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A NOTE ON THE REBUILDING OF KNOLE BY ARCHBISHOP BOURGHIER

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BOURGHIER's purchase of the manor of Knole from Sir William Fenys, lord Say and Seale, in 1456, is a matter of common Kentish knowledge. Since Kilburne in 1659 declared that Bourghier built there "a fair house,"¹ little more has been discovered about what really happened at Knole in the few years after this sale. Hasted amplified Kilburne to the extent of saying that Bourghier "*rebuilt* the manor-house and inclosed a park round it, and resided much at it,"² and nearly every tract about Knole since written has incorporated these words before hurrying on to more legible times. A notable exception was the Rev. W. J. Loftie, who in 1871 considered Bourghier's probable work at Knole from the architectural viewpoint.³ After studying the archæological evidence, he was able to suggest, in a paper read to the Society, that "Bourghier or his successors razed the mansion of the Says to the ground before they commenced their own erection," and to point out a number of features of the present building for which Archbishop Bourghier must have been responsible.

A little more illumination, from a rather different angle, is given by a few surviving accounts of the receiver of Otford bailiwick which are now in the Public Record Office, and it seems worth while to extract those portions which bear upon the rebuilding of Knole, and to print them below.

During the fifteenth century, the estates belonging to the See of Canterbury were divided into bailiwicks for the convenience of administration. In this scheme, Knole came under the *balliva* of Otford, whose bailiff, receiver and serjeant during Bourghier's early years at Canterbury was one John Grymesdyche. Each year the various reeves, farmers, parkers and woodwards within the bailiwick made up their accounts, and these several accounts for the year were stitched together at the top, Exchequer fashion, and rolled up into one neat roll consisting of several membranes. Most of these membranes, therefore, contain the accounts of individual places within the bailiwick, but a consolidated statement for the whole bailiwick was made up by Grymesdyche in the shape of an annual "receiver's account,"

¹ Kilburne, *Survey of Kent* (1659), p. 244.

² *History of Kent* (1797 ed.), Vol. III, p. 62.

³ *Arch. Cant.*, IX (1874), pp. xl-xliii.

and it is this which gives information about expenditure on Knole manor. Unfortunately, the series of receiver's accounts for Otford is incomplete, but enough details remain from the years 1455-6, 1462-3 and 1465-6 to show the sort of activity which was on hand at Knole.

The indenture of sale was dated 30th June, 1456, and work must have begun very rapidly on the newly-purchased house, as a glance at the account for Michaelmas 1455 to Christmas 1456 will show. The bailiff was, as it were, the archbishop's "Minister of Works" within his district. He accounted for money received for special purposes from the archbishop's treasury and elsewhere, and for money spent on materials and labour. If another officer, like Alexander Wood,¹ incurred expenditure for Knole, then such expenditure would be entered both on the receipt and the expenditure side of the Otford balance-sheet. Alexander Wood had some prepared lead carted down to Knole from the store at Lambeth which was under his supervision; accordingly, this item, worth £4 13s. 4d., is entered both under Grymedyche's "Foreign Receipts" and under his "Costs of the manor of Knole."

These accounts for the most part speak for themselves, but it is interesting to note that the roll for the first year in three distinct places usés the word *reparacio*. The manor is to be *repaired*, it seems, rather than built anew, just as the manor of Otford was in the same year under repair. At the same time, too, a new water-mill was being built at Otford, and here the operative word is *constructura*. And yet, in 1463, when accounts for Knole manor again appear, the *reparacio* has become the *novum edificium* and operations have expanded on to an altogether bigger scale, with workers in stone more in evidence than workers in wood, and the annual costs nearly quadrupled. It is impossible to recreate the archbishop's intentions, but it looks as though the first task had been to make the place habitable and, once this had been done, to begin new building in earnest. According to his register, Bourghier did not actually stay at Knole until 5th March, 1459, although it had been his for nearly three years, and not until 1464 did he begin to stop there for appreciable periods. Otford, on the other hand, housed him at frequent intervals from May, 1456, onwards. Doubtless he took opportunities to ride over and inspect the progressing work. Bourghier loved Knole more than any other of his houses (a taste with which Henry VIII was later to agree) and possibly made his permanent home there in his old age. A lost indult from Pope Sixtus IV in 1483 gave the archbishop the curious permission *permutandi suam residenciam de uno loco ad alium*.² Why such permission should have been necessary is not clear. At all events,

¹ Receiver-General for the archbishop's non-Kentish estates at this time.

² *Calendar of Papal Letters*, XIII, p. 913.

he spent increasingly long periods at Knole as he grew older, transacting business and finally dying within its walls, surrounded by the *familia* for whom he had long since built extra accommodation.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ACCOUNTS OF JOHN GRYMESDYCHE, BAILIFF AND RECEIVER OF THE ARCHBISHOP IN THE BAILLIWICK OF OTFORD¹

I. [*Michaelmas 1455 to Christmas 1456*]²

Recepta forinceca

. . . Et de £15 7s. receptis de cofferis domini, ut in precio plumbi empti super reparacione manerii de Knolle hoc anno, cum 32s. solutis per manus Johannis Lee, ut patet inferius in titulo custodie manerii de Knolle. Et de £4 13s. 4d. receptis per manus Alexandri Wode unius receptorum domini, in precio plumbi operati de stauro de Lambhithe super reparacione predicti manerii de Knolle, ut patet inferius in eodem titulo.

Summa £21 12s. 4d.

Custi manerii Knolle

Et in hujusmodi custis et expensis hoc anno factis et appositis super reparacione manerii de Knolle, quod quidem manerium dictus dominus archiepiscopus noviter perquisivit de domino de Say, ut in denariis solutis pro tegulis³ clavis⁴ sindulis⁵ calce⁶ zabulo⁷ emptis et expeditis in opere predicto ac pro sarracione meremii et asserum,⁸ cariagio dicti meremii et aliarum rerum de diversis locis usque manerium predictum simul cum conduccionem carpentarorum tegulorum plumbatorum daubatorum et aliorum operatorum et laborarorum conductorum ad opus predictum per dictum tempus hujus compoti, prout patet per percellas annotatas in quadam cedula inde facta et super hunc compotum liberata et examinata

£6 0s. 3d.

¹ The abbreviations and suspensions have been extended, and the paragraphing and punctuation made more acceptable to modern eyes. Money has been rendered into arabic numerals.

² P.R.O. S.C.6. 1129/4.

³ tiles.

⁴ nails.

⁵ shingling.

⁶ lime.

⁷ sand.

⁸ sawing of timber and planks.

A NOTE ON THE REBUILDING OF KNOLE

Et in denariis solutis de cofferis domini pro 3 foderis ¹ plumbi emptis et expenditis in opere predicto, precio singule fodere £4	£12 0s. 0d.
Et in denariis solutis per Alexandrum Wode pro 14 carectatis plumbi fusi et operati emptis et expenditis in eodem opere, precio singule carectate 6s. 8d.	£4 13s. 4d.
Et in denariis solutis de cofferis domini per manus Johannis Lee pro novo plumbo per ipsum empto Londonie et expedito in opere predicto	£1 12s. 0d.
Et soluta de eisdem cofferis domini pro traccione et liquefaccione cinerum dicti plumbi ex [?combuscione] facta cum plumbaria hoc anno	£1 0s. 0d.
Et soluti pro cariagio 3 carectatarum plumbi operati de Lambhithe usque Otford predictum, scilicet pro singula carectata, 5s.	15s. 0d.
Summa £26 0s. 7d.	

II [*Christmas 1462 to Christmas 1463*]²

Custi novi edificii manerii de Knolle

Et in diversis custis et expensis hoc anno factis et appositis circa novum edificium manerii de Knolle, prout patet per percellas annotatas in quodam alio rotulo papiri super hunc comptum liberato et examinato	£16 10s. 3½d.
Et in denariis solutis Willelmo Carpenter et sociis suis operantibus super novum edificium dicti manerii de Knolle hoc anno, prout patet [<i>etc.</i>]	£27 15s. 11d.
Et in denariis solutis Waltero Kyng et sociis suis lathamis operantibus super dictum novum edificium hoc anno, prout patet [<i>etc.</i>]	£49 8s. 4½d.
Et in denariis solutis Ricardo Deneman pro fodicione et preparacione lapidum in querrura pro dicto novo edificio sicut continetur in quadam billa indentata super hunc comptum liberata.	£10 15s. 0d.
Summa £104 9s. 7d.	

Expensa necessaria

. . . Et in denariis solutis pro scriptura percellarum dicti novi edifici apud Knolle et reparacionis manerii de Otford cum papiro pergameno et incausto pro eisdem supra scribendis hoc anno	3s. 4d.
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¹ Fother of lead = 19½ cwt.

² P.R.O. S.C.6. 1129/7.

III [1465 to 1466]¹

Custi manerii de Knolle

Et in diversis custis et expensis hoc anno factis super
facturum diversarum necessarium et complementum
diversarum domorum officiariorum ibidem erga festum
Natalis Domini, prout patet per percellas annotatas in
alio rotulo papiri super hunc computum ostenso et
examinato

£4 14s. 11d.

Summa £4 14s. 11d.

¹ P.R.O. S.C.6 1129/8.