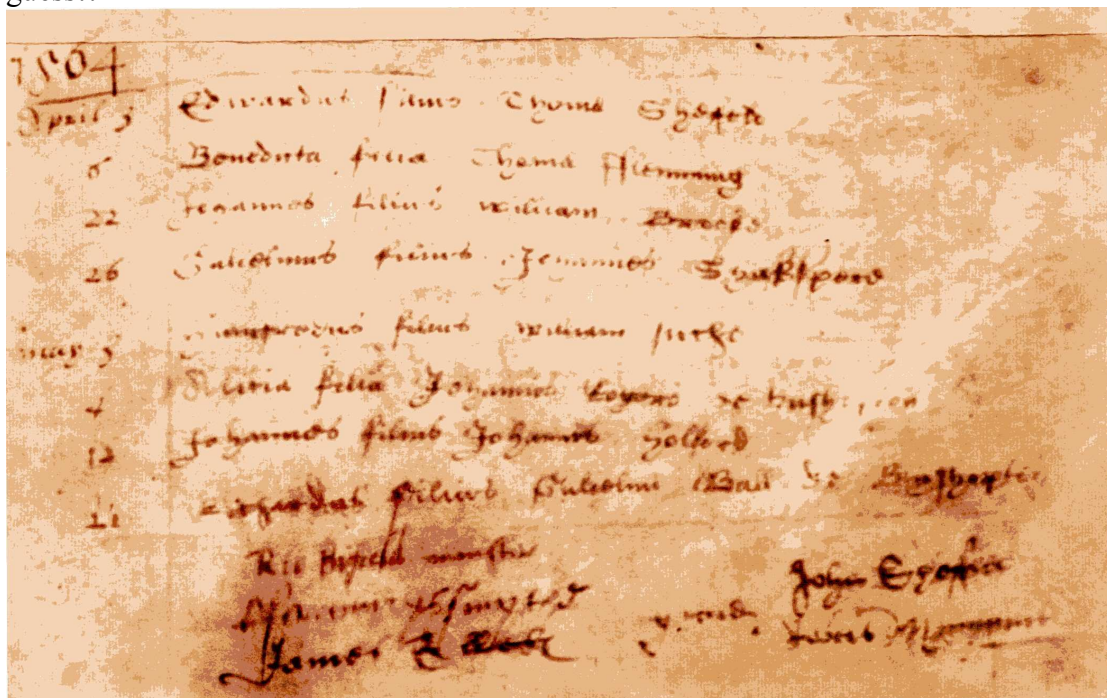


Chapter 2

A TALE OF TWO ANNE'S

If you have ever been to Stratford you will know that the house of Shakespeare's wife still exists. What you may not have been told is that this woman, Anne Hathaway, is our other mystery ghost writer in the works and his second wife. Indeed most people and writers believe that he only had one wife and she never helped him at all. Literature big wigs ignore documentation to the contrary, or make this proof, of another wife, fit Anne Hathaway. Not surprising when the evidence itself, of this other wife, is pretty slim and consists of one document with a date that is the date before his marriage to Hathaway. This previous wife was also called Anne.

This confusion comes from the state of historical records of births, marriages and deaths. However this shouldn't be an excuse to let the literature people off. I don't intend to either. For the rest of us, I'll set about explaining what they hide or fail to mention. Like the system that was used in William's time, hadn't been working long, plus the charges of the system and operator failure. The result! The vast majority of these records are a nightmare. They all resulted in the Bard's case in a ghastly mess! Point One. Nobody can tell you that for certain he was born on Saint George's day. Those that celebrate his birthday on that day are perpetuating a myth! Or a dam good guess!!



The person who wrote the christening in the Stratford register, Richard Bifield, the minister, added no baptisms in March, despite that in most months there were at least four! He thought that the year started between February 28 and April 3. Which it did! He was on the old system of dating, very similar to the year system that Mr Taxman uses in England, which incidentally, Mr Taxman won't give up, because of the loss of revenue that would happen. Our 16th Century vicar might have put April instead of

March! So he was either baptised on 26 April 1564 or the 26 of March!¹ Err no! Maybe!! I can tell you that Bifield was the one who put the entry in, because his and other church officials placed their names on the bottom of this page. One major problem now occurs here! For this vicar did not take up his post till 1597. Nor did he baptise the infant Shakespeare. Who did, plus why didn't that vicar put the text in the book? Well John Bretchgirdle was the vicar in 1564, plus the year/month before and he did write it in the parish register. Just not the one you see today. Basically the Archbishop of Canterbury is responsible for all this confusion, accepting the year. We will also see that this same man, when he was a humble bishop, has foxed university people for ages. Somebody had been messing around with the pages of the later register anyway, for three letters 'x' have been added to the end of the Shakespeare's entry. These may have been added at a much later date, as the ink is thick and heavy, compared to all the entries, who are clearly in the same hand as Richard's signing his name and position. This chaos is during the bard's life! So to expect anyone to trace people hundreds of years later is quite an achievement. Yet historians found William Shakespeare, in record books belonging to Worcester. Point Two. They appear to show that maybe at Stratford, he married Anne Hathaway and at Worcester, Ann Whateley² perhaps both at Worcester, to some historians, who haven't ruled out Shakespeare having two wives.

The dates of these two events have linked the two Anne's together to most experts, because one is the 27 November 1582 (Whateley) and the other 28 November 1582 (Hathaway). It would be easy to see that these entries are the same woman, if it wasn't for a different surname and that is the crux of the matter. In addition the two names of Shakespeare are also spelt varyingly; leading people to think these are not the same man. Other professional historians, who thought it was the same man, know that clerks who made these entries out, made mistakes and spelled the same person's name differently. This explains why there are so many different spellings of the name Smith. Indeed historians have also found 57 different spellings of Shakespeare.³ Okay, but in this case the clerk did not! Before I make clear why I know that is the case and is the same man, it is necessary to look at how church records began. These came in very simply enough at the start, however got more complicated as changes were made to them for various reasons. We kick off with Elizabeth's father Henry VIII and his marriage to her mother Anne Bolyn. As well known, Henry broke away from the Roman Church and Pope, by marrying her. This left him in charge of the church. Now whether he wanted to do this or not, does not concern us, but needless to say he passed authority to another person, one Thomas Cromwell. In the year of 1538, he issued the following instruction to the church. Namely that each one had to keep a Book or Register and record each wedding, christening and burial and include where all the names of those who undertook each ceremony.⁴ So this was quite a simple thing to do and would give a permanent record for future generations, this was the intention, for a chest with two locks was to be provided for the book. Some parishes were using books already to do this; thus Cromwell picked up on this practice and made it law. This strange system even happens today in the political world! This would have

¹ The day after New Year's Day, this was the 25th March.

² The spellings of the names have been modernized, but the name Agnes could also be used for Anne and were interchangeable. See also Eccles P63. Also bear in mind that the surname could change. For instance Whiteley, Whitelay, even Wheatley, could all pass for the same name.

³ Michell P.14

⁴ Southerden Burn P17

furnished a rich wealth of family history (it does to some extent) where it not for human beings. The first mistake was by Cromwell himself, for the instructions stated that these entries had to be written down each Sunday! Great, the clergy had to remember all what they had done all week, on the busiest day of the week for them! Cromwell knew this might be an excuse and fined them 3 shillings and 4 pence for each missed entry. Though he avoided the problem of collecting them money himself, by saying it could go to the repair of the church.⁵ How it was to be checked was left to the Bishops and how they knew of a few entries missing is anyone's guess! They did check though and if some church records are anything to go by, the Parish would soon have been able to build a new church! Today however you'll find that most church registers did not start till Elizabeth was on the throne in 1558. Nevertheless the instructions had changed only, since 1538, in the form of the fine going to the Poor Box as well as church repairs.⁶ Now most people have assumed that putting entries in a register is quite a simple thing to do. This belief is arrived at from a decent education for everybody. The trouble is that there was far from a decent education system in Shakespeare's day that would have provided this simple task. Of course this was never going to be an easy task in some parishes anyway, with the religious problems, still it wasn't merely that. All denominations had trouble and did not make out the registers properly. Undeniably it shows! They even knew it!! For in 1562 even the House of Commons said that a great deal of abuse and neglect in the system could be found. Naturally they decided to fix the problems, which of course made it even worse! As most politicians now, seem to think that introducing payments solves problems, their Elizabethan counterparts behaved no different and of course these were based on the ability to pay. So a penny was charged, with the curious charge of two pennies for a man burying his wife! Not only that you were charged for looking through the books and another charge if you wanted a copy. Sometime during Shakespeare's life the Archbishop of Canterbury also told the clergy to transfer the entries to parchment books, for those who had been using paper registry books.

The Stratford baptism register was paper; this meant that it had to be copied to parchment, in line with the instruction, from church head office.⁷ The vicar did this around 1600, simply because that date is on its front cover. Faults occurred, despite the churchwardens, who were supposed to check the vicar's script. Few however would have told the minister he had made a mistake, most would have said let's get on with it and signed each page, as instructed by the Archbishop. Needless to say this haphazard way of doing things applied to the Stratford book, as well as elsewhere, also the abuse continued. More natural problems with fire or plague and later the Civil Wars put an end to many registers. For after all, we are not just talking about something that was written 10 years ago, we are talking 300 years plus of abuse to some books! The Acts say the register should have all 3 types of ceremony in them. In practice, these tended to start at different times, baptisms being more recorded and burials the least. So working out the population and so on, is a major problem.⁸

⁵ Taxes and the like often took years to collect.

⁶ Southerden Burn P18

⁷ Ironically this transfer to parchment might have saved these entries, because paper was less likely to last.

⁸ You would have the same sorts of problems working with just local newspapers today. Take the population of the City of Sheffield currently, you could assume was 90% over 65s, this being due to the fact that most people put in death announcements, rather than births, in the Sheffield *Star* paper.

Recent evidence also suggest that some people then, saw these registers as the removal of civil liberties, and would not co-operate with them, especially those still under Catholic ways of thinking. These are typical events to registers and there contents: Common names of the Parish omitted, boys names for girls and vice verse, bills and other writing entered, registers sold, cut up for other uses. Let's not forget the church mouse, rats, and leaky roofs or flooding from the Avon in Stratford's case. Generally the clergy's attitude to the registering process left a lot to be desired. The clerks regarded them solely for the money they got for extracts; sometimes they'd rip out the entry! Often they would do them when they had the time or not at all, with gaps of up to 80 years! Long gaps (such as the previous) were explained by the vicar being old, or in one 'A long vacation'.⁹ Even when entered the entries were sometimes useless to anyone, apart from telling that one of the three events had taken place. Baptisms for example would only say "A boy / girl" burials "a man / woman" and even marriages had no names at times, just a date!

At the other end of the scale the vicar (if you are lucky doing family research) would sometimes enter loads of other information, such as astrological data, the weather, and pass social comments, even quite rude remarks. If you don't believe me here is a real entry of marriage from a register: "John Housden widower, a gape-mouthed lazy fellow and Hannah Matthews, hot-apon't old toothless wriggling hag."¹⁰

Of course you can now see that to take any entry at face value in a parish register is asking for trouble. Yet with the registers which contain Shakespeare's two wives, historians have leapt in at the deep end getting them into even deeper trouble. This time the reason is that the two entries are different, and quite simply this was often overlooked when comparing them.

To be or not to be my first wife

Our ancestors knew future generations would read the registers and wanted names recorded for prosperity. This being a reason (of many) that they were introduced. They also knew that one book could be destroyed, lost, or stolen. So they authorised copies to be made, which became known as Bishops Transcripts. There was no copying technology then, apart from a person with a pen. Once again the flaws of this system don't need to be restated. However these transcripts are far from complete in Worcester, with just over half the total parishes returning them.¹¹ To make matters worse for the Shakespearian historians the transcripts needed only to be sent once a year to the Diocese in Worcester and that's after they were officially introduced. It looks to me that it is a transcript that historians have got their hands on and assumed that it is a Stratford or Worcester true register, or even one in a proper register. Anne Hathaway's marriage to William could be an actual entry done at, or around the 28th of November depending when the entry was placed in the book.... Well sort of! More on this later, however the entry on the 27th is not and is a record of a marriage licence already being issued. We can say for certain that this licence was not issued on the 27th. Some writers believe that William was married at Worcester on one of these dates. They once again have not read the Latin text of the 27th day entry. It's quite clear you need the previous entries in the book before this begins to sort out where William married Anne Whateley, after reading the Latin text.

⁹ Southerden Burn PP40-49.

¹⁰ Southerden Burn P157.

¹¹ Southerden Burn PP199-200.

This is what I think it says translated (properly) into English: "Likewise / Also to the same place (and) day, similar (it) became known (a) license between William Shakespeare and Anna Whateley of Temple Grafton".¹²



What this shows is the clerk at Worcester copying into the register records passed to him, collected from other parishes and the 27th day may have been when he wrote the entries down. Clearly this is a Transcript and these records, including Wills' marriage to Whateley, could have been originally recorded long before the date we see today. The key words are, I think, 'became known' (emanavit).¹³ These certainly point to the fact the license had been issued. It would appear that Transcripts had not yet started in this part of England at this time, if you follow official sources. So this may have been good practice at that time. There's nothing to stop this licence being a couple of years old when it went into the book. The place where it was

issued would be in the previous entries if these exist, however other historians were not interested in them and they need checking to find the exact place. It's not terribly important to confirming that Will did marry Whateley, though they probably married at Temple Grafton, because the Vicar John Frith could be fooled into the marriage. The reason for this is that Will was only 18 in 1582 and 17 (if the marriage was the year before). Pretty young, but he could have been 14! Young marriages were not illegal. Frith had a number of complaints from the church hierarchy about him and if they knew that, then the locals would have cottoned to his ways. The boss of Frith was the Bishop of Worcester, John Whitgift (whose records contain Will's marriages) and



who historian Nicholas Fogg says 'had a strict ecclesiastical regime'.¹⁴ This would of course explain the good practice of keeping Transcripts, before legally needing to do so. You can add to this, with the benefit of hindsight, the knowledge that Whitgift became the Archbishop of Canterbury; this promotion comes the following year! The same man who gives prayers to the dying Queen. I'm sure you don't get to be Archbishop keeping lousy records or turning a blind eye to bad vicars. The Queen also later considered his judgement more important than William Cecil's. More to the point we know

later on he hates Catholics and you can bet he didn't like them as a bishop. Apparently even as a student he considered that the pope was the Antichrist, so he sent his officers to see Frith in 1580, for precisely these reasons. In that Frith (described as old and unsound in religion) was performing illegal marriages.¹⁵ Frith gave his bond, but he didn't keep it if he performed Will's marriage later, but Frith was also a Catholic, which fits in with William's father religion and why the bishop is getting his records. Our future Canterbury man seems to have his hands full with many of the Warwickshire clergy. Rooting out the old religion might have caused him to chase

¹² The original Latin can be seen in Chambers & Williams P140.

¹³ The word has numerous meanings, including 'news' yet I think this fits the context better.

¹⁴ Fogg P127.

¹⁵ Eccles P66.

these clergy, trying to get hold of records. Temple Grafton by the way is about 4 miles from Stratford and has (needless to say) not one Whateley recorded. Yet we do not need to look far for the name, because in the Street where Shakespeare was born, was George Whateley a native of Henley in Arden, and bailiff when he was born.¹⁶ He too was Catholic, keeping a woollen-drapeer's shop not far from the birthplace of Will and John Shakespeare also dealt in wool. There is no proof that George had a daughter named Anne and not a soul has found any connection between Anne and George. This does not mean that she wasn't related to George, if she was however, it would fit with a theory of a slightly dubious wedding between the two of them. Several writers have commented on the use by William in his plays of arranged marriages. Speculating that his marriage to Anne Hathaway was one of these 'arranged' by Will's father (John) and Richard Hathaway, the historians made an error, forgetting the circumstances of that wedding. It would fit better with Anne Whateley though. Because if she was a relation to George, the consent factor doesn't apply and their were strong links, in that the family's were Catholic and connected with wool, plus a possible link with the place Arden, Shakespeare's mothers' maiden name. This also means that the spellings in the records could be ignored. But why did Shakespeare marry this woman and go along with the Catholic marriage when he was more inclined to the opposite faith? There's only one explanation - he loved her!

Anne Hathaway would have known both Will and George, if not Anne Whateley as well, although she lived just outside Stratford at Shottery, her father was a prominent man of the town as was Will's. Incidentally, Temple Grafton is only 2 or 3 miles further down the road from Shottery and William or Anne could easily pass the Hathaway's house on the way to and from Stratford. This means that William defiantly did not marry two women at the same time. This leads us on to what happened to Anne Whateley after the marriage to William. The only thing we can safely assume is she died before the 28th November 1582. We can completely rule out divorce as there would have been a lot of documents in that and there is nothing about her. We may have a different burial entry. Yet no one can tell if it is just entered as 'wife' or 'a woman'. Although the possibility is strong that no records of burial were kept, there might not have been a body to bury. Fires were very common then and drowning can't be rule out with the Avon chief candidate. She could have been murdered, with the body never found and no clues to what happened! Other causes of death, more common then, were disease - the dreaded plague - were bodies just went in the ground with no records of whom died, or childbirth. It may well be referred to however in a Shakespeare play, as a tragic death would be good source material for any writer looking for ideas, as you will see in later chapters. Yet it must have been a great shock for the man, maybe he clamed up tight about it. The only Anne Shakespeare we know was buried at around 1582 is one of his sisters, yet she is dated to April 1579. Which makes it that William was married at 15, if by some chance she is listed as just Anne Shakespeare and not as the daughter of John? This would mean historians are wrong again about his sister dying at eight years of age. Mind you they were not looking for Anne Shakespeare dying in 1579, when they believed he married her in 1582. At the time of writing this, I did check to see if she is listed as the daughter of John. So far I have found that the bells were paid to be rung for her. This was considered special or a status symbol. The tragic death of a young wife would be special of course, but so would the young daughter of the former mayor. The records

¹⁶ Eccles P41.

do indeed suggest that she was his daughter. In spite of everything that's written, that still doesn't mean that she is the young child. All we have is the register entry; we don't know what happened in the church that day. Technically speaking when Ann Whateley did marry John's son, she would have become his daughter anyway. As I believe this marriage was supported by the Shakespeare family, John would have had no problems calling her his daughter.¹⁷ Nevertheless the vicar of Stratford might well have had a problem with Ann being William's wife. After all he didn't perform the wedding, in his opinion, who was to say they were married in the first place? The other thing that could suggest the vicars' reluctance to bury her as William's wife was the absence of the husband. A very quick death after the marriage would almost certainly see William in a deep shock. Unable to attend her funeral, meanwhile at that the vicar starts saying he can't bury her. In these circumstances John had little option but to agree to say she could be buried as 'his' daughter.

This might be stretching the truth for some historians, but who's to say the historical records might mean exactly this scenario? Of course there is still the problem of what therefore happened to his sister Anne, yet historians were not looking for a sister called Anne marrying later. So she might well have done, for all we know. So you can see there could well have been a wife for William Shakespeare called Anne Whateley before Anne Hathaway!

Ironically the man that is responsible for keeping these records and confusing future historians hardly gets a mention in most biographies of Shakespeare. John Whitgift later as Archbishop was probably responsible for the order to send transcripts to Bishops, something he developed while as bishop. Then, as I have said before, Academics can be confused by their own members and top ones too. For Whitgift was Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge! Worse still Shakespeare and Whitgift would have disliked one-another. Whitgift, had burnt many plays as Archbishop and hated the theatre. He would have not liked the idea that he would play a part in keeping the records of the bard alive for future generations.

Not so sweet Ophelia

There happens to be another woman who Shakespeare took an interest in, maybe sufficient enough to incorporate her in one of his plays. I mentioned drowning in the Avon, a short while ago, as it turns out a female did drown there in 1580. It's not his wife as the girl who drowns is called Katherine. Her family seem to have gone to great lengths to make sure she is given a Christian burial, in the churchyard, which they are granted. The play that our drowning victim appears in is *Hamlet*. But if William is right then she would not have got the service she got. Most historians have seen the connection with Katherine's death and the play, but nobody has grasped the reality of the story. Hamlet of course spurned Ophelia in the play, who then commits suicide by drowning herself. The parallel with Katherine is clear, however not William spurning her, probably because nobody sees that like Hamlet, Shakespeare himself is grief stricken. Certainly if Ann died in 1579, William would reject this girl's advances to him, on the grounds of being in mourning. Again is this taking the play to literally? I don't think so, because Shakespeare clearly believed that Katherine drowned herself after he rejected her. There's no-doubt in my mind that he thought that, for why would

¹⁷ In these times there was no census, so we can't check if she was living with them before the marriage. She could have been taken in by the family anyway and become a daughter, in all but name?

he name the play after her? For Katherine is Katherine Hamlet!

Guilt was therefore his motive to write about her, as well as a big ego! No-wonder he is interested in tragedy; it surrounds him from an early age, with that being so, perhaps it was clouding his judgement on the real cause of Katherine's suicide?

I think we can draw a conclusion about the young William here, one that would come as quite a shock even to Shakespeare. That being that the females where he lived considered him to be really 'HOT'! He must have had the sex appeal of pop stars and actors. Well he did become an actor! Yet at this stage in his life he wasn't popular enough to attract that kind of female attention. He seems to have had sex appeal anyway. Was it attracting rivalry among the local women? This can lead to them doing terrible things. We're back to guilt again, this time Katherine's. What if she and Shakespeare's first wife had words together? Strong heated words that nobody else, not even William, knew about? Katherine may have been resentful of Ann marrying him, extremely jealous, maybe Will dumped Katherine for Ann! Emotions like these, can lead to violent actions. So did Katherine Hamlet murder Ann Shakespeare? If she did, it brought her no closer to the man she loved. Less than a year later, the guilt and failure of her actions, presumably hints at why she ends up floating (like Ophelia) in the Avon.

The Gunshot Wedding or Anne 2?

Another woman with an eye on William thus gets her chance later on. Her we find in the other document, showing Will's second wife. As the baptism register at Stratford shows that Anne Shakespeare gave birth to a child less than nine months after than this document's date, it's quite easy to see that a pressing reason for William and Anne to get married had occurred. The formalities of asking the banns three times had to be dropped to once and other assurances had to be given. Also the banns could not be asked after the 2nd of December and if the marriage were not solemnised, William would get into a load of trouble! However I do not think that the reason for these conditions was that Anne was with child already. I think it was to do with Will's age and the Bishop of Worcester strict regime. Undoubtedly this document is the result of the Bishop being told by a credible member of the clergy of the intention of Will and Anne to marry, or requesting William to get a licence first. It's plausible in Stratford the Vicar was concerned at solemnising a marriage of an under aged person, whereas the Vicar of Temple Grafton was not.¹⁸ Indeed this marriage if it did take place at Stratford was done in the Protestant way for this vicar was very much of that faith. This document does make it clear that the Bishop of Worcester was not going to be responsible, if someone found out that the marriage was illegal through some just cause or impediment. Hardly surprising for a Bishop with a mind to the future, as already stated William was to be held answerable in that case, this points to him and his age as being the cause again.¹⁹ There is no evidence to suggest that the marriage took place at Stratford and is not in its register. Stratford's Register does contain some silly entries with men getting married to each other.²⁰ The Will is gay lobby would have had a field day, if Will and been written into the register like that!

¹⁸ Frith may have died, or refused to marry him again, as the bride or groom where not part of his parish. Then again Shakespeare might have wanted the Protestant wedding as indications suggest Anne was of that faith.

¹⁹ There is no evidence to suggest that William viewed any of these records, nor any of the church records about him. Or even went in the church at Worcester.

²⁰ Eccles P65.

So with his first wife Anne Whateley dead, William began an affair or continued one, with Anne Hathaway the consequence of which lead to her becoming pregnant. On the other hand Anne could have consoled the young heartbroken Will, being close to him for sometime and without doubt in love. This ended as previously. Many writers don't think that William got on well with his wife; this appears to be based on the will of Shakespeare. This says that William leaves only his "second best bed" to his wife. Yet when compared with other wills as F.G. Emmison did, we find that this was a common term not referring to quality often, but age. He even found entries referring to "worst bed," commentating on what the William writers would have made of that!²¹ Having said that, things between a couple will and do change over the years.

Other writers/professionals have assumed that when William went to London, his wife stayed at home in Stratford. Yet we have no evidence of this. True there are children, but once William had found decent accommodation for them, what was stopping her going to that property. They didn't have any property in Stratford,²² although there are lots of relations there.

When you think about it, the likely outcome of Anne turning up in London unannounced, perhaps because he had not kept to his word to Anne on finding a place for them all, is a strong probability. She may have even heard that he did have a place for them to all stay and had not bothered to tell her. If Anne did just turn up, it would have put an end to his meetings with the Queen and maybe how Elizabeth found out!

As William and Nicholas Hilliard the painter HAD met one other, as Nicholas paints William numerous times, and as Nicholas knew of his association with the Queen, he must by definition have been a friend to Will. When his wife appears on the scene also, he must have kept his mouth shut, for both the Queen's sake and his friend's sake. Even if Nicholas didn't like the Queen and the evidence is the reverse, I must say, then he would not liked to have lost her patronage of his art. So I think he met Anne and at some point painted her. Now the problem is he often does not put the name on his miniatures. So there is no picture with Anne Shakespeare on it. The only way we can tell who Anne might be is by general observations of married couples in general. Now this is not a scientific method and may be less than 50% accurate, but as there are no other options available to us! It's worth giving it a go. All right, the first most obvious facts on married couples is that they tend to have the same level of attractiveness. In other-words if one is ugly it's not very likely that other will be beautiful. It does happen, and that's why I said this method is far from perfect. Secondly, the partners' face may have similar features or even look like the other partner. Indeed couples often have and look for familiar things, which helps them bond together.

Withal this information, I tried to track down her comparing the William - Man clasping hand - picture with any undated miniatures of unknown women. Only one matched, with any degree of certainty and yet as she was older by eight years, this one does not really look like she is in her thirties and the dress is quite elaborate. However looking rich was what it was about then, not how much money you had. Not paying the tailor or dressmaker was in fashion.²³ Her age does bother me though, until I remembered that William was interested in older women who looked younger, as with

²¹ F. G. Emmison, Elizabethan Life pub, by Essex County Council.

²² Eccles P.70.

²³ Ashelford P.77.

the Queen.²⁴ So I began to put two and two together and came up with the conclusion that Anne also looked younger than she really was! So I will stick my neck out again and say that this miniature is Anne Shakespeare!!



Further evidence can be found in the picture (to the left) of Mrs Mary Barker, her face looks like our mystery woman. Mary's picture is still at her home where she lived in the 19th Century, being a descendent of the Hathaways, her home being the same house as Shakespeare's wife.

²⁴ It may have been the Queen who got William interested in older women!

Charlotte's web of deceit

Yet our tale of two wives doesn't stop there! For we have to add a third wife!!
Worst still he was still married to his second wife!!!

I found this third wife in a book on Shakespeare's descendents by Charlotte Carmichael Stopes (1841–1929), an extraordinary woman herself, but she did not pick up on the story itself. Charlotte managed to get the kind of education that only males were allowed at that time, achieving first class honours in a wide range of subjects. For some reason she became fascinated with Shakespeare and went to great lengths to prove the Stratford man wrote the plays, even in her first book on him *The Bacon/Shakespeare Question*, published in 1888. However it is the second book about William, that we find our hero is not such a hero as many think. For in *Shakespeare's Family* published in 1901, Charlotte tracked down many records relating to all the Shakespeares in England. Her preface thanks the many vicars for her being allowed to see the registers. So it's very clear she did a good job of tracking down the family. Now we know there were some other William Shakespeares around at that time, so Charlotte assumes this one to be another William and not the writer of the plays. So on page 122 she just writes the entry she found in the parish register of Hatton in Warwickshire, with no reference to it being the playwrite. However there's a strong possibility that it was! Before we explore this, let's see what she put in her book: "A William Shakespeare, of Hatton, married Barbara Stiffe in 1589". So that's just seven years after his second wife's marriage. Several factors pinpoint to the Hatton man being the same, the first is the location of Hatton to Stratford. In fact they are just 8 miles apart! Also Hatton is very close to the Earl of Leicester home Kenilworth, which will in a later chapter play a part in the Shakespeare story. So what are the chances of two William Shakespeares living 8 miles apart? However Charlotte adds more information which narrows the field down, in fact way down! She continues with the same sentence as before: "styled "gent." At baptism of his daughter *Susannah*, 1596" (her italics on *Susannah*). Wow! Clues by the score there. First the cheek of naming the daughter after the one he's got with another wife! And of course "gent". By 1596 the poet had got his coat of arms, so could call himself "gent". But not in 1589, so Barbara doesn't marry William Shakespeare Gent in 1589, just the plain ordinary type! Of course there could be a coat of arms for this other William, but it's not come out of the woodwork by the researches of the Bard. So I doubt there is one, for our Hatton guy. The conclusion thus is that it's the Bard that married Barbara, for he was the only William Shakespeare allowed to call himself Gent!

Charlotte tracked down the supposedly Hatton man further as his loins bore more fruit! We find that *Susannah* was born on the 14 March 1596, only to be buried a year later, when she was baptised probably at the same time. Another daughter is registered as being baptised on the 23 July 1598. This time called Katherine, presumably she lived to adulthood. But the story comes to a stop until February 1610 when we learn that Barbara dies and is buried. What of is not known. However Charlotte makes no mention of the registration of Barbara's husband's death. Which I find very odd indeed, as she has found so many Shakespeares. Yet again there wouldn't be if our Stratford man and Hatton one are the same!

EXTRA IMAGES

Text © Graham Appleyard 2008 Not pictures.



Pictures above William Shakespeare painted 1588 holding the Queen's hand.
Below Elizabeth and Dudley dance 5 years before he's still wearing the hat and
Marlowe can be seen above him. Philip Sidney can be seen in the fireplace.