

THE VILLIERS FAMILY AS GOVERNORS OF TYNEMOUTH CASTLE AND OWNERS OF THE LIGHTHOUSE.

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In the paper which I read to the society in 1895 on 'Tynemouth Castle after the Dissolution of the Monastery' (*Archæologia Aeliiana*, vol. xviii. page 61), I stated that the War office had, in the year 1828, furnished a list of the governors of Tynemouth castle and Clifford's fort. In the list were the following names :—

	Date of Appointment.
Sir Edward Villiers	Unknown.
Col. Henry Villiers	2 nd February, 1702.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNORS.

Henry Villiers	7 th May, 1713.
Henry Villiers	20 th June, 1727.

Although the War office could not give the date of the appointment of sir Edward Villiers as governor of the castle, I was able, from information in my possession, to fix the date as having taken place in the year 1661, shortly after the restoration of king Charles the second. Sir Edward Villiers was baptized at Richmond in 1620, and during the Civil War he took an active part in the royalist cause. He married lady Francis Howard, youngest daughter of the second earl of Suffolk, and had issue—(1st) Edward, his heir, born in 1656, who was created earl of Jersey in October, 1697; (2nd) Henry, born in 1658, who was a colonel of a foot regiment, and succeeded his father as governor of Tynemouth castle. In addition to the two sons, there were six daughters.

While sir Edward Villiers was governor of the castle, England was at war with Holland. In the *Calendar of State Papers*, there are many interesting letters about Tynemouth castle. On the 1st of July, 1667, colonel Edward Villiers wrote to secretary Williamson as follows :—

¹ On 5th September, 1662, colonel Edward Villiers was presented with the freedom of Newcastle (Brand).

The Two Lords [Carlisle and Ogle] join happily in the service. One performs the active part, as having a General's experience in the Chatham expedition ; the other a General's interest in raising forces. Lord Ogle's regiment has rendezvoused at Killingworth Moor, and the number could have been easily doubled, that being the best part of England for raising foot.

It is probable it was during the time sir Edward Villiers was governor of Tynemouth castle that the governor's house was built. It stands to the westward of the lighthouse in the castle. Part of it is used as a hospital for soldiers, and upon the ground floor are two rooms used as a residence by one of the non-commissioned officers. These rooms are panelled and are interesting links between the present and the past of the castle. The governor's house and the lighthouse as they appeared in 1784 are shown in the illustration on the opposite page.

A lighthouse in the castle has existed for a very long time. Whether there was one in monastic days I have been unable to trace, but it is very probable there was. In 1537, two years before the dissolution of Tynemouth priory, the Trinity house of Newcastle (then a religious guild) was granted by Henry VIII. power to build two towers on the north side of Le Shelys (North Shields) and to maintain on each a good and steady light by night for the guidance of passing ships. The earliest historical mention of the lighthouse in Tynemouth castle is in 1608, when there was a warrant from king James the first granting sir Allan Percy £40 a year in lieu of the profits from the lighthouse which had been received by his brother the earl of Northumberland. I find no further mention of the lighthouse in the castle until 1656, when there is a letter dated 15th December in that year from captain John Topping, deputy-governor, addressed to the parliament. In this letter he says :—

I have benee often aboute to acquaint y^r honours that here is one M^{rs} Ffenwicke, widoe to the late Capt. Ffenwicke, who first kept Tinmouth Castle against the Parlimint and upon Sir Thomas Riddell having commission from ye late King to be Governor of this Castle, the Erle of Newcastle commanded the fore-said Capt. Ffenwicke into his Army, who was slayne in Yorkshire, the said widoe was turned out of this Castle by the Scots when they tooke it, and the Sea Lightes which are kept upon a tower within this Castle every night through ye yeare ware then taken from the said widoe and enjoyed by the severall Governors (viz.) Col. George Ffenwicke had the profit of the said Lightes and also Capt. Blunt for one year, fourpence of each ship that anchors in the river he received, after which time the said widoe received the profit of



THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE AND THE LIGHTHOUSE IN TYNEMOUTH CASTLE IN 1784.

(From an old engraving by W. Byrne, published in 1784.)

the said Lightes. Several honest people in these partes have blamed me for continuing her to have the Lightes. Shee still remaining as Caveleerish and malignant as ever. Therefore I desire to know y^r Hounors pleasure about premises, that if the said widoe have noe order from y^r Hounors, be pleased to return it into the suckesive channell. I humbly crave y^r answer and pardon for this bouldness, and am

Yr Hounors very
humble servant,

JO. TOPPING.

Tinmouth Castle,

Dec. 15th, 1656.

Among the records of the Trinity house at Newcastle are several important letters about the lighthouse in the castle. On the 10th May, 1660, the Trinity house addressed a letter to the members of parliament for Newcastle in the 'Healing Parliament,' in which they complained of the insufficiency of the fire light in Tynemouth castle, and stated that about Martinmas then last past, the stairs and passage up to the light being fallen down, the governor of the castle since that time had kept and placed a light, near the east end of the castle, upon a piece of old stone work not above four or five yards high, which was so low that it was imperceivable for the navigation, so that there was a great necessity of having a new lighthouse. The Trinity house asked that they might have the charge of the lighthouse, and stated they had two other lights at North Sheeles, and they would be at any necessary cost to build and provide a sufficient light and keep it well and sufficiently for the service. Other letters were written by the Trinity house, without any satisfactory result.

On the 30th of June, 1665, by virtue of letters patent under the great seal, the lighthouse in the castle was granted to Edward Villiers, esquire, his heirs and assigns. The letters patent recited that the king (Charles the second) had been given to understand that there had been a long and constant toll of fourpence per ship paid by his majesty's subjects and twelvenpence by strangers and foreigners for the maintenance of a light house at Tinmouth, which being wholly decayed and fallen down, another had been then lately rebuilt by Edward Villiers, esquire, therein described to be lieutenant of the king's castle of Tinmouth, at his own proper costs and charges, to the great benefit and advantage of his majesty's subjects and others trading to those parts. And further recited, that the king had been informed that a late contract had been made on behalf of the said Edward Villiers with

divers masters of ships belonging to Newcastle, as also others trading and coasting that way, whereby they had voluntarily submitted to increase the said toll of fourpence to twelvecence, and to continue the payment thereof for the perfecting the said work, which had cost one thousand pounds already. His majesty approving the said contract, and for the encouragement of this necessary and useful work, of his special grace, certain knowledge and mere motion did for him, his heirs and successors, give and grant unto the said Edward Villiers, his heirs and assigns, the custody of the said lighthouse and the ground and soil whereupon the same was situate, and all rights and powers, that he and they should and might continue, renew and maintain the said lighthouse, with lights to be continually burning therein in the night season whereby the said ships might the better come to their harbours and ports without peril.

By the same letters patent authority was given to the said Edward Villiers to demand, collect, have, and take the sum of twelve pence for every ship belonging to any of the subjects of his majesty, passing by the said lighthouse and belonging or trading to the ports of Newcastle and Sunderland, and three shillings for every ship belonging to any foreigner or stranger coming or passing by the said lighthouse. For the privileges granted by the letters patent a rent of twenty marks was reserved to the king, which was payable after the death of sir Edward Villiers. Ample powers were conferred by the letters patent for collecting the tolls granted.

In 1680, sir Edward Villiers (who in that year had been knighted), petitioned the king and asked for an increased toll of a farthing per ton on all foreign and strange ships coming to and passing the lighthouse. The ground of his application was that the existing toll did not pay the interest on the money he had expended in building the lighthouse and the charges for keeping and maintaining it. The Trinity house at Newcastle strongly opposed the suggested increased exaction, and pointed out that a light equal to the one maintained by sir Edward Villiers, for which he received twelve pence per ship, had formerly been maintained at a charge of only four pence per ship.

Sir Edward Villiers died in 1689, and was buried in Westminster abbey on the 2nd July in that year.

In the list of governors of Tynemouth castle, before alluded to, it

is stated that colonel Henry Villiers was appointed governor of Tynemouth castle on the 2nd of February, 1702. His father, sir Edward Villiers, died, as before stated, in 1689. In 1685, colonel Henry Villiers was living at Tynemouth castle, and on the 20th May, in that year, a daughter was baptized in the parish church of Tynemouth. The entry reads thus:—'1685, May 20.—Mary, Da. of Capt. Henry Villiers, Gov^r. of Tyn. Castle, bap.'

I think it may be assumed that sir Edward Villiers had resigned his appointment as governor of the castle, and that his son had been appointed governor in his place. There are other entries of baptisms of the children of col. Villiers, and on every occasion he is described as governor of the castle. In the last baptism, in 1703, he is described as the 'Honble. Col. Henry Villiers,' governor of the castle. His only brother, Edward, had been created earl of Jersey in 1697.

In going over the Treasury papers some time ago, I discovered an extraordinary charge of smuggling brought, in 1706, against colonel Henry Villiers, governor of Tynemouth castle. These papers are described as 'a State of the proceedings att Law ag^t Col^l Henry Villiers, Governor of Tin-mouth Castle,' and contain the following information:—

On the first of January last an Informa^con was exhi^ted ag^t him in ye Court of Excheq^r by way of Deveners² for the value of a great Quantity of Wyne Brandy Pepper Lynnen some Doe Skynns & two Scotch pladds w^h came to Tryall the Sitting after the last Terme when her Ma^{ty} had a verdict for £536:16:0. The prooffe upon the Tryall was in substance as follows: viz^t Thomas fforest who was formerly the Coll^l Servt deposed that in June last Capt. Gourdon Com^{and}er of a Scotch shipp of warr arrivid nere Tynmouth Barr from whence was taken on shore in the night by y^e direc^on of the Coll^l's Lady 5 Casks of Brandy & 4 hhd^s of Clarrett Wyne which were Landed att a place called the Sally port & carry'd from hence to y^e Coll^l's Coach horses to his own Cellar in ye floort.

That in July was taken out of ye same shipp in ye night tyme 8 Caskes of Brandy six hhd^s of Clarrett six dozen Bottles of White Wyne 10 Baggess of Pepper 8 Caskes of Scotch Diaper Lynnen one pack of Doe Skynns and two Scotch Plades, all which were landed att ye same place in the same manner as the former. The Collinell's Lady receiving the goods & paid to each of her owne Serv^{ts} for their trouble Eighteene pence & to others whoc were not her Sery^{ts} two shillings a peece.

² The only writ I have been able to discover is that of *devenarunt*, an obsolete one, which was directed to the escheator on the death of the heir of the king's tenant under age and in custody, commanding the escheator to enquire what lands and tenements, by the death of the tenant, came to the king. It does not appear to have any application to the present case,

David Scotland who is a Gunner in the fort deposed that hee had a Boat of his own and that he brought on shore part of y^e goods Landed the last night. Upon this evidence the Jury withdrew for about a Quarter of an hour and then brought in a verdict for her Ma^{ty} as aforesaid.

G. Medcalf.

Custo : h^o Lond: 17th June 1706.

In addition to the foregoing document, there is the following presentment :—

Customs house,
London,
18 June, 1706.

To the R^t Honble Sidney Lord Godolphin
Lord High Treas'r of England.

Presentment

By the Comm^{rs} for Manageing and Causing
to be Levied and Collected Her Ma^{ties}
Customs, &c.

The Comm^{rs} having proceeded to Tryall the Sitting after last terme. On the Information of Thomas Forrest Inclosed to them by his Lord^{sh} direc^{ions} in M^r Lowndes's Letter of the 12th of January last against Col^l Henry Villiers Govern^r of Tinmouth Castle. For Wine and other Goods run by him out of a Scotch ship of warr and obtained a verdict against him for Five hundred thirty & six pounds sixteen shillings the value of the said Goods, as is more particularly contained in a Memorial from their Solicitors Assistant they think themselves oblig'd Humbly to Lay the same before his Lord^{sh} For his Lord^{sh} Information.

T. Hall.

Sam Clarke.

T. Newport.

Will Culleford.

Jo Werden.

W. Dudley.

(Endorsed)

Presentm^{nt} 18th June, 1706

Touching the verdict ag^t Col^l Villiers
Gover^r of Tinmouth Castle.

read 2nd July 1706.

There is another document; but it contains much the same information as is contained in the two papers I have set out, with the addition that the Scotch ship of war was called 'The Royal Mary.' I have been unable to trace whether the whole fine was paid, or a portion of it remitted.

Colonel Villiers took part in the proceedings of the vestry of Tyne-mouth church. To the minutes of a meeting, held on the 30th March, 1703, his name is appended, and is followed by that of the vicar. In 1705, his name appears at the head of the list of the gentlemen of the Four-and-twenty. In the month of August, 1707, he died, and was buried in the priory burial ground. In a small *History of Tynemouth: the Castle and Priory, with an account of their Possessors, and the Reduction of the Monastery to a Fortress*, published at North

Shields in 1804, it is said there is a stone with the following inscription upon it :—

Hic sitae sunt mortales reliquiae
 Henrici Villiers, armigeri,
 Stirpe antiqua prognati
 unici
 Honoratissimi Comitiss de Jersey
 fratris,
 Nec non hujus presidii
 circiter 20 Annos
 Fidelis et perquam dilecti
 Praefecti
 Vixit Annos 49. Obiit 11 Aug. ³
 Anno domini 1707.

This stone I have not been able to discover. It is possible the hand of time has pressed heavily upon it, and that the inscription is now quite obliterated. It is clear, from the inscription, that colonel Villiers could not have been appointed governor of the castle in 1702, as stated in the letter from the War office. His official appointment may have dated from 1687, and the actual appointment from 1685.

On, or shortly before, the death of colonel Villiers, Thomas Meredith was appointed governor of the castle. The son of colonel Villiers was appointed lieutenant-governor of the castle on the 7th May, 1713.⁴

Among the Treasury papers is a memorandum that there was granted, in 1708, to the widow and children of colonel Henry Villiers (late governor of Tinmouth castle) a pension of £300, which was vested in the earl of Jersey. The widow afterwards, with her youngest son, had £100 of it apart, and it is stated she was dead, and it was hoped the £100 might be again joined to the £200 and vested in the countess of Orkney for the children's use. In September, 1721, there is a petition from Henry Villiers to the lords of the Treasury, in which it is stated a year and three-quarters was due upon the king's bounty of £100 a year, that he had nothing else to depend on, and by the death of his brother, the earl of Jersey, and the growing charges of his education at the university, he was put to great distress, and prays for the arrears. It is minuted on the 12th September, 1721, that the arrears were to be paid to him.

³ In Brand's *History of Newcastle* (vol. ii. p. 122) the inscription on the tombstone is given, and the date of the death is stated to be the 18th August, which is probably correct, as the burial was on the 22nd August.

⁴ The appointment of Henry Villiers in 1727 was probably a reappointment, in consequence of the death of the king in that year.

Henry Villiers, the grandson of sir Edward Villiers, who was appointed lieutenant-governor of Tynemouth castle, married, firstly, Arabella, daughter of John Rossiter, esquire, of Somerby, in the county of Lincoln, and secondly, Mary, sister of lieutenant-general Thomas Fowke.

In 1728, Henry Villiers made an attempt to obtain an additional toll of one penny per chaldron towards the erection of a new light at Tynemouth. This was opposed by the owners and masters of ships, and the toll was not imposed. In July, 1747, a release was granted by him to the Trinity house at Newcastle of all dues collected at Newcastle for his lighthouse, reserving to himself a return of one moiety of the net sum collected. On the 29th May, 1753—the anniversary of the restoration of the king, by whom his family had been enriched—Henry Villiers died. His widow by her will, dated 22nd October, 1766, devised the lighthouse to her brother admiral Thorpe Fowke, Charles Palmer, and William Leigh; it was described in her will as ‘all that her freehold Estate at Tinmouth Castle called Tinmouth Great Lights,’ to hold the same subject to the payment of an annuity of £40 to Catherine Craster, widow, for life, in trust to receive the rents and profits until her godson William Fowke, then an infant of eleven years, should attain the age of twenty-one years, keeping the lights in good repair, sufficiently supplied with coals. After giving various directions as to the lights, she directed that none of the gentlemen, her then collectors, should be displaced, and from and immediately after the said William Fowke should have attained to his said age, then to his use for his natural life, with limitations over in tail as mentioned in the will, which are too numerous to mention. She died 7th January, 1767. William Fowke attained twenty-one on 26th November, 1775, and became seised of the lighthouse.

In 1802, George Fowke, of Tamerton, in the county of Devon, a captain in the royal navy, was tenant in tail male in remainder expectant on the estate for life of his uncle, William Fowke.

At this time the lighthouse was lighted, as it had always been, with a coal light. It was then agreed with the Trinity house of Newcastle, and a great number of merchants, traders, owners and masters of ships, and others, that a portion of the lighthouse should be taken down and altered, and a copper lighthouse lantern and an oil light

substituted, with a revolving machine having patent lamps and highly polished silver-plated reflectors. It was estimated that these alterations and improvements would cost £2,500; and to reimburse the owners of the lighthouse for this cost, parliament, by an act passed 4th May, 1802, granted certain dues, mentioned in the act, and power was conferred on the Trinity house of Newcastle-upon-Tyne to inspect the lighthouse, to see whether it was maintained and conducted in a due and sufficient manner. In 1836, an act was passed for vesting lighthouses, lights, and sea marks on the coast of England in the corporation of the Trinity house of Deptford Strond, and among these lighthouses was that at Tynemouth. Under this act the Trinity house purchased the lighthouse in the year 1840 of the Fowke family. The family showed that the net annual profit of the lighthouse was £5,305. 9s. 8d., which, at twenty-three and a-half years' purchase, amounted to £124,678 17s. 2d., and this very large sum the Trinity house paid for the purchase of the lighthouse, which then passed into their hands, and the connexion of the family of Villiers and their descendants with the lighthouse ceased. For 175 years they had enjoyed the benefit of the royal benefaction granted in 1665.

From 1840 the lighthouse pursued the even tenor of its way until 1871, when Souter Point lighthouse was lighted on the 11th January for the first time, and Tynemouth was changed from a bright white light to a red one. In making this change there was a waste in light in the proportion of twenty-one to nine, but by increasing the power from nine to twenty-one both the old and new lights were visible at the same distance. In 1887 the lighthouse was terribly shattered by the firing in the castle of twenty-three ton guns, brought from Woolwich. It has never recovered the shock. The lighthouse-keepers' houses have been removed, and the lighthouse stands, with the ruins of the priory, the connecting link between the present and the past. For nearly 300 years, or it may be a much longer period, its beneficent light has been shed along our coast, but the days of the lighthouse are numbered. Upon the little island of St. Mary, which stands midway between the Tyne and the Blyth, where, in early days, stood a cell belonging to Tynemouth priory, a lighthouse has been erected, which, in a short time, will give forth its light, as tradition says it did in the monastic days but in a humbler way. When this has been accomplished, Tyne-

mouth lighthouse, and probably the governor's house, with which it is intimately linked, will be removed, and one more change will have taken place in the well-known and cherished features of Tynemouth.

APPENDIX.

As a desire has been expressed that I should show the connexion of the Villiers family, who were governors of the castle, with George Villiers, first duke of Buckingham, this I shall now do.

Sir George Villiers, knight, of Brokesby, in Leicestershire, by his first wife had issue—

- (1) William (sir), created a baronet in 1619 ;
- (2) *Edward* ;

And also three daughters.

He married, secondly, Mary, daughter of Anthony Beaumont, esquire, of Glenfield, county of Leicester. By her he had issue—

- (1) John, created viscount Purbeck ;
- (2) *George*, created duke of Buckingham ;
- (3) Christopher, created earl of Anglesey ;
- (4) Susan, married to the first earl of Denbigh.

Sir Edward Villiers (before mentioned) married Barbara, eldest daughter of sir Oliver St. John of Tregoze, co. Wilts, and by her he had five sons and three daughters :—

- (1) William, second viscount Grandison, who left an only daughter Barbara ;
- (2) John, third viscount Grandison ;
- (3) George, fourth viscount Grandison ;
- (4) Christopher, who died young ;

(5) *Edward*, who was born 15th April, 1620, was knighted by Charles the second on 7th April, 1680. He was appointed governor of Tynemouth castle in 1661. He was nephew by the half-blood to George Villiers, first duke of Buckingham, and uncle to Barbara Villiers, who is spoken of as the 'splendid termagant,' and was one of the mistresses of Charles the second. She was created countess of Castlemaine in 1661, and duchess of Cleveland in 1670. It was probably owing to her connexion with the royal family that the lighthouse at Tynemouth was made over to her uncle, sir Edward Villiers.

George Villiers, first duke of Buckingham, was born at his father's seat 20th August, 1592. He was brought under the notice of king James the first, was knighted, raised to the peerage as viscount Villiers in 1616, and became earl of Buckingham and afterwards marquis. He went to Spain with the king's son Charles to prosecute his suit, which was unsuccessful. He was made duke of Buckingham and lord warden of the Cinque Ports, and negotiated the marriage of Charles with Henrietta Maria of France, and after a most eventful and extraordinary career, was assassinated on the 23rd of August, 1628, at Portsmouth by John Felton, who was hanged for the crime at Tyburn. His son, the second duke of Buckingham, was educated with the children of Charles the first, and in later years took part in the royalist cause, fought under the royal standard, and, like many others, suffered for his loyalty to the house of Stuart. He married the daughter of lord Fairfax, to whom his forfeited estates had been granted. At the Restoration his estates were restored to him, he was brought back to court, and after a career of the wildest description, he retired to his estates at Helmsley, in Yorkshire, and died on 16th April, 1688, at Kirkby Moorside, 'in the worst inn's worst room.' He was the author of several comedies.

