

likely that most of these people came from the neighbourhood, if not from Wroxton itself. And when the work was finished, there was a small amount of money for the careful Francis North to recoup by the sale of old materials: an old beam and a window casement to Will Matthews, and two old doors to Edward Carson.

Francis North had no more completed the house than John or William Pope had done, but when Celia Fiennes visited it she described it as having ‘many good pictures in most roomes, there was a part new built all the new fashion way, which was design’d for the present Lord Guilford and Lady.’ He was the son of Francis North, 1st Lord Guilford, and did not come of age until 1694. It is therefore possible that some of the work attributed to the period of the 1st Lord Guilford was actually carried out for the 2nd. But in any event, Roger North must have been responsible for it; the Norths were an exceptionally close-knit family, and Roger charmingly describes how he and his brother Dudley, trustees for the young heir after the death of his father, spent much time at Wroxton where they spent their time in carpentry and blacksmith’s work to the horror of Dudley North’s wife and the bewilderment of the villagers.³⁸

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Although the house remained incomplete, little more was probably done until the 1730s and ’40s, when the Francis North’s grandson, the 3rd Baron Guilford, undertook further work inside the house and outside. In 1734 he succeeded his cousin as Baron North, and thereby bore both titles, but when in 1752 he was created Earl of Guilford the title of Lord North was

³⁸ Jessopp, III, 243. ‘Our way of living there being somewhat extraordinary, I think it reasonable to give an account of it. In the first place, the lady had a standing quarrel with us; for we had such a constant employ that she could have none of her husband’s company; and when she came to call him to dinner she found him as black as a tinker ... We followed the trade so constantly and close, and he coming out sometimes with a red short waistcoat, red cap, and black face, the country people began to talk as if we used some unlawful trades there at least, clipping at least; and it might be coining [i.e. forging] money. Upon this we were forced to call in the blacksmith and some of the neighbours, that it might be known there was neither damage nor danger to the state by our operations. This was morning’s work before dressing; to which duty we were usually summoned by the lady full of admiration that creatures she had in her family. In the afternoons too we had employment which was somewhat more refined; and that was turning and planing ...’