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SWAVESEY PRIORY.

The Priory of Swavesey was a Norman foundation. Before the Conquest the village had belonged to Edith the Fair, but was given by William the First to Alan, Earl of Britany. Between the year 1086 when the Conqueror died and 1089 when Alan died, the tithes of Swavesey with other property in the neighbourhood, were given by Alan to the Benedictine Abbey of SS. Sergius and Bacchus at Angiers in France. The deed of gift which is printed in full in Dugdale's *Monasticon** states that he gave the Church of Swavesey with all the burial fees and all offerings, free of episcopal exaction, service or custom, except sixpence at Easter for chrism.† Also that when the Archdeacon celebrated synodals, a monk should attend on one of the days, not according to custom, but for love of the Archdeacon and honour of the Bishop.† The gift also included the tithes of all things in Swavesey and the other villages belonging to the Earl, namely Barham, Papworth, Wimpole, Toft, and Beche (Waterbeach). The tithable things specified are the year's field produce, calves, lambs, pigs, wool, and cheese. But the priest of each village was to have one field each of wheat and oats. The gift also included the Earl's property in the village called Drayton (Fendrayton) and the beasts belonging to the monks were to be allowed to feed with his own in the Swavesey pastures.

Alan was succeeded in the earldom by his brother Stephen, who confirmed these gifts, and also, at the request of Abbot Walter gave to the Abbey the tithes of

* Vol. vi. pt. 2, p. 1001, No. 1.

† These conditions, which are unusual, might be held to exempt the church from episcopal jurisdiction at the present day.

his fishery in Swavesey and of his mill at Newnham, and the piece of land before the Priory gate. In return for which, it was promised him, that when he died, he should be prayed for as if he was a professed monk.*

The estate thus granted to the French Abbey continued in its possession for three centuries. But it is by no means certain that there was ever a Priory at Swavesey, in the same sense as there was at Ely. For reasons stated elsewhere, it seems more probable that a monk of the French Abbey was instituted Rector of Swavesey and he administered the estate. However that may be, towards the end of the 14th century the monks of Angiers were willing to transfer or sell their Swavesey property. Perhaps it had not been of much value to them during the reign of Edward III., because whenever France and England were at war, it was usual for the King to seize all the revenues of property in England belonging to French religious houses. For instance in 1340, war having been declared between the two countries, all the alien priories in England were sequestered and receivers of their revenues appointed by the King. The Priory of Swavesey was given into the custody of William Fraunk, who was, out of the profits, to repay himself for a debt of £322 9s. 8d. due to him on bills of the wardrobe.† The King also had the possessions of the Priory surveyed, so that there might be no doubt, as to the amount Fraunk received.‡ In 1379, the countries being again at war, a pension of £33 6s. 8d. out of the Priory was granted to Thomas of Woodstock the King's Uncle 'to help him keep up his position.' And in 1384, the Priory was let to the Bishop of Durham and Henry Englyshe for 80 marks yearly, being £20 more than it had been let for before.§ In 1393, the Manors of Swavesey and Drydrayton, with the advowson of Swavesey Church, were with the King's licence transferred by the French Abbey to the Carthusian Priory of S. Anne, lately founded near Coventry.|| The transfer was apparently a temporary one, while the

* *Monasticon ut supra.* † *Patent Roll.* ‡ See *infra.* (*Survey at the end of this paper.*) § *Patent Roll.* || *Patent Roll,* 17 Richard II.

war lasted, for in 1396, the licence was renewed 'while the war lasted.'* Meantime, in 1395, the Prior of Swavesey had leased his interest in the estate to S. Anne's.† In 1399 the new King, Henry IV., confirmed the right of the Coventry religious house to the custody of Swavesey Priory during the war, and gave them also licence to acquire it together.‡ Accordingly in 1401, Guy, Abbot of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, executed an instrument by which all the rights of his Abbey in Swavesey were sold to the Priory of S. Anne's, Coventry, for 2500 francs of gold, legal weight, French money. In the preamble the Abbot states that for fifty years and more this estate had been an expense to the Abbey rather than a profit, on account of wars and its great distance from the mother house.§ At the next change of dynasty in 1461, the Priory of S. Anne's got a further confirmation of their rights to Swavesey.|| In 1534, this Priory fell with all the other religious houses in the kingdom, and its possessions including Swavesey, were seized by the King's servants. In 1539 the King granted the Swavesey and Drayton estates to Thomas, Bishop of Ely, in exchange for the Manor of Hatfield, Herts., which grant was confirmed by Elizabeth.¶

The advowson or right of presentation to the Prior of Swavesey was really exercised by the Abbey of Ss. Sergius and Bacchus and afterwards by St. Anne's, Coventry. But as a matter of fact, the Abbey nominated a brother for the post, and La Zouche presented him, except when the alien priories were in the King's hands, and then the King nominated him.

It was hardly to be expected that very voluminous records would be found about a Priory which never existed, nor was the titular Prior likely to have left much record, since he ceased to exist when the church was appropriated in 1411. And a prolonged search amongst

* *Patent Roll*, 20 Richard II. † *Additional MSS.*, 5849 p. 42. ‡ *Patent Roll*, Henry IV.

§ Bishop Fordham's Register, transcribed in Cole *Additional MS.* 5825, p. 248, &c., where are also the Royal Licences mentioned above. For an estate which was a loss to the owners the price seems a very good one.

|| *Patent*, 1 Edward IV. ¶ *Patent*, 4 Elizabeth, Part I.

documents printed and unprinted has resulted in very few finds. No chartulary or register of the Priory of St. Anne exists. A register of Swavesey is quoted by Dugdale in the seventeenth century and from an entry in Francis Blomefield's collections in the Bodleian* he seems to have seen a 'Book of Swavesey Priory' in Caius College Library. But there is no mention of it in the present library catalogue. There was a chance that some records of the Prior or Rectory might have come with the estate into the hands of the Bishop of Ely, but only one rent roll is in existence now. Nor are there any court rolls or bailiff's accounts in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The most valuable records relating to our subject are to be found amongst the collections of Rev. William Cole (*facile princeps* of Cambridgeshire antiquaries, past, present or to come.) Certain documents were taken out of the archives of Ely and brought to Cole to be deciphered for use in a law suit. Before returning them he made careful transcripts and added notes, some of which are quoted in this paper.† Tanner also saw these deeds and made transcripts of them, they

* Gough, *Cambs. MS.* 2. p. 488.

† The following is Cole's account, in characteristic language, of how he came to see these documents. "The following original deeds taken by Dr. Warren from the archives of Ely were put in my hands, Sept. 9, 1776, in order to read them, they being in various old hands. They were taken out of the archives of Ely to be examined on account of a new claim of tithes by Mr. Palmer, steward to the Duke of Bedford, on the new purchased estate of Mr. Cockayne of Soham, who bought it as being tithe free. The case is, Mr. Berry Dobson and his family have rented this manor and another in the same town for these 60 or 70 years, but on Mr. Cockayne's purchase about 2 years ago he raised the rent of his manor and purchase over £100 per annum, which Mr. Dobson refusing to comply with, it is let now to Mr. Mason's son of Waterbeach and it is supposed that the late tenant, who never paid tythes himself as holding another manor, gave the information, and that he is expected to repair the chancel and church-yard fences." Additional MS., 5849. p. 36. In another volume 5825 p. 249, following a transcript from Bishop Fordham's Register, he has this note. "This I added April 19, 1777, having the Register to me, at Milton in order to copy the whole of this appropriation for Mr. Cockayne of Soham, who bought the manor of Swavesey about 1775 on a supposition that it was exempt from tithes, and he applying personally to Mr. Green of Hemingford, who told him his son had been registrar 16 years, but that neither he nor his son, nor Mr. Smith the deputy Registrar at Cambridge could read the writing, so he came to me, not being able to get anyone else to copy it for him, I undertook it very unwillingly, having a great deal of writing and especially as the master of Queen's College had just lent me a MS. containing the Statutes of the College, lists of Presidents, Fellows and Benefactors, &c., which I wanted to copy in order to return soon."

were then at the Episcopal Palace.* Some further particulars concerning Swavesey, Cole obtained from the MS. collection of the Rev. Brock Rand. He also had access to the Bishop's archives and has made abstracts of documents which were not produced to Cole, notably the twelfth century award concerning tithes of Benington and the convention of 1271 with the seal of Prior attached. The abstracts of the Episcopal Registers published by Rev. J. H. Crosby in the *Ely Diocesan Remembrancer* have been largely used. In Bishop Fordham's Register, fo. 130, there is an official return of all the Priors of Swavesey who had been admitted by the Bishop since 1272. In the quotations from Patent Rolls, when no particular reference is given, the printed calendars are referred to.

It seems, from a study of the documentary remains, that there never was a real Priory at Swavesey, that is, a community of monks living under the rule of a Prior. The earliest charters, it is true, speak of the Church of Swavesey and 'the monks serving God there,' but that may have been merely a formal phrase of the charter. For there is no evidence of the presence of monks there, although there are several points against the probability of a Priory. For instance, as early as 1340, we find the Prior getting a licence for non-residence. In 1369 he leases his church and other possessions for three years. In 1379, when a clerical poll tax was taken of which record remains, there is no mention of Swavesey Priory but the Rector, a monk, is on the list, as are also the name of all the monks at Ely, Thorney, Anglesey, &c.† In 1407, William Penreth was appointed Rector 'or Prior' of Swavesey, which looks as if the second title was more a matter of form than anything else. In the proceedings ending in the appropriation of the church to S. Anne's, Coventry, there is no mention of any monks at Swavesey.

It was called a Priory perhaps because a monk was

* *Notitia Monastica.* † Clerical Subsidy, 23/1.

rector.* The name Priory survived for a long time. As late as 1693, the estate was leased as the parsonage or priory of Swavesey.†

Since the existence of a Priory is doubtful, but of a Prior is certain, the best way of presenting the facts which have been gleaned concerning Swavesey, seems to be in a list of Priors.

The earliest mention of a Prior of Swavesey is in a charter of St. Bernard, Abbot of Citeaux dated 1150—3. There had been disputes between the Abbots of SS. Sergius and Bacchus Angiers, and the Abbot of Savigny, concerning the tithes of Benington, Lincolnshire. St. Bernard directs that the former Abbot, 'that is, the prior and church of Swavesey,' shall receive 32 shillings of English money every Michaelmas as their right for ever.‡ We have found no further notice of this payment, but it is to be noted that this document was in existence at the beginning of the 18th century, when Rand made an abstract of it.§

Before 1198, there was a Prior whose name began with R. He is mentioned in a record referred to under the next prior who held the office in 1198.

1198. In this year Benedict Prior of Swavesey and the monks of the same place, bought the advowson of Fendrayton, of a certain Ansell and Ingrith his wife, for 2 marks and a virgate and a half of land.|| In the year 1200, the Abbot of Sawtry and the Priors of S. Ives and Royston were arbitrators in a suit between this Benedict and Ivo of Cambridge and Simon his son, concerning the tithes of Wimpole and Toft. When it was decided that the latter were to have two tenths in the year 1200,

* The priory of Swavesey was what is usually called a 'cell' to the French Abbey.

† Cambridge University Library, *Additional MS.* 71, skin 5. ‡ Round's *French Documents*, p. 356.

§ *Additional MS.* 5846, p. 145. A complete transcript is also given in the *Cartulaire de la Basse Normandie*, Vol. iii., p. 67. This is a MS. in the Public Record Office.

|| Feet of Fines, 10, Richard I.

and at the same time quit claimed Benedict of all conventions which they said had been made between them and R. formerly Prior.* Two grants of land to the church during this Prior's time are recorded. Richard Olf of Swavesey gave a virgate of land in Ertemanelot and half a virgate in Oxendale, which Ivo his brother held, also he gave the homage of his nephew William son of Ambrose. These he gave for the good of the souls of Ingrith, his wife, &c.† And Gervase son of Robert Torgcanelle gave a croft. The Prior is called Benedict Rem in this deed of gift.‡

1232. John was Prior. He is mentioned in the following charters. Simon of Wendy granted a messuage in Swavesey with a croft called Fissecroft to the church of St. Andrew and the monks serving God there, for the support of a lamp burning before the altar of S. Mary, wherever it should be in the church, at mass and all canonical hours, which messuage, John brother of Simon bound to the Church for the same purpose in the time of Prior Benedict.§ In another document dated 15th Aug. 16 Henry III., Roger la Zouch granted to John Prior of Swavesey half of the following holding;—a messuage and lands, three shillings rent, toll of Swavesey bridge and the meadow of Gosholme.||

1257. Roger was Prior. Cole¶ has transcribed a letter from the Papal chancery approving of a composition made between him and Carlin Scriba, merchant of

* *Additional M.S.* 5849, p. 44. "The size of this parchment is 8 inches by 4, it had three pendent seals now stolen or lost, and has Bishop Tanner's mark on it."

† *Additional M.S.*, 5849, p. 40. Cole calls this a curious deed for its antiquity, writing and contents. It had a flesh coloured seal attached with the figure of a man on horseback holding a bird in his left fist, on it.

‡ *Additional M.S.*, 5846, p. 145.

§ *Additional M.S.*, 5849, p. 40. ". . . . 7 inches by 4. It hath 5 pendent seals, the 3 middle ones cut off. The first oval of green wax has an imperfect figure in profile of a naked person in an oblong form and the legend round it is utterly defaced, the last also is of green wax, round and small and has an obliterated device in the middle and the letters round it imperfect."

|| *Additional M.S.*, 5846, p. 154. Transcript of Brock Rand's notes. The document had attached to it in his time 'a very fair seal' of la Zouch.

¶ *Additional M.S.* 5849, p. 43.

Florence, dated 3 Alexander IV. In 1249 he had special authority from the Pope to deal with the privileges of crusaders in England, of whom Stephen, rector of Cottenham was one.* During the Barons' war, the Prior of Swavesey, following his patron Alan la Zouch, would probably be a royalist, in which case he must have found his nearness to the rebel fastness of the fenland very disagreeable. There is indeed, on record, a complaint that Richard de Argentine and other rebels broke open a chest in Swavesey Church, and took therefrom thirty marks, four gold rings, and various rolls tallies and writs belonging to Alan la Zouch. The Prior however is not mentioned.†

1272, December 10th. Geoffrey de Brynkeley, monk of SS. Sergius and Bacchus was appointed on the resignation of Roger.‡ He granted a corrody to his man Andrew Scot, in return for a message and two roods of land. Scot was to have for life food and drink at the servant's table and six shillings yearly for clothes.§ In the *Hundred Roll*, Scott is stated to have held 10 acres of land of the Prior, paying four shillings yearly and doing three days' work. In 1285 this Prior got into trouble for overstocking his farm at Dry Drayton: It was complained to the justices itinerant at Cambridge that, whereas, this village contained 15 hides, each of seven score acres, of which the Prior owned one hide, and whereas, according to the custom of the village, the tenant of each hide was allowed to have pasturage for 6 oxen, 2 horses, 6 cows, 80 sheep and 13 geese, the Prior had much exceeded this number, and had a herd of 120 cattle of various kinds and a flock of 600 sheep. The justices ordered the land to be measured, with what result is not recorded.||

* *Matt. Paris Chron. Major*, Vol. VI., p. 170. † *Assize Roll* 83 m. 8.
‡ *Bishop Fordham's Register*.

§ *Additional MS.* 5846, p. 146. Collections of Rev. Brock Rand. The record is dated by him 1271. It had attached to it 'part of the seal of the Priory, pretty fair.'

|| *Assize Roll* 86 m. 12. From another suit on the same roll, it appears that Cottenham contained 18 hides, each of six score acres, the custom with regard to the pasturage of a hide being the same as in Drayton.

1286. John de Seys or Ponteseye. There is no record of his appointment in the Ely Register, but this date is given in Brown Willis's collections in the Bodleian.* The earliest mention of him otherwise is in a tithe suit between him and John de la Haye, Rector of Papworth Everard, 1301. The Prior claimed half the tithe, but the case was decided against him.† Alan la Zouch gave to this Prior ('Brother John de Punteseie') an acre of land in the Brokhaveden in Swavesey field in exchange for $2\frac{1}{2}$ roods of land which had been converted into a new ditch at Hale.‡ In 1306 he obtained from Alan a rood of land for the enlargement of the churchyard, but as this was against the statute of Mortmain, he had to obtain the king's pardon for so doing.§ In 1310 the Prior of Swavesey was asked for a loan of victuals for the use of the army in the Scotch expedition.|| He resigned in 1311.

1311 March. Oliver Britonis de Fulgeriis, a monk of S. Sergius was appointed.¶ In 1313 he appeared in a suit at the King's Bench. That Court was called upon to decide whether three messuages in Swavesey were the sole property of the church, whereof the Prior was parson, or were the lay fee of Pellagia daughter of William Legg, Roger Vicar of Swavesey and others. The prior's attorney stated that a certain Geoffrey, formerly prior was seized of this property during the reign of the King's father in time of peace.** He died before August, 1314.

1314, August. Richard Burgeris monk of S. Sergius was appointed. In 1325 when the possessions of alien priories were seized and their revenues confiscated by the King, the Prior of Swavesey was excepted.†† In 1339 we learn from the Patent Roll that two men abducted the Prior and some silver vessels belonging to him, but they brought a pardon from the King for the outrage. Next year he obtained from the Bishop, licence of absence

* *MS. Willis*, 46, p. 128. † *Additional MS.* 5849, p. 41. ‡ *Additional MS.* 5849, p. 41. "Seal of arms of Zouch, of white wax." § *Patent Roll*. || *Close Roll*. ¶ *Fordham's Register*. ** *De Banco Roll*, 201, m. 293. †† *Ministers Account*, 1125/2.

from his rectory for two years.* Whether he died or resigned is not stated in the appointment of his successor.

1344, Jan. Stephen Guyntrand, monk of S. Sergius appointed. He is so styled in the Ely Register, but in a petition to the Pope dated 1343 he is described as of Conques in the diocese of Rhodes. This petition states that he had for 25 years, in the monastery of S. Faith's at Horsham, in the diocese of Norwich, which is subject to the monastery of Conques, discharged the office of Custos in the cloister, and at personal risk defended the rights of the monastery. But as no benefice can be assigned to him by the monks, he prays that provision may be made to him of the priory of Swavesey, void by the death of Oliver Britonis de Faugeriis.† Whereupon in December 1343, the Pope issues from Avignon a mandate to the Prior of Horsham and another, to make the said provision. The mandate mentions that Oliver died at Carpentras, two days journey from the Papal Court, and that the Priory of Swavesey was at present held by Richard Bozionis.‡ It is not stated how or why Richard was to be deposed. In 1347 Stephen obtained leave of absenee for two years.§

1362, Augt. 31. John Walkelyn, a Benedictine monk of Westminster was collated by the Bishop through lapse.|| In 1363 he successfully petitioned the Pope to be allowed to keep it although non-resident.¶ In 1369 he leased the Priory and all its possessions to Almaric, parson of Boxworth, for three years at £100 a year.**

1369, Jan. 22. John Goldale, monk of Selby, presented by the attornies of Hugh la Zouch.††

1370, December 6th. Laurence Russell, monk of St. George Hulse, presented by la Zouch. In 1374 he refused with many other Cambridgeshire clergy to pay the tenth lately granted to the King. On March

* *De Montecule's Register.* † *Calender Papal Petitions*, I. 30. ‡ *Calendar Papal Registers*, II., p. 124. § *Ely Register.* || *Fordham's Register.* ¶ *Calendar Papal Petitions*, I. p. 422. ** *Close Roll*, 43 Ed. III. m. 32. †† *Fordham's Register.*

12th, 137 $\frac{4}{5}$ he had been excommunicated for sixty days and was still obdurate. In July, 1377, the Priory was ordered to be sequestered because the Prior, having been appointed by Papal provision, had not yet paid the customary 'provision' fees. In 1386 he is called the 'possessor' of Swavesey and is ordered to be sequestered for not having paid the provision due to John Walkelyn.* He was prior when the Poll Tax was levied. He was evidently non-resident, for the tax collector was unable to give his name in the roll,† but returned his benefice as being worth 100 marks. He resigned in 1389.

1389, September 6th. John de Thorndon, a monk of Ely, was presented by la Zouch, on nomination of the King as holder of the possessions of aliens.‡ But amongst Rand's Collections is an abstract of a letter from Guy, Abbot of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, to la Zouche, nominating Thorndon. It is dated 24 June, 1390, Rand had seen the original for he adds "The seal is very fair."§ In 1390-1 he was threatened with sequestration for not having paid his first fruits due by reason of the provision made to John Walkelyn.‡ The first fruits were still unpaid in March, 1401, but the sequestration was released on May 14th. In 1395 Thorndon leased the Priory to the Carthusian Priory of S. Anne, Coventry. He was to receive a pension of £10 annually, and was to renew the lease every five years during his life. The Coventry Priory was to pay £43 6s. 8d. into the Royal Exchequer annually and were to keep up repairs.¶

1401, May 28th. John Judde D.D., presented by John Knightly and others "said to be patrons of the church."‡ The Prior of S. Anne's Coventry had now become possessor of Swavesey, Judde was an official of the Bishop and a pluralist, and seems to have dealt with matters at Swavesey with a very high hand. On the Parliament Roll for the sixth year of Henry IV., there is a long petition from the Prior of S. Anne, first setting forth the

* *Bp. Arundel's Register*. † *Clerical Subsidy*, 23¹. ‡ *Fordham's Register*. § *Additional MS.* 5846, p. 146, No. 6. ¶ *Additional MS.* 5849 p. 42 "The parchment is 17 inches by 12."

conditions under which they became possessed of the Swavesey estate and then going on to complain that one Master John Judde, nothing regarding their privileges, had forcibly taken away their goods and accounts therefrom. Parliament ordered them to be put in possession again.* Cole found a reference to this affair amongst the documents lent to him from Ely, "on a long slip of parchment 11 inches by 3." It has no date or title. The following is a translation 'The aforesaid John came with armed force, to wit with bows and arrows, swords and small poinards and daggers, clubs and choppers and with a great multitude of men in a warlike manner, to to the village of Swavesey and Dry Drayton and the Priory aforesaid entered and seized the goods and chattels of the said Prior, to wit, 40 quarters of wheat, 40 quarters of flour, 200 quarters of beans and peas, 5 large chairs, 6 brass pans, 2 'lavacra' and basins of macelyn, a dozen vessels of pewter, and woollen clothes and all the utensils of the Priory house to the value of £200, and certain records of agreements and grants made by the Abbot and Convent of SS. Sergius and Bacchus to the late Prior of Coventry, predecessor to to the present prior and touching the prior of of Swavesey.' † This seems like a slip cut off a transcript of some proceedings in the Court of Common Bench. But as the De Banco rolls of Henry IV. are quite unindexed, it would involve great labour to find it.

1407, March 2nd. William Penreth, presented to the Rectory or Priory by the Prior and convent of S. Anne. It was afterwards alleged that the presentation was fraudulently and surreptitiously obtained, and that when the brethren knew of it, they all exclaimed against it. The case was tried before the chancellor of the diocese, 27 May, 1411, John Judde, official of the Archdeacon being present. The presentation was annulled and the church declared vacant. ‡ Penreth was the last Prior, for on the same day, the Priory or Church of Swavesey was united or appropriated to the Priory of Coventry.

* *Rolls of Parliament*, Vol. III., p.-551. † *Additional MS.* 5849, p. 44.
‡ *Fordham's Register*.

They were to pay the ordinary and extraordinary services and to provide a portion for the vicar according to the custom of old.*

The church of Swavesey is a fine one for a village, but not finer than many others found in or on the borders of the fenland. There is nothing in its construction to show that it was ever anything more than a parish church. A full architectural description of it will be found in Hill's "*Churches of Cambridgeshire.*" The inventory of church goods in the Archdeacon's Book in Caius College Library shows that it contained no more than the ordinary furniture of a village church. This inventory is of various dates from 1300 to 1350. It contains a portiforium given by Dominus Walter vicar, and a missal given by Dominus Luke vicar, but no gift of Dominus Prior. In the last edition of the *Monasticon* it is stated that there were some small remains of the Priory on the north side of the church. There are still some irregularities of the meadow in that situation, where the Rectory buildings probably stood. Not many notices of Swavesey church during the time of the Priors have been met with. In 1285 there is a record of its having been used as a sanctuary. The Crown Plea Roll states that Patrick (Patricius) of Galewey struck Roger the Parker of Colchester in the belly with a certain 'Knyplo,' Roger straitway died, Patrick took refuge in Swavesey Church until the coroner came, before whom he acknowledged the deed and abjured the realm.† In 1352 and 1353 the Bishop held ordinations in the church.‡

The value of the Swavesey estate varied very much at different periods. We have been fortunate enough to find two surveys and valuations dated 1325 and 1340, the existence of both of which we owe to the fact that it belonged to a foreign religious house. Two rent rolls are also forthcoming, namely, the Hundred Roll of 1278, and a roll dated 1467, when the estate belonged

* Ibid. † *Assize Roll*, 86 m 48 ‡ *Ely Register*.

to S. Anne's, Coventry. Besides these, there are the usual sources for value of the tithe, namely the taxation rolls of 1255 and 1291, the 'nonae' roll of 1341, and the valor ecclesiasticus of 1534. To take the tithe first. In 1255 the Rectory was worth £13 6s. 8d., the Vicarage £5. In 1291 they were worth £33 6s. 8d. and £8 13s. 4d. In 1341 the tithe had sunk to half its value in 1291, the chief reason given being that the Lenten seed (*semen quadragesimale*) had perished. From which we may understand that the floods had been very bad that winter. In 1534 the farm of the Rectory was worth £30. It is not easy to separate the value of the tithe from the profits of land owned by the Rector. In 1369, Prior John Walkelyn leased the whole estate for a rent of £100 a year, which seems excessive, considering that in 1456 the same was leased for £32 a year.*

The Records called *Hundred Rolls*, are full surveys of all the landed estates in the county. They were made by order of Edward I in 1279. They give the name of every tenant on each estate, his condition, the amount of land he held, and the rent he paid. Some of these records were printed by order of the Government in 1818, in two large folio volumes. The following is an abstract of the Swavesey Priory portion. The Prior held the Rectory on his own account, and 2 virgates (about 60 acres) of land of Lady Eleanor la Zouch, paying her eight shillings yearly for holding his own Court and having the survey of the gallon and bushel measures of his tenants, who nevertheless had to take their measures for examination twice a year at the Lady Eleanor's Court. The Prior also had a fishery in the River Use (Ouse), a weir and fishhouse. There were 22 tenants, of whom 12 were freeholders, renting from 5 to 25 acres at money rents, 6 were serfs, with a 5 or 10 acres holding, for which they paid a small money rent, and also did several days' work for the mistress without wages, and the remaining 4 were cottars, who held a 'cotestede,' for which they paid in labour and

* *Additional MS.* 5846, p. 147.

money. The total money rent received from the tenants was £2 1s. 10d., and between them they worked 37 days without payment.*

The other rental is amongst the Episcopal Records at Ely. In the printed catalogue it is dated 16 Edward I., a mistake due to the roll being wrongly so indorsed in a modern hand. The roll is headed "The Rental of John Norton, Prior of the house of S. Anne, of the Carthusian Order, near Coventry . . . in the 16th year of the reign of King Edward." Now the only Edward who reigned whilst Swavesey belonged to Coventry was Edward IV., so the date of the roll is 1467, and the character of the handwriting shows this also. The roll contains the names of 50 tenants and particulars of 97 holdings. A few paid part of their rent in labour, but the majority wholly in money or kind. Some suggestive names occur amongst the holdings such as Market Lode, St. Mary holme, Castell Croft, Le Market place, Chapellane, Le Row sub montem, Swyneslake, John Skinner chaplain of the Chantry of B.V.M., John Bellett late vicar. The document is not legible enough to estimate the value of the rental.†

A yearly payment by the possessors of the Swavesey estate is several times mentioned during the 14th century, which we are unable to explain. On April 10th, 1353, the Prior of Swavesey appeared before the barons of the exchequer, and exhibited letters patent dated 1351, by which he was ordered to pay to Thomas Powys, Keeper of King's Hall, Cambridge, the 65 marks which he had hitherto paid the King annually for the firm of his priory.‡ There is no mention of this payment in the lease granted by John Walkelyn in 1369, but in 1393, when the first transfer to Coventry took place, the Priory there is directed to pay it as usual after the end of five years, at the end of which time it was

* *Hundred Roll*, Vol. II., p. 469. † *Ely Episcopal Records*, D5/1.
 ‡ *Exchequer of Pleas*, Plea Roll 78, m 72.

commuted on the Prior of S. Anne's agreeing to keep twelve poor clerks in his house, from the age of 7 to 17.*

The two surveys of the so-called Priory of Swavesey which follow give a very good idea of the extent and value of the prior's property. The originals are in Latin, the translation has been slightly condensed. In the survey of 1325 it will be noted that the Prior had been unable to get his dues from outside villages, a trouble which crops up several times. After a list of the 'spiritual' property (i.e. tithes) of the Prior in Simon de Montecute's Register under the date 1339, it is remarked that the portions in outside villages hardly reach the value of their assessment in 1291, and in two cases Papworth Everard (£1 6s. 8d.) and Arrington (£1) it is stated that these sums had not been received for 20 years. As late as 1468, we find Robert Prior of S. Anne's Coventry, recovering, as possessor of Swavesey Rectory, the sum of fifteen pounds as arrears due from John Grobham, rector of Toft.† In 1466 a peremptory letter was sent by the King himself to Robert Kirkham parson of Wimpole, ordering him to pay the arrears due to the possessors of Swavesey.‡ The last mention of this payment is in a receipt given by Thomas Prior of S. Anne's to William Fincham, rector of Wimpole, for £1 6s. 8d., dated 1504.§

I. SURVEY OF 1325.

Extent of the lands and tenements temporal as well as spiritual of the Prior of Swavesey in the County of Cambridge made the 20th of November in the 18th year of the reign of King Edward son of King Edward, 1325. Before John de Crek Kt. and Master Thomas de Garton keepers of the lands and tenements of alien

* *Patent Roll*, printed in Dugdale.

† *De Banco Roll*, No. 823 m. 331. The case is an interesting one because it gives an account of the transactions by which Swavesey passed into the possession of an English Priory.

‡ *Additional MS.* 5849, p. 43. § *Additional MS.* 5846, p. 147.

religious houses taken into the King's hands in the Counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon, on the oath of honest and legal men of the neighbourhood of Swaveseye, namely; William Beneyt, John de Conyngton, John de Boleygne senior, John Grett, William Dorant, John de Eure, John Maryot, Thomas de Fevre, Henry Waryn, Henry Kyng, John Asser and John de Stanton, who being sworn say that the said Prior has in the village of Swaveseye five acres of ecclesiastical glebe, mowable and each acre is worth yearly 12d. and not more on account of the floods. There are also in the same fixed annual rents of freeholders and villein tenants worth 16s., and the fees and perquisites of the manor courts are worth yearly beyond the expense of the Steward 10s. There is also a separable fishery worth £20 yearly according to its true value. They say also that the Prior receives an annual payment of 12s. from the Church of Arnyngton, and another of 18s. from the Church of Lynton. They say also that he receives 20s. annually from a watermill at Newenham near Cambridge, and that he used to receive 33s. 4d. annually from the Church of Waterbeach, but has been deprived thereof by the Prior of Barnwell. He used also to receive 20s. yearly from the tithe of Wympol, but has been deprived thereof by the Rector. He used also to receive tithes of four acres and four roods of meadows in Fendrayton, which is now wholly under water so is worth nothing. They say also that the Prior has in Woldrayton in the said County, a capital messuage, which is worth nothing beyond the repair of the buildings. And there are with the same messuage six score acres of arable land of which four score acres can be sown yearly, and the true value of each acre is 4d. Total 40s. There is also a windmill, worth beyond expenses 26s. 8d. a year, and fixed rents of tenants worth 18s. a year. Total £29 3s. 8d., of which the prior pays 8s. to William de la Zouch according to ancient custom to his manor of Swavesey. And so the sum of this extent is according to its real value 27li. 5s. 8d. clear yearly. In witness of

which thing the aforesaid jury have affixed their seals. Dated at Swavesey, the day and year aforesaid.*

II. SURVEY OF 1340.

Appraisments of the goods and chattels and extent of the lands and tenements of the Priory of Swavesey in Swavesey, made there before John de Lascy sheriff of Cambridgeshire, on Sunday, Christmas eve, 14th year of Edward III., (1340,) on the oath of Nicholas atte Brigge, John Prikke, Thomas Osbern, John Andrew, Thomas le Smyth, William Duraunt, Robert de Wycham, John Goky, John de Rokesham, Simon Gernet, Reginald le Fisshere, and John Cutbright, jurymen, who say that the Prior has the following goods and chattels; two hundred and twenty quarters of wheat by the greater † hundred, worth 3s. per quarter, 39li; two hundred and sixty quarters of barley by the greater hundred, worth at 2s. 8d. per quarter, 40li.; 11 score quarters of peas worth at 2s. per quarter, 22li.; eight acres of land sown with wheat and now growing up worth at 2s. an acre, 16s. There are 5 horses (*affri*) worth 8s. each, 4 oxen (*boves*) worth 12s. each, 4 calves (*boviculi*) worth 40s. each, 4 calves (*boviculi superannati*) worth 20s. each, 8 heiffers (*juvence*) worth 6s. each, 19 pigs worth 13s. each, 18 geese worth 2½d. each, 4 capons worth 2d. each, 10 hens worth 2d. each. Also hay, forage, straw and *palleum* worth 53s. 4d. And they say that the above corn is for the last three years. Total value of the above goods 113li. 11s. 7d. Also they say that the Priory of Swavesey is worth nothing beyond expenses, and there are in the same 40 acres of arable land, worth 4d. an acre, and 3 acres of meadow worth 3d. an acre, and no more because it is watery (*acosum est.*) And fixed rents worth 36s. yearly, and Courts worth 2s. yearly. Total 54s. 4d. And they say that the tithe of corn and hay

* *Additional MS.* 6164, p. 228. The original is in the Public Record Office amongst the Miscellanea of the Exchequer.

† The greater hundred means 120, so that two hundred and twenty by greater hundred equals 260.

belong to the Priory and are worth 20 marks yearly. In witness whereof the jury have affixed their seals to this appraisal and extent.

Extent of the lands and tenements of the Prior of Swavesey in Dryedrayton and appraisal of the goods and chattels of the same, made before John de Lascy at Dryedrayton on Sunday Christmas Eve 14 Edward III. by virtue of a King's writ, on the oath of Reginald le Taillour, Thomas Warlok, John le Smith, Ralph Cokerel, John le Porter, William Goky, John le Ber, John Reynold, Thomas atte Pond, Geoffrey of Trumpington, William Colman and Robert Campion jurymen, who say that the said Prior has in Dryedrayton a messuage with a farmhouse and sheepyard, which are worth nothing beyond expenses. There are also one hundred acres of arable land, by the greater hundred, worth per acre 4d.; and an old windmill worth 40d. a year beyond expenses; fixed rents of free and native tenants 29s. 9d.; a rent of 13 capons worth 2d. each, of 13 hens worth 1½d. each. The Prior has also from Michaelmas to the first of August 609 works (*opera*) done by the hands of his native tenants, worth of each work a halfpenny (*obolus*). Also he has autumnal works called 'Bedrepes,' namely five score and one works worth for the time annually 12s. 7d. each work being worth 1½d.; and also of the same native tenants he has autumnal works called 'Daywerkes,' one hundred and thirty in number by the greater hundred, worth each 2d., total 25s. Sum total of lands and tenements 7li. 4s. 10½d. The Prior also has 4 horses worth 9s. 6d. each, 4 oxen worth 8s. 6d. each, 8 geese worth 2¼d. each, one cock worth 1d., 6 hens worth 1¼d. each, 45 quarters of wheat worth 3s. a quarter, 33 quarters of barley worth 2s. 8d. a quarter, 20 quarters of peas worth 2s. a quarter, 5 quarters of oats worth 20d. a quarter, 40 acres sown with wheat and now growing up, worth 12d. an acre, hay worth 40d., forage, straw and *palleum* worth 33s. 4d. There are also two ploughs with fittings worth 3s., and two old carts not iron bound, worth

35. Sum total of goods and chattels 211i. 8s. 6d. In witness whereof, &c.

* On the back of the King's writ, ordering the survey to be made, is this note. "I have delivered over to John de Pappeworth, attorney of William Fraunkes, all the goods and chattels of the Prior of Swavesey in my bailliwick, by a reasonable appraisement of the same in the absence of the said Prior, because he was sufficiently forewarned of the same by Roger de Jakele and Robert Goky and did not appear. And also the Priory, possessions of land and tenements for the debt in this writ contained, according to the tenors of the said writ, &c."* The debt was £322 9s. 8d., due on bills of the wardrobe (see supra, p. 30).

W. M. PALMER.

CATHERINE PARSONS.

* *Inquisition P.M.*, 14 Edward III., first numbers, No. 44.

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