

SUMMARY: The document below is an answer, dating from November 1608, by Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham (d.1613), Countess Dowager of Oxford, to a demand for payment of debts allegedly owing to the Crown made by Robert Cecil (1563-1612), Earl of Salisbury, who had been appointed Lord Treasurer on 4 May 1608. Demands to several members of the nobility for payment of debts to the Crown were made in the summer of 1608, most of which appear to have been unjustified (see TNA SP 14/37/48, ff. 92-6).

It would appear from the answer below that Oxford owed a mere 20s to the Court of Wards at his death on 24 June 1604. Nonetheless, process had been levied unjustly against lands formerly owned by Oxford in Cambridge and Staffordshire for £29 which was not actually owing. For Oxford's original debt to the Court of Wards, and the forfeitures which brought it ultimately to £14, 752, see BL Lansdowne 68/11, f. 22. The document below establishes that, apart from 20s, this enormous debt had been paid by the time of Oxford's death.

For the decree made by Lord Chancellor Ellesmere on 10 February 1599 mentioned in the answer below in connection with £224 3d allegedly owing to the Crown for arrearages of the tenth for Colne Priory, see TNA C 78/104/17, mm. 27-8.

For the inquisition post mortem of John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, which indicates that the Earl had no interest in a 'Priory of Battsford', see TNA C 142/136/12.

For Oxford's two inquisitions post mortem which enumerate the properties he held at his death, see TNA C 142/286/165 and TNA C 142/305/103.

In the answer it is stated that Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th Earl of Oxford, was 'neither heir nor executor to his said grandfather' and thus not liable for an alleged subsidy of £300 owed by his grandfather, the 16th Earl, to the Crown in 1556-7. This statement appears to be predicated on the fact that no lands came to Henry de Vere through entails or under the 16th Earl's will.

The answers on the behalf of the right honourable the Lady Elizabeth, Countess Dowager of Oxenford, and the right honourable Henry, Earl of Oxenford, her son, concerning the debts demanded of them by the right honorable the Lord High Treasurer of England for
and in the behalf of the King's most excellent Majesty

As concerning the debt of eight pounds for subsidy demanded of the said Countess of Oxenford, she is willing to pay the same as your Lordship shall appoint, only she desireth that she may be discharged upon the payment thereof because her name is mistaken as 'Anne' for 'Elizabeth';

And as concerning the supposed debt of £29 10s of the late Earl, her husband, in the Court of Wards and Liveries, the clerk that delivered out the note of the same unto your Lordship did mistake himself, for after many searches made for the same debt in th' office of Master Auditor's of the Court of Wards, there is found only to be owing but 20s or thereabouts, all which notwithstanding, the said Mr Auditor will not consent that a note shall be had for the testifying of the same, and yet the same hath been levied of lands of the late Earl's lying in the countries of Cambridge and Stafford, and part paid in this term by the Sheriff of Staffordshire.

And as concerning the debt of £224 3d demanded of the now Earl of Oxenford for his father's debt for the arrearages of the tenth for the Priory of Colne and lands therewith occupied, the same is to be paid by one Mr Richard Harlakenden and others until the feast of St Michael th' Archangel A {nn}o 41o of the late Queen [=1599], in which year the Lord Chancellor of England made a decree in the Chancery of some small portion of tithes occupied with the said Priory for an[d] in the behalf of the father of the said Earl of Oxenford, and the said now Earl saith whatsoever arrearages of tenths due for the same portions of tithes since th' execution of the same decree until his father's decease, he will (after th' accomplishment of his full age) pay the same, until which time he desireth to be spared.

And as concerning the rent of 36s 2d per annum issuing forth of the Priory of Battsford in Suffolk, the said Earl doth not understand nor can learn that he said Battsford was at any time John, Earl of Oxenford, his grandfather's, or his father's.

And as concerning the subsidy of £300 in the year of 4o & 5o of Philip & Mary [=1556-7] due by the said John, Earl of Oxenford, his grandfather, the said Earl also saith that he is not to be charged either as heir or executor to his said grandfather for that he is neither heir nor executor to his said grandfather.

Endorsed: (1) The answer of the Countess and the Earl of Oxford concerning their debts to the King; (2) Th' answer to the demands of the King's debts.