

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter written on 13 October 1611 by Sir Thomas Lake (bap. 1561, d. 1630) to Robert Cecil (1563-1612), 1st Earl of Salisbury, concerning the claim of Oxford's son, Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th Earl of Oxford, to Havering Park.

During Queen Elizabeth's reign, Oxford's rights to Waltham Forest and Havering Park had been a subject of dispute between himself and the Queen. However on 18 July 1603, shortly after his accession, King James had restored Oxford's rights to the Forest (see TNA C 66/1612, mm. 27-8). For a description of the rights claimed by Oxford in Waltham Forest and Havering Park, see TNA SP 14/2/63, f. 160.

Shortly before his death on 24 June 1604, Oxford transferred his rights to the Forest to his first cousin, Sir Francis Vere (1560/61–1609), and his son-in-law, Francis (1579-1622), Lord Norris (see Oxford's inquisition post mortem, TNA C 142/286/165).

In the letter below Sir Thomas Lake advises Cecil that Oxford's son, the 18th Earl, has made suit to the King for his right to Havering Park, presumably hoping to take it into his own hands even though he was still underage. According to Lake, the King was reluctant to agree to the request for fear that neither the 18th Earl nor his mother, Elizabeth (nee Trentham de Vere (d.1612), Countess of Oxford, would protect the game, and was minded, once the 18th Earl came of age, to purchase his rights from him. In a letter dated 31 March 1614, however, Sir Dudley Carleton wrote to John Chamberlain advising that Sir Christopher Hatton had, in Henry de Vere's absence from England, persuaded the King to preserve his rights to Waltham Forest (see TNA SP 14/76/52).

My duty to your Lordship most humbly remembered, his Majesty hath commanded me to signify to your Lordship that my Lord Oxford hath been here this day a suitor for his right to Havering Park. His Majesty is balanced in his mind between care of his game in so fair a ground and unwillingness to do wrong. His game he doth not expect shall be well used or cared for by my Lady of Oxford, nor perhaps by her son, who both desire it but for profit. On the other side, his Majesty is loath to deny right to the meanest subject he hath, much less to a person of his rank.

His Highness therefore desireth your Lordship that for the furtherances of his own resolution my Lord of Oxford may be called and his right looked into, and His Majesty advertised how it standeth, whether so as that immediately the Earl may dispose of it, or whether during his minority it be not in his Majesty's hand, and thereby some course may be taken how both his Majesty may see his game provided for for the present time and yet do the Earl no wrong, with whom his Majesty is purposed hereafter when his years make him able to contract, to agree for the whole Forest to be taken into his own hands.

I am willed to add that, although his Majesty knoweth your Lordship to be busy enough about greater matters, yet you will not weary(?) to bestow some hours about this, seeing your could find a time to think on Arches coat.