

The below letter is written by John Payn to John Paston in hope of recompense for his service to his friend John Fastolf, of which John Paston was an executor. John Payn further mentions his friend who was married to John Paston's sister, Elizabeth.

There is no record if John Paston ever helped out John Payn financially, but I expect waiting 15 years after the event, probably didn't help his cause.

Whilst reading this transcript, remember the letter is a one sided account of what happened with very little to corroborate it, especially the bit about how much John Payn lost.

The best way to read it and understand the English is to read it out loud and do it phonetically.

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#### John Payn to John Paston 1465

*RYGHT honurabyll and my ryght enterly bylovyd maister, I recomaunde me un to yow, with al maner of due reverence, in the moste louly wyse as we ought to do, evermor desyryng to here of your worshipfull state, prosperite, and welfar; the which I beseke God of his aboundant grace encrece and mayntene to his moste plesaunce, and to your hartis dssyre.*

*Pleasyth it your gode and gracios maistershipp tendyrly to consedir the grete losses and hurts that your por petitioner haeth, and haeth jhad evyr seth the comons of Kent come to the Blakheth<sup>1</sup>, and that is at xv. yer passed, whereas my maister Syr John Fastolf, Knyght, that is youre testator<sup>2</sup>, commandyt your besecher to take a man, and ij. of the beste orsse that wer in his stabyll, with hym to ryde to the comens of Kent, to gete the articles that they come for. And so I dyd; and al so sone as I come to the Blakheth, the capteyn<sup>3</sup> made the comens to take me. And for the savacion of my maisters horse, I made my fellowe to ryde a wey with the ij. horses; and I was brought forth with befor the capteyn of Kent. And the capteyn demaundit me what was my cause of comyng thedyr, and why that I made my fellowe to stele a wey with the horse. And I seyde that I come thedyr to chere with my wyves brethren, and other that were my alys and gossippes of myn that were present there. And than was there oone there, and seid to the capteyn that I was one of Syr John Fastolfes men, and the ij. horse were Syr John Fastolfes; and then the capteyn lete cry treson upon me thorought all the felde, and brought me at iiij. partes of the feld with a harrawd of the Duke of Exetter<sup>4</sup> before me in the dukes cote of armes, makyng iiij. Oyes at iiij. partes of the feld; proclaymyng opynly by the seid harrawd that I was sent thedyr for to espy theyre pusaunce, and theyre abylyments of werr, fro the grettyst traytor that was in Yngelond or in Fraunce, as the seyde capteyn made proclaymacion at that tyme, fro oone Syr John Fastolf, Knyght, the which mynysshed all the garrisons of Normaundy, and Manns, and Mayn, the which was the cause of the lesyng of all the Kyngs tytyll and ryght of an*

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Cade and his followers encamped on Blackheath on the 11th June 1450, and again from the 29th of June to the 1st July. Payn refers to the latter occasion.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Fastolf (who is dead at the date of this letter) left Paston his executor, as will be seen hereafter.

<sup>3</sup> Jack Cade.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter. During the civil war which followed, he adhered to the House of Lancaster, though he married Edward IV.'s sister. His herald had probably been seized by Cade's followers, and pressed into their service.

herytaunce that he had by yonde see. And morovyr he seid that the seid Sir John Fastolf had furnysshyd his plase<sup>5</sup> with the olde sawdyors of Normaundy and abyllments of werr, to destroy the comens of Kent whan that they come to Southewerk; and therfor he seyde playnly that I shulde lese my hede.

And so furthewith I was taken, and led to the capteyns tent, and j. ax and j. blok was brought forth to have smetyn of myn hede; and than my maister Ponyngs, your brodyr<sup>6</sup>, with other of my frendes, come and lettyd the capteyn, and seyde playnly that there shulde dye a C. or ij. [a hundred or two], that in case be that I dyed; and so by that meane my lyf was savyd at that tyme. And than I was sworn to the capteyn, and to the comens, that I shulde go to Southewerk, and aray me in the best wyse that I coude, and come ageyn to hem to helpe hem; and so I gote th'articles, and brought hem to my maister, and that cost me more emongs the comens that day than xxvijs.

Wherupon I come to my maister Fastolf, and brought hym th'articles, and enformed hym of all the mater, and counseyled hym to put a wey all his abyllments of werr and the olde sawdyors; and so he dyd, and went hymself to the Tour, and all his meyny with hym but Betts and j. [i.e. one] Mathew Brayn; and had not I ben, the comens wolde have brennyd his plase and all his tennuryes, wher thorough it cost me of my nounge propr godes at that tyme more than vj. merks in mate and drynke; and nought withstondyng the capteyn that same tyme lete take me atte Whyte Harte in Suthewerk, and there comandyt Lovelase to dispoyle me oute of myn aray, and so he dyd. And there he toke a fyn gowne of muster dewyllers<sup>7</sup> furryd with fyn bevers, and j. peyr of Bregandyrns<sup>8</sup> kevert with blew fellowet [velvet] and gylt naile, with legharneyse, the vallew of the gown and the bregardyns viijli.

Item, the capteyn sent certeyn of his meyny to my chamber in your rents, and there breke up my chest, and toke away j. obligacion of myn that was due unto me of xxxvjli. by a prest of Poules, and j. nother obligacion of j. knyght of xli., and my purse with v. ryngs of golde, and xvij. vjd. of golde and sylver; and j. herneyse [harness] complete of the touche of Milleyn<sup>9</sup>; and j. gowne of fyn perse<sup>10</sup> blewe furryd with martens; and ij. gounes, one furryd with bogey<sup>11</sup>, and j. nother lyned with fryse<sup>12</sup>; and ther wolde have smetyn of myn hede, whan that they had dyspoyled me atte White Hart. And there my Maister Ponyngs and my frends savyd me, and so I was put up tyll at nyght that the batayle was at London Brygge<sup>13</sup>; and than atte nyght the capteyn put me oute into the batayle atte Brygge, and there I was woundyt, and hurt nere hand to deth; and there I was vj. oures in the batayle, and myght nevyr come oute therof; and iiij. tymes before that tyme I was caryd abought thorough Kent and Sousex, and ther they wolde have smetyn of my hede.

And in Kent there as my wyfe dwellyd, they toke away alloure godes mevabyll that we had, and there wolde have hongyd my wyfe and v. of my chyl dren, and lefte her no more gode but her kyrtyll

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<sup>5</sup> Sir John Fastolf had a residence in Southwark.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Poyning, who, some years before this letter was written, had married Elizabeth, the sister of John Paston, was sword-bearer and carver to Cade, and was accused of creating disturbances on more than one occasion afterwards. He was slain at the second battle of St. Albans on the 17th Feb. 1461.

<sup>7</sup> 'A kind of mixed grey woollen cloth, which continued in use to Elizabeth's reign.'—Halliwell.

<sup>8</sup> A brigandine was a coat of leather or quilted linen, with small iron plates sewed on.—See Grose's *Antient Armour*. The back and breast of this coat were sometimes made separately, and called a pair.—Meyrick.

<sup>9</sup> Milan was famous for its manufacture of arms and armour.

<sup>10</sup> 'Skye or bluish grey. There was a kind of cloth so called.'—Halliwell.

<sup>11</sup> Budge fur.

<sup>12</sup> 'Frieze. A coarse narrow cloth, formerly much in use'—Halliwell.

<sup>13</sup> The battle on London Bridge was on the 5th July.

*and her smook. And a none aftyr that hurlyng, the Bysshop Roffe<sup>14</sup> apechyd me to the Quene, and so I was arestyd by the Quenes commaundment in to the Marchalsy, and there was in rygt grete durasse, and fere of myn lyf, and was thretenyd to have ben hongyd, drawen, and quarteryd; and so wold have made me to have pechyd my Maister Fastolf of treson. And by cause that I wolde not, they had me up to Westminster, and there wolde have sent me to the gole house at WyndSOR; but my wyves and j. coseyn of myn nounge that were yomen of the Croune, they went to the Kyng, and got grase and j. chartyr of pardon.*

*Per le vostre,*

*J. Payn.*

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<sup>14</sup> Fenn gives this name 'Rosse' with two long s's, but translates it Rochester, from which I presume it was written 'Roffe' for *Roffensis*. The Bishop of Rochester's name was John Lowe.