

SUMMARY: The document below is a petition dating from 1602 from William Duck, keeper of the Queen's game, to Sir Robert Cecil concerning Oxford's son-in-law, William Stanley (1561 – 29 September 1642), 6th Earl of Derby, who when confronted by Duck with allegations that he had taken the Queen's partridges, threatened to run Duck through with his rapier.

LM: 1602

To the right honourable Sir Robert Cecil, knight, Principal Secretary to her Majesty

The humble petition of William Duck, Keeper of her Majesty's game

May it please your Honour, your suppliant being yesterday abroad looking to her Majesty's game about Richmond, met with the Earl of Derby in the fields, whom he very dutifully acquainted with certain words [+which?] were delivered of his Honour touching the spoiling of the said game, as well with certain partridge takers that follow the court, and his setting dog & himself in person, his Honour in a great fury said it was true, and that he would take partridge again in despite of any nobleman in England, your suppliant, replying very dutifully, told his Lordship that her Majesty gave an yearly fee for keeping of the game for her own princely pleasure, and therefore hoped his Lordship would not do so.

Whereupon his Honour in a great rage threatened your suppliant that if he came unto him again in the field whatsoever he was doing, he would run his rapier through him, all which was spoken in the presence of certain honest gentlemen of the court, viz., Mr Banister, Mr Merry, Mr Crane, Mr Ward and others.

It may therefore please your good Honour, as well for preservation of her Majesty's game as for the safety of your suppliant's life which is daily in danger of his Lordship's malice, to take such good order herein as to your Honour shall be thought fit, and he shall pray etc.