

## The Wellington Estate Collection

### FR Wellington

The papers described form part of the muniments of title and estate records of the Hampshire (Stratfield Saye) estate of the Duke of Wellington, amongst which are numerous deeds and legal papers relating to the first and second Barons Rivers and earlier members of the Pitt family

The Wellington Estate Collection consists of 279 boxes of manuscript material, housing some tens of thousands of letters, several thousand deeds and other legal documents, and various other maps and papers; in addition to these there are approximately 300 bound ledgers and a large collection of rentals and other sundry accounts. These are all associated with the purchase and administration of the Stratfieldsaye estate, Hampshire (the principal country seat of the Dukes of Wellington), and other estates once held by the family

The manuscripts of which this collection is comprised are primarily those of the estate, rather than the personal papers of the Wellington family; there are letters from most of the Dukes but they are mainly to their Estate Agent or their Solicitors. As such, the records may be roughly subdivided into two categories:

- a) Deeds and other legal documents relating to the purchase of estate property;
- b) Letters and other papers generated by the Estate Office in its day-to-day administration

#### a) Deeds

The Collection includes most of the title deeds relating to the estate; apart from the original 1819 Conveyance from Lord Rivers to the Parliamentary Trustees there are hundreds of conveyances, releases, surrenders, etc., representing the many other acquisitions mentioned above. It is frequently the case that such deeds are accompanied by earlier ones recording the transfer of the property over the previous century or more; an example might be the deeds connected with the Foxcote and Brazenhead estates, purchased by the Parliamentary Trustees in 1860, in which instance the final conveyance is associated with deeds, wills and other papers going back to 1735 (plus a copy of a deed of 1569), which give a partial, if not complete, history of the land over that period (mss. Wellington/1368/1-Wellington/1368/30). Also, as the Collection includes a large quantity of archives taken from the storerooms of Farrer & Co., the Dukes' Solicitors from the 1st Duke to the present day (and also Solicitors to Lord Rivers), there are many draft deeds and draft abstracts, along with letters between Farrer & Co. and the Dukes' Agents, other solicitors, etc., connected with preparations for the transactions. There is, for example, a bundle of such drafts and letters connected with the Foxcote/Brazenhead

purchase mentioned earlier (ms. 838). Also included in the papers from Farrer & Co. are their files of correspondence relating to more recent purchasing or leasing of estate property, c. 1930-60 (e.g. ms. 298). The earliest original deed catalogued so far dates from 1613

b) Estate Office Records, etc.

This category, which forms the major proportion of the Collection, may be further subdivided as follows:

i) Estate Agents' Correspondence The Duke of Wellingtons' estates (including the Wolverton and Wellington estates, but not property in London) were managed from the Stratfieldsaye Estate Office by a series of Estate Agents; a rough chronology may be established thus:

1826-32 John Payne

1832-73 George and Abel Easton

1874-95? Walter Monsley

1895?-1937 George Frederick North

1937-39 David Henry

1939-41? Maurice C. Simpson and Alex V. Lee

1941?-48 Alex V. Lee/Hawett & Lee

1948-67 V. Peart Robinson

1967- C. Scott

John Payne's dates of employment may be established from ms. 1568. Prior to that the position is uncertain; George Easton appears to have been employed as the Duke's Steward (the position claimed by Payne) as early as 1818 (FR Wellington/176/5), and Samuel Smith of Gray's Inn Square, London, acted on the Duke's behalf in various transactions c. 1820-30. The Eastons took over as a partnership after Payne, and Abel seems to have left (or died) sometime before 1860 - the precise date, and also the way in which they divided the responsibilities between them (which one assumes must have been the case) could undoubtedly be established by a close examination of the relevant papers. Abel was described as the Duke's 'Land Steward' in a letter of 1841 (ms. 1635), and George (only) is listed in White's 1859 Directory, under the inhabitants of Stratfieldsaye, as the 'Land Agent'. George Easton retired at the end of 1873 - it is evident from the correspondence at ms. 1621 and 1622 that he was then an old man - and was succeeded by Walter Monsley, who had previously worked for the Earl of Cawdor. A

document indicating the precise date of his retirement has not at the time of writing come to light, but G. F. North was definitely Agent by 1897 (as testified by, for example, ms. 1771). A large proportion of the Collection, and particularly the letters, data from North's period of office. A. V. Lee was one of the partners of Hewett & Lee, a firm of Estate Agents, and the Stratfieldsaye Agency seems to have been handled by them during the Second World War, and immediately afterwards

There are letters from the Eastons among the nineteenth-century draft deeds and associated documents, mentioned above, but the first appearance of correspondence to the Estate Agent in any quantity dates from Monsley's time, and there are numerous bundles of letters from various writers over the period 1870-90, concerning many different aspects of estate life. There are many more letters written to his successor; it was North's practice to bundle letters together at the end of each year (or later), sorted alphabetically, and there are many thousands of these letters from tenants, farmers, suppliers, fellow Estate Agents on neighbouring estates, etc. There do not, however, appear to be any copies of North's replies (presumably he did not keep them?); this also applies to Monsley. The Agents between North and Robinson kept their letters rather better organised, held together in files with copy letters adjacent; it is not possible to observe the system later than this as there are no letters later than 1946 (apart from those in the files deposited by Farrer & Co.). The later correspondence is presumably still kept in the Estate Office at Stratfieldsaye.

ii) Accounts, etc.

The Collection includes many thousands of payment vouchers, being bills of account for goods supplied to the estate, details of wages paid to estate workers, demand notices for rates and tax, etc. During the nineteenth century these were subdivided under different headings such as 'Stratfieldsaye estate', 'Wolverton estate', 'Garden', 'Game', 'Forage', etc., and balance sheets were drawn up approximately every month (this applies from about 1870 onwards; previous to that the intervals between balances was probably larger) and there was a running numerical sequence of accounts during the agencies of the Eastons and Monsley, up to about no. 600. The system appears to have been simplified under North, when the subdivisions disappeared and all vouchers were grouped under the general heading 'Estate and farm vouchers', being bundled together at the end of each month. After North's departure the system was again revised and vouchers were kept in loose-leaf binders

In addition to the vouchers, it would be appropriate to mention under this heading the run of estate ledgers, which cover the period (roughly) from 1830 to the middle of the twentieth century and relate in some to particular farms as well as to more general estate accounts. There is also a run of rent rolls (i.e. half-yearly accounts of rentals, with tenants' names, property rented, amount paid, etc.) from about 1870-1950: (prior to 1870 the details will be found in the estate ledgers)

Estate bank accounts were held at Coutts & Co., London, and Barclays Bank Ltd., Reading (previously Simonds & Co., Reading), and there is within the Collection a considerable quantity of bank statements, returned cheques, used cheque-books, and paying-in books. These date mainly from the period 1948-65

iii) Miscellaneous other papers

There are also various other documents which do not strictly belong in the categories outlined above. There are for example numerous papers relating to timber on the Dukes' estates; these include catalogues of auction sales, summary annual lists of planting costs, reports on the state of the woods, etc. There are also catalogues of sale relating to estates sold or purchased (or to nearby estates which were presumably considered for purchase), e.g. mss. 197, 462-464. Under this heading one might also include various maps and plans, relating to parts of the estates or to specific farms, and such things as a plan of the proposed Berks and Hants Junction Canal of 1830 (ms. 1565) and a plan of the Wellington family vault in St. Mary's Church, Stratfieldsaye (ms. 348).

The full scope of the Collection can be appreciated from the Catalogue.

**Classified Summary**

Deeds, abstracts, memoranda, wills, bonds and other muniments of title 13th-19th century, mainly Berkshire and Hampshire, with some for Dorset 18th-19th century, etc

Pitt family settlements, mortgage deeds and related papers mainly temp the 1st and 2nd Barons Rivers; rental of the Dorset and Wiltshire jointure lands of Lady Rivers 1778

Stratfield Saye manorial court rolls 1401-2, 1402-3, 1475-6 and presentments 1623; Ecchinswell manorial admissions 17th-18th century

Hampshire (Stratfield Saye, Hartley Wespall, Heckfield, etc) leases 17th-19th century, with abstract of Stratfield Saye leaseholds 1664-99; Winchcombe (Gloucestershire) lease 1730

Surveys of Stratfield Saye 1663 and Turgis and Oklam's farms in Stratfield Turgis 17th century; Stratfield Turgis terrier 17th century; Heckfield particulars 1756, 1757; plan of Stratfield Saye farms c1800; plans and surveys, Bramley, Stratfield Turgis and Swallowfield c.19th century (3 volumes)

Stratfield Turgis rental 1636-41

Records of the Duke of Wellington's Stratfield Saye (Hampshire and Berkshire, with Wellington (Somerset)) estate generally, comprising:

## Museum of English Rural Life

Inventory 1939, terrier mid 19th century and particulars and valuation mid 19th century; book of reference mid 19th century and book of reference relating to tithes 1857;

Rental c1872-80;

Rental and account books, cash books and ledgers c1832-1965; estate labour account books c1834-1952 (not consecutive); accounts of labour employed on road building 1843-4;

Farms and cottages rental books 1896, 1903-61; accounts of farms in hand 1879, 1883, 1890-2; records of Stratfield Saye Farm 1893-1938, Ewhurst Farm 1904-34, Fremantle Farm 1928-9, Plantation Farm 1888-96 and Wyers Farm 1893, 1908; herd book c1891-8;

Timber account books, Stratfield Saye c1830-9, Wolverton c1840-9; accounts of estate planting 1898-1925;

Estate bills, vouchers and related papers c1900-25, c1940-59, with estate correspondence c1939-46

Articles of agreement, Wolverton tithes 1838

Stratfield Saye house accounts 1894, late 19th century, 1902-25; Stratfield Saye garden accounts 1836-58, 1867-71, 1929-30; Ewhurst garden accounts 1933

Account book, Beech Hill (Berkshire) surveyors of highways 1837-45

Accounts of valuations and surveys conducted by James Innes 1870-2 (on volume)

Rent rolls of the Dromana (Co Waterford) estate of Catherine, Viscountess Grandison, 15th-18th century, with related surveys, plans and papers mainly early 18th century.