

THE SUFFOLK DEVEREUX: HOPES DASHED AND LIVES CUT SHORT

When Leicester Devereux (later the 6th Viscount Hereford), married Elizabeth Withipoll in 1642, he became the owner of Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich in addition to Chapmans, Sudbourne (which was becoming known as Sudbourne Hall), with their respective estates. His bride Elizabeth was the granddaughter of Sir Michael Stanhope, who had owned Sudbourne, and her father, Sir Edmund Withipoll, was the owner of the Ipswich mansion. We have seen (p7 above) that Leicester was not the first member of the Devereux family to come to this part of Suffolk. A 'Devorax esquire' (quite possibly Leicester's father Walter Devereux who eventually became the 5th Viscount Hereford) was leasing land in and around Orford from Sir Michael Stanhope in 1600. Perhaps it was he who, realizing that there were two neighbouring landowners in the area without male heirs, saw an opportunity for his sons to acquire estates. Eight years after the eldest son Leicester Devereux made his good catch, in 1650 his brother Walter Devereux married Anne Forth of Butley¹. She, like Elizabeth Withypool, was an heiress, this time to the lands of the former Butley priory. The acquisition of the Butley lands (which included another fine mansion house built beside the gatehouse of the former priory – see *Orford & District Local History Bulletin* Issue 14, 2010, p 7) must have seemed a good prize.



Butley Priory gatehouse in 1785.
The Forth family's mansion, demolished in the mid-18th century, stood to the left of the gatehouse.

This project, however, was not in fact a success. The Devereux brothers seem to have failed to make sufficient enquiries before the marriage to Anne Forth was contracted. The Butley lands were heavily mortgaged and Anne was not even entitled to live in the mansion house because her mother with her third husband, William Tyrell, had it for life. The financial situation was so dire that Leicester had to step in to help his brother and his wife by refinancing some of the Butley land. Walter and Anne had to content themselves with renting Glemham Hall for a residence, but they may have lived at Sudbourne in the early years after Walter's marriage because their first children were baptised 'at Chapmans' in 1650 and 1651. Both children died young. During the