

65.09 Restoration to Fontevrault and later medieval tenants

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Fontevrault eventually had its lands restored in 1361 (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1358–61*, 559). In 1364 Fontevrault granted the manor to John Bele alias Fleccher and his wife Joan Duylle (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1361–64*, 440). Joan was to remain lady of the manor from 1364 until c 1411 when she died, but during this time both her first husband, John, and her second, Walter Walsh, died in c 1373 and c 1387 respectively (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1370–74*, 265, 447; *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1385–89*, 345). Joan, however, was outlived by her third husband, John Worship, whom she had married by 1389 and who held the manor until 1413 when he died. He had attempted to negotiate the purchase of the manor from Fontevrault in 1411 but was unsuccessful (Jenkinson and Fowler 1931, 118–19; *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1408–13*, 296).

It should be remembered that La Grava's tenants not only administered and benefited from the large manor of Leighton Buzzard but also took over properties, both large and small, with which Fontevrault had been endowed at various times in preceding centuries and which were located mostly in the vicinity of Leighton Buzzard, for example in Radnage, Bow Brickhill, Northall, Edlesborough, Slapton and the manor of Stewkley, all in Buckinghamshire, and a manor in Studham (that part in Bedfordshire).

In 1413 the manor was again in the king's hands due to war with France and it was granted to the keeping of Sir John Phelip whose wife, Alice, was the granddaughter of Thomas Chaucer. Phelip was also given permission to try to negotiate the purchase of the manor from Fontevrault (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1413–16*, 67, 131, 229). In 1414 John Phelip enfeoffed Thomas Chaucer and others with the manor but these returned it to John and Alice in 1415 after which John died (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1413–16*, 259, 334; *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1413–19*, 234–5). Alice Phelip was then lady of the manor off and on for a further 60 years until 1475, marrying William de la Pole before 1438 to become the Duchess of Suffolk. However, during this time there were several grants of reversions of the manor, in particular in 1438 when it was granted to Eton College. In 1446 the Suffolks conveyed the manor to this same college, but remained as tenants (Dalton 1957, 367–8, XV 25.56 and 25.57). The Duke of Suffolk was murdered in 1450 but the manor was regranted to Alice in 1467, though backdated to 1461 when Edward IV had removed the lands of alien priories from Eton College by Act of Parliament (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1467–77*, 65) [67.16, 67.17].

It is at about this time, perhaps just after 1465, that the links between the manor and Fontevrault seem to have been finally broken. After Alice's death in 1475 her son, John, the second Duke of Suffolk, and his wife Elizabeth (Edward IV's sister), took possession of the manor and were confirmed in this by Thomas Lee and William Marten by a charter of 1476 (*Calendar of Close Rolls, 1476–85*, 84). However, in 1479 John and Elizabeth were forced to grant the 'manor or lordship of Grobury alias Grovebury alias Leighton Bosard' to the Dean and Canons of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1476–85*, 172, 219). They were to hold the property until 1863 but leased it to a variety of tenants. Besides the main manor, the Dean and Canons also obtained other associated holdings:

'70 messuages, 12 tofts, 500 acs. of land, 100acs. of meadow, 300 acs. of pasture, 100 acs. of wood and 1008¹. rent in Stukeley, Northalle, Edelesburgh and Rodenache, co. Buckingham and one messuage, 3 tofts, 60 acres of land,

¹ Editor's note: not clear whether this should be 1008s rent, or 100s rent, or some other figure.

**6 acres of meadow, 40 acres of pasture and 20s. of rent in Stodeham, co.
Hertford' (Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1476-85, 219).**