

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 9 November 1594 in which Oxford requests Lord Burghley to have his Remembrancer set down in writing his reasons for objecting to reviving the law under which the Queen and Lord Great Chamberlain received fees for homage when tenants were admitted to their lands.

In 2010 Christopher Paul discovered a description of this hitherto-unnoticed letter in *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Vol. III, 1808, p. 484, where it is described as follows:

117. Edward E. of Oxford to the Lord Treasurer, for the reviving of a Law for the Queen's Tenants to do Homage for their Lands, the Neglect whereof is only for the Gain of a private Office, to the hindrance of her Majesty's Service, & the disinheritance of himself of both Service & Fees belonging to his Office as Lord High Chamberlain, 9 Nov. 1594.

For an earlier letter dated 7 July 1594 in which Oxford raised this issue with Lord Burghley, stating that both he and the Queen had been 'greatly hindered' by abuses in his office of Lord Great Chamberlain, see BL Lansdowne 76/74, ff. 168-9.

For a full discussion of Oxford's office of Lord Great Chamberlain, see Paul, Christopher, 'The 17th Earl of Oxford's "Office" Illuminated, *Brief Chronicles*, Vol. II (2010), pp. 171-211. The modern spelling transcript below has been prepared from the original spelling transcript on pp. 176-7, *supra*.

Christopher Paul identified 'Master Osborne' in the letter below as Sir John Osborne (1551-1628), son of Peter Osborne (1521-1592), 'the second of four generations of Osbornes to hold the office of Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, whose chief function was to take final charge of all audited accounts, or, put another way, the review and pursuit of outstanding sums owed to the crown'. See p. 178, *supra*.

My very good Lord, where I was a suitor to your Lordship for putting in execution of a law (for some few years past neglected), which is that her Majesty's tenants should do their homage for their lands holden of her Highness as to her Majesty's ancestors hath been accustomed and as the law requireth, and that homage should not be respited forever as now it is (which is a thing directly both against the life and meaning of the law) for the only gain of a private office to the hindrance of her Majesty's service and the disinheritance of myself of both service and fees belonging to mine office, of which my suit your Lordship was pleased to take honourable consideration, but forasmuch as Master Osborne, your Lordship's Remembrancer, will be the only man, as I understand, that will object against it, I beseech your Lordship that you will be pleased to require him to set down in writing such causes as he allegeth why the said homages should not be done, that I may thereupon reply & draw the cause to a short issue for a hearing before your Lordship, wherein I will move for nothing but that the law and justice of the land

requireth and as meet for her Majesty's good service and preservation of her inheritance.
This 9th of November, Anno 1594.

Endorsed: The Earl of Oxford to the Lord Treasurer [~~CROSSED OUT~~: against respite of
homage] for the reviving of a law for the Queen's tenants to do homage for the lands
holden of her wherein his both service & fees consisted as Lord High Chamberlain