
SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 2 September 1573 to Lord Burghley from his servant, Bernard Dewhurst (1533–1596), concerning arrangements for Oxford's financial affairs during a planned trip to the continent. The plans fell through, however, and it was not until early February 1575 that Oxford left England.

As the letter indicates, Dewhurst was in London, while Lord Burghley was presumably traveling with the court on the Queen's progress through Kent.

The letter indicates that certain articles had been proposed by Lord Burghley, to which Oxford had agreed (for the articles, see CP 159/113), and Justice John Southcote (1510/11-1585), Sir William Cordell (1522-1581), Master of the Rolls, and Justice William Ayloffe (c.1535-1584) had apparently been requested to assist with the preparation of the necessary documents in conjunction with Oxford's steward, Thomas Gent (c.1530-1593), and Oxford's legal counsel.

It appears from the letter that although Oxford's marriage to Anne Cecil had taken place two years earlier, on 16 December 1571, the lands comprising her jointure of approximately £700 had not yet been completely finalized, and Lord Burghley still owed the £3000 which was to be paid to Oxford as her marriage portion. It also appears from the letter that Lord Burghley had transferred to Oxford his manor of Combe Neville at Kingston Upon Thames in payment of the marriage portion. However the letter indicates that Oxford's preference was to have £3000 as Anne Cecil's marriage portion, and to regrant the manor to Lord Burghley, which must have taken place since Lord Burghley granted the manor of Combe Neville some years later to Sir Thomas Vincent.

Throughout the letter Lady Burghley is referred to as 'my Lady'. Also mentioned in the letter are Oxford sister, Lady Mary de Vere; Oxford's friend at the time, and later nemesis, Charles Arundel; Oxford's friend, Thomas Radcliffe (1526/7–1583), 3rd Earl of Sussex, Lord Chamberlain of the Household; Oxford's first cousin, John (d.1581), 2nd Lord Darcy of Chiche, co-guarantor of Oxford's debt to the Court of Wards; Dr. Edward Atslowe (d.1594), who had married Oxford's kinswoman, Frances Wingfield (d.1605); Oxford's servant, Roger Baynes (1546-1623); and Oxford's former servant, William Faunt (for whom see TNA SP 12/91/36).

The letter makes clear the degree to which Oxford's every movement was spied upon by all concerned, and reported in detail to Lord Burghley.

It may please your Lordship, on Friday at night after I had been with Mr Killigrew to send letters unto your Lordship, at my coming to Cecil House I found my Lady there, who had been at the Savoy to see my Lord of Oxford and my Lady Mary. My Lady went the next day, being Saturday in the afternoon, to Theobalds. My Lord of Oxford promised my Lady to follow her the same night, and so he did, but it was almost 7 of the clock before he set forward, so that it was bedtime before he came to Theobalds.

The next day, Sunday, at dinner, he received my Lord Chamberlain's letters for his coming to the court, and came from thence to London that night. The same afternoon I, being in London, received letters from your Lordship directed to my Lady, and immediately I made me ready to go to Theobalds with the same, and as I was going on the backside towards the stable to take my horse, I met my Lord of Oxford coming in, and said to me my Lady was coming after. I went forward & met my Lady at Newington. My Lord of Oxford, before he came from Theobalds, gave order that my Lady of Oxford should go with him to the court, and therefore she came with my Lady to London. That night my Lord lay at Cecil House. He dined there also on Monday, but did not lie there that night.

Upon Monday at night, Justice Southcote came to London, unto whom I showed your memor [=memorial?]. The Master of the Rolls came not home that night. The next morning I waited for his coming to the town until it was noon. After dinner, seeing he came not, Mr Justice Southcote thought good to go to my Lord to know his pleasure because one of my Lord of Oxford's own men went for him into the country, and in going toward the Savoy by the way he met Mr Gent, who told him my Lord was not within, but his Lordship had sent him unto him to confer with him for my Lord's causes, who showed Mr Justice certain articles that my Lord was determined upon, which he told Mr Justice in secret was Dr Atslowe's device. They were together an hour and more at Sergeants' Inn, all which time I waited afar off, both for the Master of the Rolls' coming home, and for Mr Gent's departing from Mr Justice.

After Mr Gent's departing, I went to Mr Justice, who told me the substance of all their talk. The articles which he showed was that £700 was appointed for my Lady's jointure, £300 per annum for her finding during his absence, £1000 per annum for my Lord's charges, £100 per annum for my Lady Mary, & 2000 marks for her marriage, the rest of his revenue to go to the performance of his father's will and payment of my Lord's debts.

Mr Gent also told him that my Lord meant that your Lordship should have th' oversight of all things in his absence, and that my Lord Darcy should be joined with your Lordship, and that Mr Gent and some others should have commission for th' execution of those things under your Lordships. Mr Justice said to Mr Gent that seeing he was come so far out of the country, and for those matters only, he would gladly see my Lord his self if it were his Lordship's pleasure. Mr Gent thought my Lord would not be willing so to do, but he would send him word of my Lord's pleasure therein, whereupon Mr Justice tarrying to hear of, in the meantime the Master of the Rolls came home, being Tuesday at night, & then Mr Justice went unto him, and immediately they sent a man to my Lord of Oxford to know his pleasure when they should wait on him, who sent presently Mr Gent and other 2, Baynes & Thimbleby, as I could learn, unto them, who declared that my Lord had good liking of the articles which the Master of the Rolls had delivered him at his first coming unto the town, and said they agreed with articles delivered him by your Lordship, and would they should proceed to accomplish the devices contained in those articles, and that Mr Gent and others should wait on them the next day again with perfect

informations of my Lord's pleasure, and that my Lord would be gone toward the court the next morning by 6 of the clock, and so they departed.

After the Master of the Rolls & Mr Justice told me all this, and further that his answer was that it was not possible for them to proceed to the making of any books perfect for th' estates of his lands unless they had some talk with my Lord, and willed them to show my Lord so, and that the[y] might know his pleasure in [+the] morning, & to require my Lord to tarry one day longer.

My Lord lay at Cecil House that night, being Tuesday, and brake his fast there in the morning. Mr Arundel came to him thither in the morning before he went forth. The morning, being Wednesday, I went to the Rolls to learn what answer my Lord would make them. My Lord's answer was that he prayed them to forbear to come unto him because he was troubled in taking inventory of his plate and other things which would fully occupy him so long as he was in the town, and that they should not need to trouble him at all for he would send his counsel unto them fully instructed what his pleasure was in all things, for whose coming the Master of the Rolls and Mr Justice tarried from 7 of the clock in the morning until 2 of the clock in th' afternoon, and what then was done the Master of the Rolls hath written, who did read his letter unto me before he made it up, and therefore I write nothing thereof.

I showed your memorial unto Mr Aylofffe according to your Lordship's instructions at his coming to the town, who was sent for by my Lord for these matters, who hath been every day at the Savoy t' attend on my Lord, but yet never spoke with him. My Lord sent him word he would send for him when the Master of the Rolls came home, but did not yet that I can learn. Mr Aylofffe thinketh the cause to be because Dr Atslowe and he are not familiar. There is some strangeness between them by occasion of a lease that th' old Earl granted to Aylofffe's father. Dr Atslowe hath a lease granted of the same to begin presently, notwithstanding thother lease which he holdeth at £1000 to be sold.

Mr Gent saith my Lord requireth £3000 of your Lordship for his marriage money, and offereth to deliver Combe Neville to your Lordship again. My Lady saith that my Lord in some color [=choler?] seemed not to be pleased that his men in prison for Fante [=Faunt] and Clapton's matter are not delivered. He saith he spoke to your Lordship before his going to Hedingham for them, and they are not yet delivered, and that he will never speak to you for them again, but will prove some other friends for them, and further that the villains his enemies were favourably heard at the Council board with smiling countenance between my Lord of Leicester and your Lordship.

This Wednesday at night my Lord and C[harles] Arundel supped at Cecil House, and after supper departed suddenly to the Savoy, and mean, as it is said, to go to Gravesend at the morning tide, and so on to the court. My Lady and my Lady of Oxford do mean to set forward in the morning also towards the court, as it is yet thought. The Master of the Rolls hath appointed me to be with him tomorrow again if [+he?] hear any new matter that I may know the same, and afterward, if he stay me not long for some special cause, I will come to the court.

And thus rudely having run over all such things as have hitherto comen to my knowledge as well as I could, I most humbly end, at your Lordship's house near the Savoy this Wednesday at night, the 2 of September 1573.

Your Lordship's most humble servant,

Barnard Dewhurst

LM: The Master of the Rolls prayeth that this letter herein enclosed may be delivered to the Warden of the Fleet as soon as conveniently may be.

Endorsed: To the right honourable my singular good Lord and master the Lord of Burghley, Lord Treasurer of England

Endorsed: 2 September 1573, Barnard Duhurst, Earl Oxford