

SUMMARY: The document below is a series of memoranda written between 10 July and 6 November 1608 for the information of Oxford's brother-in-law, Robert Cecil (1563-1612), Earl of Salisbury, who had been appointed Lord Treasurer on 4 May 1608. Schedules of debts allegedly owing to the crown had been presented to members of the nobility, including Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth (nee Trentham) de Vere (d.1613), Countess of Oxford. The writer of the memoranda below summarizes for Cecil's benefit the responses which had been received. The responses suggest that a surprising number of the debts were not legitimately owing at all.

For a more detailed answer by the Countess of Oxford to the demand with respect to debts allegedly owed to the crown by herself and her son, Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th Earl of Oxford, see TNA SP 14/37/50, f. 102.

For the Countess of Oxford's executor, Sir Edward More (d.1623), and his relationship to the Lords Stourton, see TNA PROB 11/76, f. 290 and TNA PROB 11/121, ff. 74-5.

For Lord Zouche's executors in connection with Oxford's nephew, Robert Bertie (1582-1642), Lord Willoughby and 1st Earl of Lindsey, see TNA PROB 11/98, ff. 141-7.

The members of the nobility charged with debts to the crown and persons mentioned in connection with them (the latter names indented), in order of appearance, include:

Robert Radcliffe (1573-1629), 5th Earl of Sussex
 - Frances (nee Sidney) Radcliffe (1531?-1589), Countess of Sussex
 John Carey (d.1617), 3rd Baron Hunsdon
 - George Carey (1548-1603), 2nd Baron Hunsdon
 - Henry Carey (1526-1596), 1st Baron Hunsdon
 - Elizabeth (nee Spencer) Carey (1552-1618)
 - Anne (nee Morgan) Carey (d.1607)
 John Harington (1539/40-1613), 1st Baron Harington of Exton
 Charles Howard (1536-1624), 2nd Baron Howard of Effingham and 1st Earl of Nottingham
 - Thomas Egerton (1540-1617), Viscount Brackley
 John Darcy (d.1635), 3rd Lord Darcy(?)
 - Thomas, Lord Darcy
 Francis Russell (bap. 1587, d. 1641), 4th Earl of Bedford
 Elizabeth (nee Trentham) de Vere (d.1613), Countess of Oxford
 - Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th Earl of Oxford
 Edward Parker (1551?-1618), 12th Baron Morley
 - Elizabeth (nee Stanley) Parker
 William Herbert (1580-1630), 3rd Earl of Pembroke
 - Henry Herbert (c.1538-1601), 2nd Earl of Pembroke
 Edward Vaux (1588-1661), 4th Baron Vaux of Harrowden
 - William Vaux (1535-1595), 3rd Baron Vaux
 William Compton (d. 1630), 1st Earl of Northampton

William Willoughby (1584-1617), 3rd Baron Willoughby of Parham
 Francis Norris (1579-1622), Earl of Berkshire (Oxford's son-in-law)
 - Henry Norris (c.1525-1601), 1st Baron Norris
 Edward Stourton (c.1555-1633), 10th Baron Stourton
 - John Stourton (1553-1588), 9th Baron Stourton
 - Sir Edward More (d.1623)
 - Anne (nee Stanley) Stourton (1542-1602)
 William Paget (1572-1629), 5th Baron Paget
 - Charles Paget (c.1546-1612)
 - Anne (nee Preston) Paget (d.1587)
 - Thomas Southwell of Woodrising (d.1568)
 - Thomas Paget (c.1544-1590), 4th Baron Paget
 Henry Wriothesley (1573-1624), 3rd Earl of Southampton
 Henry Hastings (1586-1643), 5th Earl of Huntingdon
 Francis Clifford (1559-1641), 4th Earl of Cumberland
 - George Clifford (1558-1605), 3rd Earl of Cumberland
 William Parker (1574/5-1622), 13th Baron Morley and 5th or 1st Baron Monteagle
 Lettice Knollys (1543-1634), Countess of Leicester
 - Robert Dudley (1532/3-1588), Earl of Leicester
 Oliver St John (c.1545-1618), 3rd Baron St John of Bletso
 - John St John (d.1596), 2nd Baron St John of Bletso
 Margaret (nee Russell) Clifford (1560-1616), Countess of Cumberland
 Anne (nee Hopton) Wentworth (d.1625), widow of Henry Wentworth (1558-1593), 3rd
 Baron Wentworth of Nettlestead
 Edward Zouche (1556-1625), 11th Baron Zouche
 Robert Bertie (1582-1642), 1st Earl of Lindsey (Oxford's nephew)
 Edmund Sheffield (1565-1646), 1st Earl of Mulgrave
 Thomas Scrope (c.1567-1609), 10th Baron Scrope(?)
 - Catherine (nee Clifford) Scrope
 - Henry Scrope (c.1534-1592), 9th Baron Scrope of Bolton
 Robert Rich (1559?-1619), 1st Earl of Warwick

Earl of Sussex

19 July 1608

That [+for?] th' old debts owing by his Lordship to the late Queen he hath a general release from his Majesty under the Great Seal of England, but for those debts which are due sithence his Majesty's reign, his Lordship seemeth to be very ready and willing to satisfy them according to his ability. And that some of those debts contained in the schedule did accrue from the Lady Frances Sussex, and therefore chargeable upon her executors, to whom she left a great estate, and not upon his Lordship.

Lord Hunsdon

19 July 1608

That for the debts of his late father he ought not to be charged therewith because the Lord Hunsdon, his brother, deceased, took upon him the administration of all his father's goods, which was far greater than his debts, and tied himself for the payment of all his debts, and to that end had lands in fee simple from his father. That the debts of his said brother ought not to be laid upon him because his brother's wife was his executrix, and had all, both lands, goods, plate and jewels, for the payment of his debts, as appeareth by his will. And for the debt of his mother, he knoweth no cause why he should be charged with that, for as his Lordship saith, he had neither land nor goods by her, nor of hers (neither was he her executor), more than at her death she gave him a basin and ewer.

Lord Harington

That whereas he is charged by the officers in the Court of Wards to be indebted unto his Majesty in £206 for Foljambe's and Brandling's lands, it is a matter very strange unto his Lordship, for that as his Lordship allegeth, he was never possessed of any such lands, nor indebted unto his Majesty in any such sum, and therefore supposeth that the said officers have mistaken themselves.

Lord Admiral

July 1608

That in regard his Majesty is indebted unto his Lordship in divers sums of money (the particulars whereof he gave unto Mr Chancellor) for which he purposeth to be a suitor to his Majesty when he shall return to a settled house, it is therefore earnestly desired by his Lordship that process may be stayed against him for his debt to his Majesty until the beginning of Michaelmas term next.

John, Lord Darcy

That the sum of fifty pounds charged upon Thomas, Lord Darcy, for the fine of his livery ought not to be paid by him for that it neither agrees with his fine nor with his name, his fine being but £43 4s 6d, the first payment whereof he paid in Easter term last, and the residue he hath entered bond to pay at Michaelmas next, which he will not fail to perform.

Earl of Bedford

That his auditor shall attend his Majesty's officers of the Exchequer this next term, and then either give satisfaction to the Court or take order for speedy payment of whatsoever is due. In the meantime he prays stay of process till th' end of the term.

Countess of Oxford

12 August 1608

That she may have respite till Michaelmas term because her counsel at law and others best acquainted with her estate are out of town, and for the Earl, her son, prays your Lordship to consider how unreasonable it is that the debts of former Earls should be chargeable upon him, who is deprived of all their inheritance.

Lord Morley

22 August 1608

That part of those debts contained in his schedule are pretended by the King's officers to be due by his mother, which his Lordship affirmeth to be wrongfully imposed upon her, but howsoever not chargeable upon him, wherein he desires to have his officers and learned counsel referred to Mr Solicitor to show his proofs. The rest of his debt, being £50, is for subsidy, the greater part whereof he hath taken order to pay at Michaelmas, and for the rest, he was a suitor to my Lord Chancellor and the other Commissioners to be discharged in respect of his many hindrances.

Earl of Pembroke

22 August 1608

His Lordship preferred a petition the last term to the Court for the allowance of a surplusage paid both by his father and himself to his Majesty and the late Queen more than was due by them, which was referred to the Lord Chief Baron to consider, until the return of whose certificate, which will be the next term, he prayeth respite, and then whatsoever shall be due shall be paid without delay. Moreover there be some debts charged upon his Lordship by Auditor Fulmer which he supposeth to be no way due, and therefore prays a reference for them.

Lord Vaux

That the debt contained in his schedule was a debt of the Lord William, his grandfather, who at the time when the debt did accrue was but tenant for term of life to those lands which the now Lord Vaux enjoyeth, and therefore the lands now not liable to his debts.

Besides, his Lordship is now in his minority, and under the protection of the Court of Wards.

Lord Compton

29 July 1608

That he will without fail take order to pay what your Lordship requires of him and is due unto his Majesty before the end of Michaelmas term next.

Lord Willoughby of Parham

10 August 1608

The debt which is pretended to be due by his Lordship to his Majesty is £1279 10s, being the arrearage of a rent for the manor of Walton Cardiff in the county of Gloucester for which he was called in question 25 years past by your Lordship's father, then Lord Treasurer, and Sir Walter Mildmay, and then pleaded that neither his father nor he were ever seised or possessed of that manor, nor never took any the profits or issues thereof, whereupon process was stayed against him and awarded against the owners thereof, which, as his Lordship remembers, was one Gunter. The same he must plead still, having not since that time been any way molested or called upon by any officer whatsoever.

Lord Norris

4 August 1608

That for those debts which were his grandfather's he may be longer forborne or have them installed at some easy payment yearly, and for his own debt, being £80 for subsidy, he will not long delay the payment of it as soon as he shall recover himself out of some debts wherein he is engaged.

Lord Stourton

13(?) August 1608

For his brother's debt, Sir Edward Moore [=More] hath promised to give your Lordship satisfaction before the time limited, and that which is his mother's, because she was but tenant in dower, he thinks he is not tied to discharge.

Lord Paget

For the charge of £142 11s 6-1/2d in Auditor King's office, he supposeth it to be parcel of a sum of £300 which was paid him by the Queen, received by special warrant from your Lordship's father, then Lord Treasurer, for the mean profits of certain lands which he recovered from her Majesty by monstrans de(?) droit in the Exchequer, and therefore no debt.

For the £99 19s 11-1/2d in Mr Sledary's(?) office, he supposeth to be for the arrearage of a fee-farm rent of £200 per annum, which rent his Lordship saith is granted by his Majesty to his uncle, Charles Paget, for life, and to him he hath paid it, and hath his several acquittances.

For the rest, being £15 3s 4d for his grandmother's subsidy and £19 16s for the land late Mr Thomas Southwell's, he saith he never had advancement by his father's lands nor goods, nor anything from his grandmother by descent nor in reversion, and therefore hopeth he shall not be chargeable with their debts.

Earl of Southampton

10 August 1608

His debt was for arrearages of subsidies in the Queen's time, part whereof he will pay this next term, other part he can soon make appear no way to concern him. The rest of his debt is upon a forfeiture of a bond of 1000 marks for woods, for which he desires forbearance until the next term, and then he will submit himself, when he shall speak with your Lordship to such order as you shall set down.

Earl of Huntingdon

29 August 1608

Most of his debts are either paid or in paying by extent of his lands. For the rest that are more ancient, he desires that your Lordship would respite him till the next term, in which time he will better inform himself of the state of them, and then give your Lordship satisfaction.

Earl of Cumberland

24(?) August 1608

That for all such debts as was owing to his Majesty by the late Earl, his brother, subsidies only excepted, his Majesty by his grant hath remitted them, and the subsidy which was due by the said Earl deceased, being £1000, his Lordship hath since paid and discharged,

or otherwise given sufficient security for payment of what remained unpaid at such days as were set down by your Lordship and Mr Chancellor, whereof he will not fail to perform the same accordingly. And for the £133 6s 8d due for subsidy since his Majesty's reign, his Lordship purposeth to pay the same wholly or the most part thereof before th' end of the next term.

Lord Monteagle

2 September 1608

That he will most willingly prepare himself to pay those debts which he oweth to his Majesty, knowing that reason and duty tieth him unto it, only desires that since he is in the progress, and his servants not about him which he employeth in those businesses, he might be spared until the beginning of the next term, at which time he will not fail to give satisfaction.

Countess of Leicester

That his Majesty at his first coming to the crown did release and pardon her of all debts whatsoever wherewith she might be charged or chargeable as executrix to the Earl of Leicester, which relief and pardon is enrolled both in the Court of Exchequer and Court of Wards, as is well known to the officers of the said Courts, and therefore she desireth that she may be free from these and suchlike molestations hereafter.

Lord St John of Bletso

13 August 1608

That the £40 due by his Lordship for the second subsidy in the 18 year [=1575/6] of the late Queen Elizabeth was paid to his Majesty's use unto George Franckham, esquire, being High Sheriff of the county of Bedford, in the first year of his Majesty's reign, which his Lordship thinketh will appear upon the accounts of the said sheriff.

That the £26 13s 4d due for the third subsidy granted in the said year, he purposeth to make satisfaction thereof before th' end of this Michaelmas term.

That the £40 due by his brother for the first and second payment of the first subsidy granted in the 31st year [=1588/9] of the said Queen's reign, it is sufficiently discharged by plea in the Exchequer, as appeareth by the records in Mr Osborne's office.

And lastly, that the debt of £10 imposed upon the Lord St John in the 8 year [=1565/6] of the Queen, for that it doth not appear the same is charged upon the Lord St John of Bletso, being a debt of so long continuance and whereof he never heard, he hopeth your

Lordship will not think it reasonable it should be imposed upon him, but to satisfy any doubt or scruple herein, he will cause his solicitor to attend the officers of th' Exchequer at the beginning of the term.

Countess of Cumberland

20 August 1608

Her Ladyship pleadeth that by an Act of Parliament she is privileged and exempted(?) from payment of any subsidy, yet to show her forwardness to the furtherance of his Majesty's service, if your Lordship shall think that her widow's mite cast into the mass of his Majesty's treasure may be a motive to draw on others of her rank, upon further notice thereof from your Lordship she will be ready to submit herself to your Lordship's pleasure.

Lady Anne Wentworth

9 September 1608

That in regard her officers are far remote from her, she desireth respite and stay of process until th' end of the term, at which time she promiseth to be very willing to pay all such sums as shall be due and owing by her to his Majesty.

Lord Zouche for the Lord Willoughby

10 August 1608

That the Lord Willoughby might be respited until Allhallowtide, when he promiseth to take such order for the payment of his debt to his Majesty as shall be to your Lordship's contentment.

Lord Sheffield

4 October 1608

That his Lordship hath already paid divers sums and hath tallies for the same, but as yet hath not taken out his quietus est because this term he intends to know what he is behind, and then to take such order for satisfaction thereof as your Lordship shall think reasonable.

Lord Scrope

25 August 1608

That for the six several subsidies due by his grandmother amounting to £124 8s 9d, in regard he had neither lands nor goods of hers, he is informed by his counsel that he is not chargeable for the same either by law or conscience. And for the subsidy due by his father, being £20, he saith he hath an acquittance for discharge thereof which he hath sent up to London to one that soliciteth his causes to make clear all those debts, wherein if it shall not appear that he hath not an acquittance, then he engageth his honour to your Lordship that the said debt shall be discharged next term.

Lord Rich

6 November 1608

That he desireth some convenient time to be given him to search his evidences whereby he may the better answer the debt wherewith he is charged, which is until the next term, and then he doubteth not but to yield such an answer as shall free him from that imposition(?).