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SUMMARY: By this document of 3 December 1593 Oxford revoked a commission he had earlier granted to William Lewin, Roger Harlakenden, and William Tiffin authorizing them to increase the rental values of the properties by which the Earls Colne grammar school was funded and to place a qualified schoolmaster there as required. As he states in the document, Oxford had been persuaded to grant this commission by Dr. William Lewin, a judge of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury who had once been tutor to Oxford's first wife, Anne Cecil, and who had accompanied Oxford on his continental tour. Oxford states that his revocation of his earlier commission to Lewin, Harlakenden, and Tiffin was based on the fact that they had not performed what they had undertaken to do, which appears to be the case since there is no record of Lewin having provided any funds for the maintenance of the school at Earls Colne as he had promised Oxford he would do, and the commissioners appear to have first appointed as schoolmaster George Harlakenden, a nephew of Roger Harlakenden's who left the position after one year. After revoking the earlier commission, Oxford reappoints William Adams, Master of Art and Vicar of Earls Colne, to the position of schoolmaster for life. Although no mention is made of it in the document, Oxford's decision to revoke the commission was likely also motivated by his recent discovery that Roger Harlakenden had defrauded him in his conduct of the sale of Colne priory, and his consequent natural reluctance to leave someone like Harlakenden in charge of the lands which funded the school. The copy of Oxford's revocation printed below is taken from Merson, A.D., Earls Colne Grammar School, Essex, (Colchester: Benham & Company, 1975), p.20.

To all people to whom this present writing shall come, I, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, Lord Great Chamberlain of England, Viscount Bulbeck and Lord of Badlesmere & Scales, send greeting. Whereas heretofore at the request of William Lewin, Doctor of the Civil Laws, promising me that he would for the better maintenance of the free school usually heretofore kept at Earls Colne in the county of Essex enlarge the living thereto belonging by such good order that he would take in letting the lands thereto belonging, as also in allowing of his own free will some exhibition thereunto, and that he would place a sufficient schoolmaster there for the teaching & instructing of youth in good literature, to which intent & purpose I granted unto him and Roger Harlakenden & William Tiffin a commission under my hand & seal, now forasmuch as the same neither is nor hath been performed accordingly, know ye that I, the said Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, do by these presents revoke, annihilate, & make void the said commission and all power and authority to them or to any of them thereby given for, touching, or concerning the letting or selling the lands & tenements to the said school belonging, or nominating or appointing any schoolmaster there, or touching or concerning any other matter or thing therein by them or any of them to be done, and do by these presents nominate, present, & appoint William Adams, Master of Art & Vicar of Earls Colne aforesaid, to be schoolmaster there, & to use & exercise the same place during his life in such sort as he hath heretofore used. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal the third day of December in the six & thirtieth year [=December 3,

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1593] of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France, & Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Edward Oxenford

Sealed and delivered in the presence of Simon Ive & others.