

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 28 April 1599 from Bridget (nee Hussey) Morison Manners Russell, Dowager Countess of Bedford, to Sir Robert Cecil (1563-1612). At the time the letter was written, Oxford's daughter, Bridget Vere (1584-1631), was living with the Dowager Countess at Chenies in Buckinghamshire, and as indicated in the letter, was to be married there to the Countess' grandson, Francis Norris (1579-1622), 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Berkshire.

For a letter dated 21 April 1599 on the same topic, see TNA SP 12/270/91, f. 159.

For letters concerning negotiations in 1597 for the marriage of Bridget Vere and William Herbert (1580-1630), 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Pembroke, eldest son and heir of Henry Herbert (c.1538-1601), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Pembroke, see TNA SP 12/264/84, f. 117; TNA SP 12/264/85; TNA SP 12/264/106; and TNA SP 12/264/111, f. 151.

The Dowager Countess was born Bridget Hussey (1525/6-1601), the eldest daughter of John Hussey (1465/6-1537) of Sleaford, Lincolnshire, and his second wife, Lady Anne Grey. Bridget Hussey married firstly, Sir Richard Morison (c.1510-1557); secondly, Henry Manners (1526-1563), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Rutland; and thirdly, Francis Russell (1526/7-1585), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Bedford.

By her first husband the Dowager Countess was the mother of Sir Charles Morison (1549-1599); Jane Sibylla Morison (1552-1615), who married Edward Russell (d.1573), eldest son and heir of Francis Russell (1526/7-1585), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Bedford, and secondly, Arthur Grey (1536-1593), 14<sup>th</sup> Baron Grey of Wilton; and Elizabeth Morison, who married firstly, William Norris (d. December 1579), and secondly, Henry Clinton (1539-1616), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Lincoln. By her first husband, William Norris, Elizabeth Morison was the mother of Oxford's son-in-law, Francis Norris (1579-1622), 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Berkshire. See also the will of the Dowager Countess in which she refers to 'Francis Norris, son of my daughter, Lady Elizabeth, Countess of Lincoln', TNA PROB 11/97/10.

For the Dowager Countess, see also TNA SP 12/270/82, f. 147. For the Morison tombs in the Church of St Mary the Virgin in Watford, Hertfordshire, see Brayley, Edward Wedlake, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, (London: Thomas Maiden, 1808), Vol. VII, pp. 299-303 at:

<https://archive.org/details/beautiesengland28braygoog/page/n339/mode/2up>

Sir, I have now fully resolved to take such course for effecting of this marriage as yourself have appointed, and to have it kept in this place, only desiring that (considering you wish it private, which well agrees with my own disposition) if any offence be taken by friends of either part, you will take upon you the excuse, as better able to undertake that burden than I am, and for my own part I will not look for any guests but such as you shall be pleased to invite and bring with you to keep you company, as I have acquainted

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my Lady Bridget, whom I find so pliant to your will as she seems best pleased with whatsoever you shall think good to prescribe, and in all other her actions & carriage so honourably and virtuously inclined as I do (I assure you) receive exceeding comfort in her company. And so commending my best wishes to yourself, and you to the happy protection of the highest, I end. Chenies, this 28 of April 1599.

Your ever assured friend,

Bridget Bedford

Endorsed: (1) To the right honourable Sir Robert Cecil, knight, Principal Secretary to her Majesty, deliver these; (2) 28 April 1599, Lady Bedford to my Master.