

The 2nd Duke of Richmond names and supports his predecessors as Grand Master

By Bro. Christopher Powell

Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond was Grand Master for 18 months, between 24th June 1724 and 27th December, 1725. He chose as his deputy Martin Folkes who, like the Duke, was a Fellow of the Royal Society. From 1741 until 1752 Folkes was President of the Royal Society in succession to Sir Hans Sloane. The Duke and Martin Folkes became very good friends and corresponded frequently. Folkes kept thirty-six of the letters he received from the Duke together in a bundle at his family seat, Hillington Hall, King's Lynn, Norfolk. The letters range in date from 1725 to 1744.

After his death in 1754, Martin Folkes's library was sold at auction on 27th June, 1756, but his private papers were retained at Hillington including the bundle of 36 letters from Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond to Folkes. They were still in the library at Hillington in 1872 when they were recorded in the Appendix to the *Third Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London, 1872) on page 247. They were loaned to the Earl of March – later 8th Duke of Richmond - by Martin Folkes's great-grandson Sir William Folkes, when he was preparing his fascinating two-volume biography of his ancestor, the 2nd Duke of Richmond, *A Duke and his Friends* that was published by Hutchinson & Co. in 1911.¹

In that work, Lord March quoted from the letters. Generally, he extracted sentences and paragraphs that seemed relevant to him but rarely, if ever, a whole letter. It is important, therefore, to examine the originals which often contain other important information. For instance, in Volume 1 of his book, on pages 119-120, Lord March quotes from a letter written by Charles Lennox to Martin Folkes on 27th June, 1725 in which he apologises for having been so long in replying

¹ Earl of March, *A Duke and his Friends* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1911) vol.1 p.120.

to two letters from Folkes. Later in the same letter, but not quoted by Lord March, Charles Lennox thanks Martin Folkes for sending him a copy of an Old Charge which is the only extant reference to that particular copy and is, of course, very interesting to students of Masonic history.

The 36 letters, having been returned to Sir William Folkes by the Earl of March, were inherited by his daughter, the wife of John Dawnay, 9th Viscount Downe, and sold by her in Sotheby and Co.'s sale on 27th June 1932 as Lot 118, one of 14 lots of correspondence and papers of Martin Folkes P.R.S.² Although four lots in this sale were purchased on behalf of the Royal Society,³ this bundle of letters was bought by Brother Lewis Edwards (1888-1969), a Freemason. He shared his interesting purchase with Brother Lionel Vibert who, in *AQC* 43 (1930) under Notes and Queries pp. 255-256 printed two of the letters which contained matters of Masonic interest.⁴ The final stage on the journey of the bundle of 36 letters from Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond to Martin Folkes came on 20th May 2010, when the letters were presented to the library of the Royal Society where they are to be found under the class mark MS/865.

In a letter dated just 'Goodwood, Tuesday', the Duke reveals the sense of fair play and generosity of spirit that characterised him and made him a joy to know. Folkes, in a previous letter no longer extant, had evidently asked the Duke if he might lend a portrait in his possession so that a printed engraving might be made from it of the Duke as Grand Master. Charles Lennox replied that he would only give permission once engravings had been made of all his predecessors as Grand Master, noblemen and non-aristocrats, listing The 2nd Duke of Montagu, The Duke of Wharton and The 2nd Duke of Buccleuch, in the former category and Anthony Sayer, George Payne and Dr.

² Sotheby and Co., London, Sale Catalogue 27th June, 1732 comprising *inter alia* 'The Correspondence and Papers of Martin Folkes, P.R.S. largely on scientific subjects. The Property of the Dowager Viscountess Downe (heiress of his brother)'. Priced copy in the British Library.

³ R.E.W. Maddison 'A Note on the Correspondence of Martin Folkes, P.R.S.' in *Notes and Records: the Royal Society Journal of the History of Science* vol.11, 1954, 100-10

⁴ Note the volume of *AQC* for 1930 was clearly not printed until 1932.

Desaguliers in the latter. This is exactly the same list as is to be found in Anderson's Constitutions of 1738 and confirms that the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster was indeed founded in 1717.

When he was Grand Master in 1723, Francis Scott was Earl of Dalkeith. He succeeded to the title as the 2nd Duke of Buccleuch on the death of his grandmother 6th February, 1732, which suggests that the letter was written after that date. The letter also mentions Martin Folkes's son Martin who was born in 1720 and died in 1740 of a fall from a horse whilst studying in Caen, France. The letter cannot, therefore have been written after his death in 1740 nor, probably, after he left home to study at Cambridge University in 1737. The context suggests he was then still a young man living at home probably between the ages of 12 and 14 which, when taken with the fact that Lord Dalkeith succeeded his grandmother as the 2nd Duke of Buccleuch in 1732, suggests a date for the letter of around 1732-3. Martin Folkes left for Italy on 24th March 1733 and it is likely he received the Duke's letter before he left since he was abroad for two-and-a-half years until 3rd September 1735.

A comparison between the handwriting, inks and watermarks of the 36 letters contained in RS. MS/865 between 2nd Duke of Richmond and Martin Folkes, reveals that the letter almost certainly dates from 1732 for both the style of the handwriting, ink and watermarks on the note paper are similar to letters dated 1732. The paper was made in Egmond, Holland with a Strasburg Lily and the initials of Lubertus van Gerrevink as its watermark. An atlas dated 1733 uses the same paper.⁵ It is also interesting to note that Martin Folkes's son Martin is specifically mentioned by the Duke in a letter dated 22nd October, 1733 as in the letter under consideration but never earlier or later.

Although there is mention in the letter of a pamphlet sent by Martin Folkes to Lady Hervey, which may give an indication as to the date of the letter, there is no mention of this in the extant correspondence of Lady Hervey, or of the 2nd Duke of Richmond, or of Martin Folkes or of President Montesquieu who were all part of the same circle at this

⁵ See W.A. Churchill *Watermarks in Paper* (Amsterdam: Menno Hertzberger & Co., 1935) illustration 406.

time. Nor is there any extant pamphlet written by Martin Folkes that might have been the one referred to. So, unfortunately, no help as to a specific date of the letter can be gained from those sources.

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Transcription:

Dear Folkes,

Goodwood: Tuesday

As You say, our brethren will never be satisfy'd. How can fellows be such fools? Yett a possitive negative I need not give, butt I have to[o] great a regard, you may say, to the Dukes of Montagu & Buccluch, & ~~to those~~ who were my Predecessor[s], to have my print done first, butt after they have gott theirs, the D: of Whartons, & the three that go before them viz: Ant: Sawyer, Geo: Payne, & Dr. Dessys, for I insist upon theirs being done first; then I will consent to your lending my picture, butt possitively, not before those six are finish'd.

My Lady Hervey gives her service to you, & has gott the Pamphlett at last, butt a great search was made for it. Whaccum, having given it the Coachman at Godalming, & the Coachman to a footman, & that footman to an other, & so on, till it went round the whole house. Adieu dear Folkes [.] I hope Martin [his son] & the rest of your family are well. I am most truly, & most sincerely

Your's.

Richmond.

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ILLUSTRATION

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7.
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done first, but after they have got
theirs, ^{the D. of Wharton,} & the three that go before them
viz: Ant: Lawyer, Geo: Payne, & Dr: Deslys,
for I insist upon their being done first;

then I will consent to your sending my picture, but
positively, not before those six are finished.

My Lady Kenzy gives her service to you, & has got
the Pamphlet at last, but a great search was made
for it, Whaccum, having given it the Coachman at
Godalming, & the Coachman to a footman, & that
footman to an other, & so on, till it went round
the whole house. adieu Dear Folkes I hope Martin
& the rest of your family are well. I am most
truly, & most sincerely Yours. Richmond.