SUMMARY: The documents below consist of interrogatories, said to be dated 17 November 1599, to be administered to 'Edward Hubbard, Hugh Beeston, Israel Amyce & Roger Harlakenden, esquires, Nicholas Bleake & Thomas Hampton, defendants, at the suit of Edward, Earl of Oxenford', and the answers of the defendants, with the exception of Nicholas Bleake, taken between 18 February and 1 May 1600.

For Oxford's bill of complaint in the case and Roger Harlakenden's answer, see ERO D/DPr/425 and ERO D/DPr/424. In his deposition, Edward Hubberd states that he too had filed an answer, but it does not appear to be extant.

The interrogatories allege that Oxford's former servants had in their possession evidences belonging to him including a book referred to as the 'black book', charters concerning Oxford's office of Lord Great Chamberlain of England, ledger-books relating to Colne Priory, evidences relating to other properties which had not been sold by Oxford to the defendants, and books in which the leases made by Oxford were registered.

The interrogatories also allege that Israel Amyce delivered the black book in which Oxford's charters and evidences were registered to Leicester, and that Leicester had the book burned. The answers to the interrogatories establish that a rumour to that effect was well known to some of the deponents.

The outcome of the suit is unknown. Roger Harlakenden died on 21 January 1603, and Oxford on 24 June 1604.

Several other persons mentioned in the interrogatories and depositions were deceased, or died not long after the suit was commenced. George Golding was buried on 27 November 1584. Sir Roger Townshend died 30 June 1590. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/77, ff. 127-8. Sir Gilbert Gerrard, Attorney-General from 1558 to 30 May 1581, died in 1593. Richard Branthwayte died in 1594. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/84, ff. 336-8. Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, died 4 September 1588. Thomas Skinner died in 1596. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/89, ff. 394-5. Lord Burghley died 4 August 1598. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/92, ff. 241-5. Nicholas Bleake died in 1600/1. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/97, ff. 53-4. Edward Hubberd died in 1601/2. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/99, ff. 264-7.

Thomas Hampton iuratus 3o Martij 1599 [=3 March 1600] Matthaeus Carew
Hugo Beeston iuratus 1 Maij 1600 Matthaeus Carew

Interrogatories to be ministered to Edward Hubbard, Hugh Beeston, Israel Amyce & Roger Harlakenden, esquires, Nicholas Bleake & Thomas Hampton, defendants, at the suit of Edward, Earl of Oxenford, complainant, by virtue of an order taken in that behalf

Modern spelling transcript copyright ©2010 Nina Green All Rights Reserved
http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/

1 Inprimis, where did you last see the book called the black book where are registered sundry charters & evidences belonging to the plaintiff, and whether did you ever see the same, and where did you see the same, and whether had you ever the same in your custody or possession? If yea, then to whom did you deliver the same, and where is the same now to your knowledge or as you think in your conscience?

2 Item, do you know or have heard reported that Israel Amyce did deliver the black book above-mentioned to the late Earl of Leicester, and that the said Earl did burn or cause the same to be burned?

3 Item, have you not in your custody or possession some evidences, ledger-book or books & writings that concern as well lands sometimes the plaintiff's lands and not sold unto you by the plaintiff as the lands that are sold unto you? If yea, then what are they, and where do they remain?

4 Item, what charters have you seen concerning the office of Great Chamberlain of England, and whether have you any of them in your custody or hands, or where else are they or any of them to your knowledge or as you think or believe in your conscience?

5 Item, whether have you any ledger-book or books belonging to the late priory called Colne Priory, and where are the same, and how came you to the custody or possession thereof?

6 Item, whether have you any book or books wherein are registered all or most part of the leases which have been heretofore made by the plaintiff, and where are the same book or books, and how came you to the custody or possession thereof?

Rogerus Harlakenden iuratus 18 Februarij 1599 [=1600] Matthaeus Carew
Edward Hubberd armiger iuratus 25 Februarij 1599 [=1600]
Israell Amyce iuratus 29 die ffebruarij 1599 [=1600] Matthaeus Carew

xviij ffebruaryij xlij Elizabethe Regine [=18 February 1600]

(first part of line cut off in photocopy) Curiae Capta per Othonem Nicholson in Cancellarie Examinatorem [=of the Court, taken by Otho Nicholson, Examiner in Chancery]

Roger Harlakenden of Earls Colne in the county of Essex, esquire, of the age of 56 years or thereabouts, sworn etc.

1 Interrogatory. That he hath heard much speech of the book called the black book whereof mention is made in this interrogatory and wherein should be contained, as the report goeth, evidences concerning the now complainant's office of Great Chamberlain of England with the fees and other things belonging to the same, and all or the most part of

Modern spelling transcript copyright ©2010 Nina Green All Rights Reserved
http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/

the lands, tenements and hereditaments that came and descended to the said complainant, and hath also heard that great enquiry hath been of late and divers years past made for and about the same book by the officers and servants of the said complainant, the right honourable the Earl of Oxon, but saith as for his own part that to his knowledge and remembrance he never saw the said book, nor ever had the same in his custody or possession, neither doth he know nor can certainly think in his conscience where the same book is or what is become of it, nor could ever come to the knowledge or understanding thereof.

2 That he hath heard by some uncertain reports that one Israel Amyce did deliver the said black book to the late Earl of Leicester and that he should burn it, but saith that he never heard it so reported by any that could speak thereof of his own knowledge to this deponent's remembrance.

3 That he doth acknowledge that he hath in his custody and possession some evidences and writings which do concern lands which this deponent hath bought of the said complainant, and also (illegible line) said complainant's lands and not by him sold unto this deponent, the certainty(?) whereof he now remembereth not, but for more certainty therein referreth himself to his answer made to the said complainant's bill, neither doth he, this deponent, certainly know where the said evidences and writings do at this present remain for that he keepeth not his evidences and writings in one certain place, but in divers several places.

4 That he hath in his custody certain charters or evidences which, as this deponent thinketh, do concern the office of Great Chamberlain of England, as he hath already confessed in his said answer, and saith that he is at all times willing and ready to deliver the same upon sufficient discharge and security in that behalf.

5 That to his knowledge he hath not any ledger-book or books belonging to the late priory called Colne Priory other than such as he hath lawfully conveyed unto him, as he taketh it, by virtue of certain purchases made by this deponent of the said complainant or such as this deponent was by special warrant from the said complainant to deliver over to the late Lord Treasurer of England and other purchasers of some of the said complainant's lands, some whereof this deponent did deliver over according to the said warrant, and others he retained in his keeping by appointment of the said late Lord Treasurer for his use, and more to that article he cannot certainly depose than he hath already deposed in his said answer, whereunto he referreth himself.

6 That as touching any book or books wherein are registered all or the most part of the leases which have been heretofore made by the said complainant, the right honourable the Earl of Oxon, as the article intendeth, he, this deponent, doth not certainly know whether he hath any such book or not, neither doth he take himself bound by the order of this honourable Court to make any answer touching the same for that no such matter is contained in the said complainant's bill to this deponent's now remembrance, and more etc.

Modern spelling transcript copyright ©2010 Nina Green All Rights Reserved
http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/

Roger Harlakenden

(first lines partly cut off in photocopy)

Edward Hubberd [of Stansted Mountfitchet in the county of Essex, esquire?], of the age of 59 years or thereabouts, sworn, etc.

1 Interrogatory. That he remembereth well that for divers years past (the certain time he cannot set down), he, this deponent, with others in perusing of divers evidences, books & writings of the said complainant at his Lordship's then lodgings in Broad Street, London, did see a certain book called the black book, which he taketh to be the book mentioned in this interrogatory, and for further answer to that article he referreth himself to his answer lately made upon his oath unto the complainant's bill exhibited against this deponent and others in this honourable Court wherein this deponent hath declared the full truth of his knowledge, and further he cannot depose.

2 That he knoweth not, but hath heard a speech (but whether from Mr Amyce, articulate, or from else he remembereth not certainly, but thinketh it was from Mr Amyce himself), that he, the said Mr Amyce, speaking of the said book, should or did use these or the like words, viz., 'I pray God my Lord of Leicester have not gotten it and burned it because of my Lord's title to the stewardship of the Forest', and this deponent further saith that he could wish, for the plaintiff's better satisfaction & for the finding out of the said book, that one Mrs Golding, late wife of George Golding, esquire, the plaintiff's late auditor, were caused to search her studies where her said late husband's books & writings are kept for the said black book, and also that John Maynars [=Mynors?], sometimes his Lordship's solicitor for his law causes, were examined touching the said book, and further to that interrogatory he cannot depose anything materially.

3 That, as he taketh it, he hath sufficiently answered the contents of this interrogatory in his said answer to the plaintiff's bill, and therefore forbeareth to make any further answer thereunto.

[4] As to the next precedent interrogatory he hath formerly deposed, or to that effect, and further answer to that interrogatory he forbeareth to make.

5 That he hath not any ledger-book or books belonging to the late priory called Colne Priory as by the article is intended, and therefore to that interrogatory he cannot further depose.

6 That he hath not any such book or books as is or be spoken of in this interrogatory, but saith that during the time of this deponent's service with the plaintiff, he, this deponent, for his own remembrance did take brief notes of divers leases made by the complainant, as well before the time of this deponent's said service as during the time that this

Modern spelling transcript copyright ©2010 Nina Green All Rights Reserved
http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/

deponent did serve his Lordship, which notes this deponent hath still in his own keeping, and more etc.

Edward Hubberd

(top line cut off in photocopy)

29 ffebruarij xlij Elizabethe Regine [=29 February 1600]

Israel Amyce of Cheshunt in the county of Hertfordshire, esquire, of th' age of 63 years or thereabouts, sworn etc.

1 Interrogatory. That to his remembrance or knowledge he never saw the book called the black book in the same interrogatory mentioned, nor ever had the same in his custody or possession, nor did ever deliver the same to any person or persons whatsoever, nor can any way tell where the same book now is.

2 That he is that Israel Amyce of whom mention is made in this interrogatory, and by virtue of his oath deposeth and saith that he did not deliver the said black book to the right honourable the late Earl of Leicester, and is fully persuaded that the said Earl, if he by any means had gotten into his Lordship's hands the said book, would not so far have dishonoured himself by wronging the right honourable Edward, now Earl of Oxenford, as either to burn the same book or to cause the same to be burned, for that this deponent doth no way see how the said Earl of Leicester could thereby have benefitted himself, and therefore this deponent saith that he doth not know nor hath heard nor doth see any cause or reason to induce him to believe that the said Earl of Leicester did burn or cause the same book to be burned as by the article is surmised.

3 That some few counterparts of leases or of bargains and sales or of both concerning lands late the said Earl of Oxford's lands and not sold by his Lordship to this deponent are of late come to the hands and possession of him, this deponent, but what they are he doth not remember, but saith that they do remain at his house at Cheshunt aforesaid, and that he is ready to deliver the same when it shall please his Honour by sufficient warrant under his Lordship's hand to demand the same, and as touching any other evidences, ledger-book or books or writings concerning any the lands sometimes the said Earl's lands, this deponent saith that to his knowledge he hath not any.

4 That he, this deponent, with Serjeant Bramthwayt [=Branthwayte], deceased, and others were appointed by the said Earl of Oxon to ride down to the Castle of Hemingham [=Hedingham] in the county of Essex where the said Earl of Oxford's evidences or a great part of them were at that time kept, and to deliver unto Sir(?) Roger Townshend, knight, deceased, and to Thomas Skinner, late alderman of London, also deceased, all such evidences as there were to be found concerning such lands as they had purchased of his Honour, and this deponent saith that he in searching for the said evidences with the rest of his associates found lying underfoot among the dust divers writings concerning the

Modern spelling transcript copyright ©2010 Nina Green All Rights Reserved
http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/

office of Great Chamberlain of England, wherewith he, this deponent, acquainted his Lordship, who willed this deponent to keep the same in his own custody, which he did accordingly until such time as his Honour commanded him to deliver the same to one Thomas Hampton with all other evidences that he, this deponent, had then in his keeping of his said Lordship's, all which he, this deponent, according to the commandment of his said Honour did deliver to the said Hampton, who afterwards delivered the same to the right honourable the late Lord Treasurer of England, as this deponent hath heard, but saith that what is now become of the same he, this deponent, knoweth not.

5 That he hath not any ledger-book or books belonging to the late priory called Colne Priory as the article intendeth.

6 That he hath had sometime in his custody the book articulate wherein were registered all or the most part of the leases which were then-tofore made by the said Earl of Oxford, and saith he came to have the same book by the delivery of George Golding, esquire, and by the appointment of the said Earl, who had then authorized this deponent to be his auditor, which book afterwards he, this deponent, by th' appointment of the said Earl, did deliver over to one Nicholas Bleake, then his Honour's servant, by whom, as this deponent hath heard, the same was after that time delivered to one Tanner, his Lordship's then solicitor, but what is now become of the same book he, this deponent, knoweth not.

per me Israel Amyce

Capta coram me Leonardo Robertson absente magistro Nicholson [=Taken before me, Leonard Robertson, in the absence of Master Nicholson]

iij Martij xlij Elizabethe Regine [=3 March 1600]

Thomas Hampton of London, gentleman, of th' age of 58 years or thereabouts, sworn, etc.

1 Interrogatory. That he never saw the book called the black book whereof mention is made in this interrogatory, nor ever had the same in his custody or possession, nor did ever deliver the same to any person or persons whatsoever, nor can tell where the same book is.

2 That he knoweth not nor hath heard it reported to his remembrance that one Israel Amyce, articulate, did deliver the said book to the right honourable the late Earl of Leicester, nor doth know nor hath heard that the said Earl did burn or cause the same book to be burned.

3 That he hath not in his custody or possession any evidences, ledger-book or books or writings that concern any the lands sometimes the now complainant's lands.

Modern spelling transcript copyright ©2010 Nina Green All Rights Reserved
http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/

4 That he hath seen and had sometime in his custody a patent or charter bearing date to his now remembrance in King Henry the First's time or in the time of King Henry the Second whereby was granted by the same King officium Camerarij nostri Alberico de Vere and to his heirs with all fees and regards belonging to the same as one Mallett sometime had the same, or to like effect, and also this deponent saith he hath had and seen an exemplification of the same grant made in or about the time of King Richard the Second, and as for any other charters concerning the same office, this deponent saith he never saw or had any to his knowledge, and further saith that he, this deponent, did by the appointment of the said complainant deliver the same charter and exemplification aforesaid to the right honourable the late Lord Treasurer of England to consider of the same, but what is now become of them this deponent knoweth not.

5 That he hath not any ledger-book or books belonging to the late priory called Colne Priory, nor doth know where any such book or books are.

6 That he hath not any book or books wherein are registered all or the most part of the leases which have been heretofore made by the said complainant, nor can tell where any such book or books are, nor more etc.

Thomas Hampton

iij Maij (rest of line cut off in photocopy)

Hugh Beeston of Holt in the county of Denbigh, esquire, of the age of 55 years or thereabouts, sworn etc.

1 Interrogatory. That to his remembrance he did never see any such black book as is spoken of in this interrogatory in any place or any man's possession, and saith that for his own part he is certain that there was never any such book in his possession.

2 That since the matter now in variance came in question he hath heard it bruited, but by whom he remembereth not, that Israel Amyce, of whom mention is made in the article, did deliver such a black book as is before mentioned unto the late Earl of Leicester, but of his own knowledge he saith he can say nothing therein, nor can further depose to this interrogatory.

3 That he hath not in his custody or possession any evidence, ledger-book or books and writings that do concern any the lands which were sometimes the complainant's, but saith that he had sometimes in his possession certain evidences concerning some such lands of the complainant's as this deponent did buy of him, which evidences he saith he did deliver over unto such persons as purchased the same lands of him, this deponent, and touching any other notes or writings concerning the complainant's lands, this deponent saith that it is likely that while he was towards his Honour during the time of this deponent's employment as his solicitor he might have sometimes in his custody some

Modern spelling transcript copyright ©2010 Nina Green All Rights Reserved
http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/

other evidences or writings to use for the behoof of the said complainant as being delivered unto him by Mr Baron, gentleman, then one of the complainant's counsel, or by one Mr Golding, his Lordship's auditor, which if this deponent had, he did presently redeliver those writings unto the said gentleman as soon as this deponent had performed the business wherein they were to be used.

4 That he well remembereth that in the time that Sir Gilbert Gerrard, knight, deceased, was her Majesty's Attorney-General, this deponent being commanded on a time by the said complainant to attend the said Mr Baron, gentleman, this deponent did see certain old writings produced which were carried by him, this deponent, unto the said Sir Gilbert Gerrard to be perused, and saith that those writings did concern the said complainant's interest in the Forest of Waltham in Essex, but whether they did concern the office of the Great Chamberlain of England or not is more than this deponent now remembereth, and therefore referreth himself unto the said writings, which were then instantly delivered by this deponent to the said Mr Baron, gentleman, then a counsellor at the law, upon his return to his chamber in the Middle Temple, of whom this deponent had received them.

5 That he hath not in his custody any book or books belonging to the late priory called Colne Priory, nor can tell where any such books are now remaining.

6 That he hath not in his custody any such book or books as this interrogatory mentioneth, nor can depose who else have any such books in his or their possession, and more etc.

Hugh Beeston

Modern spelling transcript copyright ©2010 Nina Green All Rights Reserved
http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/