

The Coke Papers at Melbourne Hall.



THE large and valuable collection of MSS. at Melbourne Hall, that accumulated there during the period that it was tenanted by the Coke family, from which tantalising extracts have from time to time reached the outer world, are now being printed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, with exceptional fulness, from the transcripts and abstracts made by Mr. W. D. Fane, the present tenant of Melbourne Hall. The ability and long-continued labours that Mr. Fane has devoted to this toil of love are beyond all praise. Derbyshire men, of any degree of literary instinct, cannot fail to be grateful to him; and so large a proportion of that which is already printed is of direct bearing upon our national history that historical students are sure to find much fresh light thrown in these pages upon the court history of the earlier Stuart kings.

The first volume of the Coke Papers was issued in November, 1888, the second will probably come out in the summer of 1889, and the third, with index, about the end of the present year.

The first volume begins with a few papers of the time of Elizabeth; but its chief contents refer to the reigns of James I. and Charles I., ending with the year 1632. From the confidential position occupied by Sir John Coke, a large number of the letters are of great value, and we must refer readers of the *Journal* to the volume itself; but we have Mr. Fane's kind permission to extract a few of the principal passages relative to the county of Derbyshire. For the brief notes, and for the preliminary remarks about Sir John Coke (the first of the family who resided at Melbourne Hall), the Editor is responsible.

Sir John Coke, of Melbourne, was second son of Richard Coke,

of Trusley, and brother of Sir Francis Coke, of Trusley. He married (1) Mary, daughter of John Powell, of Presteign, and (2) Joan, daughter of Sir John Lee, Knight, Alderman of London, and relict of Alderman Gore. He was born on March 5th, 1563. He was educated at Westminster School, and on April 22nd, 1580, was admitted a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, being chosen Fellow of the same college in 1584. His University career was distinguished, and he for some time held the Professorship of rhetoric. It was not until he was past forty years of age that he retired into the country to live as a private gentleman, on the occasion of his first marriage. In 1613, employment was found for him in connection with the navy, and soon after he was made Secretary to the Navy. His next appointment was to the lucrative office of Master of the Requests, through the interest of his relative, Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke. In 1620, he was made Secretary of State in the room of Sir Albert Moreton; soon afterwards John Coke was knighted. In the first Parliament of Charles I., Sir John Coke was one of the representatives of the University of Cambridge. In the early Parliaments of this reign he played a distinguished part, and his speeches are fully reported in Rushworth's *Historical Collections*.

In most of the letters of this first volume of Mr. Fane's collection, he is addressed as Principal Secretary to His Majesty, and was evidently in his close confidence. Letters of his, as Secretary of State, are also to be found in the *Clarendon Papers*, and in the *Miscellaneous State Papers*, published by the Earl of Hardwick. Sir John Coke appears to have ended his public life at the close of 1639, when he was in his 77th year. He was removed by an intrigue of the Queen's to make room for Sir Harry Vane. In the spring of 1640, he moved to Melbourne, where he joined his son John, and they lived, as he states, with their wives in one house, forming "one familie." The troublous times of the Civil Wars obliged him to leave Melbourne, and he died at Tottenham on September 8th, 1644, aged eighty-two.* He seems to have

* See *Coke of Trusley, a Family History*, privately printed in 1880.

been a worthy, upright man, both in his public and private life. To the few extracts relative to Derbyshire, we have added some details of the expenditure of those days. ED.

1625, November 17, Trusley.

Sir Francis Coke to Sir John Coke, knight, one of his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council.

A remembrance of such things as were observed in the houses of Romish recusants and others suspected within the Hundreds of Morleston and Litchurch, Appletree, and Repton and Gresley in the county of Derby, at such times as the houses were searched by the Deputy Lieutenants of the said county for their arms and warlike weapons by commandment from the Lords of his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council in Novr. 1625.

First, we found no arms save such as belonged to the trained bands, which we caused to be delivered to the captains to be used in training as formerly they had been according to the Lords' letters. I conceive that either the recusants had notice of these letters before they came to us (which in truth they had), and conveyed the arms away, or else that the better sort having had their arms taken from them about ten or twelve years' since, and committed to the then Sheriff's custody had not provided others, but I rather believe the former.

At Stanley Grange, a house standing alone in Appletree Hundred, the doors were at the first shut against us, but after a little while opened, where we found only two women in the house, who gave us to understand that the Grange House belonged to one Mrs. Vause* as farmer thereof to Mrs. Lewdell† of West Hallam, dwelling within a quarter of a mile of the said Grange,

* "Mrs. Vause" was the Honourable Anne Vause, daughter of William, third Lord Vause of Harrowden. The simple explanation of all this sleeping provision at Stanley Grange was that it was used as a school for young Romanists, the sons of noblemen and gentlemen. See *Churches of Derbyshire*, vol. iv., pp. 227, 228. Surely this well-known fact must have come to the cognizance of Sir F. Coke.

† *Lewdell*, thus in the printed transcript, but it must be an error for Powtrel, the celebrated recusant family of West Hallam. See *Churches of Derbyshire*, vol. iv., pp. 220-223.

both the one and the other being notorious recusants. Upon search of the said house we found so many rooms and chambers as I have never seen in so small a content of ground, and amongst other there was two chapels, one opening into the other, and in either of them a table set to the upper end for an altar, and stools and cushions laid as though they had been lately at mass. Over the altars there was crucifixes set, and other pictures about it. There was beds and furniture for them in that little house to lodge 40 or 50 persons at the least. At Castle Gresley, within the hundred of Repton and Gresley, there was in one little house (not above two bays and low built) six gentlewomen of very good fashion outwardly and well apparelled, one of them being an ancient gentlewoman called Mrs. Tamworthy, with whom the rest sojourned; another of them was Captain Allen's wife, which Captain Allen had served the last year under the Archduchess, and was at London as she said; none of the said gentlewomen's husbands was there, save only one whose name I remember not. They were all recusants, and they had so many men and women servants and children that I marvel how they could lodge in so little a house. Every one of these gentlewomen had a riband of green and another of white silk tied in a kind of knot upon their left arm, and (as is reported) did use to give such ribands to divers of their friends and well wishers. I think these women were able to make more proselytes than twenty priests, for it is a pestilent kind of cunning at Brisselcote (not far from Castle Gresley and in that Hundred) being in the house of John Merry, gentleman, and half a mile remote from any town we found a Dutchman, by trade a painter, who was then drawing of the picture of one of these gentlewomen (which we had seen at Castle Gresley), beholding a crucifix painted before her a little higher that she might look up to it. At West Broughton (in the Hundred of Appletree), in two farmers' houses being convict recusants we saw such store of beds and other provision of butter, cheese, pork as is not usual in such men's houses. These were tenants to Sir Henry Merry. At Alkmanton in this Hundred

of Appletree, in two other farmers' houses being tenants to Mr. Barnsley we found the like.

Furthermore, for that we received notice from Mr. Levinge, a counsellor in the Inner Temple, and a gentleman of good credit, that there had been examinations taken in Leicestershire by the Lieutenant or Deputy Lieutenants there, and that one of the examinants had confessed that there had been formerly divers meetings secretly in Charnwood Forest in the county of Leicester, by the recusants, and that they intended another meeting shortly after at the house of one Steedman in Over Thurvaston in the county of Derby, or else at Hedleston Hall not far from Steedman's house, who is bailiff to Sir Henry Shirley and Sir Basil Brook of Shropshire, we thought fit to search those two houses as suspected. At Hedleston Hall we found nothing, nor no man dwelling, but the house void of a tenant. But at Bailiff Steedman's house we saw a great preparation of bedding and victuals brought in whilst we were there. And we demanding wherefore all that provision was there, Steedman told us that Sir Henry Shirley, his master, and Sir Basil Brook* were expected to come thither either that night being the 2nd of November, or very shortly after, with some others, there to hawk two or three days, but we understand since that that meeting held not by reason that Sir John Merry's house in Leicestershire, and also his house at Barton in Derbyshire, were strictly searched for arms the day before which made them forbear in respect that Sir Henry Merry should have been a principal man there as we had good cause to think.

Thus have I been bold to certify you what we observed in these papists' houses; there are many other recusants and Romish affected in these Hundreds, but of mean estate.

Further there have been divers great assemblies of great persons Romishly affected under pretence of a marriage had betwixt Mr. Thomas Eare his son, of Hassop in this county, and Sir Francis

* Proceedings against Sir Basil Brook; Journals of the House of Commons, 24 April, 1641.

Smyth's daughter, of Ashby Fallows in Com. Leicester. They and Sir Francis Englefield, the son, and Sir Thomas Trentham, and others of such fashion were at Hassop a whole week together to the number of one hundred horses. They were also at Etwall at Mrs. Langford's house there, and other places in great troops, so that the whole country took notice thereof, they grew very insolent and kept company among themselves scorning us. Sir Henry Merry refused to pay almost every payment assessed upon him for the country, so that we were forced to complain to my Lord Lieutenant, since which time he paid all but those sums assessed upon him for the soldiers that went out of this county the last winter and the last spring which still he refuseth to pay. Since I had written these letters I understand that his Majesty doth call for the arrearages of the recusants now behind and unpaid which I am glad of; but I fear the most of them will now come to the Church having dispensations from the Pope; for some of them have prevented this demand of the arrearages by coming to the Church about a month since, perhaps having notice beforehand, whereof Sir Henry Shirley is one, the worst of all being church papists. Now if anything be of use in this letter you may take notice thereof, the rest will be but your labour to weed and then to burn. We think in this country that certainly the papists have some designs in hand the latter end of this summer, whereof we hope they are prevented. For my Lord D'Eyncourt I told him how it would succeed, but I was willing that he should perceive no want in me, that I might receive so much kindness at his hands as to get from him my father's book of pedigrees, which he hath kept as you know, therefore I pray you accept this as my excuse though it be not a good one, I confess. And thus with my best love remembered to you and my sister and my prayers to God for you and all yours I take leave.*

* For many interesting particulars regarding the recusancy of the Merry's of Barton Blount, and of other Derbyshire recusants mentioned in this letter, see Mr. Foley's *Records of the Society of the English Province of Jesus*, series I. and XII., *passim*.

1624, August 15, Trusley. Sir Francis Coke to John Coke Esq., at his house in the Austin Friars, London, near Broad Street.

Baronet Kniveton desires his suit to be made in Mr. Coke's month of waiting. The Court is at Derby*—to remove to Tutbury—the Duke went from Belvoir to the new well in Wellingborough and is come again to the King at Derby.

1627, April 27, Derby. Sir Francis Coke (brother) to Sir John Coke, Knight, Principal Secretary to His Majesty.

I have longed to relate to you Sir Henry Shirley his carriage of himself after his coming down from London before Easter sessions last, and how exceedingly graced by my Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas our Judge of Assize. He bestirs himself in his place of justice both in Derbyshire and Leicestershire. We have received your letters concerning runaway soldiers and mariners, and are this day met at Derby to take order for that business. We have also received letters for musters. We conceive these things are most needful for these times.

1630, September. Sir Francis Coke [no address].

Right Honourable, I am sorry that my occasions draw me towards Chesterfield tomorrow for the musters, there being none to join Sir Peter Frecheville but myself, and we must needs be two; but God willing I will be at home again upon Saturday at the furthest, and the next day wait on you at Melbourne. . . . I suppose that at this time (your occasions drawing you away so soon) that there can be but a preparation for the matter that must in further time be effected, and I do assure myself that my cousin Gresley, my Lady Burdett's mother, will always do her best endeavours to forward it. I pray you be wary in your articles betwixt Sir William Knvyeton and you, for he holdeth but by an extent of lands of Damfort, and there are so many questions in such a holding that there may be great danger without good looking to, and the grandfather of this youth is a very perverse man.

*King James, with Prince Charles, tarried two nights at Derby on the occasion of this "progress."

1630, October 14, Trusley. Sir Francis Coke to Sir John Coke, Knight, Principal Secretary to His Majesty, at his house in Garlick Hyth, London.

My Lord of Newcastle proceeding in Nottinghamshire as he did in Derbyshire, amongst others there my son William* was questioned, when he answered for himself, that he had but a small estate, and that at the time of the Coronation he was not in the Commission of the peace, and a great part of his now estate accrued unto him within these two years by the marriage of his wife. His Lordship and the rest of the Commissioners have set him down 25l. His Lordship will write to the Council not only this his answer, but will make known to them my pains in this service. I am also to move you at my good neighbour's and friends request, which is Mr. Richard Revell, of Brookhill, that you would use your endeavour to keep him from being Sheriff.† There is two of the Morewoods, especially the elder, both fit men, for that place, and divers others.

1630, October, Derby. Sir Francis Coke to Sir John Coke, Knight, Principal Secretary unto His Majesty.

Both my Lord of Newcastle and the rest of us that were Commissioners in Derbyshire touching the fines of those that did not appear at the Coronation for Knighthood have taken great care of His Majesty's service therein, and have had an answerable success, we having agreed for a good sum in our small county. Mr. Christopher Fulwood, eldest son of Sir George, showed that his father was alive in the last year of King James, and that he had

* William Coke, eldest son and heir of Sir Francis Coke, of Trusley, was born 29th March, 1594; he was consequently 30 at the time of the coronation of Charles I. He married, when only 22, Maud, daughter and heiress of Henry Beresford, of Alsop-in-the-Dale, from whom accrued certain small properties at Alsop and Fenny Bentley. His first wife died in 1628, and he soon after married again to Dorothy, daughter of Francis Saunders, of Shankton, co. Northampton, with whom, we suppose, came the "now estate" mentioned above. Eventually the £25 composition for Knighthood was reduced in William Coke's case to £5. See *Coke of Trusley, A Family History* (privately printed), p. 22.

† Richard Revell escaped being Sheriff; Humphrey Okeover was appointed in the following year.

no estate at all at that time, but we persuaded him, for example to the rest, to publicly say that he would pay 25*l*, and his precedent did much good to those that followed him, but it was agreed upon by us that Mr. Fulwood should not lose the benefit of that which he then offered for his own discharge, if Mr. Attorney General should hold him a man not fit to be charged.

1631, January 27. Ticknall. Gilbert Ward to Sir J. Coke.

Directions for levelling the court (at Melbourne) by next the gate 2 feet, and so downwards, have been prosecuted accordingly: the perfecting of the bowl alley gone on with the removing of the earth in the court. The stone got in the levelling of the court is almost answerable to the whole charge. The great works are all done for substance. In Derbyshire the Justices are not so forward in certifying and inhibiting inclosures as in some other counties.

1632, June 3. Trusley. Sir Francis Coke to Sir John Coke.

I have had conference with my nephew your son and also with my cousin Cundy concerning the inclosing of Melbourne according to your letters: and I perceive that my Lord of Huntingdon is fully resolved to go on (whether you agree or not) to inclose his own demesnes and hath the consent of the freeholders: they think it will be beneficial for the town; but how it will be good for the poor, when the commons are taken away, I yet see not. My cousin Cundy thinketh that it will be rather profitable to you than otherwise, and I am also of that opinion, if you make your agreement warily; . . . now you may make yourself a better match than hereafter, for inclosed it will be without doubt in time; my Lord's heart is so set upon it. And if you mind to agree thereto, you must survey yours to know what part you have of the manor, that you may have answerable allowance of commons and wastes and for your field ground that you may have so many acres of like value joining your park, as is offered as I conceive. Get a surveyor that you may trust, which is hard to do in this country, my Lord being so great an Earl.

1625. April 14.

(Endorsed by Sir John Coke "John's* charges at Cambridge from Christmas 1624 till Lady day 1625.")

From Christmas to our Lady day.

	£	s.	d.
Imp ^s for cloth to make a pair of cuffs ...	0	0	6
It for Aristotles Ethic . Græc . and Salust .	0	2	0
„ points ...	0	1	0
„ a knife ...	0	1	0
„ mending his clothes ...	0	0	8
„ 2 pairs of gloves ...	0	3	4
„ a looking glass ...	0	1	0
„ Cooper's dictionary ...	0	6	0
„ Appollinar, his Psalms in Greek Verse	0	1	6
„ binding his maps and paper inserted	0	3	0
„ ink ...	0	0	2
„ coals and turfs ...	0	8	4
„ footing a pair of stockings and peicing	0	0	7
„ a paper book ...	0	1	4
„ 2 stools for his chamber ...	0	3	4
„ a key for his chamber door ...	0	0	6
„ a curtain for his study window ...	0	1	6
„ hiring a horse to take the air ...	0	1	0
„ candles this quarter ...	0	1	4
„ shoes and a pair of goloshes ...	0	5	0
„ fasting night suppers ...	0	6	0
„ washing his linen ...	0	5	0
„ making his bed ...	0	4	0
„ chamber rent ...	0	7	6
„ commons and seizing ...	5	11	5
„ tuition ...	1	0	0
	<hr/>		
	9	17	0
Add to this remaining of the last bill ...	3	16	10
	<hr/>		
	13	13	10

* John Coke, eldest son of Sir John Coke, was born in 1607. He was knighted in his father's lifetime, and died, without issue, in 1650.

1625. To Sir John Coke Knight one of the King's most honourable Privy Council and Secretary of the State to his Majesty.

The 26 of Decemb. 1625 for a fugar satin suit and hanging sleeves to it. Imprimis canvas for straight linings

Item, fine white baize to stiffen the bodice

Item, bellypeices, stiffenings of buckram and powldaine.

Item, 2 yards $\frac{1}{2}$ russet fustian to go under the skirt, and wearing sleeves.

Item, 5 dozen of buttons for breast and collar and sleeves.

Item, 1 gross 8 dozen of large buttons for hanging sleeves and hose.

Item, 1 ounce $\frac{1}{2}$ loop lace for hanging sleeves and collar.

Item, 4 yards $\frac{1}{4}$ of homes (pun?) fustian to line the hose for pockets.

Item, fine dutch baize to go on the outside of the hose.

Item, fine buckram to border the hanging sleeves.

Item, Ribbon for the waist.

Item, 3 yards $\frac{1}{2}$ of 8d Ribbon for the knees.

Item, 1 yard $\frac{1}{8}$ of scarlet baize to line the doublet.

Item, silk to make up the suit.

Item, pinking and prinking on it.

Item, making the suit.

03 08 01

Item 2 dozen of points $\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ long.

Item 1 embroidered girdle

Item 1 yard $\frac{1}{2}$ of baize to keep the suit in.

00 . 16 . 06

Sum total is four pounds four shillings seven pence 04 . 04 . 07

Money received for the discharge of this bill.

	£	s.	d.
Rec. of your man January 24th 1624 ...	10	0	0
„ Mr. George Coke,* March 8th, 1624 ...	10	0	0
„ for 2 gowns, a table, (?) and a surplice ...	2	12	0
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	22	12	0

Out of which £13 . 13 . 10 being subtracted there remains in my hands for present quarter £8 . 18 . 2.

Anno Domini 1625 November and December.

Monies disbursed for Sir John.

	£	s.	d.
Paid for a beaver hat and band ...	2	07	0
„ a pair of russet silk stockings ...	1	18	0
„ a pair of white worsted stockings ...	0	04	6
„ 2 pair of stockings for your daughters ...	0	05	0
„ a pair of carded boot hose ...	0	11	0
„ a black embroidered girdle ...	0	04	6
„ 4 pairs of socks ...	0	02	8
„ a cap of velvet ...	0	06	0
	<hr/>		
	5	18	8

Also disbursed since :

Paid for a dozen of silk points ...	0	02	2
„ a pair of Spanish leather hose ...	0	04	0
„ 2 snaffles ...	0	00	10
„ 2 quire of paper ...	0	00	8
„ dressing and trimming of Sir John's beaver	0	02	6
„ a hat band ...	0	02	6
„ a dozen of buttons ...	0	00	8
„ a yard and a half of ribbon ...	0	00	6
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	0	13	10

* George Coke, fifth son of Richard Coke, of Trusley, was born in 1570. He was educated at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, entered the priesthood, and became rector of Bygrave, in Hertfordshire. Through the influence of his brother, the Secretary, he was consecrated Bishop of Bristol in 1632, and was translated to Hereford in 1636. He died in 1646. He was one of the celebrated Twelve Bishops committed to the Tower in 1641.

	£	s.	d.
Paid for a pair of white stockings for Sir John ...	0	04	6
„ „ half a dozen pair of bandstrings ...	0	02	6
„ „ 8 pieces of diaper for napkins ...	4	00	0
„ „ a dozen of long white buttons ...	0	00	6
„ „ a pound of pin dust, with a dish and spoon and 2 sureinges	0	02	0
„ „ to Mr. Fullwood by your Honour's appoint- ment	0	01	6
„ „ for 8 yards of black embroidered lace ...	5	00	0
„ „ a pair of russet boots for Mr. John Coke ...	3	02	0
„ „ a pair of Spanish leather hose for Mr. Secretary	0	07	6
	0	04	6
	<hr/>		
	13	05	0

The 3rd of February, 162 $\frac{5}{6}$.

Paid for 3 dozen and $\frac{1}{2}$ of black embroidered hose at 2s. 2d. per yard,			
Paid for 4 dozen of narrow embroidered hose, 11d. per yard,			
1 gross of black Paris buttons,			
15 dozen of black satin buttons at 9d.			
2 dozens of black embroidered lace, broad,			
1 black long button,			
			<hr/>
	7	14	4
8 yards of black Fugard satin at 15s.			
3 yards of black satin at 11s.	7	13	0
			<hr/>
	15	7	4
9 yards $\frac{1}{4}$ of French plush at 28s.	12	16	0
			<hr/>
	28	3	4
Paid for 2 ells and $\frac{1}{4}$ of cambric			
Paid for 12 yards of lace			
			<hr/>
	30	08	4

£ . s . d.

Paid unto the tailor for making your silk grogrin gown and for silk and lace for the same gown	1 . 14 . 0
Paid for an ell of crimson sarcenet	0 . 11 . 0
Paid unto the tailor for making three baize coats (for Elizabeth, Anne, and Dorothy)* as the particulars in the bill will appear	5 . 0 . 0
		<hr/>
		37 . 14 . 2
Rec. from Mr. Secretary 39l. 13s.		1 . 15 . 6
		<hr/>
		39 . 09 . 8

Indorsement by Sir J. Coke :—

‘Delivered to my wife in money to buy my wrought satin suit and other particulars of this bill, 39l. 13s.

Paid for 2 yards and a half of loom work to make Bess and Anna cuffs and falls,

Paid for 8 yards of calico,

Paid for a yard and a half of baize to make the child a petticoat,

Paid for 2 bands for the child,

Paid for 3 blue aprons,

Paid for 2 yards of cobweb lace for Bess,

Paid for 2 ounces of gold lace to edge the child’s scarf,

This bill included in the former.

1 . 15 . 6

* According to the pedigrees, Sir John Coke had three daughters : Elizabeth, Mary, and Anne ; but it would look from this entry as if there was a fourth of the name of Dorothy.