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ON A CHARTER RELATING TO ANGLESEY ABBEY.

BY J. E. FOSTER, M.A.

In his history of Bottisham and the Priory of Anglesey published by the Society in 1873, Mr Hailstone refers at p. 260 to the letters patent granted in 1336 to Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady Clare (Foundress of Clare College), authorizing her to give to the Prior and Convent of Anglesey certain houses and lands at Great and Little Walsingham in Norfolk on condition that they found two secular chaplains to celebrate mass every day in the chapel of the Blessed Mary the Virgin recently built by the said Elizabeth within the priory.

In an inquisition held on the 9th July 1356 by the escheator for the County of Norfolk, the jurors declared that it would not damage the King's interests if the prior and convent of Anglesey should give the said messuages, &c., to the prior and convent of Walsingham, the latter rendering a rent of twelve marcs (£8) therefor, and licenses were granted accordingly.

Mr Hailstone states that this rent was paid up to the time of the dissolution, but I think this was not the case, as when the valor ecclesiasticus was made in the reign of Henry VIII the rent had been reduced to £3. 13s. 4d.

The document now brought to the notice of the Society explains this diminution.

It is a letter, No. 92 in Vol. 51 of Ancient Correspondence now preserved at the Record Office, and is an award by the Duke of York upon the question submitted to him as arbitrator between the Convents of Anglesey and Walsingham as to the amount of rent to be paid by the latter for the property conveyed to them in 1356, and also as to the amount to be paid in settlement of the arrears of the rent.

Two points arise on the document, viz. who was the Duke of York the arbitrator, and what is its date?

The first question can be immediately answered.

The only person who used the title of Duke of York and was owner of Ludlow Castle between 1356, when the property was sold to the Priory of Walsingham, and 1535 the date of the dissolution of the monasteries, was Richard Plantagenet, whose claim to the Crown caused the Wars of the Roses, and led his son to the throne as Edward IV.

He became owner of Ludlow through his mother, the daughter of Roger Mortimer, Earl of March.

The exact date of the document I am unable to fix but a probable approximation to it can be made.

The Duke was born in 1411 and was killed at the battle of Wakefield in 1460. He was absent in France from 1434 till 1437, and from June 1441 till 1445; and in Ireland from June 1449 till the end of 1450. As he was only 23 when he went on his first journey to France it is not probable that he would have acted as arbitrator between such important bodies previously to that date, and we are therefore limited to the periods from 1437 to June 1441, from 1445 to 1449, and from 1450 to 1460.

A letter numbered 212 in the first volume of Gairdner's edition of the Paston Letters may be referred to in connection with this question. It is a letter of thanks from the Duke of York to John Paston for the 'benevolence, aide, and tendre love' shewn by him at the instance of the Duke to what the Duke describes as 'our right trusty and well-beloved in God the prior and convent of the house of Our Lady of Walsingham of our patronage' in connection with the sale of certain Manors to the Earl of Warwick. The year when this letter was written is not inserted, but Mr Gairdner in his headnote states that it could hardly have been written in any year except 1454 or 1455, when the Duke was in power as Protector of the realm.

The Paston letter is interesting in connection with the present one as shewing that the Duke had close relations with the Convent at Walsingham. A statement in the *Monasticon* seems to shew that he may have had equally close relations with that at Anglesey; for Dugdale states that Edmund Mortimer Earl of March was patron in the time of Henry IV.

This nobleman was uncle of the Duke, who became entitled to the Mortimer Estates on his death without issue in 1424, and who may have taken his position as patron of Anglesey. This may explain the acceptance by the Duke of the position of arbitrator between the two convents, which would have been a fitting arrangement if he was patron of both.

The reference to Thomas Gray as Esquire to the Duke may also assist in approximating the date. The Grays were closely connected with and supporters of the Duke, and a manuscript in the Phillips collection, printed by Mr Gairdner as No. 671 of the Paston Letters, states that a Thomas Gray was knighted on the field by Edward IV after the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471. But I cannot trace a connection between him and the Esquire of the Duke of York, though they may have been the same person.

It is however equally probable that this Thomas Gray was really attached to the Bishop of Ely's household.

In the list of Judges of Assize appointed by the Bishop of Ely under his Palatine Jurisdiction appears the name of Thomas Gray as appointed in 1454. The list is in the supplement to Bentham's *History of Ely*, and it states that the Judge was the grandson of Bishop William Gray. His judicial office would have made him a proper person to be charged with this matter, and he may have been appointed Esquire to the Duke *ad hoc* or the Duke may have called him his Esquire in order to give him an official standing in the communications carried on in this matter.

The Christian name of the Bishop of Ely is not mentioned. This would have been an assistance, as Thomas Bouchier was translated to the Archbishopric of Canterbury and William Gray appointed to the Bishopric in 1454.

The following fact proves that a Thomas Gray was appointed to office in the Ely Diocese by Bishop Gray and not by Bishop Bouchier. On referring to the Court Rolls of the Manors of Elm and Wisbech preserved in the Bishops' Registry at Ely, I find that Andrew Ogard Knight was Constable till the accession of Bishop Gray in 1454, when Thomas Gray took his place.

As the messenger came from the Bishop of Ely it seems probable that he was the Thomas Gray above referred to, and that the arbitration took place after the appointment of William Gray to the Bishopric in September 1454.

Copy of letter numbered 92 in Volume 51 of Ancient Correspondence at the Record Office.

The duc of York

Right trusty and welbeloued in god We grete yow hertily wel And wol ye wite þ^t We haue but || late agoo received l^res from the Reuend fadre in god our Righte worshipful Cousin The Biffhop of Ely || And vnderstande afwel by þ^e fame as by credence to vs declared on his behalfe by our Righte trusty & || welbeloued fervant Thon^s Gray Squier the amyable trefye betwix yow & the prio^r & Conuent of our hows || of Walfyngham upon fuche variance as depende || not det^rmined as for the payement of þ^e annuitee of .|| viij .ti by the said prio^r and Conuent of Walfyngham and their predeceffours heretofore given to thexibicion || of a prest to Doo Diuin feruice & to pray for vs & our progenito^s in our howse of Anglesey of þ^e || whiche trefye & of yo^r towarde dispoficion to the good conclusion of the fame we bee right glad Leting || yow wite þ^t as for þe det^rminacion of þe annuitie of viij .ti & of the arrerages of the fame Whiche by yo^r || agreement are put to our ordonnance & awarde We considering the decays & ruyne of the landes and ten^tes || þ^t the paiement of the said annuitee shuld growe of haue ordeigned þ^t the fame prio^r & Conuent of || Walfyngh^m & their succ^effours shal bynde thann to paye & doo paye yerely for e^more at the feste of || Seint michel tharchangell þ^e some of Lxxij & iiij^d to thexibicion of a Chanoigne professed & to bee || professed in þ^e said hows of Anglesey forto miniftr^e Divin f^ouice & to pray in þ^e fame for vs & for || all our progenito^s And as for the mitigacion of tharrerages of þ^e said annuitee behinde for v yer^es || as we been credibly enformed We haue awarded & ordeigned þ^t the said prio^r and Conuent of Walfyngh^m || shal paye vnto yow betwix this & michelmas next comyng the some of x .ti f^oling in ful paiement || of the said arrerages for þ^e v yer^es abouesaid The whiche our awarde we wol þ^t ye parfome on || your part withoute any obstacle Leting yow wite þ^t we Sende vnto yow þ^e confirmacion by our || said squier aftre the copie to vs by him deliured w^t addicion of vjs viijd according vnto o^r awarde || aboue specified Geven undre our fignet at our Castel of Ludlowe þ^e xxij day of May

Endorsement

To our Right trusty and Welbeloued || in god the prio^r & Conuent of our hows of Anglesey

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