

SUMMARY: The document below is the licence dated 5 November 1577 by which Oxford was granted permission to alienate his manor of Great Abington in Cambridgeshire to Robert Taylor, one of the Tellers of the Exchequer. Although Taylor accumulated considerable wealth, and built a great mansion at Babraham, he was one of the few purchasers of Oxford's lands who did not ultimately prosper. In 1588 he was lost a great part of his fortune when he was held accountable for the embezzlement by one of his servants of £7500 in government funds. He sold his estate at Babraham to Sir Horatio Palavicino, (c.1540–1600), a London merchant and diplomat who was born in Genoa, Italy, the second son of Tobias Palavicino (d. c.1580), a well-connected merchant aristocrat, and his wife, Battina (1522–1607), the daughter of Andrea Spinola.

The manor of Great Abington had first come to the de Veres at the time of the Conquest:

The Conqueror granted all Wulfwin's lands to Aubrey de Vere, who in 1086 held the whole township, which descended to his heirs male, later Earls of Oxford, as the manor of Great Abington.

The Earls of Oxford retained that manor with few interruptions until the late 16th century. The whole manor was frequently assigned to dowagers, who often held it for long periods. Thus Alice, widow of Earl Aubrey (d.1214), had it until after 1244; Alice, widow of Earl Robert (d.1296), until 1312; and Maud, widow of Earl Thomas (d.1371), until 1413. The dowagers are said to have used the manor-house as a dower-house. The reversion of the manor, forfeited in 1388 by the condemnation of Earl Robert, Richard II's favourite, was restored to Robert's cousin and heir Richard in 1406. Richard's son John, a Lancastrian, was executed in 1462, and the manor was granted to Richard, Duke of Gloucester. John's son John, a minor, was restored in 1463, but forfeited his lands in 1471, whereupon Great Abington was again given to Gloucester, who as Richard III granted it in 1484 to Sir Robert Percy. Earl John was restored by Henry VII in 1485. On his death in 1513 the manor, always previously considered to be held in chief, was erroneously stated to be held of the honor of Boulogne, a mistake that persisted. John's nephew and heir John died in 1526, and from then to 1559 his wife Anne held Great Abington in dower. The heir male Edward, Earl of Oxford, who came of age in 1571, had sold Great Abington manor by 1578 to Robert Taylor of Babraham, who in 1590 also purchased Little Abington, the two manors afterwards descending together.

Robert Taylor died probably in 1596. In 1599 his successor Robert Taylor sold both manors to Sir John Spencer (d.1610), the London financier whose daughter and heir Eliabeth married William, Lord Compton, created Earl of Northampton in 1618.

See 'Parishes: Great and Little Abington', *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 6* (1978), pp. 3-19.

LM: D(?) licencia alienando pro Roberto Taylor Armigero

The Queen to all to whom etc., greeting. Know that we, of our special grace and for forty-six shillings & eight pence paid to our farmer, by virtue of our letters patent have granted and given licence, and for us, our heirs & successors, by how much is in us by these presents do grant and give licence to our dearest cousin Edward, Earl of Oxford, that he might be able to give & grant, alienate or acknowledge by fine or by recovery in our court before our Justices of the Common Pleas or by any other manner whatsoever at his pleasure to our beloved Robert Taylor, esquire, the manor of Great Abingdon alias Great Abington with the appurtenances and forty messuages, forty tofts, one dovecot, forty gardens, one thousand acres of land, five hundred acres of meadow, one thousand acres of pasture, one hundred acres of wood, five hundred acres of furze and heath, two hundred acres of moor, two hundred acres of marsh, thirteen pounds of rent, & liberty of fishing, and the liberty of one fold & fold-course for five hundred sheep with the appurtenances in Great Abingdon alias Great Abington, Hildersham, Little Abingdon alias Little Abington, Pampisford & Babraham in the county of Cambridge which are held of us in chief, as it is said, to have & to hold to the same Robert and to his heirs and assigns to the sole & proper behoof & use of the same Robert and his heirs & assigns forever of us, our heirs and successors, by the services thereof owed & of right customary;

And by the tenor of these presents we have similarly given, and for us, our heirs & successors, we do give special licence to the same Robert that he might be able to receive from the forenamed Earl, & hold forever to him and his heirs & assigns of us, our heirs & successors, the foresaid manor, messuages, lands, meadows, pastures, woods & rents and all and singular other the premises above expressed and specified with the appurtenances by the foresaid services, as is aforesaid;

Not willing that the foresaid Earl or his heirs, or the forenamed Robert or his heirs by reason of the premises might be troubled therefore, molested, interfered with, vexed in anything, or oppressed by us, our heirs or successors, or by our justices, escheators, sheriffs, bailiffs or other officers or ministers or [+those] of our said heirs or successors whatsoever, nor might be by any of them troubled, molested, interfered with, vexed in anything, or oppressed. In [+testimony] of which thing etc. Witness the Queen at Westminster on the fifth day of November.

1 Regina Omnibus ad quos &c Salutem Sciatis quod nos de gracia nostra Speciali ac pro quadraginta sex solidis & octo denarijs

2 solutis ffirmario nostro virtute litterarum nostrarum patentium concessimus & licenciam dedimus ac pro nobis heredibus & successoribus nostris

3 quantum in nobis est per presentes concedimus & licenciam damus Carissimo Consanguineo nostro Edwardo Comiti Oxonie

4 quod ipse manerium de Magna Abyngdon alias magna Abyngton cum pertinentijs ac quadraginta messuagia quadraginta

5 tofta vnum Columbarium quadraginta gardina mille acras terre quingentas acras prati Mille acras pasture Centum

6 acras bosci quingentas acras Iampnorum & bruere ducentas acras more ducentas acras marisci, tresdecem libratas redditus

7 & liberam piscariam ac libertatem vnum faldagij & Cursum faldagij ad quingentas oves cum pertinentijs in Magna Abyngdon

8 alias Magna Abyngton Hyldersham Abyngdon parua alias Abyngton parua Pampysford & Badburham

9 in Comitatu Cantebridgie Que de nobis tenentur in capite vt dicitur dare possit & concedere alienare aut cognoscere

10 per finem vel per recuperacionem in Curia nostra coram Iusticiarijs nostris de Banco seu aliquo alio modo quocumque ad

11 libitum ipsius Comitis Dilecto nobis Roberto Tayllor Armigero habendum & tenendum eidem Roberto ac heredibus & assignatis suis ad

12 solum & proprium opus & vsum ipsius Roberti ac Heredum & assignatorum suorum imperpetuum de nobis heredibus & successoribus nostris per

13 seruicia inde debita & de iure consueta Et eidem Roberto quod ipse predicta Manerium messuagia terras prata pasturas boscos &

14 redditus ac cetera omnia & singula premissa superius expressa & specificata cum pertinentijs a prefato Comite recipere possit &

15 tenere sibi ac heredibus & assignatis suis de nobis heredibus & successoribus nostris per seruicia predicta sicut predictum est imperpetuum

16 tenore presentium similiter lienciam dedimus ac pro nobis heredibus & successoribus nostris predictis damus specialem Nolentes

17 quod predictus Comes vel heredes sui aut prefatus Robertus vel heredes sui ratione premissorum per nos heredes

18 vel successores nostros aut per Iusticiarios Escaetores vicecomites Balliuos aut alios Officiarios seu Ministros

19 nostros aut dictorum heredum vel successorum nostrorum quoscumque inde occasionentur molestentur impetantur vexentur in

20 aliquo seu grauentur nec eorum aliquis occasionetur molestetur impetatur vexetur in aliquo seu grauetur In Cuius rei &c Teste Regine

21 apud Westmonasterium quinto die Novembris