

SUMMARY: The documents below are Oxford's deed of 3 July 1587, signed and sealed by the Earl, by which he granted Castle Hedingham to the Queen, his bond of the same date in the amount of £4000 to guarantee his performance of the conditions in the deed, and the fine of 6 October 1587 by which clear title to Castle Hedingham passed to the Queen. For another copy of the fine, see TNA CP 25/2/133/1707/29/30ELIZIMICH, Item 45.

The background to Oxford's deed below was the attainder and execution for treason on 21 September 1586 for his participation in the Babington plot of Edward Jones of Plas Cadwgan, Denbighshire, the son of Edward Jones, tailor to Queen Mary, Master of the Wardrobe to Queen Elizabeth, and Sheriff of Denbighshire in 1576. As a result of Jones' attainder, his lands and goods had escheated to the Queen. The Queen was in the process of negotiating the grant of some portion of them to Oxford when Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham exchanged correspondence on the subject on 5 and 13 May 1587 (see TNA SP 12/201/16, f. 28; BL Lansdowne 53/45, f. 102; and TNA SP 12/201/3, ff. 4-6). All three letters are here reproduced for the background they provide to Oxford's deed below:

5 May 1587, Lord Burghley to Sir Francis Walsingham:

Sir, although I am sure that you will not omit any convenient time to move her Majesty to assent that her Majesty's gift to my Lord of Oxford of Edward Jones' lands and goods might be perfected, yet I was so vexed yesternight very late by some grievous sight of my poor daughter's affliction whom her husband had in the afternoon so troubled with words of reproach of me to her, as though I had no care of him as I had to please others, naming Sir Walter Raleigh and my Lord of Cumberland whose books I had speedily solicited to pass, as she spent all the evening in dolour and weeping, and though I did as much as I could comfort her with hope, yet she being as she is great with child and continually afflicted to behold the misery of her husband and of his children to whom he will not leave one farthing of land, for this purpose I cannot forbear to renew this pitiful case, praying you to take some time to have her Majesty's resolute answer.

And for your instruction to inform her Majesty of the valor of the gift, I do send you a bill containing the true state thereof, and I am privy that there hath been laid out above £100 by the Earl's solicitor at my request, above £120 for the charges of sundry inquisitions and commissioners to search out the truth of the things sought with great labour to be concealed, which money I fear must fall to my lot to pay.

No enemy I have can envy this match, for thereby neither honour nor land nor goods shall come to their children, for whom, being 3 already to be kept and a 4th like to follow, I am only at charges even with sundry families in sundry places for their sustentation, but if their father were of that good nature as to be thankful for the same I would be less grieved with the burden.

And so I will end an uncomfortable matter this 5th of May 1587.

*Yours most assured,
W. Burghley*

If her Majesty would have Jones' wife considered, it may be provided that she shall have an annuity of £30 per annum.

13 May 1587, Sir Francis Walsingham to Lord Burghley:

I have acquainted her Majesty with the contents of my Lord of Oxford's late letter, whom I found willing to pass his suit upon condition that he shall assure unto Jones his widow an annuity of thirty pounds during her life, to go out either of these lands or of some other lands of his Lordship that she shall like of, and that where her Majesty meant the grant should have passed only to my Lord and to th' heirs of him and my Lady, your daughter, only, his Lordship, desiring to have the same to his heirs general in respect of his advantage in the sale, shall assure to the Crown in remainder so much of some other of his lands, wherefore it may please your Lordship to cause the book to be drawn accordingly.

13 May 1587, Lord Burghley to Sir Francis Walsingham:

Sir, I heartily thank you for your care had of my Lord of Oxford's cause, wishing his own care were the like to convert her Majesty's goodness to his own benefit and in some part for his children, being three daughters to be seen and pitied, and a 4th in his wife's body at hand shortly also with like pity to be seen. I find that he hath a meaning to make present sale of these lands to be given, wherein sometime he saith he will follow my advice, which was to convert the money to the redemption of some of his own lands sold, which I know may be done, to be left amongst his poor children, with whom during my life he neither is nor shall be charged.

He himself would have these lands to be granted from her Majesty in the name of 2 others, for otherwise they will be liable to his debts at all times, for the grant of £30 annuity to Jones' wife may be very well done out of the lands that Jones redeemed, having been her father's, whereof Mr Attorney may take care.

For the limitation of a reversion to the crown of other lands of his own to the value of these which he shall have of the Queen's Majesty's grant, I think the bargain hard for his heirs, whosoever they shall be, to have the fee simple of lands of an undoubted title to be granted for these now escheated, but for mine own part, I could be content that all the lands that he hath were tied for the fee simple to the Crown.

Concerning this latter clause, I mind to send for one Beeston whom my Lord useth at this day, and to cause him to wait upon you for to determine of the proceeding therein.

When the form is agreed on, I must pray you that my Lord of Oxford may perceive that the making of the books may be directed from you as by her Majesty's order to Master

Attorney, for anything directed by me is subject to his lewd servants, who still undo him with flatteries. I have had by grievous anguish this night a sharp ague, and at this time have an idle head, unfit for any matter but to melancholy cogitations, out of which [].

13 Maij 1587

*Your most assured,
W. Burghley*

On 1 July 1587, the Queen granted lands which had come to her through the attainder of Edward Jones to the value of £218 19s to Oxford's brother-in-law, Robert Cecil, and Oxford's servant, Hugh Beeston, for Oxford's benefit (see TNA C 66/1291, mm. 5-7). As noted in Lord Burghley's letter above, the use of Cecil and Beeston as intermediaries was necessary to prevent the Queen's grant to Oxford from falling into the hands of Oxford's creditors.

By his deed of 3 July 1587 below, Oxford acknowledged this grant, and in consideration of it, granted the honour of Hedingham (i.e. Castle Hedingham) to the Queen on condition that she would regrant it to Oxford and the heirs of his body by his wife, Anne Cecil, with remainders over for default of such issue. At the date of Oxford's deed, 3 July 1587, the heirs of Oxford's body by Anne Cecil were his four daughters, Elizabeth, Bridget, Frances and Susan (b. 26 May 1587). Absent Oxford's deed, Castle Hedingham, the ancient seat of the Oxford earldom, would have passed on Oxford's death without male heirs to his cousin Hugh de Vere, the eldest son and heir of Oxford's uncle, Aubrey de Vere (d.1580), either by the ancient entail or by the 16th Earl's indenture of 2 June 1562 (see TNA C 54/626). As agreed, Queen Elizabeth regranted Castle Hedingham to Oxford, with remainder to the heirs of his body by Anne Cecil, by letters patent dated 18 November 1587 (see TNA C 66/1318, mm. 14-15).

Anne Cecil died the following year, on 5 June 1588. Three years later, on 18 May 1591, Oxford wrote to Lord Burghley, concluding his letter with mention of his hope to be able to provide financially for his children:

So shall my children be provided for, myself at length settled in quiet and, I hope, your Lordship contented, remaining no cause for you to think me an evil father, nor any doubt in me but that I may enjoy that friendship from your Lordship that so near a match, and not fruitless, may lawfully expect. Good my Lord, think of this, and let me have both your furtherance and counsel in this cause for, to tell truth, I am weary of an unsettled life, which is the very pestilence that happens unto courtiers that propound to themselves no end of their time therein bestowed. Thus committing your Lordship to Almighty God, with my most hearty thanks and commendations, I take my leave this 18th of May.

In December 1591, Oxford remarried. Before embarking on this new phase of his life, Oxford sold Castle Hedingham to Lord Burghley for the benefit of Oxford's three surviving daughters by Anne Cecil (Frances having died in September 1587). For the Queen's licence dated 2 December 1591 authorizing Oxford to alienate the manors of Castle Hedingham and Gosfield to Lord Burghley and to Oxford's daughters Elizabeth,

Bridget and Susan Vere, see TNA C 66/1392, mm. 30-31. For the fine in the Court of Common Pleas dated 25 November 1591 by which Oxford transferred clear title to Castle Hedingham to Lord Burghley and his heirs, see TNA CP 25/2/135/1723/33/34ELIZIMICH, item 74. For the pardon of alienation dated 27 January 1592 by which the Queen pardoned Lord Burghley for his purchase of Castle Hedingham in Michaelmas term 1591 with having obtained prior licence from the Queen, see TNA C 66/1387, m. 31. For the fine dated 9 April 1592 by which Oxford and his second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, transferred legal title to Castle Hedingham and Gosfield to Lord Burghley and his heirs and Oxford's daughters Elizabeth, Bridget and Susan, see TNA CP 25/2/135/1725/34ELIZIEASTER, Item 44.

See also SP 46/34, f. 183, and TNA SP 46/35, f. 28.

To all Christian people to whom these presents shall come, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, sendeth greeting in Our Lord God everlasting. Know ye that the said Earl, for and in consideration of a gift and grant made and given by our Sovereign Lady the Queen's Majesty unto Robert Cecil, esquire, and Hugh Beeston, gentleman, servant unto the said Earl, at the humble suit of the said Earl, of the land and goods which came unto our said Sovereign Lady by the attainder of Edward Jones, late of Cadogan in the county of Denbigh, esquire, and to the end that lands and tenements of the clear yearly value of two hundred eighteen pounds nineteen shillings or above may be conveyed and assured unto our said Sovereign Lady to the intent the same should be reassured unto the said Earl of Oxenford in such manner and form and with such remainders over as hereafter in these presents is mentioned, hath granted, enfeoffed, bargained, sold and confirmed, and by these presents for him, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns doth grant, enfeoff, bargain, sell and confirm unto the same our Sovereign Lady all that the honour of Hedingham in the county of Essex, with all the parks, grounds, lands, tenements, liberties, franchises and hereditaments thereunto belonging;

And all those services, customary lands, and rents belonging to the castle called Hedingham at Castle, as well of the upland as of the borough;

And all the profits of courts & leets there;

And all that the Great Park belonging or appertaining to Hedingham at Castle aforesaid containing by estimation six hundred acres;

And all that park called the Castle Park with the orchard, the hop-garden and the dovehouse to Hedingham at Castle aforesaid belonging or appertaining;

And all that little park with the meadow called Little Park meadow and Constable meadow belonging or appertaining to Hedingham at Castle aforesaid;

And all and singular other the lands, tenements, franchises, liberties, profits, commodities, services and hereditaments whatsoever of the said Earl's situate, lying or being in or within the towns, fields, parishes and hamlets of Hedingham at Castle, Maplestead Magna, Yeldham Parva and Gestingthorpe in the said county of Essex, or in or within any of them;

And all those customary lands and rents belonging to [obscured by fold in page] Gosfield, Nether Yeldham, and Toppesfield in the said county of Essex;

And all other the lands, tenements, franchises, liberties, profits, commodities, services and hereditaments whatsoever of the said Earl situate, lying or being in or within the towns, fields, parishes or hamlets of Hedingham Sible, Gosfield, Nether Yeldham and Toppesfield in the said county of Essex, or in any of them;

And all that farm called or known by the name of Shetleford with the lands and tenements thereunto belonging, situate, lying or being in or within the towns, fields, parishes and hamlets of Stambourne, Nether Yeldham and Toppesfield in the said county of Essex;

And all that the farm called Parkes with the lands, tenements and hereditaments thereunto belonging, situate, lying and being in or within the towns, fields, parishes and hamlets of Gestingthorpe, Maplestead Magna and Over Yeldham in the said county of Essex;

And all other the lands, tenements, franchises, liberties, profits, commodities, services and hereditaments whatsoever of the said Earl situate, lying or being in or within the towns, fields, parishes and hamlets of Stambourne, Nether Yeldham, Toppesfield, Gestingthorpe, Maplestead Magna and Over Yeldham or in any of them in the said county of Essex;

And all and singular messuages, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services, knights' fees, advowsons, courts, leets, view of frankpledge, parks, warrens, wastes, void grounds, commons, fishings, liberties, privileges and hereditaments whatsoever with all and singular their appurtenances to the said honour, farms, lands, tenements and other the premises or to any part or parcel thereof belonging or appertaining or reputed, taken, used, demised, occupied or enjoyed as part, parcel or member thereof or of any part thereof;

And the reversion and reversions whatsoever of all and singular the same premises and of every parcel thereof;

To have and to hold the foresaid honour, lands, tenements and all and singular the premises with the appurtenances whatsoever unto our said Sovereign Lady the Queen, her heirs and successors, to the only use and behoof of the same our said Sovereign Lady, her heirs and successors, forever;

To the intent, nevertheless, that her Majesty, her heirs or successors, shall regrant the same honour, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services, knights' fees, advowsons, courts, leets, view of frankpledge, parks, warrens, commons, wastes, waste grounds, fishings, liberties, privileges and hereditaments and all and singular other the premises with th' appurtenances unto the said Earl of Oxenford and the heirs of the body of the said Earl begotten on the body of the Lady Anne, now wife of the said Earl;

And for default of such issue to the heirs of the body of the said Earl lawfully begotten;

And for default of such issue to the heirs of the body of the said late Earl of Oxenford, deceased, father of the said Earl;

And for default of such issue to Aubrey Vere, one of the uncles of the said Earl of Oxenford and to the heirs of his body lawfully begotten;

And for default of such issue to Robert Vere, one other of the uncles of the said Earl and to the heirs of his body lawfully begotten;

And for default of such issue to Geoffrey Vere, one other of the uncles of the said Earl and to the heirs of his body lawfully begotten;

To be holden of the same our Sovereign Lady the Queen, her heirs and successors, by the fortieth part of a knight's fee;

And the said Earl of Oxenford for him, his heirs, executors and administrators, doth covenant and grant to and with our said Sovereign Lady the Queen, her heirs and successors, by these presents that all and singular the said honour, lands, tenements and other the premises before by these presents granted unto our said Sovereign Lady the Queen's Majesty, her heirs and successors, are and from time to time from henceforth shall or may continue to the Queen's Majesty, her heirs, successors and assigns, of the clear yearly value of two hundred eighteen pounds nineteen shillings over and above all charges and reprises, and that also clearly acquitted, exonerated, discharged or otherwise by the said Earl of Oxenford, his heirs or assigns, sufficiently saved harmless of and from all and all manner former bargains, sales, grants, dowers, jointures, uses, forfeitures, recognizances, charges and encumbrances, whatsoever they be, heretofore had, done, made or committed by the said Earl of Oxenford, all leases for term of years now to come and unexpired or for three lives or under, and grants by copy of court roll for term of life, lives or in fee according to the custom or any part thereof upon all which so much yearly rent is reserved as shall make up in the whole de claro above all charges and reprises two hundred eighteen pounds nineteen shillings;

And the said Earl of Oxenford doth further covenant, promise and grant for him, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, to and with our said Sovereign Lady the Queen's Majesty, her heirs and successors, by these presents that the said Earl of Oxenford, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, shall and will at all times and from time to time hereafter at the will and pleasure of her said Majesty, her heirs and

successors, make, do, knowledge and suffer to be made, done and knowledged all and all manner of other act and acts, thing and things, whatsoever for the better assurance of all and singular the premises unto our said Sovereign Lady the Queen's Majesty, her heirs and successors, as by her Highness' counsel learned in the laws shall be reasonably devised or advised;

And also the said Earl of Oxenford doth by these presents covenant, promise and grant to and with our said Sovereign Lady the Queen's Majesty, her heirs and successors, that all conveyances or assurances by him, the said Earl, his heirs or assigns, hereafter to be had or made for or touching the premises or any parcel thereof to our said Sovereign Lady, her heirs and successors, shall be and continue to the only use and behoof of our said Sovereign Lady the Queen, her heirs and successors, forever;

In witness whereof the said Earl of Oxenford to these presents hath put to his seal, given the third day of July in the nine and twentieth year [=3 July 1587] of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Edward Oxeford

Recognitum coram me Iohannem Hone in Cancellaria magistro decimo septimo die mensis supradicti et anno supradicto Iohannes Hone [=Acknowledged before me, John Hone, Master in Chancery, on the seventeenth day of the month abovesaid & in the year abovesaid. John Hone]

primo die marcij 1587 Irrotulatum per Iohannem Hill Auditorem [=Enrolled on the first day of March 1587 [=1 March 1588] by John Hill, auditor]

Nouerint vniuersi per presentes me Edwardum Comitem Oxonie teneri et firmiter obligari serenissime domine nostre Elizabethe Regine in quatuor mille libris bone et legalis monete Anglie Solvendis eidem domine nostre Regine heredibus et Successoribus suis Ad quam quidem solucionem bene et fideliter faciendam Obligo me heredes executores et Administratores meos firmiter per presentes Sigillo meo sigillatum datum tertio die Iulij Anno Regni dicte domine nostre Elizabethe dei gracia Anglie ffrancie et Hibernie Regine fidei defensoris &c vicesimo nono.

[=Know all men by these presents that I, Edward, Earl of Oxenford, am held and firmly bound to our most serene Lady Queen Elizabeth in four thousand pounds of good and lawful money of England, to be paid to the same our Lady the Queen, her heirs and successors, for which certain payment well and faithfully to be made I firmly bind myself, my heirs, executors, and administrators by these presents. Sealed by my seal, dated the third day of July in the twenty-ninth year [=3 July 1587] of the reign of our said Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc.]

The condition of this obligation is such that if the above-bounden Edward, Earl of Oxenford, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, do well and truly perform, fulfil and accomplish all and every the covenants, articles and agreements specified, mentioned and declared in one deed made by the said Earl unto our said Sovereign Lady the Queen bearing date the day of these presents which on the part and behalf of the said Earl are to be performed, fulfilled and kept, that then this present obligation to be void and of none effect, or otherwise to continue in his full strength and virtue.

Edward Oxeford

Sealed and delivered in the presence of Hugh Beeston, Richard Locksmith

[] per Iohannem Popham

This is the fine made in the court of the Lady Queen at Westminster on the octave of Michaelmas in the year of the reigns of Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France & Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc. from the Conquest twenty-nine [=6 October 1587], before Edmund Anderson, Francis Wyndham, William Peryam & Francis Rodes, justices, & others faithful to the Lady Queen then there present, between the same Lady Queen, querent, and Edward, Earl of Oxford, deforciant, of the honour, manor & castle of Hedingham with the appurtenances, and of three hundred messuages, one hundred tofts, twenty mills, three hundred gardens, two hundred orchards, three thousand acres of land, one thousand acres of meadow, two thousand acres of pasture, one thousand acres of wood, three hundred acres of furze & heath, two hundred acres of moor, one hundred acres of marsh & forty pounds' rent with the appurtenances in Hedingham, Castle Hedingham, Sible Hedingham, Great Maplestead, Little Yeldham, Grayes, Prayors alias Bower Hall, Gosfield, Shetleford, Stambourne, Nether Yeldham, Toppesfield, Parkes, Gestingthorpe & Over Yeldham;

Whereof a plea of covenant was summoned between the same Lady Queen & the foresaid Earl in the same court, namely that the foresaid Earl has acknowledged the foresaid honour, manor, castle, tenements & rents with the appurtenances to be the right of the same Lady Queen as those which the same Lady Queen has of the gift of the foresaid Earl, and has remised and quit-claimed them from himself and his heirs to the foresaid Lady Queen, her heirs and successors, forever;

And besides the same Earl has granted for himself and his heirs that they will warrant to the foresaid Lady Queen, her heirs and successors, the foresaid honour, manor, castle, tenements & rents with the appurtenances against all men forever;

And for this acknowledgement, remission, quit-claim, warrant, fine & agreement the same Lady Queen has given to the foresaid Earl one thousand pounds sterling.

1 Hec est finalis Concordia facta in Curia domine Regine apud Westmonasterium in Octabis sancti Michaelis Anno regnorum Elizabethe dei gracia Anglie ffrancie & Hibernie Regine fidei

2 defensoris &c A conquesto Vicesimo Nono coram Edmundo Anderson ffrancisco Wyndam Willelmo Peryam & ffrancisco Rodes Iusticiarijs & alijs domine Regine fidelibus tunc

3 ibi presentibus Inter ipsam Dominam Reginam querentem et Edwardum Comitem Oxonie deforciantem de Honore Manerio & Castro de Hedingham cum pertinentijs ac de trescentis

4 mesuagijs Centum toftis Viginti molendinis trescentis gardinis ducentis pomarijs tribus millibus acrarum terre Mille acris prati duobus Millibus acrarum

5 pasture Mille acris bosci trescentis acris iamprorum & bruere ducentis acris more Centum acris marisci & quadraginta libratis redditus cum pertinentijs in

6 Hedingham Hedingham at Castle Hedingham Sibley Maplested magna yeldham parua Grayes Pryors alias Bowers Hall Gosfild Shettilford

7 Stanburne Nether yeldham Toppesfeld Parkes Gestingthorpe & Over yeldham Vnde Placitum conuencionis summonitum fuit inter ipsam Dominam Reginam &

8 predictum Comitem in eadem Curia Scilicet quod predictus Comes recognovit predicta Honorem Manerium Castrum tenementa & redditus cum pertinentijs esse ius ipsius Domine Regine Vt illa

9 que eadem Domina Regina habet de dono predicti Comitis Et illa remisit & quieteclamavit de se & heredibus suis predictae Domine Regine heredibus & successoribus suis

10 Imperpetuum Et preterea idem Comes concessit pro se & heredibus suis quod ipsi Warantizabunt predictae Domine Regine heredibus et successoribus suis predicta Honorem

11 Manerium Castrum tenementa & redditus cum pertinentijs contra omnes homines Imperpetuum Et pro hac recognicione remissione quietaclamacione Waranto fine & Concordia eadem

12 Domina Regina dedit predicto Comiti Mille libras sterlingorum

Irrotulata in dorso Clausarum Cancellarie infrascripte domine Regine sexto die Decembris Anno regni sui tricesimo per W. Herd et Iohannem Bailye Deputatus Clericis Irrotulamentorum [=Enrolled on the back of the Close [+Rolls] of the Chancery of the within-written Lady Queen on the sixth day of December in the thirtieth year [=6 December 1587] of her reign by W. Herd and John Bailey, Deputies to the Clerks of the Enrolments]

Inter Comitem Oxonie et Dominam Reginam Tercio Iulij Anno xxix [=Between the Earl of Oxford and the Lady Queen on the third of July in the 29th year]