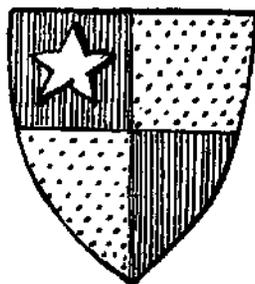


De Vere Family.

HEDINGHAM CASTLE.

Alberic de Vere came over with the Conqueror, and was rewarded with fourteen lordships in Essex and thirteen in other counties. The lordship of Hedingham belonged, in the Confessor's time, to a great Saxon noble named Ulunine, or Ulfwin, but on William, Duke of Normandy, conquering the country, he gave the lordship to Alberic, or Aubrey de Vere, one of his generals, as a reward for his services in the overthrow of Harold, and the establishing of the Norman power. This Alberic is supposed to have taken his surname from Ver, or Vere, a town in Zealand, where his family had estates. His wife was Beatrix, a niece of William I. Alberic de Vere undoubtedly sprung from a long line of brave and worthy persons, and was an important person in his time.



He was one of the chiefs or generals who came over with the Conqueror, and—what can be said of no other—his posterity flourished here after the Conquest for 630 years, in great riches, honour, and power. He was the ancestor of twenty earls of the same surname and family, “a circumstance,” says Morant, “attending, as far as we can remember, no other British noble family whatsoever.”

Besides the great office of Lord High Chamberlain and the Earldom of Oxford, hereditary dignities in this family, some of the De Veres discharged the offices of Portreeve of London, Chief Justice, Lord Chancellor, Lord High Admiral, Lord High Steward, and Constable of England. The family were noted for their piety, and for their immense riches. They founded and endowed the priories of Earls Colne, Castle Hedingham, and Hatfield Broad Oak in this county, and others in Kent and Cambridgeshire. Alberic de Vere, the first of the name in England,