

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 19 September 1581 from Leicester to Sir William More (1520-1600) of Loseley on behalf of William Hunnis (d. 6 June 1597), Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, advising that Hunnis had purchased from Richard Farrant's widow, Anne, the remainder of Farrant's lease of premises in the Blackfriars, with the implication that More should accept this *fait accompli*. For Hunnis, see the *ODNB* entry.

For the indenture dated 20 December 1576 by which More had leased 'six upper chambers' in the Blackfriars to Richard Farrant (d. 30 November 1580) for 21 years at an annual rent of £14, see Folger MS L.b.350, and Wallace, Charles William, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1912), pp. 132-6.

Although Leicester states in his letter that Anne Farrant had already sold her interest to Hunnis by 19 September, it was not until 20 December 1581 that she entered into a sublease with Hunnis and one John Newman by which they agreed to pay her £6 13s 4d a year more than she was required to pay More under the original lease.

According to Smith, *infra*, p. 150, Hunnis and Newman were more than once late in paying their rent, and on one occasion, in order to make her rent payment to More, Anne Farrant was 'forced to make humble and pitiful suit to Lord Cobham, whose mansion adjoined her property at the north, to pay her rent for her'.

Hunnis and Newman then transferred their interest to Henry Evans, who sold his sublease to Oxford, who granted it to his servant, John Lyly (1554–1606). More brought suit against Evans, and was granted possession of the property in Easter term 1584, and the first Blackfriars theatre was closed. See Wallace, *supra*, pp. 130-77; and Smith, Irwin, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse* (New York University Press, 1964), pp. 135, 148-53, 467-8.

The modern-spelling transcript below was made from the original-spelling transcript in Wallace, *supra*, p. 154.

Sir William More, whereas my friend, Mr Hunnis, this bearer, informeth me that he hath of late bought of Farrant's widow her lease of that house in Blackfriars which you made to her husband, deceased, and means there to practise the Queen's Children of the Chapel, being now in his charge, in like sort as his predecessor did for the better training them to do her Majesty service, he is now a suitor to me to recommend him to your good favour, which I do very heartily as one that I wish right well unto, and will give you thanks for any countenance or friendship you shall show him for the furtherance of this his honest request.

And thus with my hearty commendations I wish you right heartily well to fare. From the court this 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1581.

Your very loving friend,

R. Leicester

Addressed: To my loving friend, Sir William More, deliver this.