

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 11 August 1597 from Sir Edward Fitton (c. 4 March 1606) to Sir Robert Cecil, advising of improved relations between William Stanley (1561 – 29 September 1642), 6th Earl of Derby, and his wife, Oxford's daughter, Elizabeth de Vere (1575-1627).

The letter indicates that the 6th Earl had assured an income to his wife through the appointment of feoffees, chief among them George Clifford (8 August 1558 – 29 October 1605), 3rd Earl of Cumberland, his maternal half uncle, the 6th Earl being the grandson of Henry Clifford, 2nd Earl of Cumberland's first marriage, and George Clifford the son of the 2nd Earl of Cumberland's second marriage.

Specifically, the 6th Earl and George Clifford were related as follows. Henry Clifford (1517-1570), 2nd Earl of Cumberland, married firstly, in June 1535, Henry VIII's niece Eleanor Brandon (1519–1547), daughter of Charles Brandon (c.1484–1545), 1st Duke of Suffolk, and Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VII and widow of Louis XII of France, by whom he had an only daughter, Margaret Clifford (c.1540 – 29 September 1596), who married Henry Stanley (bap. 4 October 1531 – d. 25 September 1593), 4th Earl of Derby, and was the mother of William Stanley (1561 – 29 September 1642), 6th Earl of Derby. Through his mother, Margaret Clifford, Derby had a claim to the throne.

Henry Clifford (1517-1570), 2nd Earl of Cumberland, married secondly Anne Dacre (c.1538–1581), daughter of William Dacre, 3rd Baron Dacre of Gilsland, by whom he was the father of George Clifford (8 August 1558 – 29 October 1605), 3rd Earl of Cumberland.

See the *ODNB* entries for the 2nd and 3rd Earls of Cumberland and the 4th Earl of Derby.

In the Cecil Papers, the letter below is said to be from 'Edward Mylar'. However the late Peter R. Moore discovered that 'Mylar' is a misreading of Fitton. See Anderson, Mark, *Shakespeare By Another Name*, 2010, p. 584 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=kzav7JrRRJsC&pg=PA584>

Moore's finding can be verified by comparing the signature on the letter below with that on the letter dated 29-31 July 1597 from Fitton to Cecil, CP 54/110.

For earlier letters from Fitton to Lord Burghley, dated 30 June and 3 July 1578, concerning Oxford's manor of North Rode, see TNA SP 12/124/55, f. 161 and CP 10/4.

For Sir Edward Fitton, see his will, TNA PROB 11/107/223; the *ODNB* article; and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/fitton-edward-1548-1606>

See also the will of his uncle, Francis Fitton (d. 17 June 1608), TNA PROB 11/112/118.

Right Honourable, I formerly writ of a storm which I did wish to be kept from my Lord Treasurer, but now I write of a calm, as by the enclosed will appear, which my Lord of Derby in degrees to show his love to his Lady promised to me upon Tuesday last, but hath in sort performed by articles and by statute bond to make assurance with my Lord of Cumberland, who truly hath showed himself a kind friend to my Lady and a good uncle to the Earl.

My Lady taketh kindly my Lord the Earl of Derby's trust, but whether herself will take the charge or those feoffees named, whereof my Lord of Cumberland is chief, her Ladyship will do by my Lord Treasurer's direction and your advice at her Ladyship's coming to you.

And as you bade me then when I spake with you of this cause that my Lady might appoint her own receiver if we could bring it to pass, so my Lady now hath power to do if my Lord of Cumberland perform the trust.

For myself, I can do nothing but wish my Lady that good which her courtesy, patience and virtue deserveth, to my poor power as I promised your Honour. I am ready to do my Lady any service whatsoever, and have not yet been at my own house.

And so humbly take my leave, and am bounden to remain at your Honour's command,

Edward Fitton

Lathom, this 11th August '97

Endorsed: To the right honourable Sir Robert Cecil, knight, Principal Secretary to the Queen's most excellent Majesty.

Endorsed: 1597.