

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 25 October 1598 from Richard Quiney (d.1602) to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon requesting help in arranging a loan of £30.

At the time the letter was written Quiney was in London pursuing a suit on behalf of the Corporation of Stratford upon Avon:

*October came, and Richard Quiney was again in London, this time to petition the Privy Council for a corporation charter on better terms and for relief from the latest subsidy voted by Parliament. With the bad weather and two devastating fires, Stratford had fallen on hard times, so Quiney had a good case. But he was forced to wait in London for four months.*

See Schoenbaum, *Samuel, William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*, rev. ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 238 at:

[https://books.google.ca/books?id=-6VS\\_J9IVIYC&pg=PA238](https://books.google.ca/books?id=-6VS_J9IVIYC&pg=PA238)

Schoenbaum notes that both Richard Mytton and Peter Roswell were gentlemen in the service of the lord of the manor of Stratford, Sir Edward Greville (1565-c.1628).

Sir Edward Greville was the second son of Lodowick Greville (pressed to death 14 November 1589) and Thomasine Petre, daughter of Sir William Petre (1505/6-1572) of Ingatestone by his second wife, Anne Tyrrell, the daughter of John Tyrrell of Heron, and grandson of Sir Edward Greville (d. 24 December 1559) and Margaret Willington, the daughter of William Willington of Barcheston, Warwickshire, and great-grandson of Sir John Greville (d. 25 November 1547) and Elizabeth Spencer, daughter of John Spencer (d. 4 January 1547) of Hodnell, Warwickshire. See the *ODNB* entry for Sir William Petre; the will of John Spencer (d. 4 January 1497), TNA PROB 11/11/147; the will of Sir John Greville, TNA PROB 11/32/252; the will of William Willington, TNA PROB 11/42B/642; the will of Sir Edward Greville (d. 24 December 1559), TNA PROB 11/44/282; and the Greville pedigree in Lipscomb, George, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham*, (London: J. & W. Robins, 1847), Vol. I, p. 268 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=taAgAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA268>

For Sir John Greville, see also the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/greville-john-1492-1547>

See also Greer, Germaine, *Shakespeare's Wife*, at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WF6OsgytwzQC&pg=PT205>

Sir Edward Greville had promised money 'for prosecuting the cause'. However as indicated in the letter below, his servant Roswell had not yet arrived in London, and Quiney was anxious to clear the debts he had incurred in pursuing the suit, for which he required an interim loan of £30, the subject of the letter below.

In the letter below Quiney assures Shakespeare that:

*You shall neither lose credit nor money by me, the Lord willing, & now but persuade yourself so as I hope, & you shall not need to fear, but with all hearty thankfulness I will hold my time & content your friend, & if we bargain farther, you shall be the paymaster yourself.*

This clarifies that the funds sought by Quiney were not to be loaned personally by Shakespeare, but by a third party, since Quiney promises to 'hold my time and content your friend' (i.e. pay the lender at the appointed date), and that Shakespeare will therefore not lose 'credit' (i.e. personal reputation) by arranging the loan. Moreover Quiney himself, together with Thomas Bushell or Richard Mytton, 'kinsmen and associates' of Sir Edward Greville, were to guarantee the loan by standing sureties. See Stewart, Alan, *Shakespeare's Letters*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 155-63 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=TbdyNuBMM-QC&pg=PA155>

The 'Mr Bushell' named in the letter may have been the grandson or great-grandson of Thomas Bushell (d.1558) of Long Marston, Gloucestershire (now Warwickshire). Thomas Bushell, the grandson of Thomas Bushell (d.1558) married Elizabeth Winter, the daughter of Robert Winter (d.1549) and Katherine Throckmorton, the daughter of Sir George Throckmorton (d.1552), by whom he was the father of Thomas Bushell, who married Margaret Greville, the sister of Sir Edward Greville (1565-c.1628), lord of the manor of Stratford, mentioned in the Quiney letter below. For further particulars of 'Mr Bushell', see the will of Thomas Bushell (d.1558), TNA PROB 11/42A/53; the will of Roger Winter (d. 6 March 1535?), TNA PROB 11/26/5; the will of William Arden of Park Hall, TNA PROB 11/31/109; and Hotson, Leslie, *I, William Shakespeare, Do Appoint Thomas Russell, Esquire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), pp. 144-7.

According to the *OED* a paymaster was:

*a. An official (esp. an officer in the armed forces) responsible for dispensing pay, settling debts, etc. Also fig.*

Quiney thus used the word 'paymaster' figuratively, and appears to suggest that, apart from the funds sought in connection with his activities on behalf of the Corporation of Stratford, Quiney might also want to borrow funds from Shakespeare personally. This latter possibility appears to be confirmed by a letter from the Stratford upon Avon mercer, Adrian Quiney (d.1607), to his son, Richard, SBTRO BRU 15/1/131, suggesting

that Richard might borrow funds directly from, or through, Shakespeare, to finance the purchase of wool stockings, which were currently selling well in Evesham.

The letter below was apparently not delivered to Shakespeare, and was later found with other letters of Quiney's.

The letter below was followed shortly by a letter to Quiney from Abraham Sturley in Stratford upon Avon dated 4 November 1598 which supplies further context for the loan. See SBTRO BRU 15/1/136. However neither the letter below, nor Sturley's subsequent letter, clarifies whether Shakespeare ever actually arranged a loan of £30 for Quiney on behalf of the Corporation of Stratford.

For a facsimile of the letter below, see Schoenbaum, p. 180. See also the image of the original document held by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Record Office at:

<http://calm.shakespeare.org.uk/dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqCmd=Show.tcl&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqPos=0&dsqSearch=%28%28Refno=%27er27/4%27%29AND%28Repository=%27SBTRO%27%29%29>

In connection with this loan, it should be clarified that usury, i.e. the lending of money at interest, was illegal in England for centuries and 'as late as 1552 an Act of Parliament had prohibited all taking of interest as "a vice most odious and detestable, as in divers places of the Holy Scripture it is evident to be seen".' However in 1571 'Parliament repealed the medieval prohibition and acknowledged that interest up to ten percent might legally be charged for the use of capital'. See Ingram, William, *A London Life in the Brazen Age*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 40.

Shakespeare's 'friend' may have been the theatre owner, Francis Langley, who is known to have brought borrowers and lenders together, and who is associated with Shakespeare in a writ of attachment. See Ingram, William, *A London Life in the Brazen Age*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 39-40, 46 for Langley's dealings with Cecily Cyoll, daughter of Sir John Gresham and niece of Sir Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange, and pp. 144-5 for the writ of attachment.

Loving countryman, I am bold of you as of a friend, craving your help with £30 upon Mr Bushell's & my security, or Mr Mytton's with me. Mr Roswell is not come to London as yet, & I have especial cause. You shall friend me much in helping me out of all the debts I owe in London, I thank God, & much quiet my mind, which would not be indebted. I am now toward the Court in hope of answer for the dispatch of my business. You shall neither lose credit nor money by me, the Lord willing, & now but persuade yourself so as I hope, & you shall not need to fear, but with all hearty thankfulness I will hold my time & content your friend, & if we bargain farther, you shall be the paymaster yourself. My time bids me hasten to an end, & so I commit this [+to] your care & hope of your help. I

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fear I shall not be back this night from the Court. Haste. The Lord be with you & with us all, Amen. From the Bell in Carter Lane the 25 October 1598.

Yours in all kindness,  
Richard Quiney

Endorsed: To my loving good friend and countryman, Mr W{illiam} Shackesp{er}e,  
deliver these.