

SIR EDWARD TURNOUR'S LIGHTHOUSES AT ORFORD

By C. E. WELCH

In the seventeenth century, and even as late as the nineteenth century, it was usual for lighthouses to be provided by persons hoping to make a profit on them and not by Trinity House. This was usually done by obtaining a lease from the Crown which included the right to take tolls from all ships passing the light. Sir Edward Turnour, senior, the Speaker of the House of Commons, obtained such a lease of the three lighthouses at Winterton Ness near Caistor in Norfolk and the two at Orford Ness on 15 October 1661.¹ Later his son claimed that Charles II made the lease to his father as a reward for his services to the Crown and there seems no reason to doubt this although it is not mentioned in the letters patent. They first recite a lease made by Charles I on 13 April 1637 to Gerard Gore for fifty years. This gave Gore the right to charge one penny per ton on all traffic passing along the East Coast with the reservation that fishermen and the Newcastle colliers were only to pay once for the journey inwards and outwards. In return Gore was to pay an annual rent of £20 to the Crown. The letters patent then go on to grant the same privileges to Sir Edward Turnour for sixty years if the previous lease is void and determined, but only for thirty-three years otherwise. As this lease seems to have fallen in about 1720 the previous grant cannot have been void and Sir Edward died without enjoying the benefit of his lease. Despite this he managed to mortgage his interest to one Edward Smith in February 1679/80.²

The two lighthouses must have stood on Orford Beach quite close to the present lighthouse and separated from the town of Orford by the River Alde which here runs parallel to the sea. For this reason it could not be reached from Orford by land, but only from Aldeburgh to the north, and it was apparently the custom to employ Aldeburgh men to keep the lights. Gore had actually sub-leased them to Aldeburgh Corporation in 1643 and 1650 allowing that body to collect the tolls.³ The 'great light' was apparently to the south of Orford Ness and burnt coal in an hearth, but the small light, nearer the Ness used candles only. The latter's chief

¹ Public Record Office, C 66/2980, no. 2.

² This mortgage is listed (17/4) in the typescript catalogue of Turnour MSS. in the W(est) S(ussex) R(ecord) O(ffice), but is no longer with the collection.

³ *Historical MSS. Commission. Various Collections* iv, pp. 296, 298, 310.

purpose was to distinguish the great light from others along the coast in the same way that intermittent lights are used today. The coast line suffered much from erosion and during the thirty-three years of the lease both lights had to be rebuilt. From the complaints which Sir Edward Turnour junior received the lighthouses must have been important on the East Coast. There is in fact a considerable contrast between the complaints received about the Winterton and Orford lights which cannot entirely be explained away by bad management at Orford Ness and political rivalries in Suffolk.

The first reference to the Orford lights amongst the Turnour Letters is on 31 March 1687 when Richard Hooke wrote from Southwark to Sir Edward Turnour reminding him that he had formerly promised to sub-let them to him when the previous lease expired. Now that this had happened he hopes that Sir Edward would be pleased to remember him.⁴ Sir Edward was not pleased to remember him at this time and Thomas Wall and Thomas Willes of Aldeburgh continued to keep the lights for several more years. Their own evidence at a later date was that they were superannuated seamen who had supported Sir Edward's candidature at Aldeburgh in the 1690 general election, so his decision to retain their services at this time was probably political.⁵ The first complaints about the lights of which we hear are contained in a letter from Wall and Willes to Sir Edward Turnour in London, dated 5 October 1688.⁶ They say they are much troubled by complaints in London and Yarmouth about 'the ill keeping of Orfordnes lights' although they used all their care and diligence, and employed the most skilled men to keep them. They suggest that the lighthouse is too low, the east wind makes the sea 'darken the lights', and fogs are caused by the backwater and the marshes. However they have no concrete suggestion for improving the lights and no further complaint is reported for two years.

Trinity House, although it did not provide the lights, still had jurisdiction over them and powers to insist on the improvement of all privately-owned lights. On 21 January 1690/1 Mr. Hunter of Trinity House forwarded to Sir Edward Turnour a copy of the complaint by Captain Chamberlane of H.M. hired ship the *Berkeley Castle* who had been in charge of a convoy off Orford Ness and was unable to see the lights.⁷ His complaint was that 'upon my Coming in with the Nesse I was forc'd to Fire three Shott over them, otherwise severall of my Convoys who followed me about a

⁴ W.S.R.O., Turnour Letter 629.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 637 & 639.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 630.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 631.

[mi]lle astern would have been ashoare'. The *Neptune* finally did go aground, but Wall and Willes retorted that it was because she had not been taking soundings, and then it was six or seven miles away from Orford Ness. They also justified themselves to Sir Edward because of the E.N.E. wind 'with thick mislen weather with rayne which must of needs darken the lights'.⁸ They also had difficulties in managing the lights because after putting out an inefficient keeper his successor was pressed ten days later 'by Lieutenant Carow for Sir John Ashbey'. Throughout the wars with France the need to protect the two keepers from the pressgang was urged by the supervisors.⁹ But the next cause was the carrying away of both lights by the sea during the following winter. On 10 February 1691/2 Wall and Willes wrote to Robert Chaplin (at whose house in London Sir Edward was staying) to inform him that thirty feet of beach had already disappeared taking with it the small light while the great light was also in danger.¹⁰ This was particularly serious as the small light had already been moved twenty-six feet at the beginning of the winter to prevent a similar disaster. A fortnight later they wrote again to Sir Edward to say that very few materials of the small light had been saved and that they had set up a lanthorn at the request of Trinity House.¹¹ On March 13 the small light was rebuilt, and a few days later Sir Edward received the bill for £13 10s.¹² They were no doubt happy to report that Trinity House was pleased with the speed of the repairs.

In March 1692/3, possibly in readiness for the next general election, Sir Edward Turnour put Wall and Willes out of their post and appointed John Hooke of Sudbourne (probably a relation of Richard Hooke) as keeper of the Winterton and Orford lights and his deputy.¹³ Hooke was to pay an annuity of £25 to the Orford schoolmaster. Sir Edward paid Hooke £100 a year for managing the lights, from which he was to pay two keepers and find the materials. Sir Edward appears to have taken all the profits and paid for all repairs.¹⁴ This was not an unreasonable arrangement as practically none of the tolls were paid in Orford but in the different ports between Newcastle and London. However it must have been an incentive to Hooke to economise on the coal and candles in order to increase his own share of the profits. Being resident two miles away from Orford and three miles from the

⁸ *Ibid.*, 632 (26 Jan. 1690/1). Mislen or mizzling—soft rain.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 634.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 633.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 634.

¹² *Ibid.*, 635 & 636.

¹³ 17/9 & 31/15 in Catalogue of Turnour MSS. in W.S.R.O.

¹⁴ W.S.R.O., Turnour Letter 650.

lights he was unable to supervise the two men closely and they in their turn were apparently unable to see the lights from where they slept. Therefore it is not surprising that complaints continued to be made to Trinity House, the Admiralty, Sir Edward Turnour and John Hooke. The first reaction of Wall and Willes to their ejection was to remind Sir Edward of their services to him and to ask for payment for the articles they had provided.¹⁵ However after the general election of November 1695 they wrote again alleging that he had taken the lights out of their hands because they had failed to get him elected for Aldeburgh, and he had been 'pleas'd to give the keeping of it to Countrey Gent' in the hope of being elected at Orford, but had been 'egreediously slighted'.¹⁶ They now asked to be reappointed as they were 'Ancient Seamen and both past our labours and out of Employment which wilbe a deed of charitie'. The chief difficulty which Sir Edward faced in his candidature at Orford was a schism within the Corporation which occurred about this time. The mayor, Richard Gooding, had been put out of office in 1694, but with some of the portmen and capital burgesses refused to accept the decision. For almost ten years two corporate bodies existed in Orford fighting each other by lawsuits and forcibly entering the Town Hall to seize the plate and records.¹⁷ At the following general election in 1698 this led to an election petition and an altered return.¹⁸

For this election John Hooke acted as Sir Edward Turnour's agent at Orford and it is in a postscript to one of his political letters that 'the next news of the lighthouses comes. 'Sir The Lighthouse wants to be covered a Top. desire to knowe whether you please to have it don with oak or deal bord, the first will be something more chargable but more lasting, ther will want also a New Shoar and some other small things which must be don this summer the whole charge as I believe will not amount to 10 *li*'.¹⁹ In 1699 Hooke was writing to Richard Smith of the Customs House (who acted as Sir Edward's London agent) that he was sorry to hear of great complaints about the lights.²⁰ He was 'sure they have not been so good for several years as they have been since they were mended by adding new glass but all people know that Glass in either Raing or foggy weather will not show so much light'. He adds that the inhabitants of Aldeburgh say that there should be an open light as at Lowestoft, but the tower for this would need seventy

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 637.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 639.

¹⁷ *Historical MSS. Commission, Various Collections*, iv, pp. 257-271.

¹⁸ *Members of Parliament* (Parliamentary Paper, 1878), part I, p. 583. See also Turnour Letter 1019.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1020.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1025.

thousand bricks and cost £200. A year later the complaints were worse and on 3 September 1700 Richard Smith wrote to Sir Edward to say that some masters refused to pay the dues and others complained to Trinity House and the Admiralty.²¹ On September 12 the Master, Wardens and Assistants of Trinity House sent a Mr. Hunter to report on the state of the Orford lights.²² He went first to Aldeburgh and consulted the bailiffs, one of whom was Mr. Wall, who said that the lights had not been well kept and were frequently out at night because neither the contractor nor his men could see them.²³ Mr. Hunter then went to Orford Ness where he found Joseph May, one of the two keepers. The great light was in need of repair and the hearth was too small, burning only sixteen or eighteen chaldron of coal a year. The candles were too small and only burnt single, while the two lights were too close together at thirty yards. His report was forwarded to Sir Edward together with two complaints. The first was that on 22 and 23 August no lights were shown although colliers went close enough to see the lighthouse, while on November 8 Gabriel Millison of H.M.S. *Katherine* found the lights so dim that they could not be seen for a quarter of an hour at a time.²⁴ Nevertheless Trinity House did not insist on the lights being rebuilt further apart, but only asked for a general improvement. They also produced an agreement for Sir Edward which was apparently to prevent sub-letting the lights with a fixed sum for materials.²⁵ This he eventually signed, but with so many delays both in arranging for repairs and in signing that Trinity House reported him to the Privy Council.²⁶ Because of all this trouble it is perhaps not surprising that it was rumoured at Orford that Hooke was giving up his interest in the lighthouses, and one John Morgan wrote asking Sir Edward 'to Ad this favour to the Maney former you have bin pleased to be stowe upon your Servant'.²⁷

Meanwhile, quite apart from complaints about the lights, Sir Edward was having difficulty in collecting the lighthouse dues. Since these were paid at the first port reached by the ship after passing the lights it was necessary to appoint collectors in most of the East Coast ports. These were usually Customs officials who could use their position to check on the port of origin, and who

²¹ *Ibid.*, 649.

²² *Ibid.*, 650.

²³ There was no mayor at Aldeburgh and the two bailiffs were the chief officers of the borough.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 651 & 652.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 653 & 660. Most of the provisions in this agreement seem to be embodied in an undated paper, 663(2).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 654-656.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1195.

thereby supplemented their official salary. For example on 7 October 1701 Christopher Fawthrop of the Colchester Customs House was hoping to succeed to the post of Sir Edward's collector for that port. Usually the original collectors were continued in office, and James Stancliffe of Leigh in Essex continued to collect the dues although he did not know who to pay them to until he met Sir Edward Turnour's friend, the Revd. Thomas Rant in 1693.²⁸ In five years he had only collected £4 18s. 5d., so the trade of Leigh cannot have been large. In 1699 there was trouble with John Clutterbuck, Sir Edward's collector at the Newcastle Customs House. The letters imply that Newcastle Corporation (who had their own customs dues) had endeavoured to collect the light tolls also, and Sir Edward felt that Clutterbuck had not asserted his rights. By July 1700 Sir Edward Turnour wrote, 'I don't a little wonder at your weakness in being frightened at every shadow, at this rate you will make your self very unfit to manage,' and threatened to hold him responsible for any damage.²⁹ In 1708 Clutterbuck quarrelled with the Duke of Richmond's collector of coal dues at Newcastle. Consequently the collector denied him access to his books, making his task of collecting light dues more difficult.³⁰

The new grate for the fire provided by Sir Edward Turnour at the request of Trinity House caused considerable trouble, and on 29 December 1701 John Hooke wrote to him to say that 'on Wednesday last there broke out another fire in the Lighthouse under the hearth as before.'³¹ The fire was under control after burning four or five feet of deal boards and Hooke had rebuilt the hearth with three bushels of rock salt underneath as he was told that this would prevent the boards burning again. The following month he wrote to say that his two men promised to produce a better light if the hearth was taken away. It must have been removed eventually as the following winter he wrote to say that the light was '100 times better now then with that great troublesom Expensive and dangerous Grate'.³² Hooke also wanted a new pair of bellows as the wind sometimes filled the house with smoke and choked the light. He asked for a protection from the press gang for John Upson, one of the keepers, who had voted for Hooke's candidate at the mayoral election and was now being threatened by the opposite party.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 638 & 658.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 643, 644, 648.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 672. The Duke of Richmond was entitled to a toll from the Newcastle colliers by virtue of a perpetual grant of Charles II to Louise de Kerouaille.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1026.

³² *Ibid.*, 1027 & 1034.

On 14 August 1702 some of the brethren of Trinity House visited Orford Ness while on a survey of lighthouses. They found the great light much out of repair and the glass 'extreamly black and cloudy'. Because of the continual complaints they reported Sir Edward Turnour to the Privy Council.³³ They also wrote to tell him this and their reply to his answer shows their exasperation about the lights. Although they are reluctant to doubt his inclination they feel that he is ill served at Orford Ness which are the only lighthouses complained of in the Kingdom. There are no complaints about Sir Edward's other lights at Winterton. The brethren also enclosed their suggestions for improving the lights which they hoped would be adopted as soon as possible. These, with Sir Edward's comments, were:

1. Great Light to be repaired and a new dwelling house to be built nearby./ Done.
2. Glass of both lights to be cleaned and brushes and sponges to be available./ Sponges and wings provided, no brushes available at present.
3. Two persons always available at night, not to undertake other work but to have an adequate salary./Always been the case, except for some private arrangement between the men for which both were turned out.
4. No bargain for maintenance of lights to be made./ Answered above.
5. Overseer of lights to live at Aldeburgh where lights are visible rather than Orford./ The overseer can see lights from his house in Orford which is nearer.³⁴

When Sir Henry Johnson of Frinton Hall reported on the state of the lights to Trinity House in October the repairs (including the bellows for which Hooke had asked nine months ago) were in progress, the keepers had a sufficient salary and enough coal and candles were provided, but no cleaning materials had been found for the glass although they could have had fowls' wings free.³⁵

Now that Hooke was no longer keeping the lights for a fixed sum more details of the administration of them appear in his letters. In June 1702 he reminds Sir Edward that he had not yet provided the shipload of coal as he intended. Coal was then already dear at 28s. 6d. a chaldron. By October 22 he was paying 31s. and 32s. a chaldron and hoped that the 9½ chaldron he had would suffice for

³³ *Ibid.*, 660 & 662.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 663.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 664.

the winter.³⁶ As the Trinity House report of 1700 said that the great light burnt sixteen or eighteen chaldron a year, Hooke was probably cutting it fine. In October 1702 Hooke presented his first bill for the Michaelmas quarter.³⁷ Joseph May and John Upson received £7 for fourteen weeks work, Nathaniel Gooding, the schoolmaster at Orford, £6 5s. towards his salary, and Hooke £5 for 'taking care of the lights'. Nine chaldron of coal and carriage cost £15 1s. 6d., candles £5 5s. 7d., and fire irons and other implements 11s. 5d. Various repairs to the lights (probably those ordered by Trinity House) amounted to £25 5s. 3d., and Sir Edward's gifts to Orford Corporation (including £10 towards the repair of the Quay) to £21 4s. 1d., so that the total cost was £95 14s. 10d. This, as Hooke himself pointed out, was much inflated by the repairs and gifts, and his bill for the next quarter, which included a gift of £10 to the Mayor of Orford for the poor, and an increase of 18d. a week for the two keepers, was only £34 0s. 3d.³⁸ With John Hooke now living at Orford and two efficient keepers no further complaints were heard for a time, and it was said that 'all the Masters that use the Coast' commended them since the alterations were made.³⁹ But in April 1703 there was a complaint by Captain Saunderson of the *Peregrine* Yacht who fired guns at the lights because they were not burning.⁴⁰ Thomas Wall seems to have taken advantage of this to press his claims, and he wrote to Trinity House that there would be no improvement until Sir Edward stopped entrusting them to country gentlemen, tailors and shoemakers at Orford and returned their care to Aldeburgh. Mr. Hunter of Trinity House then wrote to Sir Edward to say that unless Wall succeeded John Hooke a notice would be published in the *Gazette* forbidding the payment of tolls for the lights.⁴¹ How Sir Edward Turnour avoided this is not known, but Wall had no success and the complaints ceased.

Instead Sir Edward decided to allow his friends in the Orford Corporation to have the advantage of the lights during their year as mayor. As he had been elected their Member of Parliament in January 1700/1 this was obviously part of his attempt to encourage 'the right Interest' in the Corporation.⁴² Unfortunately there were difficulties when John Morgan (the burgess who thought he could run the lights cheaper than Hooke) was promised by Sir

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1029 & 1030.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1031 & 1032.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1035.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1037.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 666.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 667 & 668.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1195, 1198, 1199, 1039.

Edward that he should have charge of the lights under the superintendence of the mayor for the time being. When in 1704, possibly as a result of some quarrel between Sir Edward and Morgan, this was not done there were angry letters from Morgan. John Hooke, the new Mayor of Orford, supported Morgan.⁴³ On 6 November 1704 Morgan 'was very much surpris'd to see that you should be so forgetfull of your promis which you made to me before Mr Green. I am very unwilling to be troublesum but I Cannot keep silant when I see my selfe so unkindly delt with . . . the Corporation [is] monnopolized by two men . . . I and sum other of your frinds begin to see that we Are ondy desined to be tooles to gaine other popel Esteates.'⁴⁴ Morgan's boldness seems to have paid for in future years he was frequently in charge of the lights and drawing his quarter's salary of £5.

In 1707 the war with France brought fresh troubles to the lights and their keepers. On 23 June they were attacked by a French privateer who stole various utensils and did 'much damage . . . to the glass of the Lantern and likewise in the Low roome, but that above is so much ruined that it will be difficult keeping a fire that will be servicable untill mended he also robbed the men of their Bedds, and I know not what else. he now rides over against our Town, wher he just now tooke a Hoy, being an English built vessell (our seaman tells us 'tis the Ferrit) she is a great decoy . . . but that which may prove of the most concern will be want of the Light being kept for I heard the men now say that if she stood down toward the house they would not venture over.'⁴⁵ In July Hooke reported that there had been no further damage although three privateers were in the neighbourhood.⁴⁶ The following January an English privateer was the culprit. 'There have ben A priveteer a shoote at the Lithouse and have Broke all the glase and stoll all the Ierons belonging to the firmes and stoll the mens beds and I wonder they did not burn the house and if there be not sum speaddy care taken to prevent the same I shall not git eany men to Louck after it for they say they will begg there Bread before they will com there eany moore . . .'⁴⁷ It is not surprising that John Hooke told Sir Edward 'Wee stand a tiptoe to hear of the defeat of the French Fleet'.⁴⁸

Meanwhile there was the excitement of a contested election in Orford in May 1708. John Morgan said he was 'dayly tempted

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1198, 1199, 1039, 1040.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1200.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1050.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1051.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 669. Written by Thomas Thurston of Orford.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1058.

by Saturn who Appere to me Clothed all in Black with many goulden bayts and great offers of prefirmment all which I have reiecte'd'. A few days later he wrote that Major Churchill and General Hervey would have spent £100 with him in return for his support, but he refused to abandon Sir Edward Turnour.⁴⁹ Sir Edward's gifts to the Corporation, his treat to them on New Years day, and his £5 for the use of the poor won the day, and by May 8 John Hooke wrote to congratulate him on his election.⁵⁰ However there was a petition and the following January the House of Commons ordered William Thompson's name to be substituted for Sir Edward's in the return. In January also there was an urgent letter from John Hooke. 'Master Sanders and John Upson has been both with me this morning to acquaint me, theis late E: and N:E: winds has unfortunately quite swept away the little Light, and that the Sea has made its progress as much nearer the great Light as the small one stood from it before, and has rendred the Beach verry low in so much as that the water came about the great light. how this Matter is to be mended is past my skill, but the old Man says there may be a small light set up just within the present full, tho't will be in danger of the same fate with the other the next NE: wind. The want of one may be attended with bad consequences wherfore hope for your speedy orders what shall done'.⁵¹ Before Trinity House could complain again Hooke was at work building a temporary light. It consisted of four pieces of timber 15 feet high supported by four shores, and a lantern to slide up and down on iron hoops. It was ready by February 7, but gales delayed its erection for several days.⁵² By February 28 John Hooke was able to send Sir Edward an elevation of the new small light, which he wanted to glaze with Crown glass at an extra cost of 10s. The erosion of the beach was obviously continuing at an alarming rate because he proposed to save the materials of the jury light in case the new one was undermined. He also said the keepers were 'a little freighted in the great light, the water play'd under it at soe great a rate'. The total cost of the new light was about £15, and John Hooke was certain that it would stand the scrutiny of the best architect.⁵³

Towards the end of 1709 John Sanders the senior keeper died. Although he had been ill for several years Sir Edward Turnour had continued to employ him and he may have served by deputy.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1206, 1202.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1204, 1061.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1070.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1071-1074.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1076, 1091, 1077. See illustration of the new light (Fig. 16).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1082, 1201.

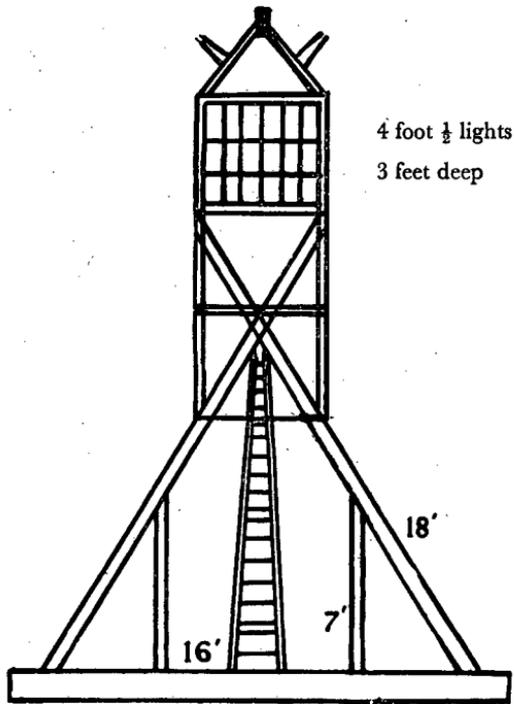


Fig. 16.—An elevation of the little light built in 1709
(Turnour letter 1091).

As John Upson, the junior keeper, had opposed Sir Edward's party over the election of a mayor there was no suggestion of appointing him. Applications for Sanders' place were received from John Tye and Thomas Cosens, both of Orford. The former's qualifications were described by himself as 'an Olde member of this Corporation (as he was) and my Labour Just Done: therefore beg you will pleas to Establish me in his Roome, which will be A great Charity'. John Hooke thought that Cosens would be more suitable as it would attach him to the right side. Hooke was instructed by Sir Edward to offer him the post, but with a smaller salary than Sanders had received. This Cosens refused, and so they were eventually obliged to promote Upson (who had promised to support Sir Edward in future) and appoint Richard Woods as his assistant.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1082, 679, 1090, 1083-1085.

The next few years passed very quietly; most of the correspondence being concerned with the quarterly bills. The usual cost a quarter was about £39. The two keepers' salaries were £5 for John Upson and £4 4s. 6d. for Richard Woods: Sanders and received £7 10s. and Upson four guineas. The supervisor, usually the mayor, received £5 which one described in his accounts as 'to drink your helth'.⁵⁶ The coal for the great light was landed at Orford and carried across the river by the two keepers for an extra payment. In January 1715/6 when the river was frozen over it was necessary to employ a cart to carry a chaldron of coal from Aldeburgh. The cost of candles for the small light varied from £1 to £4, and so did that of the coal which was usually bought at cheaper prices in the summer. Payments to the Corporation and the poor were usually £5 each, and the residue consisted of repairs to the lights and other casual payments.⁵⁷ In October 1716 there was a final complaint. Captain Steuart of the *Royal Anne* Galley in company with the *Diamond* claimed to have mistaken Orford for Lowestoft as only one light was visible.⁵⁸ Even at Aldeburgh all the seamen said this complaint was groundless and that the pilot 'made this Complaint only to Excuse his Ignorance and thay wondr he was not Ashamed to publish his weakness to the world'. The lights had been very well kept, and it was only possible to mistake them for Lowestoft if the ship was so far out to sea that it could not see the small light.⁵⁹ Trinity House seems to have accepted these assurances as nothing more is heard of the complaint.

The date of the expiration of Sir Edward's lease was now close at hand and it was necessary for him to consider his position. As long ago as 30 January 1695/6 one Ralph Grey had obtained a fresh lease from the Crown although Sir Edward Turnour had used his influence with the Duke of Leeds to obtain a renewal to himself.⁶⁰ Grey's lease was in the same terms as the previous two and was to begin (unless the previous grant was already void) on 13 April 1720. On March 29 Henry Grey wrote to the Mayor of Orford as superintendent of the lights to say that he would take possession then. He arrived in Orford on April 14 and visited the Mayor who said he had no instructions from Sir Edward Turnour and refused to dine with him. The keepers also refused to give him the keys. At dusk he went over to the lights and read over the lease. When the

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1207, 687.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 687, 690, 1204, 1207, 1208.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 691, 692.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1210, 1211.

⁶⁰ Public Record Office, Index to Patent Rolls, 7 Wm. III, part 4. 17/7 in Catalogue of Turnour MSS. in W.S.R.O. The Duke of Leeds (better known as Lord Danby) was then Lord President of the Council.

keepers went to light them he forced an entrance and took possession of the keys.⁶¹ Sir Edward then brought an action for trespass against him on the grounds that the lights were his own property being built on his land. Their subsequent proceedings are somewhat obscure as few later letters have survived, but as a few years later there was also a Trinity House light at Orford Ness it seems that the dispute so interfered with the service that it was necessary for the brethren to intervene. It is not surprising that Sir Edward was unwilling to surrender these troublesome lights to his rival because they had been a source of considerable political patronage and profit to him. In 1720 it was estimated that the Winterton and Orford lights were together worth £2800 a year.⁶²

⁶¹ W.S.R.O. Turnour Letter 778.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 779, 704, 700. I am indebted to Lord Winterton for permission to quote from his family papers and to my former colleague Mr. A. A. Dibben for his advice.

Note by Editor:—It appears that Mr. Grey may have eventually been successful, for in 1730-1 Henry Gray was in possession of 'lighthouses' at Orford (Copinger, *Suffolk Records and MSS.*, iv, 259). In 1793 Lord Howard de Walden owned the 'old lighthouse at Orford' (*Ipswich Journal*, 2 Nov. 1793, quoted in *East Anglian Notes and Queries*, vii, 255).