

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 21 June 1580 from John Hatcher (d.1587), Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, to Lord Burghley in reply to a letter from Burghley dated 9 June 1580 requesting that Oxford's players be permitted to perform at the university (see CUA Lett. 9 (B.18)). Stating that he has consulted with John Still (c.1544–1608), Richard Howland (bap. 1540, d. 1600), Thomas Byng (d.1599) and Thomas Legge (c.1535–1607), Hatcher denies the request, citing several reasons. Hatcher also mentions that Oxford's players had brought with them letters from Lord Chancellor Thomas Bromley (c.1530-1587) and Thomas Radcliffe (1526/7-1583), 3rd Earl of Sussex, supporting their request to perform at both universities.

My bounden duty remembered, with most humble and hearty recommendations. Where it hath pleased your Honour to commend unto me and the heads of the university my Lord of Oxenford his players that they might show their cunning in certain plays already practised by them before the Queen's Majesty, I did speedily counsel with the heads and others, viz., Doctor Still, Doctor Howland, Doctor Byng, Doctor Legge etc., and considering & pondering that the seed, the cause and the fear of the pestilence is not yet vanished & gone this hot time of the year, this midsummer fair-time having confluence out of all countries, as well of infected as not; the commencement time at hand, which requireth rather diligence in study than dissoluteness in plays; and also that of late we denied the like to the right honourable the Lord of Leicester his servants; and specially for that all assemblies in open places be expressly forbidden in this university and town or within five miles compass by her Majesty's Council's letters to the Vice-chancellor 30th Octobris 1575, our trust is that your Honour, our most dear loving Chancellor, will take our answer made unto them in good part.

And being willing to impart something from the liberality of the university to them, I could not obtain sufficient assent thereto, and therefore I delivered them but 20s towards their charges.

Also they brought letters from the right honourable the Lord Chancellor and the right honourable the Lord of Sussex to the Vice-Chancellors of Cambridge and Oxford. I trust their Honours will accept our answer.

Thus leaving to trouble your Honour any longer with my rude writing, I take my leave. Cambridge, the 21st of June 1580.

Your Lordship's humble & unworthy deputy,

John Hatcher, Vice-chancellor.

Endorsed: (11) To the right honourable the Lord Burghley, Lord High Treasurer of England, (2) 21 June 1580, the Vice-chancellor of Cambridge, The Earl of Oxford's players.