy of Shakespeare's Will - Shakespeare Survey 4; p69-77.

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2004

2004 Greater Manchester

The author unravels cryptic clues embedded in the last of those Sonnets composed by Mary Fitton to her lover William Herbert (Harbert). They spell out their names.

Sonnet 122 starts

TTHY GUIFT,, THY TABLES, ARE WITHIN MY BRAINE
FULL CHARACTERD WITH LASTING MEMORY,

TThy guift starts with Marry Fitt-T-on's monogram followed by Gui for Guillome with FT on. The (unique) double-comma is deliberate, as is the unique double-T of TThy on the first line.

Acrostics usually use initial letters but here the double-comma indicates to use the first two letters of *tables, are, within, my, brain*. These are TH TA AR WI MY BR – which rearranged create Wi HarbarTT My. The TT was no accident; TT was Mary Fitton's monogram.

Sonnet 123 is even more explicit.

NO! TIME, THOU SHALT NOT BOST THAT I DO CHANGE,
THY PYRAMYDS BUYLT UP WITH NEWER MIGHT

The cryptic clue here is *built up with newer*. The word pyramids contains the name Mary in reverse and if one continues backwards and picks up the first two letters of the first line one obtains the letters P Y H T O & N, an anagram of Python or Phytton, a way of spelling her name; leaving I M E – **I'm Mary Fitton**.

In the same Sonnet the initial letters of the last eight lines are O W A T T N F M T I which gives MA FITON leaving the first and last letters of W-illiam Herber-T; almost exactly the same device that William had used in his poem to her in 1604, just after he had married Mary Talbot.

Sonnet 124

YF MY DEARE LOVE WERE BUT THE CHILD OF STATE,

One sees and abbreviated May Fitton (MY FY) followed by W ERBUT.

The Dedication

The key to unlocking the mystery of the Sonnet's dedication is the number 17. By making the 17th letter of the alphabet A, the 18th B, and so on, creates the cypher. Now if one counts the number of characters in each line, including the exceptional full-stops after each word, then converts the numbers using the cypher, one gets

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letters that reassemble into *Mary FF's Prince*. One can surmise why she called him a Prince; Hamlet, Pericles? ²³⁰

Had the Dedication been to Earl W H the anonymity would have been blown, but a playful lover would have confused history by demoting her lever to a mere mister.

2004

Would you subscribe to a view that the Sanders portrait is remarkably similar to a miniature of William Herbert owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington? William has flowing auburn hair, blue eyes and a mole above his left temple.



2006

The National Portrait Gallery in London was unable to show that any so-called likeness of Shakespeare was contemporaneous, other than the Sanders portrait.

2009 Montreal, Canada

Lamberto Tassinari published *John Florio, The Man Who Was Shakespeare*, maintaining that John Florio used the pseudonym Shake-Speare to author the *Works of Shakespeare*.

His final chapter on the *Tempest* should be read ahead of watching the play. It gives an explanation which is quite convincing. Prospero and Miranda (Florio and his father) are exiles and are prepared to forgive those who expelled them in order to return.

²³⁰ There is one error. The line that yields the y is a character short and gives an x.

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My own interpretation of Florio's contribution is at variance to Tassinari's; certainly over half the plays bore Florio's mark but I would question whether he was involved in *all* the plays. Florio as a lexicographer who had written four, extensive Italian-English dictionaries would partly explain how *Shakespeare* had such a large vocabulary.

2010 Greater Manchester

The author discovered and can demonstrate that the *Probate* copy of William Shackspere's will has been forged or counterfeited. xxx

The copy starts conveniently at the top of one page and ends conveniently at the bottom of the verso. At the top of a third page is the statement granting probate to his married daughter and her husband. As with all wills, it starts with *In the name of God, amen*. The initial capital I, which is six lines tall, offers the amanuensis the opportunity to identify and personalise his work with his particular, embellished calligraphy of many strokes, here around twenty.

The evidence that this is a forgery is two-fold. Examples of other capital I's by the same scribe are consistent with each other; Shackspere's varies significantly; but it is the *letter-d* that is the primary give-away. A forensic analysis of the angle of the arm of the letter shows that in Shackpere's will it rises on average thirty-eight degrees from the horizontal whereas in all other wills, *and* the probate statement on the third page written at the same time by the same scribe, it rises only thirty-four degrees. The four degrees difference is too significant and shows a different hand. It looks like the leaf has been removed and replaced, requiring the two sides of the replacement leaf to be fully filled, top to bottom on both pages. But if there was some content from another will at the top of the first page it would need padding to fully fill both sides and would explain why the waffling, 195-word entail takes up one-seventh of the will – and is meaningless;

To Have and to hold All and singular the said premisses with their Appurtenances unto the said Susanna Hall for and during the terme of her naturall life and after her decease to the first sonne of her bodie lawfullie yssueing and to the heires Males of the bodie of the said Second Sonne lawfullie yssyeinge and for defalt of such heires Males of the bodie of the said third sonne lawfullie yssyeing And for defalt of such issue the same soe to be Reamine to the ffourth sonne, ffytte, sixte and seaventh sonnes of her bodie lawfullie issueing one after Another and and to the heires Males of the bodies of the said ffourth, ffytte, Sixte and Seaventh sonnes lawfullie yssueing in such manner as yt is before Lymitted to be and remaine to the first, second and third Sonns of her bodie and to their heires males. And for defalt of such issue the said premisses to be and Remaine to my sayed Neece Hall and the

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*heires Males of her bodie Lawfully yssueing for default of...such issue to my daughter Judith and the heires of me the said William Shackspere for ever.*²³¹

An equally effective statement is given below, with 110 less words but even that would have been flawed for I doubt if the intention was that if his niece Hall had no sons but a daughter, whatever was left of the estate would revert to Judith's side of the family perhaps seventy years later; a recipe for chaos. Here we see a female in line could inherit in one generation but not in the next.

To Have and to hold All and singular the said premisses with their appurtenances unto the said Susanna Hall for and during the term of her natural life and after her decease to the eldest surviving male heir and for default of such issue the said premisses to be and remain to my said Niece Hall and the heirs Males of her body lawfully issuing, for default of such issue to my daughter Judith and the heirs of me the said William Shacksper for ever.

I do not doubt that Shackspere left a will but whoever got hold of it would have seen that there was no mention of his wife, or bequests to London actor colleagues. The bequests that were made to the actors were in the form of interlineations in a different hand and the name was Burbadge not Burbage.

One other feature of the probate copy; the initial letter I has a cartouche overwriting the upper part. If one "lifts" it away from the paper digitally and turns it upside down there is written L 28th B.

One last feature is the letter "n" here two lines lower than in other documents and always alongside the upper-right pointed stroke.



²³¹ The forger had a problem spelling issuing!

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The will has been reconstructed, the probate copy is a forgery, there is ample evidence to move the axis of Shakespearean provenance to the Stratford on the banks of the Wiltshire Avon.

It is delusional to believe that a barely educated rustic could be the genius a snobbish world makes him out to be.

The collection of plays in the first folio was authored by a whole college of playwrights. The plays are good because they were written for the Court audience by the best playwrights and performed by the best actors.

Shake-speare was a pseudonym, a brand name, and I have resolved the mystery of who wrote them. We read in Sonnet 50,

*The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods duly on, to bear that waight in me,*

He might have been all things to all men but not quite that clever. This author here was pregnant with *that waight in me*. Call him a genius? That man could never conceive.

Appendix – Albany Wallis and Louis Bayly-Wallis

In researching the provenance of the Shakespeare deeds held by solicitor to society, Albany Wallis, I had to consider whether his heir, Lewis Bayly Wallis, had come into possession of the documents. He hadn't, they were retained by Wallis's partner, Troward, and in time, nearly fifty years later were disposed of by Troward's family. However, along the way I found the following intriguing history culminating in the sale of portraits of Albany Wallis, his twelve-year-old son, Charles, and Lewis Bayly, at auction in 1916. But first an supposition on my part on an event that might well have taken place in Albany Wallis' offices regarding one Emmy Lyon.

20 Norfolk Street, London, Early 1782

The clerk closed the door behind him as twenty-eight year old Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh entered solicitor Albany Wallis's office. The ageing solicitor, motioning to a chair, opened the conversation. Sir Harry, one of the richest men in England, sat down hesitantly, a little in awe at his late father's lifelong friend.

"Your mother, Lady Sarah, is well?"

"Indeed, she lives at Uppark, with me."

"Tender her my best regards; you are not unexpected."

"You have heard?"

"Not much gossip escapes me. Is the child born?"

"Weeks, a month, perhaps two."

"I trust you intend not to marry. The estate can be lost."

The young baron snorted, "If only. No! Impossible. She knows I will not make her my wife."

"Good! Good! Good! Excellent! And the young woman's expectations? I hear she is quite becoming and for her age the dear Lord has well-endowed her, has he not?"

"Expectations? Money, security. A home. She fears my casting her off without a sou. I will not, but what is in a woman's mind, especially one so young? Who knows? Then there is the mother, a redoubtable woman."

"And she is how young?"

"Emmy? She says sixteen."

"And she *is* pleasing? I heard you, found her, at a certain premises in Arlington Street; Romney's muse, I'm told."

"Yes, indeed. The lady of that noteworthy house serves, at a price, gentlemen's needs with her selected coterie of young, and not so young ladies and some alluring young men; ah! but with the very discretion of indeed, a solicitor like your very own self."

"Yes, I have heard as much. And your young lady, I also hear stands naked on your dining table and washes herself to amuse your friends?"

"Like a goddess, a Greek statue. Voluptuous. Hah! Tall, taller than me, soft spoken in her own way. Northern accent. Easy to spend the night-time hours with; most

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decorative during the daytime. Small education but all the wisdom of the streets, that from her mother."

"Her father?"

"An illiterate, a blacksmith of Cheshire, he died soon after her birth. Her mother, Mary, came, found work in London, a maid. Yes, the mother arrived on my estate three days ago and made it evident to me she has strong expectancy for her daughter and her grandchild. She threatens to encounter my mother."

"Emmy and mother at Uppark? Their family name?"

"Lyon."

"So, this Emmy Lyon carries your child. My advice, of course, is it would be totally inappropriate for you to marry; you tell me she wants security for herself and her child? And you cannot cast her off easily?"

"Exactly! You should see her; no man would cast her off."

"If you marry her, yes, she and your child, if he is a son, will one day claim title to your estate. If you do not marry"

"I am quite aware but Emmy is different....."

"Emmy is not different! Harry, you will not marry her. She is young; you pay her off. And her mother; let them use the money if they do not spend it first to rise to a new level in the social order. You keep hold of your father's estate at all cost and marry into your class. You are well aware your father and I grew up together as children in Northumberland. I see you as an adopted nephew. You so remind me of him."

"She carries my child, his grandchild; Wallis, they must be found a good home."

"Find a good home? That is your commission for me? You think her amenable?"

"I prized her out from Arlington Street, did I not?"

"Indeed, so you tell me, and such are the stories that indeed circulate."

"And she has ambition."

"Her mother's ambition, no doubt? When you met, did she know you are the richest bachelor in England?"

"If she did not know her colleagues at Arlington Street would have told her. I went back on several occasions, and with great relish, indeed, never to be disappointed. I wanted her for myself. I rescued her, with my money. Now she rests with her mother in a cottage at Uppark, my mother lives in the house. She can see my wealth and she has appetite."

"You think her amenable to another patron?"

"Few men would not be smitten by her; I am, she is simply adorable even carrying a child, especially carrying the child."

"And marriage? Will she want a husband?"

"A good roof over her head should suffice; she is sensible. Wallis, for the love of my father, your friend, I need your help; if you will accept your reward will be significant."

"Children are important. I lost my son."

Little Emma was born on 12th March 1772 and sent to grandparents on the Wirral. Shortly after the confinement mother (now known as Mrs. Cadogan) and daughter (as Emma Hart) removed to the protection of Charles Greville, the second son of the Earl of Warwick, who provided them with a home in London. Greville was

generous with his time and mentored his young mistress as she gained an education, learnt French and Italian and ascended the society ladder, holding regular tea-parties at the house.²³² Her beauty was remarked upon and she sat for great artists who were fascinated by her heart-shaped face, dark eyes and generous lips. Emma grew to love Greville but he, in constant financial difficulties, chose to marry an heiress and Emma was diplomatically transferred to his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, with whom she with her mother agreed to travel to Naples.²³³ In 1791 on a visit to London, despite a certain resentment at having been manipulated and betrayed, she married her elderly lover, becoming Lady Emma Hamilton. The couple returned to Naples and in 1793 she met a naval chap called Horatio Nelson.

The *witless playboy*, Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh, remained single until in his seventy-second year he married his head-dairymaid, twenty-one-year old Mary Bullock. On his death he left the whole estate to his wife, who passed it on to her niece. The estate went out of the family!

30th November 1793, London, Court of King Bench.

The Times reported litigation, *Wallis v The Duke of Norfolk*, “Mr. Bearcroft appearing for Albany Wallis who was very old (eighty), eminent practitioner of the law.” The Duke was the landlord of property in Norfolk Street which served as Wallis’s offices. There had been a covenant in the lease stating that a back-building should be pulled down by the tenant within eighteen months. However, his Grace’s agent had the back-building pulled down before the expiry of the eighteen months technically depriving Wallis of the use of what was a derelict building – for which Wallis was now suing. He was awarded one shilling and the judge, Lord Kenyon, commented that *only God Almighty knew why this action had been bought*.

8, Norfolk Street, London 1798

Nineteen-year-old William Henry Ireland was bored with work as a conveyancing clerk in a solicitor’s office.²³⁴ Resentful that his father, Samuel a great lover of the Shakespeare’s Works, had never respected his ability, William, to gain his father’s attention, in 1794 started to cut blank ends from old legal documents and forge papers relating to *Shakespeare*.

²³² Near where Marble Arch is today.

²³³ Greville gave Emma up to his Uncle on condition Hamilton made him his heir.

²³⁴ The story was researched and written up by John Mair in 1938. Told in good faith on the information available, there were serious inconsistencies in the *Confessions* of William Ireland which was written *after* his father, his father’s housekeeper, and the solicitor involved, Albany Wallis, had died. Bernard Grebanier’s *The Great Shakespeare Forgery* gives an alternative account.

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“I cannot recollect upon what particular occasion, but I rather think I had been occupied in the perusal of the mortgage-deed formerly in the possession of David Garrick esq. which is to be found printed in Johnson and Steeven’s Shakespeare, when the idea first struck me of imitating the signature of the bard In consequence of this, I made a tracing of the facsimiles of Shakespeare’s signature, both to his will in the Commons and the deed before mentioned which are to be found in the aforesaid edition of Shakespeare’s Works. I had hastily noted down the heads of this deed and thus fortified I repaired to chambers Having cut off a piece of parchment from the end of an old rent-roll at chambers, I placed a deed before me of the period of James the First, and then proceeded to imitate the style of the penmanship making a lease between William Shakespeare & John Heminge with one Michael Fraser & Elizabeth his wife.” [Ireland’s Confessions 1805]

His father, a dealer in antiquities, accepted the forgeries as genuine. Encouraged by this success and his father’s new-found respect for him, William became more audacious and invented a provenance for the documents, the source being a chest belonging to a certain Mr. H.. Over time he produced a copy of *King Lear*, a manuscript of *Henry II* and a new play *Vortigern* which was performed at Drury Lane.²³⁵ The first night turned out to be a fiasco and its last.

Despite attestation by many important names that the new discoveries were genuine, several *Shakespeare* experts were uncomfortable. The most notable was the self-appointed authority, Edmund Malone, who recognised that William Ireland’s forged signature was different to that in the will. Under pressure, William Ireland admitted to the fraud; perversely his father still refused to believe his admission. Here is part of Edmund Malone’s testimony which damned William Ireland:

In the year 1766 Mr. Steevens, in my presence, traced with the utmost accuracy the three signatures affixed by the Poet to his Will. While two of these manifestly appeared to us Shakespere, we conceived that in the third there was a variation; and that in the second syllable an 'a' was found. Accordingly we have constantly so exhibited the Poet's name ever since that time.... I had no suspicion of our mistake till, about three years ago, I received a very sensible letter from an anonymous correspondent, who showed me very clearly that though there was a superfluous stroke when the Poet came to write the letter 'r' in his last signature, probably from a tremor of the hand, there was no 'a' discernible in that syllable. . .

Revolving this letter in my mind, it occurred to me that in the new facsimile of his name which I gave in 1790, my engraver had made a mistake in placing an 'a' over the name, which was there exhibited 'Shaksper' and that what was supposed to be

²³⁵ By 1793 Albany Wallis was a significant shareholder and a Trustee of the Drury Lane Theatre, as was David Garrick. His partner, Richard Troward, was solicitor to the trust for rebuilding the theatre, [Jan 1794].

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that letter was only a mark of abbreviation, with a turn or curl at the first part of it which gave it the appearance of a letter. I resolved therefore once more to examine the original before I published any future edition of his works; and (it being very material in the present inquiry) to take this opportunity of ascertaining my own error, if any error there was.

On the 10th March 1612-13, Shakespeare purchased from one Henry Walker a small estate in Blackfriars for one hundred and forty pounds, eighty of which he appears to have paid down; and he mortgaged the premises for the remainder. In the year 1768 the Mortgage Deed was found by Mr. Albany Wallis among the title deeds of the Rev. Fetherstonhaugh of Oxted in the County of Surrey and was presented by him to the late Mr. Garrick. From that deed the facsimile above mentioned was made. As I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with Mrs. Garrick, to whom I was indebted on that occasion, Lord Orford (since I began this Letter), very obligingly requested her to furnish me once more with the deed to which our Poet's autograph is affixed: but that lady, after a very careful search, was not able to find it, it having by some means or other been either mislaid or stolen from her. On the same day on which I received this account I called upon Mr. Wallis, with whom I am acquainted and to whom the deeds of Mr. Fetherstonhaugh, after having been a long time out of his hands, have been lately restored; ²³⁶ amongst them he luckily met with the counterpart of the original Deed of Bargain and sale made on the 10th of March 1612-13, which furnished me with our Poet's name and fully confirmed my conjecture; for there the mark of abbreviation appears at top nearly such as I expected I should find it in Mrs. Garrick's deed, and the Poet having had room to write an 'r,' though on the very edge of the label, his own orthography of his name is ascertained, beyond the possibility of a doubt, to have been SHAKESPERE.

Notwithstanding this authority, I shall still continue to write our Poet's name SHAKESPEARE, for reasons which I have assigned in his life. But whether in doing so I am right or wrong, it is manifest that he wrote it himself SHAKESPERE; and therefore if any original letter or other MS. of his shall ever be discovered, his name will appear in that form. The necessary consequence is that these papers, (Ireland's), in which a different orthography is almost uniformly found, cannot be but a forgery.

Some months earlier the father, Samuel Ireland, had drawn up a *Certificate of Belief* in the Discoveries:

²³⁶ Rev Utrick Fetherstonhaugh had died in 1789 and his brother, Matthew, preceded him in 1774; only Wallis was left to vouch as to the provenance.

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"We the undersigned having inspected the following deeds in the possession of Mr. Albany Wallis Esq of Norfolk Street viz.,

A conveyance dated 10 March 1612, executed to be from Henry Walker to William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson, and John Heminges of a House in Blackfriars, then or late being in the occupation of one William Ireland; signed William Shakespeare, Jo. Jackson, and Wm. Johnson: ²³⁷ and a Deed dated 10 February 1617, being a conveyance signed Jo. Jackson, Wm. Johnson, and John Heming of the same premises: ^{238 239}

Having also inspected the following papers in the possession of Mr. Samuel Ireland of Norfolk Street, viz:

A MS Play of Lear;
a Fragment of Hamlet;
a Play of Vortigern;
several Deeds witnessed William Shakespeare;
several Receipts and Notes of Disbursements of moneys on account of the Globe and Curtain Playhouses;
familiar letters signed William Shakespeare;
and other miscellaneous MSS.

And having compared the handwriting of the above Papers in Mr. Ireland's possessions with the signatures of Shakespeare and Hemings to the Deeds in Mr. Wallis's hands – as well as with the published Facsimiles of the Autograph of Shakespeare to his last will and testament, and to a Deed dated 11 March, 10 Jac. I, which came to the hands of Mr. Wallis about the year 1760 among the Title Deeds of the Rev. Mr. Fetherstonehaugh – and from the character and manner thereof. We declare our firm belief in the Authenticity of the Autograph of Shakespeare and Hemings in the hands of Mr. Ireland.

²³⁷ Chambers notes that this was enrolled (Close Roll, II Jac., p31) on (St George's Day!), 23rd April 1613. It was not signed by Hemming.

²³⁸ A most significant discovery; the 1617 deed would have been held by the family and travelled through time with the unsigned (by Shakespeare) copy of the 1612-3 deed of conveyance of the Blackfriars Gatehouse. It means that Wallis held both the signed and unsigned 1612-3 deeds, the signed mortgage document, and the 1617 transfer deed which would have been bundled together – yet he chose to hide these facts, only drip-feeding them into the public domain.

²³⁹ The date of the first wedding anniversary of Judith Shakespeare & Thomas Quinney.

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ISAAC HEARD, GARTER having also made a correct copy of the original will of William Shakespeare and attended to the taking of the Facsimiles of his signature thereto.

ALBANY WALLIS;

JOHN HEWLETT^T Translator of Old Latin records, Common Pleas Office;

FRANCIS TOWNSEND Windsor Herald

FRANCIS WEBB

ROBERT SHERSON M.D.

GEORGE FRED. BELT

MATH. WYATT

GILB. FRANKLYN

R. TROWARD

HIRAM POWELL

JOHN BYNG

JOSEPH SKINNER

R. VALPY

When William Ireland confessed all to Wallis, Wallis strangely would not give credence to the admission even though William Ireland had demonstrated that he even had the ability to forge a two-hundred-year-old wax seal. What is also surprising (or not surprising) is that Albany Wallis was Samuel Ireland's solicitor and they all lived in Norfolk Street in the Strand, the Irelands at No. 8 and Wallis at No. 20. The *Confessions* does, however, identify that Albany Wallis remained oddly close to William Ireland despite an age-difference of over fifty years. Malone collected up all of Ireland's known forgeries which he eventually donated to Oxford's Bodleian Library.

1798 London

The widow of the actor David Garrick, upset over £70 she thought owing to her from her husband's estate, complained of her husband's executor, Albany Wallis, "*Mr. Wallis' conscience will get one more load to carry with him to his grave.*" She did not like him. It appears he was robbing her of the Garrick estate.

18th August 1775; London

A year after stepping down from being MP for Anglesey, sixty-six-year-old widower, Lord Lieutenant Sir Nicholas Bayly Bt. (1709-1782) married his second wife, Anne Hunter (the new Lady Bayly), who during the same year gave birth to a son baptised Lewis.

When solicitor Albany Wallis died in 1802 he left his fortune, estimated at £70,000, to Lady Bayly for her son Lewis who, in gratitude, changed his name to Lewis Bayly-Wallis.

1799 Ilchester, Somerset

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

Lieut. Col. Lewis Bayly, aged 24, was elected one of two Members of Parliament for the small town of Ilchester. He did not stand in the following election of July 1802; his successor would be a William Hunter. MP for the adjacent constituency of Milborne Port was Sir Henry Bayly (Paget). ²⁴⁰

3rd Sep 1800; London

Albany Wallis died. In his will of 28th August he made a number of bequests one of which was to Thomas Baxter, his brother in law, of the *Town Grove* in the Parish of Knaresdale in Northumberland. He appears to have already settled property including a bequest of Peterwell House in Sussex to Lady Ann Bailey of Pall Mall, mother of his ward, Gen. Lewis Bayly Wallis, who are both beneficiaries and executors, together with Richard Troward, Wallis's partner. Mary Gordon of the Pallmall was left £500. Lewis Bayly changed his name to Lewis Bayly-Wallis.

1802 General Election; Ilchester, Somerset

The 1802 election of one of the two seats for Ilchester was declared void for bribery. Most of the householders had each been bribed £30 by Alexander Davison and his agent to vote against the proprietor, Sir William Manners. Davison and his agent were convicted to serve one year's imprisonment. The enraged Sir William had *all but 60 of the houses pulled down and erected a large workhouse to accommodate those whose disobedience had offended him*. These same houses had in 1784 been sold by John Harcourt (MP for Ilchester 1785-6 and 1790-6) to Richard Troward, attorney at law of Norfolk Street. Troward, a constitutional expert in electoral matters, sold then on to his partner Albany Wallis who gave them to Colonel Lewis Bayley from whom they were purchased by Sir William Manners.²⁴¹

21st May 1817 London

A Louisa Wallis was christened at Saint Mary Marylebone her parents being Major General Lewis Bayly-Wallis and Jane Jackson.

²⁴⁰ Were the Hunters brother and sister or father and daughter?

²⁴¹ Troward and Albany Wallis effectively controlled a Parliamentary seat.

1819 Paris

Fanny (Frances), the wife of Major General Bayley-Wallis, died in Paris.²⁴² She was the sister of the soldier General Robert Wilson who years later would become guardian to Bayley-Wallis's grandson through his bastard daughter, Louisa Wallis, who would marry one of Robert Wilson's children.

In January 1773 a Frances Wilson, sister of the soldier Robert Wilson, had married Lt. Col. Bosville Thorpe. Five days after the wedding the groom left on tour and on 18th August he fell in action at the port of Linselles. The English and the Dutch holding the port panicked and fled the French assault.

25th June 1844 Caracas, Venezuela

Advised by a doctor that his new born child was dying and in the absence of a Church of England minister, William Belford Hinton-Wilson (1804–58), Consul-General, baptised his son Robert Belford Wallis-Wilson.²⁴³ The mother was stated as the twenty-four year old Louise Wallis-Wilson born Brompton, London.²⁴⁴ Proxy godparents stood in for Gen. Sir Robert Thomas Wilson, Gen. Bayly-Wallis and Miss Jemima Mary Gwyne Wilson.

25th July 1844 Caracas, Venezuela

Over 300 people attended the funeral at the British Burial Ground in Caracas of Louise Wallis Wilson, the wife of William Belford Hinton Wilson. She had died the previous day of intestinal complications. Her one month old baby would survive.

1892 Funtington, Hampshire

R B (Robert Belford) Wallis Wilson²⁴⁵ was the nephew & chief mourner of his uncle, Admiral Provo William Parry Wallis who had died aged 101.

²⁴² The Irelands lived in Paris at the time and Mrs. Ireland was connected with Bayly-Wallis.

²⁴³ A former aide de camp to Simon Bolivar. Charles Darwin spoke well of him when he visited Caracas.

²⁴⁴ It appears that Louisa Wallis was twenty-seven, not twenty-four.

²⁴⁵ Too much of a coincidence! Provo Wallis, born 12th April 1791, was the only son of Provo Featherstone Wallis who was then in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

WILL SHAKE-SPEAR

Robert was born on 25th June 1844 in Caracas, Venezuela, his father being William Belford Hinton-Wilson and his mother Louisa Wallis-Wilson who died a month soon after his birth. It would appear that the baby was brought up by his aunt Jemima who was married to Admiral Wallis; his mother's father was Lewis Bayly Wallis, and his adopted father, whom he called uncle, was also a Wallis.

8th July 1916, Messrs. Christie's Sale, London; (The Times)

The chief interest at Messrs. Christie's of sale of pictures yesterday centred on the family portraits sent by B A Wallis Wilson.²⁴⁶ There can be little doubt that the Sir Joshua Reynolds' Portrait of a boy of the Wallis family in mauve, slashed dress and Vandycke collar and cuffs, sketching in a landscape, represents Albany Charles Wallis the son of David Garrick's friend and executor, Albany Wallis. He was a Westminster Scholar and was drowned in the Thames on 29th March 1776, at the age of 13, a year or two after the portrait was painted. Garrick erected a monument to the boy's memory in Westminster Abbey where is described as amantissi Patris unica spes.²⁴⁷ The portrait was purchased at 340 guineas by Messrs. Parwey & Paine, who also acquired at 310 guineas Hoppner's portrait of the boy's father, Albany Wallis, who in his turn with Edmund Burke defrayed the cost of the monument to Garrick in Westminster Abbey. The third Wallis portrait said to be Baillie Wallis was by William Parry ARA (1742-1791)²⁴⁸ a pupil of Sir Joshua Reynolds and this bought 420 guineas (Tooth).

A Provo Wallis born 1731-97; married a Martha Parry in 1758. [Was he related to Albany Wallis?]. His son Provo Featherstone Wallis was born in 1766 and died 18th March 1841. He married Elizabeth daughter of William Lawler. His son, Provo William Parry Wallis, was born in Nova Scotia on 12th April 1791 and a baptism is recorded in Hampshire, England the following year. He became an Admiral of the Fleet on 11 Dec 1877 and lived to the age of 101. In 1817 he married firstly Juliana [d of Archdeacon Roger Massey] and they had two daughters. He remarried on 21st July 1849 Jemima Mary Gwyne, daughter. of General Sir Robert Thomas Wilson, governor of Gibraltar. If the mother of Provo Wallis born 1731 was a Fetherston this may relate to a Heneage Fetherston baptised in 1693 at Kirkoswold, Co. Cumberland, who appears to have married in 1715 at Dartmouth, a naval port, and become a father of a Heneage at Gloucester before returning to Dartmouth.

²⁴⁶ Robert Belford Wallis Wilson was the nephew & chief mourner of his uncle, Admiral Provo William Parry Wallis who died in 1892. Lieutenant Belford A Wallis-Wilson of the Hampshire regiment was killed on 26th September 1917 during the third battle of Ypres; his body was never found. He was 42 and the eldest son of ten children born on the Hampshire-Sussex border. Wounded in 1916 at the battle of the Somme he had received the Military Cross.

²⁴⁷ The monument can be seen on-line.

²⁴⁸ William Parry was the son of the blind Welsh harpist John Parry (?1710-1782). There may be a connection with Provo Wallis (1731-1797) who married a Martha Parry.