

too substantial for the spoilers to attack. He appealed to William, Lord Burleigh, his father-in-law for the life of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, who was condemned to death for his indiscreet adherence to the cause of Mary Queen of Scots, being unsuccessful, Oxford declared that he would do all that he could to ruin his own wife, Anne, daughter of Lord Burleigh. Accordingly he not only forsook his wife who died in 1588, but sold and wasted the best part of his inheritance. 1572-3 he sold his estate at Hedingham to the amount of £700 a year, but it was re-purchased by his second wife, or rather widow, Elizabeth daughter of Thomas Trentham, Esq. Henry de Vere the eighteenth Earl, was the son of the former earl by his second wife. He married Diana, second daughter of the Earl of Exeter, "one of the most eminent beauties and fortunes of the time." The Earl was employed in the wars in the Netherlands, and died at the siege of Breda in 1625. His wife held the lordship in jointure, and upon her decease the estate went to the Trentham family of Staffordshire. Thus this noble family continued to enjoy the lordship of Hedingham Castle from the Conquest to 1625, viz., 558 years, the longest space of time that any family of our English nobility kept so considerable an estate. Robert de Vere, the nineteenth Earl, great grandson of Henry, was adjudged the Earldom by Parliament, and he enjoyed the honour till his death in 1632. Aubrey de Vere, the twentieth Earl, and son of the nineteenth, succeeded to the title, but dying in 1702 without issue, the title expired. With his first wife this Earl had a large fortune, and by its aid the waste caused by the seventeenth Earl was largely repaired. By his second wife the Earl had one son, who died young, and four daughters, the eldest of whom married Charles Beauclerk, Duke of St. Albans. Their third son being named "Vere" in honour and remembrance of the most ancient and honourable family from whence he was derived, was in 1750 created Baron Vere of Hanworth, Middlesex.

Of all their estates Hedingham Castle was the most important. The demesne lands were divided into three manors, "Hedingham Borough," "Hedingham Uplands," and "The Nunnery." Kirby Hall is another manor in the parish, and the possessor of this estate was John de Vere,