

SUMMARY: The document below is a list of allegations against Leicester in the hand of Charles Arundel which appears to date from late December 1580 or early January 1581. Arundel attributes the allegations to Oxford, and names Oxford's sources as Edward Yorke, Robert Christmas, and Leicester himself. There are striking similarities between Oxford's allegations and the accusations made against Leicester in the anonymous 1584 publication *Leicester's Commonwealth*, raising questions about Oxford's authorship of that tract.

Oxford had a close relationship to the Yorke family. In 1574, he stayed at 'the Lady Yorke's house in Walbrook' before his brief trip to the continent without the Queen's leave, as noted by his uncle, George Golding (see ERO D/Drg/2/24):

*Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, went from the Lady Yorke's house in Walbrook in London where he then lay for a time, and at Aldgate, where he took horse, scilicet, the first day of July 1574, being Thursday, between two and three o'clock in the morning, and so to Wivenhoe in Essex, and the next night he took ship & coasted over into Flanders, arriving at Calais.*

While Oxford was away from England on his continental tour of 1575/6, Lady Yorke died. However Oxford again stayed at Yorke House on his return, according to notes made by Lord Burghley (see CP 160/99):

*I sent letters to him to entreat him to take my house for his lodging, whereof I had no answer, and yet I wrote twice by 2 several messengers, but my son sent me word that he found him disposed to keep himself secretly 2 or 3 days in his own lodging, and yet that Edward Yorke told him secretly that his Lordship would come first to my house, but he would nobody knew thereof, whereupon I was very glad, but his wife gladder, and the contrary I knew until he was landed, and then my son told me how he did suddenly leave the barge and took a wherry and only with Rowland Yorke landed about Yorke House.*

*Within 2 hours I heard by them that had been with him how many had been with him without any his misliking, and also that it was heard that he meant to sup out of his lodging at Edward Yorke's, and that there was a coach preparing for my Lady, his sister, to come to him, which being heard by my daughter, she very importunately required me she might go to him, and yet I required her to stay until I might send to my Lord Howard, from whom I would know whether he knew that my Lord, her husband, would go to the court, for if he would, she should not go until he had been there. My Lord Howard sent me word that he as yet could not tell, but when he should know he would send me word, whereof I had none.*

Oxford appears to have been a particular friend of Edward Yorke, as indicated in Lord Burghley's notes above and in the first two allegations below.

Persons mentioned in the allegations in the order in which they appear or are alluded to in the allegations include:

- Edward Yorke
- Sir Thomas Leighton (c.1530-1610), brother-in-law of Leicester's wife, Lettice Knollys
- Robert Christmas, Oxford's servant
- Thomas Howard (1538-1572), 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Norfolk
- Guilio Borgarucci [known as Dr Julio] (d. 1581)
- Walter Devereux (1539-1576), 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Essex

Articles whereof Oxford would have accused Leicester

First, that Ned Yorke had told him in what sort Killingworth [=Kenilworth] was fortified, with brass pieces, munition, powder etc., proportionably as strong as the Tower, against a day under colour of making the Queen sport with fireworks, shooting, etc.

2 That foisty meal and meat, with oil, cheese and butter, etc., were often cast out of the Castle, which were orderly provided against a day for his own assurance, as the said Ned Yorke upon Sir Thomas Leighton's words assured him.

3 That Robin Christmas gave him a note of gifts to the value of a treble subsidy, beside 17,000 of yearly receipt by land and office, etc.

4 That Leicester should tell him, when he had his suit in hand, that the Queen was of the hardest disposition, and did good to nobody but at their importune suit, and that no man in England had gotten anything but by his labour.

5 That he boasted of his greatness in alliance, wealth, credit with the Queen, etc, affirming further that he was able to make the proudest subject to sweat that would oppose himself against him, and that he made the Duke of Norfolk stoop, notwithstanding all his bragging.

6 That Julio should complain to the said Oxford of Leicester's coldness in friendship towards him, though he saved both his life and his honour when, with weeping tears, he made his moan unto him at my Lord of Essex's coming over.

7 That he told the said Oxford at Reading four days before the Queen knew of my Lord of Essex's death that he could not live past such a certain time prefixed.

8 That in respect of future times he had made a pack safe enough for himself, and would turn up their heels that made account to deal with him, with much more which I have forgotten.