

SUMMARY: The documents below are a commission from King James I dated 28 November 1609, and an inquisition taken at Cambridge on 22 December 1609 in compliance with the commission. The commission states that John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, had not paid a recognizance in the amount of £6000 made to Edward (c.1500-1552), Duke of Somerset, and forfeited to the Crown on Somerset's attainder and execution, and directs that an inquisition be taken for the purpose of collecting the £6000 owing under the recognizance.

The outcome of this matter is not known. However the proceedings were clearly instigated in error, since by his letters patent dated 22 January 1553 King Edward VI had regranted to the 16th Earl certain recognizances (including the recognizance mentioned in the commission below), jewels and other personal possessions which had escheated to the Crown as a result of Somerset's extortion against the 16th Earl and his subsequent attainder and execution (see TNA C 66/848).

Parts of the document are illegible, particularly at the margins. Illegible text is indicated by square brackets in the transcript below.

James by the grace of God of England, Scotland, France & Ireland King, Defender of the Faith etc. to our beloved & faithful John Cutts, knight, John Hungerford, knight, Thomas C[], knight, [], knight, William Fleetwood, knight, Peter Saltonstall, knight, John Kaye, knight, Henry Lyne, esquire, Thomas Freshwater, esquire, Robert De La Hay, gentleman, [] Thomas Weysser(?), gentleman, greeting;

Whereas Edward, late Duke of Somerset, for certain treasons and also for certain felonies & transgressions was attainted & convicted on the first day of December in the fifth year [=1 December 1551] of the reign of our dearly beloved brother, Lord Edward, late King of England the Sixth, by reason of which he forfeited all the goods, chattels, debts, credits, specialties and lands [] to the said late Lord, King Edward;

And whereas John, late Earl of Oxford, deceased, before Ralph Warren, knight, Mayor of the Staple at Westminster, & Robert Broke, esquire, late Recorder of the City of London, on the twenty-sixth day of February in the second year [=26 February 1548] of the reign of the said Lord Edward, late King of England the Sixth, acknowledged himself to owe to the forenamed Edward, late Duke of Somerset, six thousand pounds of lawful money of England according to the form of statute at Westminster for the recovery of debts lately on that account enacted & provided which ought to be paid to the same late Duke of Somerset at the feast of Easter then next to come, and did not pay nor cause the same to be paid to the said late Duke or to the said late Lord, King Edward, nor we thus far have been answered or satisfied of the same, as it is said;

And we, wishing to be satisfied of the same six thousand pounds, as is just, and trusting greatly in your faithful & provident foresights acting in our affairs, have appointed you,

or two or more of you, to be our Commissioners, and to you, or two or more of you, we do give & commit full power & authority by these presents to inquire, so by the oath of good & law-worthy men of our county of Cambridge as by the examinations of whatsoever trustworthy men and by all other ways, means & methods by which the truth of the matter can better be known & inquired into, on which day & in which year and where the foresaid John, Earl of Oxford, died, and what lands & tenements & of what yearly value the foresaid John, Earl of Oxford, had in the said county of Cambridge on the foresaid 26th day of February in the said second year of the reign of the said late King Edward the Sixth or at any time afterwards up to this time, and also what (s. & pl.) issues & profits of the lands & tenements aforesaid from the time of the death of the foresaid John, Earl of Oxford, thus far growing he or they perceived or had (s. & pl.) and now perceive and have (s. & pl.), and also which were or are the several heirs or tenants of the lands & tenements which were the same late Earl's, deceased;

And that you, or two or more of you, cause all & singular the same heirs & tenants of the foresaid lands & tenements aforesaid to know, by good & law-worthy men of the county aforesaid, that they be [+present] in their own persons before our Barons of our Exchequer at Westminster in fifteen days from the day of Saint Hilary next to come [=quindene of Hilary] to show & set forth what they have or know to say for themselves why we ought not to have execution against the lands & tenements which late were the foresaid John, Earl of Oxford's, for the foresaid six thousand pounds, and further to do & receive in the premises what our Court of our Exchequer [];

And therefore we command that you not omit, on account of any liberty of the county aforesaid, so within the liberties as without, to enter it, & diligently inquire & attend, in form aforesaid, on condition that you produce, or two or more of you produce the inquisition or inquisitions thereof clearly & openly taken before you or two or more of you as the whole remaining act of you or two or more of you, under your seals, or two or more of you under your seals, or two or more of you & the seals of those by whom it was made, before our forenamed Barons at the said day & place;

We have also ordered our sheriff of our said county of Cambridge that at such day & place or days & places which for this [+purpose] you or two or more of you shall have provided and shall have made known to him on our part, that he cause to come before you, or two or more of you, such & so many good & law-worthy men of his bailiwick by whom the truth of the matter can be better known & inquired into;

We do also give you, & two or more of you, full power & authority to summon before you, or two or more of you, whatsoever persons fit to be examined in the premises, and of & in the premises upon their oaths [] to diligently examine, nor this our present command might remain further to execute;

Moreover we firmly command all & singular our mayors, sheriffs, bailiffs, constables & officers, ministers & subjects whatsoever by the tenor of these presents that they yield, obey & observe you & every of you in the execution of the premises, at their peril;

In witness whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent. Witness Lawrence Tanfield, knight, at Westminster on the 28th day of November in the year of our reign of England, France & Ireland the seventh & of Scotland the 43rd [=28 November 1609], by the Memorandum Roll of the same year of the King of this Michaelmas on the roll of commissions & letters patent. []

Endorsed:

[=The execution of this commission appears in a certain inquisition to this annexed, and further we certify that we have made known to the tenants of the manors of Avindon alias Abington and Castle Camps named in a certain inquisition to this annexed by Richard Polnest(?) &(?) Thomas Trottell(?), good and law-worthy men in the within-written county, that they be at the day and place within-contained to show on their parts, as is further ordered to us].

Answered(?) John Cutts, Henry Lyne, Robert De La Hay

Indented inquisition taken at the town of Cambridge in the county aforesaid on the twenty-second day of December in the year of the reign of our Lord James by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, etc. the seventh and of Scotland the forty-third [=22 December 1609] before John Cutts, knight, Henry Lyne, esquire, and Robert De La Hay, gentleman, by virtue of letters patent of commission of the said Lord the King to the forenamed John, Henry and Robert and others directed and to this inquisition stitched, by the oath of Thomas Chaplyn, gentleman, Henry Kilborne, Oliver Read, John Rogers, John Newton, John Fuller, Christopher Rogers, William Fuller, William Sturmyn, William Streton, John Peacock, Oliver Reve, John Awsten, Thomas Wise, Nicholas Perle, Alexander Ramew, John Wallis, Thomas Wright, Nicholas Beamond and Arthur Saunders, good and law-worthy men of the foresaid county;

Who say upon their oath that John, late Earl of Oxford, on the third day of August in the fourth year of Elizabeth, late Queen of England, was seised in his demesne as of fee of and in the manors of Avindon alias Abington, Camps alias Castle Camps, Fowlmere and Swaffham and Bulbeck with the appurtenances in the foresaid county, one hundred messuages, three mills, eight dovecots, one hundred gardens, one hundred orchards, three thousand acres of land, five hundred acres of meadow, two thousand acres of pasture, forty [sic?] acres of wood, five hundred acres of furze and heath, and thirty pounds of rent with the appurtenances in Avindon alias Abingdon, Castle Camps, Shudy Camps, Fowlmere, Westley Waterless, Burrough, Horsehead [+and] Swaffham Bulbeck in the county of Cambridge aforesaid, as by inspection of a certain copy of the inquisition dated the eighteenth day of January taken in the fifth year of the said Elizabeth, late Queen of England, after the death of the said John, late Earl of Oxford, in manifest evidences appears;

And the foresaid jurors also say upon their oath that the manor of Avindon alias Abington in the county aforesaid is worth by year in all issues beyond reprises twenty-two pounds ten shillings seven and a half pence, and that the manor of Castle Camps aforesaid in the county aforesaid is worth by year in all issues beyond reprises forty-two pounds and seventeen shillings, and that the manor of Fowlmere in the county aforesaid is worth by year in all issues beyond reprises thirty-nine pounds eighteen shillings five and a half pence, and also that the manor of Swaffham and Bulbeck is worth by year in all issues beyond reprises twenty-three pounds, as by inspection of a certain copy of the inquisition dated the eighteenth day of January in the fifth year of the said Elizabeth, late Queen of England, [+taken] after the death of the said John, late Earl of Oxford, to the foresaid jurors in manifest evidences more fully appears;

And that the same John, late Earl of Oxford, died on the third day of August in the fourth year of the said Elizabeth, late Queen of England, as by inspection of a certain copy of an inquisition dated the eighteenth day of January in the fourth year of the said Elizabeth, late Queen of England, [+taken] after the death of the said John, late Earl of Oxford, to the foresaid jurors in manifest evidences more fully appears;

And that John Spencer, knight, is now tenant of the manor of Avindon alias Abington aforesaid in the county aforesaid, to their notice;

And also that Thomas Sutton, esquire, is now tenant of the manor of Castle Camps aforesaid in the foresaid county, to their notice;

And further the foresaid jurors are entirely ignorant;

And finally the jurors aforesaid upon their oath say that the foresaid John, late Earl of Oxford, has no other or more manors, lands or tenements in the county aforesaid, to their notice;

In testimony of which thing so the commissioners as the jurors aforesaid have affixed their seals to this inquisition the day, year and place first previously mentioned.

John Cutts

1 Iacobus Dei gracia Anglie Scotie ffrancie & Hibernie Rex fidei defensor &c Dilectis & fidelibus nostris Iohanni Cuttes Militi Iohanni Hungerforde Militi Thome C[] Militi []

2 Militi Willelmo ffleetewood Militi Petro Saltonstall Militi Iohanni Kaye Militi Henrico Lyne Armigero Thome ffreshwater Armigero Roberto Delahaie generoso []

3 Thome Weysser(?) generoso Salutem Cum Edwardus nuper Dux Somerset pro quibusdam prodicionibus necnon pro quibusdam felonijs & transgressionibus primo die Decembris anno regni

4 precharissimi fratris nostri domini Edwardi nuper Regis Anglie Sexti quinto attinctus & convictus fuit ratione cuius omnia bona cattala debita credita specialitates ac terras []

5 dicto nuper Domino Edwardo Regi forisfecit Cumque Iohannes nuper Comes Oxonie defunctus coram Radulfo Warren Milite nuper Maiore Stapule Westmonasterio & Roberto Brooke Armigero nuper

6 Recordatore Ciuitatis Londonie vicesimo sexto die ffebruarij anno regni dicti domini Edwardi nuper Regis Anglie Sexti secundo recognoverit se debere prefato Edwardo nuper Duci Somerset sex Mille

7 libras legalis monete Anglie iuxta formam statuti apud Westmonasterium pro debitis recuperandis nuper inde editi & provisi quas(?) eidem nuper duci Somerset solvisse debuisset in festo(?)

8 Pasche tunc proxime futuro Et eas dicto nuper Duci aut dicto domino nuper Regi Edwardo non solvit nec solvi fecit nec nobis de eisdem adhuc responsum aut satisfactum est vt dicitur

9 Nosque de eisdem sex Mille libris satisfieri volentes vt est iustum Ac de fidelitatibus & providis circumspeccionibus vestris in negotijs nostris agendis plurimum confidentes assignavimus

10 vos aut duos siue plures vestrum fore Commissionarios nostros ac vobis aut duobus siue pluribus vestrum plenam potestatem & auctoritatem damus & committimus per presentes Ad inquirendum tam

11 per sacramentum proborum & legalium hominum Comitatus nostri Cantabrigie quam per examinaciones quorumcumque fidedignorum ac omnibus alijs vijs medijs & modis quibus rei veritas melius sciri poterit & inquire

12 quo die & anno ac vbi predictus Iohannes Comes Oxonie obiit Ac quas terras & que tenementa & cuius annui valoris predictus Iohannes Comes Oxonie habuit in dicto Comitatu Cantabrigie predicto xxvj die

13 ffebruarij dicto anno secundo regni dicti nuper Regis Edwardi sexti seu vnquam postea hucusque Necnon quis vel qui exitus & proficua terrarum & tenementorum predictorum a tempore mortem predicti

14 Iohannis Comitatus Oxonie hucusque provenientia percepit vel habuit perceperunt vel habuerunt ac modo percipit & habet percipiunt & habent Necnon quam fuerunt aut sunt separali heredes

15 aut tenentes terrarum & tenementorum que fuerunt eiusdem nuper Comitis defuncti Ac omnibus & singulis eisdem heredibus & tenentibus terrarum & tenementorum predictorum per probes & legales homines de

16 Comitatu predicto scire faciant aut duo siue plures vestrum scire faciant quod ipsi in proprijs personis suis sint coram Baronibus nostris de Scaccario nostro apud Westmonasterium A die sancti Hillarij

17 proxime futuro in xv(?) dies Ad ostendendum & proponendum si quid pro se habeant vel dicere sciant quare nos execucionem de terris & tenementis que nuper fuerunt predicti Iohanni

18 Comitis Oxonie pro predictis sex Mille libris habere non debeamus Et ad vlterius faciendum & recipiendum in premissis quod Curia nostra de Scaccario nostro [] Et

19 ideo vobis mandamus quod non omittatis propter aliquam libertatem Comitatus predicti tam infra libertates quam extra quin eam ingrediamini & circa premissa diligenter [inquirant & intendant?]

20 aut duos siue plures vestrum inquirant & intendant Et ea omnia & singula faciatis & exequamini aut duo siue plures vestrum faciant & exequantur cum effectum in

21 forma predicta Ita quod Inquisitionem siue Inquisitiones inde coram vobis aut duobus siue pluribus vestrum distincte & aperte captam quam totum residuum factum vestrum aut duobus

22 sive plures vestrum sub sigillis vestris aut duorum sive plurium vestrum sub sigillis vestris aut duorum siue plurium vestrum & sigillis eorum per quos factam fuit habeatis aut duo siue plures

23 vestrum habeant coram prefatis Baronibus nostris ad dictum diem & locum Mandavimus enim vicecomiti nostro dicti Comitatus nostri Cantabrigie quod ad huiusmodi diem & locum siue dies & loca

24 quos vel que ad hoc provideritis aut duo siue plures vestrum providerint et ei ex parte nostra scire feceritis venire faciat coram vobis aut duobus vel pluribus vestrum tot &

25 tales probos & legales homines de balliva sua per quos rei veritas melius sciri poterit & inquiri Damus etiam vobis & duobus vel pluribus vestrum plenam potestatem

26 & auctoritatem ad quascumque personas in premissis examinari idoneas coram vobis aut duobus siue pluribus vestrum evocandum ac de & in premissis super sacramenta sua []

27 [] diligenter examinandum ne hoc presens mandatum nostrum remaneat vltius exequendum Damas insuper vniuersis & singulis Maioribus vicecomitibus Balliuis Constabularijs &

28 officarijs ministris & subditis nostris quibuscumque tenore presentium firmiter in mandatis quod vobis & cuilibet vestrum in execucione premissorum pareant obediant & intendant periculo

29 incumbente In cuius rei testimonium has litteras nostras fieri fecimus patentium Teste laurentio Tanfelde Milite apud Westmonasterium xxviiio die Novembris anno regni nostri Anglie

30 ffrancie & hibernie septimo & Scotie xliiio per Rotulum Memorandum de eodem Anno Regis huius Michaelis Commissionum & litterarum patentium Rotulo []

Execucio istius Comissionis patet in quadam Inquisicione huic annexata Et vltius certificamus quod scieri fecimus Tenentibus Maneriorum de Avindon alias Abingdon et Campes ad Castrum in quadam Inquisicione huic annexata nominatis per Richardum Polnest(?) &(?) Thomam Trottell(?) probos et legales homines Comitatu infrascripto quod sint ad diem et locum infracontentum ad ostendendum ex partibus suis prout vltius nobis prescribitur

Responsi(?) John Cutts, Henry Lynne(?), Robert De La Hay

1 Inquisicio Indentata capta apud Villam Cantebrigie [in Comitatu predicto?] Vicesimo secundo die Decembris Anno

2 regni domini nostri Iacobi dei gracia Anglie ffrancie et hibernie Regis fidei Defensor &c septimo Et

3 Scotie quadragesimo tertio Coram Iohanne Cuttes Milite Henrico Lyne Armigero et Roberto Dela Hay generoso

4 vertute [sic?] Litterarum patentium Comissionalis dicti domini Regis prefatis Iohanni Henrico et Roberto et alijs directis et huic

5 Inquisicioni consuti per sacramentum Thomae Chaplyn generosi Henrici Kilborne Oliveri Read Iohannis Rogers Iohannis

6 Newton Iohannis ffuller Xpoferi Rogers Willelmi ffuller Willelmi Sturmyn Willelmi Streton Iohannis Peacocke

7 Oliveri Reve Iohannis Awsten Thome Wise Nicholai Perle Alexandri Ramew Iohannis Wallis Thome Wright

8 Nicholai Beamond et Arthuri Saunders Proborum et legalium hominum de Comitatu predicto Qui dicunt super sacramentum

9 suum quod Iohannes nuper Comes Oxonie tertio die Augustj Anno Quarto Elizabethe nuper Regine Anglie fuit

10 seisitus in Dominico suo vt de feodo de et in Manerijs de Avindon alias Abingdon Campis alias Campis ad Castrum

11 ffulmere et Swaffham et Bulbecke cum pertinentijs in Comitatu predicto Centum Messuagijs tribus molendinis octo Calumbarijs [sic] Centum

12 gardinum [sic] Centum pomarijs tribus millibus acris terre quingentis acris prati duobus millibus acris pasture quadraginta acris bosci

13 quingentis acris Iampnorum et Bruere et triginta libris redditus cum pertinentijs in Avindon alias Abingdon Campis ad Castrum

14 Sudy Campis ffulmere West leighe Water leighe Boroughe Horseheade Swaffham Bulbecke in Comitatu

15 Cantebrigie predicto prout per inspeccionem cuiusdam Copie Inquisicionis date Decimo octavo die Ianuarij Anno quinto dicte Elizabethe

16 nuper Regine Anglie post mortem dicti Iohannis nuper Comitit Oxonie in capte et [sic?] evidencijs ostensis patet Dicunt etiam

17 Iuratores predicti super sacramentum suum quod manerium de Avindon alias Abingdon in comitatu predicto valet per Annum in omnibus exitibus vltra

18 reprisas Viginti duas libras decem solidos septem denarios et obulum Quodque Manerium de Campis ad Castrum predictum in Comitatu

19 predicto valet per Annum in omnibus exitibus vltra reprisas quadraginta duas libras et septem decem solidos Et quod Manerium de

20 ffulmer in Comitatu predicto valet per Annum in omnibus exitibus vltra reprisas Triginta Novem libras octo decem solidos quinque

21 denarios et obulum Ac etiam quod Manerium de Swaffham et Bulbecke valet per Annum in omnibus exitibus vltra reprisas viginti

22 tres libras prout per inspeccionem cuiusdam Copie Inquisitionis date decimo Octavo die Januarij Anno quinto dicte

23 Elizabethhe nuper Regine Anglie post mortem dicti Iohannis nuper Comitis Oxonie Iuratoribus predictis in evidencijs ostensis plenius

24 patet Et quod idem Iohannes nuper Comes Oxonie tertio die Augustj Anno quarto dicte Elizabethhe nuper Regine Anglie

25 obijt prout per inspeccionem cuiusdam Copie Inquisitionis date decimo Octavo die Ianuarij Anno quinto dicte

26 Elizabethhe nuper Regine Anglie post mortem dicti Iohannis nuper Comitis Oxonie Iuratoribus predictis in evidencijs ostensis plenius

27 patet Et quod Iohannes Spencer Miles est modo tenens Manerij de Avindon alias Abingdon predicti in Comitatu predicto ad eorum

28 noticiam Quodque etiam Thomas Sutton Armiger est modo tenens manerij de Campis ad Castrum predicti in comitatu predicto ad eorum

29 noticiam Et Vltorius Iuratores predicti penitus ignorant denique Iuratores predicti super sacramentum suum dicunt quod predictus

30 Iohannes nuper Comes Oxonie nulla habet alia siue plura maneria terras siue tenementa in Comitatu predicto ad eorum noticiam

31 In Cuius rei testimonium huic Inquisitioni tam Comissionarij quam Iuratores predicti sigilla sua apposuerunt die

32 anno et loco primo premencionatis

John Cutts