

SUMMARY: In the letter below dated 8 March 1588, Lord Burghley directs Thomas Fanshawe, Remembrancer of the Exchequer, to make process for the sheriff of Essex to extend (i.e. take into the Queen's hands) the castle and parks of Hedingham for an old debt of Oxford's father's. From the *OED*:

extend

a. Law. To take possession of by a writ of extent; to seize upon (land, etc.) in satisfaction for a debt; to levy upon.

By extending against the property, Lord Burghley says he hopes to save the castle from 'utter spoil' and preserve the timber in the parks. Lord Burghley does not identify those who are spoiling the castle and cutting down the timber. However the perpetrators were likely tenants and others emboldened by Oxford's financially straightened situation.

For a summary of the complicated transactions between Oxford and the Queen involving Castle Hedingham, see TNA CP 25/2/135/1725/34ELIZIEASTER, Item 44.

The bearer of the letter to Fanshawe is stated to have been Thomas Hampton, who proved himself untrustworthy in other dealings with Oxford's properties.

After my hearty commendations. Whereas there is an old debt depending upon my Lord of Oxford for the debt of his father, as this bearer Hampton shall better inform you, I pray you forthwith to make forth process to the Sheriff of Essex to extend the castle and parks of Hedingham, which I do for the saving the said castle from utter spoil and the preserving of the timber there. And for the manner of this extent I pray you to receive information from this bearer, and of the lands with the castle to be extended. So fare you well.

From the court this 8th of March 1587 [=1588]
Your very loving friend,
W. Burghley

Mr Fanshawe