

My dear Dom Abbas

Please forgive my not writing to you in French and believe that I thereby am saving you much pain !

I am writing a short memoir of Charles Frederick COOKSEY, a distant kinsman of mine. His papers were left to me on the death of Canon Walter Cooksey, the younger of his two children, his elder child being Father Frederick Cooksey of the Society of Jesus, who died first. In addition to Cooksey's notebooks I have letters he wrote to me, many on the printed paper of which I enclose a sheet, and some trifles of information from other sources. From these written sources there is practically no information about the Abbey acquiring Bustard Manor Farm, Martin, Hampshire in about 1901, but I can recall Mr Cooksey's story of how he chartered a small ship from Plymouth and collected at Cherbourg clandestinely movable property brought from Bricquebec hidden under hay, of which at that time the Abbey sold much for the many horses kept in Cherbourg and elsewhere. This he related to me when I stayed with him at Martin in 1920. He had managed the farm for the Abbey during the 1914-18 War and sold it on the Abbey's behalf about 1921. Among other points of interest he told me that, as a means of frustrating the anti-clerical movement in France the Abbey was registered as an English limited company (Société Anonyme) and in accordance with the English company regulations Mr Cooksey, as secretary of the company, read a statement of the accounts at Bricquebec (? and Martin) every year. He told me that the French version was prepared for him.

In 1922 - 24 I imported cyder from the Abbey, via Southampton, and in 1933 I visited the Abbey. The lay-brother at the Gatehouse was Brother Otto; he had been at Martin and spoke English and told me some trifling memories of life there, which he seems to have enjoyed. He showed me the statue of Our Lady which had been sent from Martin when the farm was sold. I was much impressed with the way the dairy herd was housed and how the milk-yield etc was recorded for each cow, a very advanced procedure in France and elsewhere at that date.

The Archivist at the Archbishop's House, Westminster, cannot find any papers relating to your Monastery's concern with Martin and thinks that any such papers would have been kept within the Diocese concerned. Martin was originally in the Clifton Diocese but later was transferred