

A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE
ORIGINAL BUILDING ACCOUNTS OF KIRBY MUXLOE
CASTLE, LEICESTERSHIRE,

RECENTLY DISCOVERED AT THE MANOR HOUSE, ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH.

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The Manuscripts and other Documents belonging to the ancient family of Hastings, of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, are amongst the finest and most interesting in the kingdom.

After the destruction of their ancient castle at Ashby, these papers were stored at Donington Hall, but since the recent sale of that estate have been housed at the Manor House at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where through the kindness of Lady Maud Hastings, they were exhibited to, and much admired by, the members of the Leicestershire Archæological Society, on the occasion of their annual excursion last year.

One of the most interesting of these MSS. is a XV. century book of building accounts, relating to the erection of Kirby Castle by William Lord Hastings, between the years 1480 and 1484.

This book was first shewn to me when I was measuring the ruined castle at Ashby, the drawings of which were afterwards published by this Society in the Reports and Papers of the Associated Societies' Publication, Vol. XXI., Part 1 (1911).

On the discovery that the accounts related entirely to Kirby Castle, they were entrusted to my care through the kindness of Lady Maud Hastings, and I at once communicated with C. R. Peers, Esq., Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, who at that time was engaged on the conservation of the old ruin at Kirby, under the Ancient Monuments Act.

A careful study of the newly discovered MS. provided him with much information, that proved most valuable.

Afterwards, the Ven. Archdeacon Stocks interested himself in the matter, and endeavoured to get the whole of it transcribed and published by the Camden or some other Society; but as this project entailed considerable delay, a Sub-Committee was appointed

to report as to the possibility of its publication by our own local Society, when the outbreak of the war prevented anything further being done in the matter for the present.

The MS. is in book form, and measures about twelve inches by eight inches. It is bound in two parts, but without covers, it is written on *paper*, and with the exception of a few leaves at the end is in a state of excellent preservation.

It records week by week the work done at the Castle from the commencement on the xxij. day of October, 20th of Edw. IV., (1480), until its completion on the vj. December, 2nd of Rich. III. (1484).

It furnishes us with the names of all the workmen employed, the amount of their wages, the nature of the work on which they were engaged, the cost and amount of the material used, and the places from whence it was obtained.

Summaries of the cost are given at the end of each week, and a further summary is given at the end of each year.

The accompanying photograph of two pages of the manuscript shews the completion of one year and the commencement of the next. On the left hand page the names of "Kerby" and Lord "Hastyns" will be easily observed, also the total cost of the building for the year, viz. : £397 5s. 8½d.

The right-hand page shews the week's work of the various trades employed—Freemasons, Brekeleyers, Hewers, Carpenters and Waynmen, with the names of the workmen and the amount of their wages.

The spelling is both curious and interesting, as for example : Xpoffor. for Christopher, and many of the names used are now obsolete, such as *maeremium* for timber.

This is obviously not the time to publish a full transcription of this unique and valuable work, but it is hoped that a translation will be gradually proceeded with, so that the Society may be in a position to publish the whole of it in its *Transactions*, after peace is restored.

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 qm sub Johi dicit p hdding q pnyng lo mto p p
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Kirby Muxloe Castle: Reproduction of two pages of the o

