

SUMMARY: In his brief will dated 20 May 1625, Oxford's only surviving son, Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th Earl of Oxford, leaves all his lands and goods to his wife Diana (daughter of William Cecil, 2nd Earl of Exeter, and granddaughter of Oxford's brother-in-law, Thomas Cecil), whom he had married on 1 January 1624. Henry de Vere was 32 years of age when he died between 2 and 9 June 1625 of infection from a wound received on 15 May at Terheiden during the siege of Breda. He was buried on 15 July in the Chapel of St. John the Baptist at Westminster Abbey. He had no children, and was succeeded in the earldom by his second cousin Robert de Vere, 19th Earl of Oxford. According to a note in *The Complete Peerage*, although his devise of the manor of Hedingham to his wife and her heirs was *ultra vires*, she held the castle and honour until her death in 1654, at which time they passed, under a settlement made in 1609, to Elizabeth Trentham, heiress of Oxford's brother-in-law, Francis Trentham. The will of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, contains a clause entailing Hedingham to her son Henry and his heirs, and in default, to 'my said brother Francis Trentham and unto his heirs forever' (see TNA PROB 11/121, ff. 74-75v).

LM: Testamentum Honorandi viri Domini Henrici Vero nuper Comitis Oxonie defuncti

In the name of God, Amen. Forasmuch as it is the part and duty of every good Christian, the better to avoid all suits and controversies of law hereafter, in the time of his life to set his house in order and to dispose of that estate wherewithal God hath blessed him, be it known unto all men by these presents that I, Henry Earl of Oxon, being weak in body but perfect in memory and understanding, do ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form as followeth:

First, I bequeath my soul into the hands of God that gave it, desiring him of his mercy that he would graciously receive it whensoever it shall please him to take it from me;

Next, I bequeath my body to the earth from whence it was taken, in full assurance that it shall one day rise again and be partaker of life and glory with him in the heavens;

As for that worldly estate which God hath given me, since the love of my dear wife hath ever been so great unto me as that I am not able to recompense the same according to the measure of her just deserving, as also in consideration of the burden of my debts and care of my servants which I leave upon her, I do by these presents freely give unto her and her heirs forever the manor of Hedingham in Essex with all the appurtenances thereto belonging, and whatsoever goods and chattels else I have, all which my earnest will and pleasure is that she and they may enjoy after my decease in as full and ample manner as I have ever done, heartily wishing that it were much more for her sake, of whose true love and faithfulness towards me I have ever had such good experience;

And of this my last will and testament I have made the same my dear and beloved wife my sole and full executress, and in witness thereof have hereto put my hand and seal the

twentieth of May anno Domini 1625, and of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Charles of Great Britain, France and Ireland the first. Oxenford.

In the presence of these whose names are underwritten. Dudley Carleton, Dudley North, H. Vane, Horatio Vere

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud Chelsey in Comite Middlesex coram venerabili viro Domino Henrico Marten Milite legum doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis Magistro Custode sive Commissario legitime constituto decimo sexto die Mensis Iulij Anno domini Millesimo sexcentesimo vicesimo quinto Iuramento prenobilis et honorande femine domine Diane Comitisse dotisse Oxonie Relicte dicti defuncti et executricis in huiusmodi Testamento nominate Cui Commissa fuit Administracio bonorum iurium et Creditorum dicti defuncti de bene et fideliter Administrando eodem Ad sancta dei Evangelia Iurate Examinatus

[=The above-written will was proved at Chelsea in the county of Middlesex before the worshipful Sir Henry Marten, knight, Doctor of the Laws, Master Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted on the sixteenth day of the month of July in the year of the Lord one thousand six hundred twenty-five, by the oath of the right honourable and honoured lady, Lady Diana, Countess Dowager of Oxford, relict of the said deceased and executrix named in the same will, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same. Examined.]