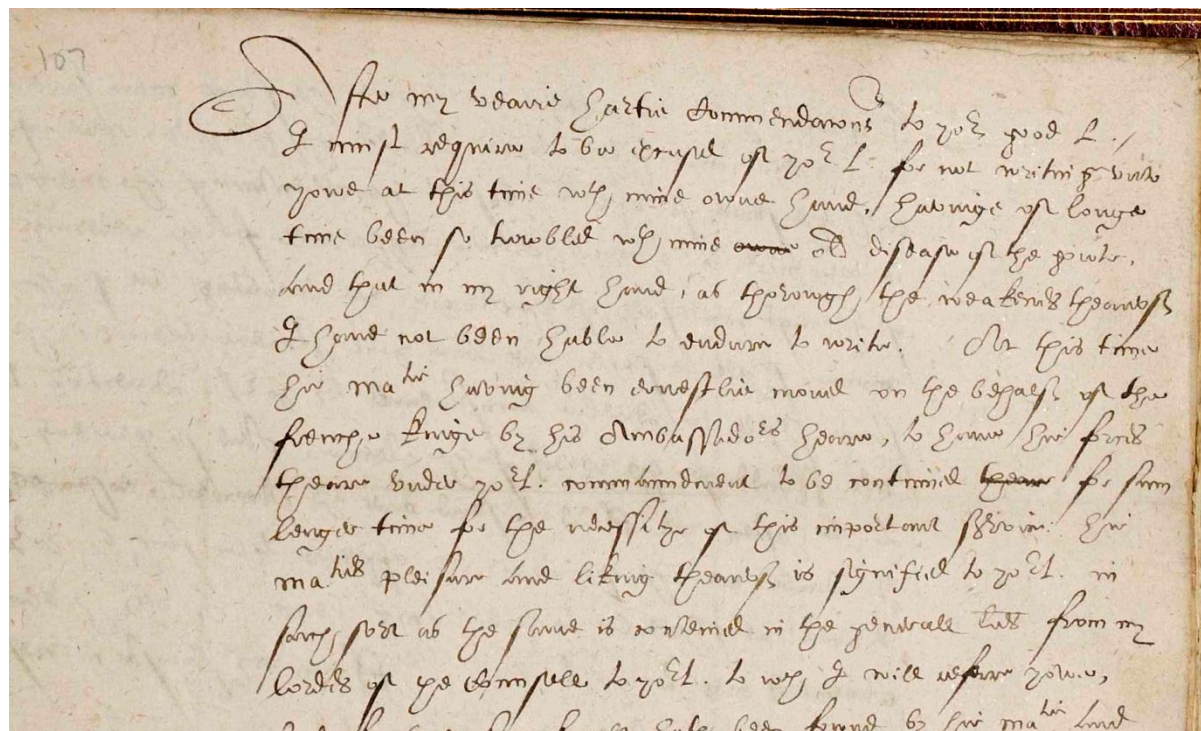


Lord Burghley is unwell

As Queen Elizabeth I's chief minister, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, was one of the towering figures of 16th century England. He was born at Bourne in Lincolnshire in 1520 and is also remembered in the county as the builder of Burghley House near Stamford.



The letter displayed here is from him to another Lincolnshire man, Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, of Grimsthorpe Castle, who at this date, 6 December 1589, was the general of an army the queen had sent to the religious civil war in France.



The bulk of the letter is about the difficulties and delays in paying the troops, but Lord Burghley begins by apologising for not writing with his own hand:

"having of long time been so troubled with mine old disease of the gout, and that in my right hand, as through the weakness thereof I have not been able to endure to write" [lines 3-6].

Gout is a very painful inflammatory arthritis of the joints. Lord Burghley suffered from it for many years until his death in the summer of 1598.

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