

Petition to the King (11 July 1640)

Grand Jury of Berkshire

Transcript

British Library, Harley MS 4931, ff. 66r–66v

66r

To the Kings most excellent Ma[jes]ty. The humble petition of yo[u]r Ma[jes]ties most loyall Sub[jec]ts [th]e Grand-Iury empannelled Iul. 11. 1640. to serue at [th]e generall Assizes holden for [th]e County of Berks, in [th]e behalfe of [the]mselues, & [th]e rest of [th]e body of the County.

Sheweth

That whereas yo[u]r Petitioners haue beene of late yeares, & still are much burdened with sundry grievances of diuers natures, deriving their authority from yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty, but being directly contrary to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ties lawes established in this yo[u]r Kingdome, the chiefe of [the]m pr[e]senting [the]mselues in a schedule heereunto annexed, for redresse whereof, as yo[u]r Petitioners hoped, yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty was graciously pleased about [th]e middle of Aprill last to assemble the g[rea]t Councell, commonly called The High Court of Parliam[en]t, & some 3 after to dissolue it, for want (as it seemes to yo[u]r Petitioners) of a good agreem[en]t betweene the 2 housed, & neverthelesse since the said dissolution to expresse such a fatherly care of yo[u]r poore people, [tha]t yo[u]r ma[jes]ty hath vouchsafed by yo[u]r Declara-tion to invite [the]m to [th]e powring out of [thei]r complaints into yo[u]r Princely care.

May it [the]r[e]fore please yo[u]r most excellent ma[jes]ty to take the said p[ar]ticulars into tender consideration, & to giue yo[u]r petitioners such ease [the]r[e]in, as in yo[u]r royall wise-dome shalbe fitt, & whereby it may appeare to all yo[u]r ma[jes]ties Subiects, especially to [th]os[e] of yo[u]r Ma[jes]ties most Hon[oura]ble privy Councell, & yo[u]r other officers, & ministers of Iustice, [tha]t yo[u]r ma[jes]ty is resolved to continue unto [the]m all [thei]r rights, and liberties, w[hi]ch they desired by the petition of right, & w[e]r[e] confirmed by yo[u]r ma[jes]ty in [th]e 3d yeare of yo[u]r raigne.

And yo[u]r &c.

[*Left margin:* Berks.] A Schedule of such grievances, as do most oppresse this County.

[*Left margin:*1.] The Illegall, & unsupportable charge of Shipp-mony imposed in the 5t yeare as high as ever, though [th]e Sub[jec]t was not able to pay [th]e last yeare, being but a 3d.

[*Left margin:*2.] The newe taxe of Coate, & Conduct mony, w[i]th undue meanes used to in-force the paiement of it by messengers from the Councell Table.

[*Left margin:*3.] The compelling some free men by imprisonm[en]t, & threatnings to take presse mony, & others for feare of the like imprisonm[en]ts to fosake [thei]r places of habitations, hiding [the]mselues in woods, wherby [thei]r families are left to be maintained by [th]e parish & har-vest undonn for want of Labourers.

[*Left margin:*4.] The infinite number of monopolies upon almost every thing [tha]t [th]e country-man buyes.

Besides the Easterne of this County, where yo[u]r Ma[jes]ties forrest of Windsor is particularly burdened.

[*Left margin:1.*] W[i]th [th]e unmeasurable encrease of [th]e Deare, w[hi]ch if they shall goe on so for a few yeares more, will leaue neither food, nor roome for any other creature in [th]e Forrest.

[*Left margin:2.*] W[i]th [th]e rigid execution of Forrest lawes in [thei]r extremity.

[*Left margin:3.*] W[i]th [th]e exaction of the Im[m]oderates Fees for some Officers under the L[or]d chiefe Iustice in Eire.

66v

Berks Petition Iul. 11. 1640:.

Other manuscript witnesses

- British Library, Additional MS 22959, ff. 64r–64v
- British Library, Lansdowne MS 1232, ff. 66v–67r
- British Library, Additional MS 24064, f. 9r
- Beinecke Library, OSB MSS 28, Box 2, Folder 25, item 37, 516r–v
- Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 65, ff. 135r–v
- Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.192, ff. 9r–10r
- Northamptonshire Record Office, FH2604
- Northamptonshire Record Office, IC 3574
- Northamptonshire Record Office, IC 3576
- The National Archives, SP 16/466, /42 [ff.122v–123v]

Modern print exemplars

- *Somers Tracts* (2nd ed.), vol. 4, p. –
- J.S. Morrill, *Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War, 1630-1650* (London, 1976), p. –

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/BerkshirePetition1640v2.html>