

SOUTHWICK PRIORY.

BY G. H. GREEN.

A Priory of Austin Canons was founded in the year 1133 by King Henry I. within the walls of Portchester Castle. The Church of St. Mary, probably built for their use, was added to and beautified during their stay within the Castle walls, and indications of cloister arches and traces of a lean-to roof may be made out on the south wall of the church. The canons were granted rights in the wood of Kingsdene and the manor of Candover, with lands in Southwick and Applestede.

Their stay at Portchester was very short. During the war of Stephen's reign the castle of Portchester like others was filled with rough and wild mercenaries, and we find the canons complaining that the language and behaviour of the troops interfered with their devotions and meditations, and so, somewhere about 1153, within twenty years of their foundation, the canons deserted Portchester and settled at Southwick, about two miles to the north, where a Priory had been built to receive them. In 1198, Prince John, living at Eastmeon, granted Colmer to "the Church of the Blessed Mary of Southwick, and to the canons there serving God," free from all secular service and exaction. The name of Hubert de Burgh occurs as one of the witnesses of the charter. In 1202 John confirmed the gift, and in 1203 granted the canons the manor of Priors Dean, to be held by them for ever in fee-farm, at an annual rental at £7 18s. 5d. In the same year John visited Southwick, and spent some time there.

An inquisition into the customs of the manors of Dene and Colmer was held in 1208, and subsequently John issued a writ:—

“John, by the grace of God, King of England, etc. To the sheriff of Southampton, greeting. We command that when the canons of Southwick shall have given security for the four score of marks to be paid to us at the Exchequer, you shall give to the same canons full seisin of the land of Dene with its appurtenances or demesnes, holdings and fees, and the services of the men, by the sheriff or bailiffs or any persons whomsoever who had held them, alienated without our consent or that of our ancestors, according to the inquisition thereupon made by our precept; and you shall take security from them and send the same to the barons of our Exchequer without delay. Witness, the Lord Peter, Bishop of Winchester.”

Adam de Haukleia gave up all claim to the lands which he held in the manor of Dene, and resigned them into the hands of Prior Guy and the canons of Southwick. The canons received him into the full fraternity of their church and undertook to keep each year the anniversary of his death.

In the year 1185 a grant was made to the priory of a piece of land in Portsea Isle for the purpose of erecting a church to the memory of Thomas á Becket (“ad erigendam capellam in honorem gloriosi martyris, Thomasæ Cantuariensis”). The work was soon taken in hand, and about 1187 was completed. A few years later a dispute arose between the Southwick canons and the brethren of the newly-opened *Domus Dei*. The parishioners, it seems, attracted by the interesting new church, attended it to the neglect of the parish church, and the revenues of Southwick suffered. The dispute was ended by an agreement, made before the Bishop of Winchester, which provided that:—

- (i.)—The Brethren of the Hospital of the *Domus Dei* should not receive the parishioners.
- (ii.)—The Brethren should not invite strangers to their services; but should receive them if they came. The offerings of these strangers were to be sent across to the parish church.
- (iii.)—If a parishioner desired one of the brethren to attend him whilst on his deathbed, the brother could do so, but must first obtain the consent of the parish priest.

Dene, granted in 1208 by John, was made the subject of a confirmatory charter of Henry III. on December 28th, 1231. Freedom from tallage in respect of Dene was granted.

A dispute with Selbourne Priory arose, about 1242, concerning the tithes on la Pette and la Berghe, in Empshott. The agreement subsequently drawn up provided that :—

- (i.)—Southwick Priory, as owner of the Chapel of Empshott, should have all tithes from la Pette, all from demesne of lord of Empshott, and half those from husbandmen.
- (ii.)—Selbourne Priory, as owning part of tithes of Chapel of Empshott, should have half-tithes from husbandmen, half those from la Berghe, although this was in the demesne.
- (iii.)—Legacies from Empshott to either church, excepting personal legacies, should be equally divided.
- (iv.)—In the case of funerals of parishioners of Empshott, the chaplain from Selbourne should say the first mass, and the chaplain of Empshott the second ; fees should be equally divided.

The private grants from land to the Priory at this time were many. We notice only a few of these.

Hamond de Northampton and Isabella de Bluntesmere (widow of William de Bluntesmere) left to the canons their land at Bluntesmere. In return, the canons granted them the allowances of two canons annually ; bread and beer, and a dish from the kitchen, so long as they remained in the neighbourhood ; one mark annually on the feast of St. Giles for dress ; a decent house in Southwick for residence, and two cartloads of wood as fuel.

The daughter of William de Bluntesmere at the same time gave up all her claims to the above land on condition that the canons secured her an adequate marriage. The canons married her to William de la Hale, giving her a piece of land as a marriage portion, and afterwards permitted her son to retain it after the death of his mother at a rent of two shillings annually.

In November 1280 the prior was summoned to appear before Solomon de Rochester and the other justices in eyre for Hampshire, at Winchester. The King claimed, under Quo Warranto, the manors of Dene and Colemere as his right. The prior produced the charter of King John, and the jury gave as their verdict that the prior and canons had a greater right to the land than the king.

In the previous year the prior had to answer to the King by what right he claimed to hold fair and market in Southwick, and to take assize of bread and beer. The prior replied that as to the fair, King Henry II had granted to the Church of St. Mary *toll and team*, and *infangentheof* in this manner by the charter which he produced. His claim was allowed. As to the market, Henry II. had granted by charter a perpetual market on Friday. This charter was seen and the prior's claim allowed. The prior, however, failed to make good his claim to a daily assize of bread and beer. The jury held that his right extended only to market days, and on other days was the King's.

The ecclesiastical taxation record of Pope Nicholas, A.D. 1291, gives the temporals in manors belonging to the priory as follows :—

Southwick - - -	7	4	11
West Boarhunt - - -	6	8	1
Crofton - - -	0	8	9
New Land (Nova Terra) - - -	1	12	3
Ariedsmere - - -	0	10	2
Stubbington - - -	2	6	0
Candover (Candevere) - - -	3	11	7
Elsefield (Ellesfelde) - - -	0	15	11
Dene - - -	3	0	0
Winchester - - -	2	0	0
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	£	27	17 8

The tithe of this was £2 15 9½

In 1316 John de Sheford, who long served the king, was sent to the prior of Southwick to receive food and clothing ;

and in the same year William de Spyney, balistarius (i.e., cross-bowman) was also sent to Southwick for the same purpose. The latter was, however, removed in the following year and sent to the Abbot of Abbotsbury to receive maintenance in the house for life, but later in the year 1317, he was sent to the prior and convent of Sandlesford, near Newbury. John le Vyneour, another of the king's servants, was received and maintained by the prior. During the lifetime of this man the king requested the prior to admit Simon Bacoun into the house. The prior complied, but in 1336 petitioned the king, setting forth that his house was only bound to supply sustenance for one of the king's servants. The king commanded John de Roches, William de Harudon, and Robert de Hoo, to find by inquisition the facts of the case. They found that the house had been previously charged with one only of the king's servants. The king granted that the admission of Simon should not prejudice the house as a precedent.

In 1320, Edward II. granted to the convent and prior of Southwick, the privilege of free warren in the manors of Dene and Colemere for ever. One of the witnesses of this deed was Hugh le Despenser the elder. Five years later William Claydon, deputy of Hugh le Despenser, Earl of Winchester, and justice of the forests this side Trent, issued a mandate to Ralph de Camoys, warden of the Forest of Wolmere. The latter was instructed not to distrain upon the prior, or canons, or servants of the Priory of Southwick for the lawing or expeditating¹ of their dogs, as the charters of the Kings of England declared that they should be for ever free of the forest and of all things pertaining to the forest, in their manors of Colemere and Dene.

In 1336 a licence was obtained for the alienation in mortmain of lands in Southwick and Huppelegh (Hiple) to the prior and canons. The total value of these lands—a messuage and garden in Southwick, an acre of land, four acres of

¹ The "lawing" and "expeditating" of dogs was an operation performed with a view to mutilating the foot of the dog in such a manner that it could not chase game. The foot of the dog was pushed through a ring kept by foresters for the purpose.

meadow, and rents of 3s. annual value—was 10s. per annum. This licence was granted in satisfaction of 10s. of the £20 yearly which the priory had a right to acquire. This right was granted by license of Edward II. at the instance of Hugh le Despenser, in 1318. Later in Edward the Third's reign (1369,) licence was granted to William of Wykeham to enable him to give and assign to the Priory of Southwick—Manor of Bourhynte Herbend, with lands in Southwick, Westbourghunte and Wymerynge, which were John de Bourhunte's Lands in Southewyk, Wanstede, Porchester, Wynrydge, and Westbourhunte held by Richard Danvers. The second part of the grant was to be held by payment of one armed man in the Castle of Portchester when the king was there, and for fifteen days in time of war.

A licence was obtained (1377) permitting the exchange by the Prior of Southwick of lands in Newland and Stobynton by Portsmouth, worth 10s. a year, and by the Abbot of Tichefield of lands in Stobynton by Tichefield, worth 6s. 8d. a year.

In the same year the prior asked permission to let the demense lands of Dene and Colemere either entirely or in parts, and received letters patent, authorising such letting.

The charters of the Priory were confirmed by Edward III. The previous charters were recited, and the confirmation was witnessed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishops of London and Winchester.

During his episcopate William of Wykeham founded five chantries in the priory church, and directed that masses should be said for the souls of Edward III., of himself, his father, his mother, and sister. The canons solemnly took an oath that they would carry out the terms of his bequest. On two subsequent occasions they renewed their oath.

Sir Bernard de Brocas in 1384 gave to the priory the manors of Hoo and Havington, with estates in Southwick, Boarhunt, and Stoke Charity, in order that masses might be said for his own soul, for those of his ancestors and his descendants, and for the king.

Prior Richard Nowell died on September 23rd, 1389. Bishop Wykeham's register (p. 197) gives a very full account of the election of the new prior.

The king's licence to elect was obtained, and the canons proceeded to elect one of their number, William Husselegh. The Bishop of Winchester, having been informed of the election, wrote to the Dean of Droxford, enjoining that proclamation should be made in the cathedral church and other convenient places so that opposers might be heard. The Dean wrote on October 26th, 1389, saying that the proclamation had been made, and that no opposer came forward.

John Shillingford, Thomas Stowe, and John Elmer were appointed to enquire into the validity of the election. They found the election to have been properly conducted, and it was subsequently confirmed. After the Te Deum and the concluding versicle had been sung by the clerks of Wykeham's private chapel, and the usual prayer had been said, Husselegh made his profession of canonical obedience.

The bishop next wrote to Husselegh confirming his election; to the king, asking for the restitution of temporals; to the archdeacon of Winchester to install and induct the new prior; and to the sub-prior and canons to obey their new superior.

The visits of inspection made from time to time by the Archbishop or his commissary give very little information about the priory. We find that the strict rules of silence imposed upon Augustinians were very frequently broken, and an admonition with regard to this generally follows each inspection. Occasionally the brethren quarrelled, and in 1307 as a result of an effusion of blood, one of them was confined for some time to his own cell and to the cloister.¹

The worst reports of the priory are of date circa 1278, when the priory was found to be in a very bad state. How financial matters were the commissary could not discover, for the prior had no accounts to show. After some examination he was ordered to be confined to the cloisters, to receive food,

¹ Vict. County History of Hampshire, Vol. II., p. 165.

lodging, and clothing like the sub-prior, and to be restricted to a daily allowance of two gallons of beer. At the commissary's next visit he recommended even severer measures with the prior. He was to receive food like the ordinary canons, and was to sleep with them in the dormitory. He was also to be deprived of all authority.

In the course of a still later visit the commissary found everything satisfactory until he began to enquire as to the way in which the seal was kept. The prior deposed that the chest in which it was could be opened only when himself, the sub-prior, and two senior brethren were present. The sub-prior confirmed this, but said there were five keys, held by himself, the prior, the precentor, and two senior brethren. Support was obtained by both from others in the priory, and the commissary states that he was greatly perplexed, and was quite unable to decide whether there were four or five keys!

In 1449 Bishop Moleyns of Chichester was murdered in the *Domus Dei* at Portsmouth, and the vicar, Sir Robert Adam, and others, came to Southwick to be beaten. In the same year Margaret of Anjou landed at Portchester. She was very ill when she landed, suffering from a skin disorder, probably brought on by the indifferent provisions which did duty in ships in those days. She probably entered Portchester by the water gate, and proceeded through the village to Southwick. There she was received and lodged by the canons, and proceeded the next day to Titchfield, where, in the parish church (1445) she married Henry the Sixth.

Henry VIII., early in his reign, passed through Southwick, and left a gift of twelve pence to the shrine of Our Lady of Southwick.

Leland tells us in his "Itinerary" that "the fame of Southwick stands by a shrine of Our Lady," and it seems to have been one of the famous local shrines of Hampshire. Such a shrine would be strongly supported by those who could not afford to make the pilgrimage to the favourite shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and by local landowners who wished to leave land to provide for masses and intercessions.

Wolsey had intended to dissolve Southwick Priory and to grant its lands to Christ Church, Oxford. He was, however, removed from power before he could effect this. Thomas Cromwell, his successor, sought for some charge against the monks, so that his action against them might have an appearance of legality. John Gunmere one of the canons, wrote to Cromwell a letter, in which he made charges against his brethren. Amongst others, he said that the masses demanded by the bequests of William Wykeham had not been said for forty years. Cromwell sent the Commissioners to Southwick, and these demanded the surrender of the priory. It was handed over by William Norton in 1538. Norton was given a pension of £66 13s. 4d., and the site of the Priory was granted to John White, a servant of Wriothesly, for £251 13s. 4d. White complained in a letter to his master of the state of the priory; it was dirty, and meanly furnished, and all the hanging bacon had been taken by the commissioners; he thanks his master for his great efforts on his behalf, and congratulates himself on having "an honest house" to which he can invite his friends.

White's first act was to imitate his master, who at Titchfield had promptly converted the Priory Church into a dwelling-house. Subsequently the property passed from the Whites to the Nortons. The Priory Church was pulled down, and its materials used in the construction of a family mansion. William of Wykeham's private chapel was left, until quite recently, when it was pulled down by Mr. Thomas Thistlethwaite. The family mansion was burned down in 1839. The old tithe barn of the canons stood for many years in the lane, Abbot's Lane, connecting Southwick with Portchester. The site is now occupied by a house. Abbot's Lane itself was probably constructed, in part at least, by the monks.

In connection with the Wykeham chapel, a local tradition might be recalled. Colonel Richard Norton, the owner of the estate, took great interest in theatrical matters. He once brought a company of players to Southwick to perform "Pausanias," and turned the Wykeham chapel into a temporary theatre. Tradition asserts that in every scene an

additional player appeared. Then the lights commenced to burn blue, and fumes of sulphur filled the chapel. At length the players could stand it no longer, and fled in a body. The colonel followed them. Then the mysterious figure left the stage, went to the door of the chapel, locked it, put the key in his breeches' pocket, and with a cry of "exeunt omnes," disappeared. Until after the colonel's death the chapel was not re-opened.

NOTES.

List of the Priors of Southwick :—

Philip.
 Guy, 1190-1217.
 Luke, early in the 13th century.
 Walkelin, d. 1235.
 Matthew, 1237-1266.
 Peter de Maupol, 1266-1273.
 Andrew de Winton, 1273-1281.
 John de Clere, 1281-1291.
 Roger de Hempton, or Hewton, 1291-1315.
 William de Winton, 1315-1316.
 Nicholas de Cheriton, 1316-1334.
 John of Gloucester, 1334.
 Richard Bramdean, 1349-81.
 Richard Nowell, 1381-89.
 William Husselegh, 1389-98.
 Thomas Curteys, 1398-1432.
 Edward Dene, 1432-55.
 Sir Thomas Kent, 1449.
 John of Soberton, 1455.
 Philip Stanebrook, 1464.
 John Lauder, 1500.
 Thomas Kent, 1514-1521.
 William Norton, 1518, surrendered 1539.

List of Principal Lands, etc., held by Priory of Southwick at Dissolution.

Manors of *Havington, Hoo, Dene (Priorsdene), Southwick, Stubbington, Portsea, Candover, Nutley, West Boarhunt.*

Lands n *Southwick, Newland, Sutton Scotney, Fishbourne (near Chichester), Farlington, Clanfield, Swindon, Werral (Dorchester), Portsmouth, Wansted, Winchester, Andover, Boarhunt, Harbert Bury, etc.*

Livings of *Portsmouth, Portsea, Southwick, Widley, Boarhunt, Farlington Betchworth, Preston Candover, Empshott, Shalden, Nutley.*

The value of the Priory at the time of the Dissolution is given by Dugdale a £257 4s. 4d. Speed gives a rather higher estimate.