

# Nottinghamshire's monasteries from foundation to Dissolution

## Beauvale Priory

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### Order

Carthusian

Approximate number of religious persons at Beauvale Priory - 12

### Origin

Founded by Nicholas de Cauntlow or Cantilupe in 1343 for a prior and twelve monks.

'The charter recites that the founder did this for the glory of God and of the Virgin and of All Saints, for the furtherance of divine worship, and for the good estate of the king, of Archbishop Zouch, his most dear lord and cousin, of the Earl of Derby, of himself and his wife Joan, and William his son and heir, and of their souls when they should die, and also for all his progenitors and heirs' (Page 1910 p.105).

The initial endowment included over 300 acres of land with its associated villains, rents and the income of the churches of Greasley and Selston. It also provided cattle grazing and stone quarrying rights. This was followed by further similar endowments from various patrons and included the hay of Willey in Sherwood.

### Income

Shortly after the foundation William de Aldeburgh gave the charterhouse waste land next to its property for grazing because of their poverty. 'In 1293 William's two daughters granted a manor for the founding of a chantry, whereby two monks were to pray exclusively for the family...Edward III gave a tonne of Gascon wine annually; his daughter Isabella an annual pension of 100s' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.74).

'In 1370 John of Gaunt granted the priory the manor of Etwall in Derbyshire worth £12 per annum for the repair of the priory' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.74).

In the reign of Richard II (King 1377 – 1399), two of the monks took on the role of chantry priests within the priory, each post earning a yearly grant of 40s. for the priory.

In 1397 the priory leased a coal mine in Kirkestallaund...for a weekly rent of 4s 6d per pit' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.74). The monks also mined coal themselves in Selston parish and leased some of their land for iron making.

'The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 gave the annual value of this priory as £227 8s, and the clear value £196 6s' (Page 1910 p.107).

### Outgoings

'Among the outgoings was the payment of 27s. 4d. a year to Sir John Chaworth for the passage of coal over his lands' (Page 1910 p.107).

In addition, 'Hugh de Cressy of Selston and Cecelia his wife assigned to the priory in 1360 all their lands and tenements in Kimberley and Newthorpe, on condition of Hugh receiving from the priory £7 10s. during his life, and Cecelia £4 11s. if she survived him' (Page 1910 p.105).

### Relics

None

### Other information

The English Carthusians rejected the supremacy of Henry VIII as head of the church in England. In early 1535 the prior of Beauvale, Robert Lawrence, with two other Carthusian priors went to visit Thomas Cromwell in London. They were arrested and taken to the

Tower of London as traitors. A trial followed where 'On the jury...refusing to condemn them, Cromwell used violent threats against them, with the result that at last they found them guilty and received great thanks' (Page 1910 p.107).

On the 4<sup>th</sup> May 1535 the three Carthusian priors and two other religious men were tied to hurdles then drawn through the streets to Tyburn before being publicly executed in a more extreme fashion than was usual in high treason cases.

'The condemned were all drawn to the place of execution in their respective habits, and everything seems to have been arranged to make their death an awful example of the king's power over the religious...of his realm....The cords used for the preliminary hanging were especially stout and heavy, in order to avoid the possibility of fatal strangling before the subsequent butchery could be achieved' (Page 1910 p.108). John Houghton, a previous prior of Beauvale had 'His entrails...cut from him and thrown into the prepared fire. Finally, his still beating heart was torn from his body. After his death one arm was cut off and nailed over the gateway of the London Charterhouse' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.76). The other men were treated the same way.

### **Dissolution**

The clear annual value was just under £200 making the priory liable for Dissolution as a smaller house. By paying £166 13s. 4d. the monks deferred Dissolution from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1538 to 18<sup>th</sup> July 1539.

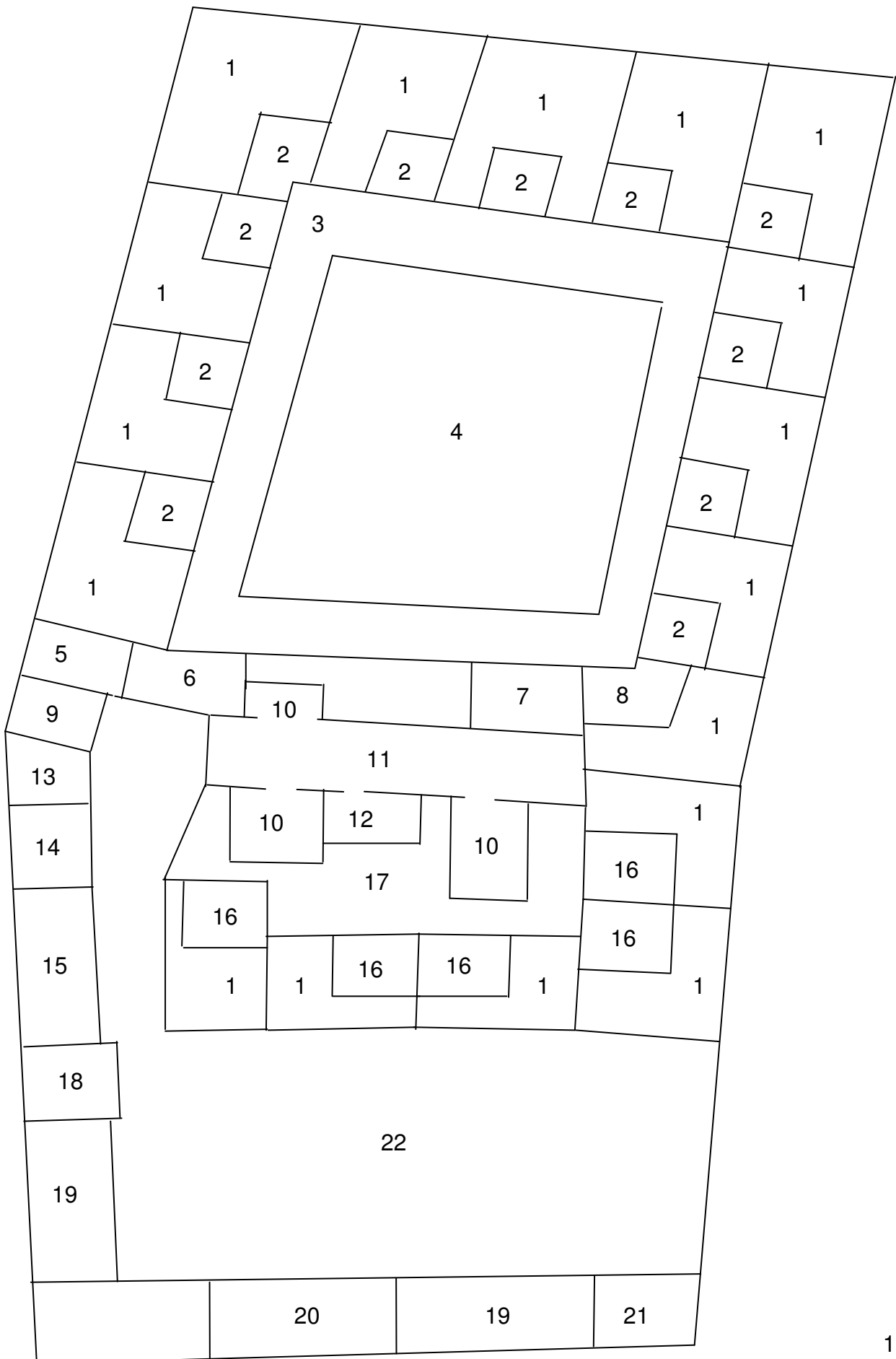
The prior Thomas Woodcock, who had co-operated with the Dissolution commissioners, received a pension of £25 13s 4d. Other monks received £5 6s each. Two elderly lay brothers received 40s each.

### **Remains** – not open to the public

'Above ground what survives is a portion of the south wall of the church, a 3 storey tower house which was probably the Prior's cell, parts of the cloister walls and a substantial part of the accommodation next to the gatehouse, which is incorporated in farm buildings' (Bishop 1988 p.13).

The site at Beauvale is difficult to interpret so the following map is based on the layout of Mount Grace Priory in Yorkshire. This can be used to identify the similarities and differences between the distinctive Carthusian plan and that used by other monastic orders. As the focus of Carthusian life was withdrawal from the world, each monk had his own cell and garden. These were arranged around the main cloister in place of the communal buildings of other orders. The two storey cells consisted of 'an entry-passage, a...living room with a fireplace, a study, and a bedroom and oratory' (Coppack 1996 p.18). The bedroom also served as a private chapel. The whole of the upstairs was a workroom. Outside, each cell had two passages leading from them along the garden walls. These are not shown on the map. One of these passages was glazed and acted as a private cloister for meditation and reading. The other was unglazed and led to the outside wall of the garden where there was a toilet with running water underneath it and a space in the wall to put a candle. Drinking water came from a tap in the passage leading to the toilet and food was delivered by a lay brother who pushed it through a hatch next to the front door. Because of the largely individual lives led by the Carthusians, the communal buildings such as the frater, chapter house and church were much smaller than those in other monasteries. Only three of the nine daily religious services were observed in church. Other buildings such as the warming room and farmery were absent altogether. Beyond the buildings around the main cloister the pattern was similar to other monasteries with the inner court including guest accommodation and buildings necessary for the day to day support of the priory. Outside this area other necessities would have been maintained such as fishponds and water mills.

# Simplified map showing the main features of a Carthusian Priory (Charterhouse)



## Carthusian Priory (Charterhouse) map key

1 - Garden	2 – Monk's cell (house)	3 – Cloister walk
4 - Cloister	5 – Frater (dining room)	6 – Prior's cell (house)
7 – Chapter house	8 – Sacrist's cell (house)	9 - Kitchen
10 - Chapel	11 - Church	12 - Vestry
13 – Bake house	14 – Brew house	15 – Guest house
16 – Lay brother's cell	17 – Lesser cloister	18 - Gatehouse
19 - Barn	20 – Stable	21 – Kiln house
22 – Inner court		

## Blyth Priory

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### Order

Benedictine

Approximate number of religious persons at Blyth Priory – 12 (but only 2 in 1379)

### Origins

Blyth priory was situated near to the Great North Road and the Ryton and Roach rivers as a dependent house of Holy Trinity Abbey, Rouen. It was founded in 1088 by Roger de Builli and his wife Muriel 'for the stability of William the king and the soul of Matilda the queen, and for the health of the donor's souls' (Page 1910 p.83).

### Income

'In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the priory's main sources of income were from 23 places in Nottinghamshire, ten in Yorkshire, and nine elsewhere' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.13). The sources of a large part of the income were identified in 1379 when the total average income was declared at £140 3s 4d. The toll, markets, pleas, and prerequisites of market and other courts in Blyth came to £62 6s 8d while the income from the church at Blyth was valued at £66.

The priory held rights of toll on the transport of goods through around 100 square miles of north Nottinghamshire. 'The convent levied tolls on every cart-load of timber or bread (for sale), ½ d.; for every cart-load of any other article for sale, 2d.; for every horse-load of salmon, 1d.; for every horse-load of any other article, ½ d.; for every back-load or pack of merchandise, ¼ d.; for every horse or cow (for sale), ½ d.; for every sheep and pig (for sale) ¼ d.; and for every sack of wool packed and sold at Blyth, 4d' (Page 1910 p.85). Income from tithes included labour, amounting to 120 days work from tenants in harvesting the prior's crops and valued at 20s. The priory also held demesne lands that the monks farmed themselves in various manors including Elton and Barnby in Nottinghamshire. By the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 the value of the gross income of the priory was down to £126 8s 2½d largely due to the priory being taken over by the crown during the wars with France as an alien priory with some French monks.

### Outgoings (1379)

The late prior who lived in the priory as a corrodian was allowed meat and drink to the value of £12 17s 9d. His servants allowance was £2 6s 8d.

'There were nine secular persons in receipt of corrodies, worth about £2 13s 4d each' (Page 1910 p.86).

In 1379 hospitality was estimated to cost £10 a year. Much of this was spent on merchants, pilgrims and soldiers on their way to the war in Scotland. The strain this placed on the priory's resources is revealed in that from 1249 the church of Weston provided an annual pension of 5 marks specifically to help pay for hospitality to travellers.

'£27 10s was expended in the sustentation of the prior, his servants, horses, and other necessaries, in addition to a sum of £16 for his expenses in travelling' (Page 1910 p.86). During the Hundred Years War with France, Blyth priory and its income was taken into the control of the Crown several times. Each time the priory had to pay a fine to regain control of its affairs if the war was still in progress, the prior having to go to London to plead his case. These costs and the poor management by some of the Crown agents put the priory into financial difficulty. This war also led to the French monks being expelled in 1377, leaving only two from a peak of at least twelve in addition to the prior at the end of the thirteenth century.

A further cost of £3 6s 8d was incurred in alms distributed annually in memory of the founder and 40s a year paid to the mother house, the abbey at Rouen.

### **Relics**

None

### **Other information**

'In the late twelfth or early thirteenth century Brother Peter was received as a monk having given timber and a toft; one Mathilda gave land and as a benefactor was received into an honorary sisterhood; Robert Rascald quitclaimed 40 acres in return for a corrody for life, a robe or 5s annually, and 40s; and Roger, son of Reginald the chamberlain, gave land and rent in return for the office of gatekeeper' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.13).

'Prior Thomas de Vymond...in 1373 with many followers broke into the park of William de Furnival in Sheffield and 'hunted, felled his trees, fished in his free fishery, dug in his quarry...carried away stones and coal...deer...hares, conies...and assaulted his men and servants' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.15).

### **Dissolution**

In 1536 the royal commissioners Legh and Layton visited the priory and declared that there were four cases of sexual offences as well as one of adultery. The house was valued at £180.

The priory was dissolved in 1538 with the prior being granted a pension of 20 marks. Nothing is known about provision for the other monks, corrodians and servants.

### **Remains**

The parish church of St. Mary and St. Martin in the centre of Blyth is part of the former monastic church which was also used as the parish church before the Dissolution. After the Dissolution the east end of the church and the central crossing were demolished with a new wall being built at the east end. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century one of the largest doom paintings in the country, representing the last judgement, was painted on this wall. Some of the columns in the church still have late eleventh century painted scrollwork visible on their capitals. No remains of the other monastic buildings exist.

## **Felley Priory**

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### **Order**

Austin canons (Augustinian)

Approximate number of religious persons at Felley Priory - 5

## **Origin**

Founded by Ralph Britto of Annesley in 1156 near to an Annesley stream. No details of foundation endowments exist although there is evidence of small parcels of land being given as gifts. The church at Annesley was given to the priory by Reginald de Annesley, the founder's son.

## **Income and outgoings**

'John de Heriz, for the health of his soul and that of Sarah his wife, gave 18 bovates of land...to sustain two canons daily celebrating in the church of Felley for ever' (Page 1910 p.110).

'In 1268 Geoffrey de Langley, for the souls of himself and of his children, and of his two wives, Christina and Matilda, gave...all that he had in Ashover (Derbyshire)...on condition that his name and the names of his wives and ancestors and successors were daily recited in the mass for benefactors, also that his obit was to be kept like that of a prior, and that on that day thirteen poor people should be fed, each receiving a white loaf, a gallon of the better beer, and half a dish of meat...' (Page 1910 p.110). A similar request, but for only five poor people, was to be given on the anniversary of his wife's death' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.63 – 64).

The Taxation Roll of 1291 gave a taxable income of £11 1s. 8d.

The priory was often in financial difficulty. In 1343 it was granted the church of Attenborough due to the poor soil of its lands being in the Sherwood Forest area, the impoverishment of its tenants, the cost of repairs and weight of debt. The priory's assets were valued at £11 2s.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 shows a gross annual value of £61 4s 8d with a clear value of £40 19s 1d.

## **Relics**

None

## **Other information**

Felley priory was visited by Archbishop Giffard on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1276. 'The visitation resulted in the deposition of Prior Ralph de Pleasley for various irregularities, in the confining of Ralph de Codnore to the cloister for incontinence, and in the infliction of a like punishment on Robert Barry and William de Dunham for theft and immorality. The charges against the prior were ...of suffering the goods of the house to be wasted, and the house itself to become dilapidated; of laying violent hands on Alan, one of the canons; of breaking open a lock...(to gain access to the priory seal)...against the will of the convent; and of neglecting to correct in chapter. He was also found to be insufficient or the position on account of weakness and old age' (Page 1910 p.111). Text in brackets inserted.

## **Date of Dissolution**

Legh and Layton visited the priory in 1536 and reported an annual income of £40 with a similar amount in debts but no scandal. The last prior was given a pension of £6 when the house was dissolved in 1536. This was cancelled on his appointment as rector of Attenborough, Nottinghamshire.

## **Remains** – Not open to the public

Fragments of the priory are built into the existing private house which uses two column shafts from the priory as gateposts. The font from the monastic church is now in Annesley Parish Church.

## Order

Cluniac

Approximate number of religious persons at Lenton Priory - 25

## Origin

'Founded by William Peverel...for the good of the souls of his lord King William, of his wife Queen Matilda...and of all their...ancestors...and for the health of his own soul, and those of his wife Matilda and his son William and all their children' (Page 1910 p.91). The foundation date is uncertain but is generally accepted as 1108 when William was the custodian of Nottingham Castle. The priory was built in an elbow of the river Leen to provide fresh water, sewerage and a means of transporting supplies. Lenton was the richest Nottinghamshire monastery throughout its life, accounting for between a quarter and a sixth of the county's monastic income at different times.

'Peverel...endowed the house with the township of Lenton ...including seven mills...(and)... the townships of Radford, Morton and Keighton' (Page 1910 p.91). Morton and Keighton no longer exist. Peverel also endowed the priory with woods and open land in Newthorpe and Papplewick.

## Income

Henry I (king 1100 – 1135) gave consent for three churches of Nottingham, St Mary, St Peter and St Nicholas, and the churches of Radford and Langar to be given to the priory, together with the tithes of fisheries in Nottinghamshire.

Further churches were granted by King John in 1199 as well as free entry to Bestwood forest to collect one cart of dead wood and two carts of heather for the monks own use. He also granted the tithes on game, including wild boars and hares, taken in the royal forests of Nottingham and Derby.

King Henry II granted the priory an annual eight-day fair around 1164 at the feast of St. Martin beginning on the 11<sup>th</sup> November. This was extended to twelve days by Henry III and it became one of the largest fairs in the country. The priory held the toll rights on everything except food or clothing and no other markets were allowed in Nottingham while the fair was on. This led to resentment due to the loss of trade in Nottingham and in 1300 the fair was reduced to its original eight days with Nottingham traders being allowed to hire booths. By 1387 net income from the fair averaged £35 a year with additional income being gained from a special court set up during the fair.

Henry III (king 1216 – 1272) also granted quarry rights in 1229 and thirty oaks out of Sherwood in 1232.

By 1300 there were 400 acres of demesne land around the priory sown with crops, probably wheat, oats, barley and peas. Sheep farming was also important. However, 'The priory was in an unhappy financial condition in 1313. In May of that year Edward II, at the request of the prior and convent...had taken it into his protection on account of its poverty and indebtedness' (Page 1910 p.96).

Beeston Church came under the control of Lenton Priory after 1330.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 gave a clear annual value of £336.

## Outgoings

'The sum of £41 1s 8d...(a year)...was expended in the daily meat, drink, lodging, and firing, and a penny each week on five needy men, who were to pray for the souls of William Peverel and Adeline his wife...A further sum of £2 13s. 4d. was distributed yearly to the poor on the anniversaries of William and Adeline Peverel' (Page 1910 p.94). Words in brackets inserted.

One mark of silver was paid each year to the Abbot of Cluny as this was the mother house.

In 1269 when prior Matthew entered office he took on a debt of 935 marks in money and forty sacks of wool at 15 marks for each sack. By 1279, thirty-two sacks had been paid. Due to the large number of endowments the priory received they had a large number of corrodians to support. These contributed to the twenty pensioners living in the priory and at the priory's expense in 1324, some with their own servants.

### **Relics**

None

### **Other information**

'The first charter of Henry II (king 1154 – 1189) freed from every form of tax, toll, or custom the whole of the priory of Lenton' (Page 1910 p.92).

There was a long dispute over ownership of Peak District tithes between Lenton priory and the Bishop of Lichfield.

'The disputes assumed a violent form in the years 1250-1, when the monks of Lenton by force of arms seized on certain tithes of wool and lambs in the parish of Tideswell. The chapter of Lichfield actually ordered the wool to be stored and the flocks to be folded within the nave of the church for security; but the adherents of the priory disregarded sanctuary rights and burst open the doors. Thereupon a free fight ensued between the two parties; many of the sheep and lambs were butchered under the horses' hoofs or by the weapons of the combatants...In this encounter eighteen lambs were killed in the church and fourteen were carried off to the grange of the Lenton monks. Geese, hay, and sheaves of oats were also seized by violent methods about the same time' (Page 1910 p.92). This dispute continued on and off until Lenton Priory was dissolved.

As most of the monks came from a warmer French climate they were allowed from the winter of 1257-8 to wear caps in church.

Ecclesiastical visitors to Lenton in 1275/6 and found no major faults. Remedial instructions left by the visitors included, 'the non-eating of meat with seculars, the reading of the lection in the infirmary at dinner, and the tarrying of any in the priory after compline' (Page 1910 p.94).

In 1279 the prior was appointed Visitor of the Cluniac houses of England by the Abbot of Cluny giving him the role of inspector.

In May 1389 the Archbishop of York investigated a rebellion by some of the monks against the prior. This rebellion included breaking open chests, taking two horses as well as other goods and money. The prior and his servants were also threatened. This was resolved by moving the offenders to other Cluniac houses for punishment.

Nottingham Free School founded November 1513, states that 'if the mayor and corporation were in any way remiss in their trust, the Prior and Convent of Lenton were to have the rule, guidance, and oversight of the lands and the school' (Page 1910 p.99).

### **Dissolution**

The prior, eight monks and four lay brothers of Lenton were indicted for high treason in March 1538, under the Verbal Treasons Act of December 1534, for opposing Henry VIII as the head of the Church in England. The prior and one monk were executed, one other monk and the four lay brothers were hung drawn and quartered, probably in front of the priory where parts of the victims would be displayed, as happened at other sites.

One of two references to these executions in the chamberlain's accounts of Nottingham for 1537-8 states that "the town gave my Lord's judges two gallons of wine, costing 16d 'when the Monks of Lenton suffered death'" (Page 1910 p.100).

Following the executions the priory was dissolved in the same year. None of the other monks received a pension and the dependent five needy men were not provided for.

### **Remains**

Little evidence of the priory exists above ground. There is the base of a pillar from the ambulatory at the end of the church in situ at the junction of Old Church Street and Priory

Street. Part of the monastic churches north wall is now incorporated into the graveyard wall of St Anthony's Church, Lenton.

The monastic church font is now in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Church Street, Lenton. The monastic church's alter stone forms the base of the high alter in St. Lawrence's Church, Long Eaton.

## Mattersey Priory

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### Order

Gilbertine (The only completely English order)

Approximate number of religious persons at Mattersey Priory - 5

### Origin

Founded by Roger, son of Ranulph de Mattersey around 1185 near the River Idle and the Mattersey to Wiseton road. The original endowment is unknown.

### Income

The priory held land in Mattersey together with a water mill, windmill and fishery. It also held land in Thorpe, Gamston, Elkesley, West Retford and Misson in Nottinghamshire as well as in Bolton, Lancashire. Much of this land was rented out. The priory had free warren on its land in Mattersey and Thorpe as well as freedom from tolls and pontage throughout England from 1276, supported by a charter of 1251.

In 1279 there was a major fire at the priory which put it into financial difficulty for the rest of its existence despite further endowments. In December of that year the priory was granted an annual pension of 5 marks from the churches of Misson and Gamston.

The Taxation Roll of 1291 gives a total taxable income of £52.

In the early 1300's Isabel de Chauncey granted the priory the full income from the churches of Mattersey, Gamston Misson and Bolton.

Henry IV (king 1399 – 1413) granted the priory a weekly market to be held in Mattersey on Mondays as well as two fairs a year.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 shows a total value of £61 16s 7d and a clear value of £55 2s 5d.

### Outgoings

Unknown

### Relics

None

### Dissolution

Legh and Layton visited in 1536 stating that one canon was incontinent and desired to be released from his vows. The annual value was given at £60. The five canons surrendered in October 1538.

'Pensions were assigned on 2 December 1539 of £12 to the prior, £2 13s. 4d. to the sub-prior, and 40s. each to the three other canons' (Page 1910 p.141).

The prior 'later became headmaster of Malton Grammar School in Yorkshire...The sub-prior, Thomas Bell...may have quickly married; for later in 1538 a Thomas Bell married Jennit Pasoke at Mattersey' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.71-2).

**Remains** – Open to the public during daylight hours all year round.

'Exposed foundations and ruined walls remain showing clearly the layout of the monastery' (Bishop 1988 p.9). The remains of vaulting can clearly be seen on the walls of the frater undercroft, the best preserved building.

# Newstead Priory (Now known as Newstead Abbey)

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## Order

Austin canons (Augustinian)

Approximate number of religious persons at Newstead Priory - 12

## Origin

Founded by Henry II in approximately 1170 near to a main road and a stream. The original endowment was made up of Kighill, Ravenshead, 'Papplewick, with its church and mill and all things pertaining to the town in wood and plain, together with the meadow of Bestwood...and 100s. of rent in Shapwick and Walkeringham' (Page 1910 p.113).

## Income

Stapleford church was appropriated to the priory in 1229 to help increase its income. This was because the priory was in financial difficulty and remained so for much of its existence due to poor financial management. By 1272 the priory was free from toll or custom throughout England.

In 1279 it gained the right to cut down and sell timber on 40 acres of land to help alleviate its financial problems and also in the late 1200's, John de Stutevill gave '40s rent and a quarter of wheat annually out of the manor of Kirkby-in-Ashfield' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p. 65).

In 1302 Archbishop Corbridge decided to appoint a special commission to manage the finances of the priory. The priory was subjected to many interventions by religious authorities; as well as the king's custodians in 1274, 1295, 1300 and 1310 to help improve its finances, all with little benefit.

'The king in 1304 made an important augmentation of the possessions of Newstead, by granting the house 180 acres of the waste in the forest hay of Linby at a rent of £4 due to the sheriff, with licence to inclose them and bring them into cultivation. Two years later a grant was made of all tithes of these 180 cultivated acres, provided they were not within the limits of any parish' (Page 1910 p.113). The rent of £4 was revoked in 1330 due to the poverty of the house.

Egmanton was added to the list of appropriated churches in 1315.

In 1392 Richard II granted the priory a tun of wine each year for use in the church services while Henry VI granted the priory 8 acres of land just in front of the priory entrance in 1437. The payment for this was to provide one rose at Midsummer.

The Taxation Roll of 1291 gives an income of £86 13s 6d. Of this, £49 19s 4d came from the spiritualities of the appropriated churches at Stapleford, Papplewick, Tuxford, Egmanton and Hucknall Torkard. The remainder was from temporalities in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. By 1535 gross income had grown to £220 with a net income of £168.

Much of this income was due to demesne farming.

## Outgoings

Apart from financial mismanagement the main reason for the priory's financial difficulties was the pressure of hospitality caused by its position on a main road. Being located in Sherwood Forest also meant that expensive royal visits were common. Edward I stayed at Newstead in August 1280 and September 1290 while Edward II stayed in September 1307 and October 1315. Building work was also a large expense.

## Relics

None

## Other information

'On 8 May 1238 the royal mandate was sent to the Prior of Newstead to let Thomas de Dunholmia...have all the goods late of Joan, Queen of Scots, deposited with them after her death' (Page 1910 p.113). This illustrates that monasteries were considered safe places to deposit valuables.

Archbishop Wickwane dismissed the Cellarer and the Kitchener from their posts in July 1280 as a 'nuisance to the monastery' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.67) due to their financial mismanagement. There were no serious infringements of religious rules as can be seen by the severity of the injunctions he issued. For example, 'nothing was to be drunk after compline, save in illness; the carols were to be unlocked twice a year, and oftener if there was occasion, in order to eradicate the vice of private property; clothes were to be allotted from a common store, the distribution of money for this purpose to be altogether abandoned' (Page 1910 p.115).

Further injunctions by Archbishop Romaine in August 1293 included 'that the sick were to be more delicately fed, and not with the gross food of the convent' (Page 1910 p.116). He also banned the game of dice and removed the sacrist from office for stealing money. 'In 1307 the prior himself was accused of incontinence with one woman and of relapsing into incontinence with another....Six years later, the sub-prior was deprived of his office because he had 'abused it to the damage of the house' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.67).

## Dissolution

The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 gave the clear annual value of the priory as £167 16s 11½ d. The priory escaped the Dissolution of the smaller houses by paying a fine of £233 6s 8d in December 1537. The house was finally surrendered in July 1539.

The prior was given a pension of £26 13s 4d. The sub-prior received a pension of £6 and the remaining monks between £5 6s 8d and £3 6s 8d.

## Remains - Open to the public

Only the west front remains of the priory church. Other parts of the monastery were incorporated into the fabric of the later house. However very little of these remains are visible apart from the undercroft to the prior's hall and several cloister doorways which would have led 'to the church, the chapter house converted to a chapel...(and)...the undercroft to the monk's dormitory' (Bishop 1988 p.10).

The bronze eagle lectern and two candlesticks disappeared at the Dissolution and were discovered in the square pond to the east of the priory in the late eighteenth century. The lectern is now at Southwell Minster.

## Rufford Abbey

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### Order

Cistercian

Approximate number of religious persons at Rufford Abbey - 12

### Origin

Rufford abbey was founded by Gilbert de Gaunt, Earl of Lincoln in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century. One source gives 1146 as the foundation while another gives 1148. The abbey was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and established by monks from Rievaulx Abbey in Yorkshire. Endowed with the founder's lands and buildings at Rufford, the abbey was built near a small stream called Rainworth Water. Much of the surrounding endowed land however was of poor quality and needed clearing before crops could be grown.

## **Income**

Rufford's rights were later extended by Henry II (king 1154 -1189) who exempted the abbey from transport tolls by road or water. Further gifts of land, exemption from charges and rights were subsequently made. These included the granting of a licence in 1251 by Henry III to take green or growing wood from anywhere in Sherwood Forest for the monk's own use.

In 1275 it was confirmed that the abbey was exempt from any form of tax on what they bought or sold. Full manorial rights in Rotherham were granted in 1279, including the ability to levy taxes on what was bought and sold at markets and fairs. The abbey also gained income from Rotherham by operating a court and five mills as well as from rents and leases.

In 1291 the abbot was granted the right to fell and sell mature wood from over 40 acres of Sherwood Forest by another benefactor, for which they received a massive boost in income of over £400 in 1359.

In addition Rufford was heavily involved in sheep farming, having pasture for 1300 sheep in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The abbey also had the right to hold a weekly market collecting fees from stall holders and making charges on what was sold.

The Taxation Roll of 1291 gives the annual income of temporalities as £118 4s.; with £110 5s. coming from Nottinghamshire.

'The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 gives the gross income of the abbey as £254 6s. 8d. and the clear annual value as £176 11s. 6d' (Page 1910 p.104).

## **Outgoings**

Various pensions but no specific or further information available.

## **Relics**

During their visit of 1536 Legh and Layton recorded the abbey's claim to possess some of the Virgin's milk under the heading of 'Superstitio' (Page 1910 p.104).

## **Other information**

In 1317 a complaint was made against two of the monks and four other men. It accused them 'of gathering to them a multitude of men and seizing Thomas de Holme...robbing him of his goods, and taking him to some unknown place and there detaining him until he should satisfy them with a ransom of £200' (Page 1910 p.103). The validity of this complaint and the outcome is unknown.

The visitation report of May 1481 states that 'we order silence to be kept in the four principal places – the church, the dormitory, the cloisters and the refectory' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.46). Quiet talking was allowed in the farmery where the rules were generally more relaxed in consideration of the sick. The report also states that 'All the doors of the cells in the dormitory should be completely removed' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.47). This suggests that the dormitory had been divided into separate cubicles, against the rule of St. Benedict.

## **Dissolution**

'The abbey was visited in 1536 by...Legh and Layton, who reported that there were six monks guilty of disgraceful offences, and the abbot had been incontinent with two married and four single women. They further stated that six of the fifteen monks desired exemption from their vows.

The annual value was declared to be £100 and the debts £20.

Abbot Doncaster obtained a pension on the Dissolution of the house among the lesser monasteries, of £25 a year; but it was voided on his speedy appointment to the rectory of Rotherham on 2 July 1536' (Page 1910 p.104).

**Remains** - Open to the public all year round.

A large part of the western range that would have been used by the lay brothers still exists. The remains of the dormer are upstairs with the groin vaulted undercroft below where the frater, parlour and cellarium would have been. The outline of the church and cloister can be seen on the ground.

## Shelford Priory

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### Order

Austin canons (Augustinian)

Approximate number of religious persons at Shelford Priory - 6

### Origin

Founded by Ralph Haunselyn or Hauselin in the reign of Henry II (king 1154 – 1189) near the river Trent with an endowment of land and churches. The original endowment included various churches including part of the income from the church at Gedling.

### Income

In 1291 the priory had a taxable income of £65.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 shows a gross income of £151 14s 1d and a clear income of £116 12s 1½d. 'The spiritualities were considerable, including the rectories of Shelford, Saxondale, Gedling, Burton Joyce, and North Muskham, Nottinghamshire' (Page 1910 p.118). They also took an income from Laxton as well as properties in Derbyshire and Lincolnshire.

### Outgoings

The heaviest outgoing was £10 a year to the chantry of Corpus Christi in the church of Newark' (Page 1910 p.118). Another major cost was that of maintaining almshouses for six poor men.

### Relics

Following their visitation in 1536, the royal commissioners Legh and Layton 'stated that the girdle and milk of the Virgin and part of a candle which she is said to have carried at her purification were here venerated. The priory was further possessed of some oil of the Holy Cross and of St. Katherine' (Page 1910 p.119).

'The girdle of St Mary was associated with pregnancy and childbirth to ease labour and ensure a healthy child, while the oils may have been held to have had healing powers for sores and wounds' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.50).

### Other information

Edward II stayed at Shelford in 1317 and 1319.

### Dissolution

'Shelford was subjected in 1536 to a visitation from Legh and Layton, who stated that three of the canons were guilty of unnatural sin...(sodomy)... and three others of incontinence, and that three desired release from their vows. They estimated the annual income at £100, and the debts at £30' (Page 1910 p.119). Words in brackets inserted.

The prior was given a one-off payment of £16 while one canon received a pension of £3 14s a year.

### Remains – not open to the public

No substantial remains exist above ground although some stone from the priory has been incorporated into the existing private house, Shelford Manor.

## Order

Austin canons (Augustinian)

Approximate number of religious persons at Thurgarton Priory - 22

## Origin

The priory was founded by Ralph Deincourt close to the village of Thurgarton and near an important crossing of the river Trent. Endowments being given to the Augustinian canons already associated with St. Peter's church, Thurgarton.

A first charter drawn up by Archbishop Thurstan of York on Ralph Deincourt's behalf endowed the new priory with 'three churches, a mill and 40 bovates of land' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.32).

Around 1140 a second charter was drawn up by Ralph Deincourt himself, 'for the health of his soul and of those of his sons and daughters, his parents and all his progenitors...he bestowed on the house the whole of Thurgarton and Fiskerton and all the churches of his demesnes' (Page 1910 p.120). This included churches and demesnes in Lincolnshire and Derbyshire.

Other benefactors gave the priory the churches of Tythby, the chapel of Cropwell Butler, the churches of Sutton-in-Ashfield and Hoveringham as well as land and dues from the church at Owthorpe. The mills of Clive, Doverbeck and Snelling were also granted as well as land and rents from Granby, Hickling, Saxondale, Harmston, Hawksworth, Aslockton, Screveton, Car Colston, Flintham, Hoveringham and Shelford, all in Nottinghamshire.

## Income

'Henry III in 1270 granted to the priory a weekly market to be held on Tuesday, on their manor of Fiskerton, and also a yearly fair there on the feast of the Holy Trinity and the two following days' (Page 1910 p.122).

By 1291 the priory's taxable income was £248, making it the second wealthiest house in Nottinghamshire after Lenton. This income came from sources such as running a court and mills, as well as rents, pasture for 160 sheep held in Derbyshire and fines such as 5s 4d from a woman getting married. They also received income in kind from services that included tenants giving the priory a cock or hen every year. Tenants also had to work for the priory 'using their own ploughs and carts, and provide carriage with a horse three times a year from the priory's granges' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.35). In return the priory provided bread for the workers on these days and a meal at Christmas. The church of Cotham was granted to the priory by the archbishop in July 1350 due to the poverty of the house caused by plague.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 shows a gross income of £361. with a clear income of £259 9s. 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d.

## Outgoings

The biggest outgoings were £44 paid to chantry priests together with the cost of alms to the poor on the obit of the founder and for fourteen days after.

## Relics

On their visit in 1536 the royal commissioners for the Dissolution, Legh and Layton, recorded that a pilgrimage was held to Thurgarton in honour of St. Ethelburg. However they described this well known female saint as a man which casts doubt on the claim (Page 1910 p.125).

## Other information

Archbishop Wickwane visited the priory and issued minor corrections in June 1280. These included not eating food meant as alms for the poor.

In 1284 it was agreed by the archbishop regarding Brother Robert de Barford a former prior 'The ex-prior was to have suitable good rooms in the priory where he could live with one of the canons, an attendant and a boy, who were to wait on him, as was seemly. Provision was to be made daily for the ex-prior at the rate of one and a half canon's portion...the ex-prior was himself to receive yearly two marks for clothing' (Page 1910 p.123).

The visitation by Archbishop Romaine in May 1286 was less happy. 'Gilbert the prior, who was accused of incontinence with a married woman, formally purged himself of this sin before the archbishop' (Page 1910 p.123). 'In 1290 Walter de Bingham was excommunicated for assaulting John de Sutton in church' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.36).

In 1415 and again in 1421 the priory had its tax halved due to financial losses caused by successive outbreaks of the Black Death, exacerbating the impact of bad financial management.

### **Dissolution**

Legh and Layton visited the priory in 1536 where they 'stated that ten were guilty of unnatural offences, that the prior had been incontinent with several women, and six others with both married and single women' (Page 1910 p.125).

The annual income was given at £240. The house surrendered on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1538 with pensions being granted in July 1539. These allowed 'John Berwick, prior, a house called Fiskerton Hall, with a chapel in the house, a garden, a stable...tithes of hay of two meadows, and £40 a year; Richard Hopkyn, sub-prior, £6 13s. 4d...(other)...canons, £5 each' (Page 1910 p.125). Word in brackets inserted.

**Remains** – The church can be opened outside service times by telephoning the vicarage on 01636 830234.

'The priory church or part of it was also the parish church, the western part survived the dissolution largely intact. The remains – the columns supporting three bays of the nave, the fine north-west tower with its lancet windows and moulding, and the west doorway with its beautiful dog toothed decoration – are all in the Early English style of the first half of the thirteenth century' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.33). The second tower at the west end has disappeared and the roof is lower than it would have been originally. 'A set of three oak misericord stalls...and a statue niche with canopy...also survive' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.34) in the present church.

## **Wallingwells Nunnery**

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### **Order**

Benedictine

Approximate number of religious persons at Wallingwells Nunnery - 10

### **Origins**

Wallingwells was founded around 1144 by Ralph de Chevrolcourt 'In honour of the Blessed Virgin, for the remission of his sins and for the good estate and the soul's health of himself and his heirs and progenitors and of all who should help and maintain the house' (Page 1910 p.89).

The site of the nunnery on Ralph de Chevrolcourt's estate lands at Carlton-by-the-Wells was called Waldon-de-Wells due to its location among wells, fountains and streams. This later became Wallingwells. The founder also granted the nunnery water for mill use, pasture, including pasture for ninety pigs and woods.

### **Income**

In 1262 Archbishop Godfrey gave the nunnery rights in the churches of Carlton in Lindrick, Cantley and Mattersey due to their poverty. They were also assigned corn tithes of 18 bovates of land in Carlton with exemption from all tithes. The parish of Carlton also paid the nunnery 20s a year.

Archbishop Giffard later appropriated the church of Cantley in Yorkshire giving its income to the nuns because of their poverty.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus gives an annual value of £87 11s 6d.

### **Outgoings**

Chief outgoings included:

£16 13s 4d to the vicar of Campsall rectory as pension.

A distribution of alms to the poor four times a year totalling £2 6s. 8d in commemoration of the founder.

### **Relics**

'Under the head of Superstitio they...(Legh and Layton)...recorded the comb of St. Edmund, and an image of the Virgin said to have been discovered at the founding of the house' (Page 1910 p.90). Words in brackets inserted.

### **Dissolution**

Visited in 1536 by Legh and Layton who valued the house at £60, reporting no scandal. £66 13s 4d was paid to the Crown officials to secure exemption from Dissolution. 'The priory was surrendered on 14 December 1539, when a pension of £6 was assigned to...the prioress, of 53s. 4d... to...the sub-prioress...and of 40s. each to six other nuns' (Page 1910 p.90).

### **Remains**

Nothing visible. The site is now occupied by a later house and grounds.

## **Welbeck Abbey**

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### **Order**

Premonstratensian (In 1512 Welbeck became the principal Premonstratensian house in England and Wales with the right to visit and inspect other houses.)

Approximate number of religious persons at Welbeck Abbey - 23

### **Origin**

Established by Richard de Flemmaugh of Cuckney in 1153, with further endowments by his son Thomas. These benefactors donated poor quality Sherwood Forest land near to Cuckney, the river Poulter and the road to Worksop. The abbey was endowed with all the land from the abbey site to Belphe as well as the land in Belphe and its surrounding woodland, the church of Cuckney and two other churches, one in Derbyshire and one in Lincolnshire.

### **Income**

The abbey collected tithes, rents and other dues from the donated parishes in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire.

'It soon acquired rights to quarry at Whitwell and to the churches at Flintham, Whatton, Bothamsall, Elkesley and a part share in the church at Kelham. Land rights at...Duckmanton, Newbold and Creswell' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998, p.52).

The Taxation Roll of 1291 gives a total taxable income of £112. Two years later the income had risen to £140 due to 'the acquisition of the rectories at Littleborough, Etwall, Whitton, Coates and Duckmanton' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998, p.52).

'In 1329 the abbey was granted the manor of Cuckney, together with seven nearby hamlets. In return the abbey agreed to provide eight canons to celebrate mass daily for the health and welfare of Edward III, his Queen and ancestors...' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998, p.53).

'Income was also derived from the sale of wool, recorded in the fourteenth century and later coal in the fifteenth century' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998, p.52).

From 1512 when Welbeck became the principal Premonstratensian house in England and Wales it obtained yearly dues from the other houses amounting to £14 a year.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 shows a total value of £298 4s 8d and a clear value of £249 6s 3d.

### **Outgoings**

£8 13s 4d per year in alms, mostly in ale and bread distributed from the abbey each week. Some corrodies were forced on abbeys, as at Welbeck where Edward III (king 1327 – 1377) granted corrodies to royal servants including Agnes the laundress.

### **Relics**

None

### **Other information**

'A considerable and long-sustained controversy was maintained in the reign of Henry III and in the days of Abbot Hugh between the abbey of Welbeck and the burgesses of Retford as to the mills of that town; eventually in 1297 the mills were taken into the king's hands and granted to the abbey at £10 a year' (Page 1910 p.131).

In 1393 some of the canons were involved in a serious disturbance 'Robert Veel and John Wynchecombe...by virtue...of the chief justice's order...took two horses of John Levet and John Turnour of Norton by Welbeck, to be paid for in due course. This action was so fiercely resented that a number of the abbey servants raised all the men of Norton in insurrection, and at dusk, armed with bows and arrows and swords and clubs, set upon the said Robert and John (instigated by one of the canons of Welbeck and the vicar of Cuckney who was also a Welbeck canon), assaulted them, shot and pierced the rolls in the carriage' (Page 1910 p.133). They also attempted to take the horses back but did not succeed. The attackers later received a pardon.

The visitation of 1478 found all generally well but instructed among other things that the abbot provided better bread and ale for the canons and that shooting and hunting in the woods should stop.

'The visitation of 1482 shows a grievous decline...The abbot was found guilty of incontinence, as well as dissipating the goods of the monastery, pledging the jewels and plate, and suffering the buildings to go into ruin' (Page 1910 p.135).

The visitation of 1488 found other sins including 'William Hankyn, guilty of disobedience, of absence from divine offices, and of hunting...(he)...was warned that for every repetition he would be put on discipline for forty days; he was never to be let out of the precincts lest he should return to his evil habits' (Page 1910 p.135).

By 1495 it was decreed at Provincial Chapter in Lincoln that on days when the eating of meat was allowed, it should be eaten twice a day. This shows the increasing standard of living enjoyed by the canons.

### **Dissolution**

Legh and Layton visited in 1536, stating that 'three of the canons were guilty of unnatural offences and one was incontinent. Three of them sought release from their vows. The annual income was returned at £280, and the debts at £40' (Page 1910 p.137).

The house of 22 members surrendered in June 1538. The abbot had a pension of £50, the sub-prior and one other £6. Others varied from £4 to £40.

**Remains** – not open to the public.

'A little of the monastery survives incorporated into the house built on its site. This comprises seven bays of a mid 13<sup>th</sup> century undercroft, a 12<sup>th</sup> century doorway and a few other fragments' (Bishop 1988 p.14).

## Worksop Priory

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### Order

Austin canons (Augustinian)

Approximate number of religious persons at Worksop Priory - 19

### Origin

The priory was sited in the village of Radford to the east of Worksop, near the river Ryton and the Great North Road. It was founded by William de Lovetot in 1103 to support 18 canons and a prior. The original endowment 'included the manor of Worksop, with its meadows and mills, and the lands and tithes of several churches, including Gringley and Walkeringham' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.17) as well as fishponds.

### Income

In 1130 William made a further grant which included 'the tithes of seven churches in the honour of Blyth...a portion of the church at Treswell and all the lands and rights belonging to it, which included pannage, venison...(and)... fish' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.19). The seven churches in the honour of Blyth were Gringley, Misterton, Walkeringham, Normanton, Car Colston, Willoughby and Wysall.

Henry I (king 1100-1135) granted the priory exemption from all tolls, passage and pontage in England. The priory also had free warren on the manors of Walkeringham, Hardwick and Shireoaks in Nottinghamshire.

These endowments were increased by Richard, son of William, who added the town of Worksop.

The endowments of land amounted to hundreds of acres of largely poor Sherwood Forest soil. The poor soil was ideal for grazing sheep and provided the priory with a large part of its temporal income. In addition, 230 acres of priory land were used for growing crops, the work being carried out by paid servants or lay brethren. One crop was liquorice for use as a sweetener in cooking and to disguise the taste of medicines.

In 1268 Henry III granted the priory the right to take two cart-loads of heather a day from Sherwood Forest to the annual value of 60s.

The Taxation Roll of 1291 shows a total income of £167.

In 1296 the priory was granted the right to hold markets and fairs. Although this would provide increased income in tolls, it would also increase costs through meeting the obligation to accommodate travellers.

In 1335 Edward III granted 73 acres in Rumwood, whose location is now unknown, to the priory. 'To show favour in return for the expenses the priory had incurred on his visits' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.19). Many of these visits were probably related to hunting in Sherwood Forest. This shows the financial strain visitors, particularly royal ones, placed on the religious houses. The woods could be used for harvesting timber to be sold, or used by the priory for building and firewood. They could also be used to provide feeding for pigs or cleared for growing crops.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1534 shows a total value of £302 6s 10d and a clear value of £239 15s 5d (Page 1910 p.127).

## **Outgoings**

The obligation to provide hospitality for travellers, particularly after receiving the right to hold fairs and markets in 1296, may have been a reason for the building of the priory gatehouse. The ongoing high expense of hospitality is shown 'In 1408 and 1409...(when)... the prior and canons pleaded poverty and asked to be granted exemption from taxation because of the numerous travellers provided with hospitality. Travellers seem to have begun to abuse the priory's generosity and were limited to a three-day stay' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.20). Word in brackets inserted.

Other major outgoings were alms in commemoration of benefactors and corrodies in return for gifts of property.

'The daily dishes of food for the poor, together with the Lady Dish (given annually on Lady Day), cost the priory £10 a year. At Christmas a 'pittance' was provided in memory of the founder, William de Lovetot. This consisted of wheat, rye, bread and beer and cost another £10. Numerous corrodians, too, had to be cared for' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.20-21).

## **Relics**

None

## **Other information**

'Archbishop Wickwane visited Worksop Priory on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1280, with the result that the following injunctions were subsequently issued: The prior was not to permit the holding of any private property, and to forbid all going outside the gates of the priory save for some inevitable and necessary cause. All lockers of the canons were to be opened four times a year and oftener if there was any cause, anything found therein to be applied to the common use of the monastery; the canons were not to go out alone, when there was necessity for leaving the house; idle canons lingering without cause in the farmery were to be treated as paupers and otherwise punished;...Adam de Rotherham, the late cellarer to stay in the cloister and do penance; the sick to be kindly treated; all sinister and unfitting speech forbidden; no canon or brother to eat and drink with any outside guest, unless the prior was present; silence to be strictly observed according to rule; alms not to be wasted...two lay brothers accused of incontinence to be punished. These rules were to be read in chapter once a month' (Page 1910 p.127).

## **Dissolution**

Legh and Layton visited in 1536 claiming four canons were guilty of unnatural sin and one wanted release from his vows. The net income was given as £240 and the debts 200 marks.

'The valuable plate listed at the Dissolution included a pair of silver candlesticks; a censor of silver; a ship of silver; five chalices; two cups with gilt covers; two salts and one cover; twelve silver spoons' (Marcombe and Hamilton 1998 p.21).

The priory with its sixteen canons was surrendered on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1538. Pensions were given in March 1539. These ranged from £50 a year for the prior who also gained a house and a farm, to £6 a year for the sub-prior and £5 6s 8d. for most of the canons.

**Remains** – The church is open during services. The church and gatehouse can be opened at other times by contacting the vicarage on 01909 472180 or by e-mailing: [worksoppriory@supanet.com](mailto:worksoppriory@supanet.com).

The 12<sup>th</sup> century nave and aisles of the monastic church are now the parish church of SS. Cuthbert and Mary. The east end of the monastic church and the crossing were demolished with the other cloister buildings after the Dissolution. Many alterations have been made to the church since the Dissolution including the building of the current east end and central tower in the 1970's. The 13<sup>th</sup> century Lady Chapel was restored in 1922 while the 14<sup>th</sup> century priory gatehouse has survived with only a few late mediaeval alterations.