

## Notes on Hinton Charterhouse.

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WE are on the site of a Carthusian Priory, the second in order of foundation in England; Witham, in this county, founded 1181, by Henry II, being the earliest. Hinton Priory owes its foundation to *Ela, only daughter of William de Evreux, Earl of Salisbury*, a descendant of Edward de Sarisburi, on whom the Conqueror bestowed the manors of Hinton and Norton. *She was wife of William Longespé, son of King Henry II and Fair Rosamond*, and after his death was minded to found a religious house, out of regard to her husband's wishes and memory. They were, both of them, inclined to works of piety and religion, and had, both of them, taken a part in the foundation of the present cathedral of Salisbury (when it was removed from Old Sarum to its present site), the husband laying the fourth, and the wife the fifth stone of the church. Longespé's tomb is in Salisbury Cathedral. The old tradition (the accuracy of which may perhaps be doubted) says that Ela founded two religious houses in one day: Lacock Abbey in the morning, Hinton Priory in the evening. "Primo mane apud Lacock, et Henton post nonam."

The probable date of the foundation of Hinton Priory is 1227. It seems that Longespé had previously founded a *Carthusian house at Hatherop, near Fairford, in Gloucester*; but the place having been for some reason found unsuitable, his wife,

Ela, translated the foundation to Hinton, where she founded, in her park, a Carthusian house, *in honour of God, the Blessed Mary, St. John the Baptist, and All Saints.*

She herself took the veil and became Abbess of Lacock, and after governing it for more than fifteen years, in the words of the Book of Lacock, "She yielded up her soul in peace and rested in the Lord, and was most *honourably buried in the Choir of the Monastery.*"

There would seem to have been at first about fourteen monks in this Priory, which number was afterwards somewhat increased; and in addition about thirteen lay brethren, called "fratres conversi," who did the farm labour, and who were located in a separate set of buildings at a place called *Frary*, or, as it is now called, *Friary*, about a mile distant, on the banks of the river Frome. All remains of this settlement have disappeared, though the names "Friary" and "Old Church" survive, and the signs of the old mill belonging to the monks are traceable in the basement of a ruined cottage. Various privileges and immunities were granted to the priory by King Henry III, and a Bull of Privileges by Pope Innocent IV. Its lands were increased by successive benefactions, and extended to various neighbouring parishes (in addition to Hinton and Norton), such as *Wellow, Freshford, Lullington, Woodwick, Westwood*, and others. King Richard II gave them a hogshead of wine yearly from the Port of Bristol.

Like most of the monastic bodies, they exerted themselves to escape and afterwards to appropriate the parochial tithes, and they succeeded so well that they became rectors of Hinton and Norton, and finally procured a union of the two benefices, the effect of which was to degrade Hinton to the position of a chapelry, from which it only emerged in the year 1824. The impoverishment of the two livings, especially Hinton, is a standing monument of monastic appropriation. Shortly before the Dissolution (1529) a small priory of Black Canons, dedicated to St. Radegund, standing near the site of Longleat, was

transferred to Hinton, and was called "the Cell of the Priory of Longleat."

The priory was dissolved on the 31st March, 1539, the last prior being Edmund Hord, Prior Hord and fourteen monks signed the Surrender. Two others apparently did not sign. The nett value at the date of Surrender was £248. Walter Lord Hungerford, of Farleigh Castle (who had long had his eye on the house) was appointed chief steward and surveyor, and the buildings were sold to him by Tregonwell, the king's Commissioner, and within three months the demolition had commenced. The site was granted to Lord Hungerford for twenty-one years, but he did not long enjoy it, as he was beheaded on Tower Hill in the following summer.

It then became the property of John Bartlet, and passed to one Crouch, and then came into the possession successively of Matthew and Edmund Colthurst. The Colthursts were land jobbers of the period, who acquired Bath Abbey and Claverton Manor, which was sold by them to the Hungerfords. One of these Colthursts probably built the present manor house out of the materials of many of the monastic buildings, and possibly on or near the site of the prior's lodgings. Edmund Colthurst sold to Walter Hungerford, and so the priory came into Hungerford possession again in 1578; and about 1684 it was sold, at the break up of the Hungerford estates (consequent on the extravagance of Sir E. Hungerford) to Mr. H. Baynton, of Spy Park, Wilts. Early in the eighteenth century the Baynton estates were sold, the site of the priory being purchased by Walter Robinson, ancestor of the present proprietor of Hinton Abbey, in whose family it has since remained.

As to the remains, I can only speak to the best of my knowledge. I hope that some of the party who have a knowledge of Charterhouses will correct me. No excavation has been undertaken, so much must be left to conjecture.

The church has disappeared; so have the monks' dwellings and the prior's lodge and cloisters. What remains probably

represents the chapter house, the refectory, and the buttery or kitchen.

- (a) The chapter house block is of three stories, and constitutes the principal feature. The length of this building is about thirty-three feet by eighteen feet. The lower story probably served as a chapter house. The second story may have been used as a library. The third story is a columbarium: the monks were evidently great pigeon-keepers. This architecture is Early English. On the north of this building is a small erection of more recent date, consisting of a vaulted corridor below and a small chamber above. The remains of the spring of an arch on the north side apparently indicate the position of the church, which has entirely disappeared.
- (b) The building on the south-west of this block, I believe, represents the *Refectory*, measuring thirty feet by twenty-two feet. Overhead is a loft, running the whole length of the building, which, I imagine, may have been a *guests' dormitory*. None of the original windows are left.
- (c) Beyond the refectory is a chamber, some twenty-two by twelve, with a large fireplace and a serving hatch. This was probably the *Kitchen or Buttery*. Corbels, which are still to be seen, suggest a covered passage, running from the chapter house to the refectory, and also a cloister or ambulatory on the south side of the refectory.

There were probably *two courts* on the south and north of the chapter house, containing the three-roomed dwelling places of the brethren.

The succession of ponds to the west of the buildings may represent the fish ponds of the priory.

The prior's lodgings may have occupied the site of the manor house. Though some considerable portion of the priory remains, much more has been demolished.

The church, the prior's lodgings, the houses of the brethren, and the cloisters are gone.

There is no trace of a cemetery.

The materials of the demolished buildings were undoubtedly used in the construction of the manor house (which may have been built from 1550 to 1560), and must have been employed in various other ways. One sometimes wonders how any portion of a building of this kind was left standing.

*The Park or Demesne* probably extended in the direction of Freshford; the name, "Park Corner," being still applied to a collection of houses on the road from Hinton to that village.

Allusion is made in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* to a monk of Hinton, one Nicholas Hopkins. This Hopkins had been Confessor to the ambitious Duke of Buckingham, whose fall is recorded in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, and had prophesied the duke's elevation to the throne.

*Surveyor*: "He was brought to this  
By a vain prophesy of Nicholas Henton."

*King*: "Who was this Henton?"

*Surveyor*: "Sir, a Chartreux friar,  
His Confessor, who fed him every minute with words of  
sovereignty."

This Duke of Buckingham was a great benefactor (probably at the instigation of Hopkins) to the priory, and assisted the monks in renovating their buildings, and in conveying water to the priory.

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