
SUMMARY: The document below is an undated letter written by Sir Robert Cecil to Michael Hickes after the death of Lord Burghley expressing his determination that Oxford should not be given custody of his daughters, Bridget Vere (1584-1631) and Susan Vere (1587-1629). Lord Burghley died 4 August 1598. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/92/316.

For Bridget Hussey Morison Manners Russell (1526-1601), Countess of Bedford, who after Lord Burghley's death had custody of Oxford daughters, Bridget Vere and Susan Vere, and whose grandson married Bridget Vere, see her will, TNA PROB 11/97/10.

For Michael Hickes (1543-1612), one of Lord Burghley's two principal secretaries, see the *ODNB* entry, and Barnett, Richard C., *Place, Profit, and Power: A Study of the Servants of William Cecil, Elizabethan Statesman*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 80-87.

For Henry Maynard (b. after 1547, d. 11 May 1610), Lord Burghley's other principal secretary, see the *ODNB* entry; Barnett, *supra*, pp. 94-103; his will, TNA PROB 11/118/123; and the will of his father, John Maynard, TNA PROB 11/39/39. See also TNA SP 14/45/146, f. 205 concerning Maynard's proposed purchase of Castle Hedingham.

For Thomas Bellot, Lord Burghley's steward, see Barnett, *supra*, pp. 32-40.

Mr Hickes, I thank you for your letter and for your care. As for my Lord of Oxford's claim, if Mr Bellot do but turn him to us we shall do well enough, and above all things we desire that he do say, though not swear, that such charge was given him by parol, which Mr Maynard shall witness.

For the Doctor's cavil to defeat them of their portion, God knows I never intend it, but be you sure my brother thinks so hardly to have none of the jewels as I fear me he will stand now upon all advantages, but I will never consent in such a kind to break my father's testament.

For any private things at Theobalds, good Mr Hickes, end them, for I am weary of the noise of such beggarly things as they are and will be when they are at best. I commit all to you.

Tell Mr Bellot if the Earl of Oxford should desire the custody he cannot have them of anybody, for if he look upon the deeds whereby my Lord hath conveyed them their lands, he shall find that for default of issue their land comes to the heirs of his body, nor whether he that never gave them groat, hath a second wife and another child be a fit guardian, consider you. If once my Lady Bedford were come in town we would quickly conclude. I wish Mr Bellot to have good care they be not stolen away by his means. I

would they had some honest man there while Mr Bellot's eye is absent from them. When you are there, I pray you, take order with my wardrobe that any stuff they want or anything else may be given them.

On Monday night I shall be at London, but I pray you, do not come from Theobalds without some end. I have written out mine eyes today, and therefore farewell.

Your loving friend,
Robert Cecil

Addressed: To my loving friend, Mr Michael Hicke

Endorsed: Mr Secretary 1598. The Earl of Oxford requiring the custody of his daughters upon the Lord Treasurer's their grandfather's death